Confronting the Institutional, Interpersonal and Internalized Challenges of Performing Critical Public Scholarship

Anderson, C.

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Colin R. Anderson

Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience
Coventry University
colin.anderson@coventry.ac.uk

Abstract

Universities are increasingly becoming self-referential, reflective of neoliberal values and are abandoning commitments to the public interest. In response, there have been efforts to assert a "public scholarship" that can contribute to the progressive transformation of society for social justice and sustainability. Yet, the performance of public scholarship within the neoliberal and elitist university is ambiguous, fraught and contested. I engage with Judith Butler's work to examine academic professionalization as performativity and unpack the disciplinary systems that shape the possibilities to perform public scholarship. I present an autoethnographic script to critically analyze the contradictions, tensions and challenges of pursuing transformative research paradigm within the professional academy. My analysis discusses three relational mediums of performativity: Internal(ized) (selves), Interpersonal (relationships) and Institutional (institutions). Each medium reflects citations of pre-existing discourse manifested in materials, customs, texts, disciplinary procedures and habits. The professional academy holds disciplinary power through these three mediums molding extractive, elitist and ultimately unjust performativity. Performativity is iterative and thus these mediums are not fixed but constituted through their performance and there are always possibilities for disruption, subversion and thus transformation. These three

mediums, and their intersections, are sites for critical self- and collective reflexivity and action.

Keywords

Participatory Action Research; Performativity; Professionalization; Public Scholarship; Transformative Research

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Introduction: Working Within a Transformative Research Paradigm

"The thesis must constitute a distinct contribution to knowledge in the major field of study and the material must be of sufficient merit to be, in the judgment of the examiners, acceptable for publication."

- (University of Manitoba Dissertation Guidelines, 2013)

[your book will] not be understandable to 99.8 per cent of the population and is thus, political death for what we work for. A first-year undergrad and a front-line NGO staff need to be able to clearly understand and engage with the manuscripts and that contributors should have this in the forefront of their minds.

–Wayne Roberts, personal communication to myself and two graduate student co-editors of an edited book

The research that I'm involved in resonates with what some have been referring to as *organic public scholarship* – which involves a commitment to reflexively undertaking research and pedagogy with, in, and for the public(s). This approach is underpinned by a transformative research paradigm where researchers see themselves not as detached producers of expert knowledge, but as embedded in broader processes of knowledge mobilization for social transformation in pursuit of social justice and socio-ecological regeneration. This work cannot be carried out from the comforts of an office desk, but requires engagement as an active participant in spaces where citizens are working collectively to transform themselves and society.

…

I often feel like a fake. An imposter. Unsure. Inadequate. Out of place. These feelings are not at all uncommon in academia (and beyond), but are perhaps more acute in the context of the competing demands, ambivalent identity, and the contested work that arise when working within a transformative research paradigm in conservative institutions.

At times I feel inadequate in academic spaces and networks - and question whether these engagements in transformative research will count as a "distinct contribution to knowledge" as defined by the academy [as per introductory quote 1].

Yet I also often feel inadequate as an activist, community animator, and citizen in the public sphere - I worry that the work I do as a career researcher, within the remit of the academic institution and on the pages of restricted-access journals might be completely useless. Rather than being a force for transformation, do the contributions of academics and claiming of expert status in these spaces indeed contribute to the "political death" [as per introductory quote 2] of a transformative research agenda?

Indeed, when juxtaposed, the two prefatory quotes exemplify a central conundrum that researchers positioned within formal institutions face when performing transformative research:

The academic labor, language, and outcomes that make for 'valuable contributions' in the academy, are often considered to be less valuable, irrelevant or even counterproductive to the public(s) we engage with.	The academic labor, language, and outcomes we co-produce with the public(s) through transformative scholarship are typically less valued, and often considered to be irrelevant, within an academic institution mired in conservatism and narrow performance management systems.

I often feel like I am jumping in-between two very different worlds and constantly coloring outside of the lines that are meant to guide appropriate performances in both. In my short life as an academic, I have been shaped (bashed around?) by these, and other, competing pressures. As I will go on to illuminate, the repeated performances of academia are constituted through my relations to people, discourses and institutions in and beyond the academy. These give shape to one's subjectivity and how we know, how we feel and how we perform as researchers positioned as professionals within academia (hereafter referred to as academic subjects).

The performance of academic work is linked to the production of academic subjectivity and to the relationships and institutions that are part of that ongoing process of production. Indeed, better understanding the character and the nature of the disciplinary systems that shape academic performances is a crucial step enabling the individual, collective and institutional shifts needed to address the injustices and ecological destruction that arise from the current political moment.

To this end, I will draw from the literature on public sociology/geography and discuss the relationship between performativity and subject formation in the context of graduate education. I use an autoethnographic approach to critically examine my own experiences as a young academic predisposed towards

transformative research but working in an institutional and cultural context that is variously indifferent or outright hostile towards public scholarship. The paper presents a framework to critically consider three mediums through which the disciplinary power of the elitist academy manifest, which also reflect three critical sites of reflexive action.

The Elitist Neoliberal Academy

"The goal of research is not the interpretation of the world, but the organization of transformation." – Conti, 2005

Critical geographers have long grappled with the challenge how 'to Change the World?' (Chatterton et al., 2011, p. 181) whilst being positioned within elite, disembodied and increasingly neoliberal academic institutions (Castree et al., 2010; Greenwood, 2012). In a world of deepening social injustice and inequality, there is no innocence – especially in powerful academic institutions that have long been, and continue to be, tied to the interests of the powerful (Giroux, 2007; Slaughter, 2004). What role do geographers, or more generally academics, have in addressing social inequality, environmental destruction, violence, community degeneration and injustice? How do researchers position themselves and their intellectual labor in relation to social change? And how does this desire and movement towards what can be referred to as transformative public scholarship sit in the context of the increasingly neoliberal university?

While universities have been posited as important institutions for advancing societal knowledge, they have also historically been governed by elites, reflect elite interests, and have largely served to concentrate the power and status of the already privileged. As an institution, universities refract and reinscribe gendered, racial and settler-colonial axes of difference and inequality (Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. 2012; Solorzano, 1998; Wilder 2013). Today, in the context of declining public funding for universities and a growing reliance on private foundations and donors, grants and tuition, the capacity of universities to pursue the public interest continues to be diminished. This narrowing of the economic base for the university drives much of the recent corporatization of universities (Bok, 2009; Castree et al., 2010), the precariousness of academic work and the hyper competitive environment for decent jobs in academia. Universities are becoming more and more organized according to the calculative managerial logic of quantifiable outcomes (Apple, 2005; Deem, 2001), which involves a narrow and rigid definition, often disqualifying more radical and counterhegemonic knowledges and approaches, and policing what constitutes legitimate academic endeavor. In the context, the room to maneuver for radical transformative scholarship within universities is shrinking.

The meta-narrative of the elite and neoliberal university is now commonplace amongst critical scholars. In this article, I aim to contribute to a discussion on how these pressures are manifesting in the everyday lives of academics and how neoliberal and elitist labor and subjectivities are enacted, performed – and contested. Thus, there are a range of pressures, technologies and relations that exert disciplinary

power over academic subjects, shaping performance and subjectivity in variegated and uneven ways, depending on these subjects' positions in grids of racial, gender, sexual, classed and other modalities of social differentiation. These can be extreme, say in the case of persecuting or firing dissidents who challenge powerful institutions, or whose non-normative identity inscribed in the color of their skin, sexuality or gender is dissidence itself and draws persecution (Gutierrez y Muhs et. al. 2012). But the disciplining of academic labor is also indirect, ordinary and subtle, yet pervasive and arguably just as effective as direct regulation.

Academics are resourced, counted and governed through an increasingly economized institution and thus perform academic freedom within a restructuring university and a repositioned knowledge economy (Fuller and Askins 2007). Systems of audit, discipline and control in the academy are important to understand in regards to the formation of academic subjects and how these processes reflect the image of the dominant social and economic forms, disqualifying alternative academic labor and subjectivities as 'non-existent' or 'non-viable' (de Sousa Santos, 2004). But, equally important, is to understand the ways these pressures can be subverted and contested in pursuit of a radical, transformative research paradigm.

A Transformative Research Paradigm?

Of course, the brief caricature of the state of academia is an incomplete scan of the situation as there has always been and continues to be resistance by politically committed researchers who work within a range of interrelated traditions as a part of what might be called a transformative research paradigm. Perhaps more fundamentally present today is the increasing broader realization that the current practices, methods and approaches not only in science, but more broadly are almost undoubtedly inadequate for addressing the ecological crises in the age of the Anthropocene (O'Brien, 2011), not the least because these approaches often take for granted and even reproduce the racial, colonial and geopolitical violence of the very epistemological and political traditions that are foundational to their formation (see Davis and Todd, 2017). This shift to a transformative paradigm is beginning to disrupt conventional thinking on knowledge and knowledge systems, where there are increasing calls for transdisciplinary and transformative research approaches (Pimbert, 2018; Seidl et al., 2013). While the increasing emphasis on finding transformative approaches is breathing more life into the more longstanding traditions that resonate with a transformative approach, the inertia of the dominant paradigm – including the vested interests of powerful actors and institutions – is a substantial determinant of change or lack thereof. This paper contributes to the critical task of better understanding the dynamics of inertia and proposing strategies to confront it.

Public Scholarship

Examples of praxis that reflects a transformative research approach can be found within the literature on feminist methodology, decolonizing methodology,

participatory action research, scholar activism, and elsewhere. Whereas the dominant positivist research paradigm strives towards objectivity and disembodiment from objects of research, transformative research requires direct involvement with multiple publics in processes of collaborative research. A transformative research paradigm is thus inherently oppositional to, and subversive of the detached elitism that pervades ivory tower intellectualism, the neoliberalisation of universities and of positivist conceptions of proper academic labor.

The concept of public scholarship that has been developed in the disciplines of sociology, geography and beyond is a useful way to think about a transformative research approach in relation to other modes of scholarship. The framework, while imperfect, was useful for thinking about and writing about my own experience within a transformative research paradigm.

When Michael Burawoy articulated public sociology in his American Sociological Association presidential address (Burawoy, 2005) he stirred up a fervent discussion about public-interest and participatory scholarship in Sociology, Geography, and beyond (Bezruchka, 2008; Calhoun, 2005; Chatterton, 2008; Fuller, 2008; Fuller & Askins, 2007; Loader & Sparks, 2013; Raphael, 2008; Smith, 2010). Burawoy's intervention suggested that "public sociology" was one of four species of scholarship and exists within a division of labor in the totality of scholarly enterprise: professional, policy, public, and critical. These, he claims, exist in an antagonistic, yet productive, interdependence.

Public scholarship involves intentionally engaging with multiple publics to support the development of a vibrant civil society, for example, by directly participating in social movements, in activism, in discussions through social media, in writing for the popular press, in public policy debate, and in community building projects. *Policy scholarship* occurs when academics serve clients, often through contractual arrangements, to solve particular problems, for example, by acting as academic consultants, directly advising policy-makers or testifying in a court case. *Professional scholarship* is the abstract theoretical work that "supplies true and tested methods, accumulated bodies of knowledge, orienting questions, and conceptual frameworks" (Burawoy, 2005, p. 10). Burawoy considers professional scholarship to provide the legitimacy and expertise that makes policy scholarship and public scholarship possible. Finally, *critical scholarship* involves questioning the foundations, norms, and the field of power in the production of knowledge and in the academy.

Public scholarship has been said to involve two strands. First, traditional public scholarship occurs when academics promote debate "within or between publics, although he or she might not actually participate in them" (Burawoy, 2005, p. 7). A transformative research paradigm, however, primarily resonates with what he referred to as *organic* public scholarship where researchers work "in close connection with a visible, thick, active, local and often counter-public" (Burawoy,

2005, p. 7; see also Hawkins et al., 2011) through their teaching (Freire, 1970), their research endeavors (Fuller, 2008; Fuller & Askins, 2010; Pain, 2003) and in their everyday lives (Cloke, 2004). Organic public scholarship is carried out through a range of approaches to research including critical variants of participatory action research (Reason & Bradbury, 2008), militant investigation (Shukaitis, Graeber, & Biddle, 2007) and public geography. These approach position academics as themselves a part of the public, and as direct agents in social change. Burawoy, and many of his interlocutors, have argued that there is a need to develop and valorize public scholarship as the most important domain for transformative research.

The field of power between these types scholarship is uneven (Glenn, 2007) and the dominant systems of hierarchy, tradition, and power generally privilege professional scholarship over the other three types. Public scholarship is marginalized by "hegemonic discourses around what 'proper' academic research is, and what a 'proper' academic researcher does" (kinpaisby, 2008, pp. 295-296) and more recently by the increasing neoliberalization of universities (Greenwood, 2012). Researchers are disciplined through audit systems and technologies of standardization that limit the outputs that 'count' when measuring quality and productivity (Kitchin & Fuller, 2005, p. 4). The tangible and often political outcomes and "non-academic" publications that result from public scholarship are marginalized by performance measurement criteria, for example, in the context of tenure and promotion (ASA Task Force, 2005; Tanaka & Mooney, 2010). Public scholarship, in this context, is often un(der)rewarded and carried out in the interstices of the academy (Gabriel et al., 2009). These impediments to public scholarship are especially acute for early career researchers (Moore, 2004; Noy, 2009) who are subject to the intense disciplinary power of academic professionalization (Bourdieu & Collier, 1988).

Professionalization, Academic Subjectivity and Performativity

Graduate education is an intense period of professionalization and a critical process in the formation of academic subjectivities. During these formative years, academic subjectivities and values are shaped through repeated performances of academic labor – which themselves are shaped through the discourses, relations, and systems that regulate experience and ongoing performance of academia. These processes of professionalization are fundamental to the reproduction of academic culture, academic subjects, and the academic institution (Bourdieu & Collier, 1988) and the inertia of dominant systems. While some of these processes are overt in graduate education, there is also what is referred to as a "hidden curriculum" including for example disciplinary norms, subtle pressures, institutional rules that are critical in the socialization of emerging scholars, yet are a largely invisible part of academic professionalization.

Judith Butler's notion of performativity provides a helpful approach to understand the more subtle and complex processes of socialization and professionalization within the academy. Performativity insists that identity does not

prefigure action but is recursively constituted through actions, discourses, and the words we speak/write (Butler, 1997; 1999). Butler's work disrupted any fixed and essentialist notion of identity, thus denying that social agents exist with fixed identities prior to their performance. Rather, subjects and their identities are produced through ongoing performance of wider discourses that circulate and are enacted through social subjects and made durable in texts, materials, systems, and institutions.

From this perspective, academic subjects and identities are formed through repetitive performances, which reflect citations of pre-existing discourses. Professionalization represents a process of subject formation that arises through a range of citational practices or repeated academic performances that are shaped by the discourses that constitute the academy (Gregson & Rose, 2000). Professionalization involves an ambivalent process of subjection where professionals often become more powerful and successful through adhering to dominant performances, which may at the same time be in dissonance with their performative identity, shaped by their life experience. Thus, subjectivities are transformed through performativity which is governed through the relationships, institutions and the iterative performances of what is understood to be proper academic labor. This disciplines professionals to become proper academic selves, regardless of desires to perform otherwise. In this article, I examine these processes of professionalization to unpack the challenges and opportunities of advancing a transformative research approach.

Methodology: Performative Autoethnography

In order to examine the processes of academic subject formation, I engaged in performative autoethnography as a mode of self-writing and critical inquiry (Denzin, 2003b). Autoethnography involves a process of self-critique and self-narration to interpret "culture through the self-reflections and cultural refractions of identity" (Spry, 2001, p. 727). The analysis is not only of the self, but is also to understand social dynamics through the self. An autoethnographer works at the intersection of the personal and the cultural, thinking and observing as an ethnographer and writing and describing as a storyteller (Ellis, 2004). Through autoethnography, the researcher explicitly draws on their own positionality to understand situated experience within the wider social and cultural context and in doing so arrives at different understandings and representations than are possible through other approaches to inquiry (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, participatory, mixed methodologies).

For Denzin (2003), performative autoethnography should shape and give "meaning to lived experience within specific historical moments" (p. 266) in order to move readers emotionally and critically and, ideally, to motivate action. The honest, creative, and reflexive critique of one's own experience is intended to compel readers to reflect critically upon their own life experience, their constructions of self, and their interactions with others (Ellis & Bochner, 1996). Performative

autoethnography is thus driven by the impulse to contribute to positive social change and itself reflects a performance of public scholarship. The resulting performative texts are not neutral representations of reality but are tools of critical pedagogy (Denzin, 2003).

Performative ethnography often uses creative and eclectic representations where "introspection, dialogue, or narration" is used to develop social theory (Ellis, 2004, p. 200). By using diverse styles of representation, performative writing can reach new audiences and engender different ways of understanding (Gergen & Gergen, 2002, p. 19). Although at odds with more dominant modes of analysis and representation (Goodall, cited in Spry, 2001), performative writing can open new opportunities for learning, for critical pedagogy, and for social change. Quality autoethnographic writing thus must have resonance with readers, inspire critical reflection, and motivate action.

In the following script, I relate my experience of doing public scholarship by presenting a conversation between three "Scholarly Colins" – reflecting three of Burawoy's archetypes of scholarship: public, professional, and critical. Recognizing that these are not discrete but co-existing and overlapping, I construct a narrative of these Colins to unpack my experience of, and reflections on, the competing desires, experiences and pressures felt through my graduate education and now beyond. In the discussion, I will further unpack these experiences and how and why these different impulses and "Colins" manifested through my position to wider systems and cultures of discipline and power.

In the next section, I discuss my graduate education and research. My dissertation project represented a six-year bricolage of public/critical/professional scholarship, rooted in a transformative research paradigm. My aspirations were to be involved in community-led efforts to create a more just and sustainable food system. At the heart of my dissertation was a community-based, participatory action research project that involved iterative rounds of action and reflection in the development of alternative food networks in the province of Manitoba on the Canadian Prairies (Anderson et al., 2014; Anderson and McLachlan, 2016; Anderson, Sivilay and Lobe, 2017; Laforge et al., 2018).

Case Study: Colin's Academic Self/selves and the Things that Matter but Don't Count

Picture this. Not one "Colin-The-Scholar" but multiple scholarly selves. Let's say: "Multiple Scholarly Colins." In this story, three Scholarly Colins are particularly relevant, and for the purpose of this paper reflect Burawoy's (2005) typology: Colin the Public Scholar (Public Colin), Colin the Professional Scholar (Professional Colin), and Colin the Critical Scholar (Critical Colin) (Figure 1). Colin the Policy scholar, or indeed possibly other scholarly Colins, may be present, but at this point, they're hard to make out. Perhaps they are lurking in some deep place within me waiting to leap out?
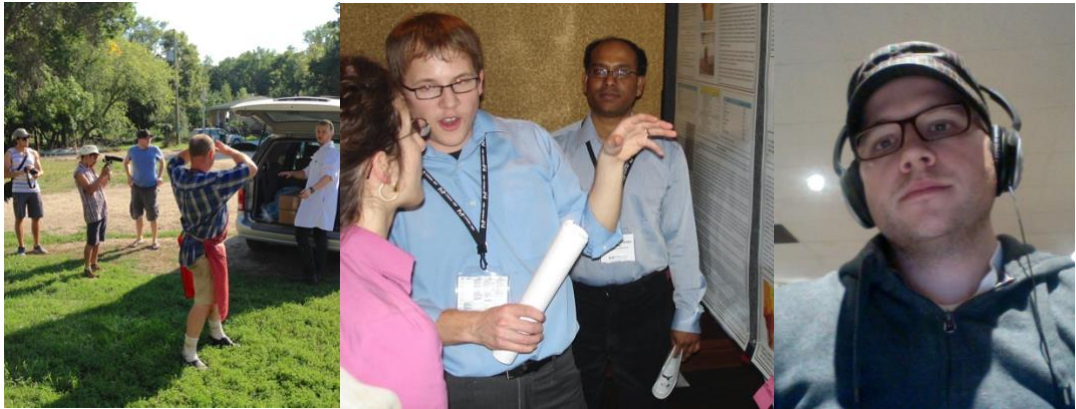
Figure 1: The multiple scholarly Colins. (Left). 2006. Colin the Public Scholar (blue shirt), out in the field (literally), at the farm of Clint and Pam Cavers – key partners in the research - during a 'food safety raid' that prompted the beginning of a new participatory action research project and political campaign. (Middle) 2007. Colin the Professional Scholar, playing the "expert" role, explaining his academic poster to Eva, a student 'colleague', both of us performing our professional scholar selves in a stodgy poster session at the "PrioNet Annual Scientific Meeting". (Right) 2013. Colin the Critical Scholar writing this article. Tired. Sitting in a coffee shop. It is late. Wearing a coffee stained sweater.

Certainly, other Colins are at play – Colin the white cishet, able-bodied male – and shape the ways that the above Colins move about in the world. Indeed, my invisible knapsack of privilege provides a wide range of opportunities to me in my everyday life that I am only partially aware of. Imagine these three scholarly selves, sometimes confused, sometimes talking and working with each other, sometimes arguing, sometimes agreeing, but almost always resulting in hybrid performances in the different spaces of academia.

I performed each of these versions of my scholarly self over the six years of my graduate education. Different academic spaces encourage a different scholarly performance: a different way to act, way to talk, way to write (Figure 1). These spaces are produced in a way that suggests what is, and is not, proper scholarly performance. What is proper is fluid, contextual and relational. But it is never clear cut and we have different degrees of room to maneuver in different spaces and indeed to transgress the boundaries that these spaces impose. Agency reflects both one's own evolving inclinations and convictions in a dialectical relationship with the disciplinary power of the institution and social relations that shape subjectivities and shape these spaces.

Let's apply this lens to a reflection on my graduate education, my dissertation, my dissertation defense and my experience trying to publish this work. What kind of performances were required to pass these rights of passage?

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When I first started my program, Public Colin dominated over the much less experienced and insecure Professional Colin.

Usually, a PhD program approximates this chronology:

Coursework – candidacy exam – identify research problem – literature review – develop research proposal – defend research proposal – conduct research – write up thesis – defend thesis – publish.

Neat. Tidy. Linear.

I doubt it ever goes quite like that, but generally, the idea is this: First develop your professional scholarly self – read, learn academic theory, prove mastery of theory – then go out and do professional scholarly research.

In this model, research questions are expected to be carved out of gaps in professional scholarly theory, which may or may not relate to public interest/need Trauger and Fluri, 2014). Students are taught to prioritize theoretical knowledge, scientific methods and technical writing over alternative ways of knowing and over the wider range of knowledge systems that co-exist in society. Inscribed onto the rhythms of the graduate education sequencing is this message: If you want to do public scholarship, do it on your own time.

My project was far from linear: writing, research, coursework, research problem identification and reviewing the literature occurred iteratively in response to the problems and needs identified in successive rounds of inquiry. I wrote my candidacy exam five years into my program, after the research was well underway. I finished my last course in the final year of my program. I broke lots of the rules, only sometimes on purpose.

In hindsight, a conventional program structure might have saved me some confusion, grief and anger and may have set me up for a more promising career – or at least a more obvious route to one. But, if I had a more orthodox experience, I wouldn't be the same person I am today. I wouldn't see research as I do. My own subjectivity and self-disciplining would reflect the performances of my years of professionalization which would indeed limit my capacity to do public scholarship. I suspect this path would be difficult, although not impossible, to undo.

From the first day of my program, I dove into the deep end of a participatory action research project that embodied organic public scholarship (Burawoy, 2005; Fuller & Askins, 2010). In fact, three months prior to the official start of my graduate program, the project began – I helped to start, and became a core organizer in the development of, a cooperative local food distribution and sustainable agriculture education group called the Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative. I went on to work, as the centerpiece of the dissertation research, for six years alongside and with a group of farmers to organize, manage and analyze the development of a cooperative local food initiative in the Canadian Prairies.

Immediately, without substantial training as a 'researcher', I was able to put to use all the communication and organizational skills I had developed over my adult years as a student organizer-programmer and in my work in the non-profit world. Outside of the codified spaces of academia, I was more comfortable and freer to explore the questions, concerns and action that emerged from the developing relationship with my co-researchers and to grow and learn together through this collaborative process. Of course, there are also particular norms, processes and other barriers faced when working in activist and non-profits spaces that take time to understand. The ability to navigate these codified spaces of social movements is also unevenly experienced by researchers from different positionalities. For example, being in these spaces as a woman, someone from a different cultural background or with a physical disability, one would experience a much different (surely more difficult) dynamic than I did.

At this point, largely because of the freedom afforded to me by my supervisor and the importance he placed on starting with the needs and interests of the community, the influence of professional scholarly subject formation was weak. Colin the Public Scholar was quick out of the gate.

But…in my first attempt at a peer-reviewed publication a year into the project (see: Anderson & McLachlan, 2012 – the result of a very trying and mostly self-defeating process) I realized that I had to locate our participatory action research project in relation to professional scholarly theory. I quickly realized that Public Colin was ill-equipped for this type of "professional" academic labor. Public Colin had taken up a lot of space and Professional Colin had little opportunity to develop or to perform. Yet, it was time to call on him. And it wasn't pretty.

In my second academic publishing endeavor, we wrote up and submitted the Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative project as a case study to an internationally renowned journal. Using the principles of Participatory Action Research (Kemmis, 2007; Reason & Bradbury, 2008), I worked diligently to co-analyze and co-author the paper with two farmer colleagues and my advisor. We drew from five years of deeply engaged action research, interviews, meeting minutes and experience. We all thought the paper said something important and was a fair, but critical and analytical, representation of our story.

We sent it to all of the thirteen other farmers who were in the story to get their feedback. I followed up by phone with each of them and they all agreed – some minor problems but generally it was great and that it would be useful for anyone trying to do similar work. We revised the manuscript based on their critical feedback, submitted it, and were optimistic. The response from the journal was this:

> I have read it carefully and my conclusion is that it is probably not best suited to the Journal... Papers in the Journal...need to critically engage with the rural social science literature and make a significant contribution to advancing that literature which is of interest to our international and inter-disciplinary readership. Whilst your paper is

clearly a rigorous piece of research, I feel that its focus is not appropriate for the Journal. – Editor, Scholarly Journal 1

Public Colin was surprised and crushed and, emotionally, it knocked me down a few notches. A bout of imposter syndrome started to set in. While the relational space in the community affirmed and reinforced a public scholarly performance, the shift into the space of professional scholarship diminished and invalidated it and demanded a process of translation.

At this point, Professional Colin wakes up and we now understand that if Public Colin wants to survive in academic spaces, we are going to have to do a better job of playing the professional scholarship game, just as that editor needs to play the game, regardless of his interest in 'rigorous' public scholarship. And, Critical Colin is now thinking reflexively: I see that there are different spaces in academia, and each of them is a field of power and discipline. To be effective in these different spaces requires a different academic performance, a different type of academic labor, and a process of translation. I won't be able to change the rules of the game…at least not on my own… but I wonder how much I can bend them.

For almost two years, Professional Colin, fretting that he needs to beef up his C.V. if he ever wanted to get a job, worked to translate that article into a passable 'academic' publication. We ended up submitting the revised paper to the Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems and Community Development, a journal that promotes 'accessible scholarship' and that targets public scholars and scholarly publics. To Professional Colin and Public Colin, this seemed like a good compromise. I submitted it, and the editor, Duncan, responded the same day indicating that it looked great, but was too long: "The case study is absolute GOLD. I find this [paper] accessible, and spot on topically… I think this should do well in the review…" (Duncan Hilchey, Scholarly Journal 2). After a positive set of reviews, the revised paper was published.

Professional Colin went on, stumbling along, trying to catch up. Learning about theory, academic writing, academic language, teaching, and so on. Over time, Professional Colin grew stronger and started to compete with Public Colin and to change the way I performed in the different spaces of the research. This was, indirectly, pointed out to me by a friend and collaborator. I was writing my first op ed for a major newspaper. The piece would draw from the dissertation research to discuss how the Manitoba government was marginalizing small-scale family farmers and processors through one-size-fits-all food safety regulations and policy. Unsure of myself, I asked a handful of colleagues to provide feedback, one of whom was a public relations professional responded,

> …be sure to keep any language…accessible[1] to the average CONSUMER/ PERSON – try to avoid terms like 'regulatory

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[1] The author acknowledges that the "accessibility" and "the public" being conjured here - drawing on 'the average', 'apple-pie words', and 'family farm' - is gendered, racialized and classed but I invoke

framework'. Etc. Stick to motherhood and apple pie words (words that warm the heart). Think Family farm, Think wholesome. Think pastured. – personal communication

She also spent a half-hour working through the op ed, line-by-line with me, reshaping my dry, technical and over-inflated writing to be more compelling and engaging. I was reminded of Katherine Mitchell's scathing (self) critique of professional geographers: "With few exceptions we write for each other and we do it with dense, turgid and usually mind-numbingly boring prose" (Mitchell, 2006, p. 205). Is this what I am in danger of becoming? Her feedback was a wakeup call for Public Colin and a reminder to Professional Colin that he may not be as useful as he was beginning to think he was.

Now, picture this: Colin the Professional Scholar is called on, again, to (finally) write up his dissertation. Picture him sitting down, back in the professional spaces of the university, writing an outline and sketching out how to convincingly argue that six messy years of action research makes a significant contribution to professional scholarship. That is, a contribution to social theory. Professional Colin starts to wade through the mess to construct a neat and tidy argument organized within the conventions of the dissertation genre. He sets about this task by modeling after other dissertations that were brilliantly written according to the conventions of professional scholarship. Moving from being out in the world doing action research to being back at the university, translating it onto the pages of a dissertation was jarring and alienating on the one hand (as a public scholar) but affirming on the other as my slowly improving professional scholarly performance gained praise by peers and advisors.

Feeling pretty good about himself and what he was writing, Professional Colin looks up and glances at a mirror. Who should he find looking back at him, but Public Colin, horrified, jaw to the ground yelling,

What the hell are you doing you self-serving egotistical jerk? You are denying all of the other meaningful and important stories and outcomes from the past six years? What about all of the work put in by all the people that we have worked with along the way? You are claiming these ideas as your own and leaving out the important parts? Who do you think you are?"

Professional Colin reacts: "While those things matter, the reality is that they don't count in the eyes of our evaluators."

Behind him, Critical Colin is smugly nodding his head, smiling, rubbing his hands together and thinking opportunistically,

"What a wonderful opportunity to write a critical auto-ethnographic paper!"

them here to signal how negotiating between Professional Colin and Public Colin requires navigating the existence of these social constructions.

The academic vulture!

Taking a breath, the three Colins cool down. They each ponder the nature of this confrontation and wonder if they can't all get what they want. They look at each other and simultaneously remark, "Why not?"

Opting to work with, rather than against each other, we decided to experiment with the dissertation as a space to perform all three of these scholarly impulses – Critical, Public and Professional. And, we committed to make visible, to the extent possible, the people, processes and outcomes that made this collective participatory research approach possible. This was an attempt to signal and demonstrate how this was not only my work, but belonged to a wider community and that the diverse range of process, publications, presentations and real-world outcomes from our praxis should, in fact, count.

Diverse Contributors, Diverse Outcomes

This work, typically, would be written up as discrete chapters in a professional scholar's dissertation, focusing in on material that contributes to social theory. Thus, if you mapped out where my dissertation was heading according to Professional Colin, it would indicate a delimited research project through three or more 'data chapters', which may or may not be published (see Figure 2), bookended by a less important but still required introduction and conclusion. This structure would require that I de-emphasize, and largely erase, the processes, findings and ideas that undermine or clutter the parsimonious empirical and theoretical story. The diverse range of processes and outcomes that define this collective PAR project, are implicitly discouraged in the professional scholar's dissertation. A reader or examiner may have some sense that there was more going on than what is reported in the chapters of a professional dissertation, but these stories are buried in a sea of dense theoretical and empirical writing, in a passing mention as a peripheral post-script or as a mention in the conclusion chapter. Some disciplines are of course more open to the inclusion of reflexive writing in theses, but this is rare as a whole in academia.

In his efforts to construct a dissertation that reflected his performance as a professional scholar, Professional Colin had taken a flashlight and shined it on a very select story (Figure 2), while the hard work of Public Colin and all of his public collaborators were left in the dark. But Public Colin challenged Professional Colin by turning on the lights (Figure 3) and revealed that, in fact, much of the work claimed by Professional Colin was supported by a wide range of collaborators, contributors and authors. These included a diversity of community members (farmers, community organizers, activists, etc.), students (undergraduate and graduate) and academics. Public and Professional Colin have both played a role in facilitating and authoring many of these outcomes, yet my agency, both as a public and a professional scholar, was a relational outcome of the much wider diversity of actors that enabled this scholarship.
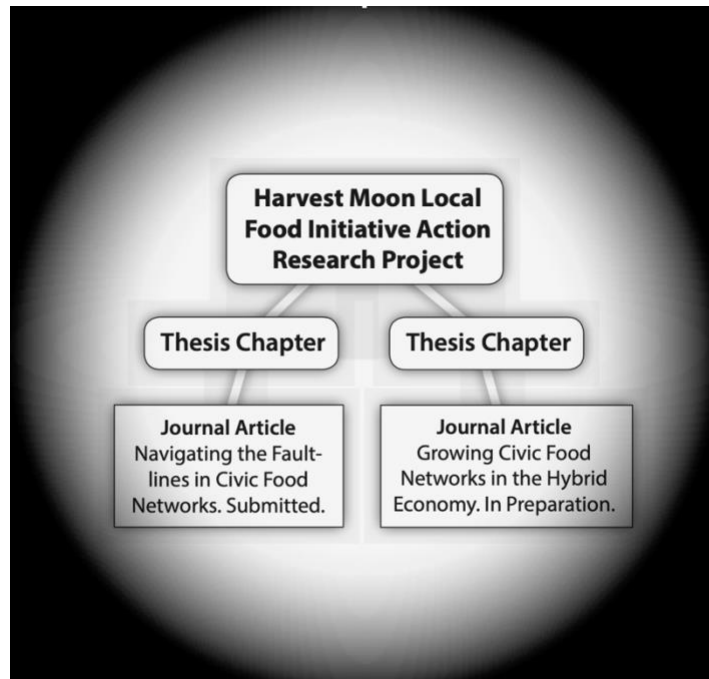
Figure 2: Thesis structure constructed by Professional Colin. The examiners and other readers may be able to sense that there is something important in the darkness beyond the beam of the flashlight, yet it is impossible to see into the darkness where a critically important, rich mess of hybrid research-action processes is obscured.

In this moment of revelation and internal crisis, I decided to transform the format of the dissertation – to drop one of the more conventional thesis chapters – and to build a dissertation that was much more diverse and inclusive of this wider range of processes and outcomes. An earlier version of this journal article was the basis of one chapter and another was added that critically reflected on the research processes as a whole (Anderson and McLachlan, 2016).

The chapters of the dissertation were written in a diversity of styles and mediums including more conventional academic writing, reflexive auto-ethnographic and reflective writing, video, photographs, articles written and published in the popular media, and "research briefs". These different formats were geared towards a diversity of audiences and indeed the published versions were put to use in different political and intellectual projects and circulate through different spaces within, beyond and across the public-professional dichotomy. The project itself led to many pragmatic outcomes such as the establishment of a cooperative, an advocacy and campaign group and a suite of popular education programs. The thesis

also included chapters co-authored by PAR partners and made visible the different ways that my co-enquirers contributed to the project (e.g. in Figure 3).
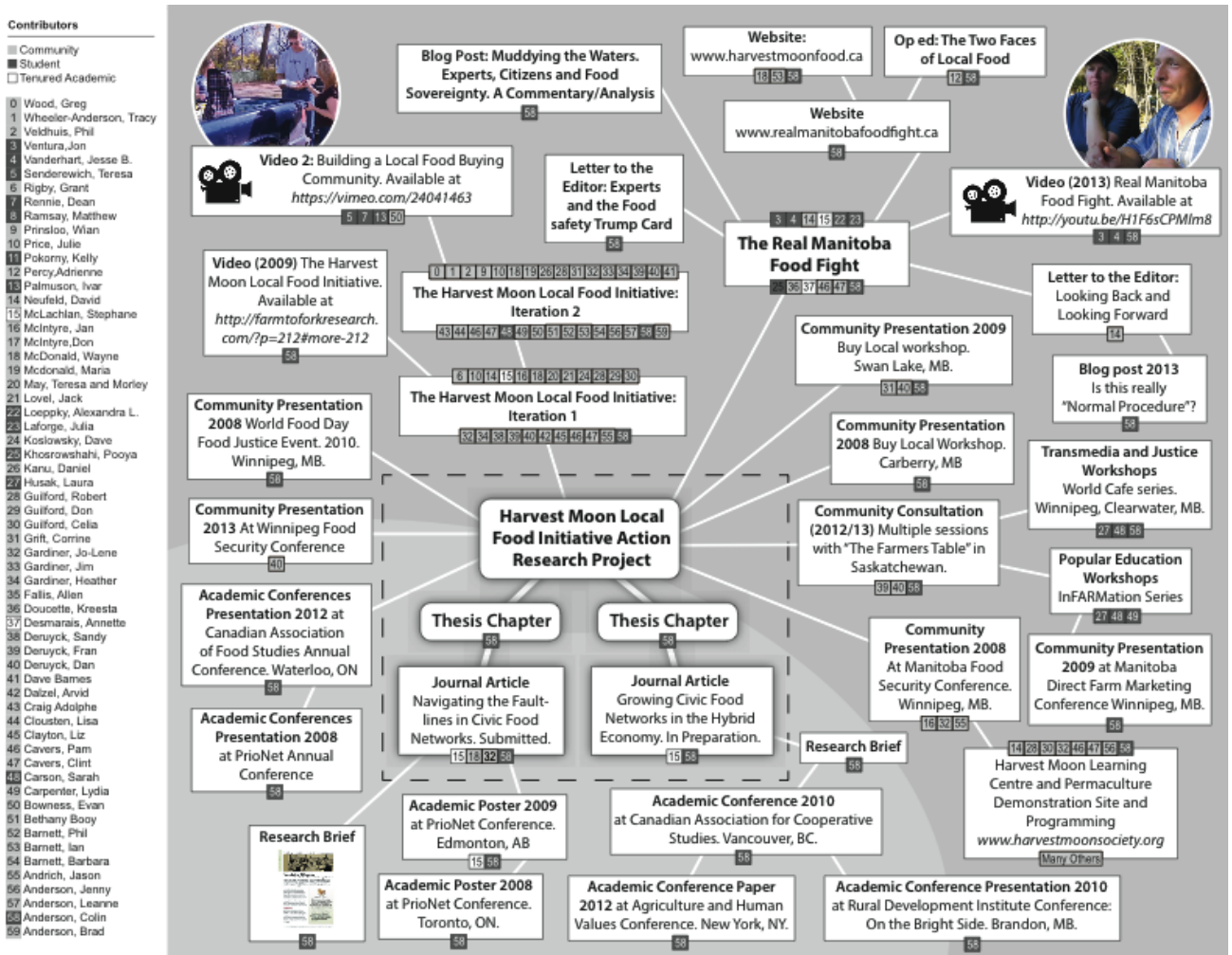

Figure 3: With a different set of parameters for what counts as research and as research outcomes we can see beyond the original thesis structure (from Figure 2) indicated with in dotted box. Outside of this, a hybrid and collective performance is made visible by highlighting 'knowable' outcomes of public, professional and critical scholarly performativity. Figure produced by author.

So. Public Colin asserted himself and demanded that Professional Colin make space in our dissertation to demonstrate and recognize the full diversity of contributors and outcomes of this hybrid research project. Public Colin demands that that Professional Colin make space for this diversity, and that the public scholarship be equally recognized and evaluated, however difficult they are to assess or to

measure. What's more, Colin's advisory committee and external examiners supported this plural approach and evaluated its own merits. While Colin the Public scholar and Colin the Critical scholar are quite pleased with this transformed process and product, Colin the Professional Scholar still felt insecure and inadequate – this isn't theoretical enough, this isn't rigorous, the language is too plain. How will my thesis examiners react? Future employers?

Discussion: Transforming Scholarly Performance at the Nexus of Subjectivity, Institutions and Social Mediums

This narrative is a partial reflection – the result of a reflexive process meant, in part, to make the internal (more) visible, to myself and others, and to unearth the dynamics of academic performativity in the context of a transformative research paradigm. The constructed conversation is a particular representation of my performativity – one way of making sense of my internal processes, self-understanding and how this evolved over time in relation to the academic people and spaces that I interacted in and with and how this changed over time. It is of course, deceptively simple, and far too neat and tidy – but arguably useful nonetheless. My subjectivity is far more complicated, blurred, contested and troubled than the few characters (the multiple Colins) that I have constructed in this story. Subjectivity is messy and iterative – a process rather than a thing, always coming into being (Butler, 1999).

Yet, unpacking, representing and then engaging in dialogue around lived experiences allows us to link the internal with the wider context, making sense of it theoretically and to strategically think about how to gain agency. The three Colins were helpful for thinking about where these constructed academic selves came from and how they've been shaped by the wider relational context within which academics are enmeshed.

Reflecting on the playful ruminations in the above script suggests that academic performativity is shaped both in the mundanity of everyday professional life and in critical moments and control points (promotion, tenure, thesis defense, performance evaluation) where academic work or 'performance' is measured in order to determine productivity, quality, worth, and status. A range of disciplinary devices prescribe and police for example, what constitutes a significant contribution, a valid publication, what are appropriate and legitimate methodologies, and who is identified as a legitimate producer of knowledge (i.e. Dr. so and so).

Academic performativity reflects acts (speech or otherwise) that cite preexisting discourses (Butler, 1997, 1999). These discourses – in my case for this paper, told through the three versions of scholarly Colin but perhaps others for different scholarly Colins (e.g. feminist, decolonial, neoliberal) – are bound up in relational lives and manifest in different mediums (a term that I am referring to here as key repositories within which discourse lives and is cultured). From my analysis, I impute three intersecting mediums of discourses that shape scholarly performativity in a dynamic interplay (Figure 4):

1. Internalized: subjectivity (how one sees oneself and thus disciplines oneself – how the world "out there" is incorporated into self-understanding and performances of the self)

2. Interpersonal: the cultural norms and social relationships (e.g. mentorship, peer-review, both within and beyond the academy, including with the publics we encounter directly in our research as well as amongst friends and families)

3. Institutional: how each person relates to the conventions, policies and materials of academic institutions (e.g. as embedded in dissertation requirements, tenure and promotion policy, publication expectations, office layouts, etc.)
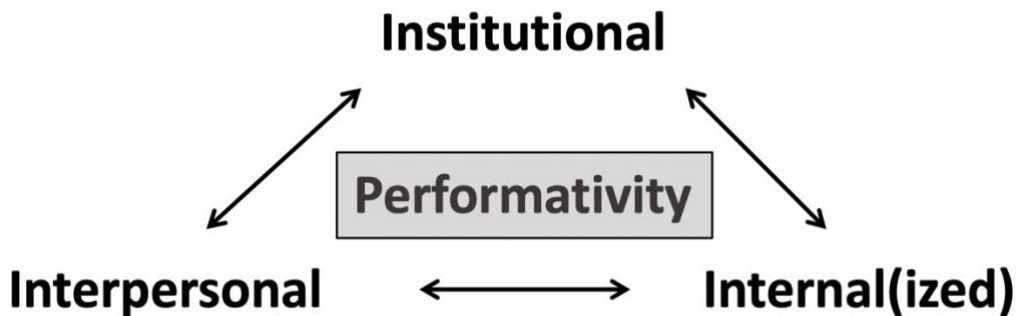
Institutional

Performativity

Interpersonal   Internal(ized)

Figure 4: Academic performativity shaped and manifested through three interrelated mediums: internal(ized), interpersonal and institutional dynamics. Figure produced by author.

The Internal(ized) Medium of Performativity

One's subjectivity – the experience of knowing oneself, one's normative perspective on their place and role in the world, and what can and should be done is a key regulator of what we do. To what extent is public scholarship possible, if one understands one's role and potential within the dominant framework of professional scholarship, and in many cases view public scholarship (including the knowledge of non-experts and the active use of knowledge production in political work) as less important or even illegitimate as an 'academic' pursuit? The 'academic self' is a medium where discourses are internalized, providing the basis for self-management. The extent to which different discourses are incorporated or internalized as a part of subjectivity is thus a crucial medium of performativity.

The disciplinary power of the neoliberal, elitist professional academy is not something that is only done to, or imposed on, us. It is also a function of self-disciplining performances. Power thus works through us, and indeed we can benefit immensely from it. We interpret, anticipate, respond, and perform in these different spaces based on subjective relationships with systems of discipline and discourses

which we reproduce, or subvert (or both) through performativity. These disciplinary relations and effects shape self-understanding and ongoing performance: What it means to be an academic; What is a valid way to do research; What are desirable outcomes; Who makes for good collaborators; What is understood to be possible as an agent working within a university.

I was privileged to have the space to explore, to some extent and with limitations, unorthodox academic performances that many of my peers wouldn't even consider to be possible as a part of an academic life. Even amongst those who are sympathetic towards, or even consider themselves to be a public scholar, this is often still carried out as the underside of a professional scholarly identity (Burawoy, 2005). In some ways naively, I came into my PhD having strongly internalized the idea that I was a public scholar and, without this key dimension of my academic subjectivity, I would almost certainly have followed a path that was aligned with professional scholarship.

The ability to even see oneself as an agent of critical public scholarship, social transformation, working with social movements, doing political academic work – is beyond the self-understanding of many academics on the left. Critically seeing oneself, challenging assumptions and re-working academic subjectivity is an important part of the process of de-professionalization and/or re-professionalization (Gibson-Graham 2006) required to advance a public scholarship and transformative knowledge work. Of course, the internalized medium of performativity is deeply shaped by institutional and interpersonal relationality.

Inter-personal Medium of Performativity

Performativity is regulated and enabled through the medium of social relations or the interpersonal encounters both in the subtleties of everyday life but also in critical intensified disciplinary moments of interaction. This is especially salient when faced with the challenge of translating the experiences, knowledge and outcomes of critical public scholarship into performance that is considered valid and valuable by academic peers in the codified spaces of academia. In these spaces, the interpersonal processes of casual conversations, interactions in meetings, peer review, thesis defense and mentorship are critical modes of socialization and regulation of academic performativity. These relations – the way we interact with one-another – are enactments of pre-existing scripts that are also deeply shaped by the internal and institutional mediums of performativity.

Although my sense is that the relational is also often unnoticed and difficult to decode, there were many obvious occasions where the interpersonal medium was important in shaping my performativity. I don't know how many times I was advised to conform to professional academic norms when navigating academic spaces and institutions. "Just get the thesis done and focus on the other stuff later" or been reminded by mentors and peers to mind the "publish or perish" culture of academia. This is, of course, great advice considering the importance of actually finishing and

then finding some way to earn a living, but also a mode of disciplining performativity.

These manifestations of the interpersonal become internalized – I still am constantly catching myself saying that I'll tow the line now, focus on academic publishing, and if/when I'm more established and secure, I can push the boundaries of what research is and should be. Early stage academics are particularly constrained by the pressures of a tight job market and the need to conform to conventional academic norms to be more widely 'marketable'- another term used by some mentors and graduate student peers in cross-talk that enacts a script of academia as commodity.

It is not only the direct interpersonal relationships that shape our performance. In many cases it is also the ones with some relational distance – mediated through blind review for example. Indeed, in this way, the weight of appeasing a community of peers – both specific and abstracted (in blind peer review) – is always present and shaping performativity. Those who control the criterion and process of judgment are crucial, and students/academics discipline their performances – to varying extent – to meet the perceived expectations of known internal examiners and peers as well as unknown external examiners, peer reviewers, grant adjudicators, and members of hiring committees, etc.

Yet, despite these pressures, students seeking to carry out critical public scholarship, often supported by sympathetic advisors, peers and public(s) can and do subvert the normalizing processes and discourses of professionalization that are embedded in the dissertation. For me, interactions with activists, organizers – the public(s) – continually suggested and enabled a performance of public scholarship that subverted elite professionalization. Wayne Robert's quote that opened this chapter reflects the many implicit and explicit scripts enacted by "non-academic" collaborators that force academics to question the relevance of professional scholarly performances and writing. In this way the reverse is true, where the interactions of non-academic peers and supporters, can encourage deviance from professional scholarly norms both in community and in academic spaces. In my case, relationships with key peers in the community, as well as with my supervisor and advisory committee were incredibly important for enabling my performance of public scholarship. Through this encouragement, mentorship and their guidance in navigating the challenges of a relatively hostile regulatory system, the interpersonal medium was critical in my internalization of public scholarship and in subverting the power of the institutional medium of performativity.

The Institutional Medium of Performativity

Academic performativity is mediated through an institutional medium where dominant discourses are embedded in rules, texts, materials and regulations in institutions. In my experience, the institutions within the university were a simultaneously supportive, while also deeply problematic, medium for shaping academic performativity for public scholarship.

On the one hand, the provisions for academic freedom in the regulations and rules of the university provide opportunities for students and researchers to pursue the ideas and the approaches without institutional influence. In this way, the institution is, on the surface, indifferent towards public scholarship. Of course, while academics are generally 'free' to pursue their intellectual interests, the details of the rules and regulations in many ways reify professional, elite and neoliberal performativity. For example, the thesis project and then later performance management encourages the development of individual excellence (over collective intelligence), becoming productive research 'personnel' (rather than citizens or productive agents of the public good) and a commitment to disciplinary protectionism (over a commitment to the public good). These institutional mechanisms reflect the tenets of professional scholarship and rest easily within elite science and the neoliberal logics of competitive individualism.

The atomizing conventions of academia are institutionalized through performance management systems, authorship attribution and reward structures for developing a reputation as an individual expert. These constrain effective collaboration on public scholarship projects between researchers in universities and with communities. Solidarity and collective action are fundamental aspects of a transformative research paradigm and of public scholarship, but are systematically dissuaded, starting early on in careers.

Institutional regulations also can prevent the recognition of the knowledge of experts-by-experience and can exclude any role of these experts in research and professionalization processes. For example, during my program, a farmer and community organizer named Jo-Lene Gardiner – a critical collaborator in the research and a critical actor, thinker and leader in the community spaces of our work – participated on my thesis advisory committee when I was in my Master's program, providing essential community voice, expertise and guidance. However, when I transitioned from a Masters to a PhD program, Jo-Lene was disallowed from formally participating on my thesis advisory committee because she didn't hold a PhD degree. This is one example of how the elitist nature of the professional academy is embedded in an institutional structure that by default excludes experts-by-experience. This experience also had an interpersonal dimension – where the academics involved (including myself) accepted this 'rule' without contesting it.

The Dynamic Interplay Between the Three Mediums

While these three mediums can be considered separately, which I did above, they are blurred in a dynamic interplay where performativity is shaped by the hybridization that results from the different discourses that manifest across these three mediums. Take for example where the institutional process of the tenure clock (i.e. obtaining tenure within 7 years or bust) perpetuates the publish or perish mantra (interpersonal) – a frequent refrain I heard from peers and mentors throughout and beyond my PhD. This pushes students and early career researchers to keep their heads down and focus on research undertakings that maximize individual academic

output in high ranking academic journals. While possibly the least useful in terms of public scholarship, dense theoretical or technical outputs are privileged in the "better" journals and are more highly rated by faculty committees that make decisions about salary, promotion, and tenure (Roth and Bowen, 2001). This encourages an extractive performativity that most efficiently translates work performed in community space into legitimate outputs in academic space.

Through repeated performances, these institutional and interpersonal pressures become normalized over time and are subtly internalized where narrow professional subjectivities take form and possibilities for other ways of doing and being are lessened. Thus, mainstream academic discourses manifest through the interplay between the three mediums and erode the possibility for public scholarship at large. Radical researchers, in this case, may abandon universities to pursue public scholarship in more conducive institutions, organizations and movements (Noy, 2009). The academic subjects that remain in academic spaces, formed in the crucible of the professional academy, then perpetuate these limitations to public scholarship through the interpersonal medium – by enacting these scripts in their relations with students, publics and peers – and the institutional medium – by accepting, upholding and reinforcing problematic institutional mechanisms.

Implications for Action

Sounds dire, right? Well of course the previous section outlines an archetype of a hostile environment for public scholarship. The experience of public scholarship and the influences in each of the three mediums is far more complex – it certainly was in my case – and each medium also has the potential to be enabling of public scholarship. The three mediums also then provide one useful roadmap for action. Through individual and collective actions, these three mediums can be transitioned and transformed in a struggle to reshape the relations and spaces of academia with a view to enable critical public scholarship. Indeed, if these three mediums constitute performativity as argued in this article, then it is also true that collectively, performativity constitutes these mediums. If subversion of the neoliberal and elitist academy is possible, and if subversion is to be expanded, then transforming how performativity is constituted through these three mediums is important. This implies that by understanding these mediums, we can act within each of them to enact alternative performances, citing counter-discourses and working individually and collectively to transform academic discourse and performativity (see Figure 5).

In the internalized medium, there is a need to cultivate reflexivity in a praxis of self-transformation. This involves an ongoing process of conscientization (Freire 1970) in a process of re-subjectification (Gibson-Graham, 2006). For me, self-writing was an important process to construct and re-construct an understanding of the relationship between my subjectivity and the wider power structures (as they manifest through the other mediums).

While this self-work is fundamental to transformation, it risks being self-indulgent, if not acted upon, and thus linking this work to action in the other mediums

is critical. We must constantly reexamine ourselves and our effect through the interpersonal medium – on students, on other academics, on communities, on marginalized groups, on businesses, on policy, on the academy and on ourselves. What effect do, and more importantly can, we have on those around us, especially those positioned differently in the constructed cultural and institutional hierarchy: students, community members, non-tenured faculty and administrators and especially people of different positionings in relation to ethnic background, gender, race and other dimensions of intersectional difference?

The interpersonal medium can be addressed by seeking opportunities to be surrounded by networks of critical friends, colleagues within and beyond the university that encourage and even actively cultivate self-understandings as subjects of public scholarship. Engaging in dialogue and conversation with others can provide opportunities to decenter the self and understand academic subject formation from multiple perspectives (e.g. Askins & Blazek, 2017). Dialogues that unearth common and different experiences of self-creation and domination in relation to critical public scholarship can create better understanding, empathy, solidarity and potentially political agency through developing collective consciousness and action.

For advisors and mentors interested in critical public scholarship, it is essential to interact with students and each other in ways that create opportunities and encourage engagement in public and transformative scholarship. For example, my advisor and also my supervisory committee, peers (especially my 'non-academic' ones) have encouraged and validated our public scholarship and without this I would certainly be on a different path now.

In the institutional medium, there is a need to bend the rules, and to contest them – working collectively and choosing the right battles at the right time. Students can be supported to learn to navigate a public scholarly performance in hostile or imperfect institutional contexts. We can take advantage of the narrow spaces within institutions and begin to pries them open. Further, people are building counter-institutions outside of the dominant system – for example the Intercultural Universities in Mexico (Rosado-May et al., 2016), the People's Knowledge collective that I am involved in (www.peoplesknowledge.org) that straddles university and non-university spaces, or the Peasant Agroecology Schools developed and ran by and for peasants (McCune, 2018).

These processes of intentionally and reflexively questioning and acting to challenge the internal, interpersonal and institutional dynamics of the academy is, again a simultaneous fraught and liberating process. Far more than a rational and instrumental exercise, this is both a political and emotional process. Recent work has highlighted the need to pay attention to the emotional geographies that are critical in the production of public scholarship and geographical knowledge (Catungal 2017). Indeed, my own experience affirms the importance of a network of critical friends and a community of practice – not merely for the instrumental purpose of exchanging to improve techniques and be more productive, but as a means of mutual

support including how to navigate the emotional ambivalence and contradictions that arise in this work (Moss, 2012). Askins and Blazek (2017) argue that while the emotional dimensions of academic performativity are implicated in the perpetuation of neoliberal, competitive and individualistic tendencies, that embracing a (counter)politics of care that renders emotions visible is a critical ingredient in eroding the dominant regimes in academia.

As targets of strategic and reflexive action, these three mediums (internal, interpersonal, institutional) should be considered in terms of their relationship with one-another. There are always opportunities to link activism and work in and across these three mediums – from within the interstices of institutions, relationships and subjectivities – to further open space for a transformative public scholarship. This process of reflexivity and of re-subjectification is both personal and political and will thus require both individual and collective action. Cultivating transformative scholarship will require that we engage in a critical pedagogy where students, faculty, administrators and the public engage in a process of mutual learning and change. In this way, academics and the academy can become increasingly imagined not as doing public scholarship on the public, but as being a part of 'the public' engaged in the co-production of knowledge – a part of wider movements for enabling social change in the public interest.

To this end, it is also important to acknowledge that many of the constraints on a radical public university come from deep-seated cultural, economic and political forces which universities are embedded within. While the bottom up practices of resistance and transformation argued for in this section are critical, we cannot lose sight of these wider dynamics. Any substantial transformation in universities will need to occur alongside and with the wider transformation of society. Thus, efforts within the realm of academia must be connected to wider struggles for change. Only then can scholars within universities transition to a stronger footing to more freely engage in a critical public scholarship.
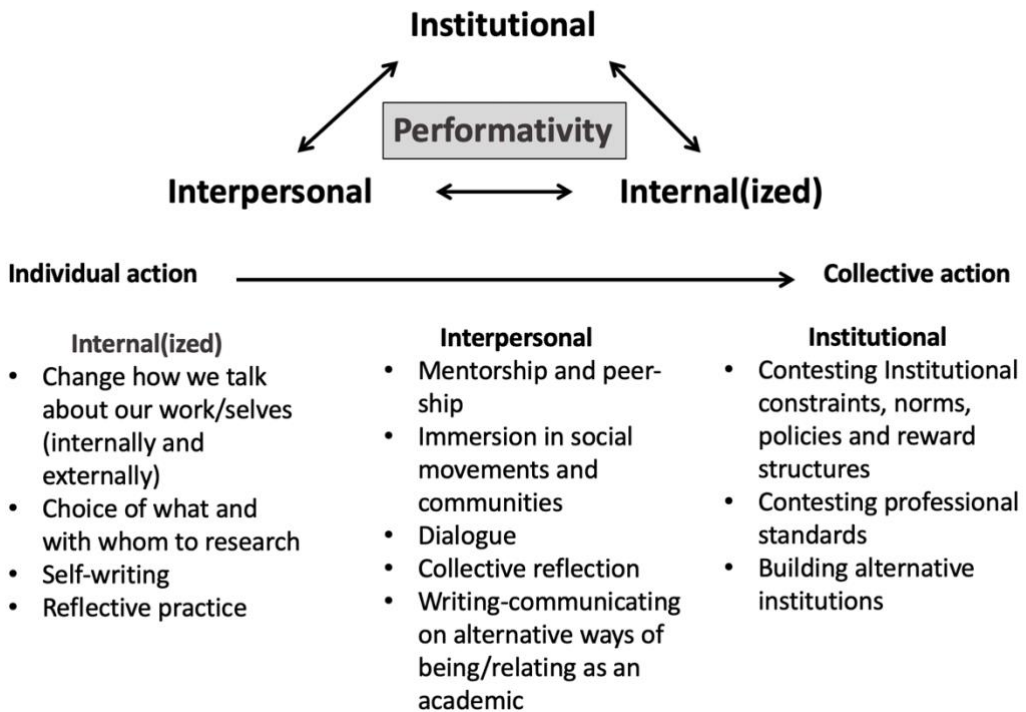
Institutional

Performativity

Interpersonal ←——→ **Internal(ized)**

Individual action ————————————→ **Collective action**

Internal(ized)	Interpersonal	Institutional
• Change how we talk about our work/selves (internally and externally) • Choice of what and with whom to research • Self-writing • Reflective practice	• Mentorship and peer-ship • Immersion in social movements and communities • Dialogue • Collective reflection • Writing-communicating on alternative ways of being/relating as an academic	• Contesting Institutional constraints, norms, policies and reward structures • Contesting professional standards • Building alternative institutions

Figure 5: Subjugation is not given and the disciplinary pressures that prevent critical public scholarship can be subverted. We can imagine a range of actions from individual to collective in orientation and that map out roughly against the three mediums that shape scholarly performance and subjectivity: internalized, interpersonal and institutional.

Wrapping Up

Attention to academic performativity provides a possibly emancipatory and subversive point of departure for sense-making and action. While the elitist and neoliberal academy is powerfully embedded, it does not pre-exist societal or cultural inscription. Academic subjectivities are continually made and remade through processes of performativity. In many ways, any act is an act that has been going on long before we arrived on the scene. Whether it be related to gender acts (where Butler conceived her work on performativity) or academic ones, these acts are acts that have been rehearsed, "much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it", but which requires "individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again." (Butler, 1988, p. 562). In this paper, I argue that professional, elitist and neoliberal scholarship is able to retain its hegemony through the continual and collective repetition of such acts and scripts across the three mediums of performativity. These pressures emanate out, reaching into the community spaces within which we conduct our research, through our performances and our enactment of power and discipline (on self, on others). At the same time,

each medium suggests a different site of transformation and plane of action across which a transformative academic scholarship can be developed, supported and strengthened.

My own experience of doing public scholarship and becoming a professional scholar, like many others, has been one of simultaneous subjection to, and subversion of, the pressures to conform as a professional scholar. De/re-professionalization, however, can be as ambivalent as professionalization. Living in-between these worlds can create feelings of inadequacy in meeting the expectations of peers in professional scholarly world and peers amongst "the publics" we engage with. Our positioning is continually destabilized as we interact with colleagues in and outside of the academy and realize the structural and cultural positions in which we are located are always compromised. Yet, it is essential to find the balance between hyper-criticality and remaining mobilized, committed and thus leveraging whatever position we are in for positive change.

One important blind spot in this article is the limits of my own experience and my positionality as a white cishet, able-bodied male. There is no doubt that these deeply shape, and are shaped by, the three mediums of performativity. The privileges that I embody enable me to navigate these tensions and to enact power in ways that fundamentally shape the possibility for engaging in academic performativity – public scholarship or otherwise. My experience is defined by my classed, gendered and racialized positioning, all of which open up access to funding, status, and opportunities, for example to, negotiate a place in a PhD program, gain resources, move relatively freely in both academic and community spaces without facing racist, sexist and other oppressions. One doesn't need to look far to find a body of work that interrogates the relationship between positionality, privilege and professionalization, often from a first person account, to unearth the implications of class, ethnicity, gender and other intersecting dimensions of difference in graduate education or higher education in general (e.g. Gutiérrez y Muhs et al. 2012; Gonzalez, 2006; Taylor and Antony, 2000; Noy and Ray, 2012; Solorzano, 1998; hooks, 1994; Offstein et al., 2004). To this end, while the experience recounted in this paper may have resonance with and be useful for differently positioned learners-scholars, readers and groups will locate themselves and interpret these ideas through their own experience and positionality.

Public scholars do not interface, collaborate and participate with a general public. Rather, publics are specific, constructed relationally, and involve processes of inclusion and exclusion that often follow the contours of a deeply uneven society. The publics that I am a part of, and that I engaged with in this research, also reflect my positionality, which in complicated and uncomfortable ways simultaneously address injustices and also reinscribe privilege and exclusions. Working for example with small farmers in the Canadian Prairies was unfolded as a strategy to confront the power of corporate agribusiness and build a more just and sustainable alternative food system. On the other hand, the specific public that cohered around this work largely reflected a settler-colonial perspective, emphasizing the property-owning

family farm. A more reflexive and critical perspective is required to interrogate the ways that systems of power such as settler-colonialism, racism and heteronormativity shape accessibility to "publics" that are constructed through public scholarship and what inclusions, exclusions and ramifications this has in a deeply unequal society.

Within the context of the neoliberalisation of universities and the even longer-standing entrenchment of elitist and positivist rituals of action in what Burawoy describes as "professional scholarship", how can processes of professionalization help to shape academic selves capable of advancing public scholarship? There is a need to better understand and collectively reformulate processes of academic professionalization. This does not result in an end state of being a public scholar, but an ongoing messy and hybridized process of always becoming one. Through personal reflexivity, dialogue and collective action, researchers can engage with the three mediums of academic performativity and resist being subjectified as elitist neoliberal academic workers (Archer, 2008). Through this process, academic selves can be reconstituted as workers within a transformative paradigm for a more just and sustainable world.

Acknowledgments

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