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Commons and Communities in the University: Some Notes and Some Examples¹

Introduction

It has become a commonplace that higher education in the UK, along with many other countries, is in crisis. The recently-published White Paper *The Future of Higher Education* proposes (further) sweeping reforms, while critics have lamented the processes of marketisation, commodification, rationalisation, managerialism, flexibilisation, along with the casualisation and proletarianisation of academics.² In another, earlier paper (Harvie 2000), I have described research selectivity (the RAE) as a process facilitating the enclosure of intellectual commons and the creation of a research proletariat which is estranged from its labour.

So far, so bad. Here I want to turn the problem on its head.³ If there is a process of enclosure, of primitive accumulation, then something is being enclosed, something is being accumulated.⁴ I want to focus on that something — *commons*. Similarly, instead of concentrating on the various processes through which academics are being atomised, and forced to relate to each other mediated through market and/or market-like relationships, I wish rather to explore the *community/ies* of academics.

Why might this project be productive? It is hard to find anyone within academia who actually likes what is currently happening. However, despite our shared unease tending toward outright hostility, we are also finding it hard to oppose these processes. Relatedly, we are struggling to articulate alternatives to neo-liberal strategies within higher education. Consequently, all too frequently, we concede the field of debate to AUT/NATFE representatives and leaders, who, for the most part, seem to have accepted capital's framework of performance, efficiency, quality, professionalism, etc., and argue only over lecturers' pay and, to a far lesser extent, conditions of work within this framework.

An exploration of commons and communities within higher education can (possibly) help us to:

- (i) identify actually-existing alternatives to market-relations within universities;
- (ii) recognise our own power (power-to);

and hence,

- (iii) articulate alternatives to neoliberal strategies for higher education;

¹ These ideas were first presented at the Association of Heterodox Economists' annual conference at Nottingham Trent University, in July 2003, and I'm grateful to participants there for useful comments. Other comments from readers would be welcome: david.harvie@ntu.ac.uk.

² This White Paper is available on the DfES's website, <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/highereducation/hestrategy/>. For a critique, see Robinson and Torney (2003). For a more general critique of neoliberal strategies for higher education see Levidown (2002).

³ Elsewhere, Harvie (2003b) I explore in more detail the way academics are productive of value for capital.

⁴ This 'something' need not be a *thing*, of course.

- (iv) more effectively fight restructuring;
 - (v) trace the connections with other threads of the anti-capitalist movement(s);
- and finally,
- (vi) posit a transcendence of capitalist education.

What are *commons*, what are *communities*? 'Commons suggest alternative, non-commodified means to means to fulfil social needs, e.g. to obtain social wealth and to organise social production. Commons are necessarily created and sustained by communities, i.e. by social networks of mutual aid, solidarity, and practices of human exchange that are not reduced to the market form' (De Angelis 2003)

Now, traditionally, for both university teacher and student, intellectual commons have included well-stocked libraries and the space and time to pursue 'scholarly activity': private study, reflection and research, along with discussion in seminars, workshops and so on. For the student, this means, for example, the absence of excessive pressure to complete numerous assignments, to gain a particular class of degree to meet the requirements of the labour market or to combine wage-labour alongside studying-labour. For the university teacher, this means a limit to the number of classroom hours and to amount of time which must be spent⁵ on onerous activities such as marking, dealing with bureaucracy and so on.

Academics, moreover, have constituted a community, or a number of overlapping communities, with discipline-defined communities largely forming the basis of collegiate forms of governance. In the past couple of decades, through progressively withdrawing funding and through changing the funding regime, the government has manoeuvred universities into demanding deregulation and marketisation as the only way of overcoming the financial shortfall.

The withdrawal of funding is real, but is deregulation and marketisation the only alternative? What happens if we don't submit? How can we resist? How do we deal with what is essentially the same problem as that faced by others the world over, everywhere from Argentina to south Wales, the problem articulated by Holloway: what do we do when capital flees? Understanding the nature of commons and communities which already exist and are reproduced within the university, or universities, can help us explore these questions.

1. The academic department as gift economy

In many cases the academic department is essentially a community. It is constituted of 'social networks of mutual aid, solidarity, and practices of human exchange that are not reduced to the market form'. The examples of these seem almost banal or trivial, but are important nonetheless. I attend a colleague's research presentation and attempt to give constructive comments, even if I am not especially interested in the topic and/or I do not like their paradigm. If I able, I will help a student taking a colleague's module (course). I share freely with colleagues knowledge of and advice concerning university procedures, courses and modules, students. What do I expect in return? Nothing, except that when I have a similar need, a colleague or colleagues will reciprocate.

In many ways then, a department may operate along lines similar to a *gift economy* in that it is structured around reciprocal relations of giving and receiving. In my experience one's standing within the department and the extent to which one is respected by colleagues tends to depend upon the extent

⁵ Echoing E.P. Thompson's (1967) point on time and work-discipline: when I discuss social theory and human practice with students or colleagues I am passing time; when I fill in some course appraisal form I am spending it!

to which one helps sustain these relations.⁶ It is interesting, and in keeping with gift economies, that one is as obliged to *receive* 'gifts' from colleagues as one is to give them. That is, according to custom, one is usually expected to allow one's colleagues the opportunity to comment on one's research, proposals for teaching or whatever, and consider seriously comments received. I think this expectation applies equally to somebody's individual research, say, as it does to plans for a new course, or designs for new publicity. This suggests that the desire to gift advice — and therefore the obligation to receive such gifts — goes beyond department members' wishes to enjoy some sort of collective control, over what students are taught or the department's external image, for example.

But, however much the academic department reproduces itself as a community, this community is partial or bounded. In my department of economics, at Nottingham Trent University, for example, we are competing both with economics departments elsewhere for students (and hence money) and with other departments within NTU for university-allocated money. Moreover, the more community-like we are, the more effective we are likely to be in competing for such students and monies. Thus, the academic department really exists in the space between commons, on the one hand, and commodities, on the other.⁷

Yet, sometimes we manage to negate such competition. For example, at NTU, a directive prohibits admissions staff from 'releasing' students who have committed themselves to taking up a place at the university, but who wish to attend another university instead. This directive is widely ignored. Staff are also much more likely to prioritise honesty over hard-sell when advising prospective applicants.

The academic department is also a partial community, or a community existing *within* capital, to the extent that its function, at least that for which it is funded, is to reproduce labour-power and, through the degree classification awarded, to organise into hierarchies the new labour-powers produced. Again, the department is likely to be much more effective in performing this function for capital when it does operate as a community.

Finally, we can note that the operation of the department *as a community* is to a large part dependent upon a certain degree of job security and access to resources for its members. A lecturer on a short, fixed-term contract, with a heavy teaching load, for example, is much less likely to participate in the communal life of the department. That is, the community can only be sustained by commons! And herein lies a contradiction. The enclosure of commons in universities and the undermining of communities, through rationalisation, restructuring, etc., is likely to make departments less effective in performing both the function of reproducing labour-power and that of producing new knowledge in the form of original research. This point is made strongly by Simon Marginson (2002), who notes that the long-term position of the 'Enterprise University' 'cannot be sustained by marketing alone; it must draw on the potency of its teaching and research. Yet as the executive leader sees it, to secure institutional flexibility and responsiveness he/she must break the power of the disciplines in university governance. And because in the public-collegial university the power of the disciplines in governance was tied to the traditional academic structures derived from their constitution as fields of knowledge, the executive leader feels impelled to weaken or break the power of the disciplines in teaching and research'.

In summary: communities already exist in academic departments, though their existence may be threatened by rationalisation and restructuring. In fact, in many cases the department itself is constituted through the action of the community. One pragmatic implication of this is that the department may be a

⁶ Those academics who publish and teach, but who keep themselves to themselves, may be respected, but this respect is frequently far more grudging.

⁷ The idea of a community existing between commons and communities comes the title of Barchiesi's (2003) article. De Marcellus (2003) also notes the role that communities play 'in the productive activity of private enterprises and the state' and suggests that they may exist inside capital, as well as outside and against.

more appropriate basis for opposing neoliberal strategies for universities than academic unions such as NATFE or the AUT.

2. The research community

A second example of community within universities is that of the researchers constituting any particular discipline or sub-discipline. It is true that researchers may be incredibly competitive, but it is important to distinguish market-type competition from competition of a more convivial type, and I would suggest that much competition amongst researchers is (still) of the latter type. Convivial competition is where I (or my team) wish to be the first to prove a particular conjecture, to explain a particular phenomenon, to discover a particular species, star or particle, in the same way that if I race my bike against my friend I wish to win. But convivial competition does not exclude cooperation, in that rival researchers (or research teams) will share preliminary results, experience of techniques and so on. This sharing of experience, of knowledge, this cooperation, is exactly what happens at scientific conferences and through the circulation of research papers (sometimes published in journals, but frequently, at least in many sciences, through the distribution of 'pre-prints', which accelerates the process). Of course, the shared knowledge, accessible through books, articles, computer software and directly, through dialogue with other scientists, forms an intellectual commons.

Competition amongst researchers is much more likely to become market-like when livelihoods come to be dependent upon 'winning'. This process is being driven by so-called research selectivity: in the UK, the Research Assessment Exercise attempts to quantify a researcher's research output; in many countries and internationally, research grants, pay, promotion, the extension of a short-term contract all depend upon publishing original research, i.e., 'coming first'. (See Harvie 2000). Within such an environment, it is not surprising if individual researchers and research teams cooperate less with rivals, and become more aggressive in claiming 'ownership', i.e., enclosing, of ideas.

As with the example of the academic department, my suggestion that researchers constitute a community which sustains an intellectual commons may appear trivial. It is far from that, especially when one compares the traditional mode of university research with that of private-sector research. A frequent complaint of scientists working in laboratories for private companies, for example, is that they are not allowed to make public their research findings. It is also the case that university research is essentially *open source*.⁸ Consider a research paper presenting some new results, a new theory, or whatever. In most cases I am free to request that the author(s) provide me with underlying data or details of techniques use (and would expect that they acquiesce), if these are not made sufficiently clear in the paper; I am free to apply those techniques or the theory to another problem; I am free to improve, adapt, extend or otherwise modify the techniques/theory; I am free to propagate the techniques/theory. Of course, if I apply, extend, modify (or whatever) someone's theory, I am expected to acknowledge their original work, but I am not required to obtain their permission nor to pay them any royalty: in this sense they may claim *authorship*, but not *ownership*.⁹

Yochai Benkler (2002) calls this mode of production *commons-based peer production*. (Benkler's article is primarily about open source or free software, but he also mentions academic research as another

⁸ The term derives from 'open source software', also know as 'free software', where source code is freely accessible and hence be modified by other programmers.

⁹ The obligation to acknowledge underpinning research, however, enables the construction of citation indexes, which in turn allows citation counting. Citation counts have been proposed as more effective than publication counts (such as the RAE) in evaluating research, and the relative merits and demerits of the two methods have themselves become the object of a number of research papers. The important point here is that the obligation to cite others' work can provide a precondition for the coupling of research activity and money, which is the logic driving research selectivity.

example of this mode of production.) In addition to its open-source nature — the fact that it can be freely modified and replicated — commons-based peer production is characterised by the fact that collaboration is established neither through market-price signals, nor through managerial command. Instead, individuals 'self-identify for tasks and perform them for complex motivational reasons', there is extensive use of peer-review and the 'collaboration platform [corrects] for defection by using redundancy of contributions and averaging out of outliers — be they defectors or incompetents' (ibid). This characteristic clearly applies to university research: individual researchers are generally driven to become involved in particular research projects through intellectual curiosity, rather than the desire for financial gain; articles and books are scrutinised by referees or publishers' 'readers' before publication, and by comment-writers and reviewers afterwards; findings not consistent with an established body of knowledge are generally treated with more scepticism... or at least it used to: given research-selectivity, given the process of enclosure of intellectual commons, there is increasing pressure on individual researchers to work in particular fields in order to get published, in order to retain access to the means to continue researching, i.e., follow 'market signals', or to work as research assistant on somebody's else project, i.e., submit to managerial command (see Harvie 2000).¹⁰

3. Community in the classroom

More important than any research activity, the university's primary function in capitalist society is to help reproduce and classify that special commodity labour-power. (See, for example, Rikowski 2000.) More specifically, universities are supposed to provide training in so-called 'subject-specific skills', e.g., in chemistry or mathematics or economics or whatever, and in 'generic skills', such as the ability to communicate, to work individually and in groups, to work to a deadline and so on. Other important 'generic skills', rarely mentioned in educational literature, include the willingness to accept work-discipline (i.e., to do what your employer tells you, to turn up to your job on time), to accept the principle that reward should be tied to hard work and ability and, more generally, to accept the organising principles of the capitalist mode of production: competition, hierarchy, etc. Universities classify individual labour-powers through awarding (or not awarding) degrees of a particular class, and through providing references for graduates to potential employers.

In any given university class, the two central subjects in this process of reproducing labour-power are the lecturer (or professor) and the student(s) themselves. Both subjects must participate in the process if new labour-power is to be produced.¹¹ The relationships between lecturer and student, between lecturer and fellow lecturers and their university's administration, and between fellow students in a class are all conditioned by various structures. The most important of these is that at the end of the class (module or course) the lecturer will grade the student. This essentially provides the lecturer with a disciplinary device, which facilitates the imposition of work on the student. Lecturers are themselves monitored by the university administration to ensure they are imposing sufficient work. For example, at least in the UK, lecturers are required to provide details of course syllabi, assessment methods and students' grades; lecturers are usually expected to provide an explanation if their course's mean mark and dispersion of marks (the standard deviation) deviate significantly and systematically from those for other courses.¹²

¹⁰ Fashionable fields and fields for which research-funding is available (e.g., through the UK's Research Councils) are, to a large extent, determined by the needs of the state and of business.

¹¹ For all the talk of 'good teachers' and 'bad teachers' the student's participation in this process is far more important than that of the lecturer.

¹² Mean mark functions as a measure of how 'tough' the lecturer is, i.e., how much work they are imposing; the dispersion of marks measures the lecturer's relative contribution to the hierarchising of students.

Also important is the physical layout of the classroom with the students' chairs all facing the lecturer at the front. This reinforces the hierarchy and encourages arborescent (to borrow Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) terminology) modes of thought, in which all discussion is mediated through the 'teacher'.^{13 14}

In spite of these structures, however, it is sometimes possible for lecturers to encourage the constitution of a community in the classroom.¹⁵ Given the lecturer's power-over their students flows principally from their power-to-grade, this is the principal barrier to the constitution of a classroom-community.¹⁶ Thus, the challenge for the teacher is to do something about their course's 'assessment regime' such that the work imposed on their students is minimised. There are a few possible tactics.

1. *Give students credit for activity they would choose to do anyway.* For example, a colleague and I 'teach' a final-year undergraduate course on the first volume of Marx's *Capital*. The course is essentially run as a *Capital* reading group: each week a group of students presents some material from the book, while a second group acts as formal discussants. Presentations and the discussants' contributions are graded, each member of the two groups being awarded the same mark. Members of the class can also get some marks simply for turning up and for contributing to general discussion after the presenters have had their say. Together, these marks account for the major part of the course's overall assessment. We make it as clear as we can to students at the beginning of the course, that if they want to read Marx's *Capital*, and if they are prepared to think hard and for themselves about the questions it raises, then they will get a good grade. (We also make it clear that we grade on the basis of a student's own attempt to get to grips with difficult material, rather than their ability to simply rehearse another author's interpretation.) If not, then they will not get a good grade and they should withdraw from the course. This format also allows us some leeway in awarding higher-than-average and less-dispersed grades. First, on the basis of our introductory spiel, we can argue that students self-select such that only 'better' students remain on the course, hence higher mean marks. Second, with a high weighting given to group work, we argue that there is 'sampling-mean effect', which explains lower dispersion of marks. Moreover, the 'better' students in each group 'pull up' the marks of the 'weaker'. Finally, we (sometimes) argue that the format of the course is more effective, or (very occasionally) that we are better teachers!

In another course, *Political Economy*, I also award marks for group presentations, but groups can choose the topic of their presentation from an extensive list. I essentially say, find something which interests you, read something about it, think about it and tell us all what you've discovered.

2. *Minimise exam-preparation time.* A lecturer actually imposes less work if they reduce the time available to students for exam revision. If a test is set after a 'vacation', for example, the student is in fact denied that vacation, because they are under pressure to spend the time preparing for the test!

¹³ I was recently involved in a spat with administrators in my university regarding physical organisation of teaching space. I was informed in no uncertain terms that the 'standard configuration' was with all students' chairs facing the front and that, however I personally chose to teach my classes, I must ensure that furniture was afterwards returned to this 'standard configuration'.

¹⁴ The many ways in which work is imposed on students and professors, and ways in which students and professors may struggle against this imposition, are discussed in Cleaver (2003). I discuss similar issues in terms of productive labour in Harvie (2003b).

¹⁵ The lecturer can only encourage: one person cannot create a community.

¹⁶ At least, a community of which the lecturer is a member: students may cooperate *against* their lecturer in all manner of ways, e.g., group working, copying each others' work, other forms of 'cheating', collective refusal of work ('if none of us do it...', 's/he can't fail us all').

3. *Substitute PASS/FAIL grades for percentage scores.* It is sometimes possible to convince university committees that *not* awarding a percentage grade actually increases a course's effectiveness in 'meeting learning outcomes'. In these cases, imposed-work on students is reduced.

Clearly, none of the above ways of reducing imposed-work is completely removes it. However, in my experience, student-led discussions on topics they have self-selected, coupled with a physical arrangement of the classroom, such as a circle of chairs, which encourages rhizomatic communication (i.e., every person in the class can establish direct contact with any other) certainly leads to richer discussions and greater participation. A partial community, at least, can frequently be created in such situations.¹⁷

4. Web-based teaching documents

If I have a new course to teach, the first thing I'll do is type its title into an internet search engine and see how others have taught it elsewhere. In this way I can find examples of reading lists, course outlines, exam questions, even handouts and lecture notes. Such web-based course materials constitute a vast commons, for both lecturers and students. This commons is sustained by lecturers uploading their own teaching materials; these lecturers thus constitute a community. Again, this example may appear rather mundane, but it's important to recognise it given current trends in many universities towards greater 'virtual learning'. Nottingham Trent University, for example, is heavily promoting its own 'virtual learning portal' (VLP), and it is likely that in the near future will attempt to force all lecturers to place their teaching materials here. Yet, access to any set of course materials on NTU's VLP is restricted to those lecturers teaching it and those students enrolled upon it. If replicated at other universities, these developments would threaten a widespread *de facto* enclosure of intellectual commons.

5. Open Access Journals

In October 2000, a coalition of research scientists founded the Public Library of Science (PLoS — <http://www.publiclibraryofscience.org>). Unhappy with the 'exorbitant' subscription fees for many journals and consequent limited access, their goal was to make the world's medical and scientific literature a public resource. They began by circulating an open letter calling on all scientific publishers to make all primary research articles freely available on-line within six months of initial publication. The letter, which also included a pledge to publish in, edit or review for and personally subscribe to only those journals which agreed to this, was signed by over 30,000 scientists from 180 countries.

In general unsatisfied with the publishers' responses, the PLoS scientists decided in the summer of 2001 to set up their own journals. In October 2003 *PLoS Biology* was launched, the first issue of *PLoS Medicine* will be published in mid-2004, and there are plans to establish PLoS journals in other fields such as chemistry and computer science.

¹⁷ It should be noted that lecturer-activity designed to facilitate the constitution of a community in the classroom — in particular, attempting to minimise the imposition of student work — can also produce outcomes which undermine the creation of this community. Clearly, most students wish to do as little imposed work as possible and are therefore likely to choose optional courses partly on the basis of workloads. A recurrent problem for our *Capital* course is the presence of students who have no interest in the critique of political economy, but who enroll on it because of the high weighting given to coursework and the fact that there is no end-of-year exam. Such students can easily hinder the development of a group dynamic, and the challenge for the members of the class who are interested in Marx's thought — both students and the lecturers — is essentially to ignore them.

PLoS has a number of core principles. These include open access: 'All material published by the Public Library of Science, whether submitted to or created by PLoS, will be published under an open access license that allows unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited'. To ensure free access, the PLoS model involves authors paying a publication (not submission) fee: 'a fair price that reflects the actual cost of publication. However, the ability of authors to pay publication charges will never be a consideration in the decision whether to publish.' That is, where the author's institution will not or cannot pay, the fee will be waived.

The Public Library of Science is not the first group to make scientific research freely available. At the time of writing (November 2003) there were almost 600 open-access journals, spanning a wide range of fields, listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals — <http://www.doaj.org/> — up by at least 25% in just six months. Besides the open-access criterion, these are all 'scientific and scholarly journals that use a quality control system to guarantee the content'.

It is notable that open-access journals are not especially 'left-wing' in any way. Although the Directory of Open Access Journals lists *Cultural Logic: An Electronic Journal of Marxist Theory and Practice*, for example, it also lists a number of management journals and the *IMF Staff Papers*. Another not-for-profit organisation, the Electronic Society for Social Scientists (ELSSS — <http://www.elsss.org.uk/>) which is supported by, amongst other institutions, the Royal Economic Society, will soon begin publishing the *Review of Economic Theory*, and is currently exploring the possibility of launching other journals in specialist areas of economics. Although not, strictly speaking, open access, subscriptions (at break-even level) will only be levied from subscribers in high-income countries.

All of these initiatives are helping to establish a knowledge- or intellectual commons.

Conclusion

Don't it always seem to go;
That you don't know what you've got till it's gone
(Joni Mitchell, 'Big Yellow Taxi', *Ladies of the Canyon*, 1970)

The examples of commons and communities discussed here are not discrete. Rather they overlap and interconnect in numerous ways. There are obvious and close links between a research-discipline community and the open-access journal it produces. One research-discipline community may interact, and hence overlap, with others.¹⁸ Researchers will almost certainly be members of university departments and teachers and thus will help constitute those communities. If my department constitutes a community rather than just a collection of individuals sharing the same line-manager, I am more likely to be able to establish some of the preconditions for a community in the classroom.

Nor are the communities discussed here fixed. Constituted through a multiplicity of mainly micro-relations,¹⁹ they are constantly reproducing themselves and subtly or not so subtly changing as they do so, expanding, contracting, establishing or breaking connections with other communities. It should also

¹⁸ One of the many problems with the Research Assessment Exercise is that it seems to freeze fields of intellectual inquiry, saying, 'this is what economics [say] is, these are the economics journals, and hence that is where economists should publish'.

¹⁹ My departmental community is not constituted through departmental meetings, but through me chatting with a colleague at the photocopier and then that person going for a pint with someone else...

be stressed again that these communities are for the most part partial, and are sometimes latent: they exist *between* the commons and the commodity.²⁰

Yet, such communities form the basis of our own power. We are powerful first because we produce information and knowledge for capital and, in particular, that special commodity labour-power. In the 'knowledge economy', knowledge workers are key.^{21 22} As workers productive of value for capital, we have the power to undermine that value production.²³ We are doubly powerful because our production is already cooperative and, more, self-managed, self-organised. Alternatives to market-based and command-based modes of social organisation already exist in our own practice. Moreover, as Benkler (2002) and Hardt and Negri (2000), amongst others, have suggested, such commons-based peer production is more efficient when it comes to producing information or culture.²⁴ To adopt Hardt and Negri's terminology, when capital further penetrates the university, squeezing resources, attacking the commons which sustain the communities, attempting to measure work (value) so as to further impose it, then it is clear how it acts as a *corrupting* influence on the *generation* of knowledge.²⁵

Finally, the problems faced by university workers, both lecturers and students — enclosure of commons, privatisation of resources, withdrawal of funding, flight of capital — are similar, in substance if not in acuteness, to those faced by millions, if not billions, of people in different situations across the planet. And across the planet people are struggling against these problems, increasingly organising horizontally, in networks, refusing definitions and limits, and seeking connections with others... (see, for example, Notes from Everywhere 2003). We rarely see it in such explicitly political terms, but such modes of social practice — horizontality, networking, transcendence of boundaries and establishment of interconnectivities — frequently characterise the existing practices of university intellectuals.²⁶

²⁰ My income depends ultimately on me grading students. (If I publish a sufficient number of articles in 'top journals' I can reduce the number of students I have to grade!) In turn, my students' future incomes depend to a large part on the grades they receive.

²¹ The Association of University Teachers' strapline is 'the key profession'. My problem is with the 'profession' bit.

²² I am actually wary of attempting to identify any sector of workers as somehow more central to accumulation than any other, and therefore more powerful politically. Perhaps I am just aiming for stylistic impact.

²³ See Harvie (2003b) on academics as productive workers, and Harvie (2003a) on productive and unproductive labour more generally.

²⁴ Of course, capital isn't really 'interested' in producing information or culture or anything else; rather its 'aim' is to impose work.

²⁵ The weakness in Hardt and Negri's analysis is, I think, their tendency to view capital as a *thing*, as a subject in its own right. But the *corruption* of capital is actually some practices of social agents who through other practices *generate*. I struggle to undermine and to transcend the system, but nevertheless, I do still grade students.

²⁶ Scientists were early globalisers-from-below. At the height of the Cold War, for example, Western mathematicians struggled to create and maintain links with mathematicians on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

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