

Early College Folio

The House of Education Needs Overhaul

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To be Beholden to Something Yet to be Made

Points of Departure for an Education
in the Arts of the Present¹

Asma Abbas, PhD
Bard Academy and Bard College at Simon's Rock

I. FALSEWORK

*a temporary framework or support put up while the main structure is being built and afterwards removed*²

WHAT, WHERE, AND WHO IS TO BE SAVED?

One thing is for certain: when we seek to save the “university,” we really don’t all mean to save the same totality of objects, subjects, relations, and systems. As a matter of fact, those of us who have always inhabited the thresholds, attics, undergrounds, and outposts of the conventional University, whether in terms of our institutional locations, or existential/ontological ones, building elsewhere and/or otherwise has been a necessity. The epistemic “privilege” of the outsider, whether as the foreigner necessary to the establishment of a democracy worth its name, or as the out-of-place theorist who has been tasked to see what others cannot and then removed from visibility in the same sensual economy that constantly and nauseatingly valorizes representation as a reparative act, makes it so that one doesn’t simply know more or less, but is compelled to know *differently*, where even time and space are intimately, yet inarticulately, known as different kinds of materialities. “Early college”—understood, as I do, as a totality of relations that manifest a critical politics, aesthetics, phenomenology, and sociality of education—ideally relies on this dissonance and dissensus: of making time and place where it didn’t exist, rather than accelerating to some end defined by the system external to it, or finding a spot where shown. In this way, I see it as a political and institutional project that has the potential to critique existing systems and posit new life-worlds beyond neutralisation and appropriation by neoliberal, managerialist, and corporate structures many of which surely seep into the spaces where this project has unfolded.³

Strangely enough, a quick look at the emergency manuals of the contemporary university-in-crisis makes clear very quickly how the student, despite being the

actual subject of much of this mobilisation, remains merely subject to the unhealed partitions at the heart of the modern university—between teaching and scholarship, between “service” and “profession” which ultimately affirms the transactional, instrumental, logistical rationality of the university that divides knowledge production from the dissemination of knowledge, and thus reproduces the social as we have known it. On some days, criticisms of the austere neoliberal university that produce the student as a victim of the university seem like a victory in a long struggle. However, what that means and reaffirms is not always clear, or consistent. For instance, seeing the student as victim qua disgruntled customer is *not the same* as victim qua recipient of abuse, betrayal, extraction, and unfulfilled promises. Simply put, the former often preempts any understanding or acknowledgement of the work of knowledge production that is performed by students in and outside the classroom, and affirms neoliberalism’s understanding of each of us as sellers and consumers, with no regard to questions of labour and production.

When students are granted their pathologies but not their power as co-authors and co-producers in the spaces they occupy—and when they accept taking cues from every adult who stands up for nothing except their own resentment, and shirks any actual politics, it corroborates a familiar and regressive formulation of work and workers inside institution that has been deployed against unions and other positive assertions of collective democratic self-determination in the university writ larger. And this formulation, familiar to many of us from having occupied different positions but receiving the same kind of resistance from “the will to administer” to which many of our colleagues resort in times of crisis, is as follows: faculty are management, and students become workers only when they are seen as employees. In the present, even though the push to make the university a home for those at the core of its traditional mission comes from students, it is often framed in terms of “serving” students an experience as consumers, rather than as a co-author of individual and collective experience, or a co-producer of knowledge. Sadly, this is the triumph of neoliberal mentality that is sustained in some ideas of care and service we have come to expect from institutions, as well as in those spaces of advocacy and cooperation where a microeconomic logic enables a neoliberal consensus on capitalist ideas of value and its production between union, professional association, and the employer. Still more sadly, it’s a trance that remains unbroken when excluded minorities are constantly tagged to ask for recognition, value, and power in the way that the institution already knows (to give and to not give!).

This scenario suggests, minimally, that different ideas of saving and of what is to be saved are possible, and our formulations of the crisis inhere different kinds of subject positions for student, teacher, and administrator that need to be paid attention to as we imagine ways out, as well as ways into a better reality. One step further, this allows me to turn to my friends and ask, didn’t we want to be beholden to different things, and differently? Is this the collective project of making that drew us in that’s been squandered to all the narratives

of consumption, leaving us alone and unrecognisable in our desire and our labour?

THE MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF BEHOLDENNESS

Given how our desires conscripted and our beholdenness presumed, turning to the coordinates of the university, and the classroom, as “contact zones” might offer us so more insight into where we might have a chance to captivate (an) otherwise. How to enframe these as interactions between equals? How to see knowledge as a product, and still speak of students involved in the act of production? While it is true that those who have led the way in thinking about the university as a space of cultural production and social reproduction have provided us insights into how the classroom can and does serve as a counter-hegemonic space, a “lifeworld” perhaps, within the “system” of the neoliberal and bureaucratising University, certain trends in the calls to remake the university or reclaim it do not quite strongly critique the diremption between knowledge production and dissemination. Instead, “pedagogy” emerges as a set of tools and techniques to fall back on if someone didn’t land a job at a research university counting on graduate students’ capacity to teach because they were somehow still students. (While other relations within the totality of the enterprise of education are possible, I believe that we can never really isolate the classroom or produce it as a “bubble” even when it is repeatedly and wrongly claimed as such, and that the turn to producing teaching as a new expert discipline or set of techniques only produces a new mode of power/knowledge, and provincialise *it* rather than the University).⁴ This has, sadly, happened just as forms of equitable inclusion have rested not on challenging the concept of value production within the university—that seemed possible for a short while when experimental teaching schools emerged within larger universities, or interdisciplinary departments were created—but by bringing more of the formerly excluded into the fold of the production of value, re-establishing the centrality and hold of those paradigms that ought to have been disrupted by those who entered, and stayed, on their own terms.

I am afraid that the usual criticisms of the neoliberal university become so enraptured with themselves and their righteous anger that they start to affirm and unwittingly reconcile with neoliberal transformations of the public sphere: where access overwrites authority and authorisation, where “communities” are produced without addressing questions of authority (largely because of the “consensus of fear” among those who have something to lose that authority and ownership are the same), and where, at our most radical, we are fine pleading for a commons which is imagined as a space *merely* of equal access, based on the idea of something lost to be recovered (such a weird pact with the Allan Blooms and William Deresciewicz of the world),⁵ rather than something that *never* existed in the form it must now, and must yet be built from the glimpses we have seen (in eighth-century Medina, twelfth-century Bologna, and elsewhere).⁶ Perhaps neoliberalism estranges us so much from our labours in a way that we are fine with just being granted access to seeing it in a cage or

a display case. Everything's already in place, and we should quickly find ours! Indeed, the final evacuation of the political is underway!

MAKING TIME, MAKING PLACE: THE ARTS OF THE PRESENT MEET THE ARTS OF THE CONTACT ZONE IN THE POLITICS OF EARLY COLLEGE

A notion of the “arts of the present” comes our way as an inheritance from modernist ancestors, underwriting a disposition that while change is imperative, it is not automatic, and must be prefigured and courted in the practices of those of us in the present, making something called history but not in circumstances of our own choosing, and so on. To this, we might do well to add the caution against being beholden to the History that has already been scripted or the future that is already fixed or inevitable, as well as all the instructions we have been given to produce conformant motions and temporalities out of discrepant ones so that we fit into the extant frames of History’s unfolding as something to aspire to. (The Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present in its usage revitalizes this phrasing, “dedicated to discovering and articulating the aesthetic, cultural, ethical, and political identities of the contemporary arts.” However, I intend to use the term arts in a more ordinary, materialist sense, to span all deliberate practices of making, including the making of life and lifeworlds.)⁷ Indeed, Mary Louise Pratt, in her foundational “Arts of the Contact Zone,” speaks of the entwinement of autoethnography, critique, and resistance in the conversion of colonial “encounter” and its attendant “representational” aesthetics into a “contact zone”—where “cultures, meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today.”⁸ The contact zone breaks *from* representation as the dominant mode of narrativizing the other, and *into* the space of agonistic accountability and equality (and the queering of a primitively accumulated History around which our desires are supposed to revolve), in the “scandalous” manner that Jacques Rancière finds essential to the pedagogical—and hence political, aesthetic, and ethical—programme of the “ignorant schoolmaster.”⁹

Factoring in the postcolony as a condition of existence and not a geopolitical entity into Pratt’s work, her idea of the contact zone can be stretched a little as well. This would take a step beyond preserving a contact zone already identified and mapped through the methods of extraction and accumulation that have shaped the social sciences and humanities to this day. It would impel us to build with what we cannot pretend any longer to not know, even if we know it in the way that the university will not recognize.

Much more can be said beyond these impressionistic gestures, and there is no dearth of these demands to encounter, recast, or even abandon the institution differently, on terms other than the logistical imperatives of racial capitalism and neoliberal postcoloniality. Enter, Edward Said, who revisits the histories of

what is deemed worth learning and sees embedded in our vocabularies of life, knowledge, and politics imperatives that shape concrete biopolitics and necropolitics and the spaces designated for apartheid, evacuation, settlement, and destruction so that others might live.¹⁰ Enter, Fred Moten and Stefano Harney and their summoning of fugitive planning and the undercommons that force us to nothing less than challenge the logistical trances we have entered within and outside the academy and re-orient democratic politics around new concepts and dispositions.¹¹ Enter, Roderick Ferguson and a deeply political understanding of histories of suffering and the concomitant demands for reparative and liberatory knowledge, and the calls to order that pacify, neutralise, and accommodate them into new maps and bureau/techno/cracies.¹² . Enter, Sandy Grande and the pedagogy that liberates and loves and recommits to a collective project rooted in land, but not in property.¹³ Enter, Hortense Spillers and the imperative to revisit histories of policy and language that pathologises and turns us away from reading and words, and posit solutions that constantly manage and domesticate potential insurgencies.¹⁴ Enter, Stuart Hall and the dignity of the colonised in claiming anew objects and subjects and locations and sources of knowledge beyond the taxonomies and enclosures even those we considered our friends have posited for us.¹⁵ Enter Sunaina Maira and Piya Chatterjee, and the exhortation that we take full stock of the triangulation of academy, university, and institutionality in the vindication and sustenance of the imperial university that we occupy even when we feel we are exceptions to it.¹⁶

There are, indeed, other ways of going around the question of ownership, which do not require subsuming it with the question of access in one direction, or ceding any inquiry into the changing nature of the public *and* the private in current times. For one, entertaining the question of work and production beyond value goes back a long way. Students of political theory, cultural studies, and critical theory will recall the particular unfolding of Jürgen Habermas's *Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere* as a template for thinking about the contemporary public sphere—its occupation and its evacuation.¹⁷ Add to that Foucault's re-reading of Kant's use of public reason,¹⁸ and Frankfurt School's analysis of the commodification of culture.¹⁹ These are all invaluable sources of thinking around the public and its manifestations both as a practice and a qualification, but not as mere zone of engagement. However, each of these, in turn, must be read alongside Edward Said and Stuart Hall, in order to understand what has always been possible, because it has already been thought, when it comes to the productions of the space for the popular and the political, and when it comes to the presumptions we hold about the subjects of knowledge, information, truth, and so on. There is really no excuse anymore to deny our contemplations, conundrums, and struggles this history, and ourselves these companions with whom to think: both to understand what has always been there to be understood and owned, but has been neglected in order to preserve something at the cost of other possibilities, as well as to not feel alone in making a future with others possible.

What I am offering here is not a repeat of nostalgic conservative or liberal apologism parading as a critique of consumer culture, because those folks did not and cannot acknowledge something crucial: that every call to preservation is a call to preserve the relations and conditions of its production. Where even Habermas and Foucault fail to fully incorporate in their work how the public sphere and public reason in the metropole is sponsored by the colony, how culture as a concept we know and deploy couldn't be conjured without slavery and colonisation, how can we fault the conservatives or classical liberals?! The question of the production of knowledge within the university, is only a small thumbnail of, but is often severed to and privileged over the question of education—which addresses ontologies, epistemologies, phenomenologies, the political and aesthetic question of subjects and objects of desire and knowledge, and the incontrovertible fact that a critique of the neoliberal university has to be also a critique of neoliberal subjects. This prejudice only exemplifies a long process of the hatred of education, that resembles the hatred of the poor and the hatred of democracy that is embedded within those who are such purveyors and vanguards of democracy that they resent it the most when it actually happens.²⁰ We cannot allow life to be breathed into this dying model.

II. FORMWORK

*[materials] made up into a form or set of forms for concrete*²¹

Habermas's idea of the structural transformation of the public sphere, and his tracing of the rise and fall of this phenomenon over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by mapping the social, cultural, ideological, philosophical, and political developments that play a part in this story, can inform our own mapping, in this time of crisis (hence possibility), of the structural transformations of the university and the academy and the political economics of the production and distribution of knowledge and affect. Not least because even in the historical-critical work Habermas is doing, the theme of structural transformation is connected to the academy as a key element of the public sphere.

We already see Habermas's emphasis on the colonising/marketising of the public sphere infect us in current ways of thinking about truth, information, and the market in fascist times. This is where Alexander Kluge's and Oskar Negt's frame of the proletarian public sphere is helpful in puncturing the delusions of a unified public sphere,²² highlighting its potential fractality, and hence the possibilities that follow. This could invite ways of mapping how these fractals nest within each other as well, such as not simply writing off the university as an elite institution, or equating/aligning the "popular" with the "anti-intellectual" in a misplaced and reactionary kind of class antagonism. The intervention of Kluge and Negt invites us to actually insist on something else beyond calling out some elite transgression or the other or resorting to the moralistic, because these kinds of claims end up hurting us by taking certain kinds of reappropriations and reauthorisations off the table. Additionally, their work—in its method—helps in renegotiating the question of colonialism back into the

conversations about the public and its problems (to recall a phrase from Seymour Martin Lipset); both Habermas and Foucault, as I mentioned earlier, fail to take the colony into account in theorising these. We end up inheriting that lack in not only European, but also North American discourse, and produce insipid analyses of the current crisis of truth in the mediatised public sphere, feeling expedient and efficient by keeping it disconnected from the history of the modern colonial formations of the (now global) university. Academics often feel very noble and detached, allowing the “ivory tower” or “bubble” narrative to give them an excuse to enter as diagnosticians or doctors of this crisis, when in fact the modes and configurations of knowledge production and distribution in which they are complicit and from which they benefit are in many ways responsible for it. I think it’s time we addressed this in new ways in our work inside the university, without pretending we are outside of the world (either as judges or plaintiffs).²³

Writing on Richard Seymour’s *The Twittering Machine*,²⁴ Jason Read speaks of the “technological, political, and economic transformations which can, and have, for particular people become objects of specialized study,” and unavoidably so.²⁵ He goes on to say that these are “also phenomena that one must necessarily have some understanding of not just as an academic, but as anyone who wants to make sense of and act in the world.” Read comes up with three transformations as follows: “the transformation of social, psychic, and political life by the ubiquity of social media; the transformation of capital by processes of automation and communication that displaces wage labor and entire populations; and the increasing transformation of the natural world by human economic and technological processes that is often summed up by the anthropocene.” He suggests “the centrality of racism to contemporary ‘populist’ politics” as a potential fourth. Importantly, Read reminds us that these zonings might trouble those who have always specialized in any aspect of any of these areas. Especially as he discusses Seymour’s contributions to thinking about social media and the questions he raises about technology and our use of it in the reproduction of life as we know it, and to produce it otherwise, he apologises to media studies scholars who might feel troubled by the big questions that displace the localized capital they have accrued.

It is time for us to honestly, “formatively,” assess, both the temporality and the motion of knowledges within the academy writ large. What is the *where* of knowledge in society, and is it the same as the *where* of education? Might it be the case that part of the diagnosis of this post-truth crisis aligns with that of the neoliberal university, precisely because those spaces that were “tasked” with the production of knowledge, were somehow also invested in a production of ignorance, keeping themselves alive by any means possible, without knowing how they were doing permanent harm to their own *actual* possibility. This becomes clearer by the day, when the spaces of education are seen as a different zone, with different workers, also evinced in not only the division, but also the *hierarchy*, as well as the hegemony of forms of labour and the partition of the sensible that is often only understood through existing cate-

gories of the “system”—and not the “lifeworld”—of the university.²⁶ It is these partitions of knowledge, labour, and sensibility, and the separation between their production and distribution, that have to be redone. The transformations we are dealing with require not dealing with the logistics and administering of the system and its seemingly benign and efficient disciplinary boundaries, but drawing news maps of lifeworlds colonised by these systems, forming new contact zones across these partitions upheld by the current university, even the one that many of our friends want to preserve.

TRANSFORMATIONS AS PREMISES

On the invitation implicit in Read’s work, I have taken it upon myself to translate it into my own “little languages such as lovers use” (as our neighbour Emily Dickinson called it), insofar as it has been put together through years at Simon’s Rock, translating this space itself to those outside, often with students and former students as partners in that effort. This was emboldened by the premise-upsetting project that brought us together to begin with, desirous to push the limits of location in this work, making a claim to something beyond institutionalities and institutional boundaries as we know them. I proceed to glean a set of transformations heeding and studying which should guide our *falsework* and *formwork* in the realm of re-building the “house of education” to which Elizabeth Hall, founder of Simon’s Rock, exhorted us.²⁷ Part of my translation involves considering not only academic specialization, but the pedagogical demands of this present in relation to insurgent histories of suffering and of unfulfilled desires for liberation in the context of cultural and structural shifts. This is necessary to emphasise because the “system” is too potent; we have seen us slip in these directions even in the transformative “lifeworld” of early college where the prejudices suffusing the “secondary school” and “college” education, it is promised, can be skirted altogether. This is no surprise because wherever it is that the new teacher and scholar is being produced is masterful at the reproduction of the limits and boundaries of teaching and of research that have been agreed upon. To the extent that we somehow feel a relief if we win the wars of the canon but preserve the disciplinary boundaries that give us territories to claim and stand on! How tragic.

First: The transformation of the aesthetic sensibility of the individual generalisable as the unit of analysis for the social sciences and the humanities—insofar as it configures a relation between knowledge, truth, feeling, and belief.

Second: The transformation in the global production and distribution of culture, and the networks and crossings between producers and audiences of art, literature, media, science, etc., that affirms a new form of the universalisable subject.

Third: A particular (post)colonial neoliberal subject with certain affect and character, certain tendencies toward the individual and the collective, and the state and society, normalised across divides of country, nation, ethnos who has a

particular relation to violence, to speech and utterance, to desire and its gratification, including but not limited to the desire for truth, belief, justice, knowledge, and their availability. (In other words, the subjects of terror, anxiety, and post-truth politics).

Fourth: “The transformation of social, psychic, and political life by the ubiquity of social media” (in Read’s words),²⁸ and the attendant discourses on the human, the non-human, and the post-human that necessarily inform and are informed by struggles for recognition and equality.

Fifth: “The transformation of capital by processes of automation and communication that displaces wage labor and entire populations” (as Read puts it),²⁹ and operationalises existing colonial structures in order to do so.

Sixth: The transformation in structures of identity and identification, and understandings of solidarity, justice, and social practice, that comes from the virtual technological erasure of borders and boundaries, as well as the heightened surveillance that coincides with it.³⁰

Seventh: “The transformation in understanding of ecological time” (which Read identifies), and which comes with the impact of work, re/production, and “technological processes” on the natural world (what is often now “called the anthropocene.”)³¹

Eighth: The transformation in the domains of politics and society that comes with the reversal of the (illusion) of post-state open borders championed by globalisation from above and below, and a newly emergent state politics, even when liberal democratic, that is unabashedly settler-colonial, nationalistic, market-driven, with a pronounced emphasis on racialisation and religion as a racial category.

Ninth: The transformation in the relations within which various issues must be mapped in order to be solved. The shifting meanings of justice, freedom, and equality, that shape a post-multicultural politics in the west, and the forms of social, political, affective, and economic organisation and institutionality they affirm, sponsor, or desire.

Tenth: The transformation that brings the post-war state full circle from its attempts at the secular nation-state that is being exposed to have formulated the economy, the nation, and religion, as separate spheres which was mimicked in the methods of study and knowledge production of the globalised university.

WISHLIST/ELEMENTS OF DESIGN: AN INCOMPLETE CATALOGUE OF THE ARTS OF THE PRESENT-AS-CONTACT-ZONE

Having spent many years building and designing spaces that might tempt a shared project in our midst—whether by way of pedagogical practice suggest-

ing some theorisation, or by critique transforming practice, or both—some design elements have emerged as essential, or at least desirable, in the fashioning of an educational undertaking on the margins of the university as we know it today, and one worth being beholden to.

- Spaces carved out and populated at the intersection of the classroom, the laboratory, the workshop, and the studio.
- Multi-disciplinary study/work groups of students coming together to work on a set of questions, regardless of their academic strength or interest.
- Unified study and practice, where practice is not seen as a synonym of “empirical data,” and where research is not seen as external to practice.
- Reliable and legible configurations of people and spaces, by way of curation, hospitality, intention, interdependence (i.e., freedom *to*), in place of the incessant emphasis on customisation and mere autonomy (i.e., freedom *from*) that, ironically, hides inequalities and differences, and also unnecessarily trumps up the idea of the student as consumer.
- Mutual accountability and collaboration in study and work groups and their facilitators. Unapologetic, unequivocal, priority to communicative action (building shared understanding leading to action) and the lifeworlds it builds out of the contact zones, over strategic action (emphasising instrumentality and outcome without regard for the shared understandings or points of departure) and the administrative, logistical, systems they uphold.
- Claim, for now, on education and learning as production, emphatically saying that all practices and vocations we commit to in the world are not mere applications or conveyances of knowledge, but productions thereof.
- *Poetic* and *rhetorical* emphasis on reading and writing, listening and hospitality, study and inquiry rather than theory or research, and on critical and creative practice rather than actionism or the idea of application”of theory. These words each sponsor different worlds and ethos. We have tried some already, haven’t we? Others beg to be tried.
- The pathologies of one realm of learning kept from serving as redemptions for another, because they are not! (For instance, no one has already *finally* defined what *research* means! Those disciplines free from the prejudices of the sciences and social sciences need to authorise new modes, genres, and accountabilities.)
- Critical, and self-critical, attention to methods unchallenged in disciplinary work (no need for the teacher to disavow their own training, but room to allow the student to make something more of it than even we could!).
- Transdisciplinary, comparativist, and transregional modes of study and learning as the norm, rather than treated as exceptions (and not

- seen as the false antagonists to specialisation or experts).
- New bridges to replace conventional transitions through a new architecture of time and location of learning. Interventions that were seen as needful in the transition from secondary to higher education (and hence resulted in the many experimental colleges in the 60s including Simon’s Rock), are good resources to turn to as we contemplate those interventions in the transition *out* from undergraduate education to either further education or to work,”that are quickly proving to be unavoidable.
 - Learning that is beyond instrumentalist and extractive, and which takes seriously a kind of relationality—to objects, spaces, and other subjects of learning—as a key outcome of the learning itself. An awareness of a project in common that is fostered over the course of many years, maybe in spaces designated for this, where a learner can have room to narrate *with* the objects of their inquiry outside of just working *on* them, aware of how they come into being, how they change form, what makes the learner the subject in that relationship, how they become the inquirers, how they grow and change with the object, and what else this relation has produced, for them, and others.³²
 - Challenges to the presumptive geographies of solutions and problems. Even if local solutions have to be found for local problems, local problems cannot be understood by studying the *local*. Using the local to understand the local is a faux pas; it produces both bad knowledge *and* bad practice. No solution is ever simply “local” even if we act within a bounded space and time.
 - No presumption of saving others from themselves (a la the saviour complex), but there certainly effort invested in saving others from “us.” The “third world” university was always more that what the west imagined (and yet, unsurprisingly, always considered less). What is imperative is getting out of their way, and blocking the hegemony of the bureaucratised and corporate university model from pervading and contaminating everything. Those institutions show a way to the future, and we in the “global north” to the unsustainable present. It might be too late: see what’s happening at places like Jawaharlal Nehru University in India, and the neoliberalising role of higher education authorities in the Global South via scientisation and productivism to the detriment of education itself. But we cannot resign ourselves to this, neither for “their” sake nor for “ours.”
 - Structured partnerships with others, subtending less extractive and imperial financial models, sympathetic to this remaking. No one can go this alone.

DR. ASMA ABBAS is Professor of Politics and Philosophy, and Director of Transdisciplinary and Experimental Studies, at Bard College at Simon’s Rock. In the

recent past, she has also served as the Dean of Academics and Professor of Liberal Studies at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in Karachi, Pakistan, and the Fulbright-Masaryk Distinguished Chair in Social Studies at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. She is senior research fellow at the Global Centre of Advanced Studies, associate faculty at the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research, and teaches in the M.Phil. in Art and Design at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, as well as at the Bard Early Colleges in Hudson and New Orleans. Abbas is founding organiser of Hic Rosa, (and its international travelling Studio in Materialist and Anticolonial Politics and Aesthetics), the Falsework School for political education, Some Beloved Productions, ACCREW Caucus of the Democratic Socialists of America, and the Common Tern Internationalist Co-op of Cultural Workers.

Abbas is the author of *Liberalism and Human Suffering: Materialist Reflections on Politics, Ethics, and Aesthetics* (2010), and *Another Love: Overtures to a Politics of the Unrequited* (2018), and curated and co-edited a collaborative pandemic writing project titled *Falsework Smalltalk: Aesthetic Archives, Political Education, Recitations of a Future in Common* (2021). She is currently working on an experimental political phenomenology titled *Anti-Odysseus: Fugues of the Non-Homeric*, and a series of essays on the “hatred of education” (in the same key as Rancière’s *Hatred of Democracy*). Her work has been part of several volumes and anthologies, and her essays have appeared in *Hypatia*, *Theory & Event*, *Democratic Theory*, *Journal of Politics*, *Politics and Culture*, among others. She is a historian of form and method with a focus on political experience and subjectivity, in the service of liberatory anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, antifascist, and anti-nationalist hospitalities, imaginations, and cultivations in practices of knowing, being, and worldmaking .

NOTES

1 I am grateful for the careful reading of Colin Eubank, for the keen and empathic eye of Guy Risko as reviewer, and for John Weinstein's inquiring and generative editorial disposition. The thinking and practice in this essay has accrued over many years of teaching, and thinking about teaching as a practice, and especially in the course on *The Ignorance of Schoolmasters and the Scandal of Democracy* at Simon's Rock. It has also taken form in ongoing work inside and outside the classroom alongside former students, always partners-in-thought, together occupying para-academic and para-professional spaces to experiment with the triangulation of art, politics, and education, as if our lives were at stake, often as part of a collectivity we have come to call Hic Rosa and Falsework School. Simon's Rock has been the reason and occasion for so much of this, allowing ventures outward, inward, and sideways that cannot help but confer new and dissensual form and life to aspirations to educate and be educated here and everywhere, for more and in better and more honest ways. Most recently, the last section of this essay was developed as part of envisioning a Bachelor of Arts programme, for which I am grateful for the trust placed by the College in me to lead and cohere that effort toward renewing a collective project that cannot help but flicker and feel overlooked in the midst of so many challenges. Many years of aspirations and efforts in programmes on and off campus are now converging, by design, deliberate intent, and a lot of peculiar joie de vivre and bravado at once, in the space called the Simon's Rock Annex for Transdisciplinary, Collaborative, and Experimental Inquiry and Practice. Both surrealist, and no less surreal, in the year of the pandemic.

2 "Falsework, *n.*" Oxford English Dictionary, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/67902?redirectedFrom=falsework#eid> (accessed June, 1, 2021).

3 My colleague from BHSEC Cleveland, Guy Risko, points out the potential "homogenous interpretation of the early college model." Risko goes on to say, "I worry about this move in part because of the increasingly corporatized models that set up 'early college' education as a strong voice/presence within neoliberal educational institutions. 'Early oftentimes refers to the individual student, trying to set themselves apart from their peers/competitive customers, demonstrating success as part of telos of acceptance. The 'college' in 'early college' also has a strained and often opaque vision of a university, high education system. With the growth of CollegeBoard's capstone diplomas, models of early college that send students to another institution, and the potentially very good/very bad 'wrap around'/'K-16' policies at home in many states, I think it may be useful to make gestures at the institutional nature of the early college model you speak of. I'm not sure that 'early college' is inherently, or even mostly, an institutional concern."

4 Guy Risko responds, "Most of the analysis in this work, especially of the discourses of nostalgia and apocalypse regarding the continued existence of the university itself, seems distinct from some of the discourses of teaching. As

I read your work, I'm left wondering to what extent a new university relates to a new classroom. In other words, what are the new 'form'ulations of the university-classroom relationship that are not reducible to hierarchy?" I hold on to that hope with Guy. At the same time, the challenges go beyond hierarchy, since a number of problematic and counterproductive possibilities of *equalising* (not equality per se) exist within liberalism that are undemocratic and hegemonic. In the middle of Part II of this essay, I speak to the various contours of the rearrangement and repartitioning to which we have to remain attentive, and sometime hierarchies and equalisations take up all our attention to the detriment of our own power to determine new forms, relations, and totalities.

5 Cf. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988). See also, William Deresciewicz, "The Disadvantages of an Elite Education," *The American Scholar*, June 1, 2008, <https://theamericanscholar.org/the-disadvantages-of-an-elite-education/> (accessed February 21, 2021); and "The Death of the Artist—and the Birth of the Creative Entrepreneur," *The Atlantic*, (Jan/Feb 2015), <https://theamericanscholar.org/the-disadvantages-of-an-elite-education/> (accessed February 21, 2021).

6 Jafar-al-Sadiq was founder of the first great Islamic University at Medina in the eighth century. The oldest university continuing to this day as a higher-education degree-granting institution was founded by an organised guild of students in 1088. See Chapter 2, "The Road to Bologna," in Paul Gaston, *The Challenge of Bologna: What United States Higher Education Has to Learn from Europe, and Why It Matters That We Learn It* (Sterling: Stylus Publishing, 2012.)

7 Cf. Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present, <https://www.artsofthepresent.org/about/> (accessed February 21, 2021).

8 Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," in *Ways of Reading*, 5th edition, ed. David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrofsky (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), p. 501, <http://myidentity.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/files/2015/01/Mary-Louise-Pratt-Contact-Zone.pdf> (accessed February 21, 2021).

9 Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

10 Edward Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975). Also Leonardo Zeus, *Edward Said and Education*, (New York: Routledge, 2020).

11 Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (AK Press, 2013).

12 Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

- 13 Sandy Grande, “Refusing the University,” in *Toward What Justice? Describing Diverse Dreams of Justice in Education*, ed. Wayne Yang and Eve Tuck (New York: Routledge, 2018), 47-65.
- 14 Hortense J. Spillers, “The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: A Post-Date,” *Boundary 2*, 21, no. 3 (1994): 65-116, <https://doi.org/10.2307/303601>; Also, Amarya Armstrong, “Crisis, Conversion, Critique, or, Practicing Black Study Now: Against the Natural and the New,” *Political Theology Network*, May 21, 2018, <https://politicaltheology.com/crisis-conversion-critique-or-practicing-black-study-now-against-the-natural-and-the-new/> (accessed February 21, 2021).
- 15 Stuart Hall, “Teaching Race,” *Early Child Development and Care* 10, no. 4 (1983): 259-274, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0300443830100402>; Also, Stuart Hall, “Gramsci’s Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity,” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 5-27, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2F019685998601000202>
- 16 Sunaina Maira and Piya Chatterjee, *The Imperial University* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).
- 17 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Borgeous Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989).
- 18 Michel Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?” in *The Foucault Reader*, ed., Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 32-50.
- 19 Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, ed. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, trans. John Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) .
- 20 An argument I am developing elsewhere compares the unfolding of democracy to the unfolding of education. This borrows from Rancière’s argument in the *Hatred of Democracy*, a guide and companion to my argument around “the hatred of education.” From Jacques Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy*, trans. Steve Corcoran (New York: Verso Books, 2009).
- 21 “Form, *n*,” Oxford English Dictionary, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/73421?redirectedFrom=formwork#eid3802967> (accessed June 1, 2021).
- 22 Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt, *Public Sphere and Experience: Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (New York: Verso Books, 2016).
- 23 In response to my very Marxi-inspired insistence on acknowledging (in order to repair the same) the pathologies of the separation of production and distribution that shape all value produced in capitalist society—with my intel-

lectual and political investment in changing the very forms of sensibility, experience, learning, relation, life itself, that are necessitated by and uphold these separations--including in the hallowed classrooms or hallways or offices of the university, my colleague and editor John Weinstein writes, "Our work in this very issue is designed to begin the process of rethinking how to bring together production and distribution in new ways, ways that meet the needs and realities of Early College educators, and of innovative educators around the world." Signalling to the actual production of scholarship as one of the key modalities of value production, Weinstein adds, "Here, we acknowledge that for some, the means of production are less accessible, be that time, resources both scholarly and financial, and the support and empowerment needed to feel that one's ideas matter. For others, the means of distribution may be less accessible, if the distributors look differently upon those who are indeed college educators (though I do not want to reify that as a category, pertinent to what follows in the article) but may be seen as not so. Through our intended support model, we are supporting both production and distribution."

24 Richard Seymour, *The Twittering Machine* (New York: Verso Books, 2019).

25 Jason Read, "Unwritten: On Richard Seymour's *The Twittering Machine*." June 13, 2019, <http://www.unemployednegativity.com/2019/06/unwritten-on-richard-seymours.html> (accessed February 21, 2021).

26 For Habermas, the *lifeworld* includes our everyday world, our social selves, our interactions with structures outside of the administrative rationality and institutional authority (which comprise the *system*). The lifeworld is the everyday world that we share with others. He brings these up in his work on the theory of communicative action where he seeks to highlight what kinds of action fill out which of these spheres, and also how the two are interlinked and shift over time. Cf. Hugh Baxter, "System and Life-World in Habermas's 'Theory of Communicative Action,'" *Theory and Society* 16, no. 1 (1987): 9-86, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/657078 (accessed Feb. 21, 2021); Stephen Kemmis, "System and Lifeworld, and the Conditions of Learning in Late Modernity," *Curriculum Studies* 6, no. 3 (2011): 269-305, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14681369800200043>

27 Elizabeth Blodgett Hall, "The House of Education Needs Overhaul: The Theory Behind Simon's Rock." Reprint 1973, Elizabeth Blodgett Hall Manuscripts Collection, Simon's Rock Archives, Bard College at Simon's Rock, Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

28 This is the first transformation that Read identifies.

29 Following Read's second transformation.

30 As Guy Risko reminds me, this coincides with the incessant performance and "presencing of identity as a mechanism for neoliberal commodification as

universities try to maintain their (older) forms.”

31 Drawing on the third transformation that Read identifies.

32 In his response to the list of transformations presented above, Colin Eubank astutely offered the idea of students being “embedded” in their programmes and departments without being disciplined by them, in response to the temporality rather than terminality of the transformation motif. This might also recall those embedded reporters who travel with a particular electoral or martial campaign: a kind of motion and accountability tied together.