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ARCHITECTURE AND CULTURE

The Neoliberal University as a Space to Learn/Think/Work in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT This article examines the conditions that have given rise to the neoliberal university, along with the conditions of being a subject of such an institution – whether as educator, student, or manager on the shop-floor of the "edufactory." Where the liberal university was recognized as a space for critical thought, slow contemplation and transformative becoming for both student and university worker, the imperative of the neoliberal university is to continuously increase performance – measurable in ultimately economic terms, imposing a new auditable disciplining, and quickening pace, of learning, thinking and working. We argue that the model of the neoliberal university is unsustainable if left to continue in its current form, and which Covid-19 has done little to decelerate or dismantle. There is an urgent need to resist, rethink, and reclaim the space to learn/think/work.

The Rise of the Neoliberal University

Higher education has changed markedly since the mid-1960s, mainly due to its shift from being supported by the State to privatization. The neoliberal university has taken hold in many developed countries and

shifted the imperatives of Higher Education from a liberal, openly accessible, lesser time pressured and broadly based education to more vocational forms of Higher Education that focus on the commercialization and marketization of teaching and research for industry and business. This shift in purpose emerged from an attack on, and subsequent disempowering of, the academic as a *sacred cow* who was previously immune from questions and untouchable to being quickly made accountable. First in the United States, later in the United Kingdom, university educators were increasingly challenged by neoliberal governance, criticized for not being relevant in the real world, being lazy, dawdling in contemplation, biasing through favoritism that was unchecked or for being unmanageable. The devaluation was framed in terms of spatial metaphors of academics occupying ivory towers, echo chambers, halls of mirrors, cloisters, and silos.

Work performed in the university that was rational, scientific and quantitative became more valued over work that appeared irrational, unscientific and qualitative. The criticism was that much work in the university had little or no direct and immediate advantage to productive, real world economies and this needed to change because, as was the case in the United Kingdom, a nanny state mentality of care was abandoned under Thatcherism and everyone and everything needed to be economically self-sufficient rather than state dependent, universities and academics included. The economization and maximization of productivity and a productive workforce to enhance university revenue making, formerly the purpose of industry, became the "new" mandate of the neoliberal university.

As a consequence of this forced-from-government, top-down ideological shift universities simultaneously changed their physical and urban form. In order to reimage and rebrand themselves in their physical form, many UK universities undertook or are in the process of undertaking ambitious real-estate developments including opening up overseas campuses, and expanding national property portfolios with new buildings in which can be found an excess of "spaces for collaboration," "vibrant meeting points" and multi-colored, office-style soft furniture. Many neoliberal universities have or are being reimaged roughly according to Silicon Valley style Google headquarters where work becomes playful, casual, fast-paced, lively and consumer market-responsive.

University culture has also changed its systems of everyday work. Learning from business and modeled in part on notions of industrialized production, many neoliberal universities have turned to new managerialism as a way to increase efficiency. Management has become central and managers are typically given the mandate to restructure and revise systems of production to cut out any inefficient wastage of time by staff, schools, departments or faculties and to discipline all university workers to accept constant change. This is done to nurture a culture of

indefinite flexibility and accommodation of rapid change. This neoliberal university work culture is not an exception but reflects what is happening in virtually all other sectors of life.

University research is most valued if it is revenue-making and relevant to solving real world problems, leading to STEM subjects being generally better funded than Arts and Humanities research. In order to change the slow, meditative culture that existed in the university, neoliberalism has forced the university into the competitive business marketplace that had previously existed outside it. Universities have been required to streamline their systems of production to become more competitive to survive in a global Higher Education sector through incorporating business-oriented strategies for the real-world into every aspect of every day university life, including the delivery and learning of the curriculum. Students are pushed and trained to become competitive, productive, entrepreneurs that are highly employable and quick to contribute to industry markets. In these "liquid times" in which all institutions have transferred from "'solid' to a 'liquid' phase of modernity," to quote Zygmunt Bauman, long-term thinking has collapsed, replaced by short-termism.[1] Precarity infiltrates the neoliberal university and just as neoliberalism nurtures a precarious class, so has the neoliberal university. As a consequence, many university workers, academics, students and support staff, lament the recent changes as having ruined university culture[2] and the very essence of what a university education was meant to deliver: graduates who learned civic responsibility and who could think and work positively toward a collective future without profit-making at the center of every conversation or activity. The situation has been heightened further because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the turn toward more focused remote working and digital production.

This special issue of *Architecture and Culture* on "The Neoliberal University" critically reflects on the realities and consequences of the worldwide phenomenon of neoliberalism in Higher Education today and is published across two issues. This article frames the conditions of neoliberal production of university architectural and urban design and education in everyday life, thereby providing a framework in which to position the more specifically focused and detailed articles contributed by other authors in Vol. 9, Issues 1 & 2. The two parts under which this special journal issue content is split are: Vol. 9, Issue 1_Part 1: "The Changing Architectures of the Neoliberal University" edited by Troiani, and Vol. 9, Issue 2_Part 2: "Resistance and the Neoliberal University" edited by Troiani and Dutson. In Vol. 9, Issue 1. authors Fernandez and Powers; Kaji-O'Grady; Austin and Sharr; Molloy; Elarji and Michels; Vismann; Pudda and Zuddas and Hrebeniak examine the relationship between the physical transformation of the neoliberal university and Higher Education's ideological and pedagogical purpose. They outline the history, physical and pedagogical changes to the university including overtly market-driven, campus architectures and university architectures which

accommodate a wider public but also monitor and surveil use. Part 1 concludes with a manifesto for positive change, reimagining what a responsive and responsible university can be in the future. In Vol. 9, Issue 2, authors Rendell; Hope and Richards; Tayob; Hill; and Dare discuss activism and resistances to the space of work, teaching, learning, curriculum content and monitoring systems in neoliberal university life including virtual education models. They showcase who and what is being damaged, or lost and offer examples of resistant physical and digital practices that when acknowledged within the university can better accommodate rather than exclude diverse university workers at all levels.

As Higher Education has transferred increasingly more toward online teaching and blended learning, this special issue asks how can thinkers of architecture and practicing architects – not just individually, but also in relation to one another – reflect and then positively redefine the role of the university campus architecture and Higher Education today for societal and cultural betterment beyond solely economic imperatives? How does the discipline of architecture as a physical and digital domain respond to the changing reconfigurations of teaching and learning? Of concern is whether the discipline of architecture, formerly valued as an exemplary creative practice, is too amenably compliant in serving the imperatives of neoliberal economics, turning academics and students into innovative, creative, self-motivated, flexible and increasingly exploitable entrepreneurial subjects? And if educators and university students and their architects have acquiesced to a form of Higher Education managerialism and corporatization devised and inherited from the tech industry, what are the consequences for the bodies of university workers, at university and post-university?

This article emerges in part from individual presentations we made as invited speakers to the "Economies of Exhaustion" symposium held at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London (UCL) and organized by Jane Rendell almost a year after the Call for Papers for this issue was circulated, but also builds on our individual research. While our separate UCL presentations came from different perspectives – we are at different stages in our academic lives and working at different levels of the university – it is because of our positions within our respective institutions and our previous experiences as women academics working across architecture, media and technology that we both critiqued everyday working life in the neoliberal university. Following Jennifer Bloomer's "Not Now," the urgency for a critique of the neoliberal university has become "~~Not~~ Now [Please]."

"~~Not~~ Now [Please]": The Urgency of a Critique of Everyday Life in the Neoliberal University

In the early 1990s, the American architecture academic and theoretician, Jennifer Bloomer wrote an article entitled "Not Now"[3] in the "Violence, Space" issue of *Assemblage*. For Bloomer, the spaces of violence exist in

how institutions – as an academic, her focus is on the university – silence complaints about exploitative or abusive behavior, of those who are marginalized/being mistreated/have suffered/complain for others and who are hushed to keep quiet with a "Not Now" response by those with greater influence in the university. Bloomer writes "about the spaces of institutions and the soft, chummy violence that circulates within them."[4] At that time, her aim was to make public gender- and sexually-discriminatory practices within the university that were silenced, glossed over or left unchallenged and thereby were allowed to continue through leaders being complicit and without contrition. While gender and sexual discrimination remain persistent areas for ongoing change within some universities, on the main, due to legislative changes, issues of gender and sexual violence within the university are diminishing. Instead, it is neoliberal business-mindedness that is exerting a powerful violent force on the university and its workforce.

In countries like the United Kingdom, United States and Australia, although the phenomenon is spreading worldwide, it is academic capitalism[5] that is disciplining university workers to work longer, more digitally, with less avenues for radical, resistant critical voices of complaint and protest. No longer is "the model of the university," as Simon Sadler notes, "a locus for criticism within the dense relations of capitalism [that] depends on the possibility of immanent critique-on locating the contradictions in the rules and systems necessary to production."[6] Instead, since the rise and fall of counterculture movements, the neoliberal university has been forced to monetize Higher Education, operating more like a private corporation which focuses on profit-making by maximizing outputs at the expense of human capital. Those, mostly academics inside the university, who voice their objections to any aspect of the neoliberalization of the university are seen by some, but not all universities, as troublemakers, disrupting the condition and processes of academic production. Because they vocalize objections, they can stall, slow down or hinder productivity and as consequence be deemed to be not-a-team player. At times, complaints made within their institution are delegitimized, ignored or silenced much in the way that Bloomer felt of her complaints. In contrast, some universities critique their loss of civic function and as an institution object to governance that diminishes the value of the civic university.

Arguably, academics with more of a civil rather than self-centered conscience – many of whom are old enough to remember what things used to be like, some of whom are younger generations suffering more from the exploitation, all of whom understand the experience of being on the university "shop floor" – generally express their complaints privately in oral conversations with one other although sometimes contestation appears in academic outputs including publications, films etc. An influential critique of the neoliberal academy was published in 2015 by the political philosopher, Wendy Brown in *Undoing the Demos:*

Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution.[7] In architectural discourse, Troiani's "Academic Capitalism in Architecture Schools"[8] and Dutson's "The Entrepreneurial Self"[9] offer disciplinary focus. Troiani's individual publications on working life and wellbeing in the university[10] including *Playing the Game of Life: In Architecture* (in press) and subsequent collaborative cinematic and textual research, presented mostly at conferences, on *The Death and Life of UK Universities* with Tonia Carless offer other layers of critical reflection.[11] These writings by women academics working across politics, architecture, media and technology expose publicly the deeply problematic aspects of workings in a neoliberal university which has transformed into what Pier Vittorio Aureli describes as the "edufactory."[12] In turning to an education factory, the university becomes appeasable to demands for constantly increasing academic outputs of student graduates, research and revenue generation.

Here, we build upon our shared interest before we met in the writings of Arlie Russell Hochschild's study of the standardization and control of modern life and Hochschild's reference to Charlie Chaplin's 1936 comedy film, *Modern Times* in which the modern factory worker can never keep up with the need to increase and optimize production. The model of working on the shop floor and in management of those working on the shop floor in the factory is applied here to the "edufactory." Our attention turns to the demands on the body of the university worker – educator and student – who suffers from time pressures and energy depletion. More so for the early-career academic who is required to do/juggle more in order to obtain promotion but increasingly for academics of all career levels, there is always the potential threat of "beware you may lose your job if you can't keep up" through not renewing precarious contracts to restructuring at the professorial level. These are indirect ways to reduce numbers of university staff who are expendable when downsizing is required to meet the university's bottom-line.

We argue that the very essence of the university is at stake here and that only through allowing readings, interpretations and contestations of the neoliberal university to be concretized can we progress to improved individual and societal wellbeing beyond neoliberal-driven quantitative teaching and learning. Writing this essay at a time in the world when Covid-19 has shown us that the hippy-happy flow of academic capitalism can be dramatically affected by external forces that are unpredictable and uncontrollable, offers an opportunity to rethink the neoliberal university to reclaim lost ground and forge new ground to improve university work cultures.

This article is structured around types of university experience discussed at the UCL symposium. Personal stories of everyday life for educators and students on the shop floor of the neoliberal university; and the effect of New Managerialism in the university and the disciplining of learning, thinking and working – speaking, writing, making are examined.

These experiential levels are discussed politically, spatially and technologically around the question of what it means to be austere versus generous in university work. Excerpts of films that are critical of modern life and edufactory production are referenced to show the ways in which the bodies of university workers are put under time-production pressure. The article argues that the commodification of the university as a social, intellectual and space of academic business only is unsustainable and warns that if unabated will result in a growing class of servant graduates, educators and university managers and the vanishing of the liberal university as it was known pre-1960s. The model of an "edufactory" in terms of a pattern of work and its spatial design is no longer suitable for the university if we are to value all who work within it and who create it.

Stories of the Everyday Work Life of an Educator and Student on the University Shop Floor

In 1895, a 46-second film *La Sortie de L'Usine Lumière à Lyon* by Louis and Auguste Lumiére documents the synchronized exit of workers leaving the Lumiére factory. In 2006, Harun Farocki's 12-channel video installation *Workers leaving the Factory in 11 decades* displayed extracts from different found films depicting workers outside factories.[13] Arranged chronologically, each looped film begins with the year of its production: 1895, 1899, 1912, 1916, 1926, 1936, 1952, 1968, 1981, 1987, 2000. The material is taken from various sources: from documentary films such as the Lumiere brothers' piece, feature films including Chaplin's *Modern Times*,[14] Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*,[15] and Michelangelo Antonioni's *Deserto Rosso*, and corporate promotional videos.[16] In most of the film extracts, workers rush out "as if impelled by an invisible force … the workers are running as if they already lost too much time,"[17] until the tenth decade: 1987, where a steel automated gate takes over a minute to open to release a car-bound commuter.

In 2021, in the "edufactory" of the neoliberal university, working hours preclude a mass exit at the end of the day of its "no-collar" workers. Would it even be possible to make a visual record for this decade? Technological innovations have undermined the sense of the "collective of workers" documented in the Lumiere Brothers films, and in many of Farocki's extracts.

Flexibility is celebrated; we are "free" to come and go, organize meetings, sit at our desk, or in the café – as long as we are within Wifi connection, and with email constantly open, and phone at hand (although very few calls will be taken). The actual lived experience, concealed by wandering between design studios and lecture theaters, coffee meetings, and wandering around campus, has been made all the more apparent as universities switched to online or blended learning. With everything accessible from one location – a computer screen window, the academic hops between tutorials, meetings, requests for pre-meetings,

assessments, appraisals, and more – the reality of working in the academic complex reveals itself.

In 1964, Marshall McLuhan predicted a future in which we would traverse a media space of movie, radio, tv as if it were a classroom without walls – as "information gatherers" enabled by technology, "electronic man is no less a nomad than his Paleolithic ancestors."[18] In this nomadic space, the exit from the factories of knowledge is dispersed and individualized.

Perhaps the film could not be made today by a camera at all. It would be instead made using "screen recording" technology used by gamers for their YouTube channels: tracking the toggling between screens – on phone and computer – as word processing documents, spreadsheets, email programs, team collaboration apps, meeting reminders, over the course of the day get interspersed with Twitter, Facebook, Journey Planner (pre-pandemic), news apps, recipe sites for making sourdough at home (post-pandemic).

Before Covid-19, we took work home, we worked on our way home, we simultaneously tweeted while checking work emails, tapped notes for a paper we will finish writing later. Emails came in at all hours: a mix of urgent bureaucratic tasks and work related pleas from colleagues or students. Without physical space, we occupy the virtual suite of productivity tools, fully immersed in an unending work flow.

The expectation is that we are home – and therefore available – at all times during the working day, no matter if we teach across different institutions, in different capacities, or are attending a conference. Physical space allowed us to step away, take a coffee break, chat informally, and therefore reasonably decline meeting invitations and miss emails. Working on Google Docs – the cloud-based platform on which most of our work resides – we see colleagues (who are on sick-leave) on-screen as a bright pink outlined box, jumping down the spreadsheet. Unwell or not, working on the academic conveyor belt we process student work and students in a manner that is dauntingly benign, unhuman but efficient. The coronavirus pandemic has changed the everyday work life of the educator even more dramatically. The student experience of being processed through the neoliberal university system can arguably be equally productively efficient, distant, disembodied and numb. Still, everyone is working toward student graduation, at whatever cost.

The Student Experience on the Neoliberal University Conveyor Belt

The neoliberal university employ large marketing and recruitment teams, and detailed marketing strategies and pipelines aimed at ensuring a continuous supply of students, sieved from local, national and international markets. Multiple modes of study allow continuous teaching and assessment. Graduation shows occupy the atrium and gallery throughout the year or are online, along with Winter as well as Summer graduation ceremonies.

Offering options to study full or part-time, fast-track or accelerated degrees, flexible undergraduate and postgraduate programs that range from 1 year, 15 months, or 2 years, the Higher Education sector promise more choice. And yet concrete changes to broadening access and continued progression through Higher Education seem to lag or even decline: In 2017–18, mature students (aged 21 and over) accounted for 26.7% of first-degree entrants, compared to 33.3% in 2009–2010.[19] So while the neoliberal university endeavors to broaden participation, in its increase of student numbers, changes in student gender and ethnic demographic is slow.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students accounted for 23.6% of the UK student population at UK higher education institutions, compared to 18.1% in 2009–2010. In architecture specifically, a CABE (The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) study[20] revealed that 1998/99 Part I entrants to schools of architecture in England were classified in the RIBA survey as 84% white, 2.5% black, 5.5% Indian, and 7% Other. By 2016/17, 66% of the UK students are white, 14% are Asian or Asian British, 8% black or black British, 6% are mixed or multiple ethnic groups, with 6% from another ethnic background.

The asymmetry of financialized education draws stark oppositions between wealthy and poorer students where those who do not need to work part-time to support their studies can be advantaged from the outset. As real-estate gives over more space to nomadic exploration of "learning landscapes" those with the skills and former training to navigate and participate such informal infrastructures have the capacity to potentially proceed further. The progression rates of female, and black students, in architecture are a poor narrative of the student experience.

As Covid-19 moved teaching online within the university to privatize the MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) culture developed by Stanford professor Sebastian Thrun with computer scientist Peter Norvig in 2011,[21] laptops and mobile phones became portals that infiltrated into the homes and bedrooms/bedsits of all university workers. An intimate two-way surveillance of student and teacher that is not as apparent when on the university campus reveals further spatial inequality when working visibly from home. Those with a spare room to turn into an office were the lucky ones; the less fortunate had to share communal spaces for work with family, partners, flatmates and children, or retreat to their bedroom sometimes to study at university while lying, dressed in bed. For architects, remote work and learning not only affect the objects of design they produce but also challenge the way in which architectural studio operates in the university or practitioner office.

The critique of the physical space of studio art education as socially, ethnically and gender-segregated presented in *Institutional Time* by Judy Chicago,[22] has overlaps with criticisms of the space of the architectural studio presented by Kathryn H. Anthony,[23] Helena

Webster,[24] Christine McCarthy[25] and Charles Doidge, Rachel Sara and Rosie Parnell.[26] In the embodied historical space of the pedagogical architectural studio in the university elite architect-studio tutors were *sacred cows*, with virtually no accountability for how they behaved personally or professionally in the teaching space. But in the neoliberal university where architectural studio is now online or in a blended learning environment, accountability of student and educator are foregrounded. The neoliberal space of studio learning is defined in the student experience as "contact hours" which has little to say about becoming. The architecture of the neoliberal university articulates the becoming of neoliberal subjects: but has little space for personal-political becoming, gender, sexuality, race and class. Finding space in the university to learn, beyond student contact hours, modules, and units is almost impossible because of the workload demands, which focus the mind and body on the quantitative and qualitative task delivery with no free time to think outside work life. Spaces of radical pedagogy or radical inclusion have diminished or been commodified to be capitalized upon as the academic body is disciplined.

New Managerialism and Disciplining University Workers: Audit Culture, Control and Digital Labor

The Higher Education sector is examined here in relation to the potentialities for overcoming the dominant economies and logics of the neoliberal, entrepreneurial university and which relate to the bodies and minds of its academic working class and managerial class. The focus is on how we might, to quote Gina Anderson, "carve out time and space in the managerial university"[27] in light of "the ascendancy of "managerialism" – [i.e.,] the introduction of private sector management practices to public sector institutions."[28] What is lost and what is gained for university workers under new managerialism? How have the bodies of university workers been transformed by new managerial envisioning and where do resistances lie against top-down changes? While other articles in this issue focus on subversive tactics of worker resistance such as Trade Union Strikes, a resistant form of managerialism is instead examined here. To position this, first, the rise of the audit culture in neoliberal universities is discussed and second, how audit culture impacts on a process of disciplining the body and mind of all university workers through digital technologies.

In *Discipline & Punish*, Michel Foucault[29] distinguishes between the docile body and the manipulated body. Foucault argues that "A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" and it is through the exertion of disciplinary power on the docile body (here reference is made to body of the university worker) that it suffers through being disciplined and punished.[30] In the architecture academy, the body of the student or staff worker is the vessel in which "capital" is contained and as Foucault notes under our current economic system "the two

processes – the accumulation of men and the accumulation of capital – cannot be separated";[31] they are co-existent. Carl Cederström and Peter Fleming explain in *Dead Man Working* that:

> The traditional line-in-the-sand between capital and labor no longer makes sense to anyone. Today, the real struggle is between capital and *life* (bios), although the struggle is not played out under especially unfair rules, given that we can hardly tell what life is anymore. We should consider here what Foucault and his followers called bio-power. If work was once primarily regulated by bureaucracy through depersonalization then today we witness the emergence of a new regime of control which we call *biocracy*, in which life itself is an essential "human resource" to be exploited.[32]

Neoliberalism can exploit the body of the architectural worker in their everyday life differently than when working under industrial capitalism. While David Harvey argues that; "Capital circulates ... through the body of the laborer as variable capital and thereby turns the laborer into a mere appendage of the circulation of capital itself,"[33] neoliberalism goes further than capitalism to curiously lead the worker into thinking they can freely choose, and are in control of, how their body is used for labor production.

The way in which the body of a worker has been conditioned to work under neoliberalism is deeply linked to global 24/7 production. In *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*, Jonathan Crary[34] claims that in regards to work a 24/7 work life global capitalism "renders plausible, even normal, the idea of working without pause, without limits. It is aligned with what is inanimate, inert, or unaging." The academic worker whose mind and body are "inanimate, inert and unaging," with infinite energy for work, arguably is more easily rationalized and economized to generate more revenue/status for a university. As architectural labor in the university operates ever increasingly in the digitized realm so an architecture student and educator are hurried and stretched in their university-of-"anywhere" workplace.

According to Guy Standing, "The digitized world has no respect for contemplation or reflection ..."; it creates a certain kind of thinking mind which he defines as "the precariatised mind."[35] Standing sees that the electronic gadgetry that pervades much of everyday life is profoundly affecting how we think, and for how long we can think, in a focused way for lengthy periods of time. By nurturing an architectural precariat class, neoliberalism promotes short-termism in each and every aspect of a working life and can be detrimental to long-term wellbeing. Short-termism allows the neoliberal architectural worker in the university to be fluid to adapt to changes beyond their control but also means they are less able to develop or fix thoughts, and long-term plans.

The bodies of architectural students and academics are controlled and monitored using new digital technologies adopted by universities as part of a "managerialist approach in higher education." According to Anderson, "... A managerialist approach in higher education includes a focus on efficiency and effectiveness (... of time and space), on quality assurance, accountability, and cost-savings"[36] all of which are implemented by management through a heightening of a deeply embedded and dominating audit culture. Beginning in the 1990s, the term audit culture "... refer[s] to the increasing use of regulatory mechanisms, designed to monitor and measure performance, in fields other than accounting, insurance, and finance, where the mechanisms originated."[37] Most university audit cultures rely heavily on increasing administrative procedures of assessment, from which trickle-down performance and assessment criteria for all workers within a university. The audit culture in a university is accompanied by new values and language, for example, *performance management, quality assurance, accountability, transparency, efficiency, best practices, stakeholders, benchmarking*, *research outputs* etc. Importantly, an audit culture employs new digital technologies and software to collect a copious amount of data, which is used to discipline, track and monitor productivity within the university at all levels.

The university's administratively heavy methods of audit assessment have followed neoliberal qualitative, checking systems used in manufacturing. Mike Laurence argues that; "the university, like the hospital or the prison, can be understood as an apparatus of perpetual examination."[38] Audit culture in the university quantifies each and every aspect of university production on a performance-based system of delivery. All university staff are assessed through Personal Development Reviews (PDRs). For academics who research, books and journal articles – now termed *research outputs* or *deliverables* – are rigorously counted and ranked on their value to generate economic return for the university for industry. Every academic staff member and their outputs in the university is diligently counted and ranked using systems of assessment including REF (Research Excellence Framework), TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework), KEF (Knowledge Excellence Framework). UK programs are judged through the NSS (National Student Survey) which contributes to University League Table rankings. In architecture programs in the United Kingdom, Periodic Reviews and regular monitoring visits by accreditation bodies including the R.I.B.A. (Royal Institute of British Architects) and ARB (Architects Registration Board) ensure that architectural education meets the performance standards of external accreditation. Gender and equality standards are assessed through Athena Swan awards and EDI (Equality Diversity and Inclusion) auditing. All in all, the systems of monitoring, counting and controlling an architectural educator's outputs are vast in number. As a consequence, the academic's time becomes increasingly devoted to and consumed by "administrivia" or the production of "outline paperwork and other administrative tasks that are regarded as trivial,

uninteresting, and time-consuming."[39] While not necessary not so long ago, the university audit culture is now considered vital because of its "quality assurance."

For students, the audit culture of architectural education, pre-pandemic involved the completion and production of work assessed through assessment forms or proformas, with university attendance recorded through sign-up sheets or the scanning of student cards. Post-pandemic, the participatory engagement in online teaching platforms mostly happens through the data collection done on digital platforms in which students learn through and submit work. Laurence contends that a process of standardization or normalization occurs in order to acculturate a student into disciplinary norms: "The student is constantly evaluated, graded, measured, created. The abnormal is marginalized, rejected and excluded. The human sciences develop and the university introduces the student to a world where everything can be measured, including their imaginations."[40] The consequence of this growing culture of auditing is that it increases workloads and can also condition younger staff and students into what Wendy Brown[41] describes as a "neoliberal subject" who is unable to think or question because they are overwhelmed by work. Architecture students conditioned only to achieve the best grade results can negatively impact on identity formation of a student causing them to suffer stress of underachieving or not be able to cope. Ironically, audit cultures also exist within the university to assess how many students (less so staff) are suffering in terms of their well-being in architecture from a system which itself can create the feelings of anxiety and unhappiness in the first place. While the purpose of an audit culture in the neoliberal university is to ensure parity and fairness in student assessment processes, the marking can still operate slightly inside and outside set standards. The multitude of consequences like these which have resulted from the deep embedding of audit cultures in Higher Education are leading to exhaustion and need to be resisted not only at the level of staff and studio action but also at the level of management.

Resisting the Neoliberal University

As a consequence of its neoliberalization, no longer is "…the university … a protected space for unhurried scholarly contemplation."[42] University workers now operate in a highly competitive unprotected space which can lead to varying degrees of disillusionment, dissatisfaction, exhaustion, fatigue, stress and burnout. The rise of a burnout culture, in physical and mental well-being, broadly and in the UK Higher Education sector, is linked to the consumption and exhaustion of the labor workforce as a resource.

In the book, *Exhaustion: A History*, Anna Schaffner explains that "'to exhaust' means to draw off or out, to consume or empty something in its entirety, to account for or utilize the entire quantity of something" "…. Exhaustion generally suggests the vampiric depletion or harmful

consumption of a limited (and usually nonrenewable) resource, which leaves an originally well-functioning person, object, system, or terrain in a weakened or dysfunctional state."[43] It is "a specifically modern affliction, irrevocably bound up with the rise of capitalism and new technologies."[44] "... The ubiquity of new information and communication technologies (Machines brought in by managers that allow us to work for longer and) ... which no longer allow us ... to [properly] disconnect and to relax, blur the boundaries between work and life ..."[45] A nonstop university work culture can conflict with "people's natural rhythms"[46] that naturally seek out rest. "Sleep, Jonathan Crary argues, has become the true enemy of capitalism, as the capitalist economy envisages a machine-like, willingly surveillable [sic] citizen who is always productive and perpetually engaged in the circulation and consumption of goods."[47]

The exhaustion of "human resources" in the neoliberal university for academic capitalism before the pandemic, and more so post-pandemic, is reaching epidemic proportions in many universities requiring empathic rather than economically-rational managerialism. Many but not all universities employ senior manager-interlopers who have no training or understanding of the discipline/s they are managing or how a university differs from a commercial business; managers who often do not comprehend or feel the consequences of their policy changes and who act as docile bodies subservient to neoliberal governance. A university is not an "edufactory" and running a university is not the same as running a commercial business and for this reason, we need to change the work cultures that have been nurtured in the neoliberal university.

Empathic management offers leadership by academic-managers who can better understand the machinations of the university, its historical past and present but who, through their empathy and experience of often having been on the shop-floor, have first-hand experience of how the machine works and understand the consequence of management changes on the bodies of all university workers of management changes. From that interior experience, a pathway toward empathic managerialism is possible because it can critically and deeply understand, to return to Sadler, how to "locat[e] the contradictions in the rules and systems necessary to production"[48] and offer solutions that challenge and decelerate the audit culture and the expectations of academic production within the university, so as to resist the depletion and exhaustion of its essential and valuable resources -its workforce. Neoliberal governance has forced many UK universities into unreasonable and unhealthy austerity with negligible free time and space to work and think.

The shift from the rise of the neoliberal university to resisting the neoliberal university requires moving away from a focus on the university as "edufactory" to a participatory, transparent landscape of consultation between everyone in a university community. The university as a "greedy institution," to quote Louise Morley,[49] needs to understand that its resources – material, human, and intellectual – must to be preserved,

valued and nurtured. This working together model of collaborative and supportive Higher Education will need to dramatically revise internal power structures and relations, curriculum and property portfolio. It is vital that a more discursive and collaborative workplace be cultivated across the sector to ensure the sustainability of the university as a place of intellectual growth. A university education is and was not solely about the efficient delivery and absorption of content for real-world business. Instead, it sought to and should return to allowing the academic community to nurture citizens who can learn/think/work in a socially and ethically responsible manner to better the world outside the university.

Igea Troiani (PhD) is Subject Lead and Professor of Architecture at the University of Plymouth. She is a trained architect, educator and filmmaker who over the last 24 years has worked in universities in the UK, China and Australia mostly on the university shop floor teaching architectural design studio, history and theory. Since mid-2018 she moved into more managerial roles. Her research has always been into the social and political processes of the production of architecture and architects. Since 2016, she has focused on the impact of neoliberalism on the bodies of architectural workers in academia and practice. Her books include *Visual Research Methods in Architecture* (2021), *Spaces of Tolerance* (2021), *Architecture Filmmaking* (2020), *Transdisciplinary Urbanism and Culture* (2017), and *The Politics of Making* (2017/2007). Her forthcoming book is entitled *Playing the Game of Life: In Architecture* (2022). She is committed to improving the spaces of work in architectural education and practice for greater tolerance and inclusivity.

Claudia Dutson (PhD) is an academic and interdisciplinary artist trained in architecture. With a background in media studies, working in new media consultancy during the 1990's dotcom boom and subsequent bust. Her current architectural research returns to the topic of the tech industry. She is writing a book on the architecture and spatial managerial tactics of Facebook, Apple and Google in Silicon Valley. Her practice combines architectural techniques of drawing and model-making with performance, video and virtual reality, and she has exhibited at Watermans Arts Center, London (2019). As a Tutor in Design Products, and Senior Tutor in Information Experience Design at the Royal College of Art, she teaches experimental design, critical spatial practice and interaction design. Her writing is published in *Industries of Architecture* (2015, Routledge), *E.R.O.S. Journal,* Issue 7, *The Interior* (2015), *Architecture and Feminisms: Ecologies Economies Technologies* (2017, Routledge) and *Architecture and Collective Life* (2021, Routledge).

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Notes

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