New Proposals

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Our Mandate
This journal represents an attempt to explore issues, ideas, and problems that lie at the intersection between the academic disciplines of social science and the body of thought and political practice that has constituted Marxism over the last 150 years. New Proposals is a journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry that is dedicated to the radical transformation of the contemporary world order. We see our role as providing a platform for research, commentary, and debate of the highest scholarly quality that contributes to the struggle to create a more just and humane world, in which the systematic and continuous exploitation, oppression, and fratricidal struggles that characterize the contemporary sociopolitical order no longer exist.

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Introduction

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New Proposals Editorial Collective

New Proposals began with a dream, that a small group of individuals could make a tiny difference. This was not a big dream. While we may have wanted to make big changes we were old enough and travelled enough to know that our best hopes lay in making small changes. We make no claims to have played any role in the changes that have occurred since we started our journal 6 years ago. We do, however, lay claim to having provided platform for diverse scholarship, focused on making progressive changes that may not have otherwise seen the light of day! We look forward to 6 more years!

From the vantage point of North America it is painful to watch the increasing repression within Egypt as the generals yet again increase their control over Egyptian civil society – yet the actions of the Muslim Brotherhood when they were in power lends no comfort to libertarian socialists. We open this issue with a commentary by Aisha Birani, which reminds us of the critical contemporary importance of Franz Fanon.

We are pleased to present a special theme issue, Nature on the Move. The three papers and introduction, while separate individual works, are best read, contemplated, and understood as a collaborative writing project. In a subsequent issue we will have a special invited commentary, but for now we present Nature on the Move unadulterated by commentary so as to allow our readers the opportunity to come to your own conclusions.

The article section of this issue is a medley of tantalizing subjects: consulting anthropology/archaeology in BC, an intervention on Lenin and religion, and an exploration of neoliberal ideology in public education. The theme of this last article is picked up in three reflections on education.

Ecology and education are two of the most pressing issues facing humanity. Too often our political leaders focus upon clichés and platitudes favouring environmentally friendly policies while simultaneously enacting laws and regulations that diminishes the future wellbeing of all humanity. Realizing that education is a path toward liberation these selfsame leaders have undermined public education in such a way as to further diminish the future wellbeing of our societies. The papers gathered in this issue offer good counsel on ways forward, means to understanding and means to act. In each of the pieces to follow we are reminded that we do have the power to make our own history – the choice is ours!

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Fanon, The Arab Spring and the Myth of Liberation

Aisha Birani
Western University

Introduction

Psychiatrist, philosopher, writer and revolutionary, Frantz Fanon has been the inspiration for anti-colonial liberation movements for more than four decades. In his two most famous and complex works, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (2004), Fanon traces the violent and psychologically deleterious conditions of existence under colonial rule. Situated in Algeria in the midst of its political and economic turmoil in the 1950s, Fanon quickly began to break down the assumptions of a "benevolent colonialism and as such, served as one of the chief theoreticians of the Algerian struggle toward liberation (Gordon et al. 1996). At the basis of his works, Fanon offers us what he calls a "stretched" Marxist approach that incorporates an explanation for the racialized nature of capitalist exploitation. His prescription for the liberation of the colonies from exploitation can only be attained through the violent process of decolonization, to rid the colonized from feelings of inferiority that they develop on account of their skin colour. The end goal of decolonization, according to Fanon, is the formation of a unifying African culture.

In this paper I aim to highlight the complexity and contradiction inherent in colonial systems as put forth by Fanon by asking: what is the relationship between colonialism and racism? Is there an association between theories of racial stratification and theories of class exploitation? What is nationalism according to Fanon, and can it be an avenue to promote primordialism? Is Fanon's "stretched Marxism" a necessary stretch? And lastly, in what ways can an engagement with Fanon's body of work elicit insight into the nature of colonial exploitation in today's societies? The answers that we can gain from a critical examination of Fanon's works will begin as a useful starting point from which to understand a set of more recent revolutionary events that have occurred in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and other nations in the Arab speaking world, know as the Arab Spring. While these countries are not necessarily rebelling against a foreign colonial system, they at least see themselves as engaging in a decolonization process in pursuit of greater liberal-democratic ideals against what Fanon (2004) refers to as the "national bourgeoisie" (76).

I intend to demonstrate, however, that *both* Fanon's appeal to the formation of a common African culture *and* the calls for democracy that have recently surfaced in the Arab world are embedded in mythical conceptions of "race," "equality," and "freedom." In this respect, the primordialist assumptions that underlie Fanon's work will be used to shed light on the yearning for liberal-democracy in the Arab-speaking world. Specifically, I will

argue that since both Fanon and the revolting citizens of the Arab Spring disregard any reference to exploitation and/or group cohesion rooted in a class solidarity *for itself*, they remain, as a consequence, in a state of false consciousness. Ultimately, until these revolutionary movements form a working-class consciousness, vast inequalities in the region are likely to be perpetuated.

Marx, Surplus Labour and the Accumulation of Capital

In order to fully comprehend the crux of Fanon's arguments regarding the psychological implications of colonialism and the struggle for liberation, it is first necessary to begin with an understanding of the root cause of colonialism. For this, we must look to Karl Marx and his analysis of the exploitative, profit-driven system of capitalism. At the basis of Marx's theory of exploitation is an explicit assertion that society is broken into two main classes that are in constant opposition: those who hold the right of ownership to property and those who do not and who must sell their own labour power to subsist (Marx 1972). The diametric opposition between ownership and non-ownership classes today takes its form in the relationship between bourgeoisie and proletariat, but in the past has been constituted in different forms depending on the mode of production in that historical epoch (Marx and Engels 1988:67). It is important to note that for Marx it is the dominant class of that particular historical epoch whose interests are represented within the ideological superstructure, which further serves to solidify their power.

Under a capitalist mode of production, owners or capitalists are in the advanced position to accumulate capital from the exploited labour of their workers. This process is referred to as the extraction of a surplus value, and alludes to the new value created by the *unpaid* labour of workers. This value is freely appropriated by capitalists and is the basis of their profit: "surplus-value and the rate of surplus value are… the invisible essence to be investigated, whereas the rate of profit and hence the form of surplus-value as profit are visible surface phenomena" (Marx 1972:441). For Marx, the enormous increase in wealth and population from the 19th century and onwards were primarily due to the competitive striving to obtain the maximum surplus value from the labour power of workers. To the extent that the primary motive of capitalists is the maximum accumulation of capital, the system necessarily requires cheap labour to increase the surplus value of work, resulting in the amassment of wealth on a larger and larger scale.

For labourers who naturally find the value of life inherent in the processes of their labour and consider their work to be what separates them from animals, then "how does production, based on the determination of exchange value by labor-time only lead to the result that the exchange value of labor is less than the exchange value of its product?" (Marx 1918:72). Since the exchange of labour for wages between workers and owners occurs by people who are *legally free* to choose to work or not, coercion and exploitation may *appear* to be absent in a capitalist mode of production. The propertyless workers must, however, sell their labour indefinitely in order to avoid starvation, ultimately deeming capitalism a highly exploitative system of production.

The competition between millions of small-scale producers preceding the introduction of large factories and enormously efficient machines rapidly transformed into the monopoly of resources and the concentration of capital in the hands of just a few after the establishment of large-scale production. The ongoing pursuit of cheap labour for the maximum accumulation of capital has intensified the search for raw materials and new investment opportunities among capitalists. In an economic system based on the competition of cheap labour, "one of the surest means of gaining the upper hand in the competition is for owners to be able to secure a cheap labour force, [by utilizing] race as a reliable means of cheapening labour" (Allahar 2011:3; Allahar and Côté 1998). Imperialism, the colonization of less developed geographical territories, and the subsequent racialization of labour can be understood in the complementary sense that the ideological manipulation of race serves as a means by which to solidify control of the labour force in the most effective and profitable manner. It is in this context that Frantz Fanon's work becomes especially instructive.

Race, Racism and Class as the Organizing Principles of Colonialism

In his classic works *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* Fanon powerfully delineates the psychological implications and subsequent struggle against the oppressive system of colonialism. Colonialism, for Fanon (2004) refers to a violent system of exploitation and oppression produced through the creation of two conflicting societies: the society of the colonizer, which "displays and demonstrates [oppression] with the clear conscience of the law enforcer, and brings violence into the homes and minds of the colonized subject" and the sector of the colonized "that crouches and cowers, a sector on its knees, a sector that is prostrate" (Fanon 2004:4-5). What, then, differentiates and forms specific spatial barriers between the colonized and the colonizer? The borders within colonized regions, argues Fanon, segregate not only the poor from the wealthy, but also produces clearly demarcated racial formations. Therefore, the colonized sector is not only a world whose "belly is permanently full of good things" but also a society of "white folks" (Fanon 2004:4). On the opposite side of this degenerate border is a "sector of niggers, a sector of towelheads" that is "hungry for bread, meat, shoes, coal and light" (Fanon 2004:4-5). Racial inferiority in the colonial world is felt and realized economically. Thus, Fanon writes:

> Looking at the immediacies of the colonial context, it is clear what divides this world is first and foremost what species, what race one belongs to. In the colonies the economic infrastructure is also a superstructure. The cause is effect: you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich… [Accordingly,] it is not the factories, the estates, or the bank account which primarily characterize the "ruling class." The ruling species is first and foremost the outsider from elsewhere, different from the indigenous population, "the others." [Fanon 2004:4-5]

In this extension, or "stretching,' of Marxism, Fanon is asserting that racism, the "practice of including and excluding individuals and groups from participating fully in the social economy on the basis of some imputed racial similarities or differences," is not merely a superstructural effect of a determinant economic base, but rather, an organizing principle in society (Allahar 1993:39).

We can trace the genealogy of racial domination back to the period of the Atlantic slave trade and the advent of chattel slavery, where slave-owners successfully captured and "othered" Africans for the purposes of economic expansion (Davidson 1992; Williams 1966). Colonialism, too, required and continues to require the complete "racial," cultural and ethnic subjugation of an entire group of people. Grounded in the economic imperative of capitalist profit-making, the system of colonialism in the Americas represented a new era of human degradation reinforced by the ideology and practice of white supremacy and black inferiority (Gordon et al. 1996). We need not look further for evidence of this process of racialization than in our own beloved nation. The intense racialization of Canada's First Nations peoples as hostile "red men," for example, has enabled Canada's dominant classes to promote their own interests, economically and politically up until the present day (Allahar and Côté 1998:62). Similarly, the migration of Indian indentured workers, or "coolies," into Trinidad between 1845 and 1917 provided colonizers with cheap and temporary plantation labour (Singh 1974:43). Strategically defined against the uncivilized African labourer in Trinidad, the absence of Afro-Indian solidarity allowed the colonizers to perpetuate and maintain their dominance (Samaroo 1974:96). Racism, therefore "had not [only] to do with the color of the laborer, but [also] with the cheapness of the labour" (Williams 1966:19; Bonacich 1972).

Most importantly, the racial significations aligning black with "the uncivilized savage" are transferred and internalized into the psyches and structures of the colonial society (Fanon 1967: 164). Like the slave owner who demanded from the slave unconditional submission and who impressed upon the slave a sense of innate inferiority and fear of white people, the strategies of degradation, depersonalization and dehumanization are also quintessential features of the colonial project. As a consequence, the psychological roots of African or "black" inferiority have come out of the soil of both slavery and colonialism. For "not only must the black man be black; he must be black in

relation to the white man… his inferiority comes into being through the other" (Fanon 1967:110). Again, in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) Fanon writes that the colonized "identifies his self with the explorer, the bringer of civilization, the white who carries truth to the savages – an all-white truth. There is identification, that is, the young Negro subjectively adopts a white attitude" (147).

Indeed, for Fanon, the unintended reaction to colonial oppression by the colonized subject is to internalize the white negrophobe's gaze and to engage in a process of self-objectification or what he calls the epidermalization of inferiority:

> It is apparent to me that the effective disalienation of the black man entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. If there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process: primarily, economic: subsequently, the internalization – or better, the epidermalization – of this inferiority. [Fanon 1967:10-11]

The black man, according to Fanon, wants to be white.

Accordingly, for Fanon, race is not a biological trait. Rather, it is an historically constructed phenomenon and culturally mediated artifact. Culture, argues Fanon, operates as the instrument through which the normalization of the social construction of race as a system of hierarchal power relations occurs. The dominant colonial culture maintains and legitimates this racialized hierarchy by replacing indigenous histories and cultures with newly constructed racial ideologies. Racial domination in the colonies, therefore, is legitimated through the imposition of the colonizer's language, racist propaganda and religious institutions that equate darkness with evil and inhumanity (Fanon 1967:6-7, 69). We can see echoes of this logic in the work of Roger Bastide (1968) and his discussion of colour symbolism in Christianity:

> The Christian symbolism of color is very rich… The color yellow, or at least a dull shade of yellow, has come to signify treason… But the greatest Christian two-part division is that of white and black. White is used to express the *pure,* while black expresses the *diabolical*. The conflict between Christ and Satan, the spiritual and the carnal, good and evil came finally to be expressed by the conflict between white and black, which underlines and synthesizes all the others. [36-7, emphasis added]

Religious and cultural justifications, such as the Christian colour symbolism illustrated above, served further to legitimate and rationalize the exploitative conditions in the colonies. Gradually, the overt mechanisms of domination have become hegemonic and embedded in different institutional sites – the government, criminal justice system, and schools – all operating to mediate the polarized racialized economic systems of the colonial worlds.

Violence, Decolonization and the Call for an African Culture

In the very same space that Fanon conceptualizes the psycho-affective internalization of inferiority, he also attributes to the colonized a capacity for emancipation and disalienation. In the *Wretched of the Earth* Fanon exclaims that because colonialism is an inherently violent phenomenon, decolonization must also exist as a violent process. Thus, in reaction to the violence of the colonizer, Fanon prescribes counter-violence as the initial pathway for establishing the basis for reciprocal recognition between the colonized and the colonizer. In contrast to non-violent attempts for liberation by the national bourgeoisie (members of the colonized class who merely appropriate "the old traditions of colonialism [and] flex its military and police muscle"), Fanon (2004) looks to the lumpen-proletariat to create revolutionary change (76). He asserts that the unemployed and starving peasants "do not lay claim to the truth but are the truth" because they understand most clearly how things really work in the colonial world (Fanon 2004:13).

To the extent that the colonized have internalized their inferiority, "the logical end of this will to struggle is the total liberation of the national territory. In order to achieve this liberation, the inferiorized man brings all his resources to play, all his acquisitions, the old and the new, his own and those of the occupant" (Fanon 1967:43). Because of the preoccupation with their racial inferiority, the colonized must unite, first, on the basis of their common

African consciousness. No one, Fanon (2004) argues, "can truly wish for the spread of African culture if he does not give practical support to the creation of the conditions necessary to the existence of that culture; in other words to the liberation of the whole continent" (235). To effectively challenge colonialism, thus, culture must become national and specific. The formation of a national culture, argues Fanon (2004), "must lie at the very heart of the liberation struggles these [colonized] countries are waging" (168):

> The culture which has been retrieved from the past to be displayed in all its splendor is not his national culture. Colonialism, little troubled by nuances, has always claimed that the "nigger" was a savage, not an Angolan or a Nigerian, but a "nigger."… The colonial's endeavors to rehabilitate himself and escape the sting of colonialism obey the same rules of logic… the culture proclaimed is *African culture.*" [Fanon 2004:150, emphasis added]

Ethnic Nationalism as False Consciousness

It is at this point that I wish to argue that Fanon's extension or "stretched Marxism" is extremely useful insofar as it accounts for the racialized nature of labour under capitalism, and subsequently, the very real experiences of the colonized. However, I would also like to argue that, like nationalism, race and ethnicity constitute ideological distractions that prevent any real solidarity based in class consciousness from occurring. Decolonization along the lines of race and the successive call for an African culture serves to essentialize the dignity, glory and solemnity of all Africans and all past African civilizations. In this respect, decolonization based upon racial solidarity roots itself in myths and fabrications, rather than in material emancipation. Fanon's contention that a critical, progressive negritude can lead to a genuine national culture raises serious implications regarding the effectiveness and success of a violent decolonization movement within the colonies. If we can agree, for instance, that the colonists' concern with race is ideological and serves to maintain the structure of class dominance, why is Fanon's ultimate resolution for the liberation of the colonized rooted in a primordialist unity based in a common African culture? To this extent, Fanon is describing what Anthony Smith (1988) has termed *ethnic nationalism* – a nationalism that is culturally or ethnically defined (11). In contrast to the civic or territorial nation which is defined by a common economy, territory, educational culture and citizenship, ethnic nationalism rests upon a "myth of common descent, common historical memories, elements of a shared culture, an association with a particular territory, and a sense of solidarity" (Smith 1988:9). The key to Smith's definition of ethnic nationalism is, of course, that it is supplanted in myth. In the same way that Fanon, and also to a degree Bastide (1968), suggest that the racialization of particular groups of people for the purposes of extracting cheap labour is justified and rationalized in a myth of racial inferiority (i.e. through religion), ethnic nationalism is also based in a the myth of primordial unity and assumes the existence of an imagined community.

To the degree that ethnic nationalism invokes such mythical or mystical bonds – and thereby abstracts social relations from their *real*, *material* basis – it is best regarded as false consciousness. False consciousness, a concept alluded to by Marx, describes a situation whereby individuals who share a common class position are unaware of the fact. Class consciousness, on the other hand, refers to a situation whereby members of a similar social class are aware of their positions, and as a consequence, share, promote and defend the common interests of that group (Bottomore 1991). Enabled by the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie classes, "ethnic entrepreneurs" further promote forms of cultural nationalism rooted in primordial notions of racial belonging. These entrepreneurs produce and perpetuate myths associated with belonging and sameness and redirect the consciousness of the colonized toward, not economic, but racial injustice. In this sense, ethnic entrepreneurs seek to promote a non-class consciousness, or a *false consciousness,* among the popular masses in the colonial world. The false consciousness facilitated by ethnic entrepreneurs enables the continual exploitation of the colonial subject insofar as they force the colonized mind to value racial solidarity over solidarity rooted in a working-class consciousness.

The Arab Spring and the Myth of Liberalism

In the foreword to *The Wretched of the Earth*, Homi Bhabha asserts that Fanon's work and his vision for decolonization provide a blueprint for the conceptualization of social inequalities that have proliferated under global aspirations and impositions in the 21st century. Placing Fanon's work in conversation with the experiences of "popular masses" distinct from the colonial setting which he was passionately assessing, his theory provides a starting point for analyzing and critiquing the recent revolutionary events in the Arab-speaking world. These events, coupled with the issues of colonialism, post-colonialism, neo-colonialism and ethnicity give us cause to analyze the work of Fanon so as to gain insight into the strengths and pitfalls of his work.

What is currently being referred to as the Arab Spring is in fact a revolutionary wave of protests and demonstrations occurring in the "Arab world" (the Middle East and North Africa) that began in the last few weeks of 2010. Thus far, revolutions that have successfully overthrown tyrannical officials and governments have occurred in Tunisia, with the flight of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Egypt and the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak, and most recently, in Libya with the death of Muammar Ghaddafi. Civil uprisings have also surfaced in Yemen, Syria and Bahrain in addition to major protests in Jordan, Morocco and Algeria (Pollack 2011:213). The demonstrators in the region have shared many similarities including techniques of civil resistance in their campaign efforts such as strikes, marches, sit-ins as well as the use of social media to organize and communicate. Although, the uprisings that have surfaced in the Arab-speaking world over the course of this past year have not followed the exact same trajectories nor have the fruits of their dissent resulted in similar or exact outcomes, they do, however, share common motivations and features that allow for, at least, a partial analysis.

The economic, political and social situation characteristic of the colonies described by Fanon beginning in the 1950s certainly differs from the situation of the countries impacted by the Arab Spring. For example, while almost or all of these Arab countries have done away with the colonial rulers of the imperial conquest, the remnants of tyrannical leaders remain. In order to perpetuate and support the colonial order, the puppet native ruling class has been Anglicized, but are emphatically not English. Thus, although these countries no longer define their existence in relation to a colonial ruler in the way that Fanon describes, the protests and revolts launched by the citizens of these countries do resemble the previous attempts for decolonization originally targeted against their former imperial authorities. Accordingly, these citizens see themselves as engaging in a decolonization process against what Fanon (2004) refers to as the "national bourgeoisie" - members of the native population who seek to remain on good terms with the colonial authorities (in our current neo-colonial context, *the West*) and who, as a consequence, necessarily "reject these upstarts, these anarchists" (76-7). As such, the native rulers are not exactly like the colonizer but mimic the colonizer – they become almost the same, but not quite. For, "once colonialism ended… and the Europeans withdrew from the colonies, new opportunities were created for the formerly colonized to come to the fore and to assert a new political identity" (Allahar 2005b:237). The epitome of these new political identities can be found in the representation of leaders such as Ben Ali, Mubarak and Ghadaffi who have come to be both agents and objects of colonial surveillance.

However, the sustained prevalence of tyrannical, bourgeois-nationalist leaders indicates that a truly liberating process of decolonization, as described by Fanon, has yet to occur for these countries. To the extent that these leaders have not the best interests of their citizens in mind, but rather their own political and economic interests, these tyrants merely serve to protect and reproduce the bourgeoisie's control over the conditions of capitalist production. Take, for example, Hosni Mubarak's support of the eviction of Iraqi forces from Kuwait:

> When America was hunting for a military alliance to force Iraq out of Kuwait, Egypt's president joined without hesitation. His reward, after the 1991 Gulf war, was that America, Gulf states and Europe forgave Egypt around $20 billion-worth of debt. [Economist 1999]

Insofar as the ultimate goal of the national bourgeoisie (as well as the leaders of the West that they are serving) is the maximization of capital, both Fanon's and Marx's descriptions of the exploitation necessary to secure assets are undoubtedly applicable to the relationship between ruler and oppressed in the Arab speaking world.

Extreme poverty, the unequal distribution of wealth, and an overall economic decline describe the realities of nearly all of the countries in the Middle Eastern and North African regions (with the exception, of course, of U.S. puppets, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, among others) (Pollack 2011). Let us look again to Egypt for a more specific example of the exploitative relationship between the rulers and the ruled. Egypt, a former British colony, sought independence at the end of the nineteenth century with the creation of an Egyptian nationalist movement. A revolution in 1919, which rooted itself in the foundations of socialist thought, resulted, instead, in the emergence of the national bourgeoisie (Ginat 1997). Accordingly, the emergence of an Egyptian working class was the direct result of the acceleration and the development of industrialization in order to satisfy the material interests of the bourgeoisie (Ginat 1997). Therefore, instead of placing the mode and means of production in the hands of the working class, the Egyptian nationalist revolution resulted in the entrenchment of bourgeois domination and proletarian exploitation. Presumably, the espoused goals and perceived outcomes of the recent Egyptian revolution center, not upon the original socialist agenda of the Egyptian nationalist party, but rather, on a yearning for democratic rule, equal human rights, meritocracy and fair and free elections in the country (Pollack 2011).

Similar sentiments regarding the democratization and overall celebration of the call to adopt liberal-democratic ideals in Egypt can be found among citizens in the rest of the Arab-speaking world who have regarded these revolutions as truly liberating. However, the touted features of a liberal society – equality, freedom, constitutionalism and free and fair elections – are still *ideals* that remain a long way from being actualized; in reality, they serve instead to distract us from the realization of our class positions and concomitant exploitation (Allahar and Côté 1998). It is in this way that the ideology of liberalism, its promotion of the free pursuit of individual goals and the drive to acquire material possessions, has seeped into the wants and desires of the materially underprivileged citizens of the Arab world. Of course, to the degree that it is ideological and widely believed, the notion of liberal-democracy is itself mythical because it endorses the view that all individuals are free and equal, while simultaneously reinforces capitalism's unequal distribution of wealth.

In Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and other countries that we shall characterize as neo-colonial, the myth of liberalism promotes arbitrary ideals of "human flourishing" and "conceptions of the good' in its claims to liberate citizens from the despotic rule and oppressive culture imposed upon them by their rulers. In this way, liberalism is less a means of promoting political emancipation, but instead serves as an ideological tool that endorses the assimilation of a native culture into the West through the imposition of "democracy." To the extent that the revolutions of the Arab Spring have sought and continue to seek out liberalist notions of freedom, justice and equality, they are conforming to the West's individualist democratic system, and by default, free enterprise capitalism that assumes that all economic actors are free and equal in the marketplace.

We know, however, that "although the political system is portrayed as a free contest among equals, each having one vote to cast, the economic system is driven by competition and inequality of access to material resources" (Allahar and Côté 1998:13). Thus, while race was, for Fanon, the most salient notion along which to derive solidarity, it is, in our time, democratic, progressive liberalism that has shaped the great rallying call. I argue that this is due largely to the globalization of liberal ideologies (and their attendant conceptions of freedom and political economy) that have accompanied the *material* hegemony of capitalism in general (and the United States more specifically) over the past century. Ultimately, the myth of liberalism, like the myth of ethnic nationalism and the belief in the existence of primordial ties between members of "our kind," allow the ruling class

to persist unimpeded in pursuit of its fundamental goal: the accumulation of capital. Just as Fanon's call for solidarity rooted in a mythical and imagined African culture is, in the end, solidarity based in false consciousness, the myth of liberalism too distracts citizens of the Arab-speaking world from the true source of their exploitation – advanced industrial capitalism – and in this way, are also falsely conscious.

Conclusion: Toward a Socialist Future

The revolutionary events that have recently taken place in the Middle East provide for us a unique natural experiment through which we can address the applicability and relevance of Fanon's work in both *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth*. These events inform us that, firstly, Fanon's arguments concerning the use of race as a tool for the extraction of capital must include the realities and myths associated with post- and neo-colonial situations; and secondly, that *both* the exploitation of natives in the colonies described by Fanon and the exploitation endured by the citizens of the Arab-speaking world are ultimately the result of a capitalist economic system rooted in an inherent antagonism between the interests of those who own property, and those who do not.

In essence, the ethnic nationalism that Fanon calls for as the end result of the violent decolonization process in the colonies disregards almost entirely the revolutionary power of a decolonization movement based in a common class consciousness. The call for democracy by the citizens of the Arab Spring may similarly be understood as falsely conscious because it is coloured by liberal ideologies that do not sufficiently attend to the realities of the exploitative conditions being experienced under modern-day capitalism. Accordingly, Fanon's extension of Marxism to include the racial subordination of natives in the colonial world does encourage us to be increasingly attuned to and critical of increasing *global* economic disparities; however, we must also bear in mind that the exploitative system of capitalism, whether in the guise of colonialism or liberalism, and its ultimate pursuit of capital "has no race, color, sex or nationality" (Allahar 2005a:136).

Rather than extend or stretch Marxism, then, it is necessary to revert back to traditional Marxist assertions for the formation of a working class-consciousness. The formation of a class consciousness and a subsequent working class nationalism (first) and internationalism (later) looks beyond myths of race, ethnicity and liberal-democracy toward a socialist alternative and "the triumph of humanism and communalism over materialism, consumerism and individualism" (Allahar 2004:120). In both the case of Fanon and the Arab Spring, therefore, it is only through revolutionary action oriented toward the eradication of economic exploitation and ideological hegemony that true liberation may be achieved.

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Introducing "Nature on the Move" – A Triptych

trip·tych
n.
1. A work consisting of three painted or carved panels that are hinged together.
2. A hinged writing tablet consisting of three leaves, used in ancient Rome.
3. A set of three associated artistic, literary, or musical works intended to be appreciated together.
[From Greek triptukhos, *threefold* …][1]

In the spirit of *New Proposals* – a journal of interdisciplinary enquiry "dedicated to the radical transformation of the contemporary world order" – we are pleased to offer the following three papers. They are the outcome of a three-year process of conversation and engagement, characterised by both disagreement and excitement. Our shared concern has been how best to theorise and understand the socio-economic displacements we have each observed through studying and engaging with conservation policy and practice in varied contexts since the 1990s. We have witnessed landscapes, natures and peoples of the global south become increasingly entwined with market-oriented solutions to ecological and economic imperatives of improvement, with outcomes that can intensify inequitable patterns of fortune and misfortune in both social and environmental registers. We have documented the occlusion of local and indigenous knowledges and concerns, alongside the amplification of specific wildlife populations and consumptive access to these by foreign tourists. We have noted that conservation successes, such as increased incomes from ecotourism and strengthened numbers of "big game," frequently are accompanied by a paradoxical entrenching of detrimental environmental impacts globally through emissions-related climate change and amplified material consumption generally. And we have wryly observed the myriad displacements effected in a growing *zeitgeist* claiming that such effects can be "offset" by paying for conservation investments somewhere else. As environmental activists remind us, on a single planet limited by the borders of space, there is no "elsewhere;" there is no "away." With others, we have experienced attempts to silence and close down interventions that state concern at some of the socioecological displacements and injustices we have observed.[2] Whilst celebrating the resilience and diversity of struggles globally, we see

1 Definitions from http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/triptych and http://www.thefreedictionary.com/triptych.

2 For examples and discussion, see Sullivan (2003), Holmes (2007), the policy report published by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) (Igoe and Sullivan 2009) and the collection of pieces in a special issue of the policy oriented online journal *Current Conservation* 3(3). The website www.justconservation.org, co-founded by two of us (Igoe and Sullivan) in collaboration with a broader network of people who are academics, practitioners and activists – and sometimes all of these - makes publicly available documented instances of displacement due to conservation interventions.

these closures as connected with broader hegemonic dynamics that seek to create (or at least appear to create) a consenting "civil society" by reducing resistance possibilities and the expression and practice of radical alternatives.[3]

We first presented the following three papers in June 2011 at a shared panel, chaired by Human Geographer Prof. Noel Castree, at the conference *Nature™ Inc.: Questioning the market panacea in environmental policy and conservation* organised by the Institute for Social Studies, The Hague, where one of us (Bram Büscher) works.[4] In this panel we sought to depart a little from standard conventions of lumping together papers under a panel title that more-or-less speaks to their emphases. We wanted to see instead if we could produce separately authored papers with distinct contents and approaches, that worked in relationship with each other such that each piece spoke to and developed themes expressed in the other pieces. We spent time listening to, engaging and disagreeing with each other's perspectives, asking others to mediate our disputes and sometimes declaring to withdraw our work entirely. We mention this by way of acknowledging that academic collaborations are the outcome of affective as well as intellectual relationships, requiring work and persistence that may be invisible, but that is nonetheless essential, in shaping the final "product."

On presentation of the papers at *Nature™ Inc*, Anthropologist Prof. James Fairhead commented that they had the quality of a "triptych": of three complementary "panels," each of which is indispensable to the meaning of the whole. For us, this characterisation of our three pieces as a triptych has illuminated what we have been attempting to do. It has firmed up for us a sense of the aesthetic rhythm of our methods for telling our particular and combined "stories" of "Nature on the Move," as well as refining our intention to write three separate pieces that nonetheless say more (we hope) when read in combination than alone.

The first "panel" is Bram Büscher's initial rendering of "Nature on the Move." He describes the myriad ways in which conserved and relatively untransformed natures are being repackaged as monetized and financialized products that can move in the world so as to accumulate speculative financial or more general ephemeral values. He notes parallels with the movements of "fictitious capital" circulating in the world as debt, credit, options, futures and other derivative products so as to enhance investment portfolios without entailing a corresponding movement of the material items on which these derived products are based. Büscher's panel is a homage to and creative extension of Marx's analysis of capital as "money in process," "value in process" (Marx 1976:256), and comprises the inspiration for the triptych as a whole. To speak once again of paradoxes, the products "embodying" this "liquid nature" – that include entities such as carbon options and futures, and that seem set to include new commodities of biodiversity such as species credits and biodiversity offsets – are connected rhetorically with environmental aspects but designed to circulate so as to generate "green" economic growth that seemingly is decoupled from environmental impacts. The concern is that adding to the frenzied and homogenising metrological world of financial liquidity also adds to a world of booms, busts, bubbles and bonuses. This is a rhythm associated structurally with plutonomic tendencies, and thus with strident and deepening global inequalities (cf. OECD 2013). It seems antithetical to the material or societal requirements of equitable socio-ecological sustainabilities based on emplaced diversities, and thus warrants diagnostic and critical attention.

The triptych's second panel by Jim Igoe draws attention to the ways in which the "fictitious conservation" engendered by this circulation of an objectified and conceptually spliced nature, has its roots in an earlier and intensifying modern impetus. This entailed the stilling and commodification of conserved nature through the production and circulation of images of constructed wild natures deemed valuable for viewing and conservation. Igoe extends Büscher's (post/neo?) Marxist political economy analysis by drawing into the frame insights from

3 See, for example, Igoe (2005), Sullivan et al (2011), Büscher (2013), MacDonald (2013) and Fletcher (under review).

4 See Arsel and Büscher (2012) and the special issue of *Development and Change* that it introduces for some of the papers presented at this conference.

two of France's most incisive post-Marxist theorists. He builds on situationist artist-activist Guy Debord's observations regarding the structuring effects of mass-produced and circulated images to highlight the multiplicitous ways that society-environment relationships are increasingly mediated by value-generating images. These selectively "spectacularise" landscapes and people-nature relationships and thereby encourage the (re)making of landscapes and associated peoples such that they accord with empowered images. As such, and following Michel Foucault, he argues that Debordian spectacle constitutes aspects of wider techniques and technologies of government, thereby aligning and entraining the production of nature, and of society-nature relationships, so as to accord with the particular and empowered projections associated with a milieu of "nature conservation" (also see MacDonald 2010; MacDonald and Corson 2012).

In the final panel of the triptych Sian Sullivan draws attention to varied animist "culturenature ontologies" – the suppression and purification of which is an ongoing requirement for the entrenching of a modern worldview that consolidates "nature" as deadened and mute object. Arguably, it is the associated possibilities for bending this objectified nature to the instrumentalisations of an emergent and capitalised technoscience that lies at the heart of many of the environmental imperatives driving conservation practice today. The piece is a continuation of a broader poststructuralist and feminist political ecology endeavour that problematises the foreclosures of animist culturenature ontologies that are other to, and othered by, modernity's great divide. It adds to attempts to refract this foreclosure by bringing into the frame different culturenature knowledges and practices from varied cultural, contemporary and historical contexts. These share characteristic approaches towards "nonhuman nature" as a relational sphere of lively subjectivities, desiring life too. Drawing on ethnographic field experience in multiple contexts, and in alignment with the theorists and ethnographers by whom she is inspired (of which Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Donna Haraway, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Jerome Lewis, Tim Ingold, James Fairhead, Bruno Latour and Silvia Federici deserve mention) her suggestion is a normative, ethical and hopeful one. Namely, that there is much of relevance in animist onto-epistemologies and associated extant, as well as subjugated, practices that is worth (re)countenancing in the course of engendering socionatural alternatives with desirable eco-ethical effects.

In introducing our "triptych" we acknowledge a resonance with the astonishing *Millennium Triptych* painted in the late 1400s by the Dutch artist Hieronymous Bosch (available for viewing at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Garden_of_Earthly_Delights). In this the left panel depicts a Garden of Eden innocence and harmony between "man," "God" and "beast." Seemingly inspired in part by colonial encounters with New World indigenes, often described by observers as existing in a state of abundant reciprocity with the exotic plant, animal and spirit entities inhabiting their environs, the panel generates a sense of calm, spaciousness and coherence of meaning.[5] The centre panel, known as "The Garden of Earthly Delights," portrays an intense proliferation of spectacular but meaningless consumption – what one commentator describes as "an erotic derangement that turns us all into voyeurs, a place filled with the intoxicating air of perfect liberty."[6] The right panel moves on to convey a horizonless dark hell of unspeakable torment and destruction, seemingly the cumulative outcome of the spectacular and thoughtless consumptive delights of the previous panel.

There is something of an echo of these themes in our triptych, but in the reverse order. Echoing Büscher's opening piece, John Berger (1999:1-2)[7], for example, has described the third panel of Bosch's triptych as "a strange prophecy of the mental climate imposed on the world … by globalisation and the new economic order," that generates "the conquest of the entire world through the market... subject to no control except the logic of investment." As in Igoe's following paper, Berger (1999:2) sees this 'mental climate' as consolidated by a claustrophobic "world

5 Even if already prescient of "the Fall" represented by God's introduction in this panel of the biblical Adam to his consort Eve.

6 Peter S. Beagle, quoted in Belting (2005:7).

7 We are grateful to Ranjan Bhattacharyya for drawing our attention to this piece.

picture" – or spectacularised CNN "wilderness of separate excitements" – controlled by the "delinquent need to sell incessantly," and generating a world of surplus peoples forced to the jagged edges of market rationalisations.

Fittingly for a journal that embraces Marxist and anthropological commentaries regarding multiplicitous possibilities for struggle, Berger connects his observations of Bosch's *Millennium Triptych* with the pieces of the global puzzle identified in a late 1990s letter to the world press by SubCommandante Marcos (1997) – sent from the infamous and ongoing Zapatista struggles in Chiapas, south-east Mexico. In this, the first piece "has the shape of a dollar sign and is green" and "consists of the new concentration of global wealth in fewer and fewer hands and the unprecedented extension of hopeless poverties" (Berger 1999:2; Marcos 1997). The second piece "consists of a lie," a totalising and spectacularised rationalisation publicising that there is no alternative - that history has ended with the steep-sided plutonomic pyramid of distribution encouraged by neoliberalism. Connected with these pieces are those of emigration, precarity, landlessness, organised crime, physical repression, and the fragmentations of the nation state produced by "free trade zones" and money's freedom to move across borders creating new frontiers and breakages. But the final piece is in the form of heterogenous pockets of resistance. Of "a refusal of the world-picture implanted in our minds" (Berger 1999:3; Marcos 1997) and a reciprocal imagining of other horizons, other rationalities, that can be walked towards, collaboratively. These pieces of the puzzle again are reminiscent of the movement of themes we pursue in the three "panels" of the triptych that follows.

Our invocation here of "*Zapatismo*" seems appropriate. We understand this as a practical orientation to diagnosis and contestation that is inspired by Marxist political economy, class struggle and revolutionary praxis; but that also refracts this through an embeddedness in indigenous communitarianism and the production of egalitarianism, as well as via a culturenature cosmology that personifies the nonhuman with significant eco-ethical effects. It is towards this vitality of a refracted Marxism and its potential and promise for radical change and 'magical' subversions that we offer this triptych.[8]

We are honoured to also welcome a constructive-critical discussion paper by Marxist geographers Noel Castree and George Henderson to be published in a following issue of this journal, and we invite broader engagement in service to the journal's stated desire to create a more just, humane, and we would add eco-culturally sensitive, world.

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8 See also Merrifield (2011).

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Nature on the Move I: The Value and Circulation of Liquid Nature and the Emergence of Fictitious Conservation

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Abstract: A rich body of literature investigates the many ways in which nature is impacted upon and transformed by the "endless accumulation of capital." Much less attention has been reserved for understanding how capitalist actors increasingly aim to profit from the non-extractive use of nature. While recognized as important, the theorization of conservation as a capitalist project has only just commenced in earnest. The paper contributes to this effort by positing that the commodities created through capitalist conservation, so-called "environmental services," constitute a type of capital that challenges dominant (Marxist) ideas about the links between value, production and nature. Most importantly, this new type of capital, which I call "liquid nature," necessitates rethinking the relations between circulation and production in contemporary capitalism and how the emphasis in the creation of value is shifting from the latter to the former. Two indications of this shift are seen as key in enabling liquid nature, namely that the valourization of production is increasingly alienated from the act of production and that the value of capital, defined as value in process, increasingly relies on a continuous intensification of capital circulation. The paper concludes that the upshot of attempts to establish "liquid nature" as the new mode of sustainable accumulation under capitalism result in the emergence of "fictitious conservation."

Keywords: conservation, nature, circulation, capital, value, production

Introduction

This article is part of a broader project to understand the place of conservation in the critical analysis of the relations between nature and contemporary capitalism. While there are vast literatures on how "nature" and "capitalism" interrelate, these are overwhelmingly geared towards the manner in which the latter *uses*, *transforms* and/or *impacts upon* socio-biophysical natures. A solid theoretical framework for thinking about the place of the *conservation* of nature within contemporary capitalism is still embryonic. This is odd, considering that the fate of modern conservation has been interwoven with capitalist trajectories since its inception in the 18th and 19th centuries (Grove 1995). In fact, the preservation of the world's "last wild places" appears as a classic Polanyian double-movement, a direct response to the alienation of humans from nature and massive transformation of nature under capitalist expansion (Cronon 1996). At the same time, by separating rural people from their land conservation aided in the formation of the labour force that industrial capitalism needed (Perelman 2007), while proving a valuable tool in colonial administrative control (MacKenzie 1988). More recently, an intensive and pervasive proliferation of protected areas has accompanied the rise of neoliberal capitalism since the late 1970s (Brockington et al. 2008) while the 1990s and 2000s have given rise to popular paradigms

such as "payment for ecosystem services" and novel approaches such as biodiversity derivatives, wetland credits, species banking and more (Robertson 2004; Cooper 2010; Sullivan 2012). All these are based on the assumption that capitalism and conservation are – can be made – compatible (see Brockington and Duffy 2010), which leads to a pertinent question: how can we understand the conservation of nature as a capitalist project?

This question is the topic of a nascent but swiftly growing literature. Igoe, Neves and Brockington (2010), for example, focus on how a Gramscian hegemonic "historic bloc" intersects with an economy focused on Debordian Spectacle to produce the *idea* that capitalism and conservation can indeed be compatible (see also Fletcher 2010, for a poststructuralist perspective). While these authors convincingly show how in this way the prediction by green Marxists that the "second contradiction of capitalism" would lead people to demand ecosocialism (O'Connor 1998) has been neutralized – or delayed – they leave implicit the question how the conservation of nature actually functions *as capital* in the 21st century global economy. Over the last two decades, this question has become a prominent one, particularly after the recent (or ongoing) financial crisis. Not only has the idea that business should "green" itself received a massive boost, the financial crisis also led to calls for a "global green new deal" and a "green economy" that focus on shifting the global political economy from extractive to non-extractive or non-transformative use and its concomitant valuation of nature and natural resources (Büscher and Arsel 2012).[1] We thus witness the capitalist system increasingly accepting the effects of the "second contradiction,' yet trying to deal with it by making it part and parcel of the system; by giving 'value' to the conservation of nature. It does this in the only way it knows how to give things value: by taking them up as commodities in capital circulation, by finding new ways to guarantee "nature on the move."

Obviously, this makes sense from the perspective of capital. After all, capital, according to Marx, is "money in process," "value in process" (Marx 1976:256). If anything, the last years have again made abundantly clear that when capital stops moving, the system in which it thrives is in deep crisis. Hence, all over the world, governments were fixated on getting money moving again and so turn it back into capital. Similarly, in our times of multiple environmental crises, we see many actors working hard to turn the conservation of nature into capital so that it can take its "rightful" place in global markets and no longer be dispensed with as mere "externality." This leads to a further dilemma: how does "conserved nature" – what I will call "liquid nature" – circulate as capital, as "value in process," and what does this mean for the value of nature?[2] This is a significant question with potentially quite radical implications for (neo or post) Marxist theory and for conservation.

Let me briefly outline why, before moving on to discuss the question in more depth. Most fundamentally, the commodities "produced" by capitalist conservation (aim to) turn "production" on its head, and hence engrained ideas about (the production of) value. The accepted, Marxist way of thinking about the relation between capitalist production and nature goes something like this:

> Human beings exploit nature in all sorts of ways. It hardly seems possible to imagine otherwise. The transformation of nature, though it takes place under all manner of conditions and through all manner of socially embedded practices, is an absolute requirement for the production of anything. [Henderson 2003:77]

Of course this is generally correct, with one major possible exception, *namely when capital seeks to produce the non-transformation of nature,* most especially through its conservation. Now, it has to immediately be added that the conservation of nature does not mean the non-transformation of nature. The opposite is true: nature is actively produced and transformed through its conservation (Brockington and Duffy 2010; Dressler 2011). Yet, the manner of production

1 See: http://www.unep.org/pdf/A_Global_Green_New_Deal_Policy_Brief.pdf, p. 4. Last viewed: 15 September 2010.

2 Neil Smith (2007) has written an extremely interesting and relevant essay entitled 'Nature as Accumulation Strategy' that touches on many of the issues discussed in this article. In my view, however, Smith does not give 'conservation' a central enough place (indeed, he hardly even uses the concept at all), and so misses some crucial links in explaining 'conserved nature as capital' and what this implies for the value of nature in contemporary capitalism. These will be discussed later in the article.

and transformation is rather different from what is generally understood as the "transformation of nature under capitalism." It is a transformation that aims to leave nature (materially) unexploited and unused, and is as such seen as diametrically opposed to, and – importantly – *fit to off-set* "traditional" production processes that do (materially) exploit and use nature. Phrased differently, the *value* in this product, at least theoretically, is found exactly in the fact that nature is (believed to be) not (materially) used, transformed or exploited.

In contemporary conservation, this idea has become known under the banner of "natural capital," which provides "environmental services" to humans. Nature-to-be-conserved functions in this rhetoric as a peculiar kind of *fixed capital* whose value circulates through the capital embodied in and implied by its environmental services. This, I refer to as liquid nature – nature made fit to circulate in capitalist commodity markets – the potential for which, I argue, has been made possible within a change in the nature of circulation in contemporary capitalism. Yet, these services, like the land and nature they are derived from, are a form of fictitious capital: "capital without any material basis in commodities or productive activity" (Harvey 2006:95). In Marxist terms, this would also mean they cannot hold any value, as they have not been (directly) produced through human labour. Given this, the question "how does conserved nature circulate as *capital*, as value in process" has potentially fundamental implications for engrained ways of thinking about value, nature and the relations between production and circulation in capitalism. Indeed, a central argument of this paper is that the analysis of conserved nature as capital necessitates a shift in emphasis from production to circulation. *It is (the nature of) contemporary capitalist circulation that enables the circulation of liquid nature as a form of fictitious capital, the ultimate result and consequence of which is "fictitious conservation."* This, however, is not to discount production. To the contrary: production, as we will see, remains crucial, but quite differently from "standard" Marxist theories of production.

In what is to follow, this argument is approached from two angles. First, I will outline the nature of circulation in capitalism and how this has changed over the last three to four decades. Next, I will discuss how this transformation relates to attempts to enable the circulation of nature, leading to the argument that to make markets for conserved nature fully liquid – or to create fully liquid nature – capital has had to "elevate" nature from fixed to fictitious capital. The difference is that in the latter case, the link between actual natures and their conservation through digitalized financial mechanisms is severed, so creating "fictitious conservation." The penultimate section discusses the notion of fictitious conservation in more depth and explores its consequences for Marxist theories on production, circulation and value. The article ends with some brief concluding thoughts.

Before moving on, it is important to emphasize that all of this is not a matter of mere abstract political economy: to make "liquid nature" believable, legitimate and manageable, capital has had to and continues to create particular governmentalities and associated ideological believe-systems. These matters, however, are outside the purview of this article and will be taken up by Jim Igoe in his companion piece. Moreover, it also does not mean that no alternative ontologies and epistemologies exist when it comes to "nature on the move" and that these could potentially provide ways out of the current capitalist deadlock. These will be discussed by Sian Sullivan in her companion piece. The sole objective of this article is a step-wise *theoretical* exploration of how conserved or liquid nature becomes capital that circulates with great speed in our contemporary global economy. It is an exercise in logical reasoning, not an empirical investigation although the potential empirical and practical implications might be considerable.

The Nature of Circulation in Capitalism and "Fictitious Capital"

The ensuing discussion on the nature of circulation in contemporary capitalism will start by going into some "fundamentals" of capitalist circulation based on Marx's *Capital* (1976) and Harvey's *The Limits to Capital* (2006). I will then move beyond this "deep structure" of capitalism to incorporate how circulation has changed alongside recent changes in global capitalism. Hence, I explicitly *start* with Marx, not *end* with his work as is sometimes the case

in Marxist-inspired work. I will argue that several aspects of Marx' work will need to be reconsidered and/or expanded in order to fully understand *contemporary* capitalist circulation that has made "liquid nature" possible.

The basis of capitalist circulation for Marx starts when commodities are "sold not in order to buy commodities, but in order to replace their commodity-form by the money-form", and when "the change of form becomes an end in itself" (Marx 1976:227-228). This leads to the famous conversion from C-M-C to M-C-M whereby a capitalist "throws money into circulation, in order to withdraw it again by the sale of the same commodity" (249). Money, thus, becomes "money in process" or "value in process," and therefore capital. This has due implications: "the circulation of money as capital is an end in itself, for the valorization of value takes place only within this constantly renewed movement" (253). When capitalist circulation becomes an end in itself, and under the pressures of competition, the "immanent laws of capitalist production" start confronting "the individual capitalist as a coercive force external to him" (381). A tremendous amount of faith is thus placed in the (seemingly) "exogenous" process of circulation to keep accumulation on track. As even mainstream economists recognize, however, this is obviously incorrect. In the endless complexities of the differentiated circulation and realization times of capital, production, commodities and values, it is clear that circulation in the aggregate is never an even, consistent or automatic process (Marx, 1978). If circulation of capital converged exclusively around commodities, capitalism would quickly become immensely unstable. This imminent instability is, for Harvey (2006:254), why credit is vitally important to the system.

While full discussion of credit is beyond the scope of this article, some remarks are important for clarifying its focus on circulation. Harvey (2006:285) talks about the "immense potential power that resides within the credit system": "credit can be used to accelerate production and consumption simultaneously. Flows of fixed and circulating capital can also be co-ordinated over time via seemingly simple adjustments within the credit system." Credit, however, leads to what Marx called "fictitious capital," which Harvey (2006: 95) describes as "money that is thrown into circulation as capital without any material basis in commodities or productive activity." In turn, he argues that "the potentiality for 'fictitious capital' lies within the money form itself and is particularly associated with the emergence of credit money" (267). He explains as follows:

> Consider ... a producer who received credit against the collateral of an unsold commodity. The money equivalent of the commodity is acquired before an actual sale. This money can then be used to purchase fresh means of production and labour power. The lender, however, holds a piece of paper, the value of which is backed by an unsold commodity. This piece of paper may be characterized as *fictitious value*. Commercial credit of any sort creates these fictitious values. If the pieces of paper (primarily bills of exchange) begin to circulate as *credit money*, then it is fictitious value that is circulating. A gap is thereby opened up between credit moneys … and 'real' moneys tied directly to a money commodity. … If this credit money is loaned out as capital, then it becomes *fictitious capital*.

While arguing that credit can function to stabilize circulation, Harvey adds that this does not mean that credit solves capitalism's inherent contradictions. Indeed, it embodies the contradictions it aims to solve, but on new levels and with new complexities:

> What started out by appearing as a sane device for expressing the collective interests of the capitalist class, as a means for overcoming the 'immanent fetters and barriers to production' and so raising the 'material foundations' of capitalism to new levels of perfection, 'becomes the main level for overproduction and over-speculation.' The 'insane forms' of fictitious capital come to the fore and allow the 'height of distortion' to take place within the credit system. What began by appearing as a neat solution to capitalism's contradictions becomes, instead, the locus of a problem to be overcome. [Harvey 2006:288]

Once a process of relying on debt to guarantee and intensify accumulation has been set in motion, there is no way back: accumulation has to

continuously increase in order for "fictitious capital" to retain its "value." The use of credit thus adds a major impetus to ensure that capital is truly "money in process" or "value in process" and thus that the velocity of circulation must continuously increase. Circulation, Marx remarked in the Grundrisse, "has to be mediated not only in each of its moments, but as a whole of mediation, as a total process itself" (Marx 1973:255). What this points towards is that a certain velocity of circulation helps sustain a particular amount of "fictitious capital," and how with its further institutionalization capitalism becomes progressively dependent on the circulation and proliferation of this type of capital.

Much has changed since Marx's day, and even since Harvey first published *The Limits to Capital* in 1982. It is thus necessary to account for subsequent dramatic changes in the global political economy and their effects on capitalist circulation. This is crucial since, while Marx' and Harvey's analyses point us in the right direction, one thing both these scholars did not foresee is the way in which global capitalism would (try to) adjust in relation to the environmental degradation it engenders. This was obviously not a major issue in Marx' time but even Harvey does not devote much attention to this in his work and so completely misses the important connections between changes in contemporary capitalism and the energy expanded to finding ways to green capitalism through conservation (Büscher et al. 2012).

The background to these changes are found in a central imperative of capitalism, namely "to reduce the time and cost of circulation so that capital can be returned more quickly to the sphere of production and accumulation can proceed more rapidly" (Smith 2008:126). On a global scale, Castells (2000:136-137) argues, this has truly become possible with the advent of new information and communication technologies: "advanced computer systems" that allow "new, powerful mathematical models to manage complex financial products, and to perform transactions at high speed." In this process, "the whole ordering of meaningful events loses its internal, chronological rhythm, and becomes arranged in time sequences depending upon the social context of their utilization" (Castells 2000:492).

So far, so good, but an apparently irreducible obstacle to this dream of unfettered hyper-circulation remains. For as Smith (2008:126) further argues, "the circulation of value requires also a physical circulation of material objects in which value is embodied or represented" (see also Henderson 2003:43). Understanding how capitalism may be transcending (or perhaps circumventing) this apparently irreducible obstacle requires further theorization of value and circulation. Let us start with LiPuma and Lee, who make the same point about the central imperative of capitalism as Smith, but draw more radical implications about circulation:

> The basic or founding argument is that the internal dynamic of capitalism compels it to perpetually and compulsively drive toward higher and more globally encompassing levels of production. This directional dynamic has engendered such progressively ascending levels of complexity that connectivity itself has become the significant sociostructuring value, leading to the emergence of circulation as a relatively autonomous realm, now endowed with its own social institutions, interpretative culture, and socially mediating forms. [LiPuma and Lee 2004:19]

While the level of "autonomy" can be debated, fact is that connectivity has become a "significant sociostructuring value," to the extent that Boltanski and Chiapello (2007) have elevated this value to the centre of their analysis of the "new spirit of capitalism." LiPuma and Lee, however, draw their conclusions about circulation from their analysis of financial derivatives, which they say for most of their history "were production-focused and functionally geared to hedging" (97). This changed in the 1970s with several far-reaching "institutional changes and the liberalization of national capital controls" (98). As a result "the essential movement of the market was away from hedging on production to wagering on circulation" (99). Next, LiPuma and Lee describe how this process started leading a life of its own, to the extent that it has created a system "in which means dominate ends" in that "the goal of financial circulation increasingly shapes the means of its realization" (54).

Again, some elements of LiPuma and Lee's overall analysis can be debated, most especially the

power they attribute to financial capital in the west (see 179-180) and their "move away from production," as it is clear that financial capital has recently re-emphasized material production, particularly land and agricultural commodities in the global south, resulting in massive land grabs (Borras et al. 2011). That said, it is undeniable that the direction of change in global capitalism has been towards unleashing financial markets and hence massively increasing the intensity and velocity of capital circulation (Moore 2010; Marazzi 2011). What, then, does this mean for the concept of value?

LiPuma and Lee (2004:83), again, take a radical step, arguing that "standard macroeconomic theories of international trade and exchange rates, or Marxist approaches that originate from a labour theory of value, appear to have little to say about circulation." Technically, this is not correct: many do have many things to say about circulation but they interpret this rather differently. The central question here, at least from a Marxist perspective, is where and how value is produced. In this paper, I follow Phil Graham (2007:174) who argues that while Marx's theory of value still forms the "deep structure" of capital, contemporary notions of value – for example embodied by financial derivatives – are no longer the ones that Marx first articulated:

> Today it is not the muscle-power of people that provides the most highly valued labor forms. Far more intimate aspects of human activity have become technologized and exposed to the logic of commodification. Correspondingly abstract forms of value have developed. Value production, in turn, has become more obviously "situated" in the valorized dialects of "sacred" and powerful institutions, such as legislatures, universities, and transnational corporations. In official political economy, value has moved from an objective category that pertains to such substances as precious metals and land, to become located today predominantly in "expert" ways of meaning and, more importantly, in their institutional contexts of production. [Graham 2007:174]

This has major consequences for the nature of circulation in capitalism. It means that capital increasingly circulates as "expert ways of meaning" and "institutional contexts of production," for example through reports, policy briefs, think tanks, brands, marketing, and so on (Goldman and Papson 2006), but also through financial derivatives, futures and other financial constructs (Lee and LiPuma 2002). In other words, what circulate mostly these days are forms of *fictitious capital* – capital that does not directly have "any material basis in commodities or productive activity" (Harvey 2006:95). In addition to credit, this capital takes the form of a whole host of financial and non-financial derivative "products" that – amongst others – focus on institutional or organizational efficiency, management of meaning, technological, informational and communicative "innovation," or simply speculation. These "products" all crucially depend on a concept of value that is ephemeral and transient. Indeed, Graham (2007:4) argues that "what we call "values" are more or less ephemeral products of evaluation," which "like all aspects of meaning … are socially produced and mediated."

This, it must be emphasized, is not to say that production-based labour is not important. It does mean that its role in the production of value has changed, most notably through a shift in emphasis towards circulation, in that circulation increasingly determines production rather than the other way around (see also Marazzi, 2011: 48-49). LiPuma and Lee (2005: 424), in another article, articulate these changes as follows:

> We appear to be … heading into an era where speculative capital, a socio-historically specific concept of risk and derivatives products have become the centre of the financial clockwork that turns the hands of contemporary capitalism. *There is thus reason to believe that circulation-based risk represents a new self-structuring dynamic that is superimposed upon and structurally supersedes an earlier form grounded in production-based labour*. [emphasis added]

Circulation superseding and determining production, however, is not new, as pointed out for California agriculture in late 19th, early 20th century by Henderson (2003). What has changed over the last decades, or so I argue, is that *the valourization of production is increasingly alienated from the act of production*.

This, of course, has consequences for production in general, and for the "production of conservation" under capitalism specifically. Production in general, in this process, is relegated to producing "underlying assets" for the (financialised) derivative structure that is the prime focus for value creation in contemporary capitalism.[3] In turn, it is in this context that we see global capitalism increasingly directing its attention to dealing with its negative environmental consequences in a way that mediates its worst excesses while opening up new frontiers for capital accumulation (Arsel and Büscher 2012). To enable this process, several fundamental changes in the way capitalism operates and generates value are necessary, most especially to value the non-use or non-extraction of nature (and hence paying for labour that conserves rather than appropriates or destroys nature), while simultaneously trying to reduce the "physical circulation of material objects" that Smith (2008:126) argues is necessary for the circulation of value, and replace these with creating the possibilities for the circulation of "liquid nature" as capital. It is to these changes and their challenges and critiques that we now turn.

The Circulation of Liquid Nature as Capital

Anno 2013, it is abundantly obvious that our planet's natural environments are being transformed and commodified with unprecedented intensity and speed. As policy-makers, NGOs, businesses and politicians work to alleviate the growing concerns about capitalism's negative ecological record, they often do so under the banner of "natural capital" (see Costanza et al. 1997). This (usually) involves bringing nature deeper into contemporary capitalism through mainstream neoclassical economic tactics (Burkett 2005:113). Nature as "capital," in this discourse, appears to function according to classical forms of *fixed capital,* which "circulate as value while remaining materially locked within the confines of the production process" (Harvey 2006:209). This is achieved in large part through the products it creates, namely a whole host of different "environmental services" (Sullivan 2009).

What different variations of the idea of environmental services have in common is their – rather simplistic – presentation of how embedded value is "transported" from the producing entity "nature" to the consuming entity "humanity." These, according to proponents, could be different categories of services, including supporting, provisioning, regulating and cultural ecosystem services (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005:vi).[4] The exact nature of these different types of services, however, is not relevant; what matters for the analysis is that a complex array of services is tied to a range of "constituents of well-being" (vi) through a valuation model that relies on *monetary* payments in order to assign quantitatively comparable values to qualitatively incommensurable conditions and relationships (Kosoy and Corbera 2010). Arguably the most important policy result of this thinking is the currently trendy "payments for environmental services" (PES) paradigm.

Of course, the standardization of value measures is an extremely complicated process, requiring a great deal of speculation by those doing the "measuring" and "valuing." In this section I will not focus on precisely how this is done. Rather, based on the two functions of money, namely "as a measure of value and as a medium of circulation" (Harvey 2006:292-293), my primary concern is, first, to briefly outline the implications and problematic aspects of the monetization of nature, and, second, discuss how nevertheless this monetized nature is supposed to become *circulating* and *valuable* global conservation capital.

Importantly, if nature is expressed in money, we need to first clarify our conceptualizing of "nature," particularly if some kind of *material, biophysical* nature is to be conserved through some kind of commodified, *abstract* value circulation. Biodiversity conservation is explicitly *not* interested in what Castree (2003:286) calls "internal nature": nature that has been brought almost entirely under human technological control, like genetically modified seeds.

3 Note that this is not the same as Marx' base-superstructure theory in relation to capitalism.

4 The category of 'cultural ecosystem services' is interesting in relation to Sian Sullivan's (2009) point that the whole exercise of subjecting nature to capitalist market dynamics is a profound manifestation of 'cultural poverty'. It almost seems to acknowledge this very point by ensuring that 'culture' is giving its appropriate place in an otherwise culturally impoverished framework.

It *is* explicitly interested in nature that "still retains the independent capacity to act," or what Castree calls "external nature." Although most external nature is "inherently social" (Smith 2007:33), fundamentally shaped by human thought and action, it remains far more unruly and encompassing than internal nature. It is precisely this kind of unruly and encompassing nature that biodiversity conservation sets into motion so that it may circulate as a form of fictitious capital.

To theorize this circulating nature, it is necessary to account for both the biophysical and social aspects of nature, and to engage with them as interconnected and mutually constituting realms (Castree 2000; Carolan 2005; Büscher et al. 2012). After all, as argued by Neil Smith (2007:33), "capital is no longer content simply to plunder an available nature but rather increasingly moves to produce an inherently social nature as the basis of new sectors of production and accumulation." However, as Carolan (2005:400, 409) cautions from a critical realist position, it is also necessary to maintain some distinction between these categories such that they do not wind up simply merging into one another. He thus distinguishes three categories: Nature, nature and "nature."[5] The first is "the Nature of physicality, causality, and permanence-with flux." The second is nature as socio-biophysical phenomenon, and the third is "nature" as discursive construction. While all three are important, in this article I am centrally concerned with the latter two categories, their intersections and mutual constitutions, in the circulation of conserved nature as capital. Conservation is always to a large extent a struggle between different "natures", namely in terms of "discourse, power/knowledge, cultural violence, and discursive subjugation" (Carolan 2005:401). As these discursive regimes influence human action, they play an active hand in shaping biophysical nature (Carrier and West 2009). At the same time, biophysical nature shapes, limits, and defines discursive regimes of "nature," such that the two are in constant dialogue, as shown by Jim Igoe"s and Sian Sullivan's companion pieces.

5 Importantly, Carolan (2005:401) adds that "all three natures – "nature," nature, and Nature – represent bounded hybrids. In each, sociobiophysical interactions occur, but to various degrees, thereby underlying the need to conceptually stratify reality so as to better understand how those strata interact and the bounded hybrids that result."

This brief discussion has obvious implications for the circulation of conserved nature as fictitious capital. If it is to circulate in the capitalist economy, conserved nature must be monetized. If monetized, it will be expressed and understood in quantitative terms, which erases the "ontological depth" and qualitative complexity of relationships between Nature, nature, and "nature." Specifically, as Burkett (2005:122-124) elaborates, it is possible to identify five important problems with the monetization of nature: 1) "unlike money, 'nature cannot be disaggregated into discrete and homogenous value units'"; 2) a reliance on money leads to "inadequate accounting for the irreversible character of many natural processes" (e.g. there is no reason to assume that the monetary value of an ecosystem will go up before its depletion/extinction is irreversible); 3) monetization involves an absolute "tension between money's quantitative limitlessness and the limits to natural wealth of any given material qualities"; 4) "the price of a resource stock is not determined solely by its absolute size", but by many other aspects of how markets work, meaning that "price may not rise as depletion occurs"; and 5) "higher resource prices may actually accelerate a resource's depletion by spurring technological advances that reduce extraction costs and/or lower the amount of the resource needed per unit of final goods, thereby encouraging its further use to increase total output." Burkett (2005:115, emphasis added) concludes that even "many ecological economists have resisted it [*natural capital*] on the grounds that it is irreparably anti-ecological" and "lends a spurious legitimacy to the commercialisation of nature and *its reduction to a productive input*."

These points highlight the problematic and contradictory effects of transforming nature into a quantitative, monetary input – a point I will come back to below. At the same time, these criticisms have not withheld many conservation, business and government actors to try and monetize nature. In fact: it has spurred them on even more (Bracking 2012; MacDonald and Corson 2012). In this endeavour, they have been enabled, I argue, by the contextual transformations in global capitalism laid out in the previous section, most notably the proliferation of complex forms of fictitious capital,

changes in the production of value and how these have influenced interrelated processes of production, consumption and circulation. In other words: while the idea of monetizing ecosystem services as the product of "fixed" natural capital is a problematic, and critics would argue futile and false solution, *it is only the starting point* for those who aim to bring conserved nature into contemporary capital circulation. They need to go further still, and find ways to link up capitalist conservation to a political economy where value has become ephemeral and located "in 'expert' ways of meaning and, more importantly, in their institutional contexts of production" (Graham 2007:174).

And this is exactly what has been happening, as shown by recent scholarship on conservation and capitalism. Thus, Garland (2008:67) has posited a "conservationist mode of production," that "lays claims to natural (and thus fixed) capital" and adds value to it "through various mediations and ultimately transform it to a capital of a more convertible and globally ramifying kind." Brockington (2008) chronicles the "power of ungrounded environmentalisms" by emphasizing how conservation celebrities enable (mostly western) audiences to re-establish their bonds with the wild through commodified representations of nature. Igoe (2010) records how conservation produces and turns upon Debordian "spectacle" in the "global economy of appearances"; particularly how spectacular media representations of nature are dominating the way environmental non-governmental organizations communicate and "sell" their conservation messages. Dressler (2011), based on research in Palawan Island, the Philippines, notes how "capitalist conservation" shifted from "first to third nature": a nature that lives up to how tourists would like nature on Palawan to be. Lastly, I have earlier shown how conservation initiatives around the 2010 world cup soccer in South Africa produced and incorporated what I call "derivative nature," the systemic preference on the side of capital for idealized representations of nature and "poor locals" in order to attract tourists and investment (Büscher 2010). What these disparate examples have in common is that they show how contemporary conservation fundamentally adheres to and relies on "ephemeral values" to enable the circulation of conserved nature in contemporary capitalism.

Having stated this, it is crucial that we do not take the argument too far: just as a rapidly circulating and speculative financial realm ultimately still depends on a more "mundane" production, distribution and consumption of asset streams (Leyshon and Thrift 2007:98), so is contemporary conservation still deeply intertwined with the material realities of socio-biophysical nature. This, for instance, is clear from work by Katja Neves (2010:721) who shows that the commodity fetishisation of whale watching is not as diametrically opposed to exploitative whale hunting as it imagines itself to be. In fact, she argues that the "transition from one to the other is more closely related to transformations in the global capitalist economy than to enlightened progress in human–cetacean relations." The new production of conserving whales through ecotourism, then, precariously links making audiences – literally – buy into commodified and romanticized whale encounters and shielding them from the negative material sides of the same, for example the disturbance of whale ecology and carbon-packed air travel. This poses a more general problem, namely that the circulation of conserved nature as capital has to be achieved through creating "derivative" ephemeral value while at the same time remaining inextricably linked to material (socio-biophysical) nature.

In other words, for conserved nature to truly function as capital, it has to go beyond environmental services. After all, the generally accepted definition of PES talks about a "well defined environmental service" that is sold by a particular provider to a buyer "if and only if the ES provider secures environmental service provision (conditionality)" (Wunder 2005:3). The "problem" here is that this does not necessarily involve competitive markets, and indeed often comes down to mere "compensation schemes." True capitalist marketization of conserved nature would need to go far beyond this in order to link material nature with ephemeral values. In business terms, most environmental services markets lack sufficient "liquidity." Liquidity is business lingo for a market with an ever-ready supply of sellers and buyers where

assets can easily be bought or sold with little effect on price-levels. It means that commodities need to be fully "alienable" and/or fully transferable at minimum transaction cost. This presents fundamental problems for markets of "environmental services," as their liquidity is usually circumscribed in space and time (see also Fletcher and Breitling 2012). Thus when the rather naive idea of PES has scarcely become popular in mainstream conservation, it is already being overshadowed by a host of much farther-reaching proposals to turn conserved nature into circulating capital. We are currently witnessing the creativity at work of those who push the frontiers of capitalist commodification ever further, as conservation derivatives, "sustainability enhanced investments," wetland and mitigation banking, biodiversity offsets and other schemes are rapidly making headway in conservation and extra-conservation arenas.

While an extensive discussion of these separate schemes is neither possible nor necessary here (see Sullivan 2012), what they have in common is that risks related to, impacts on and incentives towards biodiversity (conservation) are financialised and subjected to market exchange. Mandel et al. (2010:45-46), for example, promote "conservation derivatives" as hybrids of "two types of financial instruments," "in which an insurance derivative is issued with modifications to allow responsible action to decrease the likelihood of the insured event." Wetland and mitigation banking and biodiversity offset schemes, in contrast are geared towards offsetting the impact of development projects by (at least) restoring or reviving the same amount of biodiversity that was destroyed by the project (see, eg. http://bbop.forest-trends.org/; Robertson 2000 for a critique). Taken together, the goal of all these mechanisms is to make markets for conserved nature more fully liquid, which indeed is how it is referred to in practice.[6] Let us now look at the implications of this development on Marxist theory and conservation in more detail.

The Emergence of Fictitious Conservation

The *ultimate* objective of getting market liquidity right is of course the lubrication of producing greater surplus value or profits.[7] The *immediate* objective of liquidity is facilitating faster and/or smoother turnover of capital, and thus to increase the velocity and/or stability of capital circulation. The Platonic ideal of liquid nature is one in which monetized forms would be completely free from the material contexts and relationships that produced them. In reality, of course, "financial superstructures" are always entangled in material realities (Leyshon and Thrift 2007:98). Neoliberal conservation's entanglements with material realities are the topic of another emerging body of literature, and need not detain us (but see West 2006; Neves 2010; Büscher, 2010). What is important to note here is that these entanglements occur in "a world that can no longer be directly grasped" (Debord 1967:11), in which production and consumption have become so separated that "their relationship becomes all but unfathomable, save in fantasy" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2002:784).

Accordingly, the connections and disconnections between consumers of liquid nature and the conditions and relationships that produced it, have become so complicated that they are, for most intents and purposes, severed. It is not just that individual producers, consumers and natures are no longer directly in touch, though this is often certainly the case. The point is that the various products derived from many distinct natures have to become standardized and utterly abstracted in order to be exchangeable. This is not just a *strategic* process, as Smith (2007:29) has it; it is a *necessary* one. This is achieved in large part through *securitization*: the standardization and rationalization of "nontransparent and localized commodities … so that different buyers and sellers in different places around the globe can understand their features and qualities and exchange them easily" (Gotham 2009:357).

Hildyard (2008: 4-5) takes the idea of securitization one step further, arguing that it is:

6 For 'entrepreneurs' making the market liquid, see http://www.ecosystemmarketplace.com/pages/dynamic/article.page.php?page_id=7682&section=news_articles&eod=1. Last viewed: 21 September 2010. Important to add is that the degree to which this 'rendering liquid' varies greatly in practice.

7 Note that it is generally accepted that 'more' liquidity is not always the best for market stability, and thus for profits, hence the phrasing 'getting market liquidity right.'

Figure 1: The "new face of nature" or a typical index for pricing (here carbon). Source: www.ecosystemmarketplace.com, viewed: 22 September 2010.

> A process whereby assets that generate regular streams of income … are sold to a newly created company (a Special Purpose Vehicle [SPV]). … The SPV then issues derivatives … that give investors the right to the income stream from the assets.

As these highly complicated processes are stacked on top of one another, one can immediately see how they completely erase any local, qualitative, spiritual properties and contexts around an "environmental service" through their subjection to utterly abstract numbers on marketized value indices. This has resulted in profoundly "new face of nature," depicted in figure 1.

Proponents of the marketization of conserved nature usually argue that securitization helps stabilize and balance markets and prices. Yet, examples from other markets that depend on the "liquidization" of fixed capital commodities reveal this is not the case. Taking the housing market that had such a major role in the financial crisis as an example, Gotham (2009:357, 368) contends that "the housing finance sector is permeated by significant contradictions and irrationalities that reflect the disruptive and unstable financial process of transforming illiquid commodities into liquid resources" and that this "conceptualization of securitization as a process of creating liquidity out of spatial fixity dovetails with theoretizations that emphasize the conflictual, contested and deeply contradictory nature of uneven geographical development." This is a stark warning for ecosystem markets. Most fundamentally it points to the ways in which securitization artifices have systematically transformed homes and neighbourhoods into fictitious capital that can circulate in the global economy without concern for, or even knowledge of, the material and social conditions that produced them. I am arguing, by extension, that similar securitization artifices are systematically and fundamentally separating liquid forms of conserved nature from the material and social conditions that produced them. The upshot is the full-fledged conversion of conserved nature into capital, so enabling its ultimate purpose: becoming a new vehicle for money in process, or value in process. Conservation, in other words, has become fictitious capital, which leads to what I call "fictitious conservation": conservation without any direct basis in material, socio-biophysical nature.

Fictitious conservation has not displaced or subsumed more traditional forms. Rather it accompanies them, intertwines with them, and infuses them with its logic in ways remarkably analogous to interactions between "nature" and nature as outlined above. Traditional forms of conservation may continue to protect animals, landscapes, and eco-systemic processes. Increasingly, however, *the valourization of these activities is alienated from them and subject to broader processes of the circulation of liquid nature*. At the same time, the logic of fictitious conservation is increasingly geared toward the production of liquid nature *tout court*. In losing much of its basis in socio-biophysical nature in favour of liquidity, the idea of "fictitious conservation" can almost be taken literally; after all, how can conservation alleviate the "second contradiction" of capitalist expansion if it is capital-

ist expansion that is the ultimate objective to begin with?

The implications of all this are legion. For one, it adds an additional layer of complexity to Smith's (2007:33) cogent discussions of "nature as accumulation strategy," in which he argues that the "horizontal integration of nature into capital" (the exploitation of material nature) is now being complimented by the "vertical integration of nature into capital" through the "production of nature 'all the way down'" and "its simultaneous financialisation 'all the way up.'" A focus on the circulation of liquid nature further complicates this picture. Liquid nature, I have argued, depends on a conceptualization of ephemeral value that blurs Smith's horizontal and vertical axes of nature-as-capital beyond recognition. It moves through these intermittently and simultaneously, as a frenzied circulation of a seemingly integrated "nature" and nature.

The analysis also complicates Smith's (1996; 2007:25) discussions of the "production of nature," as well as Garland's (2008) concept of "the conservationist mode of production." While I agree with Smith's epistemology behind the idea of the production of nature as taking both material and discourse serious, I believe that conserved nature as capital in the context of contemporary capitalism emphasizes that "formerly distinct spheres of analysis" – production, distribution, consumption and circulation – are converging more than this thesis can give credit for (Graham, 2007: 7). Being overly "productivist" can blind analyses for "other processes that simultaneously socialize nature" (Castree 2000:285) while it also obscures the ephemeral and hybrid character of value in contemporary hyper-capitalism.[8] Likewise, the concept of a "conservation mode of production" cannot do justice to the ways in which nature and conservation are increasingly becoming "valuable" in the global economy, namely as fictitious capital, which depends on the ever-increasing velocity of circulation.[9] Nature is not only produced. It is constantly on the move, along with fictitious versions of the very forces that produced it, through simultaneous and intertwined processes of circulation, consumption, distribution, and production.

Yet, while having said this, the analysis at the same time leads us to the argument that the emphasis in the creation of value has shifted from production to circulation. The Marxian theory of value would stress that value is ultimately produced through the surplus extracted from labour in production, which in turn happens through the appropriation of nature. This becomes problematic, of course, when environmental services circulate as fictitious capital without having been produced by human labour. In fact, the idea of capitalist conservation says that humans should be paid to *forego* the creative appropriation of nature. As such, capitalist conservation is at the same time an acknowledgement of production and its role in the transformation of nature, as well as its (hoped for) negation. These two opposites, in turn, are brought together in the idea that natural capital commodities (seem to) skip the phase of material production to focus on the *production of circulation*. Central in all of this is the elimination of the (traditional) role of labour, and hence the questioning of what Hannah Arendt referred to as "the glorification of labor as the source of all values" (1998:85). In other words, the point of capitalist conservation becomes giving (ephemeral) value to the elimination of labour's appropriation or transformation of nature.

Interestingly, Hannah Arendt, in the 1950s, already criticized Marx in a similar way. In *The Human Condition* she argues that Marx' conceptualization of labour as being directly embedded in the life process through the metabolism of nature leads to a "fundamental and flagrant contradiction" in his value theory (1998:103-104). She argues on the one hand that "when Marx insists that the labor 'process comes to its end in the product,' he forgets his own definition of this process as the 'metabolism between man and nature' into which the product is immediately 'incorporated,' consumed, and annihilated by the body's life process." On the other hand, she insists that "while it was an 'external necessity

8 Although obviously not for all – many people in the world are still clearly caught in capitalist relations that are not all that hybrid as conceptualized here.

9 Moreover, the term is actually confusing as it seems that the 'conservation mode of production' is somehow different to the 'capitalist mode of production,' while Garland (and others, see Brockington and Scholfield, 2010) indeed argue that conservation is a capitalist mode of production, and not a self-standing mode.

imposed by nature' and the most human and productive of man's activities, the revolution, according to Marx, has not the task of emancipating the laboring classes but of emancipating man from labor; only when labor is abolished can the 'realm of freedom' supplant the 'realm of necessity.'" Interestingly, the capitalist system is now trying something similar: to emancipate capital circulation from labour and its role in the transformation of nature as a way of "off-setting" other labour processes that do (need to) continue to transform nature. This, of course, is inherently contradictory, showing again how fictitious capitalist conservation is becoming.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to see this contradiction for what it is, which leads me to a second reason why it is important to emphasize circulation. This is because of Marx's argument that circulation develops into a "coercive external force" that becomes "an end in itself" (Marx 1976:253; 381, see above). Of course, production, distribution and consumption can also become "ends in themselves," yet it is only their converging totality aimed at accumulation *through circulation* that becomes a "coercive external force." Hence, while circulation itself is indeed (continuously) produced, distributed and consumed, as a totality it seems to have become an external force that affects us all – albeit in highly differentiated ways.

This, in turn, is further intensified in the context of hyper-capitalist circulation, a maelstrom that moves at incredible speed and velocity, continuously taking on (and shedding) bodies, information, technologies, natures, relations, spaces and time as it proceeds. Hyper-capitalism, as Graham (2007:1) stresses, is "hyper" indeed, creating the possibility that its circulation has significant potential to be used and abused as a seemingly external force that magically creates value for those who can step in and out of this circulation when they want to (see also Marazzi 2011). While we see the evidence of this all around us, particularly in the financial sector, we again immediately have to stress the limits of circulation as an "external force" since the growth of the circulatory circuit of production, distribution and consumption of capital and values can absorb only so many "free-riders." In other words: somewhere, someone still has to produce, distribute or consume something, or, paraphrasing Leyshon and Thrift (2007), speculative structures can only be build on more mundane structures, and these are interwoven in complex ways.[10] Similarly, fictitious conservation has its limits, and is thus never truly free from more traditional forms, even though these limits are always continuously pushed under capitalism.

Concluding Thoughts

Conservation, it seems, is increasingly becoming its own negation. Where once it might have been a Polanyian counter-movement against the ecological contradictions of capitalism, this is no longer the case (Igoe et al. 2010). Capitalist conservation has become an important instrument for the production of surplus value on its own, and a way to "off-set" and so seemingly legitimate more conventional methods of producing capital. This has meant that conserved nature itself needed to become capital, to become "value" and to be able to circulate within the ephemeral hyperspheres of contemporary capitalism. Marx, while recognizing that the soil was one of the "original sources of all wealth," believed that capitalist commodities could only ever have value if they incorporated the interaction between labour and material nature (Marx 1976:638; see also Arendt 1998). These days, we see something different. Humanity has become so fearful of its own capability of destroying all this wealth that it is increasingly "willing to pay"[11] for its value to be recognized on the explicit condition that it does not incorporate the interaction between labour and material nature. Characteristically, it does so by further bringing inherent contradictions in capitalism to new heights and levels, in this case to what I have called "fictitious conservation."

Fictitious conservation precariously tries to link the conservation of material nature via its "environmental services" to contemporary hypercapitalism and its emphasis on the circulation of ephemeral values. Occasionally it might succeed in doing so

10 The simplistic way in which Mandel et al. (2010: 49) argue that "short-term volatility in the price of the derivative does not affect the underlying asset" is therefore wholly unfounded and a disturbing act of wishful thinking.

11 Finding out people's 'willingness to pay' for conservation is one of the favorite subjects of much mainstream ecological economics literature, as though this is synonymous with 'legitimacy.'

and indeed "save" some material nature from the onslaught of more "traditional" capitalist expansion. This, however, cannot be concretely verified if, for all intents and purposes, the link between consumers of liquid nature and the conditions and relationships that produced it, has been severed. But this is hardly the point. The central paradox of fictitious conservation is not that it has little chance of not "working," but rather that it ultimately is not really about conservation at all. It is first and foremost about capital; generating value that is of use in and to contemporary capitalism. This is, I argue, what the severing of the link between material natures and ephemeral values signifies. Ironically, conservation's latest financialised products, such as conservation derivatives, "sustainability enhanced investments," mitigation banking, biodiversity offsets and others, are still "marketed" under the heading of "environmental services," to try and emphasise direct links with material, biophysical natures. But it is the attempt at delinking that made these schemes attractive to capitalists, and this should therefore be the starting point of their characterisation.

If this sounds "cynical," I would argue that it is – unfortunately – only the start. Truly cynical is that it no longer matters that in the complexity of turning conserved nature into capital, conservation has become fictitious; it can still sell. All that it needs is a compelling brand: a memorable logo, some catchy slogans, smooth marketing campaigns, visually captivating websites, celebrity spokespeople, and a take home message that "everybody wins." It can make people "feel good" in the face of serious problems that seem to be going out of the rational, technical control capitalism thrives on. No wonder, then, that Sian Sullivan (2009, and companion piece) talks about a profound manifestation of "cultural poverty" through the seeming incapacity to think of nature as anything in any other but capitalist terms.

Yet none of this is unforetold. Fictitious conservation is but one manifestation of the *intensification* of capitalism – rather than its extensification (Smith 2007) – and in line with Carolan's critical realist distinction between Nature, nature and "nature", the point for capitalist expansion is to penetrate *deeper* into rather than merely wider across reality. Hence, the uptake of conservation into the capitalist system signals that the hegemony of neoliberal capitalism is strong indeed, despite, or perhaps because of the recent crisis (Igoe et al. 2010; Büscher and Arsel 2012). Indeed, the incorporation and celebration of its own contradictions may well be the basis of our current hegemony's perhaps unprecedented strength. To believe that nature can be conserved by increasing the intensity, reach and depth of capital circulation is arguably one of the biggest contradictions of our times. The only way, then, to confront the contemporary contradictions around conservation is by working from and acknowledging both the "deep structures" and the contemporary dynamics of capitalism, lest we continue to have conservation politics and policies based on symptoms rather than real causes.

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Nature on the Move II: Contemplation Becomes Speculation

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Abstract: As the second installation of this triptych, this essay addresses the broader historical trajectories and cultural manifestations of Nature on the Move. In it I argue that recent forms of *nature for speculation* are discursively and visually rooted in an older, and more widely recognized, *nature for contemplation*. As it emerged alongside the industrial revolution, nature for contemplation already embodied qualities amenable to the production of a moving commodity nature: forgetting, abstraction, reification, and exchangeability. At the same time, however, it was popularly presented as immutable, immovable, and beyond capitalist value production. It took a great deal of cultural and intellectual labour for this nature's proto-commodity qualities to be realized and presented as a *fait accompli*. This has been achieved in large part by the mediation of relationships by images, or what Guy Debord (1995) called spectacle. "As the indispensable decoration of objects as they are produced today," (Debord 1995: thesis 15) spectacle provides the aesthetic articulation for what I call "eco-functional nature" – a nature that appears as though it can be moved around to optimize ecosystem health and economic growth. Production of this seemingly unassailable vision happens at a diversity of interconnected sites, where it is also often vigorously opposed. These constitute the *micro-political milieus* of decentered and apparently unrelated struggles over what nature is and what nature will be.

Keywords: nature, conservation, spectacle, fetishism, governmentality

Introduction

In the first installation to this triptych, Bram Büscher posits the emergence of a "liquid nature" – a kind of "fictitious capital" no longer grounded in any specific material context or relationships.

Abstraction and financialization "are extending new possibilities for nature's speculative release into the realm of circulating money" (Sullivan 2013b:11). Liquid nature, Büscher further argues, requires "fictitious conservation – conservation without any direct basis in material, socio-biophysical nature." Through fictitious conservation, the valourization of actual conservation activities is alienated from those activities themselves. Fictitious conservation circulates with liquid nature, which it also authenticates and valourizes. Both nature and the conservation of nature have been rendered into circulating commodity forms.

While these developments may initially appear as sudden and counter-intuitive, emergent forms of nature for speculation are actually rooted in older, and more widely recognized, forms of nature for contemplation. Lukacs (1971) has ascribed the pervasiveness of contemplation in modern society to Marx's concept of commodity fetishism, arguing that it is symptomatic of a generalized separation accompanying the alienation of labour's use value into exchange value by industrial capitalism. Over time, he asserts, people have increasingly become passive contemplators of the apparently autonomous movement of commodities, as a "kind of second nature" (Lukacs 1971:128).[1] The industrial transformation of commodity into a kind of nature, was accompanied by corollary transformation of nature into a kind of commodity, a spatially framed and putatively timeless view that people would pay to contemplate at a

1 This usage is distinct from current usages referencing anthropogenic environments (Hughes 2005: 157-158), though all share Hegelian roots (see Schmidt 1971: 42-43; Smith and Harvey 1984: 19; and Jappe 1999: 20-31).

comfortable distance (Cronon 1996; Neumann 1998). This was consistently achieved by the forced removal of people who lived and labored in landscapes, and the subsequent erasure of those removals (Igoe 2004).

Thus, as Sian Sullivan elaborates in the third installation of this triptych, making nature move first required making it sit still as an increasingly deadened object of contemplation.[2] The second section of this essay will accordingly examine how the putative stillness of nature for contemplation has been entrained to the movement of nature for speculation. My analysis is informed by Guy Debord's (1995) concept of spectacle, a uniquely specialized and powerful form of "capital accumulated to the point that it becomes image" (Debord 1995: thesis 34), and which mystifies and mediates the relationships of its own production (thesis 4). Debord further argued that spectacle's power to transform fragments of reality into a visually pervasive totality, produced "a separate pseudo world" (thesis 2), offered in exchange for the totality of actual activities and relationships, a world of "money for contemplation only" (thesis 49).

Abstraction of nature into spectacle, as we shall see, has turned it into money for contemplation *and* speculation. Via multi-billion dollar film and advertising industries, nature has moved onto screens that are seemingly everywhere (Mitman 1999; Brockington 2009). Such images also lend themselves to the simulation of nature in themed environments, through which multiple and far flung natures can be contemplated in one comfortable and conveniently located setting (Wilson 1993; Igoe 2010). Moving images of nature move consumers to buy products, take vacations, and to give money to worthy conservation causes (2013). Finally, spectacle provides visual testimony for a movable nature that can be "disassembled, recombined, and subjected to the disciplinary design of expert management" (Luke 1999:142). This is the basis for what I call eco-functional nature, which appears as though it can be calibrated to optimize ecosytem health and economic growth. Eco-functional nature, I will argue, is indispensable to the current global policy consensus that the financialization of nature is the key to its salvation – a pseudo-qualitative accompaniment to complexly quantified forms of financialized liquid nature.

In addition to its abstraction of nature into circulating images and its visual embellishment of the practices and rationale of nature's financialization (cf. Debord 1995: thesis 15), spectacle offers a powerful technique for fostering and managing subjectivities appropriate to commodity nature (cf. MacDonald 2010). The ability to create the appearance of certain realities, even when those realities have not been – in fact cannot be – achieved, is in itself a powerful effect – particularly when the reality in question is presented as "nature:" "the inherent force that directs the world, human beings, or both" and "the material world itself" (Williams 1983: 219). Spectacle should therefore be considered as part of the wider mosaic that Michel Foucault (1983; 2007; 2008) called techniques and technologies of government (Debord 1998:2; Crary 2002:456).

In section three of this essay I will address the ways spectacle is produced and deployed in the intentionally modified and interconnected contexts that I call micro-political milieus of commodity nature. These milieus are sites for the production and consumption of liquid nature and fictitious conservation, as well as of diversity of decentered and seemingly unrelated struggles over what nature is and what it will be. One of my main motivations for sketching these milieus is the possibility of short circuiting spectacle, and its attendant mystifications, through the intensification of "channels, concepts, and processes that can link up and thereby intensify transversal struggles into larger collective, but discontinuous movements" (Nealon 2008:106).

The Nature of Spectacle and the Spectacle of Nature

Introduction

Historical treatments of nature, on the one hand, and spectacle, on the other, to the best of my knowledge have yet to be synthesized. The genealogical synthesis presented here focuses specifically on western, and

2 The logic of deadened nature for contemplation is lucidly set out by Timothy Luke in his discussion of the Nature Conservancy as the Nature Cemetery. "Nature is dead," Luke (1997:68) argues, "material signs of its now dead substance need to be conserved as pristine preserved parts, like pressed leaves in a book, dried animal pelts in a drawer, or a loved one's mortal remains in a tomb."

predominantly North American, contexts. I begin somewhat arbitrarily, with 18th century land enclosures that accompanied Europe's industrial revolution and segregated countrysides into: 1) landscapes of production – for the production of wealth; and 2) landscapes of consumption – for leisure and contemplation only (for details see Green 1990; Neumann 1998; Igoe 2004). The creation of 19th century American parks as the ultimate landscapes of consumption revitalized this segregation to generate a widely recognized and eminently transportable abstract category of nature-as-big-outdoors (Cronon 1996).

While such abstraction is an important element of circulating commodity forms, the category of nature itself was consistently presented as immutable, immovable, and thus forever outside of capitalist value production (Brockington et al. 2008). Landscapes of production, by contrast, were celebrated, elaborated, and simulated by elaborate commodity displays, mass produced and embedded in new landscapes of consumption, from county fairs to world exhibitions. These displays not only effaced the labour that produced them, but also appeared capable of transcending their own materiality (Connerton 2009), qualities that were important antecedents to what Debord would later call spectacle. Nature and spectacle thus appear less as separate parallel threads than as strands of a double-helix becoming more tightly interwoven over time.

The Nature of Spectacle

As noted by Crary (2002:457-458), Debord dated spectacle's origin to the year 1927 and "the technological perfection of the television. Right at the age when an awareness rose of the age of mechanical reproduction, a new model of circulation and transmission appeared ... spectacle was to become inseparable from this new kind of image and its speed ubiquity and simultaneity." This year also introduced the first sync sound films, which demanded more concentrated attention from viewers than previous moving pictures. Debord's concern with sync sound suggests that he saw spectacular power as "inseparable from a larger organization of perceptual consumption" – as near as possible to a total sensory experience (Crary 2002).

Shortly thereafter, the Third Reich and Stalinism demonstrated the power of these technologies for producing encompassing state-sponsored propaganda that Debord (1998:8) called "*concentrated spectacle*." American corporations and marketing firms deployed the same technology to produce "*diffuse spectacle*," an apparently decentered profusion of commodities on display (1998:8). While doubtlessly catalyzed by these technologies, diffuse spectacle is rooted in mid-19th century world exhibitions that inspired German economists to posit an "exhibition value to indicate the productive capacity of representation itself ... things gain value simply by their mode of appearance, quite apart from their use value" (Brain 1993:13-14).

Exhibition value proved and capitalized upon Marx's (1990) point that a commodity is "a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties." By exaggerating and manipulating the metaphysics of commodities, their use value was effaced in what Benjamin (1978:152) described as "a phantasmagoria that people enter to be amused." These were intentionally designed to overwhelm and disorient: giant glass buildings presented "an unending perspective that fades into the horizon" (Brain 1993:39), exhibit machines were also exhibiting machines (48), and panoramas moved past stationary spectactors to simulate a hybrid collage of travel experiences (65). Such simulacra, Jameson (1991:18) held, "come to life in a society where exchange value has been generalized to the point at which the memory of use value is effaced." By the turn of the 20th century, exhibition simulacra were bursting their boundaries and spilling into their surrounding environs. Visitors to the 1900 Universal Exhibition found it difficult to distinguish the exhibition space from the rest of Paris (Brain 1993:10). This, argues Connerton (2009:60), was the beginning of diffuse spectacle, "an all embracing medium where people continuously interact with commodities."

Today this medium is indeed a kind of "second Nature," readily and ubiquitously visible in the environments with which consumers most commonly interact: cities, restaurants, freeways and rest stops, shopping malls, airports, train stations (and of course trains and planes themselves), not to mention theme

parks and all manner of entertainment venues and tourist attractions.[3] It is also working its way into places like schools, hospitals, and office buildings. All these environments incorporate a diversity of video screens, from towering jumbotrons to tiny televisions in taxicabs and airplane seats. They also provide settings for the production of commodified images, resulting in a recursive relationship between "reality and image" (eg. a jumbotron in Times Square promotes the Broadway production of Madagascar by endlessly repeating a sequence from the film in which the animals escape from the Central Park Zoo and wind up in Times Square). This is the basis of what Debord (1998:9) called "*integrated spectacle* – spectacle that has integrated itself into reality to the same extent that it was describing it, and that it was reconstructing it as it was describing it."

Since Debord's death in 1994, the boundary between actual and virtual reality has been further blurred by wifi and a diversity of portable communication devices. In my classroom a phalanx of glowing Macintosh logos mediates the space between me and the students, who are in actual and virtual reality at the same time. They listen to my live lecture and take notes while texting each other, shopping online, and updating their Facebook profiles. To spice things up I show a Youtube video of Slavoj Zizek lecturing from *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce,* saving myself the labour of preparation and them the labour of reading. Zizek defines "cultural capitalism" as a reality in which "the very act of consumption entails redemption for being a consumer."[4] I rush to relate this point to the prosumption (simultaneous consumption and production) of nature (Büscher and Igoe 2013). I display a web site where users can track radio-collared polar bears to see how drinking Coca-Cola helps protect arctic habitats. Another invites consumers to adopt acres of virtual rainforest personalized with their names and graphic of their favourite endangered species, but a synchronized closing of laptops indicates time is up. Next time, I promise, we will explore the transformations of nature that have rendered such presentations plausible.

The Spectacle of Nature

Nature for Contemplation....

In contrast to 19th century exhibitions, which enshrined intensifying industrial production, 19th century national parks enshrined a special kind of "natural legacy." While 19th exhibitions offered escape from industrial life into phantasmagoria's where "commodities are now all there is to see" (cf. Debord 1995: thesis 45), parks offered escape from industrial life into putatively pristine realms, one of the main attractions of which was that commodities seemed to be absent (cf. Cronon 1996). In spite of these differences, exhibitions and parks operated by similar logics of abstraction and contemplation at play in the production of contemporary spectacle through which nature is now explicitly presented as the ultimate commodity.

Like exhibitions, parks effaced the conditions of their own production. Their displays of timeless wilderness for leisurely contemplation depended upon systematic clearances of their human inhabitants.[5] For the illusion of a timelessness to be effective, however, "this process of erasure had to erase itself" (Igoe 2004). Nature was thereby presented as reality without social or historical connections, an arrangement ironically requiring significant administrative and technical intervention. The contemplation nature in these terms, as Cronon (1996) aptly notes, was only possible by virtue of the modern conditions to which it was supposedly the antidote. For elites who championed American parks, however, this nature was nothing less than "the basis of universal truth available through direct experience and study. To study a particular instance offers a window onto the universal" (Tsing 2005:97).

These conditions present four important antecedents to spectacle: 1) forgetting, 2) abstraction, 3) reifications, and 4) proto-exchangeability.

3 For a detailed account of these transformations in North America, see Alexander Wilson's (1993) *Culture of Nature: North American Landscapes from Disney to the Exxon Valdez*.

4 To view this video visit http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpAMbpQ8J7g, accessed July 27th 2009. For the more adventurous there is of course the book by the same title (Zizek 2009).

5 For some time this aspect of parks was so under researched that Jacoby (2001) described it as "the hidden history of American conservation (also see Brockington and Igoe 2006). Since then the topic has gained more attention through a flurry of research, investigative journalism, and documentary films. For an overview of this extensive work I recommend Dowie's (2009) Conservation Refugees.

Forgetting is essential to Lukak's (1971) theoretical elaboration of commodity fetishism: "the precise processes that produces commodities gets forgotten ... [and] ... manufactured artifacts ... fall prey to cultural amnesia" (Connerton 2009:43).[6] Forgetting is a precondition of reification, whereby artifacts appear to take on a life independent of their manufacture, "much like the laws of nature" (43). It is also figures centrally in abstraction, whereby artifacts apparently transcend their own material limitations (Büscher 2011). The notion that individual parks materially embody an ideal universal nature is a kind of abstraction, since this universal nature presumably transcends the material boundaries of any park in particular. The ability of one object (a park) to stand for a class of objects (imagined universal nature) is furthermore an essential element of Marx's (1978) theory of how commodities gain exchangeability, and the basis of spectacle as "money for contemplation."

Because parks were meant to be stable and enduring, however, the nature they displayed required further mediation to transgress its material boundaries. This came with the aforementioned advent of sync sound and television, paving the way for the nature film industry. By the 1950s technicolor nature films were a popular staple for western theater goers (Mitman 1999), while freeways in the United States were transforming parks from a rarified elite playground into popular vacation destinations for millions of newly affluent automobile owners.[7] Nature became part of the wider current of consumptive experiences that exploded on the scene in the years following WWII (for details see Wilson 1993), presenting unprecedented possibility for its refinement into a reified commodity forms that is also generators of additional value.

The career of Frankfurt Zoological Society Director Bernhard Grzimek poignantly illustrates these refinements. At the end of WWII, Grzimek set up shop in what would become Tanzania's Serengeti National Park. With revenues from his film *No Room for Wild Animals*, produced in 1955, he undertook an aerial survey of the now world famous wildebeest migrations. The survey was the centerpiece of *Serengeti Shall Not Die!,* an international best seller that won the Oscar for best documentary in 1959 (Bonner 1993). By the 1960s Grzimek presented a popular German television show called *A Place for Animals*, which he used to market non-existent tours to East Africa. He speculated that this would generate sufficient demand to bring the safaris into existence, and he was correct (Lekan 2011:225). Tourism is now Tanzania's second largest source of foreign currency (Igoe and Croucher 2007), while the royalties from *Serengeti Shall Not Die!* have built a world class headquarters for Frankfurt Zoological Society inside Serengeti. The headquarters remained there after colonialism, and indeed to the present day (Bonner 1993).

Grzimek's story reveals nascent formulations of a now fully blown "conservationist mode of production" in which, "through various mediations ... natural capital is converted into capital of a more circulating and globally ramifying kind" (Garland 2008:62). This is achieved in large part through the abstraction of nature into images. In addition to their multi-billion dollar value in the nature film industry, images of nature inform completely fabricated pseudo-natures in 3D blockbusters like *Avatar* and *the Lorax.* Images of conserved nature, and promises of conserving nature, are used to market everything from fast food to dish soap, SUV's to computer printers. Such images spread through the theming of space in airports, resorts, shopping malls, zoos, botanic gardens, and of course theme parks (Igoe 2010). Finally, as we have just seen, conservation NGOs use them to distinguish their brand in a crowded and highly competitive funding environment (Sachedina 2008). When images of nature are deposited in "image banks" (Goldman and Papson 2011:137), from which they can be withdrawn and reanimated for any of the purposes above, there can be no further doubt that nature is "money for contemplation."

6 These ideas were a major inspiration for Society of the Spectacle (see footnote 1 above).

7 The enjoyment of pristine wilderness by millions of people was of course a paradoxical arrangements, as evidenced by "bear jams," which happen when the supply of bears cannot meet the demand of photographers, resulting in hundreds of tourists concentrating around sparsely distributed animals. Parks in Tanzania experience similar phenomenon of "lion jams," and I imagine parks in India probably have "tiger jams."

Becomes Nature for Speculation...

But how might nature that is money for contemplation become nature that is money for speculation? Both require abstraction and reification, but in the case of the latter these are more meticulous and precise. As recent work by Sullivan (2013a:3; also 2013b) illustrates, the abstraction of nature into tradeable units of financial value is closely associated with "variously marketized forms of environmental offsetting," which will reputedly resolve "contradictions between economic development and nature health." Monetized ecosystem services theoretically correspond to land-based localities, nature banks, "where they can be situated and accounted for" (Sullivan 2013a:3). These notional connections inform "key design principles" for turning nature into money for speculation (Sullivan 2013a, 2013b; also cf. Büscher this issue; Fairhead et al. 2012).

Two of these are of particular relevance to the present discussion. The first is the need for an "ecosystem metric to permit exchangeability," a "symbolic numerical signifier that can serve as an abstraction of ecosystem aspects in different places and in different times, such that these abstractions become comensurably with and subsitutable for one another" (Sullivan 2013a:5). The second is the principle of "additionality," which assumes that nature conservation would not have occured without offset payments (7-8). While the illogic of these assumptions may seem self-evident, it merits brief mention here: making nature quantitatively fungible conceptually obliterates the unique qualities of specific ecosystems and the cultures of people who dwell within them, while the principle of additionality depends on counterfactual scenarios.

It is precisely in areas like this that nature for contemplation is most important to nature for speculation. The former becomes the latter not by turning into it, but like a becoming outfit, which enhances someone's attractiveness to the point of becoming indistinguishable from them (as in when we tell a friend, "that outfit is you!"). Nature for contemplation suits nature for speculation, covering over it's blemishes and lumpy bits while enhancing its finer qualities. Nature for contemplation is "the indispensable decoration"[8] of nature for speculation, and "the general gloss on the rationale of the system" that produces it (Debord 1995: thesis 15).

Productions of nature for contemplation have consistently and elaborately effaced its use values, as well as its wider ecological and social connections (Cronon 1996). Contemplative activities are accordingly portrayed as non-consumptive, and transcendent of more mundane concerns, such as environmental effects of the contemplator's every day activities (Cronon 1996). or even of travelling to the nature that will be contemplated (Carrier and Macleod 2005). The production of nature film, and related conservation celebrity, contributed to a popular perception that such natures would disappear if not for the efforts of heroic conservationists (Bonner 1993; Brockington 2009; Lekan 2011). Finally, mass produced images and simulations of nature replaced uniquely contextualized qualities with iconic signifiers that could be transported to other locations and rearranged as desired (Wilson 1993). In this light nature for contemplation appears tailor made for scenarios of exchangeability and additionality, it also becomes the idea that local people will prosper more from nature's exchange values than from its use values.

Considering these compatibilities, it is not surprising that nature for contemplation is consistent backdrop to the reified practices that Büscher (2011) calls "fictitious conservation," as well as standing for its putative ends. Fictitious conservation, Büscher correctly notes, is indispensable to the valourization of nature as money for speculation, which he calls liquid nature. It is visually articulated – and made to circulate – by spectacular presentations of conservationists in action, often also incorporating narrative testimonies from conservationists themselves or celebrities speaking on their behalf (cf. Brockington 2009; Igoe 2013).

Nature for contemplation also figures in the calculative and technical reworkings of nature into money for speculation. The web page of TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity) tells us,

8 Alternative translation "insdispensable embelishment," http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/debord/, July 26th 2012.

"You cannot manage, what you do not measure."[9] Of course most people find it difficult to relate to abstract calculations and financial mechanisms, and nature for contemplation therefore remains essentially important. The TEEB page accordingly features a montage of endangered species, stock market trading screens, pristine landscapes, bar charts, and local people. A video promoting ARIES (Artificial Intelligence for Ecosystem Services) intersperses images of wildlife and satellite maps, with illustrated explanations of how the technology operates to calculate values of environmental assets.[10]

Visual mashups of nature for contemplation, fictitious conservation, satellite maps, graphs and charts are transforming nature for contemplation, through explicit, though selective, presentations of what has long been present, but previously hidden from view: "the application of techniques, procedures, and practices," by which nature is brought forth as "an object of knowledge and target for regulation" (Bäckstrand, 2004:703; cf. Foucault 2007:79). Through the rapid proliferation of these kinds of mashups, even in popular presentations, nature for contemplation appears increasingly eco-functional, still beautiful and entertaining but no longer pristine and best left to its own devices. Eco-functional nature, as I call it, appears amenable to technological reorderings that will optimize economy and ecology, or at least accomodate putatively inevitable growth with minimal disruption to ecosystems and human well being.

Popular presentations of eco-function appears to operationalize cultural capitalism's promise of consumption redeeming consumption (see footnote 3 above). Donations and purchases appear to initiate events resulting in the protection of animals and ecosystems (Brockington, Duffy, and Igoe 2008: Chapter 9; Igoe 2013). Texting "tree" to a designated number helps to make a shimering virtual forest grow on jumbotrons in Times Square, metaphorically standing for actual forests being planted in Kenya and Mexico.[11] Those who want more detail of how such arrangements work can track virtual polar bears, follow the blogs of African conservationists, or watch videos outlining the logic of interventons they are helping to support (Igoe 2013).[12]

Eco-function also informs more general commentary on the environment in popular media. A recent special edition of *Time Magazine* (March 12, 2012), for instance, showcases a top 10 list of "ideas that are changing your life" – number nine: "Nature is Over." The corresponding article (Walsh 2012) explains that we are living in what atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen calls the *Anthropocene,* a geological epoch in which human activity has become an irreducible element of the biological, chemical, and geological processes of our planet. "It is no longer us against nature," Crutzen opines, "instead it is we who decide what nature is and what it will be (84)." This, the article continues, will revolve around technological interventions and their acceptable trade-offs. With genetically modified seeds we will grow more food on less land, freeing up space for wildlife. We will also "learn to live" with nuclear power's "risk of accident (85)." Finally we may have to "fiddle with the climate," using "planetary scale technology (85)."

While such scenarios are scary, they are made to seem less so by more whimsical interactions with eco-function and language that lionizes the power of expert knowledge, while softening the potential dangers of the transformations experts will oversee. While optimal eco-function is almost certainly unachievable, in spectacle it can be conjured as a *fait accompli.* Spectacle's ability to project unity and consensus where none actually exists (Debord 1998:2) makes it a powerful "technology of government" (cf. MacDonald 2010). It provides visual articulations of nature as an eco-functional object of intervention, while concealing and marginalizing alternatives and opposition to its seemingly monolithic vision. We now turn to the relationship of spectacle to what I call the micro-political milieus of commodity nature.

9 TEEB is a global initiative, and an evolving array of calculative technologies, dedicated to saving nature through its systematic valuation http://www.teebweb.org/HomeofTEEB/tabid/924/Default.aspx, July 26th 2012.

10 ARIES is a web-based technology offered to users world wide to assist in rapid ecosystem service assessment and valuation, http://www.ariesonline.org/about/intro.html, accessed July 26th 2012.

11 http://3blmedia.com/theCSRfeed/Earth-Day-2011-Celebrations-Times-Square-ReGreen-World, accessed July 27th 2012.

12 See especially: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_fwEwBdAM6U&feature=endscreen, accessed July 27th 2012; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACHqdkfmP4Q', accessed July 27th 2012; and https://www.arctichome.com/web/index.html, accessed July 27th 2012.

The Micro-Political Milieus of Commodity Nature

Spectacular celebrations of fictitious conservation and financialized nature conceal a much more contested politics of what nature is and what it will be. Missing are western conservationists who believe in their bones that capitalism and profit motive spell nature's demise and not its salvation (see especially Ehrenfeld 2009). We will also never see the occasional tourist who looks beyond the spectacle they have been shown to gain a more nuanced understanding of nature conservation in specific locales, some of whom even go to the trouble to educate others by disseminating what they have learned.[13] Also absent are the resistances and critiques of the diverse rural people whose lives, livelihoods, and ontologies of more-than-human reality have been discounted and displaced by conservation (see Dowie 2009; regarding ontologies see Sullivan 2009).

In stark contrast to earlier green Marxist predictions that a looming environmental crisis would catalyze mass social movements demanding ecologically sane alternatives to capitalism (esp. O'Connor 1988), the struggles of these actors are decentered and seemingly disconnected. My theoretical framing of these struggles draws from the productive intersection of Marxian concerns with the subsumption of culture by capital and Foucauldian scholarship on techniques of government. The conditions described in the previous sections reveal not only what Nealon (2008:84) describes as the recirculation of value at all points on the socius, but also at diverse points of interaction between humans and more-than-human nature around the world. Furthermore, as Read (2003:126) has argued, the spread of commodity relationships from concentrated sites of production has required a concomitant spread of techniques and technologies designed to produce appropriate subjectivities. Nature on the move, which is produced and supported by these dispersions, presents a difficult moving target for activists and social movements, shifting and changing at different scales and locales.

This situation reflects two broader historical transformations that I have already touched upon. The first began when the 19th century crisis of capitalist overproduction prompted the creation of a marketing industry to channel human desire into an apparently unlimited demand for consumer goods and services (cf. Debord 1998: thesis 45). The second began with the late 20th century proliferations of fictitious capital, "without any material basis in commodities or productive activity" (Harvey 2006:95), of which reified nature for speculation is a most recent expression. Taken together, as they frequently are, these processes have spawned a gigantic intellectual labour force, tasked with creating, celebrating, authenticating, and valourizing the latest consumer commodities and financial products. And of course there is the labour of consumption, which includes interpreting – and ideally taking appropriate action upon – a continuous bombardment of commodity signs: brands, slogans, and associations between desired experiences/qualities and designated products/services (Goldman 1994).

All of this "immaterial labor," according to Read (2003:129-130), both targets and shapes social communication and social space. It travels through "epistemic, aesthetic, and affective models that structure social communication." These, according to Virno (1996:23) include information systems, epistemological paradigms, and images of the world" and are communicated through manuals and reports, videos, seminars, and workshops. They are thus stored in archives, but also in the "minds of workers, as little productive machines (virtual fixed capital), without necessarily originating from them" (Read 2003:131). These valuable little machines are activiated and reproduced in realms outside the direct control of capital: in the subjectivity of producer/consumers and the diversity of social spaces they inhabit.

In *Foucault Beyond Foucault* (2008), Nealon describes how mutations in modes of production from factory to cultural life corresponds to similar mutations in modes of power. My understanding of these mutations is informed by Foucault's (1983:220) basic definition of government as the "conduct of conduct," achieved by "structuring the possible field of action of others ... it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult." Government is inseparable from regimes of truth (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983),

13 See especially View from the Termite Mound, by Susanna Nordlund, http://termitemoundview.blogspot.com/, accessed July 27th 2012.

producing objects of knowledge and intervention (e.g. conservation as a regime of truth that produces nature). It is concerned with shaping people's subjective perceptions of what is possible, plausible, and desirable, and thus of their own efficacy in any situation – for the purpose of "developing, canalizing, and harnessing social and individual capacities on a ... cost effective mass scale" (Nealon 2008:27).

Over time, Nealon (2008:31) argues, techniques and technologies of government have become more efficient, as they have been made lighter and more virtual. Discipline, for instance, works in a retail fashion on individual bodies in specific institutional contexts through a "series of discontinous institutional training exercises" (41). Subsequent modes of biopower do not replace discipline, but infiltrates it and amplifies its effect by working throughout populations and "infuses each individual at a nearly ubiquitous number of actual and virtual sites." It works less on actual bodies and more on potential actions, thereby "gaining an intensified hold on what (bodies) are, will be, may be" (31). Along these lines Foucault (2008:71) posited that neoliberalism is a new "art of government ... which will systematically act on an environment and modify its variables." The point is to channel the acts of individuals, presumably acting in their own best interests, toward a spectrum of preferred outcomes and effects (Fletcher 2010).

What forms might "enviromental governmentality" take with respect to the politics with which we are currently concerned? The politics of commodity nature, I believe, occur for the most part in modified environments that greatly resemble Foucault's (2007:20-21) discussion of milieu: a "multi-valent and transformable framework" ... fabricated from ... "pre-existing material givens," designed to "maximize the positive elements ... [while] minimizing what is risky and inconvenient" (these of course are defined for the most part by planners, politicians, and other powerful actors). "It is what is needed to account for the action of one body on another at a distance." "What one tries to reach through this milieu is precisely the conjunction of a series of events produced by [people] and quasi natural events which occur around them." While his discussion is derived from town planning in 18th century Europe, the dynamics he describes are visible, intensified, and refined in the micro-political milieus of commodified nature.

The first of these is a consumer milieu, consisting of the kinds of spectacle-dominated environments described in the previous section of this essay. In this milieu the action of one body (a consumer) can appear to initiate a chain of events positively effecting another body at a distance (e.g. a polar bear or a tree). Its recent explosion of web 2.0 applications marry self-expression (sharing your favourite causes) to wholesale monitoring and delineation of consumer types (people who care about the same causes as you also love "Endangered Species Chocolate!").[14] While micro-politics of commodity nature occupy a tiny segment of this milieu, its presentations of conservation and nature are dominated by celebrity, consumerism, and depoliticized presentations of fictitious conservation (Igoe 2010; Igoe 2013). While possible to find virtual communities and media that are critical of commodity nature, they are few and their connections to efficacious action are undeveloped.[15] This remains for the most part a spectator milieu.

Next we have a transnational institutional milieu that corresponds to what MacDonald (2010) calls "the new fields of conservation." This is the policy environment in which the creation and valourization of new forms of nature for speculation takes place. It is also a realm in which immaterial labour takes the form of "little productive machines," like TEEB and ARIES as described above, and many other formulas,

14 The Facebook page of Endangered Species Chocolate currently features a photograph of four lions cubs. Clicking on this takes you to a comment from a "friend," who states, "I officially want to adopt the four babies pictured here ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ I know it's not reasonable, but they're just so stinkin cute!!!!!" The company responds, "We know the feeling! You can symbolically adopt them through African Wildlife Foundation." See: http://www.facebook.com/EndangeredSpeciesChocolate, accessed July 27th 2012. And: https://www.chocolatebar.com/categories.php?category=Gift-Collections%2FAWF-Adoption-Collections, accessed July 27th, 2012.

15 For an example of a critical virtual community, see the facebook page of Just Conservation, http://www.facebook.com/JustConservation, accessed July 15th 2012. For critical media see, the Silence of the Pandas,: What the WWF Isn't Saying, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YSztqfLT3F0, accessed July 14th, 2012. Conservation's Dirty Secrets, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTVELt-pdGc, accessed July 14th 2012. A Place Without People, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrEmUjNhwyo, accessed July 14th, 2012. BBC's Unnatural Histories, http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b011wd41, accessed July 14th, 2012.

models, and matrixes disseminated through interactive displays, expert presentations, promotional literature, videos, seminars, workshops and the like. Earlier in the millennium this milieu was more prone to conflict and contestation. The 2003 World Parks Congress in Durban, for instance, was disrupted by protests from indigenous peoples (Brosius 2004; Brockington and Igoe 2006). Similar disruptions have been reduced at subsequent events through a variety of management techniques designed to minimize interactions between attendees likely to have strong disagreements (MacDonald 2010). They also entail orchestrated performances of community consensus, miniature concentrated spectacles hailing appropriate subjectivities in their intended audiences (MacDonald 2010). This milieu, itself accessible to only a limited range of actors, is segregated into exclusive events within events, accessible to only the most powerful and privileged actors of all.

Finally we have the landscapes and seascapes that are sites to conservation interventions, and the source of nature spectacle circulating for contemplation and speculation in the milieus outlined above (cf. Igoe 2010). The modification of these milieu increasingly turns on complex and multi-faceted arrangements between NGOs, states, corporations, and local people, operating through "the restructuring of rules and authority over the access, use, and management of resources, in related labor relations, and in human-ecological relationships" (Fairhead et al. 2012:239). While these include voluntary relocation guidelines, they also often involve arrangements in which choices for relocation and/or livelihood transformations appear preferable to contending with the risks that the interventions themselves present for existing settlements and livelihoods (cf. Schmidt-Soltau and Brockington 2007). Resistances to such transformations are complexly intertwined with "local cultural politics, identities and material struggles" and frequently informed by complex assessments of the situations in questions. However, established presentations of local people as 'green primitives,' make it only to easy to reimagine these resistances as uninformed, "primitivist and hopelessly romantic" (Fairhead et al. 2012: 253).

Concluding Remarks

The micro-political milieus that I have just finished sketching are currently subject of intense scholarly analysis, and important inroads are being made into understanding their internal dynamics, their interconnections, and their disconnections. I hope that in some small way the conceptual schema I have offered in this essay will prove useful to ongoing and future endeavours. If, however, "the point is to change it," there remain a few things to say. It almost goes without saying that the stakes are very high by just about any standard. As Sullivan argues the third installation to this triptych, productions of nature for speculation are profoundly anti-ecological. Indeed she puts it more strongly than this: they are made possible by the systematic deadening of animate ecologies and non-capitalist human ontologies. Nor is it likely that turning nature into a giant bundle of capital assets will automatically result in the global spread of holistic stewardship practices. To quote Fairhead (et al. 2012:244):

> Logic might suggest that this would inevitably value ecosystems over and above the sum of its parts. And yet that is what employees often think of viable businesses they work for when they are sold – before they are asset-stripped. The perversities of the financialized world are legion, and once there are markets for nature's assets, so nature's assets can be stripped.

Debord (2008:81) perhaps put it most succinctly with his assertation that capitalism was creating "a sick planet," rendered palatable and seemingly inevitable by media spectacle, as "the environment and backdrop" of its own pathological growth and reproduction. As evidence for this undesirable outcome mounts, I increasingly hear conservationists lament that they did not know what they were helping to make when they embarked on the financialization of nature – a sentiment that resonates with Foucault's (1965) observation that: "people know what they do; they often know why they do what they do; what they don't know is what they do does."

Of course it is doubly difficult to know what we do does from inside a spectacle saturate milieu. As Agamben (1993) notes in his comments on Debord's

legacy, spectacle is "the appropriation of language itself, the very communicative nature of humans." As such, Read (2003:151) elaborates, "it is the simultaneous site of site of mystification and struggle." Spectacle, as a technique and symptom of power, works to appropriate the diversity and commonality of human communication and experience, presenting it as an apparently unassailable singularity. Spectacle's meta-message, Debord (1995: thesis 12) believed, is "everything that appears is good; everything that is good will appear."

As both Debord and Foucault urged, each in his own way, we denizens of post-industrial consumer society have a lot of work to do on our subjective experiences of, and by extension engagements with, "the intense singularity that is the present" (to borrow a phrase from Nealon 2008:106). More expansively, struggles in the micro-politics of commodity nature are animated by, and productive of transformative knowledges and practices that need to be taken more seriously. To quote Foucault once more: "it is possible that (in) the struggles now underway, the local, the regional, (and we can add the transnational), discontinuous theories being elaborated in the course of these struggles, and which are absolutely of a piece with them, are just beginning to discover the ways in which power is exercised" (in Deleuze 2004:212). As West (2006:66) aptly notes, for instance, we have not begun to understand the creative and diverse ways that people around the world engage and critique capitalism, and by extension capitalist natures. These in turn point to possibilities beyond oppositional critique, taken up by Sullivan in the following essay: "enlivening both nonhuman natures and understandings of what it means to be human in intimate and maintaining relationships with other-than-human worlds."

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Nature on the Move III: (Re)countenancing an Animate Nature

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ABSTRACT: Current market logics in environmental governance for conservation and sustainability tend to disaggregate nonhuman natures into discrete units to which monetary value can attach, such that these new units may be released into markets of circulating commodities where they can accrue more "value." As Bram Büscher and James Igoe describe and theorise in "Nature on the Move" I and II, new techno-configurations of nature permit its circulation in emerging environmental markets, and the gathering of more monetised value through proliferating product exchanges. The new "value entities" with which these circulations are associated require abstractions of nature's immanent vitality so as to manufacture and make commensurable tradable units deemed representative of nature health and harm. Through these de- and re-territorialisations of nature, "value" may be created for some but arguably pathology is enhanced for all. These abstractions proliferate a nature that is distant, stilled and transcendent, at the same time as tuning out the *communiqués* of other(ed) sustainability practices and socionature possibilities. My contribution in this third panel of our "Nature on the Move" triptych, then, is an experiment in bringing into the frame, conceptually at least, connective and ecological possibilities associated with animist "amodern" ontologies. I develop ethnographic and theoretical explorations of what might be implicated ecologically and ethically by a *milieu* of immanent embodied ecologies, enfolded in an epistemological and ontological move of "becoming-animist." "Becoming-animist" is framed here as a normative subjectivity that refracts the current disconnective and virtualising impasse in both the theory and practice of socio-ecological relationships, and as such is worthy of intellectual, political and ethical engagement.

KEYWORDS: nature, culturenature, animism, commodification, green economy, ecocultural ethics, immanence, transcendence, value

Dedicated to the memory of Kadisen ||Khumub, rain-shaman of the Etosha Hai||om, and road-labourer for Etosha National Park, Namibia.

> From the invisible atom to the celestial body lost in space, *everything is movement… It is the most apparent characteristic of life.* (Etienne-Jules Marey, 1830–1904, cited in Oberzaucher and Grammer 2008:151, emphasis added)
>
> In the Oedipal relation the mother is also the earth, and incest is an infinite renaissance. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:177)
>
> They lived firmly and wholly in the real world. Spiritual yearning and the sense of sacredness they knew, but they did not know anything holier than the world, and they did not seek a power greater than nature. (Le Guin 2000:118)
>
> ***To refract*** ...To change direction as a result of entering a different medium. … To cause... to change direction as a result of entering a different medium.[1]

Coding Nature?

> In the beginning, the primal Mother Tiamat was creator of the Universe, Heaven and Earth, water, air and plants. This female serpent emerged from the sea to teach human kind the arts of living well. Over time, a complexified pantheon of Gods and Goddesses began to bear curious resemblances to the egoic and heroic struggles of an emerging

1 http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/refract, accessed 26 November 2010.

> metropolitan élite. But their transcendent and celebrated glamour was not without challenge. Threat came from their own labourers, and from envious neighbours and other barbarians; not to mention the capricious dance of the elements, which brought drought, flood and all manner of earthly chaos to challenge their élite order and control. It was clear to the ruling class that Tiamat needed disciplining. And so a young God kills Apsu, her favoured consort, thereby crowning himself king. With his wife, Damkina, he has a son named Marduk. This son is a murderer driven to crush all chthonic, chaotic threat to the growing Babylonian hierarchical order. He kills the genetrix Tiamat, and from her split and deadened body he remakes Heaven and Earth. From the blood of her (also murdered) consort Kingu, he makes humans to be slaves to the ruling-class Gods, assistants in the latter's pursuit of war, leisure and pleasure. This complete revolution *turns the generative cosmos into dead matter*, to be fashioned for use through the artisanal expertise and force of the ruling class. Standing astride the dead body of the genetrix, they assume transcendence over and possession of their new objects of the cosmos. The rest, as they say, is history.[2]

Bram Büscher and James Igoe, in the first two panels of this "triptych" of papers,[3] diagnose the contemporary moment as saturated with a dizzying range of commodified, financialised and spectacularised "other-than-human natures."[4] Many of these are new commodities designed to service a "green economy" suturing of economic growth and environmental sustainability (cf. UNEP 2011). This in part relies on market logics to solve the environmental harms caused through the failure of capitalist markets to adequately account for the costs of environmental degradation.[5] Carbon credits, environmental options and futures, biodiversity derivatives, mitigation insurance, species credits, biodiversity offsets and so on, are among the plethora of actual and proposed entities populating the resultant new ecology of monetised and marketised nature (Sullivan 2012 and 2013a). They are made through particular abstractions, significations and conceptual transformations of nonhuman nature, to create a circulating commensurability of environmental healths and harms that can be managed through the remote control of the market. And they become visible through lively marketised exchanges in which the "value" of nature, as the $ signs and zeros and ones of digitised "natural capital," becomes materialised (as described and discussed in Robertson 2006, 2011; Sullivan 2010, 2012, 2013a, 2013b; Szersynski 2010; Pawliczek and Sullivan 2011; Bracking 2012; Lohmann 2012; also see Plant 1998).

At the same time, these universalising abstractions seem to amplify and even require a deadening of nature's immanent and vivacious movement. As Igoe (this volume) writes, "making nature move first required making it sit still as an increasingly deadened object of contemplation."[6] The liquid, capitalised nature of which Büscher (this volume) speaks thus is simultaneously an abstracted, contemplated and stilled nature, legible to the extent that it can be packaged into units that can be calculated and traded (cf. Castree 2003): for "it is only when "nature" is dead that a full-scale Nature™ Inc. becomes a possibility" (Arsel and Büscher 2012:62). The commodity fetish-

2 From the Sumerian creation myth of around two thousand years BCE, later retold as the Babylonian story *Enuma Elish*. Summarised in Willis and Curry (2004) and Young (2011).

3 This paper was first presented at the conference *Nature™ Inc.: Questioning the market panacea in environmental policy and conservation,* Institute for Social Studies, The Hague, June 2011, where it was accompanied by a short film that can be viewed online at: http://siansullivan.net/talks-events/. A version of this paper is forthcoming in the volume *Nature™ Inc: New Frontiers of Environmental Conservation in the Neoliberal Age*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, edited by Bram Büscher, Wolfram Dressler and Rob Fletcher (Sullivan in press).

4 I use the term 'other-than-human' nature(s), and occasionally "nonhuman nature" and "more-than-human nature" when referring to organisms, entities and contexts other than the modern common sense understanding of the biological species Homo sapiens (also see Sullivan 2013a). As highlighted in this paper, however, these terms are already culturally-embedded and constructed. For cultural contexts where the "nonhuman" is "personified" and there is a tendency towards the assumption of one humanity and many different embodied perspectives, these terms may be problematic and even nonsensical. In the ontological domain of shamanic "perspectivism," for example, there are no "nonhumans" (Viveiros de Castro 2004).

5 As framed, for example, by the EU and UN supported TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity) programme, on which see Sukhdev (2010), and by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP 2011). For critical engagement see Büscher et al. (2012).

6 Note that this is a move that echoes the rise of the signifier of equilibrium in colonial ecology and the imperial tendency to view ecosystems of the "periphery" in terms of a definable and desirable climatic climax with anything different to this classed as degradation through irrational (usually indigenous) use practices (see, for example, Anker 2001; Sullivan and Rohde 2002).

ism[7] that animates capitalist circulation thus not only strips away the "incorporated creative life [of workers] toward equivalence within an exchange," such that labour value is deflected towards "the account of capital" (Nancy 2001:3). In the biopolitical subsumption of life itself, the "zombie-soul" (Holert 2012:4) "animating" the commodity form also makes productively exchangeable but deadened objects of life's immanent vitality and diversity. The current reframing of a working nature as provider of discrete services (cf. Daily and Ellison 2002:5), and as a bank of units of natural capital,[8] might thus be seen as an extension of "thanato-politics" and "necro-capitalism" (Banerjee 2008) in the environmental sphere, even whilst claiming exactly the opposite. Through these new "myths" of nature (cf. Sullivan 2013b), "the soul of capital" extends its vampiric subjugation of life in service to the juggernaut momentum of "value" production, economic growth and corporate power (Crouch 2011).

Current socio-ecological accounting practices conceived as emphasising the monetised "value" of nonhuman nature (cf. Costanza et al. 1997; Sukhdev 2010), such as in ecosystem service science, carbon metrics, biodiversity offset metrics, "the TEEB approach," REDD+[9] calculations and corporate ecosystem valuation (see, for example, BBOP 2009, 2012; TEEB 2010; WBCSD 2011; DEFRA 2012), thus are conceptualising and constructing other-than-human natures such that they can be further entwined and entrained with transcendent monetary categories and measures (cf. Mackenzie and Millo 2003; for key proposals by significant corporate and financial "visionaries," see Kiernan 2009; Sandor 2012; Sukhdev 2012). These accounting practices attach monetary value to selected indices of nonhuman nature. Notwithstanding the work of those in the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) process to mobilise finance through enhancing regulatory mechanisms and fiscal reform,[10] they are permitting the emergence of new market exchanges in these measures.[11] At the same time, ecosystem services and natural capital accounting perhaps does relatively little to transform the underlying value practices tending towards problematic nature exploitation and the obscuring of socio-ecological parameters produced by the new layer of associated fetishised commodites (cf. Kosoy and Corbera 2010). Instead, they rely on economic incentives that appeal to individual self-interest so as to alter behavior, thereby extending the *zeitgeist* of (neo)liberal individualism and competitive entrepreneurialism with which exploitative and dissociative socio-environ-

7 Commodity fetishism emerges in Marx's writings to clarify "the relationship between exchange value and use value as it is embodied in the commodity" (Holert 2012:4), whereby the value of an object is seen as residing in the thing itself in a manner that obscures and thus alienates the labour (and nonhuman life) from which it is made (Graeber 2001:65). The systemic screening-out of materiality and labour relations from commodity production and consumption under capitalist commercialisation, creates a logic that endows commodities with something akin to a soul, wherein they appear to assume human powers and properties and thus to act to satisfy wants. Marx derived his theory of commodity fetishism from interpretations of the fetishistic abstractions of objects amongst non-capitalist societies at the colonial frontier, stating that "fantasy arising from desire deceives the fetish-worshipper into believing that an 'inanimate object' will give up its natural character in order to comply with his desires" (Marx 1975:189 in Nancy 2001:4). He extended this to the abstracted commodities and currencies produced under capitalist relations of production, including money – hence "the magic of money" (in Nancy 2001:5). A corresponding attribution of agency to capital, capitalism and markets has led Michael Taussig (1987) to speak of a "capitalist animism" (see discussion in Holert 2012; also Jones 2013). A "post-capitalist animism" (cf. Holert 2012) instead might note that a modern removal of subjectivity and intentionality from nonhuman entities was itself an historically embedded discursive move that facilitated the creation of a scientifically knowable, exploitable and tradable world of objects. Marx's understanding of "primitive" fetishistic practices and "the brutalising worship of nature" (Marx 1962) derive from this context. Whilst foregrounding the "truths" that are screened out by the activities of commodities and capitalisms, it is worth noting, then, that the concept of "commodity fetishism" is steeped in particular understandings of the "fetish" as a component of "primitive" and animist thought, and is associated with a broader modern dismissal of amodern animist ontologies as 'savage' and irrational. This paper seeks in part to reclaim amodern animist ontologies from such dismissals, noting that in any case the apparently exterior "matters of fact" and commodity objects of the modern are themselves fetishised "factishes" – as Latour (2010a) puts it – brought into being through human work but charged with acting from a distance as exteriorised facts animated technically and socially with authoritative, objective power. Thus, we may never have been modern, because we are all fetishists: "modern" or not, we all endow the materialities we create, and with which we are entangled, power to shape our actions, choices and affects.

8 cf. The Bank of Natural Capital website established by TEEB at http://bankofnaturalcapital.com/

9 Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation in Developing Countries, www.un-redd.org

10 As I have observed through the privilege of participating in meetings held by the UN Secretariat of the C onvention on Biodiversity and partners on 'Scaling up Biodiversity Finance' (in Quito, Ecuador, March 2012, http://www.cbd.int/financial/quitoseminar/) and 'Ecology and Economy for a Sustainable Society' (in Trondheim, Norway, May 2013, http://www.dirnat.no/tk13/).

11 See, for example, the emerging environmental exchange platforms at https://environmentbank.mmearth.com/login and http://mmearth.com/.

mental relations currently are linked. As MacDonald and Corson (2012:159) claim, the "endeavour to put an economic value on ecosystems makes nature legible by abstracting it from social and ecological contexts and making it subject to, and productive of, new market devices." In a Foucaultian sense new nature valuation technologies act to intensify capital's power-effects (Nealon 2008 and discussion in Sullivan 2013a), whereby all is subsumed to the "truth regime" and associated accumulations of "the market" (Foucault 2008). The subsequent release of new nature values into the totalising and biopolitical control of the smooth flows of capital associated with globalised markets thus intensifies capital's power-effects, while also sustaining the subsuming dynamic of capital present since at least the European Enclosure Acts (Federici 2004).

In the process, new constitutions of material nature are brought forth, together with new means of its practical appropriation. The discursive and calculative technologies (cf. Callon and Muneisa 2005) that create and prime entities for marketised exchanges – from genetic plant resources under the UN CBD to insurance derivatives on the Chicago Board Options Exchange – thus structure and shape the materiality of the things that thereby become traded, with effects on the ecosocial contexts from which they derive (Mackenzie and Millo 2003; Brand and Görg 2008). At the same time, contemporary techno-configurations of circulating commodified nature are amplifying an ecology that resides in a radically disembedding and disembodying ontology. Through this, the fates of diverse rainforest assemblages are influenced and managed through the remote control of electronic exchanges;[12] online cyber-safaris of African savannas seemingly generate authoritative knowledge of "the real thing;"[13] and radical geographies of non-locality become the basis of nature conservation through the marketised exchange of varied "conservation credits" between landowners and localities.[14]

These approaches to environmental management for conservation constitute both recent innovations, and intensified conceptual decouplings of culture from nature familiar in Europe since at least the Enlightenment, an era that itself is rooted in Renaissance interpretations of classical Greek philosophy (Merchant 1989). They are part and parcel of a broader series of epistemic shifts, that can be traced to successive transformational moments in different cultural milieux, such as that summarised in the Babylonian story with which this paper opens (also see Merchant 1989; Roszak 2001). In the western context they extend and entrench an older occidental biblical creation hierarchy asserting "man's" dominion over other creatures (Cohen 1986:15), and the dominion of a singular God over all. As returned to in the epilogue to this paper, the associated *transcendence* or "set-apartness" of experience of the sacred is a related and relevant construct flowing from this monotheism. It corresponds with both a removal of "the sacred" from the immanent vital materialities of "nature," and an associated separation of leader-priests from followers through variously rigidified hierarchies that serve(d) political, economic and technological inequities (Young 2011).

The phenomena described above invoke a significant paradox: of the intensified lively circulation of new commodified digital units of nonhuman nature intended to signify the incorporation of environmental harms into productions of economic value (what Büscher (this volume) calls "liquid nature"); and of the simultaneous dependence of these lively representations and circulations on an amplified treatment of nonhuman nature as distant, stilled, bounded and mute object (cf. Ingold 2006). A key effect of this, as Latour (2004) gestures towards in his *Politics of Nature*, is that human nature has been rendered increasingly deaf to a stilled and desacralised nonhuman nature that is its mirror (Weber 2001; Curry 2008). Environmental philosopher Andrew Dobson (2010) elaborates the implications of this,

12 As, for example, in the binding of distant localities to financialised trade in carbon and associated option and futures exchanges, as well as in weather derivatives and various environmental futures and derivatives (see the emissions trading page of the Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) (https://www.theice.com/emissions.jhtml) and discussion in Böhm and Dabhi (2009), Cooper (2010), Randalls (2010) and Lohmann (2012)).

13 See, for example, WildEarth™ http://www.wildearth.tv/home, last accessed 08 November 2013.

14 For examples of such environmental conservation markets see Carroll et al. 2008, and Briggs et al. 2009; for discussion see Robertson 2004, 2006; Morris 2006; Robertson and Hayden 2008; Pawliczek and Sullivan 2011.

noting an associated entrenching of an Aristotelian position that "Man" alone is a political animal, with nonhuman nature rendered mute in political terms. Anselm Franke (2012a:12-13, emphasis added) thus invokes Indonesian narratives that tell of "*the falling silent of the world* under the burden of "primitive accumulation," of capitalist exploitation, and of colonial administration." And so behind the contemporary proliferations and circulations of the fetishised abstractions of nonhuman nature described above, is a deepened muting and deadening of the enunciative possibilities of nonhuman natures; accompanied by an intensified "tuning out," as irrelevant and obstructive, of the *communiqués* of other(ed) culturenature ontologies.

This predicament, and its tendency towards inequity and a possibly global ecocidal moment, generates significant questions. What relationships and ontologies are strengthened through these contemporary constructions and circulations? What is demoted and negated? And what "gaps" remain for (re)embodying socio-ecological arrangements that are both differently democratic and nourishing of life's alive diversity?

Deleuze and Guattari (2004:177-178), on whose work I draw in the remainder of this paper, refer to nature's immanence as "the germen" – the original full and flowing body of the intense germinal and generative earth. They argue that inhibition of the incest-like desire for possession of this full and flowing force has always required systemic cultural codifications. Thus, "in indigenous and other … rural communities of the world, one almost always finds institutions with rules that serve to limit short-term self-interest and promote long-term group interest", which tends to be concident with concern regarding ecological sustenance (Berkes 2008:238). Indeed, for most of human history and cultural circumstances the separating culture/nature assumptions described above seem to have been understood and refused as negative in their effects. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, the abstracting and fictionalising impetus that enables state-capitalism's de- and re-coding of the *ecosocius* has tended to be thoroughly resisted, prevented and contained (cf. Clastres 1989; and discussion in Melitopoulos and Lazzarato 2012a). They write, for example, that "the primitive machine is not ignorant of exchange, commerce, and industry; it exorcises them, localizes them, cordons them off, encastes them ... so that the flows of exchange and the flows of production do not manage to break the codes in favor of their abstract or fictional quantities" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004:168; also Polanyi 2001). Anthropologist Laura Rival echoes this in writing of Huaoroni, Zaparo, Shuar and Tukanoan nations of the Upper Marañón river of Peru that "they have constituted nomadic and autarkic enclaves fiercely refusing contact, trade, and exchange with powerful neighbours" (Rival 1996:146). As such, the separation of market exchanges from ecosocial relations (as in the ideal of free market economics) has been variously inhibited in part because this separation is known to break embodied ties of living community: ties which otherwise might be understood as binding all emplaced[15] entities in moral *and maintaining* economies of connection, cooperation and sharing (Bird-David 1992; Lewis 2008b; Graeber 2011).[16]

In the modern era of industrialism, capitalism and the controlling freedom of the market, human endeavour instead has seemingly become untethered from these codes. The effect has been a chimerical disembedding of human from nonhuman natures (Polanyi 2001; Latour 1993) and an unleashing of accumulated stocks into flows that escape prior societal codifications (Buchanan and Thoburn 2008:25). In this reading, it is an intensified breaking of inhibiting codes that makes possible current value-accumulating circulations of newly commodified stocks and flows of abstracted nature, and whose recoding as "natural capital" and "ecosystem services" assists this instrumentalisation perfectly.

I seek, then, to destabilise and refract these deadening and dis-embodying assumptions by calling on ethnographic and historical records that clarify different possibilities for conceptualising and enact-

15 In invoking 'place' and 'emplacement here," I follow Ingold's (2005:507) conception that 'places are not static nodes but are constituted in movement': in comings and goings and through embodied actions and perceptions, all of which necessitate movement in conjunction with an always moving *milieu* of nonhuman presences (also Abram 1996:65).

16 This is not to say, of course, that times of disagreement, bloodshed, warfare and competition do not occur in these circumstances, cf. Taussig 1987; Rival 1996.

ing human-with-nature existence. I focus on varied *animist* ontologies from different geographical and temporal contexts (cf. Ingold 2006). Modernity's "nature-as-mute-and-stilled-object" is an empowered but particular cultural fetish (or "factish," cf. Latour 2010a, and footnote 7 above) permitting instrumentalising abstractions that are proving problematic in their socio-ecological effects (cf. Latour 2004; Hornborg 2006). Nature's conceptual pacification has been made possible precisely through denial and purification of the animist ontologies that both constitute modernity's necessary Other, and that pose(d) danger to the transcendent coherence of modern (b)orders (Franke 2012a; cf. Douglas 1966). As the Nobel Laureate and molecular biologist Jacques Monod wrote in the 1970s, science necessarily "subverts everyone of the mythical ontogenies upon which the animist tradition... has based morality," so as to establish "the objectivity principle" as the value that defines "objective knowledge itself" (1972:160-4, quoted in Midgley 2011:4). My intention thus is to refocus attention on the eco-ethical effects that may be associated with bringing nature "back to life": via a re-activation of animist relational onto-epistemologies concerned with maintaining good relations between all entities/actants in each moment, rather than conserving-via-capitalising specific objectified and thus transcendent natures (cf. Harvey 2005; Ingold 2006; Bird-David and Naveh 2008; Sullivan 2010; Curry 2011; Stengers 2012).

In doing so I hope to speak to Bruno Latour's (2010b) call, in his recent "Compositionist Manifesto," for movements beyond critique, and towards curiosity and support for subversive everyday (re)compositions of human-with-nature ecologies. Latour encourages us to broach and brave, as well as to re-member, a very different collection of concepts, concerns and practices. In this vein, relevant work regarding diverse and (re)embodying insertions of nature and materiality in society is being productively conducted in a range of social science and humanities genres, including critical geography, science and technology studies, religious studies, feminism, environmental philosophy, political theory and art (see, for example, Castree and Braun 2001; Harvey 2005; Plumwood 2006; Curry 2008, 2011; Haraway 2008; Bennett 2010; Coole and Frost 2010; Lorimer 2010, 2011; Panelli 2010; Yusoff 2012; and the contributions in the volume of *eflux* edited by Franke 2012b). But the possibilities are greater still for "enlivening" nonhuman realms and the *ecosocius* in ways that refract the deadening abstractions of Nature required for its financialised circulations. Anthropology and cross-cultural ethnographic work can offer much here by way of bringing into the frame markedly differently embodied culturenature ontologies and associated effects (cf. Descola and Pálsson 1996; Ingold 2000, 2006; 2011; Posey 2002; Hornborg 2006; Neves 2006, 2009; Berkes 2008; Moeller 2010).

I explore a few contributions here, all of which have a key commonality. This is of an amodern assumption of the alive sentience of "other-than-human natures" as animate and relational subjects, rather than inanimate and atomised objects. An effect is to enliven both nonhuman natures and understandings of what it means to be human in intimate, moving and maintaining improvisations with other-than-human worlds. "Animism" is the term used to describe this orientation. This is a descriptor that enfolds Edward Tylor's "mistaken primitives," positioned prior to the attainment of Enlightenment rationality in his theory of religion (Tylor 1913); also Gilmore 1919), with postmodern "eco-pagans" of the industrial west, for whom animism is a contemporary eco-ethical "concern with knowing how to behave appropriately towards persons, not all of whom are human" (Harvey 2005:xi; also Plows 1998; Letcher 2003; Harris 2008). As such "animism" is both "a knowledge construct of the West" (Garuba 2012:7), and a universalising term acknowledging a "primacy of relationality" (cf. Bird-David 1999; Ingold 2006) and a set of affirmative practices that "resist objectification" by privileging an expansionary intersubjectivity (Franke 2012a:4, 7). Animist onto-epistemologies in varied circumstances seem to have tended towards ordinary praxes of living with eco-ethical effects that enhance(d) ecocultural diversity and poetic meaning. As such, they are worthy of (re) countenancing.

Counter-Culturenature Ontologies

> ***Countenance*** **n. 5** bearing or expression that offers approval or sanction **:** moral support. **v.** to extend approval or toleration to **:** sanction.[17]

An established ethnographic literature destabilises some of the seemingly intractable dichotomies and categories infusing the growth- and commodity-oriented political economies of modernity and postmodernity. In this, the culture/nature dualism and accompanying assumptions of either environmental determinism (over cultural activity), or of a passive Nature as background to cultural dominion, make way for "ethnoepistemologies" that challenge these modern ways of organising what it is possible to know (Descola and Pálsson 1996; Hornborg 2006). Key here is a plethora of possibilities in which humans are envisaged as sharing ontological social space with the beings that "western human ontology" (cf. Glynos 2012) frames as "nonhuman." This seems entwined with a sense that what exists is brought into being through ongoing participation in relationship by all entities (Ingold 2006). Agency, while differentiated, thus is present everywhere, such that all activity is simultaneously imbued with a moral, if frequently ambiguous, dimension (Ingold 2000). Arguably, such different culturenature ontologies have actualised lively embodied ecologies that favour the maintenance of biological and other diversities. As such, they warrant engagement and "re-animation" (Ingold 2006:19) even in contexts more attuned to modern technological and economic discourses regarding policy solutions in biodiversity conservation (and perhaps especially in such contexts).[18] In what follows I draw on a selection of ethnographic study to foreground elements of the "animist" socio-ecologies associated with several contemporary and historical circumstances. These emphasize what seems to be an uncynical ontology that knows all dimensions of existence to embody and enact agency in interrelationship, as well as to be animated and alive with sacred and connective meaning. I return to the latter theme in the epilogue that completes this paper.

My first exploration is a 1992 paper by anthropologist Nurit Bird-David, whose ethnographic work on "animism" has been critical for establishing key parameters in this subfield. In this early paper she develops Marshall Sahlins" (1974) conception of "the original affluent society" through considering so-called hunter-gatherer conceptions of the provisioning roles of other-than-human natures in such economies. Her ethnographies are of Nayaka of South India (also see Bird-David and Naveh 2008), Batek of Malaysia and Mbuti of Zaire. Their orientations to "nonhuman natures" are understood in terms of assuming "the environment" *to give to* humans in a profound "economy of sharing" that mediates human-with-human and nature-with-human provisioning. "Nonhuman" natures are "humanised" such that they are known as kin and as ancestral embodiments, as communicative agencies, and as friends. Landscape entities as well as nonhuman animal species are attributed with life and consciousness. An *order of goodness*, while at times ambivalent, in general is assumed. Such knowledges find expression in value practices oriented towards sung, spoken and danced communication and multiway gift-giving with nonhuman natures that are equivalently expressive. All of these situate human persons as agents continually doing their part to maintain a moral and dynamically generative socio-ecological order of trust that implicitly is assumed to be both abundant and good. This assumption of abundance and the associated "full-subject" (Glynos 2012:2379), mitigates against a need for excessive consumption or hoarding of possessions.

Specific cultural innovations assist with the maintenance of this sense and assumption of abundance. Ongoing work by anthropologist Jerome Lewis (2008a, 2008b) with Mbendjele Yaka of Congo thus emphasises the importance of appropriate sharing through the guiding concept of *ekila*. As Lewis (2008b:13) states, "for Yaka, people should be successful in their activities because nature is abundant. If they are not, it is because they, or somebody else, has ruined their *ekila* by sharing inappropriately." Significantly, "*ekila* regulates Yaka environmental

17 http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/countenance, accessed 3 January 2013

18 On which, see the special issue of the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* on 'Indigenous nature reverence and nature conservation," introduced and edited by Snodgrass and Tiedje (2008), and the Biocultural Community Protocol Toolkit at http://www.community-protocols.org/toolkit, Accessed 24 April 2012.

relations by defining what constitutes proper sharing" (Lewis 2008b:13). *Ekila* is ruined by such actions as not sharing hunted meat, being excessively successful and thus engendering envy, by inappropriately sharing sexuality, or by sharing laughter in such a way that the forest will not rejoice. By regulating potency through appropriate sharing, dynamic abundance is maintained for all. As Lewis (2008b:13) writes, such culturenature ontologies and associated value practices have established a relationship with "resources" that has meant that Yaka people have "experienced the forest as a place of abundance for the entirety of their cultural memory." This, again, is in rather stark contrast with modern discourses of resource scarcity and the associated competitive urgency to capture "values" in both extractive industry and conservation activity.[19]

Working in a different context again, anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2004) speaks of the similar *multinatural* "perspectivism" of cosmologies associated with peoples of the Amazon: a concept that currently is much celebrated by Bruno Latour (2004, 2010b). Viveiros de Castro posits perspectivism as the understanding that all beings share culture, kinship, and reciprocal relationships, their perspectives differing due to being seated in different bodily affects (or "natures"). Key aspects of this proposition are as follows: of an original culture that is disaggregated into different embodied perspectives; of all animals and plants being conceived as subjects/persons sharing a spirited hypostases cloaked in different embodied perspectives; and of all embodiments as sentient, alive and able to act with intentionality. Ecological relations thus are social relations, with all persons able to share and exchange knowledge. Communication and even transformation between such different embodied perspectives thus is an intrinsic possibility, existing in contradistinction to the naturalism of modernity, which proposes a shared universal Nature from which human culture and Reason rises and becomes progressively separate (see critique in Gray 2002). Indeed, science becomes scientific when the world is de-cluttered of intentionality (Viveiros de Castro interviewed in Melitopoulos and Lazzarato 2012b:4), such that the life sciences, on which modern conservation policy depends, propose a radically emptied encounter with nonhuman life. The "Amerindian" conception instead is that, "having been people [in the mythological past] animals and other species continue to be people behind their everyday appearance," endowed with the soul or spirit that personifies them (Viveiros de Castro 2004:467). As such, "nonhumans," including ancestors and spirits, are attributed with "the capacities of conscious intentionality and social agency" (Viveiros de Castro 2004:467). They are understood as subjects with empathically knowable and communicable subject positions that complexify possibilities for social and moral action.

Cognate culturenature orientations have been confirmed for me through ethnographic fieldwork since 1992 with people associated with the names Damara / ≠Nū Khoen[20] and dwelling in north-west Namibia (also see Biesele 1993; Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2004; Low 2008). I have written on this in the journal *New Formations* (Sullivan 2010) and I paraphrase some of this material here. This is a context where a rain shaman dances into trance, and in this state of consciousness is able to climb a rope of light into a different but no less real world inhabited by the spirited beings that shape and form the life force(s) of daily embodied existence. Here he negotiates with the rain goddess |Nanus, seducing her to permit him to retrieve life-giving rain, which is then brought back to the everyday world with apparently real and celebrated effect (||Khumub et al. 2007). It is where people can shapeshift into lions and other animals, and be witnessed doing so, iterating the "reality of becoming-animal, even though one does not in reality become animal" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:273). And where giant snakes, sometimes with antelope horns on their heads and quartz or lights in their foreheads, roam the landscape, filling it with intense generative potency (Hoff 1997; Schmidt 1998; Low and Sullivan 2013). It is where the most all-knowing deity is known in part

19 A situation that is increasingly compounded by a global movement in which the offsetting of impacts from economic development enhances the scarcity and thus the financialisable 'value' of conservation, e.g. see Seagle 2012, Sullivan 2012; 2013c.

20 The symbols used here reflect the standard orthography for KhoeSān languages used to denote click consonants.

through the material form of an insect - the praying mantis – that in mythical and symbolic realms capriciously shapeshifts into and shares kin relations with many other animals, thus iterating the dynamic ambiguity of life itself as a force to be moved with in ways that maintain, rather than still, this movement (personal field notes; Biesele 1993). And where illness is carried and caused by wind, smell and energetic arrows, with healing accomplished by the manipulation and alignment of energetic forms called |*gais* so that they stand up straight in the body (Low 2008). Culturenature assemblages of potency thus enfold human and nonhuman domains into endlessly dynamic connectivities: establishing mysteriously mutable relationships between what occidental ontologies know as distinct and different orders of being (Biesele 1993; Power and Watts 1997; Low 2008). All of these phenomena, spoken of in contemporary times (personal fieldnotes), sit within and affirm an old and broad KhoeSān conceptual world that speaks suggestively through the layers of rock art imagery that is enormously prolific in southern Africa (discussed further in Sullivan and Low 2013).

My final example embraces a quite different cultural context and is detailed in a 1986 paper by Esther Cohen called "Law, folklore and animal lore,"[21] from which I will quote extensively. Cohen describes the practice of "the criminal prosecution and execution of animals" in both secular and ecclesiastical courts of Western Europe in the later middle ages and the early modern period. She draws on legal anthropology and associated cross-cultural methodologies to assist with understanding the mutual social obligations that normatively bind animals and humans in these trials. Animal trials are first mentioned during the thirteenth century in Northern and Eastern France, from where they spread to the Low Countries, Germany and Italy. They are documented in court records from the 13th to 18th century, "reaching their peak of frequency and geographical scope during the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries" (Cohen 1986:17). In them, sentences "were passed and executed in properly constituted courts of law by fully qualified magistrates, according to generally accepted laws," at the same time as being "an integral part of customary law" and owing "their continued existence partially to popular traditions and influences" (Cohen 1986:10). They generally followed two distinct procedures, secular and ecclesiastical. Secular procedures, for example, were "used to penalize domestic beasts that had mortally injured a human being," while ecclesiastical procedures were "employed to rid the population of natural pests that could not individually be punished" (Cohen 1986:10). Frequently sentences were passed only after "ponderous debates and trials years long" (Cohen 1986:16). Here I provide some detail from a description of one of these, a trial of domestic animals in a secular court. My intention is to illustrate the seriousness with which nonhuman animals in these relatively recent European cases were attributed with subjectivity, intentionality, and personhood, leading to their treatment as legal persons in the processes surrounding their trial and sentencing. They "differed as little as possible from human trials," usually involving appointment of an advocate for the defence of the accused non-human animal(s) (Cohen 1986:13).

Drawing on references from archival research, Cohen writes:

> In December 1457 the sow of Jehan Bailly of Savigny and her six piglets were caught in the act of killing the five-year-old Jehan Martin. All seven pigs were imprisoned for murder and brought to trial a month later before the seigneurial justice of Savigny. Besides the judge, the protocol recorded the presence at the trial of one lawyer (function unspecified), two prosecutors (one of them a lawyer and a councillor of the duke of Burgundy), eight witnesses by name, "and several other witnesses summoned and requested for this cause." Though the owner was formally the defendant, it is clear from the proceedings that he stood accused only of negligence and was in no danger of any personal punishment. Moreover he was allowed to argue in court "concerning the punishment and just execution that should be inflicted upon the said sow", if he could give any reason why the sow should be spared. The owner having waived this right, the prosecutor requested a death sentence. The

21 Thank you to Martin Pedersen for drawing my attention to this paper.

> judge, having heard all the relevant testimony and consulted with wise men knowledgeable in local law, ruled, according to the custom of Burgundy, that the sow should be forfeit to the justice of Savigny for the purpose of hanging by her hind legs on a suitable tree. The piglets created a more difficult problem as there was no proof that they had actually bitten the child, though they were found bloodstained. They were therefore remanded to the custody of their owner, who was required to vouch for their future behaviour and produce them for trial, should new evidence come to light. When the latter refused to give such a guarantee, the piglets were declared forfeit to the local lord's justice, though they suffered no further punishment. The court brought from Chalon-sur-Saône a professional hangman who carried out the execution according to the judge's specific instructions. [Cohen 1986:10-11]

Cohen (1986:11) explains that "the case of the sow of Savigny is typical in many respects of most secular animal trials. In the first place, it was held in Burgundy, one of the earliest areas to record such cases." In addition, "the defendant's porcine nature also recurred in a great many trials. Pigs, who seem to have accounted for the deaths of many unattended infants, were the most common culprits, but such trials also occurred throughout this time for homicidal pigs, oxen, cows, horses and dogs" (Cohen 1986:11). What is particularly relevant here is that:

> the trial is typical in its painstaking insistence upon the observance of legal custom and proper judicial procedure. This was neither a vindictive lynching nor the extermination of a dangerous beast. Other records mention, in addition to pre-trial imprisonment, the granting of remissions to wrongly accused beasts, the burning in effigy of a "contumacious" [i.e. wilfully disobedient] animal, and the public display of an executed cow's head." [Cohen 1986:11]

And further, "where the hangman's bills are extant, they closely resemble those presented for the execution of humans" (Cohen 1986:12).

In analysis, Cohen notes that "the very existence of animal trials in Europe poses severe problems for the historian of Western culture" *because* "the practice runs counter to all commonly accepted conceptions of justice, humanity and the animal kingdom; and yet it survived and flourished for centuries" (Cohen 1986:15). She writes that it is apparent that there are no clear distinctions between these domains in "the minds of medieval legists" (Cohen 1986:19). This is an ontological disposition that overlapped significantly with an emerging and élite modern rationalism regarding "the immutable categories of nature" and associated universal hierarchies (Cohen 1986:23-24), as well as with the radically different Cartesian notion that "animals are automata possessing neither sense nor feelings" (Cohen 1986:16).[22] For the medieval and early modern mind, the difference between "man and beast" instead "was functional, not causal: pigs or locusts who harmed man must alike stand trial in the interest of universal justice" (Cohen 1986:19). In parallel with the ethnographies of non-western cultures discussed above, European animal trials thus seem to have "expressed a perception of law that held sway over the entire universe" for people who "viewed justice as a universal attribute, applicable to all nature" and in which "animals were neither insensate nor lacking in intent" (Cohen 1986:35-36).

In summary, these examples gesture towards an *amodern* "onto-epistemology"[23] generating experi-

22 In *Discourse 5* of Rene Descartes," *Discourse on Method* (1968:75-76) writes of animals that '… they do not have a mind, and … it is nature which acts in them according to the disposition of their organs, as one sees that a clock, which is made up of only wheels and springs, can count the hours and measure time more exactly than we can with all our art." Other authors argue against the thesis that Descartes considered animals to be incapable of feeling, whilst affirming his insistence on animals as automata, possessing neither thought or self-consciousness (Harrison 1992:219-220). It is telling that the emerging Cartesian vivisectionists 'felt compelled to sever the vocal chords of the dogs whose living anatomy they explored," thus performing 'their modernist task' only after having literally silenced their subjects in the endeavour of transforming them into objects of study (Hornborg 2006:24 after Evernden 1985:16-17).

23 By this I mean reasoned knowledge flowing from particular cultural and historically situated assumptions regarding the nature of reality and the methods through which, given these assumptions, it is possible to know this. I derive the term 'onto-epistemology' from Jones (1999). On the connected understanding of *episteme* as the cultural and historical fabric that shapes and determines what it is possible to know, see Foucault (1970). Foucault uses the term *episteme* to describe the assumed or *a priori* knowledge of reality – the knowledge that is taken as given – that infuses and permits sense-making to occur in all discursive interactions flowing from and reinforcing a historical period or epoch. This is similar to an understanding of 'culture' as the shared norms and values that infuse and produce community in all spheres of praxis and language. An episteme thus guides and influences the social production of discourses – or empowered knowledge frames – that

ences of, and dealings with, "nonhuman natures" that depart radically from those empowered in the modern era. They do more than simply suggesting that nonhuman natures and objects are animate(d) actants producing effects and affects. Key additional themes emerge to stabilise the grid of this amodern episteme. "Nonhuman" entities are understood to embody variously different perspectives in a shared moral community of "persons," all of whom possess and enact intentionality that is communicable and knowable. The "social character" of relations between humans and nonhumans tend towards multi-way economies of gifts, exchanges, sharings and transformations between all persons (cf. Sullivan 2009; Haber 2012), and to mitigate against a commodity economy based on the creation and production of disembedded, pacified things (Viveiros de Castro 2004: 481-482). In addition, an array of "counter existential," but actually common-place, experiences and ontological configurations permit transversal movements into other experiential domains, populated by beings known and related with through millennia of dynamic biocultural concerns and desires.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987:309) write that what is valued in this "amodernity" is the ability and skill to improvise well with "what already is musical in nature."[24] Ontologically, this seems quite distinct from a modern imaginary that fixes nature and nature knowledge through surveys, measurements, maps, numerical models and metrics (as discussed in Robertson 2011; Hannis and Sullivan 2012), and whose expert readers and constructors can be ordained to know their silenced constituents in advance (Castree 2006:161). Improvising-with instead confers what Guattari (2000:21) refers to as the "significance of human interventions," in a context of an always and potently communicative non-human world that also is sentient, mind-full and asserts responsive agency. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987:258) state, "the plane of composition, the plane of Nature, is precisely for participations of this kind."

Becoming-Animist?

> People call the soil mineral matter, but some one hundred million bacteria, yeasts, molds, diatoms, and other microbes live in just one gram of ordinary topsoil. Far from being dead and inanimate, the soil is teeming with life. These microorganisms do not exist without reason. Each lives for a purpose, struggling, cooperating, and carrying on the cycles of nature. (Masanobu Fukuoka quoted in Buhner 2002:154)

> The disenchantment of the world is the extirpation of animism. (Adorno and Horkheimer 1986:5, quoted in Wheeler 2010:48)

> Today, it seems interesting to me to go back to what I would call an animist conception of subjectivity... (Félix Guattari quoted in Melitopoulos and Lazzarato 2012b:1)

The understandings suggested in the contributions above propose cogent "counter-logics" and praxes regarding nature/culture relationships that open the black box of mute nature proposed by modernity's great divide (cf. Latour 2004), the circulating abstractions of which infuse the current conceptual and policy paradox of "green growth." Such counter-culturenature ontologies may indeed be among the social forces that can be mobilised and affirmed today in (re)configuring, (re)composing (re)embodying culturenature relationships that are enlivened in support of the flourishing of life's diversity (cf. Sullivan 2010), thus curtailing the modernist project of severed relationships (cf. Hornborg 2006). Animist moral economies propose conceptual and eco-ethical space for the dynamic sustenance of relationships between diverse entities, with all acting to play a part in this maintaining "sustainability" (cf. Descola and Pálsson 1996:14; Harvey 2005; Bird-David and Naveh 2008; Schwartzman 2010:322). It is this "power-effect" that makes animist culturenature ontologies worthy of engagement, given the Anthropocenic juncture at which collectively we find ourselves.

But it can be difficult to speak of such animist counter-logics and ontologies within academia and other modern institutional contexts. This is

at the same time iteratively reproduce what epistemologically is, and becomes, shared as self-evident about the nature of reality.

24 For more on improvisation as a dynamically sustaining praxis see Gilbert (2004) and the edited volume by Ingold and Hallam (2007).

due both to the necessary systemic "epistemological purification" of such amodern knowledges for the consolidation of modern categories (Descola and Pálsson 1996:8); and the mirror of falling prey to ""archaic illusion", where moderns … nourish their fantasies about the primitive other, mysterious communications, mimetic contagions, spirits, enchanted nature, and so forth" (Franke 2012a:21, after Taussig 1987). Anthropologists are specifically hampered by a charge that in speaking of animist culturenature counter-logics we might iterate a romantic and nostalgic construction of indigenous peoples as living in some sort of unreachable and ahistorical harmony with a spirited nature. Kuper (1993), for example, argues that such a romanticism, and a delineating of "indigenous peoples" and affective relationships with "the environment" more generally, effects a problematic "return of the native" in anthropology. He suggests that this echoes earlier colonial characterisations that served to denote and demote the "other," and that made possible the displacements and violences enabling the reconstitution of people and nature as labour and property.

There is a danger here of throwing the baby out with the bathwater, however (cf. Sullivan 2006a). Of implying that it is only legitimate to understand relationships between culture and nature from the perspective of the ontological bifurcation between them – via which "nature" can be peered at from the culture side of the fence, and any refraction of this divide, in terms of where subjectivity, agency and intentionality might be located, becomes subject to dismissal. It also imputes a valorisation of essentialised identities, as opposed to a curiosity regarding different culturenature praxes and their productive effects. In other words, it is not that the animist culturenature conceptions, experiences and value practices explored above are interesting because they might be those learned from indigenous peoples (the European example from Cohen (1986) in any case destabilises this pattern here). It is because the conceptions and praxes themselves might have effects that are relevant for coming to terms with being human in the Anthropocene, as well as for making choices regarding subjectivity that might be better calibrated with life's diversity.[25]

Indeed, the current global socio-ecological cul-de-sac in which collectively we find ourselves suggests that continued dismissal of such different culturenature ontologies is a luxury we can ill afford. As ecologist Richard Norgaard (2010) describes, in shoe-horning our understandings of nature such that the only valid terms and concepts are contemplated, objectified and monetary ones (whether metaphorical or as newly devised and tradable commodities), a foundational contraction of possibilities is occurring. Options for different socio-ecological praxes are being foreclosed, even as a new frontier for capital investment in nature conservation is composing new "socionature" and "world-ecology" possibilities.[26]

This, then, is a proposal for a positive and refracting dialectics (cf. Ruddick 2008; Latour 2010b; Gibson-Graham 2011) that is inspired by animist onto-epistemologies so as "to undo the very "alienation" that capitalist modernity induces" (Franke 2012a:21). For engagements that mobilise knowledge of the cultural and historical particularities that have silenced "nonhuman nature" and diverse ecocultural knowledges, so as to resuscitate and affirm immanent "counter-logics" and praxes that might bring socionatures "back to life." Bennett (2010:14) affirms that "the starting point of ethics is... the recognition of human participation in a shared, vital materiality" (also Goldstein 2012). The culturenature ontologies of other(ed) cultural perspectives offer much for the guiding of such recognition. At the same time, their (re)countenancing requires both considerable decolonisation of the orders of knowledge sustaining modernity, and a turning to face the systemic violences with which these orders have been established

25 cf. Guattari's (2000:19-20) differentiated and multiplicitous 'ecosophy' as 'an ethico-political articulation...' between the three ecological registers of 'the environment, social relations and human subjectivity' that re-embeds relationships between interior (subjective) and exterior (social and environmental) potencies.

26 The term 'socionature' is borrowed from Swyngedouw (1999) and 'world-ecology' from Moore (2010). It seems hard to find a term in English that unclumsily expresses connectivity between human and 'other-than-human' worlds. It seems important to do so, however, so as to keep affirming connections and correspondences between these worlds. After all, no individuals of any species including our own are actually able to exist in a state of disentanglement from other species (cf. Ingold 2010).

and maintained. Nonetheless, and to invoke a hopeful Foucault (1998), since the strategic relationships, practices and discourses that become empowered also always contain their own "gaps" - their own possibilities for breakdown, subversion, and reconstitution – a corresponding potential exists for interventions that exploit these contradictions and ambivalences.

In moving from critique towards insertions that may refract and reconstitute, however, "we" also need to have something different to say. In the spirit of "ambitious naiveté" (Bennett 2010:19), I hope here to have brought in some suggestions for ways in which culturenature relationships might be thought and practiced differently; and that thereby might provide elements of something different to say and do.

Postscript: Ethical Gestures Towards a Transcendental Immanence

> The transcendental field is defined by a plane of immanence, and the plane of immanence by a life... Transcendence is always a product of immanence. (Deleuze 2001:28, 31)

> The world is holy! The soul is holy! The skin is holy! The nose is holy! The tongue and cock and hand and asshole holy!
> Everything is holy! everybody's holy! everywhere is holy! …
> Holy the supernatural extra brilliant intelligent kindness of the soul! (Ginsberg 1956)

> Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. (Emerson 1985:4)

> Even the difference between transcendence and immanence seemed to be beyond them. (Latour 2010a:34)

On closing this essay, I realised I had made an omission. I had overlooked making any gesture towards considering and locating "the sacred" and its significance in the animist culturenature ontologies engaged with above. This is curious, since my sense is that animist tendencies, combined with a healthy force of humour (Willerslev 2012), centralise the sacred in conceptions and constitutions of culturenature, with potent eco-ethical effects. Arguably, in the animist propositions outlined above the sacred is everywhere present: as the soul connecting relational entities of different form (Buhner 2002; Harvey 2005); as a sanctioning of the gaps in knowing generated by the experience of mystery that thereby emerges (Wheeler 2010:44); and as the lived relationships via which each being in "the cosmic community of beings... is bred, grows, reproduces and dies" (Haber 2012:5).[27]

Reflecting on why this omission occurred brings to mind a series of constraining and silencing trajectories. Of a millennia-old capture of the sacred by priestly castes tasked with mediating between a sanctified heavenly realm inhabited by a distant, individualised and judging God, and a populace of lesser mortals denied legitimate experience of "the divine" (Young 2011). Of the similarly transcendent expert knowledge and religious fervours (Wheeler 2010:37) of priestly castes of scientists, entrepreneurs, and politicians, whose choices are elevated in Man's continuing dominion over Nature. And of a simultaneous historical and contemporary denial of sacred presence in the ordinary natures of everyday life; combined with the occlusion of common sense knowledges and practices of those experiencing as well as instrumentalising this immanent presence (Federici 2004). Through this nexus of circumstances the sacred is set apart from the earthly and fleshly germinative plane of immanence, such that participation in, and engagement with, earth and body is devalued. The sacred as transcendent experience has tended to be seen in contradistinction to the immanent sphere. A transcendent God is both beyond the limitations of the material universe, and beyond knowing by non-specialist humans, not to mention being intrinsically unavailable to creatures deemed made less closely in the image of Him.

But of course, and as expressed by poets, mystics, shamans and critics of all times and cultures, this is not the only way in which the sacred might be conceived and experienced. In his 1836 essay *Nature*, the North American poet and essayist Ralph Waldo

27 On which, it is noticeable that the current government of Bolivia integrates a conception of sacred within its legal framework for 'Buen Vivir' (living well), as in Chapter 2, Art. 4(2) of the 'Framework Law of Mother Earth and Integral Development for Living Well' which states that 'The environmental functions and natural processes of the components and systems of life of Mother Earth are not considered as commodities but as gifts of the sacred Mother Earth."

Emerson, for example, destabilises this sense of a transcendent sacred realm that is unknowable or unreachable without the mediation of empowered experts, through an exposition that paradoxically became known as "Transcendentalism." In this, "nature" is deemed poetically knowable by the most innocent of minds, through the attunement of the senses between inner and outer worlds. He speaks of "an occult relation between man [*sic*] and the vegetable" in which "I am not alone and unacknowledged. They nod to me, and I to them" (Emerson 1985:6). Emerson's "Transcendentalism" affirms a pantheistic sacred immanence, infused with an "ethical character" that "so penetrates the bone and marrow of nature, as to seem the end for which it was made" (Emerson 1985:28). The sacred, as transcendent and intuitive experience (Wheeler 2010:37), and as entranced state of consciousness (cf. Sullivan 2006b; Fletcher 2007, and references therein), thus is immanent in a nature the generation of which humans and other persons are part (Ingold 2006). Transcendent sacred experience is an ordinary possibility for the human by virtue of being a facet of nature's immanence, that can also know and open to the other aspects of nature's diverse embodiment (Bateson and Bateson 2004, discussed in Wheeler 2010). As Hepburn (1984:184, quoted in Curry 2008:64, emphasis added) states, and as echoed later in the quote by Deleuze that opens this section, "there is no wholly-other paradise from which we are excluded: *the only transcendence that can be real to us is an 'immanent' one*." A sense of this commonality perhaps is present in the ethnographic examples above. Viveiros de Castro (2004:464) describes an ontological "state of being where self and other interpenetrate, submerged in the same immanent, presubjective, preobjective milieu" such that the hypostases of embodied difference is an all-pervasive, connecting and communicative vitality. Or an ontological primacy of animacy, as Ingold (2006:10) puts it.

The instrumentalisations of life and landscapes associated with monotheistic doctrine, Enlightenment thought and the rise of modern capitalism instead are effected in conjunction with the enforced denial and systemic disruption of this embodied transcendental immanence (Weber 2001; Merchant 1989; Federici 2004). This is a constraining gendered dynamic too, in that the subject position of Western transcendental/Enlightenment philosophy – the "Father-*logos*" that "claims to be the overall engenderer compared to mother-nature," sets up "a transcendence corresponding to a monosexual code" (Irigaray 1997:314). This "Law-making-God-the-Father" equates "to an absolute transcendence only insofar as it is appropriated to male identity": in the meantime ensuring that "everything that is of the feminine gender is... less valued in this logic because it lacks any possible dimension of transcendence" (Irigaray 1997:314). When this includes a feminised earth, the feminised values of the body and of the (indigenous) natural become devalued, discarded and violated (as documented in brutal detail in Merchant 1989, Taussig (1987) and Federici (2004)). This generates "the ecofeminist insight that there is a relationship between the subordination of women and the exploitation of nature" that is extended to indigenes, configured conceptually as similarly close to nature (Mellor 2000:107). It is associated with a patriarchal circumstance in which "dominant [and modern] men" are "above nature (transcendent)," while "women [and indigenes] are seen as steeped in the natural world of the body (immanent)" (Mellor 2000:111; also Sullivan 2011). Mary Mellor thus urges a conceptualisation of "human envelopment in 'nature' as a material relation, an immanent materialism, that is the historical unfolding of the material reality of human embodiment and embeddedness within its ecological and biological context" (Mellor 2000:117).

But perhaps it is the experience of this material immanence as also a transcendent experience of the animate embodied sacred that enhances eco-ethical behaviours. This, then, is an affirmation of the ethical praxes that might be engendered by the notion of a "transcendental immanence": arising both from the "transcendent experience" of the inviolable sacred as immanent or in-dwelling in all entities and relationships; and from the *a priori* possibility that such experience is part of the immanent "toolkit" of the embodied "human condition" (cf. Spinoza 1996). It is based on the proposition that when sensual and communicative vitality is known as shared by

and pervading all entities it arguably (and hopefully) becomes harder to make choices that violate socio-ecological integrity. As Bennett (2010:14) iterates, "the ethical task at hand here is to cultivate the ability to discern nonhuman vitality, to become perceptually open to it." In this vein, then, and in solidarity with a growing number of authors (cf. Merchant 1989(1980); Abram 1996; Roszak 2001; Buhner 2002; Harvey 2005; Ingold 2006; Curry 2011), a revitalised experience of living in embodied and sacred relationship with a communicative and animate nature is a necessity if current alienations and violences are to transmute into democratic and vivacious socio-ecological sustainabilities. With Allen Ginsberg in the provocative quote above, it is a reminder that everywhere, everything and *every body* is holy, and can be re-imagined, experienced and treated ethically as such.

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In *Vibrant Matter* Jane Bennett (2010:21) writes that "an actant never really acts alone" - that "agency always depends on the collaboration, cooperation, or interactive interference of many bodies and forces." In the years that this piece has been gestating, I have been sustained by many such inspirations and frictions. My appreciation goes in particular to my partner, environmental philosopher Mike Hannis, and to friends, colleagues and human and "other-than-human" collaborators in the Viva, Nature Inc., Movement Medicine and Kings Hill communities. All errors remain mine alone.

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'Capital-C' Consultation: Community, Capitalism and Colonialism

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ABSTRACT: Drawing on ethnographic research based in Gitxaała, British Columbia during 2007, this paper focuses on the theory and practice of consultation undertaken for development in British Columbia. I specifically address the local impact of the consultative process on the Indigenous community, and relate this to larger themes of capitalism and colonialist expansion.

KEYWORDS: consultation, capitalism, colonialism, collaboration, Traditional Use Study, Aboriginal Rights and Title

Introduction

In the summer of 2007, I conducted ethnographic research based in the Reserve town of Gitxaała (Figure 1) near Prince Rupert as part of a university field school. My time in Gitxaała coincided with a week-long training session held by Golder Associates, a multinational corporation offering consulting services for developers. The Katabatic Power Corporation had proposed a wind farm development in Gitxaała territory, and Golder had been hired to train community members to undertake a Traditional Use Study (TUS) as part of the Environmental Assessment for the wind farm. I therefore chose to focus my research on the issue of consultation – what it is, how it works in practice and its impact on Indigenous communities.

This paper discusses the results of that research, with a particular focus on the relationships of consultation; the larger power dynamic this reflects and contributes to; and what it tells us about both the potential and limitations of individual practice, for those now operating within the paradigm of collaboration. For this research, I attended the week-long TUS training sessions and other related meetings, and interviewed Gitxaała community members who were involved in the training process, as well as employees of Golder. The names of all informants have been removed for confidentiality.

Consultation, in Theory

Before discussing what consultation in Gitxaała looked like in practice, the following review provides some context for this concept of "consultation" and where the idea comes from.

When a decision about land use is being considered by the Crown that might affect the exercising of Aboriginal Rights or Title, the Crown has a duty

to consult with Aboriginal people prior to making the decision. This duty stems from the *Constitution Act* (1982) and means that the Crown must try to reconcile with First Nations, an obligation detailed further in *The New Relationship Trust Act* (2006). The obligation to consult, and accommodate if the decision will mean an infringement of Aboriginal Rights, was recognized with the *Delgamuukw* (1997) case that reaffirmed the existence of Aboriginal Rights and Title, including right to the land itself. This obligation was further clarified in the *Haida Nation* (2004) and *Taku River Tlingit* (2004) *c*ases as being proportional both to the strength of the Aboriginal claim to the area and to the potential adverse impact that the decision will have on that claim. In circumstances where the strength of claim is high and the potential impact is significant, the Crown must "in good faith" try to reconcile with the Aboriginal group and reach an agreement that balances their concerns with other societal interests.

Figure 1. Location of the Gitxaała community in British Columbia, Canada.

This is where consultation comes in, which involves initiating a dialogue for information sharing between two groups, usually the proponent of a project and the local Indigenous community. Often, the proponent writes to the First Nation to initiate a relationship, after which multiple meetings are held to discuss both parties' interests and concerns. Critically, although the duty to consult and accommodate is placed on the Crown, in fact the actual legwork of this process is usually delegated to a third party, most often the developer or proponent of the proposed project. For example, in the case of the Banks Island wind project, Katabatic wrote to Gitxaała to initiate the consultation process, which involved ongoing discussions and meetings between them.

Before land development can happen, the government requires that impact assessments be conducted, to see what the effects of the development will be on other resources. Most consultation happens in relations to Environmental and Archaeological Impact Assessments, and this is where the consultants fit in. In this case, the Golder consulting firm was hired to do an Environmental Impact Assessment, to see how the wind farm might affect the plants and animals living around Banks Island. The consultants are not *officially* part of consultation, as this is a formal legal and polital process that takes place between Gitxaała and the developer who in a sense represents the Crown. However, the consultants' work, and specifically the Traditional Use Study being proposed, relates to questions of Aboriginal Rights and Title, which will help determine the extent to which the developer is obligated to accommodate Gitxaała's claim to the land (Tobias 2000, 2009). The relationship formed between the consultants and the

community is therefore a critical component of the consultation process.

Consultation in British Columbia is complex. It is directly related to questions surrounding Aboriginal Title and sovereignty, the legality of colonization and the authority of Canadian law. It is an evolving concept, informed by every legal decision and relationship established between Aboriginal groups, government and/or businesses. This has contributed to a feeling of uncertainty, in particular amongst the business community who seek to invest in British Columbia but want to ensure that there will be no barriers to development. A group of major business and industry associations therefore drafted their own "how-to" guide on consultation, wherein they advocate that "consultations should not debate or attempt to resolve the existence, extent or limitations of Crown and aboriginal rights and titles," but instead focus on the extent of consultation and accommodation required based on the strength of Indigenous claim to an area (Figure 2; NRMC 2007:9,6). Meanwhile, The New Relationship Trust, an "independent non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening First Nations in BC through capacity building" (NRT 2011), has compiled their own guide (Meyers Norris Penny 2009). More recently, the federal government produced a document titled "Aboriginal Consultation and Accommodation: Updated Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Duty to Consult" (Canada 2011).

These larger issues of Aboriginal Rights and Title and treaty negotiation are critical to address in the consultation process; however, consultation *in practice* has a major impact on the local First Nation community, which is less acknowledged. Throughout my research, there is one issue that was highlighted in the interactions between people involved in the consultative process, and that is this: *intentions do not necessarily translate into realities*. Likewise, what few government regulations exist to assist developers and First Nations through the process of consultation, do not necessarily address how this negotiation takes place in practice. The position of the project proponent in this process is disconnected from the impact on the local community, where the effects of consultation trickle down into every home in one way or another. Therefore, my research has focused on how being in the process of consultation for land development has affected the Gitxaała community on a very local level.

Consultation, in Practice...

While the "theory" of consultation involves the duty of the Crown to Indigenous peoples, in "practice" much of this process is delegated to the proponents of whatever development is on the table.[1] This is particularly the case when it comes to "gathering information about the impact of the proposed project on the potential or established Aboriginal or Treaty rights" (Canada 2011). The proponent initiates this dialogue during impact assessments, and negotiates the distribution of project benefits, should the development proceed.

Markey (2001:7) provides a comprehensive analysis of the development and use of Traditional Use Studies as a means "to develop a cultural component for existing impact assessments," which tend to focus on environmental impacts and be based on Western scientific methods and theories. After the *Delgamuukw* decision, the TUS became a commonly employed means to record "Aboriginal perspectives" and assess the level of consultation and accommodation required for any given project. As Figure 2 illustrates, the extent of consultation and accommodation is determined based on the resource use and significance of an area to the First Nation, and directly related to Aboriginal Rights.

Also called Traditional Land and Occupancy Studies, such research is framed within assessing Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), with a view towards implementing this knowledge in contemporary resource management strategies (Houde 2007). These studies are effectively inventories, creating maps of locations of significance, and typi-

1 The recent Enbridge Northern Gateway Project Joint Review Panel (JRP) highlighted the problems with consultation as formally the responsibility of the Crown but practically delegated to project proponents, for whom there is an inherent conflict of interest. In the Final Written Arguments submitted by several First Nations opposing the Enbridge pipeline, the point was repeatedly made that the JRP was not consultation and did not absolve the Crown of its still unfulfilled duty to consult with Aboriginal groups. I expect this project to have significant impacts on how government and business approach consultation in future; in the interim, it has demonstrated that the meaningful relationship implied in consultation is an ideal far from being realized.

cally involve interviews with community knowledge holders and site visits and surveys (Tobias 2009). Although archaeological and heritage sites are often included, framed in the United States as Traditional Cultural Properties (King 2003), the focus of a TUS is typically on resource use (e.g., berry-gathering sites, fishing spots etc.) because of their primary use within the environmental assessment process.

This is where my research comes in. The TUS training session that I attended in 2007 was designed to teach Gitxaała people how to do much of the work that is involved in a TUS, and in anthropology more broadly – interviewing people about traditions, plant use and harvesting locations, good hunting spots, and then mapping these all out along with place-names for important sites (see Tobias 2000, 2009). I sat in the training sessions for a week, listening to questions from the community, and watching the consultants teaching trainees how to talk to people. For the consultants, this was a key issue they returned to again and again: *how do you make people feel comfortable so they will talk to you?* However, just as the TUS trainees were taught how to put people at ease in order to conduct their interviews, I came to see how the process and impact of consultation itself mirrors that power dynamic, with disturbing consequences.

...according to the Proponent

The absence of a formal interview with representatives from the proponent was supplemented by background research on the company called North Coast Wind Energy (NCWE), which is comprised of Katabatic Power Corporation and Deutsche Bank AG who funded the project. The company was commonly referred to as "Katabatic" by the Golder employees and the Gitxaała community, a reference that has been maintained in this report to avoid confusion.

On their company website, Katabatic (2007a) devoted a section to the Banks Island project, which includes a section affirming their dedication to the consultative process:

> Consultation Process: Banks Island North Wind Energy Project is committed to a comprehensive consultation program that will build strong relationships with community partners and ensure that all stakeholders are informed of Project developments in a timely manner.

The project itself is described by the proponent (NCWE 2007a) as consisting of approximately 234 wind turbines on Banks Island capable of generating 700 MW of power, with supporting infrastructure of access roads, buried cables, a substation and transmission line to Kitimat. This is no small project but rather a massive development valued at approximately $1.4 billion (NCWE 2007b:5) involving a host of permits and impact assessments. Indeed, as Rodman (2013:44) discusses, the wind farm was viewed locally as linked to the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline, an enormous project with potentially astounding impacts socially, culturally and environmentally. Unlike the massive panel established for that development, however, only a small part of the Katabatic project (3 paragraphs of a 63-page document, NWCE 2007b:24) relates to consultation with the affected First Nations, including Gitxaała.

In their News section, an article written by a corporate public relations firm dating January 25, 2007 titled "Katabatic Power and the Gitxaała Nation Working Together on Banks Island Wind" is featured, wherein it is stated that Gitxaała Nation and Katabatic "are working together to make wind power on Banks Island, located south of Prince Rupert, a reality." The article states (Katabatic 2007b):

> A letter of understanding, designed to guide the relationship between the Gitxaała and Katabatic on the proposed Banks Island wind power project, is being drafted. The document provides a framework for developing future cooperation agreements in areas such as environmental and cultural protection, training and education, employment, and partnerships.

In the absence of a Katabatic representative to interview, one of the Golder consultants offered his view, noting that this large TUS project was only possible because Katabatic supported it, as it is a very costly process. Such a comprehensive TUS as proposed for Gitxaała is unusual, he said, and was deemed to be beneficial to the community:

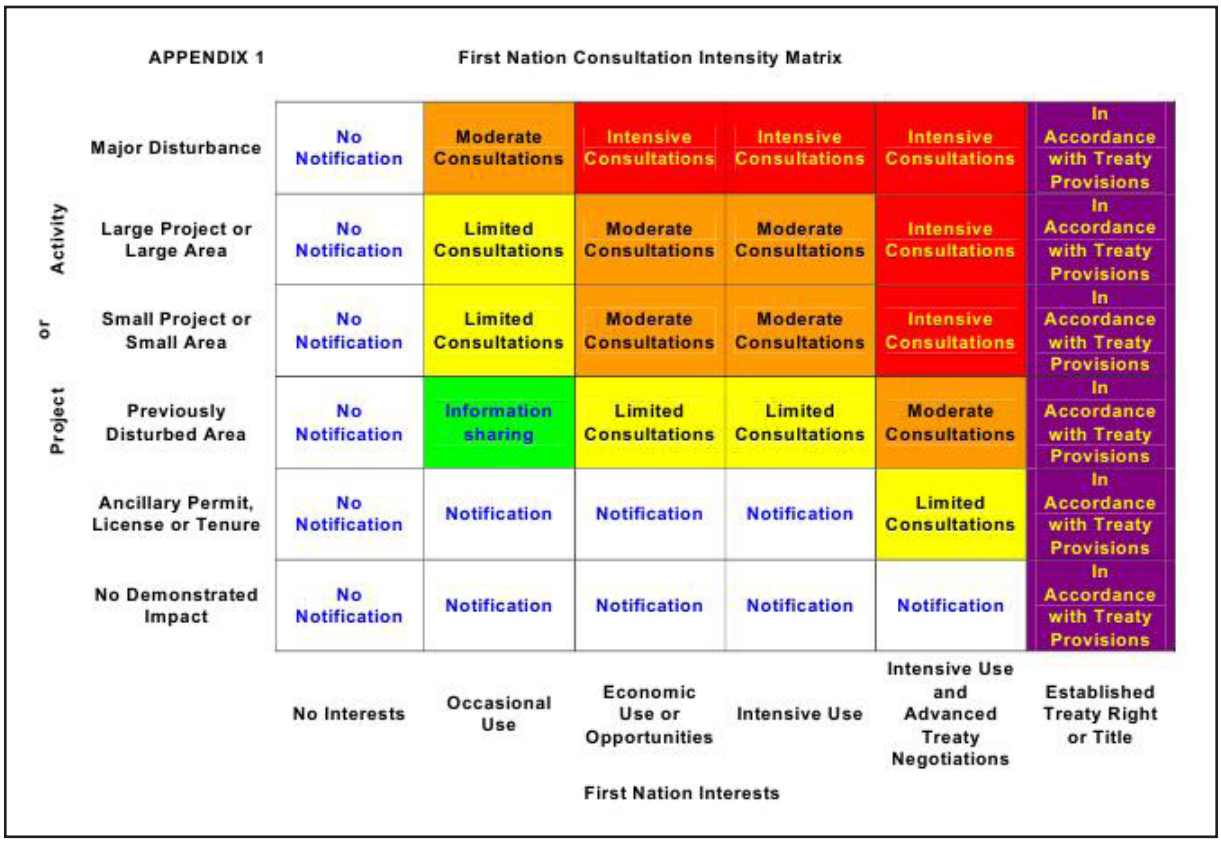

Figure 2. From *First Nation Consultation and Accommodation: A Business Perspective* (Strategic Aboriginal Consulting Inc. 2007) report Appendix 1, illustrating the degree of consultation "required" depending on the impact and First Nation interests in the area. This represents a "checklist" approach to consultation that prevents meaningful relationships and is designed to expedite development. (This graphic is used with permission but does not necessarily reflect the views of the New Relationship Business Group or the Business Council of British Columbia, who commissioned the 2007 report.)

> Anything that can be done that gives the community confidence that the work is being done well, and the work is being done by the right people, and that the community's interests are being taken care of...that's a good thing.

Yet this was not exactly the proponent's main concern. As described by one Golder consultant, when TUS training was proposed, Katabatic's response was, "is it going to slow down the work?" For Katabatic, time is money, this is business, and their bottom line is also the bottom dollar.[2] Yet it was still in their best interests to keep Gitxaała satisfied with the process to avoid a breakdown in the relationship, which could end up in the courts, slow everything down, and cost more money.

During a conference call between Katabatic, Golder, and the Gitxaała Chief Councillor and wider community, representatives of Katabatic repeatedly expressed that their primary concern was to have a product to submit to the government for the Environmental Impact Assessment. They explicitly stated that the information for the TUS belonged to Gitxaała – "it's your people's knowledge" – and agreed that they would not release confidential information; however, they added: "we ask that Gitxaała will not unreasonably withhold the information that we need for [the report to the province]." Succinctly put, they said: "our concern is that we proceed with the project and do an EA that is acceptable to the province and Gitxaała." For Katabatic, this is simply business, and they were clear that the question of Aboriginal

2 One reviewer of this paper commented that such "economic mentalities" are commonplace and the concern of corporations over all facets of development, not just the TUS. This highlights precisely my point, that the real concern is always financial, despite how it was often framed by the consultants as relationship-building, language that Katabatic also drew upon.

Rights and Title was "not a decision for [them] to be involved in."

...according to the Consultants

In the case of the proposed Banks Island wind farm project, Katabatic represents one side of the consultation table and, as the company proposing development, it is in their interest to have this work completed in as timely and cost-effective a manner as possible. This is where the consulting firm, Golder, comes into the picture, hired by the proponent to undertake the Environmental Impact Assessment. This relationship is one of sub-contractor, as described by one of the consultants:

> I had things to say in representing Golder and to a degree representing the company that's hiring us, the project that's put forward ... not advocating for it, but communicating about it, about what is being proposed.

He further clarified:

> My number one obligation is to the people in the communities that I work with. I'm also paid by a particular company, but that ... shouldn't affect my ability to work with the communities here, to develop strong research that will stand up.

For both Katabatic and Golder, the issue of consultation was conceived of entirely within its legal framework. Although the TUS research could help determine Gitxaała's claim to the land and thus the extent to which they would benefit from the development (the "accommodation" part of the "consultation and accommodation" process), Katabatic and Golder made it clear that Aboriginal Rights and Title was not their concern, and that the TUS was merely informing the required Environmental Assessment. On the first day of the TUS training, the consultant was very clear to communicate that the training session was not about what he called "capital-C" consultation, describing this as follows:

> The word consultation ... that sets off alarm bells for a lot of people. Consultation is a legally defined field with legally defined processes. What we are doing here today is not consultation. This is training. ... And even the studies, traditional use studies, is not consultation. It's all sort of, provides information and provides capacity in the community so that consultation can happen better, but it is not consultation. And I want to make that extremely clear ... I want, again, I want everybody to feel very comfortable in this room, in training and working together and discussing. And so, I want to make very clear that that whole issue of consultation is outside of here. We'll talk about it, we'll talk about what it means, and about how the information is collected and used in consultation – but in terms of legally defined consultation, this is not it.

In this way, the political ramifications of the training session and even the TUS itself were dismissed by the consultants as both not part of formal or what they called "capital-C" consultation, and thus as "outside" of the room.

Still, the consultants did feel "there were also political dimensions to the other intersections in the room. ... There are these bigger picture issues that, absolutely, they're right in the room with us too." The intent of the training, however, was not to engage in these issues other than to inform people of the proposed project, what the Traditional Use Study would consist of, and figure out "how this work should be done." This, they insisted, was not part of "capital-C" consultation. Yet, towards these goals, they frequently deferred to community Elders who attended the training sessions, which they noted was strategic:

> It's supposed to be set up so that there are two sets of experts in the room that the trainees learn from. There's experts who are Golder who are social science experts, and there's experts who are Gitxaała, who are traditional knowledge experts... They're there to talk about, how do you approach the knowledge? How do you ask those questions? What's appropriate? How do you make people feel comfortable? How do you follow the cultural protocols? And also, how have projects either worked or failed in the past in the community? A lot of these elders have been involved in those projects and so their feedback is vital, it's an opportunity for them to basically tell us, how do they want it done.

Despite their assertion that consultation was "outside"

Figure 3. Village of Gitxaała as seen from above facing roughly north-east. Photo by author.

of the TUS training process, one consultant admitted that this training session *did*, in fact, serve a consultative role since, as he said, "there's also information that we're sharing that I'm hoping will make people feel more comfortable with what's going forward." They also stressed the need to make the community *trust* the TUS data so that they could later make an informed decision about the wind farm project. One consultant felt that,

> [if] you've got community members that are involved in [the Environmental Assessment], in the science, and doing it, not only is your work improved massively, and for something like traditional use studies, you could never do it without, like it's, it's a fundamental requirement that you have community members working with you. You know, the elders just won't talk otherwise.

Ultimately, their asserted neutrality put the consultants in a precarious position. Golder's reputation is in part based on their ability to conduct unbiased research, yet they were *paid* by the developer, and they worked *for* the proponent; they admittedly wanted to "make people feel more comfortable with what's going forward." This primary relationship with Katabatic fundamentally shaped the consultants' interactions with Gitxaała people from the beginning. In the end, just as the proponent could not remove politics from what they construed as "just business," likewise the consultants were unable to keep politics out of what they labelled as "just training."

...according to the Community

For the community of Gitxaała, consultation is an integral part of the decision-making process when considering any future developments. Clifford White, then-Chief Councillor for Gitxaała, explained:

> Consultation, for Gitxaała means being able to get preliminary information in advance of an agreement being made. This information must be provided in a timely fashion which gives Gitxaała an opportunity not only to digest it and to be able to make informed decisions based on all relevant information and resources ...which would not only include the elected Chief and Council, but also including our hereditary leaders, elders and community members.

In my interviews with Gitxaała community members, three topics were specifically discussed: the

TUS training session and how Golder and Katabatic were interacting with the community; how the project was going to work and how people felt about the wind farm itself; and how the project would affect internal community social relations in Gitxaała. The following sections deal with each aspect separately.

The TUS Training Sessions

During the week of TUS training, discussions about the TUS and the interviewing process stressed that the gathered information would not only assist the Environmental Assessment for the wind project, but would also be beneficial to the community in having their knowledge written down. This, it was suggested, would both help with future negotiations and be of value as simply a record of their cultural knowledge. One community member reflected on these ideas:

> I kind of didn't like it the first day, but when all that stuff came about what we need to know, that, our language, our culture, our traditional ways, when all that came, that hooked me, what we have to do. Our food, everything. Because I'm traditional.

Others were more cautious about the consultants' attempts to engage with the community on issues such as what questions would be asked for the Traditional Use Study:

> I think the dialogue is starting to appear through the Golder Association, but again it's a long arm of wind power. They're talking about interviewing our elders, okay what questions to ask them, our elders? And the questions they're going to ask are one-sided...

Thus although the consultants had said the training is not "capital-C consultation," these questions and topics were felt to be intricately related to the issue of Aboriginal Rights and Title, and to the larger consultative process. One informant stated,

> I'm not happy with the process of Katabatic because they seem to take things for granted... we're still in the consultation process but they're making announcements already, and that's kind of a concern to me, they're assuming that we accept it, their presence in our territory and they need a vehicle to do this...

In this sense, there was a fundamental concern expressed about the relationship between the consultants and the proponents. As one community member put it,

> Sitting in that Golder meeting, there's the long arm of the Katabatic wind power. They were not talking about the protection of the food, they were for the wind power. They strongly endorsed the wind power project.

Indeed, Golder, Katabatic and the government were frequently referred to as one entity or interchangeably – the point being that they were seen as representing the same interests. One informant described these connections:

> Katabatic hired Golder to come in and consult with the community and do the Environmental Assessment and gather information to, to try and help them move ahead and Golder is, my understanding is, Golder is the vehicle.

Conceptually, then, the relationship was between Gitxaała and "them" – the outsiders – coming in and wanting something. Thus, Gitxaała's position was framed as a matter of *protection*.

Just as the consultants, the proponent, and the government became simply "them," the TUS, the training for the TUS, the Environmental Assessment, the wind farm project and resulting potential jobs were conflated to represent one endeavour. One community member described feeling positive about "the project" in general because of its connection to her heritage:

> That's our land too, so I want to be a part of it. I live here. I grew up here. I was born on this island. So I just want to be a part of it because of my grandkids, my future family, my children.

"The project" also became reduced to one of its end products: employment. When asked specifically about conducting TUS interviews with the wider community, this informant explained that

> A lot of people want to be, want employment, so they'll open up their homes if they know what it's all about, you know. Let them know how much

> people are going to be employed. This town's going to be booming for a while, for fifteen years. Lots of money here.

Thus, the Gitxaała community tended to focus on how all of these things – consultants, proponents, TUS, wind project, employment, environment, and Aboriginal Rights and Title – are interconnected. Conversely, Golder, and Katabatic, consistently attempted to draw lines between the various parties, issues, activities, and processes at hand. In this way, what the training session represented for Gitxaała reached far beyond what perhaps was intended by Golder, as one informant described:

> Every time I talk about our land, our water, our seas, the *Delgamuukw* [court case]. And now the government is trying to water it down...the meeting we had last week from the Golder. It's a prime example there of them watering it down...the chairman of that project said it'll be non-political to start with. When we first sat down he said this is a non-political area, and the next breath he took it was all political. It was all political. So this is where we have to be very careful.

The Wind Farm Project

At the beginning of the TUS training sessions, one of the consultants described the wind farm project in detail and speculated on its potential results – again, focused on the promise of employment:

> [Katabatic is] expecting that it's going take ten to fifteen years to build this, of continuous construction, and they would be doing it in phases ... likely with a workforce, just the construction, of around two hundred people. ...This is not a small project we're talking about. It's a large project ... nd certainly for the local community here, if it goes forward, it would mean a lot of change. There would be a lot of jobs. There would be social and economic effects around it ... great if there's jobs, [but] how do we make sure that the communities here are the ones that are getting the jobs? Because that's in everyone's interest. This company does not want to be flying workers in from Newfoundland to be doing this stuff. They would like for it to be local people. What I'm trying to say is that this is a big project, and it has the potential, it has lots of opportunities in it, but it also has the potential to be done the wrong way, in which case all this development might not help.

One consultant then described what he felt were the three different kinds of accommodation: accommodations within the project, such as changes to the where the turbines are built; indirect economic benefits, like jobs and training; and direct benefits, such as monetary payments and revenue-sharing. He stated that "all of those are on the table," but that the goal of the TUS training session and resulting Environmental Assessment was "to provide good information to leadership" and enable them "to make good decisions."

For the community of Gitxaała, concerns about the impact of the development on the environment were in tension with the economic potential of the wind farm to create jobs – all of which was set in the larger context of depleting food resources and an ongoing high unemployment rate. There was a pervasive tension between wanting to protect the environment, upon which their people have depended for subsistence for so long, and wanting to take advantage of economic opportunities, without which Gitxaała may continue to suffer as the reach of Western capitalism and the market economy grows ever longer. As one person put it, there are "lots of us dying to work in this community."

All Gitxaała community members who were interviewed expressed this tension between economic opportunity and maintaining their way of life, and at times seemed to be almost willing away the possibility of environmental damage:

> Where the site's going to be, where the project's going to be. That's where all our food is. So we just have to prove that our food won't be damaged or that it'll still be there. And they did say that if there is damage then we could be compensated. But there's a ninety, ninety-nine percent chance that there won't be any damage.

> I'm positive this wind energy thing is not gonna damage all that food we have out there. It's gonna be still there, we're still going to be picking [our food].

Such confidence in a negligible impact of the wind farm was not expressed by everyone, and there was real concern felt by some that people were already accepting the "accommodation" without knowing yet what they were losing:

> It's almost like saying, what are you prepared to give up to get some of the benefits? You know, it's exactly what they're asking when they do this environmental survey.

Exactly what benefits would result from this project and how these would be managed by the community were also questioned, based on one person's previous experience elsewhere:

> So much money came into the community that the Nation never saw that before. The individuals, you know, their self-esteem came right up to a high. But what do they do with this money? They didn't know and they were just spending, spending ... so there's more than just the consultation process for the jobs, you know, or the project rather. There's a lot of other aspects that we have to consider. So the two hundred jobs, well, hopefully they'll get the training, those that want to participate.

This tension between protecting the environment while pursuing economic opportunity was frequently framed as paralleling "traditional" and "modern" values, addressed more directly by another community member:

> Where do we draw the line for so-called progress? I'm for progress. I'd like to see change in the village. But what do we give up? Do we give up our traditional way? For a long time, we regard the inlet, the Gitxaała inlet, as our grocery store. Well, how long's the grocery store going to last if that high-powered line goes through the water, in our water? I think I can see the change already. We depend on Safeway, you know, Safeway grocery store, we depend on big chain food stores. Where do we draw the line? This is what I want to know. We depend on abalone for hundreds of years, thousands of years, and now it's disappearing.

In this context of competing values between tradition and progress, strengthening cultural and social bonds by documenting cultural knowledge and combating social problems in the community became seen as one of the key benefits of economic opportunity generally, and specifically the wind farm. These sentiments were expressed in connection with the colonial appropriation of lands and policies of cultural genocide:

> What injustice they've done to us, what the government has done to Gitxaała people ... all that land has been just taken away from us. Our culture just about died, just about gone. Our language is just about gone. All our, the way of life changed drastically. That's why I'd like to see Gitxaała change in a very positive manner.

Internal Community Relations

Throughout these interviews, there were comments made about exactly who in the immediate community was involved – in the training, the consultation, the potential employment—and how future social interactions might unfold. In these social interactions, clan alignment and hard feelings between families were often mentioned, and there was clearly competition for employment:

> If Golder didn't come out and do what they did, I probably wouldn't have been an interviewer ... I'm so glad that Golder came here and did that with us, and hired me. *(pause)* Because I'm going to be a part of that project, guaranteed *(laughs)*. I'll do everything I can do to help them and spread the word, I already started.

Several people expressed that they hadn't heard about the wind farm project before the TUS training session was announced, just days before it took place. They felt there was a lack of public notification about such events that affect everybody, and there was suspicion that some people were intentionally withholding information in order to secure access to any potential resources that came from the project.

As part of this discussion, the role of "off-reserve" Gitxaała people was mentioned by several community members, who were concerned that the off-reserves were already against the wind farm project because they would be outside of the potential benefits:

> It's like, 'if it's not my project you can't have it,' sort of thing. You know, and I think that's why the old people were wise in saying, unless you live here, you know, you can't really have a say.

People considered this ill-feeling between on- and off-reserves to be partly responsible for the demise of a previous development proposal, which had come under attack from environmental groups and off-reserve Gitxaała members. As a result of this, one person described,

> The damage is done already in the spirits, and the relationship of the people, families, families are split ... any other project comes along, that's what's going to spark the continuous split [in the community].

Despite this division in the community, another community member recognized potential in this project to bring Gitxaała people together:

> Our off-reserves are going to have to move home and live here to get employed, so this town's going to be full of people, and that's going to be awesome for this community because they have to live here to work. So if our off-reserves come home, it'd be all the better for the community...most of them have their own houses here, they're just sitting empty. They move to [Prince] Rupert for employment.

To understand these concerns, context is critical. In 2007, Gitxaała had a population of about 500 people, most lived off the reserve for employment, and the unemployment rate in Gitxaała was 75% (Stats. Can. 2006). People continue to be impacted by government policies that systematically undermine Gitxaała's ability to engage in and benefit from the economic system of the colonial society. Thus, "the project" seen as a whole came to represent employment, with the attendant promise of improved quality of life and a future for their grandchildren.

Yet it meant even more than this. Since European contact, the disruption in the community has been profound, and the incredible tension between concepts of "tradition" and "progress," mirroring concerns for the environment and culture versus economic opportunity, are felt perhaps most pointedly by the younger generations. Everyone I spoke with commented that the youth and the elders are not talking, meaning that cultural knowledge is not being passed on. This relationship is strained in part because the youth are torn, influenced by Western values of gross material wealth, modernity and urbanism – considered the measures of "success" – so that tradition comes to be seen as backwards and old-fashioned, a relic, and poor – in a word, as "failure."

The importance of training youth was stressed by several people, who felt that "they are our greatest resource if we give them the right tools." In particular, the communication gap between elders and the youth was repeatedly emphasized as a primary concern, and it was felt that the TUS could be used to improve this. Yet although the youth were often the subject of discussion, they were not represented in attendance at the meetings. Among youth I spoke with, there was some resentment that they were being left out of the conversation:

> When it comes to taking the time, training us and giving us the jobs that we apply for, we're not old enough or smart enough yet, I think they just look at us like we're little stupid kids or something *(laughs)*. And they always say we're the backbone of this community, we're the ones that are going to take them to the top and everything, they don't even give us that chance to do anything like that.

Reflecting both on the consultants leading the TUS training, and the ethnographic project of which I was a part, he also commented that

> It takes other people to come out and others to teach us the things that we think we need to know.

This feeling of resentment was intimately connected with a deep sense of isolation from the wider society, again expressed by pitting "impoverished" tradition against modernity, aligned with wealth and "progress":

> [Our great grandparents] tried to get this place, this village ahead of the times instead of leaving us back in the 1800s like they are now. Because I feel like we're still living back in the caveman days. It's just, everything, all our laws and stuff out here have to do with years and years ago...I think we're the

> only village that's laying at the bottom of the chain. Everyone else is forward like they're supposed to be, Port Simpson is making money off of their own village, and like the Nisga'a are their own government now, and us, we're still stuck.

Ultimately, negotiating through internal social conflict was recognized as one of the main hurdles resulting from the community being in consultation over economic development. The way through this negotiation, according to one community member, was to be unified in purpose by looking to the *aywaax* (oral history and traditional teachings):

> It's got to be revived totally and implemented totally so it'll dictate effectively exactly what we have to do, not just for personal gains, it's got to be the well-being of generations to come because that's why it was set up in the first place. You know, it's brought us to this point, and [our ancestors] entrusted a huge territory to us, and we are obligated now to do the same for the future generations. We've gotta look thousands of years down the road, not just at the tip of our noses, you know, not just two generations, thousands of generations.

The Context of Consultation: Capitalism and Colonialism

Whatever else consultation may be, it is certainly a relationship – but what exactly is its dynamic? Katabatic wanted something from Gitxaała that might have made the company a lot of money, but Gitxaała could have also benefitted from this project, as was pointed out repeatedly by the consultants. Yet consultation for the wind farm project is not just about "consultation for the wind farm project." It is part of a long legacy of outsiders coming in, making promises and asking for something, and then, more often than not, leaving with whatever they wanted without fulfilling their promises. This is the historical context in which the wind farm project must be situated – and it is one of colonialism, and capitalism, and the social context is one of disruption. One question, then, is this: if the TUS proposed was well beyond the scope of any *required* consultation, why was Katabatic paying for it?

For Gitxaała, the TUS became a way to document cultural knowledge of places and practices – to record tradition and thus in a sense save, preserve and protect Gitxaała culture, what it is to be Gitxaała – while still pursuing economic development, ensuring a future for the community. By extension, the TUS, Environmental Assessment and wind farm, viewed as one project, was seen as a way to mend existing divisions in the community, bringing people together with a common purpose. Yet competition to access project benefits also exacerbated conflict in the community by playing on old rifts, especially between those living off-reserve and those in the village. This produced a tension that prevented Gitxaała from engaging in consultation as a united front. On the one hand, this may ease the way for "outsiders" to drive a hard bargain, while on the other, internal community conflict may actually prevent the proponent from achieving the consensus it needs to proceed. In this complicated political and social arena, the need for protection for Gitxaała was quite real.

Although the TUS was arguably designed to bring Indigenous perspectives to the fore, within the framework of consultation for development, Indigenous priorities, concerns and cosmology are devalued and de-privileged (Markey 2001). As one Gitxaała member put it, "both the federal and provincial government, they don't know how to use [Traditional Ecological Knowledge] in the system because [we're] not experts according to their standards." In this context therefore, the TUS is little more than a modern-day trade-bead—a goodwill gesture to make the community trust the consultants and developers, by showing them that they respect Gitxaała culture, values and traditions, and that *these values, not profit, are driving development* (Bakan 2004:32). Katabatic and, by extension, Golder were therefore directly appealing to Gitxaała's fear of losing their cultural knowledge when their Elders pass on. Likewise, the offer of employment was one that a community with one of the highest unemployment rates in the province, simply could not refuse. Thus it was a compromise, for what was really being asked was, what are you prepared to give up?

Therein lies the crux. In a community with high unemployment, that is still coping with the effects of colonialism, feeling divided and alienated both within and without, and trying desperately to hold onto their

culture and teach their children the language and the traditional foods while their kids want McDonald's and iPods – in this context, the TUS ceases to be a tool of empowerment, and becomes instead grease for the wheels of development. It capitalizes on the vulnerability of the community, playing on their hopes for their children's future and their fears of missing that one golden opportunity that will both save the past and secure a future.

In this context, and regardless of their personal beliefs or intentions, consultants are put in the position of representing the proponent *and their interests*, and those interests are wholly financial. Several times, the consultants stressed that, if the people of Gitxaała completed the TUS and still did not want the wind farm to proceed, then that would be it – it would not proceed. At the time, I felt this was being said as reassurance, to emphasize that Gitxaała was in control, and I do think this was the intent. But after speaking with community members, and thinking about the unemployment rate, social problems, poverty – I realized that, when it was said that "if Gitxaała doesn't want this, it won't happen," it was not perceived by Gitxaała people as reassurance: rather, it was seen as a threat:

> They were saying 'if, if, if,' that kind of turned me off, because I want, you know, all this training, is it going to be for nothing ... I want it here, for our future. *We need it*. So now we just have to persuade the public. Get them to buy in and ... like it too, and I'm sure they will because it's positive to me, something that we need out here.

From Consultation to Collaboration

Throughout this research, I often reflected on the concept of accountability in anthropological research, and it was in studying the consultants at work, as practising anthropologists, that I became concerned about my own "collaborative" research and the relationships I was forming in the Gitxaała community. From the beginning of the TUS training session, the consultants frequently repeated how important it was for TUS interviewers to "make people feel comfortable" in their discussions. Increasingly, I came to see this tactic as a form of social manipulation (La Salle 2010), and it was the following comment uttered by one consultant that finally confirmed my suspicions and deepened my discomfort, both with Golder's role in the process of consultation, and more broadly with anthropology in general. He said:

> for something like traditional use studies ... it's a fundamental requirement that you have community members working with you. You know, *the elders just won't talk otherwise*.

Colonialism can be defined as the exploitation by a stronger country of a weaker one, and the use of the weaker country's resources to strengthen and enrich the stronger country. My position is that the relationship of consultation is predicated on precisely such exploitation, wherein the TUS becomes a tool of manipulation, used to placate the disenfranchised Indigenous community to ensure development can proceed. Within this larger ideological structure of imperialism, it does not matter how well-intentioned the consultants are, where their sympathies lie or what personal values and beliefs they hold. They, like all of us, are operating in a structure that is premised on growth and stops for no person.

Lest I throw stones at glass houses, I came to recognize that academia as a knowledge economy is subject to the same critique as any other venture under capitalism. Academic research can be analysed in much the same way – making people feel comfortable so "we" can continue "our" research. The buzzword today is "collaboration" (Lassiter 2005; Nicholas et al. 2011), commonly viewed as more "ethically conscious" research (Fluehr-Lobban 2008:175), and while "collaboration" may include more community input than "consultation," both remain on the spectrum of *sharing* power, not relinquishing it (La Salle 2010; La Salle 2013).

Thus, it may not matter how honestly researchers are committed to collaborative research so long as they are operating within and rewarded by a structure that is premised on social inequality (Dabulkis-Hunter 2002). Can this exploitative power dynamic really be disrupted simply by inviting the people, the "objects" of study, to become partners in it? Or is this a form of cooptation (Alfred 2009), one that just makes everyone *feel better* about perpetuating the exploitation that may be *inherent* in anthropology?

Conclusions: Community Control

"Capital-C" consultation is a complicated process that impacts everyone involved. For the developers, consultation is not just business: it is one step in the long historical march that is imperialism and exploitation, a path they may not even be aware they are treading. For the consultants, consultation is not just business; it is a platform for an internal struggle between the ethics, values and intentions of the individual, and the structuring framework that restricts the ability of these same individuals to always do what they feel is right.

And for the community, consultation is not just business: people's whole lives are affected when outsiders come in wanting something, when their community leaders engage with outsiders in negotiation, when the promise of empoyment is on the table, and the threat of lost opportunity looms large in the background. These are complex issues involving concepts of "tradition," "progress" and social well-being, and these impacts will not be lessened when outsiders insist that it is not political or it is just business. It never is *just* business.

When I left that summer, Gitxaała had just mobilized their own community-based company, Gitxaała Environmental Monitoring (GEM), which they hoped would take over Golder's role on this project and those to come[3]:

> I think the Gitxaała should be in control of their own studies and what's going to happen in Gitxaała. The Gitxaała people will do their own survey for their own survival for Gitxaała's sake.

It cannot be stressed enough how critical it is for Indigenous Nations to have control over any research being conducted on, for or about themselves, particularly when it comes to documenting cultural knowledge and heritage, which are the building blocks of all social identity – the past, present and future of a people. In this engagement, the people of Gitxaała are right to feel that they need to protect themselves, and the best protection comes through projects like GEM, designed to ensure that the Nation has control – over who is involved, what research is completed and how the information is used.

Like Gitxaała, other First Nations have established departments in their Band offices or even their own corporations to handle any environmental or archaeological impact assessments required in their territory (e.g., Katzie Development Corporation, Nl'akapxm Nation Development Corporation). Such companies effectively replace consultants-hired-by-proponents with internal staff, First Nation and non-Indigenous alike, to design culturally-appropriate research strategies and prepare reports and make suggestions based on the Nation's own interests (Bunten 2011:68).

Do these First Nation-based consulting firms and development corporations actually give the Nation control over decision-making in the development process? Or is the main benefit that of local employment, essentially a form of pre-emptive accommodation? The answers are uncertain as these examples are still the exceptions that prove the rule: First Nations still largely have the role of *responding* to letters of consultation rather than leading negotiations, TEK remains mostly unincorporated into assessments and management plans despite the many traditional use studies completed (CIER 2009), and First Nations are significantly hindered by a lack of staff and funding to engage in what is often a complex, lengthy and legal process (Levesque 2010:8). Significantly, these barriers to participation are not shared by either government or private industry.

For anthropologists involved in this process, facilitating approaches that challenge the consultative model and replace it with a relationship where the Nation is in control, is one way to contribute. A critical step is to situate ourselves in history. When anthropologists go into Indigenous communities, they are not simply individuals, nor do they only represent one company, corporation or university. They represent *every* outsider who has ever come into the community – manipulated them, lied to them, stolen from them, and betrayed them – for their own benefit (Thomas 1994; Smith 1999). Anthropologists must therefore be critical of their involvement in and

3 The Katabatic wind farm project has not yet proceeded and remains in the pre-application stage, the first stage of the Environmental Assessment process. It is also unclear whether Golder ever completed the Traditional Use Study discussed in this research. I have been unable to confirm details surrounding these events beyond hearsay and speculation.

approaches to working *with* communities *for* developers. Likewise, they must be sure that the work done in the name of "collaboration" reflects a *real* shift in the power dynamic rather than empty rhetoric. Social change simply is not that easy, and my research on consultation in Gitxaała demonstrated just how difficult it is for individuals, no matter how well-meaning, to overcome the exploitative structures in which we *all* operate.

In large part because of its legacy of collecting information to ease the takeover of lands and people by colonial governments, anthropology has been called the handmaiden of imperialism (Asad 1973). My greatest fear is that we still are, especially when the bottom line is the bottom dollar of big business. Central to this role has been the perhaps unwitting manipulation by anthropologists, academic and applied, of communities, in practising a discipline that "mimics friendship, but isn't friendship." So perhaps "greasing the wheels" by making people comfortable is not the best approach for anthropologists to assume, for this manipulates, and becomes a vehicle for capitalism, for colonialism. Perhaps insisting that training or research is not "capital-C" consultation, and that issues of politics are "outside" of the room, is not only naïve, but is actually lying. If being frank and honest with people results in their discomfort, in their being armed with caution, and ultimately in the creation of Indigenous-controlled research projects...well, perhaps this is a good thing. It is at least a good place to start.

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The Student Commodity: Labour and Neoliberal Ideology in Public Education

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ABSTRACT: This paper attempts to analyze some mechanisms of neoliberal ideology in the public university system. Drawing upon political economy of communication resources we propose that one can assess the aforementioned mechanisms as a type of audience commodity work by which neoliberal ideology incorporates students into the process of ideological production, the goal of which is to shape student's understanding of education and self as a marketable commodity. In making this argument, the paper modifies Dallas Smythe's conception of the audience commodity and introduces the notion of the student-commodity. We argue that, ultimately, the role of the public university in a neoliberal regime is to produce the student-commodity and sell it to the corporate sector. These are examples of what Smythe calls the "consciousness industry," and we argue is the core productive activity of the public university system.

KEYWORDS: Dallas Smythe, audience commodity, labour, public universities, neoliberalism

Introduction

In 2001 Chris Barrett and Luke McCabe, two about to be high school graduates from New Jersey, created a website offering themselves as "walking billboards to companies" by which they meant that they "would put corporate logos on their clothes, wear a company's sunglasses, use their golf clubs, eat their pizza, drink their soda, listen to their music, or drive their cars." Doing this would be in return for a sponsorship of their college education and living expenses. (Associated Press 2000)

In an online interview posted on their website the then teens stated that they had even developed a "business plan to show the benefits to any potential sponsors" and that this decision was inspired by celebrities' endorsement of corporate products. The interview ended with Barrett and McCabe's pledge of full commitment to the potential corporate sponsors: "We're going to be working constantly for our sponsors" they emphasized. While at some point this project might have started as a playful exercise by teenagers possibly anxious about the cost of university education, as the story gained publicity, and with it the possibility to actually make the hair-brained scheme work, so these two decided to seriously pursue this strategy. Eventually, after negotiating with several corporations, First USA – one of the largest US credit card companies – agreed to sponsor the two boys in return for unspecified services.

Barrett and McCabe were featured in Joel Bakan's 2003 documentary *The Corporation*. In the film they claimed that they do not consider their decision to neither be sellouts or shills, but rather a strategy to secure their education (their livelihoods), without having to take excessive loans. For Barrett and McCabe, brought up in a society that has learned to satisfy all its wants and needs in terms of commod-

ity exchange, it is considered a perfectly reasonable thing to transform themselves into commodities in order to attain another commodity, education.

At first glance it appears that Barrett and McCabe have been subjected to a veil of reification which prevents them from seeing the real social relations that operate in their society and contributes to their alienation. Recall that Lukacs in his chapter on 'Reification and Class Consciousness' points to the perception of this type of action though being naturalized as actually perpetuating alienation. "The transformation of the commodity relation into a thing," he writes,

> stamps its imprint upon the whole consciousness of man; his qualities and abilities are no longer an organic part of his personality, they are things which he can 'own' or 'dispose of' like the various objects of the external world. [Lukacs 1972:100]

Reification could explain why, instead of questioning the system for its turning of primary public social goods, such as education, into commodities, the two teens not only enact the rules of the system, but by employing their creativity become role models of ideological behaviour. This ensures the system's thriving and reproduction. Moreover, it has hallmarks of the recursive nature of reification. As Lukacs explains,

> Just as the capitalist system continuously produces and reproduces itself economically on higher and higher levels, the structure of reification progressively sinks more deeply, more fatefully and more definitely into the consciousness of man. [Lukacs 1972:93]

Selling themselves as commodity is an emulation of other reified subjects, with the status of celebrities, within late capitalism. As Barrett and McCabe explain their choice:

> We were…thinking about all the sports stars and actors and how they get corporate sponsored to do what they do best—which is act, play sports and look good in front of the camera. I thought, why can't normal people get sponsored to do what they do best? [BrandEra Times 2001]

Lukacs purports that commodities become "constitutive of society" when they "penetrate society in all its aspects and remold it in its own image."

However, while this "veil of reification" explanation may account for the general prevailing conditions in which such consciousness comes into existence, by itself it is an incomplete explanation, at least for this case. This is because it misses the coercive change in behaviour from one of jest, and perhaps even one ridiculing the exorbitant cost of higher education, to one of market championship and entrepreneurship. As a better explanation, one that can accommodate the change in behaviour and beliefs, we propose instead a tripartite explanation involving the convergence of consciousness, state, and market. The primary benefit of this tripartite convergence explanation is, as we will show, that it is better able to attend to the nuances of involving persons co-opted into, or consenting to, ideological formation. Indirectly, our tripartite convergence explanation can reconcile accounts which attribute ideological production to mutually exclusive single sites. For example some accounts argue that the state disrupts the market from being able to function as an independent site of ideological production, while other accounts claim that the market undercuts the coercive capacity of the state. The infighting between these types of accounts is not sufficiently sensitive to how ruling elites use both as venues to extend their interests.

To advance our explanation, the paper will examine how good natured students like Barrett or McCabe become involved in ideological formation. Importantly, however, we wish to emphasis that in our explanation, Barrett and McCabe are the subjects of their own labour; that is so say that they do the ideological labour required to convince themselves that they can be treated as commodities. In other words, while the preconditions exist such that their reorientation is possible, they themselves do the work of reorienting their worldviews.

In our account, students are themselves doing the work required to prepare themselves for labour positions. In *Labour and Monopoly Capital*, a work that examines labour relations in industrial capitalism, Harry Braverman explains that in the era of

monopoly capitalism the term working class can encompass almost anyone. In this sense, the majority of students can be viewed as either the future working class that will be employed primarily in various positions of the capitalist enterprise, or in service to that enterprise.

As a case study, Barrett and McCabe offer a useful means to tint the various mechanics at play within the public university system and hence provide good examples of the aforementioned convergence within neoliberal public institutions and the logic thereof. The case study demonstrates how public institutions facilitate the transformation of the citizen into commodities and consumers. This process is a key site of capitalist ideological production.

The Convergence of Consciousness, State, and Market

In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels state that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas. ... The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production." (1969:39) Yet, if in previous epochs (slave-owning societies, feudalism) the relationships of power and the rulers of society are clear, capitalism masks its exploitative nature by the existence of the market where mass produced products can be exchanged. Jorge Larrain explains Marx's notion of ideology:

> The exchange of equivalents by free individuals in the market is seen on the surface of society and conceals the hidden extraction of surplus value in the process of production, it naturally tends to be reproduced in the minds of both capitalists and laborers as equality and freedom, the linchpins of capitalist ideology.

Larrain continues,

> The emphasis is put in Marx not on ideology being a worldview, or a discourse consisting of articulated concepts and images by means of which we try to make sense of social existence; the emphasis is put on ideology being a specific form of distortion, not just false consciousness – its function of sustaining domination and reproducing the capitalist system by masking contradictions. [Larrain 1983:56-57]

Marx's concept of commodity fetishism directly relates to the characteristics of capitalism as a concealment of social relations, hiding the real nature of the system. Marx defines commodity fetishism as the substitution of social human relations with interactions between "things." "A definite social relation between men," Marx writes, "assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things" (Marx 1977:165). Under capitalism the products of human labour are assigned exchange value in the form of money and become commodities. Because of their exchange value on the market those commodities are not perceived as what they are, simply products of human labour. Rather they appear naturally to have a force of their own. (Marx 1977:167) Moreover, to quote Marx, "these commodities conceal the real social relations that take place during their process of production." Instead "their own social action takes the form of the action of objects, which rule the producers instead of being ruled by them." (Marx 1977:169) Relevant to the forthcoming analysis, it is important to remember that the process of commodity fetishism mystifies the domination of the capitalist mode of production, making it difficult to perceive, both to the people involved, and those analyzing it.

Lukacs' reification takes its cue from the mystification and domination of the commodity form. However, rather than confining the concept to the economy, Lukacs expresses the viewpoint that commodity fetishism is the central structural problem of modern capitalist society. This is because it conceals the true nature of people's relations with one another. Lukacs calls the outcome of this expanded process of commodity fetishism reification. The most important aspect, for Lukacs, is that "reification requires that society should learn to satisfy all its needs in terms of commodity exchange" (1972:91). Certainly Barrett and McCabe were trying to fulfill their desire and need for education by commodity exchange; except where most others were to exchange money for education, they were prepared to exchange themselves for it.

Central to the Marxist critique of ideology is that it conceals the social history of production, thus hindering the social good from being able to fully develop. As it applies to Barrett and McCabe,

they are unable to perceive the value and social good of education from a position that does not defer in part to conventional capitalistic conceptions of production.

At the time that Lukacs was writing, he claimed that "the internal organization of a factory [contains] in concentrated form the whole structure of capitalist society" (1972:90). Given, however, the changing nature of the economy, one area that could be considered akin to the factory is the public university, insofar as it is a concentrated site of basic knowledge production that the economy draws upon, prepares persons for diverse types of production, and comprises, as per Braverman's definition introduced above, the working class and soon to be working classes. Furthermore it has the characteristic capitalist division of labour, and practices that come as a result of the mode of production needed for the mass production of commodities. The public university thus is in a unique position to define relations between individuals and transform their consciousness.

As reification applies to the public university, specialization in one sphere leads to the destruction of the image of the whole. Thus, knowledge can easily become deprived of context. Reification and specialization are characteristic of the same process that has profoundly negative consequences for human consciousness, because it prevents the person from seeing the real processes operating in capitalism. "As the process advanced and forms became more complex and less direct," Lukacs writes "it became increasingly difficult and rare to find anyone penetrating the veil of reification" (1972:86). For example, when a person hears the expression 'diamonds are forever' one does not think of the commodity chain, possibly involving horrible exploitation and genocide, that turns rough diamonds into precious commodities. Rather the commercial symbolism conceals the real history of the product and its exchange on the market. This inability to imagine the whole assures that the system continues to reproduce more easily than if this labour process was known. The same principles operate in public universities. Here the labour process makes it difficult for students to question the purpose of the institution as a whole, or to properly set themselves in relation to that whole. It is unlikely that Barrett and McCabe know neither the labour process nor the labour history of the institution they aspire to enter. They mostly see it as a route to satisfy personal aspirations.

Lukacs' conception of capitalism was as an economic system dominating social life, shaping social relations and consciousness in accordance with the needs of the established economic order. In his analysis of the position of the worker in a system of monopoly capitalism, written fifty years later after Lukacs' primary work, Braverman made similar observations:

> [Monopoly] capitalist production takes over the totality of individual, family and social needs and, in subordinating them to the market, also reshapes them to serve the needs of capital. [1974:271]

And

> [It] is a process that involves economic and social changes on the one side, profound changes in psychological and affective patterns on the other. [1974:277}

In classical Marxian analysis economic production forms the base of a capitalist society and thus is a fundamental aspect of its existence. In *Capital* Marx writes:

> My view is that each particular mode of production, and the relations of production corresponding to it at each given moment, in short the economic structure of society, is the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness and that the mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. [1977:175 n35]

In other words, the economic base determines the superstructure that forms social and political life. Yet, Althusser points out that the reproduction of the conditions of production is fundamental for the existence of the capitalist system (Althusser 1971:124). But for reproduction to take place, a belief system that society accepts as normal and that promotes the value of this reproduction is required. The ideas and beliefs of society are parts of the superstructure. In

Althusserian theory the superstructure takes a primary role and becomes the necessary condition for the existence of the economic base. For Althusser, ideology always manifests in meanings of material practices, rituals and institutions. Thus, an examination of the meanings of the institutional purpose of the public university can be one means to explore the workings of the economic base.

Althusser differentiates between the coercive structures of the State, the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and those that operate by forming of belief systems, the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA). Even though both RSA and ISA combine the use of repression and ideology, the former functions primarily by repression and the later functions primarily by ideology. The ISAs are "multiple, distinct, relatively autonomous" and consist of the educational system, the religious systems, the political system, the family, cultural institutions, and communications. But what unifies the ISAs is the presence of ruling class' ideology (Althusser 1971:142). All ISAs contribute to the same result: the reproduction of the relations of production, i.e. capitalist relations of exploitation (Althusser 1971:146).

According to Althusser, the educational system in modern capitalism is the most important ISA, where children learn the skills to sustain the capitalist system.

> I believe that the ideological State apparatus which has been installed in the dominant position in mature capitalist social formations as a result of a violent political and ideological class struggle against the old dominant ideological State Apparatus, is the educational ideological apparatus. [1971:145]

From Althusser's perspective the primary function of ideology is to constitute individuals as subjects to a higher authority. Ideology interpellates subjects. He terms this higher authority the Absolute Subject, around which all other subjects orbit and determine their various courses of action (1971:168). In the case of neoliberal ideology this higher authority is the ruling class's version of market.

In Althusser's view ideology always manifests itself in practice. The behaviour of Chris Barrett and Luke McCabe demonstrates this notion: their decision to act in such a manner could not have been prompted if the existing social relations did not permit this act, if the existing social relations deemed it inappropriate. It is precisely because neoliberal ideology's social relations exist, that Barrett and McCabe think it is perfectly normal to become corporate billboards. Their website shows that they acted out of the realization that this was a savvy business tactic to achieve success. Thus, they see themselves as individuals who are able to market themselves and reap the rewards of their adeptness, rather than as products of the capitalist system, who can be sold on the market, that has grown to determine all aspects of human existence. They simply acted in the ways that neoliberalism expected them to act – like good subjects. Additionally, since ideology permits no viable alternatives, Barrett and McCabe were rendered incapable of comprehending a different system whose economic structure permits different social relations. The process of reproduction becomes complete through the role that another major ISA, the media plays. In various major networks, such as CNN, NBC, FOX, ABC, and numerous newspapers and magazines, the two teenagers are presented as another success story that can only happen in America (Giroux 2002:426). The Barrett-McCabe case is an example of how education is perceived as a commodity and how students perceive themselves as such.

The Neoliberal Restructuring of Education and its Impact

Keeping Althusser's aforementioned comments in mind, it would be a misnomer to treat neoliberalism exclusively as an economic form. Rather we consider it to be a convergence where the ruling classes have captured the state and use political and economic means to establish a mechanism design which skews privileges and resources to themselves at the expense of the working class. In this sense, neoliberalism is by no means a laissez-faire capitalism, or antagonistic to state economic planning or policy, but rather requires direct intervention into the public life to create their preferential mechanism design, followed by a commensurate mobilization of state and public sector productive capacities to support this practice.

Whereas the classical liberal economy revolves around the fairness of exchange, neoliberalism emphasises the creation and immediate extraction of value as per the purpose of the aforementioned mechanism design. One method of doing so is to disinvest people of their capacity to circulate value amongst their local circumstances, and extract that value elsewhere. It is trickle up economics.

To assist in this, a successful neoliberal governance regime requires a process of organizing subject's consciousness to respond in particular ways, and a state apparatuses whose objective is to treat individuals as subservient to the power elite's interests. Through concrete policies the state both rewards behaviour and attitudes driven by economic self-interest and punishes those groups that are not economically savvy enough to adapt to the new rules of the game. An example of the first movement is the states' regulation of laws and economic sectors, while an example of the second is the states' reduction of social welfare policies that ameliorate the conditions of the most vulnerable.

As Read (2009) argues neoliberalism masks class differences and exploitation by presenting a picture of society where all are competitive economic actors driven by incentive structures. The key to success in this environment is "human capital" – or acquiring and nurturing skills that increase benefits and decrease costs. This is what produces the neoliberal subjects. If, as Harvey has shown, Fordism aimed to discipline workers into consumer subjects through the practices of scientific management and affordable pay that stimulated the consumption of the produced commodities, neoliberalism forms subjects through re-regulation and alienation. Ultimately, "individuality is reduced to the endless pursuit of mass-mediated interests, pleasures, and commercially produced lifestyles" (Giroux 2002:426). Well-being is understood as the ability to reproduce labour, a cost borne by individuals themselves.

At the level of ideology, the rhetoric of neoliberalism, at least with regard to the public sector, is that it should be structured according to market principles, the management of public goods being informed by the logic of market utility. This means that the aforementioned things are no longer supported by wide spread taxation, but a pay-as-you-go model. There is however a say-do problem here. Neoliberals appeal to free trade, free markets, or economic entrepreneurship for the purposes of open competition, while their actions suggest anything but. Therefore we should be cautious not to be fooled by the rhetoric of neoliberalism. Recall that Marx understood the process of exchange to conceal the exploitative production process as giving the ideological base of capitalism, so too must one not be caught up in the concealing process itself.

Wendy Brown captures the essence of neoliberal rationality that has assigned a very specific role to the state. She writes that it is to disseminate market values to all institutions and social action, even when the market relations do not exist. (see Brown 2005:40) She argues that neoliberalism erases the discrepancies between economic and moral behaviour. Consequently any form of action, as long as it is prompted by economic incentives, becomes permissible. Further, she points to a qualitative difference between the constituted subject under liberal capitalism and the constituted subject under neoliberalism. Whereas in liberal capitalism, the citizen is the legal subject of the state, under neoliberalism, subjects are conditioned to respond to economic signals, and to think of themselves primarily in these terms. This is why the neoliberal state promotes self-interest, investment and competition. As Brown points out,"the state ... must construct and construe itself in market terms, develop policies and promulgate a political culture that treats citizens exclusively as rational economic actors in every sphere of life." (Brown 2006:694) In other words, a successful neoliberal governance regime requires a process of social conditioning. Hence, the success of neoliberal policies depends on a process of measures designed by state apparatuses whose objective is to shape individuals as particular types of subjects.

Hyslop-Margison and Sears give a clear account of how the neoliberal ideology restructures societies on a global scale and impacts perceptions of education:

> Neoliberal ideology removes the economic sphere from moral or social discussion by portraying these latter realms of discourse as entirely dependent on

> the former. In other words, appropriate social and moral action is determined by what works for the market, and what works for the market, according to the prevailing logic, is neoliberalism. All other spheres of life are correspondingly designed to address the needs of the marketplace and any interference with market logic becomes unthinkable let alone possible. Sadly, for younger students who have lived "inside" this worldview their entire lives, their ability to even imagine a different social structure is barely perceptible. [2006:11]

Furthermore, as Giroux points out, neoliberalism translates into the colonizing of the public sphere; everything that is not operating in accordance with the laws of profit is either turned to operate that way or squeezed out (2002:430). In that sense education is not an exception.

Neoliberalism commodifies public universities through the corporate restructuring of programs, redirecting research thorough changing the incentive structures, involving universities in public-private-partnership, threatening academic freedom, attacking teaching unions, transforming university spaces into places of advertising of corporate values indebting and employing students as corporate salesmen. Henry Giroux illustrates how the ideological language of neoliberalism stamps its mark on the educational system. He writes that "the corporate commercial paradigm describes…students as customers, admitting college students as 'closing a deal' and university presidents as CEOs" (Giroux 2002:430) Furthermore, "academic disciplines are valued according to their exchange value in the market," while students "take courses that provide them with the cachet they need to sell themselves to the highest bidder" (Giroux 2002:432).

Althusser argues that the school's task as an ISA is to drum into the student the know-how needed to reproduce the capitalist system. In the case of the neoliberal shift the emphasis is on classes that can lead to financially beneficial jobs in the corporate world. As public universities become dependent on corporate capital, "those areas of study" Giroux writes "that don't translate into substantial profits get either marginalized, underfunded, or eliminated"(2002:434). Usually, as Nussbaum (2010) notes, these are humanities-type programs and disciplines, which are, with good reason, reluctant to demonstrate econometric based returns on investments or ideological servitude. While there are many shared resources across the university, the distribution and allocation of other types of rewards and resources is uneven, with departments with closer ideological coherence to ruling classes, or responding to their incentive structures, given preferential treatment.

Public universities starved of finances increasingly rely on corporate money for support, which gives corporations some influence over the educational process and the type of research conducted. Giroux points to the fact that in highly ranked public universities such as UC Berkeley, business representatives sit on faculty committees that determine funding for research. These trends change the role and function of academia: "As the boundaries between public values and commercial interests become blurred, many academics appear less as disinterested truth seekers than as operatives for business interests" (Giroux 2002:433).

This process has a direct impact on the students' perceptions of education. Jeffrey Williams, commenting on the ideological ramifications of student debt under neoliberal capitalism, demonstrates how debt encapsulates the notion of education as a commodity. It is worth quoting him at length:

> First, debt teaches that higher education is a consumer service. It is a pay-as-you-go transaction, like any other consumer enterprise, subject to the business franchises attached to education. All the entities making up the present university multiplex reinforce this lesson, from the Starbucks kiosk in the library and the Burger King counter in the dining hall, to the Barnes & Noble bookstore…Second, debt teaches career choices. It teaches that it would be a poor choice to wait on tables while writing a novel or become an elementary school teacher for $24,000. Third, debt teaches a worldview. Debt teaches that the primary ordering principle of the world is the capitalist market, and that the market is natural, inevitable, and implacable. Fourth, debt teaches civic lessons. It teaches that the state's role is to augment commerce, abetting consuming, which spurs producing; its role is not to interfere with the

> market, except to catalyze it. Fifth, debt teaches the worth of a person. Worth is measured not according to a humanistic conception of character, cultivation of intellect and taste, or knowledge of the liberal arts, but according to one's financial potential. Last, debt teaches a specific sensibility. It inducts students into the realm of stress, worry, and pressure, reinforced with each monthly payment for the next fifteen years. [Williams 2006]

Parallel with the growing debt is the transformation of public universities into spaces that resemble markets. In this environment it is not surprising that students think and act in terms of commodities.

The Student Commodity

At this point the question is: can one view public education under neoliberalism as the producer of the student-commodity that works to reproduce global capitalism with conformity and obedience? We have already indicated how higher public education has been increasingly infiltrated by the interests of big business and remodeled to serve its purpose. The important point here to detail is how students are not only packaged to sell to corporations, but also how they do the labour of this process themselves. That is, that the exploitation of students occurs in such a fashion that they work on their own ideological production. In this section we will be drawing upon the logic of Dallas Smythe's audience commodity, and applying it to neoliberal educational concerns.

Dallas Smythe argues that "mass-produced, advertiser-supported communications under monopoly capitalism" produce "the audience-commodity," a product that is sought after by advertisers. The audience commodities possess "predictable specifications," or "demographics" that enable advertisers to scrutinize their buying habits and adjust their strategies accordingly. The audience commodity is a form of labour – it works to create the demand for advertised goods by learning to buy particular brands (Smythe 1994:272). Advertisers rely on the content of the media to get what they pay for. Thus, the media makes sure that the audiences are attracted and "cultivate a mood" for buying the advertised products. Smythe deems any media content other than advertising as "free lunch" that works to "recruit members of the audience" (Smythe 1994:271). Leisure time is also work time – as a result of being trained to become consumers, individuals under capitalism engage in consuming corporate products and thus work for the reproducing of the economic order, while at the same time they preoccupy themselves with consumption.

What has happened to the time workers spend off-the-job while not sleeping is that enormous pressures on this time have been imposed by all consumer goods and service branches of monopoly capitalism. (Smythe 1994:279)

How is this related to higher public education? There is a mechanism that works to turn the student into commodity that sells their labour. As the neoliberal state tightens control on the allocation of funds to public universities, and the burden of cost of education is increasingly borne by the students themselves, many students are put in a position where they have to justify their studies in economic terms. This occurs irrespective of whether they take on debt or draw upon intergenerational wealth to fund their studies. Placed in this position, the student soon becomes familiar with the structure of the public university system. Moreover, due to the conditions of research funds and allocations, the student learns that the more conducive the research and area of study is to the ruling elites interests, they will be able to draw upon more resources. Furthermore, they seek entrance to an occupation that promises to get them out of debt. Thus, the process by which the student-commodity learns to choose "the hot majors" is twofold. First is the lack of finances and pressure to pay debt, and second is the university itself, restructured under neoliberal lines. In reality the promise of the well-paid job remains just an empty promise. The majority of the students end up getting monotonous and routine entry-level jobs (Williams 2006; Giroux 2002). Braverman's analysis of the corporate office is indicative of the types of labour students perform:

> The functions of thought and planning became concentrated in an ever smaller group within the office, and for the mass of those employed there the office became just as much a side of manual labor as the factory floor. [Braverman 1974:316]

For the majority of the students the dream of the "hot jobs" that never materialize are the "free lunches" that allure them to choose majors like business, finances and so on, those that can demonstrate a return on investment.

The similarity with Smythe's model is also visible in relation to students' leisure time. All around campuses students are surrounded by the symbols and products of corporate culture that teach them that social relations are equal to consumerism. The number of billboards associating leisure with consumerism is disproportionate to the number of announcements of social activities. Students often spend their free time in the pub or at the disco, where they engage in the consumption of corporate brands. In that sense the audience-commodity and the student-commodity do not differ in their essence, simply working to reproduce the system of capitalism.

We have already shown how the current public university transforms students into future corporate employees by instilling corporate values and creating a blurred line between education and market. If we analyze the function of the public university based on this assumption, we can argue that student labour in the current stage of neoliberalism is the perfect commodity. Students are taught to become the future employees of the corporate world where they will exercise their labour power. Commenting on the role of labour in a system of monopoly capitalism Braverman writes:

> Labor power has become a commodity. Its uses are no longer organized according to the needs and desires of those who sell it, but rather according to the needs of its purchasers, who are primarily, employers seeking to expand the value of their capital. And it is the special and permanent interest of these purchasers to cheapen this commodity. [82]

Under these conditions the work in public education is not humanistic in orientation, that is work directed at discovering more about ourselves and the world, but rather corporate, that is work directed at using tools to create and extract value.

As already pointed out, the current form of neoliberal ideology is a convergence of state-based and market-based ideological production. In education, at least, this means that educational incentives and structures develop around corporate-state lines. The public university, it seems, has been co-opted to become a site of ideological production.

Public higher education therefore reveals itself to be integrated into the wider process of commodity exchange, and one which subsumes processes of political contention. Here students are sold on the idea of the university as vocational institution as well as sold to corporate entities. In this set of exchanges it is important to consider the nature of products being sold. A basic reading of the public university system is that it has to sell its value to the public coffers, and to its donors by making its value explicit. The value proposition is econometric or political abiding in nature, and hence the public university must show value for money and a return on investment. Public universities are required to make their pitch for continued support by demonstrating financial return. Here students are no longer viewed as students learning, but rather customers who are selecting vocational life chances. The student commodity shows that commodified students are not only buying education when they attend universities, but rather they are working to make themselves products as components of an ideological system in which they are subject to higher forms of authority. The 'product' here is the student who has learned to respond to the mechanism design of the neoliberal production process. Public higher education is in the business of selling these products to the market, and packaged for work in the capitalist system. This corresponds to the subject status that the working classes have in relation to the ruling classes.

We are now in a position to look more closely at the alienating aspects of this student work. From the proceeding paragraphs, we think we are well justified in claiming that labour is exploited in the student commodity. Moreover, we think that this is alienated labour insofar as it conforms to the alienation and repurposing of their reproductive capacities. As Smythe writes,

> In Marx's period and in his analysis, the principle aspect of capitalist production has been the alien-

> ation of workers from the means of producing commodities-in-general. Today and for sometime past, the principle aspect of capitalist production has been the alienation of workers from the means of producing and reproducing themselves. [Smythe 1981:48]

The public university effectively produces alienated labour.

The student commodity is, admittedly, a nonconventional interpretation of the audience commodity. Nevertheless, despite the difference in the segment of population that does the labour, the logic remains the same. For example, the case of Chris Barrett and Luke McCabe cannot be thought of being wholly representative of all students, but is representative of the commodification of education and the effect this process has on students' consciousness and affiliations, in which their class power is excluded. Chris Barrett and Luke McCabe seem paradigmatic of this process. If we understand them to be involved in the convergence of the state-market-consciousness, the student commodity as a form of demand management is a crucial link.

Conclusion

In this paper we pointed to the relevance of Lukacs, Althusser and Smythe's theoretical work in the current era of neoliberalism to attempt to demonstrate how students, a subsection of the working class, are involved in producing an ideology which posits them as its subject. The paper analysed contemporary public higher education as a central component of neoliberal ideological production, where the commodification of student work arranges student's consciousness in such a fashion to converge with market and state based incentive skews.

We would like to conclude by reiterating Althusser's highly pessimistic realization of the function of ideology in a capitalist society, hoping that if this pessimism is realized we can face more optimistic times.

> Result: caught in this quadruple system of interpellation as subjects, of subjection to the Subject, of universal recognition and of absolute guarantee, the subjects 'work,' they 'work by themselves' in the vast majority of cases, with the exception of the 'bad subjects' who on occasion provoke the intervention of one of the detachments of the (Repressive) State Apparatus. But the vast majority of (good) subjects work all right 'all by themselves,' i.e. by ideology (whose concrete forms are realized in the Ideological State Apparatuses). They are inserted into practices governed by the rituals of the ISAs. They 'recognize' the existing state of affairs (*das Bestehende*), that 'it really is true that it is so and not otherwise', and that they must be obedient to God, to their conscience, to the priest, to de Gaulle, to the boss, to the engineer, that thou shalt 'love thy neighbour as thyself,' etc. Their concrete, material behaviour is simply the inscription in life of the admirable words of the prayer: 'Amen – So be it.' [Althusser 1971:169]

The student commodity might be useful to help explain why the majority of students are not involved in ideological contention.

The main objective in the process for the formation of the student-commodity is reproducing mechanisms of production that define the current socioeconomic environment. The outcome hoped for is complacency and conformity with the political and economic practices of neoliberal regimes, assuring the next corporate workforce. It remains to be seen whether the production of student-commodities will be completely successful or whether student led activism will push back against their commodification. Initial efforts, for instance, in Britain and Quebec show promise, but it is too early to tell what the outcomes of these contentions will be.

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Spiritual Booze and Freedom: Lenin on Religion

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ABSTRACT: Rather than a doctrinaire atheist who has no time for religion, careful attention to Lenin's explicit statements on religion reveal a far more complex and ambivalent position. This study explores those tensions, beginning with the duality of religion as response to and cause of suffering, moving onto the multi-layered metaphors of booze and the human image, and then analysing the unresolved question of what happens after the revolution when religion persists. As for the vexed issue of 'freedom of conscience', Lenin both accepts the standard socialist position and yet seeks to stipulate that in the party religion is not a private affair. Yet even here, believers, even priests, are welcome in the party as long as they do not propagate views contrary to the party platform. Lenin also glimpses the more radical possibilities of religion, especially when it is not mainstream, occasionally (although not often enough) fostering various elements of the religious Left.

KEY WORDS: Lenin; religion; spiritual booze, freedom of conscience, revolution, education, religious left

Introduction

God grant – not God, of course … [Lenin v30:431]

Religion may be an idealist and reactionary curse, a manifestation of and support for oppression, but to oppose it is a red herring; atheism may be a natural position for socialists, but one should embrace a comrade who is a believer; one may oppose religion on class terms, but atheism is not a doctrinaire platform. These are some of the forms in which an intriguing tension is manifested in Lenin's writings on religion. Yet one struggles to find detailed attention to Lenin's thoughts on religion. He has a reputation for doctrinaire formulations that lose the subtlety of Marx's or Engels's arguments. If they are republished, it is to bolster a staunch and unqualified atheism (Lenin 1969). My project is both to restore these texts to their place in the Marxist tradition of reflection on religion[1] and to assess the importance of their tensions.

The main texts for Lenin's overt statements on religion are relatively few: 'Socialism and Religion' (Lenin 1905d); 'The Attitude of the Workers' Party Towards Religion' (Lenin 1909a); 'Classes and Parties in Their Attitude To Religion and the Church'; (Lenin 1909b); 'On the Significance of Militant Materialism' (Lenin 1922a). I analyse these texts logically rather than chronologically, for Lenin loops back to pick up earlier themes, raises

1 The straws in the wind suggest a revival and reformulation of the debate over 'Marxism and religion', to which this study may be seen as a contribution. Recent examples include Roberts (2008a, 2008b), Molyneux (2008), Rehmann (2011), and Boer (2007, 2009a, 2011, 2012).

questions later that may be answered in earlier texts, and draws together complex and overlapping positions that need to be unpicked and critiqued. Based on these texts, one may gain an initial impression of what a 'textbook' interpretation.[2] For this Lenin, Marxism 'is absolutely atheistic and positively hostile to all religion' (Lenin 1909a:402; see also Lenin 1913d:23). Apart from having, like philosophy, no independent existence (Lenin 1894a:405-6, 418), offering belief in invented beings outside time and space and spurious accounts of the history of the earth (Lenin 1908:185), religion is simply a curse, a diversion of the working class, offering futile hopes of life after death. 'Religious fog', 'medieval mildew', 'obscurantism', 'humbugging' (Lenin 1905d:84, 85 and 87)[3] – these terms supposedly express the essence of Lenin's position.

Response and Cause

> *Rotten products of a rotten social system*. [Lenin 1908:185]

A careful reading reveals a more dense cloth that requires unravelling.[4] Let us begin on the negative register, for which the initial move is that religion is not immediately the cause of human oppression, but rather the indication of such oppression. More specifically, religion is a response to socio-economic exploitation, a way of dealing with an intolerable situation that is revealed in upsurges of religious observance during war (Marx 1844a:175-6; 1844b:378-9; 1845:4; 1845:6; Lenin 1915b). The true source of 'religious humbugging' is economic slavery. In contrast to bourgeois radicalism, in which religion is the main issue, for communists the yoke of religion is the 'product and reflection of the economic yoke within society' (Lenin 1905d:87 and 86; see also Lenin 1909a:405-6). Religion is thereby a mark of the impotence of the toiling classes in their struggles against exploitation, a situation that is sharply expressed in the belief of a better life after death.

Now we encounter the first of many dialectical turns, for religion is also a cause of suffering. As a system of belief, religion adds to the oppressive woes of the exploited, 'coarsening and darkening … the spiritual and moral life of the masses' (Lenin 1905d:83). We may believe that the gods will provide us succour under trial, that our prayers for relief will be answered, that God will punish our enemies at the Judgement Seat, that the grace of God will lead to a life far greater than our present one. Yet we are deluded, for these beliefs merely make us content with our lot (Lenin 1902c:338). As for those who live on the labour of others, religion teaches them to exercise charity, thereby offering a 'cheap way of justifying their entire existence as exploiters' (Lenin 1905d:83) and providing a cheap ticket to heaven.

Our own beliefs are but part of the problem, for they are perpetrated by clergy and their institutions. These 'gendarmes in cassocks' (Lenin 1911:142; see also Lenin 1902e:385, 414; 1902d:259) are hand-in-glove with state powers, from which they receive their stipends, residences, church buildings, and by which the whole ecclesial system is maintained. And the one who pays the bills expects ideological support of the state apparatus. Also expected are constant messages of subservience for the faithful. Respect your rulers, they are told, reverence the church and her ministers, redirect your anger at the evil anarchists and communists, not to mention foreigners attacking holy mother Russia.[5] In short, the clergy are part of the small ruling class, numbering also landowners and capitalists, all of them keen to preserve their privileged status (Lenin 1913d:28). In this light, opposition to religion is a political position. If the ideology of the state is 'one God in heaven; one Tsar

2 For example, see the introduction to the collection, *On Religion* (Lenin 1969).

3 This 'textbook' Lenin is closer to some contemporaries of Lenin, both his erstwhile comrade, Alexinsky, and the liberal Miliukov (Alexinsky 1913:307-17; Miliukov 1962:60-104).

4 See Lenin's citation of Marx's comment that one must pay equal attention to the 'theoretical existence of man', which includes 'religion, science and so forth' (Lenin 1894b:161-2; Marx 1844b:143; 1844a:344).

5 Or as Lenin puts it with characteristic earthiness: 'All oppressing classes stand in need of two social functions to safeguard their rule: the function of the hangman and the function of the priest. The hangman is required to quell the protests and the indignation of the oppressed; the priest is required to console the oppressed, to depict to them the prospects of their sufferings and sacrifices being mitigated (this is particularly easy to do without guaranteeing that these prospects will be "achieved"), while preserving class rule, and thereby to reconcile them to class rule, win them away from revolutionary action, undermine their revolutionary spirit and destroy their revolutionary determination' (Lenin 1915a:231-2). See also (Lenin 1917b:336; 1903d:413, 422, 424, 427; 1913a:332; 1915a:228, 229, 231; 1916a:295; 1917d:265; 1916b:128; 1917a:185; 1913e; 1920:149; 1913; 1901:290-1; 1899a:242; 1905a:87; 1905a:464; 1906b:40; 1907:275; 1913b:260; 1913c:269; 1913:40).

on earth', then to challenge God is to challenge the state (Olgin 1917:58).

How does one respond to religion? Apart from occasional comments that modernisation and economic development will see religion 'rapidly being swept out as rubbish (Lenin 1905d:87), the response takes two forms. First, systematic education will make workers and peasants see the light. Through the press, word of mouth, republishing the best of old anti-clerical works along with new material (Lenin 1922a:229-30; 1902c:339), through 'an explanation of the true historical and economic roots of the religious fog' (Lenin 1905d:86; see also Lenin 1909a:404), will the truth of religion be revealed. Yet, to restrict activities to this level is to engage in abstract ideological preaching like the bourgeoisie. Given that religion is a response to oppression, one focuses attention on that cause. Or rather, workers will come, through their own struggle, to an awareness of that oppression and the role played by religion (Lenin 1905d:86-7).

Thus, the response to religion has two prongs, one educational and the other revolutionary, one secondary and the other primary. However, the obvious question is: what happens after the revolution, when you have deployed your most powerful weapon and religion is still present? One approach is to assume that the revolution has removed all causes of alienation, but that religion also has political and cultural dimensions that persist. This approach is taken by Anatoly Lunacharsky, 'God-builder' and first Commissar for Enlightenment after the October Revolution (Lunacharsky 2011:277-8). The appropriate answer is education. Lunacharsky urges that any violent or crude means are counter-productive, producing martyrs and strengthening church and mosque, but that persistent persuasion and education are keys. Given that everyone is fully entitled to preach and profess any religion, the government too is entitled to engage in systematic efforts to reveal the unfounded superstitions of much that passes for religion. By and large, Lenin agrees, urging Skvortsov-Stepanov in 1922 to write a book against religion, which would outline the history of atheism and the connections between religion and bourgeoisie (Lenin 1919:110-11; 1922b:570). Yet, in 'On the Significance of Militant Materialism' from the same year, an increasingly impatient Lenin castigates the educational programs for incompetence in their tasks (Lenin 1922a:229-30). As for the persistence of religion, Lenin suggests (half-heartedly, it seems) that the masses still remain half-asleep, not yet having awoken from their religious torpor.

But this still does not answer the question why religion persists after the revolution. Lenin does not answer directly, although one approach is that the oppressive conditions producing religion have not yet passed. Lenin's frequent post-revolutionary discussions of both the continuation of the class struggle, in which the dictatorship of the proletariat is crucial, and the international situation in which the bourgeoisie is hell-bent on thwarting the Russian revolution, may support the contention that the vale of tears has not yet been overcome. But that suggests the revolution made no difference at all, in respect to religion, class conflict and conditions of oppression. A more satisfactory answer is to identify revolutionary possibilities within a religion like Christianity, incentives that feed into the revolution and thereby persist after its initial moment. But does Lenin admit – even in passing – that religion may also have a revolutionary dimension? The answer to that question involves a long but necessary search.

Spiritual Booze and Image of Man

> *Opium is for us a treasure that keeps on giving, drop by drop*. [Vvedensky 2011:223]

We have reached a turning point in Lenin's arguments, marked by an unanswered question. Let me recap: thus far Lenin remains within a conventional paradigm concerning religion: it may be both result of and cause of suffering; the reply is a combination of patient education and agitation for overthrowing the economic basis of oppression. But how to respond to religion when it persists after revolution?

The first hint appears in one his most famous comments on religion:

> Religion is opium of the people [*opium naroda*]. Religion is a sort of spiritual booze, everboin which the slaves of capital drown their human image [*obraz*], their demand for a life more or less worthy of man. [Lenin 1905d:83-4]

This text is a direct allusion to Marx:

> Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the *expression* of real suffering and a *protest* against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people [*das* Opium *des Volkes*]. [Marx 1844a:175-6; 1844b:378-9]

An initial reading may attribute to Marx a subtler appreciation of religion – as both expression and protest, as the sigh, heart and soul of oppressed creatures in a heartless, soulless world. A closer study of the key term, opium, reveals a profound multivalence in Marx's usage (McKinnon 2006; Boer 2012). For opium was both cheap curse of the poor and vital medicine, source of addiction and of inspiration for writers and artists, the basis of colonial exploitation (in the British Empire) and of the economic conditions that allowed Marx and Engels to continue work relatively unmolested; in short, it ranged all the way from blessed medicine to recreational curse. As the left-leaning theologian, Metropolitan Vvedensky said already in 1925, opium is not merely a drug that dulls the senses, but also a medicine that 'reduces pain in life and, from this point of view, opium is for us a treasure that keeps on giving, drop by drop' (Vvedensky 2011:223).[6] That Marx himself was a regular user of opium increases the complexity of the term. Along with 'medicines' such as arsenic and creosote, Marx imbibed opium to deal with his carbuncles, liver problems, toothaches, eye pain, ear aches, bronchial coughs and so on – the multitude of ailments that came with chronic overwork, lack of sleep, chain smoking and endless pots of coffee (Marx (senior) 1857:563; 1857:643).

Do we find this multivalence in Lenin's recasting of the opium metaphor? Marx's 'opium of the people [*das* Opium *des Volkes*] is directly translated as 'opium of the people' [*opium naroda*]. The usage is the same, with a genitive in Russian. Unfortunately, the English translation in Lenin's *Collected Works* renders the phrase in this text with the dative,[7] 'opium for the people', with the sense that religious beliefs are imposed upon people rather than emerging as their own response: religion is no longer *of* themselves, but has become something devised *for* them. Such a translation may have been preferred due to Lenin's swift gloss, 'a sort of spiritual booze' [*rod duhovnoi sivuhi*], which seems to reinforce this impression.[8] And does not the next phrase – 'in which the slaves of capital drown their human image' – deploy the conventional role of alcohol in which sorrows are drowned? Religion becomes a bottle of wine, a carton of beer, a flask of vodka, with which one dulls the pain of everyday life.

It is worth noting that even if Lenin did use the genitive construction (following Marx), in the USSR the dative construction came to dominate. Thus people mostly used the phrase 'opium for the people' rather than 'opium of the people' as the standard definition of religion.[9] Perhaps the most famous example is the line from the movie, *Twelve Chairs* (based on Ilf and Petrov's satirical novel from 1928) where the main character keeps greeting his competitor, the Orthodox priest, with the line: 'How much do you charge for the opium for the people?'

In order to return to the ambivalence of 'opium of the people', let us consider the rest of Lenin's description. He introduces two items: 'human image' (*chelovecheskii obraz*) and 'their demand for a life more or less worthy of human beings' (*svoi trebovania na skolko-nibud dostoinuiu cheloveka zhizn*). Both items wrench the text away from a simple drowning of sorrows. Although they appear to say the same thing, the fact that they sit side by side introduces a minimal difference between them, one exacerbated by biblical and theological echoes. Recall Genesis 1:26, where human beings are created in the 'image of God': 'Let us make humankind in our image [*tselem*], according to our likeness [*demuth*]'. Here too is a minimal dif-

6 Vvedensky was engaged in a very popular debate over two nights with Anatoly Lunacharsky on 20-1 September in 1925. This observation, which Vvedensky had gained from doctors who used opium to treat melancholy and other ailments even in the twentieth century, is, to my knowledge, the first observation concerning the ambivalence of the opium image.

7 Exactly the same phrase is translated with the genitive elsewhere: 'Religion is the opium of the people – this dictum by Marx is the cornerstone of the whole Marxist outlook on religion' (Lenin 1909a:402-3).

8 As does the influential shift in phraseology from *The State and Revolution*: 'the opium of religion which stupefies the people' (Lenin 1917c:455). See also (Lenin 1909b:422-3)

9 Personal communication from Sergey Kozin.

ference, between image and likeness; here too they seem to speak of the same thing, yet they are different.

Lenin's Orthodox theological context exploits the distinction between the two terms. While Adam and Eve may have been created in the image of God, thereby able to participate in divine life and be fully human, sin has fractured the divine-human union, resulting in a less than human condition, with the unnatural result of death. However, in Orthodox theology after St. Maximus, what went 'missing' after enjoying the tree's fruit was not the 'image' but the 'likeness'. Christ's saving task is thereby not a process of restoring the prelapsarian state, but rather a new state achieved uniquely in Christ, which was not there with Adam and Eve. That is, beyond the image, one becomes a likeness of God – *theosis*, or deification. *Theosis* designates a closer fellowship with God than even the first human beings experienced. Christ may be the second Adam, but he goes beyond Adam in enabling a far greater communion that was initially the case – so much so that Christ may have been incarnated for that reason, without the first stumble.

Is it possible that Lenin alludes to this complex interplay between image and likeness, with his usage of 'human image' and 'worthy human life'? Our human image may be obscured, inebriated, blurred – as though blind drunk – but the demand for decent life persists. A life worthy of human beings echoes not merely Orthodoxy's broken image, but especially restoration to God's likeness through Christ (see here Lunacharsky 1981:45-6).

Yet, Lenin turns this theological heritage of image and likeness on its head. Rather than staying within the theological framework and asking why human beings are sinful, he accuses the framework itself with creating the problem. The issue is neither human culpability nor deception by a third party, but religion itself. That is, Lenin unwittingly parleys one tradition of interpretation against another, in what may be called a Reformed sense:[10] Genesis 1-3 opens up a third, rarely travelled path of interpretation, in which the one responsible for the Garden of Eden with its two trees – of the knowledge of good and evil and of life – is also thereby responsible for the act that sends the likeness into exile. If God had not created the flawed crystal of the Garden, the Fall would not have happened. This charge the deity refuses to answer, so keen is he to lay the blame on human beings and serpent. By contrast, Lenin does lay the blame precisely here. Only when that has been addressed may a worthy human life – now a very human 'likeness' – be attained.

But what about spiritual booze? Might that not also be a richer metaphor? To begin with, in 1925 Metropolitan Vvedensky pointed out that 'booze' (*sivuhoi*) is a good translation of 'opium' (Vvedensky 2011:223), which opens further ambiguity. Add to that the role of alcohol in Russian culture: even today, beer has only recently (2011) been designated an alcoholic drink, although most continue to think it is not. After this legislation, not much has changed in Russia's beer-drinking culture except that Putin's 'police' increasingly fine youngsters for drinking in public. Two-liter bottles are still available in shops. And the famed vodka may be bought in bottles that fit comfortably in one's hand, a necessary feature due to that great Russian tradition in which an opened bottle must be emptied. Russians may be admired for their fabled drinking prowess, vodka may be a necessary complement to any long-distance rail travel, it may be offered to guests at the moment of arrival, it may be an inseparable element of the celebration of life, but it is also the focus of age-long concern. One may trace continued efforts to curtail excessive consumption back to Lenin. Then Khrushchev and Brezhnev sought in turn to restrict access to vodka, although their efforts pale by comparison to the massive campaign launched by Gorbachev in 1985. Lenin himself fumed at troops and grain handlers getting drunk, molesting peasants and stealing grain during the dreadful famines (due to lack of means to transport grain) during the foreign intervention after the Revolution. Nonetheless, vodka was a vital economic product. Already in his painstakingly detailed *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin provides graphs and data concerning the rapid growth of distilling industry (Lenin 1899a:288-91).

10 It is worth noting that Orthodoxy seeks to steer between Roman Catholic and Calvinist 'extremes'. For example, the *Catachesis* by Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov), which was *the* theological textbook in Russian imperial schools of Lenin's time, discusses Calvinism in detail in order to refute it. Lenin would have been instructed in this catechism at school.

Alcohol is as complex a metaphor as opium, if not more so. It is both spiritual booze and divine vodka: relief for the weary, succour to the oppressed, inescapable social mediator, it is also a source of addiction, dulling of the senses and dissipater of strength and resolve. Religion-as-grog[11] thereby opens up far greater complexity concerning religion in Lenin's thought.

Freedom of Conscience

Where's your fear of God? (Lenin 1910:168)

The multiple layers enclosed in Lenin's image of religion-as-alcohol come to the fore in his argument concerning freedom of conscience. He pays close attention to this phrase for a number of contextual reasons, especially in 1909: the rise of the 'God-builders' among the Bolsheviks; the Western European legacy – particularly the powerful German Social Democrats – of invoking 'freedom of conscience'; and a statement in the Duma by the Social-Democratic representatives concerning religion (Lenin 1909a:402). While the God-builders advocated their position strongly within the party, the statement of the Duma representatives, although excellent in outlining a materialist position and the class allegiances of the clergy, was felt to fall short precisely on the issue of freedom of conscience. As for Western Social Democrats, freedom of conscience was a standard position, applying to all spheres and embodied in the *Erfurt Program* of 1891: 'Declaration that religion is a private matter [*Erklärung der Religion zur Privatsache*]' (SPD 1891a:3; 1891b:3; see also Lenin 1909a:404). This was so even in the Spartacus Group, as we see with Rosa Luxemburg (Luxemburg 1970, 1982; 2004:2; 1903:28). For Luxemburg, the reasons for such a position were self-evident: opposition to the state's efforts to control one's political aspirations, let alone religious affiliations (the tsarist autocracy persecuted Roman Catholics, Jews, heretics and freethinkers), and resistance to the church's attempt to demand allegiance, especially by using a judicial system saturated with religious laws, means that one does not seek to impose the same type of control as a socialist.

While Lenin adheres to this position in many statements of the Social Democratic platform (Lenin 1899b:239; 1902a:28; 1905b:92; 1907:296; 1903d:402; 1903c:79), in both 'Socialism and Religion' and 'The Attitude of the Workers' Party Towards Religion', he makes a few qualifications.12 He distinguishes between two levels of analysis, between state and party: religion must be a purely private affair, separated in all respects from the state; the party must not make religion a private affair yet atheism is not a prerequisite for membership. The former position might be expected, but the latter less so. As for the state, the properly communist position is a radical separation of church and state, along with separation of church and school (Lenin 1906:194-5; 1906a:35). Here the reasons overlap closely with Luxemburg: given the sad history of the church's dirty little relationship with the state, the removal of the church from all influence was necessary. An end to state support of the church, to the possession of lands, state-derived incomes, government positions for clergy, were minimum requirements (Lenin 1905d:84-5; 1902a:28, 30; 1903d:402; 1903a:347-8). In this respect, however, the socialists shared the same platform with the radical bourgeoisie. Thus, 'Everybody must be perfectly free, not only to profess whatever religion he pleases, *but also to spread or change his religion*' (Lenin 1903d:402).

Now comes the intriguing twist, for Lenin argues that the party must *not* make religion a private affair. Contextually, he sought to counter the Western European application of freedom of conscience to all spheres, as well as (later) the God-builders who deployed the same position to propose that socialism should draw upon the best resources of religion. For Lenin, this is mistaken. Given that religion is both symptom of economic oppression and a contributing factor to its perpetuation, socialists should fight, publically, against such oppression. Advanced fighters 'must not be indifferent to lack of class-consciousness, ignorance or obscurantism in the shape of religious

11 English captures the metaphoric elision in the very word 'spirit', as both a distilled drink and what pertains to the higher realms of the gods.

12 Here he cites Engels as his authority (Lenin 1909a:404; 1917c:455-6). Note also a comment to Plekhanov in 1902, in which he mentions attacking 'freedom of conscience' (Lenin 1902:94).

beliefs' (Lenin 1905d:85). Thus, separation of church and state enables the party to undertake its ideological struggle against religion without hindrance. Religion is therefore a very public matter for the party.

Does this mean one ticks the 'atheist' box in order to become a member? Not at all: even though socialists may espouse a materialist worldview, undertake education programs against the church and hope that the historical materialist position will persuade all (Lenin 1905b:509-10; 1905b:23; 1905c:47-8), the party still does not stipulate atheism as prerequisite for membership. Further, no-one will be excluded from party membership if he or she is religious. As Lenin put it forcefully in response to the Bund, 'Organisations belonging to the R.S.D.L.P. have never distinguished their members according to religion, never asked them about their religion and never will' (Lenin 1903b:331 fn; see also Lenin 1909a:408).[13] The right, let alone the workers and socialists themselves, was astounded at such a position, asking 'Why do we not declare in our Programme that we are atheists? Why do we not forbid Christians and other believers in God to join our Party?' (Lenin 1905d:86)

Three reasons appear. First, opposition to religion strengthens reactionary elements within religious organisations, as was seen with Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* against the German Roman Catholic Party in the 1870s (Lenin 1909a:403). Further, attacking religion is a red herring, for it diverts attention from resistance to economic subjugation. Now we return to our starting point: if the yoke of religion is the product of the economic yoke, that is, if religion is a secondary, idealist phenomenon, then an attack on religion misses the mark.[14] Should one achieve the aim of abolishing religion, then nothing would change, for bosses would still oppress workers. Third, a focus on religion splits the united front of the proletariat (Lenin 1909a:407-8). The Right knows this full well, attempting to break up the proletariat on religious lines, urging allegiance to the church and claiming that socialism has a program of godless atheism, fomenting anti-Semitic pogroms. So also does the bourgeoisie, which wavers between anti-clericalism in its struggle with the old order and reconciliation with religion.[15] For these reasons, the party does 'not and should not set forth' atheism in its program (Lenin 1905d:87). Or, in one of Lenin's characteristic images: 'Unity in this really revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class for the creation of a paradise on earth is more important to us than unity of proletarian opinion on paradise in heaven' (Lenin 1905d:87).

A united front is needed, drawing the line not between believer and atheist, but between workers and owners of capital. People who are still religious are welcome in the party, insofar as they join the struggle:

> Jews and Christians, Armenians and Tatars, Poles and Russians, Finns and Swedes, Letts and Germans – all, all of them march together under the one common banner of socialism. All workers are brothers, and their solid union is the only guarantee of the well-being and happiness of all working and oppressed mankind. [Lenin 1905a:348; see also Lenin 1905b:509-10; 1905b:23; 1905c:47-8]

This is the first moment when Lenin recognises a revolutionary potential within religion, a moment that suddenly intensifies his awareness of religion's political ambivalence. I return to that question in a moment, but first I would like to ask: was Lenin consistent in his dealings with religion? At first sight, he appears remarkably inconsistent: religion may be both response to and perpetuator of a basic economic exploitation, yet it also offers the possibility of resistance to injustice. It may be no better than primitive beliefs in response to nature, yet it is an ongoing reality. The party may seek to educate concerning the deleterious effects of religion, yet it refuses to make atheism a platform, accepting religious believers in a united front against capitalists and landowners.

Did Lenin wage a revolutionary war against God and yet offer sops to religion, playing up to workers in

13 Here Lenin has listened carefully to the position of Marx and Engels in relation to the First International (Marx 1868:208; see also Marx 1872:142; Engels 1872:275-6; 1872:169-70; 1870, 1870; Marx and Engels 1873:460; 1873:335).

14 Lenin would find the attack on religion by the 'new atheists' a typical idealist and bourgeois program, for it makes religion the primary cause of all the world's ills (Dawkins 2006; Hitchens 2001, 2007; Harris 2005, 2006; Dennett 2007; see Boer 2009b).

15 Or in the different situation of Western Europe, where the bourgeois revolution had already achieved its anti-clerical program, the bourgeoisie may deploy anti-clericalism as a way to split the united front of the working class (Lenin 1909a:411).

a cowardly fashion so as not to alienate new members? Critics thought so, particularly among the anarchists, who wanted a more consistent line (Lenin 1909a:404). As may be expected, Lenin argues that the position is entirely consistent, invoking both the dialectic and the pedigree of Marx and Engels. In some respects, one may agree, especially in terms of the (apparent) contradiction between consistent education against religion and the need to make religion an issue secondary to class struggle. I would add the reasoning that religion is both response to and cause of suffering, as well as the complex party platform – both a firm position against religion and refusal to require atheism as a pre-requisite to party membership. Once we acknowledgement the primacy of the struggle against economic oppression, these positions make sense.

Yet Lenin falls short on two counts, one regarding the dialectic of collectives and the other the political ambivalence of Christianity. On the first matter, he is not dialectical enough. The issue is party membership for a Christian believer and Lenin, as we saw, has already stated that the party does not require subscription to atheism, that all who share the party's program are welcome. At this point, he invokes the distinction between collective and individual approaches to religion and party. In effect, he asks: do we operate from the basis of the private individual, allowing full reign to individual freedom of conscience within the party, or do we begin with the collective and explore the ramifications? This question lies behind the statement, 'We allow freedom of opinion *within* the Party, but to certain limits, determined by freedom of grouping' (Lenin 1909a:409). If the collective has come to agreed-upon positions, through open debate (he was a great proponent of arguing vehemently and openly, for this produced a healthy party) and congresses, then those who join must abide by those positions. At various times, he attacked Mensheviks, liquidators, the Bund, and many other opponents because they did not abide by collectively-agreed positions. The same applied to religion.

Lenin provides two examples, concerning a priest and a worker (Lenin 1909a:408-9). The choice of the priest is not arbitrary, for it was a common question at the time, especially in Western Europe. In contrast to the unqualified affirmative usually given, Lenin states: if a priest shares the aims of the party and works actively to achieve them, then of course he may join. And if there is a tension between his religious belief and communism, then that is a matter for him alone. But if the priest proselytises within the party, persuading others to his religious view and thereby not abiding by the party's collective position, then he will be stripped of his membership. The same principle applies to a believing worker, who should be actively recruited. But should he attempt to persuade others of his views, he will be expelled.

At first sight, this argument seems reasonable, since anyone who joins a political organisation should subscribe to its platform. But is this a fully collective position? If we stay with the minimal notion that a democratically agreed platform is binding on the minority who disagrees, then it may be regarded as collective. Yet this approach hardly distinguishes communists from any other political party in (capitalist) parliamentary democracies. For this reason, we may go a step further: within a collective movement such as socialism, imposing one will over another is anathema. A collective will is not the assertion of uniformity from above, not even the vote of a majority over minority, but a collective agreement that arises from the complex overlaps of beliefs, aspirations, even foibles that are given full and open expression. Only when these many-coloured expressions are allowed full rein, pursuing all manner of possibilities until they collapse in dialectical exhaustion, does a collective will emerge. Or rather, the very act of enabling such free expression and freedom of conscience is the embodiment of such collectivity, the result of which turns out to be a collective will. In short, a completely collective approach is the best guarantee for full freedom of conscience.

The Ambivalence of Religion

> *In the old days they used to say, 'Each for himself, and God for all.' And how much misery resulted from it. We say, 'Each for all, and we'll somehow manage without God.'* [Lenin 1920a:305]

The second moment in which Lenin is less consistent concerns the political ambivalence of religion. In part,

this inconsistency is due to the profound ambivalence of Christianity itself, which has and continues to support oppressive and reactionary regimes, while also inspiring countless revolutionary movements. We have seen that Lenin often emphasises the former element, but does he also glimpse the latter? I present three examples out of a wider collection.

The first concerns a speech in the Duma from 1909 by Rozhkov, a Trudovik representative of peasant background. Responding to priestly, right-wing and even liberal defences of the church, Rozhkov debunks these lofty claims by listing extortions collected by clergy for services that should have been part of the job description, not to mention additional demands, such as "'a bottle of vodka, snacks, and a pound of tea, *and sometimes things that I am even afraid to talk about from this rostrum*'" (Lenin 1909b:421). For Lenin, this speech is pure gold, more likely to revolutionise peasants than sophisticated attacks on religion. The outrage from the right-wing majority reinforces the point. But Lenin goes further, noting 'the primitive, unconscious, matter-of-fact religiousness of the peasant, whose living conditions give rise – against his will and unconsciously – to a truly revolutionary resentment against extortions' (Lenin 1909b:422). We should be careful here, for Lenin does not quite yet say that the matter-of-fact religiousness gives rise to revolutionary sentiment, for that is generated by living conditions. Yet the close connection between religiousness and living conditions opens up the possibility religion and revolution connecting with each other.

A second and clearer example concerns Russian Orthodox clergymen dissatisfied with the church's corruption and power. Despite the church's efforts to reassert medieval privileges through the 'priestly bloc' during the period of the Dumas between 1905-17 (Lenin 1909b; 1912:227-8; 1912c:341-4; 1912a:347; 1912b:310-11), Lenin stresses that some clergy 'are joining in the demand for freedom, are protesting against bureaucratic practices and officialism, against the spying for the police imposed on the "servants of God"' (Lenin 1905d:85; see also Lenin 1905c:448; 1902e:469, fn; 1902b:296-7; Walling 1908:392-401). Noting such a development is not enough, for socialists must fully support this groundswell, urging clergy in every way to realise their desire for breaking the debilitating ties between church and police and state. After all, suggests Lenin, you priests should believe in 'the spiritual power of your weapon' (Lenin 1905d:85). But if you cave into inducements from the state, then woe to you, for Russian workers will be your enemies. Note that Lenin speaks not of the odd renegade breaking ranks, but of the clergy as a group.

A third moment of deeper awareness comes after the October Revolution. On 1 March, 1921, Lenin wrote to N. Osinsky (V. V. Obolensky), chair of the State Bank and of the Supreme Economic Council. Lenin mentions a certain Ivan Afanasyevich Chekunov, a peasant keen on improving the lot of toiling peasants. Having improved his own farm, he had toured other areas (around Novgorod and Simbirsk) and tells Lenin that the peasants had lost confidence in Soviet power. Knowing full well the vital role of peasants in building a new society and sensing Chekunov's enthusiasm, Lenin urges Osinsky to appoint Chekunov to the role of representative of the People's Commissariat for Agriculture, with a view to establishing a non-Party Peasant Council. Now comes the vital point: Chekunov 'sympathises with the Communists, but will not join the Party, because he goes to church and is a Christian (he says he rejects the ritual but is a believer)' (Lenin 1921:91). Standing before him is a Christian peasant with communist leanings who may possibly be enlisted in the broad front of communist reconstruction. Even more, Lenin suggests a Non-Party Peasant Council, beginning with an old farmer, along with another person from an area not producing grain. Crucially, not only should they be experienced, but 'it would be good for all of them to be *both* non-Party men *and* Christians' (Lenin 1921:91). The reason is not given, but clearly such an organisation would gain the confidence of peasants, showing both support for the communist government from outside its own ranks and revealing that Christians too may have communist preferences, indeed, that being a Christian and communist peasant is not a contradiction in terms.

Conclusion

With each twist and turn, each explicitly stated and curiously half-said argument, Lenin's position

has become ever more complex. The simplistic and polemical Lenin who dismisses religion as fiction and curse is far away. Instead, there are arguments for the duality of religion as response to and cause of suffering, multi-layered metaphors of booze and the human image, and the dilemma of what happens after the revolution when religion persists. But when it comes to the 'freedom of conscience' clause, Lenin both accepts the standard socialist position and yet seeks to stipulate that in the party religion is not a private affair. Or rather, he shifts the boundary of what the private nature of religious belief may be. Religion may be a very public question and the party must have a clear pos ition. Yet atheism is not a requirement for party membership and believers are encouraged to join. Now the identity of what remains private appears: the tension between the party platform and a religious person's beliefs is for them to resolve. One caveat remains: they must not seek to propagate their beliefs in the party.

Yet this still assumes that religion is largely negative and reactionary. But now a different picture of Lenin's approach emerges, picking up the ambivalence of the opium-booze image noted a little earlier. It begins with Lenin's argument for a united front of believers, atheists and others. From here, a number of other instances emerged in which Lenin recognises the revolutionary possibilities of Christianity. All of which leads to the conclusion that Lenin, no matter how much he may have lashed religion, also reveals an occasional awareness of its deep political ambivalence.

Yet two regrets remain in light of this complexity. To begin with, I regret that Lenin did not realise the full potential of radical freedom of conscience. As noted earlier, I mean this not in a liberal sense of letting all the flowers bloom, but in a radically collective sense in which all of the possibilities are release through real freedom, the result of which is that a deeper collective identity emerges. This point opens out to another discussion that cannot be pursued here concerning Leninist freedom, which is fully partisan, open and collective. A further regret is that although he did notice occasionally the revolutionary possibilities of the religious Left, those moments were fewer than those when he attacked religion. That is, one may regret that fact that he was not as clearly aware of these possibilities than he might have been. Perhaps the Russian Revolution may have found maters a little easier if he had.

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Students Work: A Discourse Analysis of Writing Center Mission Statements

Andrew Rihn

Writing centers are sites of one-to-one dialogue about writing. They exist on many colleges and universities, and, increasingly, in high schools. Though every center operates differently, they are typically not tied to curriculum or classroom. Some centers hire professional tutors, but most university writing centers employ undergraduate peer tutors. These practices situate the writing center as something of an alternative site within the institution, operating in contrast to traditional academic hierarchies and practices. This contrastive stance has historically attracted and created a "subversive" edge to writing center pedagogy.

Though once marginalized on college campuses, many writing centers are now enjoying a wide range of institutional support. As they move from the margins of the university to the center, it is important to remain mindful that with such prominence comes both responsibility and risk. The impetus for my current research project stems from the anxiety I feel watching centers aligning themselves more and more with universities whose missions have become increasingly "corporatized." I worry this alignment is caused by, and promotes, a blunting of our otherwise sharp critical and self-reflexive thinking.

Although the apparently self-contradictory position of "peer tutor" has been teased out in writing center scholarship (Hemmeter 1990, Runciman 1990, Trimbur 1987), little attention has been paid to the tension between the identities of "student" and "worker." As student workers constitute the central creative force of labour in most writing centers, I worry about the effects of not fully accounting for this fact in our everyday self-definitions.

Within our discourse, we have the ability to highlight or conceal the academic labour done by student workers. Supported by a grant from the International Writing Center Association (IWCA), my current project investigates how writing centers represent student labour rhetorically in their institutional and self-definitional literature.

Methodology

For my research project, I am performing a rhetorical analysis of a sampling of writing center mission statements. Such statements, according to writing center scholar Frankie Condon, are "more than window dressing" (2007:23). In her essay "Beyond the Known: Writing Centers and the Work of Anti-Racism," she writes that "mission statements name commitments to quality and service and as such serve as a means by which an institution or institutional site can hold itself accountable or be held accountable to the constituencies it seeks to serve" (2007:23).

My research engages a certain trend in rhetorical analysis called "critical discourse analysis." This practice has been championed by scholars such as Norman Fairclough (1989, 1993), Ruth Wodak (2001), and Teun A. van Dijk (1993). Rather than comprising a specific set of methods for linguistic analysis, the practice of critical discourse analysis involves exploring the linkages between micro-level linguistic choices and macro-level political trends (Fairclough 1993:135).

In analyzing writing center mission statements for their representations of undergraduate student labour, I follow three basic lines of questioning:

> Does the mission statement explicitly represent the writing center as workplace for undergraduates
>
> How does the mission statement represent the work being done in the center
>
> How does the mission statement represent undergraduate peer writing tutors?

I am currently conducting a pilot study based on a small number of local writing centers in the northeast Ohio region. This pilot study allows me to hone my coding skills and refine my questions. As a novice researcher, having direct access to, and feedback from, experienced local writing center directors will prove invaluable in strengthening my own work. Once completed, I hope to move to a larger analysis of mission statements from across the United States. These statements will need to be collected with an eye towards diversity of geographic region and institutional type.

To provide an example in this research report, I have decided to look at one mission statement from my pilot study. Although unable to provide the depth or nuance of a larger sample, it should successfully illustrate my research questions. I have selected the mission statement from the writing center at the Kent State Stark Campus, where I worked as an undergraduate peer tutor from fall 2007 through spring 2009 (see below).

Results

Does the mission statement explicitly represent the writing center as workplace for undergraduates?

No. While it does reference "undergraduate tutors" and does describe some of the work they do, it does not explicitly describe the center as a place where undergraduates can find employment. Instead, the writing center is described entirely in its capacity as a service. This may seem like splitting hairs, but

Mission Statement of the Kent-Stark Writing Center

The function of the Kent-Stark Writing Center is to provide a free collaborative space in which all members of the Kent State University-Stark community (students, faculty, staff, and alumni) can find support for their efforts to become more effective writers. Utilizing one-to-one conferences – available both in person and online – our staff of highly trained undergraduate tutors seeks to promote thoughtful engagement and ongoing reflection throughout the entire writing process. Our goal is not to supply directions, give answers, or "fix" papers for clients, but rather to empower them to discover their own solutions to the challenges in their writing. In addition to helping clients brainstorm, problem-solve, and revise, we also offer them a wide range of print and online resources (pamphlets, manuals, handbooks, etc.) in further support of their efforts. Beyond their one-to-one work with clients, Writing Center tutors also conduct writing workshops in classrooms, help foster the recognition and celebration of student academic writing by annually publishing The Writing Center Review, and help foster connections with the outside community by publishing Common Ground, an annual sold-for-donations volume of creative writing which benefits local charities. Tutors also pursue their own research interests in the tutoring of writing, research which they frequently present at local, regional, and national academic conferences, and occasionally publish in scholarly venues.

such elision makes invisible the process of hiring undergraduate tutors, making the path to student employment illegible. In this formulation, students are not posited as potential employees/tutors, but solely as consumers or clients.

How does the mission statement represent the work being done in the center?

The work described can be broken down into a few categories: general principles ("promote thoughtful engagement and ongoing reflection"), in-session tasks ("brainstorm, problem-solve, and revise"), and tasks that extend beyond the session ("conduct writing workshops in classrooms," "publishing The Writing Center Review," "pursue their own research interests"). It also describes a few tasks in the negative – that is, things they will NOT do ("supply directions, give answers, or 'fix' papers").

A larger sample size will allow me to compare the frequency of these (and possibly other) categories. These categories will allow a look at which kinds of work are privileged within this discourse. In this case, while we see a thorough and thick description of the "academic" work done by tutors, we do not glimpse the more "menial" tasks, such as scheduling appointments or maintaining a database. We also are denied knowledge of the work tutors complete to be trained and hired.

How does the mission statement represent undergraduate peer writing tutors?

To answer this question, I look to the work of John Swales and Priscilla Rogers (1995). In examining the affiliative nature of corporate mission statements, they quantified three factors: the total number of finite sentences, the number of employee-denoting subjects, and the different ways to which those employees could be referred (1995:231-233).

Following this example, the Kent State Stark mission statement has six finite sentences and five employee-denoting subjects. In the larger study, I will be able to compare these numbers with those of the other mission statements, not only in terms of total numbers, but in percentage of employee-denoting subjects. Doing so will provide a glimpse of the centrality of peer tutors to writing centers.

For their third category, Swales and Rogers list employee-denoting subjects in order of their affiliative nature. The most affiliative subject in their study is the use of the first-person-plural-pronoun "we" (1995:232). This appears once in the writing center mission statement ("we also offer them a wide range of print and online resources"). Another way to affiliate the tutors with the institution is the use of "Our" + NP. Again, this technique is used once in the statement ("Our goal is not to supply directions"). Finally, the least affiliative method of referring to employees is the use of specific sub-groups. This is used three times in the statement ("highly trained undergraduate tutors," Writing Center tutors," and finally "Tutors").

As noted earlier, this sample set of one does not offer much room for nuance or discussion. It does, however, raise the issue of institutional affiliation. For instance, who does "our" refer to in the phrase "our staff of highly trained undergraduate tutors"? The writing center? The university? And to what degree do those highly trained tutors identify with that institution?

Conclusion

A renewed interest in the academic labour of student workers is not only necessary, but timely as well. As the current economic recession continues and universities see reductions in state funding, we will see a continuation of the trend towards using more contingent faculty – part timers, adjuncts, GAs, and even undergraduate peer tutors. This trend has been written about extensively in articles and books such as *How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation* (Bousquet 2008) and *Tenured Bosses and Disposable Teachers: Writing Instruction in the Managed University* (Bousquet and Parascondola 2004).

Daniel Mahala writes in his article "Writing Centers in the Managed University" that "writing centers make cash sense from the point of view of university presidents and administrators" because we are "consumer-friendly in a cost-efficient way, providing personalized one-to-one contact at a relatively low cost" (2007:7). This low cost is, of course, dependent largely on the work of skilled undergradu-

ate peer tutors who often work for minimum wage and without benefits. As writing centers move ahead in this time of economic austerity and "managed universities," a reconsideration of our roles, whether complicit, resistant, or subversive, is a necessary function of our scholarship.

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Totalitarianism? Elementary Education in Leningrad, USSR, and Corner Brook, Newfoundland, Canada, During the 1980s[1]

Dennis Bartels and Alice L. Bartels

In the West, the former USSR is often characterized as 'totalitarian.' While definitions of totalitarianism differ, some include attempts by a centralized, one-party state to harness all facets of life to achieve a perfect society (*Columbia Encyclopedia*, www.answers.com). It is often argued that Nazi and Soviet societies were varieties of totalitarianism (for example, see Arendt 1951).

Schooling is held to be central to achieving totalitarian and other state-sponsored goals in so far as it is an instrument for indoctrinating or conditioning citizens "in such a way that they voluntarily believe what the ruling elite required them to believe" (Schapiro 1972:36).

We shall examine the view of Soviet schooling as totalitarian by comparing and contrasting the school experiences of our two daughters in Leningrad, where they attended elementary school for eight months in 1981-82, with their previous and subsequent elementary school experiences in Corner Brook, Newfoundland. Our methodology in making this comparison will focus on our view of the ideological foundations of Soviet and Newfoundland societies during the early 1980s. Roughly following Dolbeare and Dolbeare (1971), 'ideology' is defined here as a set of beliefs which provides answers to certain questions about a society: (1) Why is society the way it is? (2) Is its present form good or bad? (3) What, if anything, should be done about it? Ideologies may exhibit various degrees of inconsistency (see Bartels 1999).

The explicit central tenets of the Marxist-Leninist ideological foundation of the Soviet state were that capitalist exploitation had been eliminated in the USSR (see Afanasyev et al. 1974), and that the Soviet state, as directed by workers' councils, or Soviets, was a democratic instrument of working people's rule. Surplus produced by Soviet workers was supposedly to be used to insure the security of the Soviet state and to improve Soviet living standards (see Khorzov et al. 1977). Soviet socialism was theoretically based on the principle, 'From each according to their ability, to each according to their work,' and was seen as a stage on the evolutionary progression toward a Communist society which would be organized on the principle, 'From each according to their ability, to each according to their need' (see Khorzov et al. 1977:393-406). In contrast, the ideological foundation of Newfoundland society centred on freedom of individuals to speak, to worship, to travel, to own as much property as they wished and were able to acquire, and to participate in a multi-party parliamentary electoral system.

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2004 conference of the Society for Socialist Studies in Winnipeg, Canada.

The latter, coupled with the right of individuals to own property, was widely conceived as democratic. This type of democracy, despite obvious social and economic inequalities in Canada and Newfoundland, was widely assumed to be the pinnacle of social and economic organization.

When we moved to Corner Brook, Newfoundland, in 1975 we were unaware of the extent to which religion pervaded the society and the school system. Elementary and secondary schools were administered by four Christian 'denominations': (1) "Integrated," composed of the Anglican Church, the United Church, and the Salvation Army; (2) Roman Catholic; (3) Pentecostal; and, (4) the Seventh Day Adventists. Full-time teachers were required to belong to the denomination(s) that administered the school where they were employed. If a teacher quit the denomination(s) which employed them or, in the case of Roman Catholic teachers, divorced or married outside the faith, they could lose their jobs. Some did. Even though denominational control of education involved clear violations of human rights, it survived in Newfoundland because its retention was negotiated when Newfoundland-Labrador joined Canada in 1949. In the mid-1980s, we were told by the Newfoundland-Labrador Human Rights Association that legal challenges to denominational education under the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms were futile because the provincial government could invoke the 'Notwithstanding Clause' of the Charter. This clause (33.1) allows provincial governments to give existing provincial legislation precedence over particular rights and freedoms listed in the Charter.

Before we moved to Newfoundland, Alice completed teacher training at the University of Alberta. In Newfoundland, she applied for teacher certification but was repeatedly denied because she did not have a religious affiliation. She was eventually certified after telling school authorities that her father was Jewish. But even after she was certified to teach, her lack of religious affiliation insured that she would never get a full-time teaching position in the denominational school system. (This system changed after a referendum in 1998).

Our older daughter started kindergarten in an Integrated (Protestant) school before her fifth birthday. At age six we enrolled her in a Roman Catholic elementary school because, unlike schools of other denominations, it would hire non-Catholics as short-term substitute teachers. At one point our older daughter's grade one teacher asked her when and where she had been baptized. Our daughter replied that she had never been baptized. In front of the class, the teacher accused her of lying. Another time, the teacher became angry when our daughter asked who made God. When the teacher said that after death the souls of good people go to heaven our daughter asked why good people don't commit suicide in order to get to heaven immediately. This also made the teacher angry.

At age six, our older daughter decided to join Brownies, a national organization for young girls that promoted allegiance to God, Queen, and country. Brownie activities at that time stressed learning to braid, sew, and cook. Our daughter found these activities boring. She had hoped to learn to build fires and go camping like the male Cub Scouts. She also resented having to pray before being given cookies. During grade two she quit Brownies.

After she finished grade two, we withdrew our older daughter from the Catholic school and enrolled her in a nearby Integrated school.

In order to forestall misunderstanding, we told our daughter's teacher that we were not a Christian family but that our daughter wanted to sit in the religion class anyway. The teacher said, "Not to worry. The religion book is so bad it would put anyone off religion for life." The local Baptist minister was behind us and overheard. He didn't allow his daughter to take religion that year. She stood in the hall during the daily class.

In the year before we went to the Soviet Union our older daughter was in grade four. Her curriculum consisted of math (mainly multiplication and long division), English (based on a reader with short stories), art, geography (learning locations of the Canadian provinces and provincial capitals), and Newfoundland Culture. Pupils learned a lot about the U.S., but very little about Canada. Religion – i.e., Protestant Christianity – was taught every day.

Physical education and choir were taught separately by male teachers. School prayers were compulsory.

Our older daughter's teacher respected pupils and treated them fairly. Boys and girls nevertheless formed cliques based, in part, on the socioeconomic status of their fathers. For example, the children of doctors, lawyers, and businessmen generally played and socialized together.

Our younger daughter began kindergarten under an excellent teacher at her sister's Integrated school. She also joined Sunbeams, a pre-Brownie organization for four and five-year-old girls. The Sunbeams met in the basement of the Anglican church. The wife of the priest at this church was the Sunbeam organizer. The girls wore a yellow shirt and a bright blue jumper. Sunbeam activities included hymns, prayers, and various games that promoted cooperation. Our daughter recalls that the Sunbeam organizer did not tolerate cliques.

At age six, our younger daughter began grade one at the Integrated school. Her teacher treated her pupils fairly irrespective of their socioeconomic status or religious backgrounds. The pupils were taught to share and to be kind to each other. Subjects taught were reading, arithmetic, nature study, choir, physical education, and religion. The latter focused on the Ten Commandments, the Christmas story, and other well-known Bible stories such as the tale of David and Goliath. Religion was taught daily. All subjects were taught by the teacher except physical education and choir which were taught separately by male teachers.

Despite the teacher's efforts to promote fairness and equality, pupils formed cliques according to their clothing and toys. Fashionable toys and other prestige items were regularly displayed by pupils at 'show-and-tell' sessions at school.

Grade one social divisions also followed gender lines. Boys played with war toys and Lego. Most girls did not.

Our younger daughter suffered from eczema which often left visible marks on her hands and wrists. Repeated prescriptions of cortisone cream were ineffective. As well, our daughter had a misshapen thumb, the result of an accident with a door. Her eczema and her thumb set her apart, and some of the children treated her as infectious.

Our younger daughter decided to join Brownies and inherited her sister's uniform. The Brownies met on the school premises, and our younger daughter found that the cliques which existed in school persisted in Brownies. She quit within a year.

The mothers of a few of our younger daughter's female classmates attempted, like her teacher, to teach their children to treat others courteously and fairly. Our daughter always received valentines and party invitations from these girls.

When it became known that our younger daughter was going to go to the Soviet Union, her homeroom teacher told the class that our daughter was going to embark on "a difficult, exciting adventure." The teacher encouraged her pupils to write letters to her while she was in the USSR. The teacher hoped that our daughter's replies would allow pupils to learn about life in the Soviet Union.

We went to the Soviet Union to investigate Soviet policy toward indigenous peoples of the Soviet North and Far East (see Bartels and Bartels 1995). Our research was supported by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and we were hosted in the USSR by the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

In Leningrad we lived in a one-bedroom apartment in a large Academy of Sciences apartment building on Ploshad Muzhestva (Courage Plaza) a few kilometers northwest of spectacular landmarks such as the Hermitage in the heart of the city. Our daughters attended School 105 which specialized in teaching English. It was about a half kilometer from our apartment.

We met with the principal and vice-principal of School 105 – two middle-aged women – before our daughters started classes. We were told that discipline would be strict in comparison to Canadian schools. As we left the meeting, we dodged younger pupils boisterously careening around the wide corridors during recess, while young girls in upper grades strolled by, arm-in-arm, ignoring the mayhem.

Grade 1 students entered School 105 at age seven. After eight years of compulsory education, students could leave school, but most stayed on through grades IX and X in order to prepare for entrance

exams to various post-secondary educational institutions (see Grant 1979). In Newfoundland, students left school after grade 11. There was no grade 12 at that time.

Teachers at School 105 elected two of their number to be Principal and Vice-Principal. In Newfoundland, Principals were appointed by denominational school boards.

Pupils at School 105 began taking English classes when they reached Grade II (age 8) (see McFadden 1985: 53). Most upper level classes were taught in English. Our seven-year-old daughter would normally have been placed in grade I, but since she knew no Russian she was 'skipped' to grade II where her classmates were beginning to learn English.

Classes started at 9 a.m., Monday through Friday, and finished in the early afternoon. On Saturday, classes finished by noon. With parents' permission, students could stay at school under supervision on weekdays after classes ended. Many students, including our daughters, took advantage of these "prolonged days." Students were conventionally seated at desks in rows which faced the teacher and the blackboard, as they were in Corner Brook. All students wore standard uniforms, as they did in the Catholic school system in Corner Brook. Girls' uniforms at School 105 were brown wool dresses. Black aprons were worn for most school activities and white aprons were worn on special occasions. White lace collars of various styles were hand-stitched to each of the girls' uniforms.

School uniforms had to be washed. Washing of girls' uniforms involved taking the collars off by ripping out stitches. The collar was then washed by hand and ironed before being handstitched on again. Washing, drying, and ironing of uniforms were usually done by mothers or grandmothers.

Boys wore blue trousers and a blue jacket over a white shirt. The trousers and jacket were made of synthetic material.

Many younger pupils went to school with a parent or grandparent. Many of the students lived within walking distance of the school.

Parents were expected to buy vouchers every week for snacks and hot meals that were served every day in the school cafeteria. Hot meals and snacks included bread, butter, *kasha* (porridge), meat, rice, root vegetables, fruit, weak coffee with lots of milk and sugar or strong lemon tea, and fruit juice. If parents could not afford vouchers they were purchased by the school's Parents' Committee. The budget of this committee was probably provided by the local factory with which School 105 was associated. Milk in small bottles was distributed in 'prolonged day.' It was sometimes already sour.

A large proportion of our younger daughter's weekly classroom hours were devoted to English, Russian (eleven hours per week), and math (six hours per week). Other subjects were art (one hour per week), music (one hour per week), physical education (two hours per week), history, nature study (one hour per week), and *trud* or 'work' (two hours per week), which involved, among other things, learning to operate a treadle sewing machine and cleaning the classroom. This included mopping floors and washing wood surfaces.

When our younger daughter started school her eczema was very bad. We were told to take her to a doctor at a children's polyclinic in our neighbourhood. The doctor, a woman, told us how to determine whether the eczema was caused by something in our daughter's diet. A bright-green disinfectant and coal tar cream were prescribed. The doctor also prescribed daily ultraviolet treatments for some weeks at the local polyclinic. All Soviet polyclinics were state-funded. There were no user-fees, and the state paid for all prescribed drugs. In Newfoundland, the state did not pay for prescription drugs for children, although medicare would have covered visits to the doctor.

Soon after our younger daughter started treatments, her eczema disappeared. It didn't come back for a couple of years. No treatment for eczema that our daughter received in Canada was as effective as the treatment that she received in the former Soviet Union.

The primary instrument of political-cultural socialization for younger pupils at School 105 was the Young Octobrists, a country-wide organization which all pupils joined when they entered elementary school. The major pedagogical focus of the Young Octobrist was Lenin's childhood. The Young

Octobrist badge featured a profile of Lenin as a child. Pupils were taught that Lenin received top marks in school on the Soviet/Russian scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high), that he respected and helped his parents, that he helped others, and that he worked for a better society. Young Octobrists were taught to emulate him. Our daughter's homeroom teacher supervised Young Octobrist discussions about student conduct and discipline and pupils took these discussions very seriously.

Pupils were taught about the 900-day World War II siege of Leningrad with special emphasis on the hardships suffered by children. Stories were told of cases where adults starved because they gave their meager food rations to children. (Over 300,000 citizens of Leningrad died during the siege). There was a small statue in a meeting room of a School 105 alumnus who had died heroically while fighting the invaders. Pupils were taught about Nazi atrocities. As well, they were taught that conditions for most people were not good during Tsarist times and that the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was therefore necessary. They were also told about atrocities committed by the Whites during the Civil War (1918-20).

Lower level pupils were not explicitly taught that capitalism involved 'exploitation,' but there seemed to be an awareness that conditions in the West were not always good. When it became known that two sisters who attended School 105 were going to emigrate to the U.S., several schoolmates questioned our daughters about conditions there. Would the emigrés be safe in a country where everyone had a gun? The Soviet pupils had heard about high U.S. crime rates, but didn't seem to understand the concept of 'safe areas' and 'unsafe areas' which are largely tied to income differentials in North America.

When a pupil at School 105 received low marks or behaved badly, their parents could be given paid leave from work to discuss their child's problems with the school principal. We saw parents close to tears in such meetings. Parents in Corner Brook were not given paid leave from work to meet with their children's teachers or school administrators.

Despite teachers' efforts to instill a sense of social responsibility in pupils, unpleasant incidents sometimes occurred. Our younger daughter's winter jacket, purchased in Canada, could be clearly distinguished from the other children's jackets. One day it was repeatedly slashed with a sharp instrument while it hung on a peg outside her classroom, presumably by another student. We never found out who did this, or why. But the teachers were very concerned and had the coat repaired.

Gender roles were traditional. Male students were expected to be rambunctious and unscholarly while female students were expected to be studious and polite. The teacher often chided the boys to match the high grades of the girls. There was, however, a great deal of solidarity among female pupils. When a boy in our younger daughter's class called her an "American pig," he was scolded and humiliated by the girls. (Our daughter pointed out that she was Canadian, but many people did not seem to understand the difference between Canada and the USA.).

Students at School 105 were taught about civil defense. The teacher used our younger daughter as a model to demonstrate the use of gas masks to the class. Our daughter found this terrifying. In retrospect, she suspects that the teacher was trying to show other pupils that, even though our daughter was from North America, she was equally at risk with other students from an attack by the USA on the USSR.

Because our younger daughter did not know Russian when she entered school, she could not understand what was going on. Her teacher did not stop her when she sometimes wandered out of class in order to visit the school nurse whom she liked a lot. By Christmas, however, our daughter spoke Russian well and participated fully in school activities and classes. She did well in art, and we were told that she should, if we were staying another year, attend the special school for art.

The situation of our ten-year-old daughter was quite different. She entered School 105 in Grade V and had different teachers for math, history, art, English, Russian, physical education, music, and *trud* ('work'). She was not expected to keep up in all classes because she did not know Russian. Also, because we were returning to Newfoundland she was tutored by her mother at home in math according to the

requirements of Newfoundland school curriculum. Math was taught at a relatively high level at School 105 in comparison to the level of math taught at our children's elementary school in Corner Brook.

Topics covered in our older daughter's history classes (two hours per week) included the Bolshevik Revolution. English classes (six hours per week) focussed on grammar and vocabulary exercises and simple stories. The mathematics classes (six hours per week) covered topics that were far in advance of topics covered at an equivalent grade level in Newfoundland. In art classes (one hour per week) pupils were taught how to create realistic, three-dimensional representations with pencils or water colours. In physical education classes (two hours per week), students did calisthenics and learned rope-climbing. Six hours per week were devoted to Russian. In 'work' classes (two hours per week) female students were taught to sew with treadle machines. Boys learned metalwork and woodwork, including welding.

During "prolonged day," our daughter and several other students who remained at school were given weekly piano lessons by the music teacher, a woman.

In the first week of school, our daughter made three friends who remained close to her throughout our stay. Two were Russian and the third was of Indonesian descent. They communicated in a sort of English-Russian pidgin.

All of our children's classmates were very curious about Western toys and eager to share their toys with our daughters. Rarely a day went by without at least one gift coming home.

A boy in our older daughter's classes once called her a capitalist. This was intended as an insult. Our daughter angrily protested to her friends and to her teacher. The teacher told the boy and the rest of the class that our daughter was "red."

There was much serious discussion among students and teachers when our older daughter asked to join the Young Pioneers, the country-wide organization which students entered in Grade IV. The discussion, in which we were included, focused on the question of whether a non-Soviet student should be allowed to join. It was eventually agreed that she could join, but she was exempted from repeating the part of the Pioneer oath that enjoined loyalty to the Soviet Union. At the school ceremony where she was inducted, she swore "to live, learn, and struggle as the great Lenin bade us and as the Communist Party teaches us" (Grant 1979:73). After taking the oath, she was presented with her red Pioneer scarf.

Young Pioneer activities included organizing school assemblies, visiting war veterans, trips to museums, parties at "Pioneer Palaces," and attending summer camps that were supported by various productive enterprises, etc. (Grant 1979: 74-75). The Young Pioneer slogan was, "Always prepared," very similar to the slogan of the Boy Scouts in Canada.

Young Pioneer activities which our daughters attended included a New Year's celebration at a Pioneer Palace. New Year's celebrations in Leningrad were similar to Christmas celebrations in Newfoundland. In both places there were decorated trees, coloured lights, parties, and gifts for children.

We are not sure whether puppet plays and ballets for children which our children attended were sponsored by the Young Pioneers.

The Young Pioneer Code of Conduct included the following tenets: "A Pioneer loves his motherland and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; a Pioneer honours the memory of those who gave their lives in the struggle for freedom and for the prosperity of the Soviet motherland; a Pioneer is friendly to children of all countries; a Pioneer learns well; a Pioneer is polite and well disciplined" (Grant 1979:77).

In retrospect, our daughter feels that students who were seen by teachers as exemplary Young Pioneers were favoured over students who were not. She feels that this sometimes precluded marginal students from fulfilling their potential. She also feels, however, that this categorization was not based on the wealth or status of students' families.

Our older daughter and her classmates did not like their English teacher, a Russian woman who humiliated students and made them cry when they did not do well. In contrast, the grade VI English teacher, another Russian woman, was friendly and helpful.

Our older daughter felt that her classmates, particularly the girls, were generally friendly and pro-

tective toward her. When our daughter once stayed at home from school with a minor illness, her three friends visited our flat and anxiously asked where she was.

Children with infectious illnesses such as sore throats were not permitted to attend school, and doctors made house calls to examine them. This was intended to prevent illnesses from spreading. Parents with sick children at home were eligible for paid leave from work. Public service announcements on TV cautioned people who were sick not to go to work. These practices were absent in Corner Brook.

As in the lower grades, classes in Grade V were orderly and quiet. But before school, between classes, and after school, there was mayhem as younger children boisterously ran or played games in the wide school corridors. Young Pioneers and older students were supposed to insure safety in the corridors, but this was not always possible. Our older daughter told us that a large boy in her class broke the collarbone of a smaller boy in a fight. The offender was kept home from school for a few days and his classmates, including our older daughter, were asked to decide how to deal with him. The students initially proposed expelling him permanently from the Young Pioneers. This was regarded as a particularly harsh punishment. Under the guidance of teachers, students eventually decided that the offender would not be allowed to participate in Pioneer activities until he had atoned for his offense by doing "something good." Within a few weeks, it had all blown over.

Our daughter and one of her Russian school friends agreed, without telling us, that a hamster would be given to our daughter. The Russian girl brought the animal to school in a box. While the hamster was at school it escaped, and the teachers and students had to conduct a search for it. The teachers did not like having the rodent at school and were anxious to have it found and removed. Our younger daughter found the hamster in a closet and was roundly praised by her classmates and the teachers. When we arrived we were greeted by many teachers and students who wanted to see if our daughter could keep the pet. We could hardly refuse in front of so many witnesses, especially when the girl who gave it to her promised to take it back when we left to go back to Canada.

Our older daughter's friends often visited our flat, and she was sometimes invited to her friends' homes. Our younger daughter and her friends didn't see much of each other outside of school and prolonged day.

When our older daughter returned to Newfoundland in 1982 she entered grade six in an Integrated elementary school. Our daughter felt that she was liked and taken seriously by the teacher, a woman who taught English, science, religion, and social studies.

Math was taught by the male Vice-Principal. Choir and physical education were taught by different male instructors. Our older daughter did exceptionally well in math that year, so perhaps some of the math classes at her Leningrad school had rubbed off.

Student cliques based on wealth and status of parents still existed, and our daughter felt excluded from them. Her journey to the USSR made her 'weird,' and some of the male students 'jokingly' called her a 'Commie.' Only one girl was curious about her life in the USSR.

In class, the Vice-Principal once asked our daughter what she thought of life in the USSR. She said that she had liked it. The Vice-Principal said, "You'll have to tell us about it sometime." Our daughter suspected that he would never ask her about it again, and he didn't.

When we returned to Newfoundland, our younger daughter entered grade three in the same Integrated elementary school attended by her sister. Her teacher was a young woman who taught science, religion, English, math, and history. Choir and physical education were taught separately by males.

The teacher was very religious. Our daughter once dropped a thumbtack in the classroom, and exclaimed, "God!" The teacher angrily asked who had taken "the Lord's name in vain." She ceased to be angry when she realized that the culprit didn't know that she had 'sworn.' Pupils were once asked in class to draw a picture of God for a test in religion class. When our daughter, whose grandfather is Jewish, said that Jews are not supposed to make pictures of God, the teacher told her to be quiet and draw the picture. Not surprisingly, there were 'correct' and 'incorrect' ways to draw God. In 'correct' drawings,

God was a white or pink-skinned old man with a big white beard.

Our younger daughter felt that she was different from the other pupils because she had visited the USSR, and because she had become unfamiliar with Canadian/Newfoundland culture and language during her absence. During unsupervised recesses on the school grounds some of the boys in her class called her and her family "Commie spies,' and tried to hit her. Because outdoor playtime was required but unsupervised, children were free to bully each other and to play dangerous games. This could sometimes result in injuries. The worst playground injury that our younger daughter saw was a broken limb.

The comparison of our daughters' school experiences in Leningrad and Newfoundland sheds light on our initial characterization of totalitarianism. The concept of totalitarianism was used during the Cold War to equate Naziism with 'Communism' in order to discredit the latter. This equation still persists, but it is difficult to sustain because Western powers have consistently supported Fascist-style, anti-Communist regimes where state power is used to support capitalism and to suppress democracy and the left, in some cases by torture and terror (see Blum 2000). In light of this ideological conundrum, some mainstream Western academics have characterized these regimes as 'authoritarian' or 'autocratic' and attempted to distinguish them from totalitarian regimes (for example, see Macridis 1986; Kirkpatrick 1982:51). It is then suggested or implied that while authoritarian regimes are undemocratic, they theoretically do not involve comprehensive state-sponsored attempts to achieve a perfect society (Kirkpatrick 1982:99-102). 'Market forces' and the 'invisible hand' are supposedly free to work their beneficial magic in authoritarian societies, but not in totalitarian societies.

In the former USSR, the activities of the Young Octobrists and the Young Pioneers can perhaps be seen as attempts to mould the sorts of people who could continue the struggle to achieve a communist society in the indefinite future. To the extent that these activities promoted equality and fairness in relations between children and in relations between students and teachers, they were consistent with the ideals that many Christians profess.

The definition of totalitarianism as a state-led attempt to achieve a perfect society obviously cannot be applied to Newfoundland in the 1980s. While social and economic problems in Newfoundland were widely acknowledged, their solutions were not generally seen as requiring structural or revolutionary change. It can be argued that the religious intolerance in Newfoundland schools was outside the Canadian norm. Nevertheless, the notion that solutions to social and economic problems had to be sought within the supposedly 'perfected' institutions of parliamentary democracy was a central feature of the dominant ideology, or *doxa* (see Jenkins 1992), not only in Newfoundland, but in the rest of Canada as well. It still is. The contradictions inherent in this ideology were exemplified by the school experiences of our children in Newfoundland. While some teachers and parents attempted to instill the democratic and 'Christian' ideals of equality and fairness, this was difficult in a socio-economic context where some people clearly had more wealth and power than others, and where it was acceptable to 'get ahead' at the expense of others. The latter 'messages' were constantly reinforced by mass media, especially in advertising (see Bajpai 1996). While these 'messages' seemed to be absent in Soviet elementary schools and mass media, this did not prevent large numbers of young Soviet intellectuals who went through these schools from supporting a transition to a so-called free market economy during the early 1990s (see Bartels 2008).

In conclusion, we feel that our family was fortunate to experience schooling in both capitalist and socialist societies. It gave us a comparative perspective which is increasingly rare.

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Book Review

CLASS DISMISSED: WHY WE CANNOT TEACH OR LEARN OUR WAY OUT OF INEQUALITY. By John Marsh. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2011.

Hardly a week seems to go by without a new study or book published cataloguing the sins in the American university system. In part, this is heartening, because it shows that people still care enough about the system to be enraged when things are, to use the title of one such study, 'academically adrift.' Yet within this emerging set of new public institution and policy literature, outside of a narrow band of scholars such as Marc Bousquet and Henry Giroux, relatively little about education's relationship to production reaches the public eye, the newsroom floor, or congressional hearings.

It is therefore wonderful that John Marsh, an English Professor at Penn State, presents a timely and accessible discussion deflating the promissory potential of education as a luck neutralizing policy tool. Applying his sharp eye and close reading skills to education econometrics Marsh demonstrates how the consensus on higher education is a confluence of the various forces that create the neoliberal mode of governance. As his analysis applies to prospects for equitable social change, he reckons that this burden of hope is too much for education alone to carry. Lastly, and perhaps the best element of the book, Marsh demonstrates that humanistic training can stand toe-to-toe with the policy wonk crowd.

To give an overview of the book, Class Dismissed addresses the prevailing inequality in the United States and the lack of public engagement over the role of class in determining the allocation and quality of life chances. Instead, most stakeholders obsessively concentrate on the efficacy of education at the expense of examining the differentials of, and interest in, economic power. Even well-regarded economic commentators believe "outsourcing, immigration and the gains of the super rich…are diversions from the main issue [which is] largely one of (a lack of) education." (15) The consensus is that inequality is the byproduct of poorly formed, or executed, policy.

Any doubts of this consensus are quickly brushed aside by pragmatic politics. Despite the hostile antagonistic impasse that is formal American politics, all parties agree that higher education is vital to growth and prosperity. Here the university system is regarded as being reasonably democratic (relatively accessible) and reasonably meritocratic (a four year ranking). This provides just enough to satisfy all; conservatives, because it provides justification not to support those that fail; and progressives because it provides access to opportunity that can overcome starting gate inequality. The arrangement therefore permits inequalities for which you are said to be responsible. But this is too vulnerable to moral luck, and is perhaps the worst version of luck-egalitarianism for it fails to address the actual prospects for success, which for those familiar with Marc Bousquet's How the University Works, will know is unlikely for students when the system is rigged.

Marsh proceeds to show that when structural issues are discussed in educational policy, it is often under a neutral technocratic rubric of matching teaching to economic needs. The current thought in

education policy is that the university system should provide workplace preparation through professional degree programs, the cost of which is born by the individual themselves as businesses are unwilling to carry the costs of vocational training. Given that high school attempts to develop a well-rounded learner capable of functioning within the society, but that the new economy requires hyper-specialized knowledge and skills, universities have been tasked to signal that the person is vocationally competent. The proliferation in professional master programs is testament to this process.

While some might have concerns with the university bearing a vocational mandate, Marsh's direct concern is not this per se (although he does think that universities are best positioned to cultivate intellectual maturity, and not vocational skills). Rather, he plainly points out that vocational training as a means to economic mobility is misplaced because that path soon becomes bottlenecked as everyone attempts to take that route. Furthermore, to quote Marsh, "the US economy, despite claims to the contrary, will continue to produce more jobs that do not require a college degree than jobs that do. A college degree will not make those jobs pay any more than the pittance they currently do." (20) This sentiment is neatly expressed by the best line in the book, "A PhD working as a bartender earns bartender wages, not a professor's salary." (20) One might add, this bartender would be burdened by enormous student debt which greatly hinders the chances of upward economic mobility.

As an alternative policy prescription to inequality Marsh proposes the sufficiency of a living wage. It is a little bit unclear whether he means a citizen's wage, a basic income grant, or raising the minimum wage, but all three aim to improve working and living conditions which is generally Marsh's point. To make this politically possible he thinks that Americans require an honest dealing with structural economic arrangements. But Marsh is also under no illusions that concessions will be given without contention. For this reason he taps organized labour as the instrument by which to fight for economic rights and gains. Marsh, though, is also a realist, and acknowledges that a labour renaissance still confronts the lack of political will to do what is required to greatly reduce inequality. If such will existed, then progressive redistributive taxation and other mechanisms would already be in place to promote widespread human flourishing.

After reading this book some might quibble that Marsh is not radical enough, or that his appeal to preserve the liberal university rings of a self-interested humanities faculty member, or even that union organizing is not good enough in the present circumstances. But criticisms of this sort forget that Marsh is constrained by his context, and his appeal to particular audiences. These criticisms also unnecessarily make the good the enemy of the perfect. More measured responses should seek to build upon what Marsh has provided.

In sum, Marsh has crafted something magnificent. Class Dismissed deserves to be one of the most read and talked about books this year.

Scott Timcke