



AAUP JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM

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## Academic Freedom from Below: Toward an Adjunct-Centered Struggle

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In most discussions of academic freedom, tenure-track employment figures either implicitly or explicitly as the normative model of academic work. When contingent faculty are taken into account, it is usually to discuss how the proliferation of adjuncts negatively affects academic freedom overall, or to lament the extraordinary lack of protections and vulnerability to pressures for conformity that result in adjuncts having considerably less academic freedom than their colleagues with tenure. In contrast, this essay affirms that today the adjunct reality is the new norm,<sup>1</sup> and that reframing conceptions of academic freedom to reflect this reality is key to any strategy to defend and expand this freedom. What we hope to offer here, however, goes beyond a litany of the fears and restrictions under which adjuncts labor, or an enumeration of the ways increasing reliance on adjuncts undermines the freedoms of the entire academy, for our contrapuntal analysis considers the various important strengths that adjuncts bring to the fight for academic freedom. In a world where contingent faculty now comprise the majority of college and university teachers, effectively defending academic freedom requires that we locate and amplify the strengths specific to this large group.

In advocating for this effort, we acknowledge that, despite vigorous and rising activism among contingent faculty—work that has spawned such advocacy organizations as the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor (COCAL) and the New Faculty Majority<sup>2</sup>—academic freedom has so far ranked low on the list of vocally pursued adjunct concerns. This is not surprising, given the pressing economic and labor issues contingent faculty face daily. Adjuncts have had more immediate issues to address than the impact of their status on academic freedom, even as tenured and tenure-track faculty have largely failed even to acknowledge the magnitude of the problem. This article, then, calls on both faculty groups to prioritize the threat posed to academic freedom by the reality of a majority-adjunct academy.

We should open our brief description of the consequences of the academic unfreedom of non-tenure-track faculty with a few definitions and statistics. Although in this article we refer most frequently to “adjunct” faculty, the salient features of adjuncts’ working conditions tend to apply to contingent faculty in general. Despite differences and particularities, the inherent insecurity of contingent appointments makes for a foundational similarity across categories.

All observers agree that the numbers of contingent faculty are massive and growing, although data collection problems and a variety of methods yield slightly varied statistics; for instance, the category of “teachers” in institutions of higher education includes teaching assistants, who may not be included in statistics labeled “faculty.” Reflecting the lack of institutional attention to contingent faculty issues, the June 2012 report of the Coalition on the Academic Workforce relies on data from the US Department of Education’s 2009 Fall Staff Survey as the most recent and best available information on the prevalence of contingent labor, as does the AAUP’s 2013 report on contingent faculty and governance. According to these data, of all teachers in degree-granting two- and four-year institutions of higher education in the United States, 75.5 percent were employed in contingent positions off the tenure track. This category of “contingent” includes part-time or adjunct faculty members, full-time non-tenure-track faculty members, and graduate student teaching assistants.<sup>3</sup>

Part-time or adjunct faculty are by far the largest subset of all higher education faculty and constitute a strong majority (70%) of contingent faculty,<sup>4</sup> forming roughly half of college and university faculty and 40 percent of all teachers (the category that includes teaching assistants) employed in higher education. In this article, we have chosen to focus on adjuncts as the clearly dominant contingent category, while bearing in mind that the contingent faculty who together make up three-quarters of the overall professoriate typically labor under roughly shared conditions of precarity. We have chosen to foreground adjuncts among the contingent faculty not only because of their numbers but also because adjuncts, we argue, serve as the default contingent category. Contingent full-time faculty frequently emerge from among part-time teachers and return to their ranks again, once their appointments have run their course, while teaching assistants' positions are time-limited by definition. The staggering statistics reflecting the rise and expansion of precarious academic labor, considered in light of the vulnerability endemic to this employment category, raise haunting questions about the academy and its cherished principles and, perhaps, cherished myths. Those questions come into sharper focus as we take a closer look at the implications of the new adjunct norm for the range of ways academic freedom is typically described.

From a perspective that views academic freedom as the sum of the freedoms of individual faculty members, we may ask: if three-quarters of higher education faculty today are contingent, is it meaningful any longer to talk of academic freedom as a ruling principle in higher education? Or is it incumbent on us to consider that the conditions and constraints which are the constant context of this great majority of academics *are the new reality* of higher education? Rather than framing our battle as the defense of some regnant, if threatened, standard of unfettered intellectual activity, perhaps we would do better to frame our struggle as one to *establish* academic freedom for that large proportion of scholars and teachers for whom it can scarcely be said to exist.

We would do well, however, to temper this individual-based approach with a more expansive view, given that, as Benjamin Johnson has eloquently argued, "free speech is not only

an attribute attached to individual academics (or anybody else), but rather necessary to make teaching and research actually serve a purpose beyond the gratification or advancement of whoever's performing it."<sup>5</sup> If we conceive of academic freedom not merely as the ability of each faculty member to teach, research, and publish fearlessly but also as the collective freedom enjoyed by the faculty bodies charged with guiding the pedagogical and intellectual life of educational institutions, what becomes of that freedom if the vast majority of faculty members cannot exercise their collective functions without fearing employer retribution and in fact all too frequently find themselves excluded from participation in the normal structures of governance? How will such divided and largely disenfranchised bodies manage to set appropriate standards of pedagogy and scholarship, to formulate the general goals and purposes of higher education in terms specific to given institutions, and to make the fearless and imaginative decisions about matters including hiring, program design, and pedagogy that will surely be required to realize those ends?<sup>6</sup> We can approach our task realistically only when we begin to frame it in terms of *establishing* the freedom of the *entire* faculty to govern academics matters.

Finally, if we define academic freedom as including not only the traditional triad of freedom in the classroom, in research, and in governance but also the freedom of so-called extramural speech—the right and responsibility of knowledge workers to speak freely, and on occasion dissentingly, in the public forum, on issues of importance to all citizens<sup>7</sup>—can we really say that most faculty members have that right or freedom? When most of them risk forfeiting renewal of their teaching contracts if they dare to advise a group of student activists or speak critically about the university administration to an inquiring journalist, it seems that we are not so much preserving as endeavoring to *establish* the right of academics to act as public intellectuals.

In short, at a time when contingent (or as one author devastatingly and accurately calls them, “disposable”)<sup>8</sup> academic laborers form the overwhelming majority of faculty members, discussions of academic freedom need to take the adjunct reality of unfreedom as the *baseline reality* of academia. Additionally, without academic freedom in the classroom or in research for the multitude of individual adjuncts and other contingent faculty, there can also be no powerful

academic community or unified academic voice.<sup>9</sup> To effectively grapple with these dangers and advocate for meaningful academic freedom, discussions of the topic will need to engage concretely with the bitter truth that the contingent status of a majority of faculty now constitutes the only realistic point of departure.<sup>10</sup>

As an aside, we would like to acknowledge two dynamics of academic transformation, each of which merits a level of detailed analysis that we have not attempted here. Not coincidentally, both are directly linked to the push for expanding use of contingent faculty, and both raise pivotal issues concerning academic freedom.

The first of these is for-profit higher education, a powerful and growing area of academia that brings the process of marketization to its logical conclusion. Just about every feature of organizational transformation that threatens academic freedom is exaggerated to its extreme in the profit-driven landscape, including the use of an essentially one-hundred-percent contingent faculty in for-profit universities.<sup>11</sup> When we consider the trend toward an ever more contingent faculty in nonprofit institutions in light of a total picture that includes schools run to make a profit, we can more clearly identify the proliferation of adjunct employment as reflecting a deliberate effort to make higher education conform to a corporate business model.

A second key development that we can mention only in passing is the proliferation of online education schemes. Online instruction is clearly linked, though not limited, to the expansion of both stand-alone for-profit institutions and the for-profit spin-offs that many private institutions are undertaking.<sup>12</sup> With an almost franchise-like model of prefabricated syllabi, “content-delivering” faculty, intellectual standardization, and electronic surveillance, this model at its worst epitomizes a corporate approach to higher education and, not surprisingly, appears to rely heavily on contingent faculty labor. (We are not aware of any formally compiled statistics on contingent faculty and online courses other than the US Senate report cited in note 11.)<sup>13</sup> We are left with three stark alternatives: to simply give up, to mount a cynical rearguard action in defense of the remaining elite tenured jobs, or to confront the conditions faced by the contingent majority, drawing insights and energy from their ranks. What might those adjuncts say? What

can they contribute? Speaking as two members of the academic precariat, we offer the following five propositions in hopes that others will be inspired to step forward as well.

*First of all, faculty members who have directly experienced the consequences of exclusion from tenure-track employment often understand with crystal clarity that the traditional model is not coming back—an understanding without which, we argue, there will be no real push for meaningful alternatives.* Appeals to restore the tenure system to a status sufficiently robust to underwrite guarantees of academic freedom for all are every bit as unlikely to succeed as ringing calls for corporations to repatriate offshored jobs and revert to Fordist compensation structures as a means of rebuilding America's industrial job base.

In other words, contemporary academic reality has everything to do with globalization, understood not merely as the movement of people and employment across national borders but primarily as the concrete manifestation of a neoliberal ideology that has colonized the education field with its shrill and ubiquitous demands for flexibility, efficiency, instrumentality, marketability, and customer satisfaction. "Globalization" is not just about US students wanting to study Mandarin, or about NYU opening a campus in Abu Dhabi. "Globalization" is the rationale, the discursive disciplining mechanism, for a curriculum that is all about credentials in a context in which creative thought is understood to be a frill. "Globalization" is why the faculty will not be heard when we object to this approach to education. How dare we prioritize anything other than our students' chances of success in a ruthless international job market? "Globalization" is how transnational capital is transforming education to abolish the temporary autonomous zones of the knowledge economy in favor of a certification industry.<sup>14</sup> Above all, this ideology *disciplines*, shrinking the horizons of students, teachers, and administrators alike with a relentless logic that, once its premises are accepted, implicitly justifies the vanishing freedoms and debilitating economic insecurity experienced throughout academia.

The most powerful international financial institutions have taken an active role in promoting this shrinkage. In a 2002 article, Les Levidow discusses the roles of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the European Union, and

others in a campaign to restructure (or, as he names it, “marketize”) higher education.<sup>15</sup> Here is a selection from a 1998 World Bank report on higher education that lays out an agenda in stark terms:

Radical change, or restructuring, of an institution of higher education means either fewer and/or different faculty, professional staff, and support workers. This means lay-offs, forced early retirements, or major retraining and reassignment, as in: the closure of inefficient or ineffective institutions; the merger of quality institutions that merely lack a critical mass of operations to make them cost-effective; and the radical alteration of the mission and production function of an institution—which means radically altering who the faculty are, how they behave, the way they are organized, and the way they work and are compensated.<sup>16</sup>

In other words, in 1998 the World Bank framed teachers and tenure as the obstacles to the globalization of higher education, and it would surely seem that creating a precarious faculty could be seen as a perfect solution. The probability that professors, pitting themselves against the likes of the World Bank, might now be able to rewind academic reality to a premarketized state seems vanishingly small. As a complement to the economic motives that we have argued are driving the move toward an increasingly regimented, adjunct-dependent academy, we should also consider political motives. In their introduction to *Steal This University*, Benjamin Johnson, Patrick Kavanagh, and Kevin Mattson note that a century ago, before the G.I. Bill or the civil rights movement, the professoriate exhibited a quite different sociological profile in race, class, and gender than it has in recent decades. Those professors of yore were trusted to govern both themselves and the process and content of higher education. Now, however, given at least some level of continuous academic dissent since the 1960s, the professoriate continues to be painted as “tenured radicals.” Add this perceived political unreliability of academics to a view of higher education as a potential profit center and pesky and demanding tenured faculty are doubly disfavored.<sup>17</sup> Once dethroned, a costly and unruly tenured faculty will be hard pressed to secure its own restoration.

Given this discouraging picture, it might be tempting to conclude that, from an adjunct's point of view, the tattered remnants of the tenure system are hardly worth defending. However, while we do argue below that some aspects of that system are toxic, we also must recognize that without the model of what Cary Nelson calls "the anchor institutions enjoying tenure,"<sup>18</sup> the situation of even the most precarious academic workers can only get worse, absent a level of sophisticated organization and capacity for concerted action that thus far elude us. Although the traditional model of tenure is not coming back, it *has* offered some seawalls to protect against the worst effects of onrushing academic corporatization. Despite the bad faith of tenured faculty who have opposed unionization by adjuncts and teaching assistants, or who have supported the exclusion of part-timers from governance mechanisms, tenure-track faculty are not at the root of our problems, and in fact they can sometimes be allies. Tenure as we know it does afford both real protections for some level of academic endeavor and a very important symbolic foothold for the principle that life in the academy needs to be guided by values created and refined from within the scholarly and intellectual-activist communities themselves, rather than being dictated by private sector hiring needs, bureaucratic imperatives handed down by administrators, or market research into the consumer preferences of students and parents.

Tenure *as it could be* might afford very real protections as well. The AAUP's recommendation of how tenure should be institutionalized, as outlined in the 2009 report *Contingent Appointments and the Academic Profession*, diverges radically from the reality of the extant tenure-track system.<sup>19</sup> In this document, the AAUP states, "it is important to note that tenure can be granted at any professional rank (or without rank); the Association does not link tenure with a particular faculty status."<sup>20</sup> Yet the AAUP report *Tenure and Teaching Intensive Appointments* also notes, "At some institutions, however, particularly at large research universities, the tenure system has already been warped to the purpose of creating a multitier faculty."<sup>21</sup> Our own experiences have only confirmed to us that tenure is widely viewed as a "brass ring" to be grabbed, in the words of one adjunct at a recent conference of contingent



faculty. It is true that a variety of colleges and universities have made attempts to embrace tenure-like arrangements for their adjuncts, while continuing to employ contingent faculty.<sup>22</sup> Such efforts, however, have made no dent in the wider trend toward ever larger numbers of adjuncts, ever more unstable employment, and the dismantling of tenure. Reckoning with the reality that the Golden Age of tenure is gone for good means that we adjunct faculty need to become more conscious of our own central role in the struggle for academic freedom, while insisting on more than token inclusion in the conversations and strategies of full-time faculty of goodwill.

*As our second proposition, we argue that, in addition to understanding the realities of the faded Age of Tenure, the champions of academic freedom must engage in a more vigorous, systematic study of the new contingent reality they seek to affect.* The diverse pressures that hamper the freedom of adjuncts and other contingent faculty have been acknowledged in principle, but they have not been adequately researched. If we believe that the adjunct reality is the new norm, do we not need to investigate and describe, rather than merely speculate about, this unfree reality, as a step toward changing it? Engaging in such description opens the door to insights that might form the basis for practical solutions to specific problems like the tyranny of student evaluations or the prefabricated nature of much online instruction; even more important, it can help render the intellectually constrained experience of contingency more “real” to contingent faculty themselves.<sup>23</sup> And by making the scope, variety, and ubiquity of constraints more visible to all, such research can make vivid the need to resist and refute the discourses of flexibility, efficiency, and market orientation currently being used to legitimate the rapid erosion of academic freedom.

The moment seems ripe for anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s “thick description”: an analysis of the adjunct experience that would attempt to do for the degradation of academic labor what historians have done for the degradation of the skilled trades by parsing the erosion of workers’ control over the labor process, turning “artisans into workers,” as the title of a book by Bruce Laurie has it.<sup>24</sup> Although adjuncts are as eager as any constituency for solutions, we are far from

being situated to offer developed plans given the paucity of the kinds of surveys and information gathering that could allow contingent faculty members to express the qualitative conditions of their intellectual life. Not only must we research what real constraints on freedom exist, but we must tap into the hidden subversions that contingent faculty have developed: the electronic exchanges with other faculty and students away from Learning Management Systems or off-campus e-mail accounts, the course material not listed on syllabi, the selective enforcement of dictated grading or attendance policies, the extra credit assignments not listed, the choice of which institution to use as a platform for what activity. Only such depictions can give us a real understanding of the constraints on freedom that exist, and therefore of what must be done to loosen them.

Such an analysis of adjuncts' reality is all the more relevant given that, in many ways, adjuncts merely experience with particular intensity the constraints on academic freedom that are increasingly endured by everyone in the academy.<sup>25</sup> Some authors observe that even tenured faculty fairly often lose their jobs, whether in response to their unpopular views or actions or thanks to austerity measures that have the effect of permanently shrinking the tenure-protected group.<sup>26</sup> Others note the high cost of restraints on creative thinking built into the respectable, suitably "rigorous" scholarship typically required of individuals seeking admission to the precincts of the tenured.<sup>27</sup> The relative paucity of critically *activist* scholarship reflects the embrace of these blinkered definitions of academic freedom, in which knowledge that does not rock the boat is seen to be more worthy of the academy's protections than is critical or politically dissident work.<sup>28</sup> The constraints that adjuncts experience are in many ways also the constraints of all knowledge workers in a capitalist, consumer society, a point we will return to later.

As we argue below, an unknown but significant proportion of adjuncts end up in their contingent jobs at least partly because they have consciously rejected the intellectual conformity and political quiescence too often imposed by the tenure system. But for those of us who became adjuncts not through any qualms about the standard academic trajectory but because

there are fewer and fewer opportunities for tenure-track employment and ever higher bars set for these positions, our experiences suggest that the limited liberties of a few highly privileged professors are *predicated* on the material exploitation and intellectual marginalization of the many. A detailed portrait of the structural conditions underpinning this lived experience will greatly assist organizing and agitation for systemic academic equality, both by bolstering ethical and pragmatic arguments for change and by helping to shift the psychology of contingent faculty toward an understanding of our condition as an exploited majority.<sup>29</sup> We are among those for whom a libertarian idea of freedom, or in Isaiah Berlin's formulation, "freedom to" appropriate resources, voice, and power for the small elite, prevents "freedom from" exploitation, persecution, and fear.

*Thus, our third proposition from an adjunct vantage point is that academic freedom for all cannot exist alongside the levels of class stratification found in academia today; our fight therefore entails a campaign for serious structural change.* While adjuncts are far from being in a position to offer a road map to transformation, we do bring the urgency — and often, the militancy — without which the more privileged strata of academia are unlikely to take on such a fight. In 2013, tenure-track employment, available only to one quarter of all faculty members, is not simply the rump end of the old tenure system; rather, it needs to be understood as a key prop in a radically reconfigured academic structure. As such, it serves to mask the radical erosion of academic freedom understood in terms of faculty control over academic programs. In other words, while offering what we have argued are meaningful symbolic protections, it also fosters the most invidious forms of academic competition and denies basic individual freedoms to the vast majority of teachers. Starkly divided, we — the totality of tenure-track and contingent faculty — are ripe for conquering.

The truth is that teaching requirements at the top of the faculty ladder have gone down in recent decades, and the most privileged faculty stratum actually significantly benefits from the expansion of contingent faculty, whose teaching loads make possible the free time for elite faculty to research, write, and create. In 2003, one-third of full-time faculty members did not

have teaching as a primary responsibility, creating what Benjamin Johnson refers to as a Brahmin faculty class directly built on the adjunct labor that subsidizes it.<sup>30</sup> The emerging divergence of interests between the top tier of faculty and adjuncts has even created an unpleasant string of incidents in which various famous “leftists” have threatened their unionizing teaching assistants and crossed the picket lines of unionized contingent teachers.<sup>31</sup> Faculty members who do support such organizing efforts sometimes suffer the consequences: Joel Westheimer, for example, has described how his support for a union for graduate students led directly to denial of his tenure.<sup>32</sup>

The flowering of this elite stratum, facilitated by changes such as the rising publication threshold for tenure review that makes fewer eligible for tenure,<sup>33</sup> overlaps with the proliferating star system under which a few high-profile academics command extraordinary salaries. Over the last twenty-five years, the salaries of full professors have increased by 60 percent in constant dollars,<sup>34</sup> to the 2012 level of an average of \$116,419,<sup>35</sup> while adjunct pay has plummeted to new depths: the Coalition on the Academic Workforce found in its recent survey that contingent faculty’s median pay for a three-credit course was \$2,700, or \$21,600 per year for a load of four courses a semester, without benefits.<sup>36</sup> If top-tier academic stars have the biggest structural incentive to indulge in denial of this reality, then the position of adjuncts invites clear-eyed assessment of the contradictions that make the present system truly untenable as a guarantor of academic freedom.<sup>37</sup>

As the AAUP has made clear repeatedly over the years, treating tenure and its protection of academic freedom as a scarce faculty reward—a “badge of merit” rather than a routine support for academic endeavor—endangers the academic freedom of the community as a whole. Yet such, increasingly, is the case. When tenure is dangled as a reward, faculty will modify their speech, scholarship, and activism in order to attain it, sabotaging its original purpose of encouraging free thought and expression. As the academic hierarchy becomes ever more sharply defined, having tenure or being on the tenure track has become the mark of the insider, the litmus test, the ticket to being taken seriously as an intellectual. Conversely, falling off the

tenure track is a fate to be dreaded—the scholar’s equivalent of being cast into outer darkness. Is there no academic freedom for contingent faculty? Well, they probably don’t have anything important to say, anyway. Such a sadly common view increasingly corrodes both the ideal of free speech as the underpinning of the academic commons and the faculty’s freedom to govern as a body. In a system of polarized faculty status and rewards, of an elite with tenure and an unwashed majority who will never have it, this view will only flourish.

So, we speak directly: Unfortunately, it is not simply that you, tenured person, enjoy a degree of freedom that I do not (but which might theoretically be extended to me); instead, your low teaching load and routine participation in the ritual remnants of shared governance are *afforded* through my exploitation and exclusion from the “normal” process. The structural constraints that may be, at best, theoretically visible to you are engraved on my psyche, my scholarship, and my daily teaching schedule.

The larger and communal meanings of academic freedom are equally threatened in this arrangement, which mirrors the extremes of the larger twenty-first-century social structure, formed and disciplined by a philosophy for which “the operation of a market or market-like structure is seen as an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide for all human action and substituting for all previously existing ethical beliefs.”<sup>38</sup> Administrations that do not want to relinquish managerial authority can easily afford a veneer of shared governance so long as only the fortunate fraction of the faculty whose full-time salaries include service work sit on committees and serve on faculty senates. If they actually had to reckon with the effective combined power and voice of the entire faculty, however, administrators would have to cede a good deal of real authority over academic matters.

Alongside a new openness on the part of those with tenure to study the adjunct experience for all it can reveal about the new academic norm, recentering the struggle for academic freedom on contingent faculty must include a broad-based willingness to look to adjuncts and other contingents for practical leadership. Despite a widespread assumption that the least secure faculty members have completely surrendered to a condition of intellectual,

scholarly, and pedagogical immiseration, adjuncts *are* fighting academic freedom battles every day, whether by introducing “subversive” content and opportunities for critical thinking into regimented basic and remedial courses; by using their tenuous foothold in underscrutinized corners of academia (think night schools or continuing education) to pursue forms of knowledge and engaged scholarship that may be devalued within more conservative and traditional academic hierarchies; or by organizing for union representation, with its promise not only of better compensation and a modicum of job security but the dignity of meeting tenure-track colleagues and administrators on somewhat more equal ground—a struggle in which we see the prerequisites of academic freedom reduced to their most basic components. All levels of faculty need each other in this fight for a faculty voice, but it must be joined on terms that take account of adjuncts’ vulnerabilities, insights, and practical contributions—terms that, in the daunting effort to abolish the current system of virulent class stratification in the academy, already enact a practical as well as principled rejection of that system.

*Our fourth proposition is that while adjunct union organizing efforts do not typically foreground academic freedom, they are about securing the stability and contractual protections that offer a minimal bulwark against total “flexibilization” and administrative whim, and that set the preconditions for academic freedom.* Such efforts underscore the fact that the ultimate stakes in struggles over academic freedom are faculty control over their own labor process, including research, creative and artistic work, pedagogy, and the planning and administrative functions involved in governance—aspects of the process that are too often artificially separated as part of an academic Taylorization. In the course of fighting for such basics as livable wages and due process in disciplinary proceedings, adjuncts typically acquire invaluable organizing experience and a refreshing willingness to challenge authority, both of which are sorely needed in faculty senates and other venues where the upper tier of faculty increasingly defer to administrators driven more by their business plans than by any academic goals. The serious erosion of academic freedom that has come with the vast expansion of contingent employment and its attendant abuses appears as the contemporary academic equivalent of the events in late

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eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century England described by E. P. Thompson in *The Making of the English Working Class*.<sup>39</sup> That era saw a sharp confrontation between formerly self-determined artisans proficient in a range of complex, interlinked operations and a brutal industrial system that not only had no use for the high skill levels and independent attitude of the individual producer but thrived by smashing both skill and dignity.

The twentieth-century continuation of this conflict as it unfolded in the United States was charted by Harry Braverman in his classic 1974 study *Labor and Monopoly Capital*.<sup>40</sup> From prefabricated online courses that are essentially merely proctored by adjuncts to papers assigned by professors in Virginia or Illinois and graded by employees of Edumetry thousands of miles away,<sup>41</sup> contingent knowledge workers currently are experiencing—and resisting—a version of the dynamic that Braverman so trenchantly described: “Having been forced to sell their labor power to another, the workers also surrender their interest in the labor process, which has now been ‘alienated.’ *The labor process has become the responsibility of the capitalist*”<sup>42</sup> (or, in the university setting, the responsibility of a corporate-style administrator: a “deanlet,” to borrow Benjamin Ginsberg’s catchy title for the low-level bosses of academia).<sup>43</sup> In a world where even the grading of papers is being outsourced, whether to graders scattered across the country, to readers in Bangalore, or to computers,<sup>44</sup> we adjuncts assert that labor struggles are keys to academic freedom, for they offer our only hope of regaining some control over the academic labor process.

Academics are not alone. The emphasis on direct profitability of a knowledge “product” that has shrunk the willingness of colleges and universities to support even full-time academics to do research (while adjuncts receive no research support at all) has similarly starved print journalists as their newspapers vanish. The employer-orientation required of primary and secondary teachers who are forced to “teach to the test” is echoed in the persistent idea of “holding higher education accountable” for value added with some kind of universal pre- and postdegree test of students. The worker surveillance and standardization inherent in managed health care protocols that speed up patient visits while relentlessly increasing the time spent on

paperwork are paralleled by the dumbed-down core curricula, rubrics, and euphemistically titled “learning management systems” that are sweeping through higher education and especially affect the online and general education classes taught disproportionately by adjuncts.<sup>45</sup>

As the above discussion shows, we have no wish to minimize the daunting implications of adjunct labor’s vulnerable status, not only for adjuncts themselves but for the institutions within which they labor, where the academic freedom of both students and tenured colleagues suffers real and grave harm.<sup>46</sup> However, we also believe that our call to put adjuncts at the center of an analysis of this topic mandates the development of an additional and complementary perspective. While acknowledging the pressures and diminishment of the contingent condition, we also maintain that the adjunct life, at least when it comes to the content of thought and scope for action (as opposed to matters of compensation, prestige, and authority, where the picture *is* dire), demands to be viewed as something more than a flattened, impoverished version of the normative experiences of the tenured professoriate.

The contradictory fact is that in many cases we adjuncts find aspects of our contingency to be intellectually liberating. There are many for whom the absence of a need to maintain standards of intellectual respectability (e.g., in reference to disciplinary expectations), not to mention the option of refusing to engage in the politics of departments, allows for adventurous research and pedagogy, freeing us from the pressure to hew to the latest intellectual trend that afflicts those who undertake the tenure trek.<sup>47</sup> Some adjuncts who crave this liberty end up in institutions with explicitly progressive or nontraditional profiles, schools like Antioch or Goddard, Naropa or the Evergreen State College, which have downplayed academic competition on philosophical grounds. Others hang out in the nooks and crannies of large public institutions, perhaps in specifically “progressive” programs such as the City University of New York’s Center for Worker Education, or perhaps in more mainstream locations where academic microclimates allow us scope for experimentation. Here, too, we must pursue the unglamorous task of data collection. Just what is it about these institutions and programs that



supports our intellectual life and pedagogical practice? How can these places serve as resources for a new design for academic freedom?

Often we teach the undervalued, underserved, and underprepared students disproportionately relegated to community colleges, remedial classes, and the less prestigious four-year schools and programs within large public institutions, where student populations are heavily working class, of color, and from immigrant backgrounds. This culturally marginalized constituency often provides sympathetic support for adjunct creativity, as the authors of two papers on a recent conference panel have argued.<sup>48</sup>

The “freedom” of such positions is rather like the freedom of the artist or poet—and in fact, many adjuncts, particularly in the enormous field of writing instruction, *are* artists, poets, and others whose intellectual proclivities do not lend themselves to disciplinary regularization. In short, many adjuncts have enjoyed some kinds of paradoxical freedom in return for our low compensation, lower status, and marginalization from academic decision making; if “freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose,” perhaps one need not grovel, or conform, to keep a job that is worth so little. This tradeoff sacrifices status, stability, and money but allows *some* income, the stimulation of interaction with interesting colleagues, and perhaps a far greater scope for creative scholarship and teaching. Making for a flawed and exploitative but intellectually enticing package, this route has often appealed to people whose radical politics or heterodox intellectual leanings may have caused them to avoid what historian John D’Emilio refers to as “the abyss of professionalism.”<sup>49</sup> The package is so seductive, in fact, that it is not uncommon for adjuncts to in effect support their teaching habit with day jobs of another nature entirely.

*Our fifth and final proposition, therefore, is that contingent faculty members have a unique perspective to offer, not only on what the academy is and how it shapes thought and action but also on how to find the reservoirs of intellectual and academic freedom in its shadowy corners. Our experiences will be pivotal to badly needed redefinitions of higher education’s purpose, leading to as yet unimagined structural innovations capable of reconnecting academic institutions both to the students they*

*purportedly serve and to the struggles of surrounding communities.* Making a virtue of necessity, we have figured out how to hack through the university's firewalls and are prepared to apply our skills not only for personal survival but to "steal the enlightenment for others," to use the formula proposed by Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, who continue: "Like the colonial police force recruited unwittingly from guerrilla neighborhoods, university labor may harbor refugees, fugitives, renegades, and castaways. . . . Maroon communities of composition teachers, mentorless graduate students, adjunct Marxist historians, out or queer management professors, state college ethnic studies departments, closed down film programs, visa-expired Yemeni student newspaper editors, historically black college sociologists, and feminist engineers."<sup>50</sup>

In short, we adjuncts have a valuable guerrilla perspective on academic freedom. And while those with noses to the grindstone on the tenure track may have difficulty admitting to what extent the enclosures<sup>51</sup> of neoliberalism's demand for efficiency, flexibility, accountability, and measurable "outcomes" have already encroached on their territory, *we* are under no illusions. We also have much less to fear in breaching conventional boundaries between our intellectual work and our activism than our more privileged colleagues with "serious" reputations to uphold. The renovation of the relationship between thought and practice is a largely neglected aspect of academic freedom, yet it is crucial both because we need to be able to defend our intellectual life and because an intellectual life that disdains the reality of the world can hardly be said to be either intellectual or free at all. Rather, it is irrelevant.

Paradoxically—even perversely—in many fields adjuncting has offered a considerable degree of control over the labor process at the expense of job security and adequate levels of compensation. And yet even this costly liberty may be coming to an end, for once funky institutions seem increasingly attracted to the corporatizing lingo of "excellence," "accountability," and "outcomes-based assessment." In the ominous words of Marc Bousquet, commenting on the "service" ethic in relation to the superexploitation of academic labor, "When the appeals to pride, love, and self-sacrifice [and, we would add, to the increasingly

scarce rewards of membership in some sort of functioning intellectual community] at last run their course, most of today's superexploited will simply be bullied into further giving with absurd metrics, unreasonable expectations, dishonest evaluation, the threat of nonrenewal, or the like."<sup>52</sup>

In a climate of renewed corporate assaults on the rags and tatters of academic freedom, it is all the more important to tap the power and insight of contingent intellectual "autonomous zones" to create new visions and structures, before the intellectual enclosures are complete and the academy capitulates once and for all to its designated role as a handmaiden of the globalized market. The broader faculty should not simply acknowledge the intellectual vigor and creativity of adjuncts (though that would be welcome) but embrace the fact that these free, unenclosed aspects are key to helping everyone advance. We adjuncts are not enclosed in the standard categories of academic thought, which—for all their frequent virtues—are also inevitably tainted by the strictures of the contemporary academic class system, with its rewards for conformity and its pervasive suspicion of activist engagement. We have comparatively little to lose; with our backs against the wall, many of us are willing to fight. This, above all, is the strength we have to offer—a strength without which *nobody* will ultimately win the battle for academic freedom.

Even as we bear the brunt of market-subservient academic schemes, we adjuncts stand poised to foster a revival of an approach to higher education that stresses the university's indispensable public role. While John Dewey is most closely associated with this encompassing vision for academia, the modern champions of academic freedom have also underscored the social significance of what happens on campuses by keeping alive the ideas of the public intellectual and of extramural speech. Now, when a strong majority of Americans attend at least some college, this appreciation of the academy as a vital cultural commons, a force in the public interest, is even more compelling. Universities and how they run, who teaches and under what conditions, are no longer elite concerns. Academia is an arena of civil society that directly engages most people, thereby exerting a huge cultural force. Adjuncts and other contingents are

not only three-quarters of the college and university faculty but are overwhelmingly the teachers of the required classes, the introductory courses, the largest and fullest sections, the lower level classes that those who never graduate attend nonetheless. Adjuncts fundamentally *are* the college experience for many students. For those who care about college faculty, those who care about the future of the academy and its ability to live up to its own stated ideals, but most of all those who care about what higher education can contribute to the public good, we adjuncts and our realities must become the center of the fight for academic freedom.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> "For half a century, tenure had been the key guarantor of academic freedom. Now tenure is available only to a minority of faculty members. Higher education's reliance on contingent teachers has steadily increased over two generations. Although the complete current cohort of part-time faculty is far less likely to have the PhD or an equivalent professional degree[,] . . . contingent teachers are increasingly drawn from the same pool of potential employees who fill tenure-track jobs." Cary Nelson, *No University Is an Island* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 79–80.

<sup>2</sup> Other expressions of this upsurge of organizing include information-gathering systems like the Adjunct Project (newly relocated to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*; <http://adjunct.chronicle.com/>) and freewheeling independent voices such as the website Adjunct Nation.

<sup>3</sup> Coalition on the Academic Workforce, "A Portrait of Part-Time Faculty Members: A Summary of Findings on Part-Time Faculty Respondents to the Coalition on the Academic Workforce Survey of Contingent Faculty Members and Instructors (2012)," [http://www.academicworkforce.org/CAW\\_portrait\\_2012.pdf](http://www.academicworkforce.org/CAW_portrait_2012.pdf), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Johnson, "The Drain-O of Higher Education: Casual Labor and University Teaching," in *Steal This University*, ed. Benjamin Johnson, Patrick Kavanagh, and Kevin Mattson (New York: Routledge, 2003), 74.

<sup>6</sup> For a similar expression of deep concern on this issue, see the AAUP's final 2013 version of its report *The Inclusion in Governance of Faculty Members Holding Contingent Appointments*, <http://www.aaup.org/report/governance-inclusion>.

<sup>7</sup> One of the AAUP's mottos for decades has been: "Academic Freedom for a Free Society." It appears on many Association documents.

<sup>8</sup> Joel Westheimer, "Tenure Denied: Union Busting and Anti-intellectualism in the Corporate University," in *Steal This University*, ed. Benjamin Johnson, Patrick Kavanagh, and Kevin Mattson (New York: Routledge, 2003), 135.

<sup>9</sup> This point is repeatedly stressed by a range of recent authors including Joe Berry, "Contingent Faculty and Academic Freedom: A Contradiction in Terms," *Works and Days*, nos. 51–52, 53/54 (2008–09), [http://www.worksanddays.net/2008-9/File18.Berry\\_011309\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.worksanddays.net/2008-9/File18.Berry_011309_FINAL.pdf); Benjamin Ginsberg, *The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why It Matters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Cary Nelson, *No University Is an Island: Saving Academic Freedom* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); and Ellen Schrecker, *The Lost Soul of Higher Education: Corporatization, the Assault on Academic Freedom, and the End of the American University* (New York: New Press, 2010). In contrast to our argument, however, these authors mainly stress contingency as a lamentable if ubiquitous departure from the "gold standard" of tenure rather than as a "new normal" offering a standpoint central to any realistic discussion of academic freedom. Berry, a COCAL activist, offers the most far-sighted if still fairly abstract formulation: "For most faculty now, these rights [to academic freedom] exist as nostalgic historical artifacts"; Berry, "Contingent Faculty and Academic Freedom: A Contradiction in Terms," *Works and Days*, nos. 51–52, 53/54 (2008–09): 359, [http://www.worksanddays.net/2008-9/File18.Berry\\_011309\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.worksanddays.net/2008-9/File18.Berry_011309_FINAL.pdf). It should also be noted that proponents of a variety of contingent-faculty-driven initiatives, such as the Instructor Tenure Project at the University of Colorado, have made eloquent arguments for the extension of some form of tenure to contingent faculty. While we admire these efforts, so far they have had little success in their battle against the same powerful currents that have eroded traditional tenure. Regarding the University of Colorado initiative, see <https://sites.google.com/site/doneronaaup/the-problem-and-solution-to-contingency>.

<sup>10</sup> This point has profound implications for students as well as faculty, given that, as Cary Nelson writes, "Tenure is becoming concentrated in elite institutions, where it serves elite students and offers faculty elite identities. The world without tenure is more and more the home of the poor, most notably in community colleges." Nelson, *No University*, 91. Under such conditions, to continue addressing academic freedom issues as meaningless or largely illegible outside the precincts of tenure is to cede the ground to

a pernicious intellectual class system that excludes the vast majority of students—those matriculated in nonelite institutions—from the benefits of an education that prioritizes critical inquiry, intellectual creativity, and the possibility of informed dissent.

<sup>11</sup> See the federal government's 2009–10 Digest of Educational Statistics at [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d11/tables/dt11\\_278.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d11/tables/dt11_278.asp), which finds that at for-profit institutions which have a tenure system, 1.5 percent of the *full-time* faculty members are tenured. See also the US Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee report, *For Profit Higher Education: The Failure to Safeguard the Federal Investment and Ensure Student Success*, July 30, 2012, accessible at <http://www.propublica.org/documents/item/407797-help-senate-report>, which reports that at the twenty-two for profit institutions surveyed by this committee, 80 percent of faculty members were part-time. We have been struck by the paucity of up-to-date statistics in this area, an observation confirmed in e-mail correspondence with Joe Berry, who referred us to National Center for the Study of Bargaining in Higher Education and the Profession, *Directory of U.S. Faculty Bargaining Agents and Contracts in Institutions of Higher Education*, ser. 2, no. 2 (September 2012), while noting that “stats are of very poor quality”; e-mail to authors, April 12, 2013.

<sup>12</sup> I. Elaine Allen and Jeff Seaman note that in 2012, 32 percent of college or university students took at least one online course; Allen and Seaman, *Changing Course: Ten Years of Tracking Online Education in the United States* (Babson Park, MA: Babson Survey Research Group and Quahog Research Group, 2013), 4, <http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/changingcourse.pdf>. Anita Crawley notes, “The greatest growth in online programs comes primarily from private, for-profit institutions”; Crawley, *Supporting Online Students: A Guide to Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Services* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 2–3. Risa Lieberwitz decries the extent to which the growth of online education has offered a foot in the door for profit-making structures at ostensibly nonprofit institutions: “This rather dizzying array of distance learning institutional models has an important common dimension of directly involving public and private nonprofit universities in relationships with the private for-profit business sector for the delivery of education. By entering partnerships with for-profit businesses, contracting out distance learning functions to for-profit businesses, creating for-profit spin-offs, and selling equity in for-profit corporations, universities ignore the differences between a for-profit corporation and a public or private nonprofit university. These bold moves by universities mix the for-profit, public, and nonprofit sectors as if the choice of institutional structures were simply a matter of financial convenience with no consequences for the nature of the university or of education”; Lieberwitz, “The Corporatization of the University: Distance Learning at the Cost of Academic Freedom?,” *Boston University Public Interest Law Journal* 73 (2002–03): 107–8.

<sup>13</sup> Joe Berry believes that “stats on specifically online do not exist” (e-mail to authors, April 13, 2013).

<sup>14</sup>The following passage by *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman, from an online version of a piece that appeared while this article was in preparation, exemplifies the standard neoliberal argument yoking the methods and purposes of higher education to the unquestioned power of globalized markets: “But what is also true, says [Harvard University labor economist Lawrence] Katz, was that even before the Great Recession we had a mounting skills problem as a result of 25 years of U.S. education failing to keep up with rising skills demands, and it’s getting worse. There was . . . a surge in demand for higher skills, as globalization and the I.T. revolution intensified, combined with a slowdown in the growth of supply of higher skills. Many community colleges and universities simply can’t keep pace and teach to the new skill requirements, especially with their budgets being cut. We need a new ‘Race to the Top’ that

will hugely incentivize businesses to embed workers in universities to teach—and universities to embed professors inside businesses to learn—so we get a much better match between schooling and the job markets.” Friedman, “If You’ve Got the Skills, She’s Got the Job,” *New York Times*, November 17, 2012, 2, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/18/opinion/sunday/Friedman-You-Got-the-Skills.html?pagewanted=2&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/18/opinion/sunday/Friedman-You-Got-the-Skills.html?pagewanted=2&_r=0).

<sup>15</sup> Les Levidow, “Marketizing Higher Education: Neoliberal Strategies and Counter-strategies,” *Commoner* 3 (January 2002), <http://www.commoner.org.uk/03levidow.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> D. Bruce Johnstone, A. Arora, and W. Experton. *The Financing and Management of Higher Education: A Status Report on Worldwide Reforms* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1998), 22, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/1998/01/437254/financing-management-higher-education-status-report-worldwide-reforms>. See also Cary Nelson’s comments on the role of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in “maximizing part-time academic employment” in countries that apply to them for economic assistance. Nelson, *No University*, 83.

<sup>17</sup> Johnson, Kavanagh, and Mattson, *Steal This University*, 11–15.

<sup>18</sup> Nelson, *No University*, 95.

<sup>19</sup> AAUP, *Contingent Appointments and the Academic Profession*, adopted November 2003, <http://www.aaup.org/report/contingent-appointments-and-academic-profession>.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> AAUP, *Tenure and Teaching-Intensive Appointments*, <http://www.aaup.org/report/tenure-and-teaching-intensive-appointments> (accessed May 27, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> For examples, see the closing section of *ibid.* While such proposals may eventually offer valuable ideas to those seeking to create a more robust vision and standard of academic freedom for all, their institution-specific nature currently renders them vulnerable to the same forces that make it so difficult to negotiate even modest job security and due process provisions for adjunct faculty in collective bargaining agreements. Administrators have gotten used to the convenience of disposable faculty, and by and large they strongly resist any limits on their control. The type of broad-based study of conditions affecting contingent faculty that we propose promises to shift the focus from the local to the national arena, and to make possible further insights into the types of proposals that should be adopted or adapted.

<sup>23</sup> We experienced a version of this process in the writing of this article, as we came to grips with hitherto unperceived contours of the landscape surrounding our personal frustrations at the limits on our freedom to affect educational policy in the institutions where we work. A COCAL report on a survey of online instructors’ working conditions, currently in draft form, offers a good example of what might be attempted; in addition to compensation-related issues, it looks at professional concerns involving “control of the work, writing or editing or updating a class, expecting to teach it in the future, ownership of copyright and evaluation,” many of which relate to academic freedom. We were given access to an unpublished draft of this report, titled “Report on the COCAL Survey on Online Instructors’ Working Conditions,” by its author, Helena Worthen.

<sup>24</sup> Bruce Laurie, *Artisans into Workers: Labor in Nineteenth-Century America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

<sup>25</sup> “At present, the two worlds—with and without tenure—seem sharply divided. Yet in some critical respects they are becoming steadily more similar. The most critical cultural overlap is in administrative impatience with the element of faculty authority in shared governance. . . . The contingent world without tenure is a living laboratory for higher education as a whole.” Cary Nelson, *No University*, 93.



<sup>26</sup> Schrecker, *Lost Soul*, explores in detail the history of politically motivated attacks on the tenured from the McCarthy era to the period following September 11, 2001. Ginsberg observes that “tenure does not guarantee absolute job security, and its protection seems to be diminishing”; Ginsberg, *Fall of the Faculty*, 155. For further examples of the firing of non grata tenured faculty, see Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus, *Higher Education? How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids—and What We Can Do about It* (New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 2011), 136–42.

<sup>27</sup> For instance, Judith Halberstam asks what is lost by sticking to “the tried and true paths of knowledge production” and points out that “terms like *serious* and *rigorous* tend to be code words, in academia as well as other contexts, for disciplinary correctness; they signal a form of training and learning that confirms what is already known according to approved methods of knowing, but they do not allow for visionary insights or flights of fancy”; Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 6. Joe Berry is even more pointed: “The key restriction, of course, on faculty activism and academic freedom is not direct repression or direct threats of firing or explicit rules that restrict teaching, research, or other forms of behavior on or off campus. The main factor is the fear and self-censorship that this climate and reality creates. Anyone who has ever tried to organize even tenured and tenure-track faculty to do anything even remotely controversial in their classroom or on campus knows that, as a group, they are not a particularly courageous bunch, especially before they get tenure. Despite the stereotype of the liberal or left-wing faculty majority, in fact, on the ground and on a personal level, most faculty are very mainstream in their behavior and quite conscious of the desirability of remaining so”; Berry, “Contingent Faculty and Academic Freedom,” 360.

<sup>28</sup> Recent cases often cited in this regard include those of Ward Churchill, Norman Finkelstein, and a number of Muslim and Arab academics caught up in post-September 11 hysteria or controversies over scholarship involving Palestine.

<sup>29</sup> While significant contingent faculty initiatives such as the “Countering Contingency” conference of April 2013, organized by the Adjunct Faculty Organization at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, are already doing much to raise the consciousness of non-tenure-track faculty, for understandable reasons their practical attention is usually directed to ameliorative measures on the local level. The authors of *A Program for Change*, which includes an eloquent statement about the negative impact of contingency on academic freedom, envision that its list of suggestions for incremental changes designed to reverse academic inequality overall will offer a template against which advocates for faculty equality can measure their progress; Longmate and Cosco, *A Program for Change, 2010–2030*, August 12, 2010, <http://newfacultymajority.info/PfC/?p=1>. We envision that the types of research we are advocating can likewise serve as a rallying point.

<sup>30</sup> Johnson, “The Drain-O,” 77.

<sup>31</sup> Examples are scattered throughout Johnson, Kavanagh, and Mattson, *Steal This University*. Schrecker, *Lost Soul*, notes the tension occasioned by a disdainful attitude toward the “academic proletariat” exhibited by “so many self-identified liberals and even radicals within the higher reaches of the academic establishment” (222). During a union organizing campaign by part-time faculty at the New School in the early 2000s, one of us (Clausen) watched prominent anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, who had recently been appointed provost, demonstrate his administrative gravitas by opposing unionization.

<sup>32</sup> Westheimer, “Tenure Denied.” Acts of labor solidarity on the part of the tenured are, though rare, far from unknown. At the New School, tenured political scientist Adolph Reed Jr. made a point of publicly supporting the unionizing part-timers, as New York University’s Andrew Ross (who serves on the



AAUP's Committee A on Academic Freedom and Tenure) has done for that school's graduate teaching assistants.

<sup>33</sup> Schrecker, *Lost Soul*, 194–97; also see Sharon Crowley, introduction to Eileen Schell, *Gypsy Academics and Mother-Teachers* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1997).

<sup>34</sup> Hacker and Dreifus, *Higher Education?*, 117.

<sup>35</sup> AAUP, *Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2012–13*, Table 4

<http://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/files/2013%20Salary%20Survey%20Tables%20and%20Figures/Table%204.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>37</sup> As usual, Berry is particularly pointed, offering the case study of an attempted firing of an adjunct at Roosevelt University in Chicago. From this he draws a series of general lessons including, “Local full-time tenure-track faculty are not reliable allies when it comes to violations of academic freedom by department heads whom they see as colleagues”; Berry, “Contingent Faculty and Academic Freedom,” 367.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Treanor, “Neoliberalism: Origins, Theory, Definition,”

<http://web.inter.nl.net/users/Paul.Treanor/neoliberalism.html> (accessed January 19, 2013).

<sup>39</sup> E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966).

<sup>40</sup> Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974).

<sup>41</sup> “Let your faculty spend their time on mission-critical activities, like teaching, improving their courses and doing research. Leave the mechanics of assessment to the professionals at EduMetry!”; EduMetry: Learning Outcomes Management, home page, <http://www.edumetry.com/benefits.php> (accessed May 27, 2013).

<sup>42</sup> Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, 58.

<sup>43</sup> Ginsberg, *Fall of the Faculty*.

<sup>44</sup> For just two recent examples, see Audrey Williams June, “Some Papers Are Uploaded to Bangalore to be Graded,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 4, 2010, <http://chronicle.com/article/Outsourced-Grading-With/64954/>; and Jeffrey R. Young, “Professors Cede Grading Power to Outsiders – Even Computers,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 7, 2011, <http://chronicle.com/article/Professors-Cede-Grading-Power/128528/>.

<sup>45</sup> A particularly significant struggle over curricular issues is still unfolding at the City University of New York, where the trustees and chancellor have sought to institute a pared-down core curriculum known as CUNY Pathways over the strenuous objections of faculty governance bodies throughout the sprawling system. As reported in the *Clarion*, the newspaper of the faculty union (PSC-CUNY), union president Barbara Bowen criticized the curricular scheme as “a ‘sort of academic Taylorism’ that ‘chops up our role into smaller and smaller, less and less professional pieces’ while standardizing everything from curriculum to textbooks and tests. This, Bowen warned, could be the precursor to implementing the kind of assessment agenda that has been used to attack K–12 public school teachers across the country”; John Tarleton, “UFS-PSC Working Group Examines Data on Transfer Problems,” *Clarion*, December 2012, <http://www.psc-cuny.org/clarion/december-2012/ufs-psc-working-group-examines-data-transfer-problems>.

<sup>46</sup> Authors such as Jeffrey J. Williams have argued that students’ academic freedom is being attacked through astronomical tuition costs and ballooning student debt; such analyses have only increased in the

last year or two as movements such as Occupy Student Debt have appeared. Less commonly remembered in the concern over debt is the crucial point—made for instance in AAUP, “Contingent Academic Faculty and the Academic Profession”—that students taught by expanding numbers of contingent faculty who operate without freedom of speech or research are themselves not participating in an academically free intellectual forum. The student experience of the potentially mind-expanding years of higher education is thus drastically curtailed, and in fact it might be said that students are being explicitly trained in the protocols of fettered knowledge. As the union mantra goes, “Faculty teaching conditions *are* students’ learning conditions”; Williams, “Academic Bondage,” *Works and Days* 51/52, 53/54, vols. 26 & 27, (2008–09), [http://www.worksanddays.net/2008-9/File22.Williams\\_011309\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.worksanddays.net/2008-9/File22.Williams_011309_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>47</sup> Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus write that “the tenuring process actually discourages intellectual audacity among the hopeful. . . . Though the stated rationale for tenure is the protection of free inquiry, the demeanor required to obtain it depends heavily on caution”; Hacker and Dreifus, *Higher Education?*, 146.

<sup>48</sup> Marylou Gramm, Shiwei Li, and Minting Yu, “The Power of Feeling Foreign,” and Robin Clarke and Andrew J. Zarnich, “Pedagogy of the Oppressed? When Students Learn What Their Teachers Earn,” papers presented at “Countering Contingency: Teaching, Scholarship and Creativity in the Age of the Adjunct,” Duquesne University, April 5–7, 2013.

<sup>49</sup> John D’Emilio, speech accepting the Publishing Triangle’s Bill Whitehead Award for Lifetime Achievement, New School, April 25, 2013. D’Emilio used the phrase while making the point that the academy’s welcome embrace of queer studies has had a serious downside: the disappearance of scholarship rooted in and speaking to an activist gay community.

<sup>50</sup> Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, “The University and the Undercommons: Seven Theses,” *Social Text* 22.2 (2004): 104.

<sup>51</sup> “According to the Marxist tradition, the Enclosures were the starting point of capitalist society. They were the basic device of ‘original accumulation’ which created a population of workers ‘free’ from any means of reproduction and thus compelled (in time) to work for a wage. The Enclosures, however, are not a one time process exhausted at the dawn of capitalism. They are a regular return on the path of accumulation and a structural component of class struggle”; Midnight Notes Collective, “The New Enclosures,” *Commoner*, September 2001, reprinted from *Midnight Notes*, no. 10 (1990): 1.

<sup>52</sup> Marc Bousquet, “We Are All Roman Porn Stars Now,” *Academe* 98 (November–December 2012), <http://www.aaup.org/article/we-are-all-roman-porn-stars-now#.UNJEkne3S70>.