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Abstract

"Corporate speak," the language of neoliberalism, has for so long been integrated into higher education institutions that many academics greet new terms wanly with the tedium of overkill; academic practice is scrutinized and regulated through terms such as performance indicators, benchmarking, service providers, and clients. As part of a discursive field where ideological shifts continue to apply marketized frames of reference as neoliberalism tightens its grip, new terms and phrases are commonplace.

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CORPORATE SPEAK AND "COLLATERAL RECRUITMENT": SURFING THE STUDNET BODY

Colleen McGloin

"The question is", said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things." "The question is", said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master, that's all," (Carroll, L. 1872, 72).

"Corporate speak", the language of neoliberalism, has for so long been integrated into higher education institutions that many academics greet new terms wanly with the tedium of overkill; academic practice is scrutinized and regulated through terms such as, *performance indicators*, *benchmarking*, *service providers*, and *clients*. As part of a discursive field where ideological shifts continue to apply marketized frames of reference as neoliberalism tightens its grip, new terms and phrases are commonplace. They acquire new and different meanings through appropriation, expropriation, or the re-cycling of terms whose originary, or other, prior sets of meanings refer to other contexts, events, or histories. Recontextualzing language suits the agenda of neoliberalism. In fact, it is central to its success. Ready-made terms and phrases with echoes of "problematic" significations or contexts can be adopted and adapted for re-use; like old songs they undergo a re-mix giving them a new "sound" so that often, recognition of previous tones disappear as they are excised from any former, less harmonious connotations or denotations.

The genesis of this essay is a solicitation to the writer to be "profiled" in a faculty humanities brochure as part of "recruitment collateral". The request was made on the basis of previous research undertaken by the writer on surfing and beach culture in Australia. Despite the political scholarship of that work and its contestation of hegemonic symbols of nation, the terms "surfing" and "beach" were noted as potentially attractive subject matter for attracting 17 year olds into the humanities, and specifically, the discipline I teach into, Indigenous Studies. Militaristic usage is common to neoliberal parlance, but on this occasion, I confess to being quite startled by the re-semanticizing of a term whose other military metaphors in recent and on-going histories are still within purview, and whose re-mix can be so effortlessly incorporated into the business of student attraction to humanities study. Interpellation into the fold of "recruitment collateral" invoked thought as to how seamlessly we are witnessing the recycling of ideologically-laden frames of reference, and that, in the spirit of much humanities inquiry, and more specifically, my own disciplinary area, how the inoculation of "corporate speak" can become a problematic process of resistance or compliance for academics.

In this article, I want to unpack "recruitment collateral" not for the purpose of nit-picking or finger pointing; as stated, academic life in all Western institutions is regulated by corporate language and a cursory web search will attest to this kind of usage across a vast number of sites. More importantly, I want to consider this term as a basis for discussing what I see as an insidious re-processing of language forms that seek to make innocuous, and delete from view their violent histories and political dimensions, in this instance, the colonial implications of neoliberal speech codes. Firstly, I will consider "recruitment collateral" in relation to its semantic echoes of state-sanctioned violence and its obfuscation of racialized, gendered and class codes and, by extension, its euphemistic power as a pedagogical implement for attracting young students. Secondly, I will address the necessity of repetition as a pedagogical force for rote learning as a means of successful inculcation into

neoliberalism's ideology. I will also take issue with the assumption that youth are an apolitical mass whose attraction to tertiary study is best effected through the enticement of the paraphernalia of youth culture. Finally, I will discuss student engagement with the pedagogies presented in Indigenous Studies courses whose political foci and aspirations are always geared towards transformative learning and social justice. Throughout, this work will pay attention to corporate speak in the broader sphere of public pedagogy where the political aims of market-driven education find a "voice" in recycled frames of reference.

NEOLIBERALISM'S SIGNIFYING PRACTICES

As argued elsewhere, (McGloin and Carlson, 2013; McGloin, 2014) an understanding of how language works to produce and inform colonial subjectivity with an emphasis on its use as a device for colonialism is mandatory for students' political engagement with the material presented in Indigenous Studies. To cite Cross-Townsend, "by engaging with critical theoretical and pedagogical approaches, Indigenous Studies has the capacity to be an important site of resistance to assimilationism in the academy" (2011, 73). Attention to language use, then, is core to anti-colonial study, anti-racist praxis, and any meaningful engagement with Indigenous histories and contexts in my teaching. To be "conscripted" as "recruitment collateral", therefore, gave pause for concern about what I see as the disarticulation of signifiers from their unpalatable significations in the recycling of language. Having said this, I am mindful of the ambiguity of language as noted by Stuart Hall's (1998) assertion that meaning is dependent on the balance of power between opposing forces (1998, 451); in this case, between the corporate interests of neoliberalism and the will to engage students critically in an awareness of language as this promotes an intellectual engagement with issues of social justice. In marking these opposing forces, and with deference to poststructuralist notions about the "play of language", it is useful also to address Derrida's questions about what we do in Universities and how we do it: "[W]ho are we in the university … What do we represent? Whom do we represent? Are we responsible? For what and to whom? (Derrida, 1992, 3). Derrida's questions raise important issues in the current neoliberal climate that increasingly organizes all facets of teaching and learning. They are important questions because they ask us to look more closely at what we do, how we do it, and crucially, for what purpose, as Derrida expands, "[I]f there is a university responsibility, it at least begins with the moment when a need to hear these questions, to take them upon oneself and respond, is imposed" (3). This is not simply a call to acknowledge the play of language as its shifting codes regulate our practices; rather, it is a call to consider our complicity in the regulative forces that seek to mollify us, through depoliticising linguistic frameworks that interpellate us, and render us acquiescent to all facets of the market economy. In other words, what we do and how and why we do it is grounded in the very language of neoliberal ideology, so cognizance of language codes is crucial.

The term "collateral" has a number of meanings in contemporary usage but in the above context, it would be reasonable to think it refers to the legal definition, "to support or corroborate" (collateral, n.d.); in this instance, to support potential students. However, "collateral" resides in recent popular memory as a notorious signifier whose neat metaphorical marriage to the word *damage* forms a palliative code for death and destruction by "accident". As a term signifying colonial violence, *collateral damage* was first introduced into the public lexicon during the brutality of the Vietnam War to metaphorize the maiming, crippling and bombing of millions of innocent people. The term was then reinvigorated for the same semantic purpose during the US and allied forces "intervention" into Iraq and Afghanistan, again to euphemise the horrific killing of tens of thousands of innocent Iraqi and Afghanistani peoples. The term *collateral damage* has an unspeakable history of state-

sanctioned violence that locates wartime atrocities into a depoliticized realm of *accident*, simply defined as the "deaths, injuries, and damage to the property of people who are not in the military that happens as a result of the fighting in a war" (see http://www.meeriam-webster.com.dictionary/collateral%20dmage). Murder as "collateral" is scripted as an unfortunate by-product of war that justifies its own actions. Serving to assuage the most despicable of crimes against humanity, "collateral damage" is what Volosinov (1973) referred to as a "sign that has been withdrawn from the pressure of the social struggle". "Such a signifier", he notes,

inevitably loses force, degenerating into an allegory … [A]ny current curse word can become a word of praise, any current truth must inevitably sound to many people as the greatest lie. This inner dialectic quality of the sign comes out fully in the open only in times of social crisis or revolutionary change (1973, 23).

To my mind, the term *collateral* cannot be neatly dissected from its euphemized meanings inscribed so artfully into the hearts and minds of popular culture and the broader, global political sphere if we are to begin to understand "the dialectic quality of the sign", its ideological capacity as a potentially untruthful, undemocratic force — and its re-calibration into the marketplace of education as a disarticulation from real, violent global struggles. Euphemism's creativity and usefulness aside, it is imperative that in such an important task as attracting young people into humanities study where our aim is to nurture global citizens, we take care with the language applied to this task. As Hall reminds us,

[P]owerful symbols and slogans … do not swing about from side to side in language or ideological representation alone … [T]he expropriation of the concept has to be contested through the development of a series of polemics, through the conduct of particular forms of ideological struggle; to detach one meaning of the concept from the domain of public consciousness and supplant it within the logic of another particular discourse. (cited in Chen & Morley, 45)

Hall's metaphor of a pendulum of "swinging signs" allows us to consider the cunning of neoliberalism's lingua franca and its potential for ideological vacillation. Like other euphemisms denoting war, violence, torture and so on, for example, "enhanced interrogation techniques", "war fatigue", and "combat stress reaction", such usage, as Hirthler notes, is indicative of "a people deeply troubled by their reality" (2013, 25-27). This point is well-made; neoliberalism's adaption of terms and phrases to suit corporate interests is hardly an imaginative or creative process, and as argued elsewhere, (McGloin, 2014) points to a chronic discomfort with any meaningful political engagement with the world. "Collateral recruitment" as a decontextualised re-mix calls to mind Bourdieu's critique of the use of trite slogans that "serve to misinform and naturalize dominant discourses while reproducing existing relations of power" (Giroux & Giroux, 2010, 54). "Collateral recruitment" can be understood as an example of Lewis Gordon's (2010) application of "bad faith" where "acts of disclosure, of unconcealment, bring things to the fore that call for us to make decisions" (2010, 29). Gordon explains, "[I]n bad faith, we attempt to hide from the social world. A way of hiding from that world is to dehumanize it" (2010, 30). As a form of "institutional bad faith", corporate speak composes its own reality through an imposition of its own normativity. Placated by watered-down language, violent or unpalatable lived realities become the diluted property of the metaphorical unreal. Bearing little resemblance to recognisable human experience, corporate terms and phrases buzz in and out of the popular

lexicon detracting meaning, and thereby reducing the ability to give voice to events, situations and circumstances that, in the process of dilution, become almost *adiscursified* (i.e. beyond the realm or interest of comprehensibility). Institutional bad faith "involves constructing norms, rationalizations, social edifices, symbols, places, anything that could influence social life in ways that facilitate self-deception and the erosion of the human spirit" (Gordon, 2010, 30). Gordon's theorizing of "bad faith" allows us to understand the artifice of modes of speech that interpellate subjects into an uncritical acceptance of a reality based solely on the market. As he notes, "bad faith" is an effort to hide from responsibility" (2010, 30). As agents in the process of student attraction, and certainly as facilitators in encouraging intellectual engagement with ideas about the social and political world offered in much humanities scholarship, recognizing "bad faith" is to acknowledge our own decision-making potential as opposers of "bad faith" and proponents of a pedagogy that is enriching, and socially just from the outset, from the moment of interpellation into higher education (i.e. from the very beginnings of our solicitations to future students to come and join us).

According to Paul de Man, "metaphors are much more tenacious than facts" (1979 123), a view corroborated by the metaphorical trickery of neoliberalism's lexis. For example, the referent "collateral recruitment" not only denotes support for students in the form of an exchange of academic labour, but more craftily, it invites academic staff to belong to a repository of supporters who will collaborate with the market driven forces that undermine our efforts to teach students to be democratic citizens. The use of this lexicon to spruik the humanities says much about the equation of human labour with market forces, or what Bourdieu refers to as the "new neoliberal doxa" (2003, 23), as a now familiar intrusion to all facets of higher education. The question raised for me by this usage and its context is how do such metaphors come to be so easily re-fashioned and incorporated into discourse to the extent that it almost appears consensual to join the "ranks" of "recruitment collateral"? There was no attempt to explain the language (even though I had not heard this particular term before); it was simply assumed that I would "get it" and respond affirmatively.

Volosinov refers to language as "the ideological phenomenon par excellence" (1973, 13). Ideology depends on various speech codes, on euphemism and other metaphorical forms, for its coherence and also for its ready absorption into an intelligible discursive lexicon. The "naturalisation" of metaphoric speech can mask language's ideological codes, though, in phrases, referents, utterances that become so much part of public parlance that they are easily disassociated with some of their less palatable or polite connotations: to reiterate, collateral recruitment was given no explanation — but more importantly perhaps, none was needed. Neoliberalism is an ideology that depends on re-using or ventriloquizing what are often incongruously coined phrases to fashion them into completely different sets of meanings. In fact, to borrow from its vernacular, this is its "stock-in-trade". Repetition is crucial though. Consider the use of the term *client* in neoliberal parlance in all kinds of social situations where *patients*, *students*, and *tenants* were once the norm denoting quite clearly subject positions, class affiliations, relations of power, and social contexts. Dewey (1916) draws attention to the politics of language in his seminal work, *Democracy and Education*, where he points to the potential for language to be unrepresentative, "…there is always a danger that symbols will not be truly representative; danger that instead of really calling up the absent and remote in a way to make it enter a present experience, the linguistic media of representation will become an end in themselves" (1916, 126). Dewey's (1916) theorising of the philosophy of language remains pertinent in that he was grappling with ideas about language and education, about signs and symbols and their simplistic application, and about techniques of teaching and learning, and the importance of the experiential in "supplying subject matter required for instruction involving signs, and of evoking attitudes of open-

mindedness and concern as to the material symbolically conveyed" (1916, 127). Dewey calls attention to the notion that language has a history and that its history is always implicated by the experiential and the cultural. Ultimately, he was concerned with the capacity of language to represent truthfully. This again, does not imply a belief in the fixity of language or meaning; rather it suggests that representation is a force that can reflect the real, political nature of life. Notions of "truth" in relation to language are always problematic if we are to accept that "truth claims" are discursive, ideological and historical. And, as argued elsewhere, (McGloin & Stirling, 2011), it is the case that terms such as *ethics* and *truthfulness* are always philosophically contested terms that are often absorbed by neoliberalist discourses to re-signify according to free market individualism. What Dewey draws attention to, though, is the absence implicit in representational signs, for example, their capacity for dissociation from any ethical interpretation implicated in the social, political or moral: to reiterate, *clients* and *collateral recruitment* are disembodied terms that massify for the purpose of easy categorisation and regulation. Like *benchmarks* and *performance indicators*, such neologisms drown in ambiguous mire where meanings are often so indecisive, so utterly devoid of particularity, that gauging meaning and context through speculation becomes the norm.

Returning to the ease with which existing words and phrases are re-semanticized into new forms of representation, clearly repetition plays a crucial role in establishing consensus. This view is supported alongside the argument that even though "ideologically sensitive words" are recrafted and absorbed into the dominant lexicon through assiduous repetition by powerful societal communication channels, there are always oppositional voices (Block, Gray, and Holborow, 2012) It is important to note, however, that resistance or opposition to linguistic forms can often be a result of an awareness of other sets of meanings; that is to say that repetition and the guileful appropriation of words and phrases whose violent history is still in circulation, works to erase recognition of the traces of former meanings. Recalling Derrida (1976),

[L]anguage itself is menaced in its very life, helpless, adrift in the threat of limitlessness, brought back to its own finitude at the very moment when its limits seem to disappear, when it ceases to be self-assured, contained, and guaranteed by the infinite signified which seemed to exceed it" (1976, 6).

In personifying the potential of language to "move" in and beyond itself and its contexts, Derrida creates a picture here that at first glance removes language from users so we can see its capriciousness and its capacity for life and death. He argues, "[T]here is not a single signified that escapes, even if recaptured, the signifying references that constitute language."(7) Derrida's theory of language as a "game", an "absence of the transcendental signified as limitlessness of play" (50) also comes with a warning though, "[I]t is therefore the *game of the world* that must first be thought; before attempting to understand all the forms of play in the world." (italics in original, 50). In understanding the linguistic "game" that comprises neoliberalism's referential system, it is not difficult to detect how this "game" works to "train" language users into its signs, codes and contexts; more difficult is to sidestep its banality and to recognize its linguistic trickery as the repetitive force of its agents. That is to say, corporate speak is an embodied and embodying activity; despite its "bad faith", this is a language form that is created and re-created, echoed and repeated ad nauseum, always recruiting new users into the fold of its market driven ideology.

SAY IT AGAIN, SAM

As I have argued, neoliberal parlance, despite its facileness, requires repetition for users to "learn" its codes, or how to decode its ambiguity. This does not appear to be an onerous task, however. A quick online search shows that "collateral damage" has been appropriated in various disciplinary areas such as science, health, medicine, finance and ecology, and indeed into the lexicon of popular culture to denote a range of domestic and social injustices. To reiterate, it is not the appropriation of language, its re-use, or re-designation that is a problem; it goes without saying that language is a dynamic force that is continually revived, re-applied, appropriated and revised to fit with new cultural forms, to represent new practices, new significations and discursive formations. This is the vibrancy of language as a formidable contributor to culture's dynamism. The problem with neoliberal corporate speak as a marketing tool is its dependence on a culture of forgetfulness to ensure that subjects can be simply and effectively integrated into the ideology of the market. The sleight-of-hand appropriation of decontextualized terms like *collateral* disengages words and phrases from the often violent and catastrophic events that gave rise to their metaphorical set of meanings in the first place when a particular usage denoted actions so unspeakable that euphemism relieved the horror. The effect of dehistoricizing such terms in this particular context, is that we – and our students – are re-subjectivized into a culture of passivity where meaning is always up for grabs as now empty signifiers come to denote the marketplace and increasingly, our place within it. More broadly, this form of linguistic appropriation in university marketing is an act of public pedagogy: student attraction and enrolment brochures are for public consumption and of course, corporate speak finds expression well beyond the university so its application in this context can be assured of intelligibility in the broader domain of the public sphere, in workplaces, media organisations, legal, social and educational domains. Indeed, neoliberalism's lingua franca has a broad audience. I am reminded of a recent television advertisement where a bespectacled young schoolboy sits at the breakfast table in a suit and tie mimicking "manhood" as he cites a few lines in corporate speak about his forthcoming day as CEO, while advertising the energy potential of some breakfast cereal.

The trickery of corporate speak, I suggest, is deliberate: the priority of market driven economies depends on it. New ideologies demand new linguistic frameworks; new frameworks for language require consensus; consensus demands repetition. And so it goes. The repackaging of *collateral* is made comprehensible because we have become accustomed to the dilution of terms and phrases as referents for market forces. Without the repetition of revised, recontextualized terms, *waterboarding* might be understood as a sport, and with repetition, *collateral recruitment* can be neatly severed from other histories and contexts and seamlessly re-scripted onto the business practice of recruiting students into university study. A consequence of corporate speak is that the constant repetition of its speech codes across a vast range of public domains not only familiarizes listeners with new uses but ensures a forgetfulness of other, former contexts. This is not particularly an invention of neoliberalism; it is, in part, the way language changes. Neoliberalism's chicanery, however, is an onslaught of repetitiveness that serves to mask its political and ideological force by saturation, across all spheres of social activity, to the extent that we – social agents – are forced into a market lexicon precisely because its ubiquity guarantees comprehensibility within and among so many language communities. In other words, we are coerced into linguistic compliance in order to participate in many cultural activities. As Fairclough (2002) states, "[T]he neoliberal order is a distinctive network of practices whose distinctiveness is the way semiosis figures as an element of its material processes" (2002, 147-18).

It is the implications of terms with a violent derivation that are of concern in the activity of interpellating students into humanities study on the basis of a staff profile seen to be including a topic of interest to youth. I will address this point more thoroughly later. What is masked by the term *collateral recruitment*, apart from its echoes as a wartime referent for violence, are its racialised and gendered codes. Resonances of current and historical violence are neatly eviscerated in this seemingly benign, yet immensely political usage. *Collateral recruitment* overwrites the echoes of its violent shadow, *collateral damage*, relieving any residual discomfort while "purifying" the term from its associated significations of state sanctioned murder. As a racialised form, *collateral damage* denotes the non-West and the gendering of colonial violence where the killing of innocent women and children is couched into euphemistic abjection. Remixed as *collateral recruitment* it becomes what Fairclough (2002) calls a "narrative of progress" (2002, 47-8), signifying the "movement" of recruitment, the marching forward of successful students who are supported by a massified "collateral" of acquiescing academic supporters. There is a sense of Gramsci's notion of indifference in this usage. Gradually absorbed into the lexicon that informs public pedagogy, *collateral recruitment* is indifferent in every sense, its users inattentive to its origins or its effects as it both manipulates and destroys any semblance of meaningful human interaction. To borrow from Gramsci, neoliberalism's instrument, corporate speak, can be likened to a "deadweight" that "operates with great power on history. The indifference operates passively, but it operates. It is fate, that which cannot be counted on. It twists programs and ruins the best-conceived plans. It is the raw material that ruins intelligence"(Gramsci, 1917). Corporate speak fits precisely into Gramsci's order of a hegemony occurring across multiple sites and contexts as an educational – pedagogical – relationship. I would add that a crucial element of the success of neoliberalism is the deft absorption of its linguistic frames into the public domain; its bland banalities that are so readily assimilated, learned and repeated.

Giroux (2004) notes that, "language is more than a mode of communication or a symbolic practice that produces real effects; it is also a site of contestation and struggle" (59). Contestation and struggle require effort, courage, and indeed, strategy if we are to dodge the depersonalizing effects of corporate speak and alert our students to its insidious power of interpellation. Returning to the practice of repetition, I would argue that indifference is a response to repetition, and that in fact, indifference is exactly what is required for us – language communities – to not contemplate or engage critically with the linguistic terrain of neoliberalism. Indifference is the final step once repetition has done its job. Repetition constitutes a political activity that pacifies the populace through familiarity, and ennui. Our collective sighs and yawns eventually recede as the repeated use of remixed metaphors enforces acclimatisation, familiarity, and ultimately, indifference.

CORPROATE SPEAK AND YOUTH "RECRUITMENT"

Recruitment collateral is a prescribed, orderly activity that speaks simply, on the face of it, to an audience of potential supporters of young student cohorts to whom such advertising ascribes no acknowledgement of any capacity for intellectual engagement. Carrots like *surfing*, *digital*, *media*, *social media* and *youth studies* are among the many appellations dangled for the consumption of aspiring undergraduates whom marketers have decided are apolitical, self-absorbed and self-interested, and must be titillated by courses with "sexy" designations or titles that will stimulate, or appeal primarily to their social interests. The idea of an apolitical youth has taken hold to quite an extent as evidenced by the solicitation in question, but also in curriculum development, and in more concrete ways as those recruited are marched through paces that will train them to engage more fully with the market forces

that drive their education and fit them for a place in the neoliberal workforce. In effect, we risk creating what we critique without thought that students entering the humanities might already have knowledge and interest in issues of social justice from enlightened school teachers, parents, Elders, communities and families where such issues are discussed. Indeed, many students are often looking forward to learning more. Constrained by the vagaries of corporate speak, therefore, we succumb in many ways to the concept of an apolitical youth by complying to the dictates of what we think – or are told – young students want. According to the demands of the marketplace, we are reined in by the discursivities that now regulate us, our students, and the ways we might solicit students into university study. Speaking outside of this discourse can be dangerous and can incur penalties. As we know, the pervasiveness of the discourses of neoliberalism allows for "no vocabulary for political or social transformation, democratically inspired visions, or critical notions of social agency to enlarge the meaning and purpose of democratic public life" (Giroux & Giroux, 2004: 251). So, effectively, we draw on our own device to try and sustain a counter discourse that refutes essentializing notions of youth and asserts that young people are not an apolitical mass, and that, whatever their level of knowledge or commitment to social justice, our job as teachers is to build on that with a view to educating future democratic citizens.

There is of course a political imperative into creating the view that youth are apolitical. Neoliberal economies need the consent of acquiescing young cultural workers for a range of reasons, one of which is to equip them with the knowledge that if they cannot get a job, it is through a lack of compliance to the regulating forces of neoliberalism that demand good interviewing skills, a comprehensive curriculum vitae with evidence of community engagement, good marks, a "good" character, and all and sundry that now weigh heavily on young people's chances of work. To cite Bauman (2011), neoliberalism prescribes that "[Y]ou can't be a good shopper unless you yourself become a commodity which people are willing to buy" (79). Non-adherence to the prescription incurs the penalty of unemployment and all the consequences of that condition. The depoliticizing of students in the "recruitment" process can be seen as a market-driven attempt to solicit as many students as possible through whatever means necessary. In these days of the highly competitive education marketplace, dangling carrots is a useful tool for increasing student numbers in order to retain/attract funding and to finance the increasing administration costs incurred through massive bureaucratization, those employed in what Stephen Ball refers to as the "technicians of transformation" (2003, 219). Ball's discussion of the "terrors of performativity", following Lyotard, engages with the saturating techniques of marketization and their effects on ethical autonomy (2003, 226). Corporate speak in the form of marketing to potential students produces what Ball refers to as a "performative text", inscribed with "the use and re-use of the right signifiers" (2003, 224) in a promiscuous act where " truthfulness is not the point … the point is – their transformational and disciplinary impact" (2003, 224).

Despite the pervasive view that youth require the trappings of youth culture to be enticed into study, it is still the case that "critical thinking" skills are often written into humanities curricula as a course objective, and in some instances, a graduate quality valued by the institution. The message here is that 17 year olds can be encouraged into critical engagement with the right tools – or carrots – on the proviso that such measures of knowledge acquisition can be scripted as "value-added" attributes for the curriculum vitae. An insidious example of how this works in another spruiking context on many university campuses is the way in which voluntourism organizations are now to be seen touting their wares to attract young students into the practice of temporary overseas "aid" for poverty stricken nations, often Indigenous communities, as teachers of English or "helpers" in orphanages. I have witnessed this practice of "recruitment" in lecture theatres and tutorials

and have been astonished at the ease with which these organizations sell their "products" by telling students that to be a volunteer in a poor nation "looks good on your cv."[i] (McGloin and Georgeou, 2015)

INDIGENOUS STUDIES: SURFING "ON THE GROUND"

Contrasting Bauman's (1999) distinction of neoliberal worldviews from other ideologies as "a surrender to what is seen as the implacable and irreversible logic of social reality" (1999, 127), Indigenous Studies offers a counter discourse to that logic, where the relentlessness of neoliberal thought can be temporarily suspended. As Cross Townsend argues, Indigenous Studies offers an opportunity "to resist the epistemic authority of dominant culture in the academy" (2011, 76). The majority of students who undertake Indigenous Studies courses in my Unit, as electives or as a major, are non-Indigenous, for well-known and documented historical reasons relating directly to colonial policies and practices. Knowledge about the discipline is openly stated on staff webpages and generally, on the university webpage, so is available to all students seeking enrolment. This is relevant insofar as this discipline is political in nature and concerned primarily with engaging students in understanding and critiquing all facets of colonial dominance. The invitation to participate as "recruitment collateral" suggested I include a couple of paragraphs stating what a degree in Indigenous Studies will provide for students. The request was understood. I was being asked about future employment prospects rather than how this discipline provides a counter-hegemonic discourse that engages students in Indigenous histories and political struggles.

It is the case that students at higher education institutions are these days often overwhelmed by a range of competing commitments, obligations and responsibilities. As Searls Giroux points out, along with employment and familial responsibilities, students are subject to changing conditions, increased class sizes, less frequent access to academic staff − themselves overwhelmed by both academic and administrative demands (160). Students with employment and/or familial obligations are often "time poor" to borrow another corporate euphemism. It is the case therefore that teaching anti-colonialism can be difficult and challenging. Anti-racist theory can be both difficult and time consuming to learn. However, "selling" the benefits of anti-colonial courses to students as long term political goals can be quite straightforward and rewarding. In these times of manufacturing education for future work, students, imbued with the demands of highly polished curriculum vitae as pre requisites for a job interview, will often ask, " How can I make this course look good on my cv"? A reasonable request given their knowledge of the competitiveness of the marketplace. It is here that we can give practical advice on how to demonstrate their mastery of the language of the marketplace in creative ways, to intervene, and to apply the critical skills they have acquired in Indigenous Studies courses. Students learn about the social justice and democratic principles central to Indigenous critical pedagogy through the works of Indigenous, anti-racist, anti-colonial, and decolonial theorists and activists. This learning is the basis for critical thinking and the confidence that comes with this attribute, following hooks (2010), as a practice, an "action … a longing to know — to understand how life works" (2010, 7). Critical thinking can be usefully applied in many workplaces requiring "problem solvers". Students who develop this capacity know that any on-going commitment to social justice and democratic principles requires them to maintain an awareness of the social world, or as Giroux (2011) puts it, to "question critically the institutions, policies and values that shape their lives, relationships to others, and their connection to the larger world" (2011, 101). The most important thing is that students–and educators–practice the principles of democratic agency whereby we can apply transformative pedagogies through seizing back ethics and social justice from their uncritical and diluted absorption into neoliberal parlance,

and so we can retain our collective memories of other words, other contexts, and other histories, times where a Freirean vision of hope was evident in the social order.

PAST AND PRESENT: REVIVING HOPE

On November 5, 2014, a public memorial service was held for former Australian Prime Minster (1972-1975), Gough Whitlam, who died at the age of 98 on October 21, 2014. I mention Whitlam here, not simply out of nostalgia for a time of hope and democratic vision, but because this was a Prime Minister whose political ideals and aspirations were inseparable from his commitment to a free and democratic education system for all, at all levels. In the days following Whitlam's death, I spoke to my students about him recalling that time of hope, commenting that despite its challenges, errors and pitfalls, the Whitlam Government ushered in a brief moment in Australia's history whereby Freire's ideals of democracy and hope began to be realised as free education and a wealth of other social reforms were firmly on the political agenda. During this time, mammoth changes to policy shifted social perceptions of justice and freedom, of civic and social responsibility. These were pre-neoliberal days when the social realities of the current "user pays", free market era would have been both inconceivable and incomprehensible and free education began to be understood as a right. A memorable eulogy for Whitlam was given by Indigenous leader Noel Pearson, (2014) who cited a litany of some of the Whitlam government's democratic reforms, among them free universal healthcare, free University education, student financial assistance, needs based school funding, the introduction of the Racial Discrimination Act, the recognition of Indigenous Land Rights, the abolition of conscription, the funding of health and welfare organisations for women and the abolition of assimilation policy. The list is long and I draw attention to this, to reiterate, not simply with a sentimental nod at a past that paved the way for my own entry into University, but with thoughts as to how we can maintain a vision for liberatory pedagogy, in a Freirean sense, to "unveil opportunities for hope, regardless of the obstacles", and to refute "conservative, neoliberal postmodernity" (Freire, 1994, p.9, 10).

Language, the fundamental basis of social activity and cultural expression, functions as a coercive force for neoliberalism's objectives. Corporatized terms and phrases mark a conservatism that is difficult to evaluate because their potential for meaning is comprehensible only through mindless conformity to the ideology that gives rise to their blandness while ensuring the veracity of market forces in every sphere of social action. Terms such as *paradigm shift*, *core competencies, value added* and *collateral recruitment* join a cache of expressions that, inextricably connected to market ideology, deter critical engagement with real social conditions, which is precisely the point: if we are not engaged, we are more easily persuaded, more compliant, less critical. The revival of hope, therefore, for a more equitable and democratic social order necessarily becomes a strident activity that subverts linguistic domination through forms of resistance that might include conscious engagement – or, following Freire, *conscientization*, and the incorporation of critiques of language into our classrooms through dialogic teaching and learning methods. Reviving hope demands that we become active agents in this game, and where possible, usurpers of its edifice for our own purposes. Susan Searls Giroux (2010) raises a crucial question for this essay. She asks, "if there is no peace without struggle, the question for intellectuals is not how to remain neutral and impassive, but how to distinguish, with due consideration and care, the kinds of battles in which they can and should engage" (2010, 23). The struggle over the politics of language is fraught, as discussed in a previous piece (McGloin, 2014) where I highlight the effects of euphemism on students learning about global colonialism and the effects of violent histories on Indigenous people. Unfortunately, our students are already

imbued with the language of de-sensitivity; they come to us knowing the term *political correctness* and understanding on some level the power of this phrase to stifle dialogue and temper lived realities. Students come to University with more familiarity with corporate speak than us; hardly surprising, for most, it is their primary lexicon of exposure in the public domain where its force has infiltrated all sites of youth culture. By contrast some academics see corporate speak as an assault not only on our academic freedom, but more cogently, on our pedagogical values and practices. Corporate speak might induce ennui. But it is also a powerful tool in the maintenance of neoliberalism, in the effective re-presentation of "collateral damage" as "collateral recruitment" and a whole raft of significations that dilute histories and solicit our complicity in their bland re-assignment to other, more comfortable significations.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Following Searls Giroux, this article attempts to draw attention to a battle I see as important, that is, to develop an understanding of the broader public domain of neoliberalism, its legal, economic and socio-political formations from whence corporate speak derives and imposes its legitimacy. The reflections in this paper are only useful inasmuch as they may generate further questions about language, its capacity to construct subjectivities, to contribute to discourses, and to promote new and more truthful ways of representing day-to-day realities and experiences. It is difficult to countenance a critical or radical teaching practice in any discipline in the humanities, and particularly in Indigenous Studies, which omits attention to the cunning of neoliberalism's market vocabulary. In its euphemistic glory, *collateral recruitment* in the context of attracting students to the humanities, is a phrase that tells us about history, politics and the potential for language to be harmful. More importantly, it is just one re-mix within an infinitely expanding lexis whose threat to depoliticize all modes of expression constitutes a significant challenge for democratic thought and action. Alerting ourselves and our students to this force is an urgent task, therefore, as Fairclough reminds us, "the task is not only to specify the threat, but also to specify emergent practices of resistance, and to discern possibilities for change" (2002, 18).

NOTE

See McGloin and Georgeou (2015) for a full discussion of this common practice in higher education institutions. This article draws attention to the practices of student interpellation into activities that are more often than not detrimental to many Indigenous and other poverty stricken communities, and to the "ethics" applied in this recruitment process through the marketing spiel of many voluntourism recruitment organizations.

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