Academic Publishing on Student Debt: *Homo Academicus Americanus*

Joseph Shafer

> Two frames diverged on the common road
> & I, I could not choose the one for the other
> So stood, astounded, in place.
> Bernstein, "Truth in Pudding"

America's latest generations are presently being cropped and crippled by university student-debt, and academic publishing presents an internal gaze from the heart of the beast. The *topos* of America's student-debt is becoming historicized within academic criticism, but as the crisis culminates, the academic's symbolic resistance becomes problematized. In 2013, when government profits from student loans were surpassed only by Exxon and Apple,[1] both the financial industry and cultural criticism were further disillusioned by their losses and opportunities to invest. In the last three years there has been an alarming production of literature on the American university in relation to student-debt, the causal privatization of universities, racial and gender discriminations resulting from student-debt, calls for student activism against, for change in university governance, and for boycotting the global Americanization of such. The imperialism of the American university, specifically through student-debt, has been branded as a new form of colonialism. But while post-colonial studies reserves an area of criticism concerning the role of the intellectual and the intellectual's discourse, the recently inaugurated field of "critical university studies" less formally interrogates the subjectivation of the academic, a role definitively dependent upon the university and publications on its behalf. The academic finds itself in an unprecedented role within colonization, distinct from post-colonial intelligentsia, and if the intellectual's discourse is conflicted in its representation, then exigencies conveyed by academic discourse on student-debt epitomize symbolic crises. This piece serves to provide a review of America's student-debt culture as university structured, academic criticism within such

structuration, and the conflicts inherent in academic publishing founded on, and concerning, student-debt. Academic publishing and its form of resistance within critical university studies reintroduces the dilemma of the American academic.

There appears to be a feverishly demanding need for America's younger generations to address student-debt and conceptualize resistance, and therefore there is an increasing need to account for this cultural phenomenon within academic criticism. The spoken-word of America's urban poetry increasingly revolves around the motif and trope of student-debt, which plagues its poets as it does its audience. “America in 4 minutes,” by Brandon Emmanuel Watson, epitomizes the nation as a "blubblin" of "the student loan crisis,"[2] while Manhattan's Bowery Poetry Club, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, hosted and promotes a voice "Supportive of Student Debt Resistance," part of the movement Strike Debt. Strike Debt is a nationwide "debt resistance movement,"[3] with funds contributing to the popularizing Rolling Jubilee campaign, which most recently purchased the accumulated student debt from Everest College. The Bowery Poetry Club is a venue for projects such as Debt Fair as well, which "aims to build solidarity between artists and put the debt crisis center stage in art today."[4] Debt Fair creates a community of artists who can link their work and their earnings directly to student-debt repayment. The solidarity of student-debt resistance is a particular wave in the wake of Occupy, and the solidifying artistic movements against student-debt solicit academic positioning. Charles Bernstein's recent collection of poems, *Recalculating* (2013), implies the redirection of the Global Positioning Service (GPS) and includes such poems as "Strike!" "Strike!" was written in July, 2011 in conjunction with the poem "In Utopia", which was published in the *Occupy Wall Street Poetry Anthology* (2012). Bernstein combats the "debilitating" nature of student-debt and resulting income inequalities,[5] but he maintains a poetic position of debt resistance rather than a political one. In a 2011 interview about his participation in Occupy Wall Street and student-debt resistance, Bernstein stated, "my engagement with OWS is speculative, supportive, but somewhat spectral," as he is careful in representing resistance symbolically.[6] Bernstein contrasts the student movements of the 60s and 70s with the student resistance of Occupy, in that the former was a "political position," and the present situation against the "crippling tuition increases for current students" is cultural, economic, a "pata-political" position, one in which poetics can be "in, around, about and beside the political," not politics qua politics. His published criticism

on the subject is careful not to misrepresent the symbolic violence the industry of student-debt has issued, and he attentively seeks to avoid obscuring *the real* situation by marketing his own symbolic discourse, attempting "not [to] unhinge the symbolism from the social conditions that engendered it." Bernstein's position here is uniquely presented, not because of proclivities for political poetics, nor because it is a position yet to be taken up generally, but because it seems to formatively interrupt its own discourse when considering his role *within* the violent symbolization of student-debt, for example, as an established academic of the university. He concludes, "So yes: I am always concerned with 'the distance between the observer and the object of scrutiny'" (*ibid*).

Bernstein is more explicit and direct in his interviews than in his poetry, and he joins an academic tradition of scrutinizing the university as an industry. F.O. Matthiessen's speech upon receiving Yale's Deforest Prize in 1923, for his grounding work in the field of American Studies, was entitled "Servants of the Devil," and bespoke historical accusations which a university-studies is currently documenting: that university governance is "an autocracy, ruled by a Corporation out of touch with college life and allied with big business," stated Matthiessen (Lakoff 21). However, student loans were not yet introduced into Education markets until Lyndon B. Johnson's Higher Education Act of 1965, which made grants and scholarship programs available to college students, along with loan guaranties to those banks offering student loans for postsecondary education (Collinge 3). This was ostensibly successful, as the American population grew by 16 percent from 1960 to 1970 while adults with four-year degrees grew to approximately 67 percent, and up to 1970 the average tuition for universities was $585, so "only a small minority of students required loans to attend" (*ibid*). In 1972, Nixon authorized the Student Loan Marketing Association (Sallie Mae) with the purpose of promoting student loans through banks and lenders, and subsequently allowing Sallie Mae to repurchase them, but in 1995 Sallie Mae converted from a government-sponsored organization to a for-profit corporation capitalizing on defaulted loans. Sanford Collinge's *The Student Loan Scam: The Most Oppressive Debt in U.S. History–and How We Can Fight Back* (2009) discloses Sallie Mae's CEO, Albert Lord, "reported to shareholders in 2003 that the company's record profits were attributable to penalties and fees collected from defaulted loans" (Collinge 5), with a fee income from $280 million to $920 million between 2000 and 2005, and a loan portfolio from $67 billion to $122 billion, an averaged annual rise of 1,600 percent between 1995 and 2005. Bill Clinton's Federal

Direct Loan Program had been counteractively employed to issue loans directly from the government to students in an attempt to minimize public and student expenses towards the mediation of such banks, and was initially successful, as the Federal Direct Loan Program caused Sallie Mae to lose half its market value (10). However, by offering perks to university administrators who would secure lending through Sallie Mae, and lobbying Congress to void consumer protection laws regarding student loans specifically, Sallie Mae nearly monopolized the student loan industry by owning the loans, guaranties, collections, and defaulted investments, and by ensuring that the freedom to change lenders, existent in all other lending practices, was no longer available for student loans, nor the indispensible option of declaring bankruptcy. The capitalization of student-debt became unbound.

The particular foundation of student-debt for a corporatized American university was fortified in the millennial turn, and research from the recent years has been able to depict and predict several socio-economic, racial, gender, and academic freedoms that are continuously limited due to the ensuing student-debt culture. Jason H. Houle's[7] 'Disparencies in Debt-Parents' Socioeconomic Resources and Young Adult Student Loan Debt' (2014) outlines some of the socio-economical consequences of America's student-debt culture, and correlates the racial and economic background of parents and the amount of student-debt their children undertake. Since, he writes, "in the United States, where college costs have skyrocketed and outpaced inflation (College Board 2010b)" and "the rise in college costs has not been offset by grant aid (College Board 2006)," students and families have to make up the exponentially widening difference, all while "middle-class incomes have stagnated, making it harder for many to keep up with college costs" (53). Today, the College Board states that the average tuition and fees at public four-year colleges alone "increased by 19 percent beyond the rate of inflation over the five years from 2003-04 to 2008-09, and by another 27 percent between 2008-09 and 2013-14." What becomes termed "the middle-class squeeze" is evident, from the high college-attendance-rate of America's middle class, their commitment to advanced degrees, and inclinations for attending private or for-profit institutions which are "the types of institutions associated with higher debt" (Houle 56). The maxim that "young adults who consume more postsecondary education (e.g. spend more time in college, get higher degrees, or attend more expensive private institutions) have more student loan debt" is only untrue for "young adults from the two highest income brackets ($100,000 to $149,000 and $150,000+)," who have 240 percent less debt than the lowest income

category (58). And while student-debt directly widens America's wealth gap, particular inequalities are also observable, as Houle finds in one model that "African Americans have 51 percent more student loan debt than do whites ($p < .001$), and these differences are even greater before accounting for parents' SES [socio-economic status] and aid from family and scholarships" (60). In Houle's "A Generation Indebted': Young Adult Debt Across Three Cohorts' (2014), Houle considers the economically dividing principles of student-debt and the various intentions for investing in student-debt, writing that this "widening disparity in debt portfolios suggest that more advantaged young adults are taking on debt that helps them pursue a middle-class lifestyle and build their wealth, while less advantaged young adults are taking on debt to pay their bills and keep their heads above water," and concludes, "Thus, it is plausible that rising debt is mirroring rising inequalities in the United States, and it is possible that debt could come to play an important role in the social reproduction of inequalities across generations" (462). The student-debt already undertaken will accompany the rapidly worsening student-debt to come, and consequential inequalities progressively inflamed. Houle's synoptic articles lay bare the socio-economic stakes involved in America's student-debt culture, and are among the latest in a storm of student-debt criticism across the disciplines.

The forced economic divides of student-debt seem impelled by the underpinning logics particular individuals and classes operate from. Dowd's *Dynamic Interactions and Intersubjectivity: Challenges to Causal Modeling in Studies of Student Debt* (2008) had aligned with Houle's findings and predictions of racial inequalities in student-debt culture, as a "high debt burden" is a price "which falls heavily in the United States on low-income students who are African American or Latino" (234), but Dowd is chiefly concerned with the rationale and ideology necessarily bestowed upon the young adults who must strive within and feed such a culture. "Not surprisingly," writes Dowd, "students at expensive private and for-profit institutions are most likely to borrow and to borrow the largest amounts" (235), but entry to such institutions must nevertheless be sought, and Dowd finds the cultural psychology of American student-debt in need of criticism, arguing "that the next generation of scholarship on college loans will be enhanced by incorporating sociocultural and psychological constructs into the prevailing economic view of rational decision making in collegiate choice" (*ibid*). Certainly the "sociocultural and psychological constructs" are already researched and implemented by university 'outreach' and marketing offices, but criticism of how young adult psychologies are

effected by these campaigns needs to be exposed. Therefore, Dowd also provides criticism of the university's dominating marketization of individual, familial, and generational behavior. Dowd quotes Archer and Hutchings's observations that "young people from working class backgrounds [...] constructed higher education as inherently risky, demanding great investments and costs, and yielding uncertain returns" (2000). Dowd summarizes a common inter-subjectivity, a class-consciousness, defined by its socio-economical views of what student-debt provides: "The official discourse of higher education investments being safe and profitable is not a matter of common sense but a socially constructed value of dominant groups in privileged economic positions. Perceptions of risks and rewards are influenced by family and personal wealth, experience with formal lending systems, and perceptions of discrimination" (250). The university allows "student loans [to] directly conscript college age students into the market" (Williams 164), and victimizes new generations, of all classes, as they grow dependent upon the cultural capital of student-debt, despite their fiscal and social indebtedness. Socio-economic conditions can be susceptible to the university's various psychological conditioning through the logics of student-debt. It is, therefore, helpful to acknowledge one's inherent vision of what the "university" symbolically provides in order to account for one's personal debt to it.

The ironic position of paradox is marked for the University academic. Of late, explicit attacks on the "imperial university" are unifying scholarship, resulting in ostensive losses of academic freedom; which has, subsequently, further contextualized and optimized the academic din. Academic freedom has been stripped most notoriously in regards to criticism against Israel's occupation of Palestine, but "In distinct yet not unrelated ways, both student debt and the occupation of Palestinian territories cut to the heart of articulations of a right to education [...] a practice of collective thought and social activity irreducible to and in fact antagonistic to market logics" (Marez 275). General academic criticism is aimed at the university's support for, and participation in, America's encompassing "military-industrial-prison complex," which has now become the "academic-military-industrial complex," because academic criticism against American injustices is filtered by university investments, corporate and/or nationalistic, albeit investments in public marketability. Such is the context of Vijay Prashad's 'Teaching by Candlelight' (2014), which conveys the sentiment of being labeled a "campus radical" ("the domesticated rabble rouser who provides the academy with its illusion of ideological diversity") and introduces the invaluable premise foregrounded in this article as well, that academic freedom

is co-relative to the student-debt culture. Prashad writes, "The question of affordability of higher education is salient to any discussion of academic freedom" (330). The corporatization of the university undervalues academic pay and academic roles in governance, but university intolerability of academic dissent is also driven by investments in student-debt. Jeffrey Williams, of Carnegie Mellon, who recently published 'Teachings of Student Debt' in Heller and Callender's *Student Financing of Higher Education: A comparative perspective* (2013), had previously declared in 'The Pedagogy of Debt' (2006) that "Over the past decade, there has been an avalanche of criticism of the university, especially of its 'corporatization.' Most of it focuses on the impact of corporate protocols on research, the reconfiguration of the power structure of administration and faculty, and academic labor. Rightly so, but little has addressed the privatization of student debt" (157). It is Williams who coined the term "critical university studies," now a formal title of an area of American Studies which was recently inaugurated by the president of the American Studies Association, Curtis Marez. With "Critical University Studies" (CUS) now an official area of academic criticism, it is due time to further establish the role of the academic and their discourse as a topic embedded therein.

Marez published his November 22, 2013 presidential address, entitled 'Seeing in Red: Looking at Student Debt' (2014), in this June's edition of *American Quarterly*–a volume devoted to that address and its replies. Marez's call for a Critical University Studies is indeed a call which has long been enacted yet invited both a formal declaration and a formal redirecting towards the grounding and growing phenomenon of "Student Debt," for "a critical university studies for American studies helps us understand regimes of student debt as a defining feature of 'the imperial university'" (Marez 274).[8] Marez opens, "I attempt to center collective dissent to student debt in American studies. At the same time, I outline an American studies version of critical university studies" (261). He is particularly concerned about the racial and gender inequalities that the American universities customarily harbor. Marez, in prefacing the centrality of student debt, introduces a historical narrative of university colonization and the ASA's initiative to study new forms by which national and global university colonization proliferates, i.e. the form of student-debt. He writes "that the contemporary regime of university debt constitutes a form of racialized and gendered settler colonial capitalism based on the incorporation of disposable low-wage workers and complicity in the occupation of indigenous lands. The university domination of land and labor, I conclude, is pursued structurally but also ideologically, in film and other

media representing campus life" (262). Referring to Bousquet's *How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation* (2008), Marez scorns at how the emergent developments in higher education, such as the globalizing model of the online classroom or imaginary constructs of university living, seem to tickle university administrators and business investors, yet their "dreams obscure higher education's ongoing dependence on the labor of part-time faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates" (268). It is a history magnified in "the last three decades," which "have witnessed a dramatic expansion in the university's exploitation of women workers, who are overrepresented among the ranks of part-time instructors, as well as in the exploitation of undergraduate and graduate student workers, particularly young women and people of color" (268). The aforementioned research portraying the current and future socio-economics of student-debt adjoins the racial and gender inequalities that persist within the university, says Marez, and is iconic of a history still unfolding. In other words, the promise of an accessible and equalizing education, via such marketable trends as online courses, continues to correlatively diminish the rights of its laborers or consumers. In depicting the "imperial" nature of the American university, Marez rightly "raises the question: what is the relationship between the disciplining of campus dissent by settler colonial militarism, on the one hand, and the disciplinary force of student debt, on the other?" (275). This open-ended question seems to rhetorically supply the narrational void: one precise relationship between the university and student dissent, or the university and the marketization of student-debt, is *the symbolic mediation of academic discourse.*

The published solidarity among American academics against their own environment hopes to also promote societal solidarity, yet the discourse should necessitate that the 'academic role' become an object of analysis as well, not only the exploited academic, but the academic's symbolic purpose within such a machine, and how it may, or may not, contribute to the machine on some level. If a Critical University Studies performs an analysis of the global colonization of the imperial American university model, should not the field demand the upmost scrutiny of the American Academic, much like the role of the Intellectual has been taken up in post-colonial studies? Surely the conversion of the "ivory tower" or "city on the hill" to "the U.S. corporation" (Prashad, 333), and the redirection of an intellectualized American Studies to a proletarian university studies, relates to what Julian Benda, in his *Treason of the Intellectuals* (1928), described as a suicidal turn for the "intellectual." Benda observed the historic intellectual as an

“uninterrupted series of philosophers, men of religion, men of literature, artists, men of learning [...] whose influence, whose life, were in direct opposition to the realism of the multitudes” (44). A critical university studies on student-debt innately requires that Benda's prescribed "life of contemplation" become progressively temporal and universal. Yet while the academics of the ivory tower may widely relate internal politics in a meritable social gesture, it is at the risk of speaking for the masses through academic literature. In relation to Gramsci's tracing of the subaltern, the *faute de mieux*, through the historical novel, we are faced with further temptations to equate the voice of the people through academic publications. Academic publications are relatively funded by, comprised within, and produced for the university, compared to 'intellectual' histories. If there is going to be a colonial discourse centered around the globalizing, imperial American university, then the post-colonial criticism of the role of the intellectual has to be reconsidered, and in a fundamentally new way.

Within post-colonial discourse, the intelligentsia are the educated but not necessarily the academic. The post-colonial intellectual is a distinct role within the bourgeoisie, but with various classifications and vocations. Fanon elucidates the intellectual role as one among "the business elite and university graduates, who make up the most educated category of the new nation, are identifiable by the small numbers, their concentration in the capital, and their occupations as traders, landowners and professionals” (98). Formally educated, trained, or self-proclaimed bricoleur like Spivak, the intellectual is learned but need *not* work for academe, or be an academic. Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, also portrays the intellectual's tendency to become detached from the masses and often complicit in perpetuating colonization. Speaking of "the underdeveloped country," Fanon writes, "We will see, unfortunately, that the national bourgeoisie often turns away from this heroic and positive path, which is both productive and just, and unabashedly opts for the antinational, and therefore abhorrent, path of a conventional bourgeoisie, a bourgeois bourgeoisie that is dismally, inanely, and cynically bourgeois" (99). Even in the intellectual's complicity, the intellectual does not *definitively* exist within the colonizing institution, that is, the intellectual does not depend on the particular colonizing body for existence, nor does the colonizer *determinately* gain cultural and financial capital from the intellectual's discourse. It has been argued that a post-modern post-colonialism increasingly manufactures intellectuals through the university's social-constructs and discourse for mediators of commodification, as in Kwame Anthony Appiah's "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in

Postcolonial?" (1991), in regards to Africa. "Postcolonial intellectuals in Africa, by contrast, are almost entirely dependent for their support on two institutions: the African university, an institution whose intellectual life is overwhelmingly constituted as Western, and the Euro-American publisher and reader" (348). With the western ethos of intellectual specialization and accreditation, the history of the intellectual morphs into the historical place of the academic, and, in regards to the American academic, a unique position within student-debt culture. In other words, the conditions of a traditionally historical "intellectual" discourse are restructured within contemporary academic terms and conditions. A critical university studies can appropriate a post-colonial discourse, but the arriving aporias within the role of the academic, in contradistinction to the role of the intellectual, for example, should be put center-stage.

In Miranda Joseph's response to Marez, 'American Studies and the University of Debt' (2014), she acknowledges Marez's "explorations of the constitution of racial, gendered, and class subjectivities, identities, and hierarchies; and the transnational processes and relations in which the United States is situated" (283), and is interested in further labeling the American university as the face of "student debt," "university debt," "the university of debt," and as an ivory tower on a hill that "signal[s] a larger financial system in which the university itself is enmeshed" (283). She reiterates Marez's support for the Strike Debt movement and Pamela Brown's 'When Theory Meets Hearts: The Rolling Jubilee as a New Methodology for Debt Resistance,' but Joseph's article, and Marez's, seem to open an investigation upon all systemic workings of the university except for the representational role of the academic, nor the inherent problematizations of an academic's means of resistance through publication. Joseph lists Marez's central concerns, but exempts the specific role of the academic and their contingencies, "By 'American studies' [Marez] means a methodology that focuses on the making and circulation of meanings, through media, in the differential distributions of power and wealth," but Marez and Joseph do not directly address the media contained within academic publications containing criticism thereof, or any topoi of academic publishing. Marez "means those key concerns with racial, gender, and class formation in the context of transnational colonial and postcolonial processes, including or especially settler colonialism in what is now the United States" (285), and while it is implicit that the academic be a catalyst for a Critical University Studies, the endeavor simultaneously resists a system which enables such "studies." How the Borromean knot, consisting in the *academic*, the

university, and *publishing*, may be changed without each link reconfiguring itself is still a question which precedes us.

The call for change is seemingly unanimous. Joseph continues, "The work of those scholars, as well as that of Marez himself, requires us to pause long enough in our critique of the university as agent of domination through debt to recognize the university as a space of 'conflict and contestation'" (286). A critical university studies, in other words, must definitively embody crises within and exercised through the university, just as the academic rests on criticism – criticism as a struggle to sustain the transformative processes manifested by critical thinking. But how theory becomes practice is another question. There is hope that publications within CUS concerning student-debt can be a practice in and of itself, by "helping to organize collective dissent, to articulate relationships and galvanize collective dissent, through our use of critical American studies tools to develop, disseminate, and deploy *alternative accounts of who owes what to whom*" (Joseph 286). In developing, disseminating, and deploying research, what does the long "pause" in critically resisting (re-thinking) the university look like? Is it possible to both develop, disseminate and deploy symbolic resistance in criticism while simultaneously pausing? In other words, is formal academic publishing a form of "pausing long enough," and what forms of 'pausing' can be resistant without symbolization which invests in the university complex? Is either resistant resignification or a silent revolution possible within old or new forms of academic "work"?

Such a discursive crisis is portrayed in the adjacent article by Jodi Melamed, 'Dangerous Associations'. There Melamed rhetorically reveals the scholar embedded within a new American Studies, "In my response, I revisit 'Seeing in the Red: Looking at Student Debt' for the insights it yields into the complex strategical situation in which American studies–the field**,** *we scholars***,** the association–now finds itself" (289 italics added). Melamed speaks for much of the recent attacks on the American university's history, such as foundations to colonize the Native Americans, segregate race, marginalize women, accumulate land, support financial patrons, corporatize education, "and now it has become center and transit for the ongoing neoliberal debt economy, controlling dissent, and perpetuating old and new forms of settler colonialism" (290). However, in adopting Spivak's formulations of the "right to intellectual labor," where equality offers everyone the right to become a laborer in an intellectual capacity, Melamed paradoxically displays an American university with a trajectory increasingly unpromising and yet a hope "to

keep" what may not have existed. "For our purposes," she writes, "'the persistent production of the understanding of the right to intellectual labor' speaks to the never-ending struggle *to keep* the university open as an institutional location where critical–practical activity tending toward social democracy can happen, despite the university's alliance with state and capital" (291-292 italics added). The critical concept proposed here admits the academic's dependency upon the university as imagined, not as existent: the academic's insistent dependency upon an imagined body. We must struggle. "For Spivak," continues Melamed, "the formulation 'right to intellectual labor' is part of her effort to transcode the project of epistemological change at the center of Marx's *Capital*–if workers collectively learn they are the agents of production (when they stop, production stops), then a postcapitalist, socialist future might be allowed to happen–for contemporary times" (291). Therefore, if production through the laborer stops, and academic publishing is a mode of production, where is resistant discourse relocated? Again, Melamed is not addressing academic publishing, per se, yet the topic of academic publishing cannot be separated from academic production nor published arguments. Melamed correctly states that "it is the productive, pedagogical function of the university that should interest us most right now, that is, how the university, with the state and capital as its interlocutors, expands its capacities through adaptation" (294), yet cannot the university profit from its actively publishing academics, even if the subject is the university itself? The academic voice beckons to its place of residence. In other words, if the American university continues to "adapt" in order to ensure its maturation as a globalizing empire, must not the academic adapt as quickly; but in what way?

The uncanny initiative to "transcode the project of epistemological change" within the imperial university is one involving the academic role as well. In *Homo Academicus*, Bourdieu introduces us to the self-irony which I believe the American academic must historically undertake:

> Indeed, for the researcher anxious to know what he is doing, the code changes from an instrument of analysis to an object of analysis: the objectified product of the work of codification becomes, under his self-reflexive gaze, the immediately readable trace of the operation of construction of the object, the grid which has been mapped out to construct the datum, the more or less coherent system of

> categories of perception which have produced the object of scientific analysis, in this particular case, the world of 'important academics' and their properties. (7-8)

If the Americanization of the university is arguably the most powerful discursive and financial schema for globalization, and operates upon student-debt, then the Americanized academic finds themselves in an unprecedented position, a position perhaps at a more crucial junction than that of Bourdieu's subjects of '68. Such an academic must be careful not to exercise what is only too natural to exercise. "To understand in this case," continues Bourdieu, "is difficult only because we understand far too well, in a manner of speaking, and because we do not wish to see or know what it is we understand" (35). What is it that we know? Is it not what Judith Butler personifies in *The Psychic Life of Power*, that in "the condition of becoming a subject, subordination implies being in a mandatory submission. Moreover, the desire to survive, 'to be,' is a pervasively exploitable desire. The one who holds out the promise of continued existence plays to the desire to survive" (7). For, unlike the post-colonial intellectual, the academic depends on the university for its income, *habitus*, mode of being, for its identity. When faced with the option of complete refusal and non-acceptance of the master's symbolic call, the subject must pay homage; one's existence rides on it. "'I would rather exist in subordination than not exist' is on formulation of this predicament (where the risk of 'death' is also possible)," writes Butler (*ibid*). Butler expands Althusser's concept of *interpellation* (identity formation is subject to the call of authority, albeit resistant) and she employs 'the call' to a resistant discourse within gender politics, but Butler's argument, I find, provides exemplary reapplication for an Althusserian context – the formation of the academic within university discourse. Hardly anywhere is an identity so dependent on the language of the Other. Resonating with Bourdieu's exhortation, that the academic cannot liberally see itself as a clear object of analysis, Butler explains the logic of subjectivation through authoritative discourse and the required blind-spots in the subject's observations of its own formation: "The child does not know to what he/she attaches; yet the infant as well as the child must attach in order to persist in and as itself. No subject can emerge without this attachment, formed in dependency, but no subject, in the course of its formation, can ever afford fully to 'see' it. This attachment in its primary forms must both *come to be* and *be denied*, its coming to be must consist in its partial denial, for the subject to emerge" (8).

The university forms the academic, and university constraints are vital for academic freedom. In *Out of Bounds: Academic Freedom and the Question of Palestine* (2014), Matthew Abraham relies on Butler's 'Academic Norms, Contemporary Challenges' (2006) to portray the paradoxical dependency that academic freedom (i.e. criticism) has with the *discipline* that narrows it. "As Butler explains, disciplinary norms themselves were at one time dissenting perspectives, perspectives that became norms as disciplinary practitioners came around to adopting them. Butler encourages us to think about how norms change, evolve, and adapt to historical, social, political, and institutional preferences in response to changing external conditions that are more often than not exercises of political power" (11). Robert Post, Dean of Yale Law School, speaks from a legal standpoint and states that academic freedom must be first situated in a "discipline within a recognized body of knowledge" in order to "derive the benefits of academic freedom" (Abraham 10). Post portrays academic work, its subject or nature, as contingent upon its strict discipline, or the institution which supports, forms, and defines it. Butler continues her enterprise of adhering to the call, appropriating the authoritative discourse, and working within the symbolic order to change it, however slowly. "As faculty member," writes Butler, "we are constrained to be free, and in the exercise of our freedom, we continue to operate within the constraints that made our freedom possible in the first place" ('Academic Norms' 107). Butler responded to this earlier debate in the more recent "Critique, Dissent, and Discinplinarity" (2009) in *Critical Inquiry*. Addressing specifically the controversy over how disciplinary limits define freedom and conditional premises enable questions, she walks through this unconcluded aporia from Kant, Foucault, Derrida, and finally Arendt. Without addressing the form of her argument, she offers her formal thoughts on the philosophic tradition in contemporary, interdisciplinary times, and concludes with the notion, "Perhaps another kind of inquiry would be needed to know what precisely fuels efforts to circumscribe the speakable and the thinkable through means that compromise the very democratic values in whose name this censorship is performed and that ally modes of thinking with the kinds of viewpoints that uncritically adhere to governmental policy" (795). Yet cannot the academic's published discourse be an objective trace in observing how the university industry inscribes, circumscribes, and capitalizes on the democratic speakability, and do so quite uncritically? And so Abraham's disturbed synopsis over the acute paradox of this discourse lingers, but more so over the thought of inaction. He concludes, "The contemporary debate about academic freedom revolves around

these two distinct conceptualizations of academic freedom: first, as a right of the individual researcher; second, as a right that inheres within the university as an instruction and the academic profession as a corporate body. These two conceptions are in direct tension with one another" (12). Suniana Maira and Piya Chatterjee, in *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent* (2014) summarize Butler and Post's position here, "that academic freedom should not be rooted in 'individual freedom' or simply in First Amendment rights of freedom," for "these professional constraints are contingent and contested, not fixed" (38); offering hope from within the system, but they duly ask:

> But the question remains, is scholarly dissent simply the other face of the coin of academic repression–that is, are expressions of protest doomed to be incorporated into the imperial cartographies they resist or [is] it possible for them to create alternative mappings that resist recuperation? The chapters in this book allude to this enduring dilemma about resistance from within, directly and indirectly... (20)

The Imperial University harbors ranging topics to confront this question, such as academic or student victimization, but none directly tackles how the academic may be complicit; if the academic can create preferred change by adopting norms, then why is criticism pointing askew? How is the latent form of criticism (i.e. academic publishing) situated within such resistance? Maira and Chatterjee do address such latent forms in an interview about their book.[9] Chatterjee is asked, "What strategies would you pose for confronting the Imperial University?" and she replies, "We should all be re-reading Fanon, especially his critique of nationalist intellectuals." She mentions the central importance of revisiting the role of the intellectual in passing, but I suggest that a re-reading be revised for au courant paradoxes of the late academic role within universities.

After Maira's praise of the "very small group of scholars [who] organized a boycott campaign in the American Studies Association that shook up the imperial university and became an issue of national and global concern," Maira and Chatterjee remind us that there are options other than going about business as "normal." Through close friends at UC Riverside, Chatterjee "learned a lot, again, about what really goes on in the university: who is disposable, who is not–and the incredible ruthlessness with which even the most 'liberal' or 'radical' administrators

(some former professors with liberal-left credentials) will exercise human beings for their bottom line, their 'new normal.' This is a horrible but telling phrase, one that justifies neoliberal corporate violence." It is a violence now inflicted upon generations of students: a globalizing business model on student-debt. By avoiding what is "normal" practice and normal discourse, Maira stipulates that the academics who made the boycott and the declaration of CUS "possible did not resemble the new models of 'engaged scholarship' that are being promoted and funded by the imperial university." Rather, joins Chatterjee, "I think it is much more important to go 'off radar.'" Going "off radar" here means a resistant academic discourse that does not schematically align with conventional registers for academic production. It takes the form of back-channeling and alternative publishing, which have been undertaken in recent years with an increasing frequency. What the platform of CUS and the ASA publications represent, in other words, are the *hidden transcripts*[10] wherein resistance festers. The publication of such shows the face of solidarity, but, as Maira and Chatterjee impose, it should deliberately come in the form of a "new model."

Laura Pulido, for example, whose chapter 'Faculty Governance and the University of Southern California' is within *The Imperial University*, had previously posted on her personal blog the 'Memorandum' by Professor Jane Junn: 'Faculty Governance Report about Tenure at USC' (2012). Pulido's blog includes the prefatory note, "Being a professor at USC certainly has its perks, but working in an institution dedicated to meaningful shared governance is not one of them. On this blog I will document some of the ongoing struggles that USC faculty encounter as well as post documents that may be of interest to USC faculty (and others)." It seems the blog consists only in presenting Junn's "Memorandum," which was a concise memo stating previously closeted data from USC's administration. Junn's memo finds that "Ninety-two percent of white male faculty were awarded tenure at USC"; "Fifty-five percent of female and minority faculty were awarded tenure at USC"; "White junior faculty are awarded tenure at a higher rate than minority junior faculty"; "Asian American female faculty are awarded tenure at a lower rate than white female faculty"; "Data on comparative tenure rates between minority and white faculty in Social Sciences and Humanities at USC College show a different pattern from information published by USC." Criticism of governance also delimits 'academic freedom' within student-debt corporatism. Junn's publicly shared 'Memorandum' and Pulido's blog certainly exhibit "new models" of publishing "off radar."

A contemporary juncture is how the academic can symbolically resist condoning student-debt culture (e.g. neoliberalism, corporatism, inequality) or how the academic can symbolically resist capitalizing on student-debt (culturally, vocationally, or financially) when academic publishing is central to the role of the academic. In this case, discourse is still the kernel of the academic "dilemma," as Maira and Chatterjee call it, perhaps imperceptibly, sequentially, or increasingly so. Kendall A. King, in 'Academic Publishing, Globalization, and (In)equality' (2010) writes, "Indeed, the publishing of an international academic journal presents fertile ground for examining challenges associated with globalization and, more specifically, with inequalities in representation, access, and labor" (652). And "in recent years," writes Altbach and Rapple,[11] in 'Anarchy and Commercialism' (2012), "scholars worldwide have found themselves under increasing pressure to publish more, especially in English-language 'internationally circulated' journals that are included in globally respected indexes such as the ISI Citations." The global demand for publications and the overwhelming proliferation in selected journals has resulted in acceptance rates often less than 10 percent. "Universities increasingly demand more publications for promotion, salary increases, or even job security. Further, the pressure has increased to publish in English-language journals, even for scholars in non-English medium academic environments. Far too many academic institutions — a large majority of ones that mainly focus on teaching — insist that their faculty members publish" (Altbach & Rapple). The institutional insistence is known all too well, as an identifying trait for the role of the academic, but the waxing pressure to publish alongside the growing student-debt topos behooves one to uniquely consider form.

The forms of resistant academic publishing are changing, and as much debate ensues over the cost-benefit analysis for Open Access publishing, "clever people have understood that new technology has created confusion as well as opportunities and that money can be made in the knowledge communication business" (*ibid*). Although Open Access journals, who do not require readers to pay or have affiliation, potentially appease much of the contractually debilitating costs for publication subscriptions (e.g. Elsevier, Pearson, American Chemical Society, Proquest), there nevertheless lies a significant number, of what Altbach calls "bottom feeders," who have started online journals to appeal to academic publishing demands "with the sole goal of earning a quick profit and enriching their owners." Due to its free viewership, articles in Open Access journals have a higher percentage of being viewed and cited, with a quicker publication rate

which also appeals to high frequency publishing, but often such benefits come at a financial and professional cost, as writer fees can be required ranging from $50 to $500 (*ibid*), and the relatively low-quality of such journals can present credible risk. It seems that "A 21st-century paradox is that while it is ever more difficult to get published in a top-tier journal, it is now easier than ever to get published" (*ibid*). However, "many scholarly organizations and universities have created new open-access journals that are reliably peer-reviewed and are backed by respected scholars. There are over 7,000 free, quality-controlled scholarly journals in the Directory of Open Access Journals. Some of these publications have achieved a high level of respectability and acceptance, while, admittedly, others are struggling, and there are no doubt some that are of poor quality and little relevance" (*ibid*). The "open-access movement" is still young, and the movement's problems of form and content already exist. One such dilemma is that an increase in publication rates encourages the university to increase expectations for an academic's publication record. "Their administrators believe," continues Altbach and Rapple, "this will improve their institutions' rankings. Of course, publishers step in to create new journals, which publish these frequently mediocre research articles. Moreover, instead of publishing all their research results in one article, too many authors stretch them out to multiple articles or write repetitively just to increase their publications." If the academic were to resist the student-debt culture by publishing in what Chatterjee and Maira describe as media that does "not resemble the new models of 'engaged scholarship'," then the academic may still find little choice in avoiding the university industry. Altbach offers several recommendations for improving the academic publishing industry, such as more qualitative assessments by university boards and less quantitative, but he nevertheless concludes, "It is undeniable that presently technology and globalization have brought anarchy to the communication of knowledge in academe and have created serious problems for the academic profession, in a time of increased competition. A meaningful solution will take much dialogue and probably significant changes to how scholarship is diffused, as well as rewarded."

The academic is identified by their publications and their university, and so the significant changes to the publication industry, a market constructed by the university industry, again places the academic in a discursive bind, which is exemplified most critically for criticism on the Americanization of student-debt. Gesticulations of solidarity can show face, and in

considering form as an extension of content, academic publishing on student-debt hopefully will not have to appear from student-debt.

Notes:

[1] "Federal Loan Profit", USA Today, 2013.

[2] Brendan Wellington, first runner-up in the 2007 Poetry Out-Loud Finals, and in the film 'Real Talk' (2011). His poem, "America in 4 Minutes" (2012) is performed at lybio.net.

[3] Strikedebt.org, "Principles."

[4] Trustart.org

[5] Charles Bernstein, "Loan refusal pledge faces mixed reactions from administration," The Daily Pennsylvanian, Dec 11, 2011.

[6] Charles Bernstein, Interview, "You Can't Evict an Idea: the poetics of Occupy Wall Street." Jacket2, Dec 8th, 2011.

[7] Jason H. Houle, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Dartmouth College.

[8] Marez is referring to Maira and Chatterjee's then forthcoming book *The Imperial University* (2014).

[9] http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/17695/new-texts-out-now_sunaina-maira-and-piya-chatterje

[10] referencing James Scott's *Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (1992).

[11] Phillip Altbach, Research Professor at Boston College, Director of the Center for International Higher Education (CIHE) and Editor of *Times Higher Education*; Brendan Rapple, Collection Development Librarian at Boston College and journalist.

Works Cited:

Abraham, Matthew. *Out of Bounds: Academic Freedom and the Question of Palestine*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2014. Print.

Altbach, Phillip and Rapple, Brendan. "Anarchy and Commercialism" Inside Higher Education. Washington D.C.: Inside Higher Ed, 2012. Web. 10 June 2014.

Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?". *Critical Inquiry* 17.2 (1991). 336-357. Article. JSTOR.

Benda, Julien. *The Treason of the Intellectuals*. New York: Transaction Publishers, 1928. Print.

Bernstein, Charles. *Recalculating*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. Print.

Bernstein, Charles. "You Can't Evict an Idea: the poetics of Occupy Wall Street: A Conversation Between Jane Malcolm and Charles Bernstein." *Jacket2*. Philadelphia: Kelly Writers House, 2011. Web. 20 July 2014.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Homo Academicus*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988. Print.

Bousquet, Marc. *How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation*. New York: New York University Press, 2008. Print.

Boyer, Stephen, ed. *Occupy Wall Street Poetry Anthology*. *n.p. n.d.*

Butler, Judith. "Academic Norms, Contemporary Challenges: A Reply to Robert Post on Academic Freedom." *Academic Freedom After September 11*. Cambridge: Zone Books, 2006. Print.

Butler, Judith. "Critique, Dissent, Disciplinarity." *Critical Inquiry* 35.4 (2009). 773-795. Article. Jstor.

Butler, Judith. *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997. Print.

Collinge, Alan Michael. *The Student Loan Scam: The Most Oppressive Debt in U.S. History–and How We Can Fight Back*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2009. Print.

"Principles of Solidarity." *Strike Debt*. 2014. Web. 14 June 2014.

"DebtFair." Trust Art. 2013. Web. 14 June 2014.

Dowd, Alicia C. "Dynamic Interactions and Intersubjectivity: Challenges to Causal Modeling in Studies of Student Debt." *Review of Educational Research* 78.2 (2008). 232-259. Article.

Finkel, Rachel. "Loan refusal pledge faces mixed reactions from administration." *The Daily Pennsylvanian*. 2011. Web. 20 July 2014.

Fanon, Franz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove/Atlantic Inc., 2007. Print.

Houle, Jason H. "Disparencies in Debt-Parents' Socioeconomic Resources and Young Adult Student Loan Debt." *Sociology of Education* 87.1. (2014): 53-69. Article.

Houle's "A Generation Indebted': Young Adult Debt Across Three Cohorts'. *Social Problems* 61.3 (2014): 448-465. Article.

Jesse, David. "Government Books $41.3 Billion in Student Loan Profits." USA Today. 2013. Web. 13 June 2014.

Joseph, Mirenda. "American Studies and the University of Debt." American Quarterly 66.2 (2014). 283-287. Article.

Junn, Jane. "Memorandum: Analysis of data on tenure at USC Dornsife." n.p. 19 Oct. 2012. Web. 19 July 2014.

King, Kendall A. "Academic Publishing, Globalization, and (In)equality." The Modern Language Journal 94.4 (2010). 652-654. Article.

Lakoff, Sanford. *Max Lerner: Pilgrim in the Promised Land*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. Print.

"Tuition and Fee and Room and Board Charges over Time, 1973-74 through 2013-14, Selected Years." Trends in Higher Education. The College Board. 2014. Web. 21 Sept. 2014.

Maira, Sunaina and Chatterjee, Piya."New Texts Out Now: Sunaina Maira and Piya Chatterjee, The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent." Jadaliyya. Arab Studies Institutue, 2014. Web. 21 May 2014.

Maira, Suniana and Chatterjee, Piya. *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014. Print.

Marez, Curtis. "Seeing in the Red: Looking at Student Debt." *American Quarterly* 66.2 (2014). 261-281. Article.

Melamed, Jodi. "Dangerous Associations." *American Quarterly* 66.2 (2014). 289-300. Article.

Post, Robert. "The Structure of Academic Freedom." *Academic Freedom After September 11*. Cambridge: Zone Books, 2006. Print.

Prashad, Vijay. "Teaching by Candlelight." *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014. Print.

Pulido, Laura. "Faculty Governance and the University of Southern California." *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014. Print.

Pulido. Laura. "Tenure and Faculty Governance at USC." Laura Pulido: Exploring the racial processes that shape place and how place informs race. 2013. Web. 19 July 2014.

Scott, James. *Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcript*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992. Print.

Williams, Jeffrey. "Teachings of Student Debt." *Student Financing of Higher Education: A comparative perspective*. New York: Routledge, 2013. Print.

Williams, Jeffrey. "The Pedagogy of Debt." *College Literature* 33.4 (2006). 155-169. Article.