

Indebted servitude – the work of ‘the calling’ in the new feudal professions

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Abstract This paper will argue that, far from supporting an educational ‘calling’ in structural terms, the academic life (like many professions) is both a form of wage labour and, in certain cases, part of a neo-feudal economy in which growing numbers of working people remain permanently indebted to landlords and financial institutions, and increasingly accountable to both markets and the state. At the same time, however, many of those who work as academics in universities continue to cultivate and defend traditional principles of scholarly activity and aspire to pursue what remains for them an intellectual, social or moral vocation. Drawing on recent work about student debt and insights from the New Faculty Majority (a US organisation of adjunct academics), and on the frameworks of economic culture outlined in Weber and Boltanski and Chiapello, the paper will ask whether the cultural image of ‘the academy’ as an educational and intellectual institution in fact legitimises market logics and managerial domination within universities, and ask whether there is any chance for it to operate as a critical force against these conditions within the universities themselves.

Introduction

This paper grew out of a seminar on rethinking the contemporary politics of the university, the scholar and the student through the lens of Max Weber’s work on universities (Dreijmanis 2008). The seminar raised three questions. First, what is the meaning of scholarship in contexts where scholars are ‘faced by a series of sometimes contradictory conditions – output targets in research, “the student experience” in teaching coupled with compulsory student fees and debt-financing, the tension between instrumentalism and knowledge for its own sake, between a public and a market-driven university ethos, between a collegial institution and a hierarchical organisation’? (Frade 2012) How do these conditions impact upon academic pedagogy, epistemology and identity? Above all, what forms of subjectivity, and what new economic relationships, are being cultivated within this system?

Raising these questions through contemporary readings of Weber’s work on the academy creates space to reconsider the politics of academic knowledge, teaching and learning as central problematics for critical social theory and philosophy. From his now classical speech laying out the importance and implausibility of ‘science as a vocation’ (1917a) to his critical publications and correspondence on the relationship between the university and the state (1911a, 1917b), the politics of appointment and employment in higher education (1908c, 1909), tensions between academic freedom and ideological or political position (1908a, 1908b), the origins of sociology as an academic discipline (1910, 1912), and comparisons

between German and US universities during the early twentieth century (1911b), Weber's work demonstrates that the meaning of scholarship is always contested terrain. More obliquely, it reminds us that scholarship is a deeply political, moral and subjective activity; that it is susceptible to institutional conservatism and systemic recuperation, that it also retains the potential to be a force for resisting abuses of power, and that it is shaped by forms of human subjectivity as well as political and economic constraints.

Within this broader body of work, Weber's theorisation of 'the calling' may be particularly useful for understanding the processes of subjectivation that are presently redefining scholarship in new capitalist institutions such as the British university. In this paper, I will argue that the cultural representation of the academy as a progressive intellectual institution within British society functions to maintain the possibility of the university as a space for critical knowledge and practice, while simultaneously legitimising the market logics and managerial forms of power within universities that are transforming scholarship and education into economic technologies. The structural adjustment of British universities from public educational to market economic institutions, which began in the 1970s, has now largely been accomplished (Amsler 2011; Beck 1999). Within this system, however, academics continue to cultivate and defend traditional principles of scholarly activity and aspire to pursue what remains for many an intellectual, social or moral vocation. As scholarship itself has become more oppositional it has become more subjectively painful, and the contradictions between the intellectual ideals and the political-economic realities of the university have become more visible (Boden and Epstein 2011; Gill 2009). This politicisation of the academic profession has spawned a prolific new field of study detailing how the vocations of teaching and research are being distorted by the commodification of knowledge, and by the production of human beings who are willing and able to subordinate their knowledge, pedagogies and vocational commitments to the metricised logic of neoliberal capitalism (Ball 2003; Burrows 2012; Davies and Bansel 2010).

Here, however, I would like to consider the problem from another direction, via a critique of the depoliticised articulations of the 'academic calling' which provide fertile ground for idealistic and melancholic fantasies about the idea of the university and which subsequently obscure critical understandings of the historical conjuncture that we work within. This conjuncture, which has been in formation since the first stages of neoliberalisation in the early 1970s, combines fundamental changes in the institutional forms of the university through its privatisation and corporatisation, changes in the experience of studying through the consumerisation of knowledge and normalisation of student debt, alterations in the composition of the academic profession through its casualisation and bureaucratic regulation, and the structural dependency of both indebted and debt-free academics on the future indebtedness and labour of students. I suggest that this conjuncture is a critical problematic for all those who are considering the social meaning of the university today.

Indebted livelihoods: students, academics and the co-dependency of exchange

Among other things, this assemblage of changes has made it virtually impossible to argue that we could separate the academic and professional from the normative and political, even if we wanted to. Particularly following the publication of the Browne Review (2010), the subsequent withdrawal of government funding for teaching in most non-STEM disciplines in 2011 and implementation of the new tuition fee regime in 2012, and the increasing concentration of reduced state funding for research, the survival of British universities appears to require the reproduction of explicitly exploitative types of political-economic relationships with students and colleagues alike. As Andrew Ross (2012), an organiser of the US-based Occupy Student Debt campaign, explains, his livelihood ‘depends on [his] students going deeply into debt, often for decades to come’. And this complex relationship of economic exchange, he argues, alters his moral responsibilities to students in the classroom.

On other words, some of the tensions that academics feel between their ‘work’ (or in Weberian terms, their calling) and the demands of the capitalist institutions in which they work are not simply cultural clashes between educational and managerial logics. On the contrary, rhetoric about different institutional cultures or values distracts our attention away from the more mundane contradiction that is created between students and academics. This contradiction becomes palpable in a range of everyday practices within the university. For example, a number of academics in my acquaintance recently received invitations from their university to leave their posts (taking, as it is grimly called, ‘voluntary severance’) if their departments did not recruit their ‘targeted’ numbers of students. The message insinuated that to remain in post under such conditions would be not only unsustainable for the individuals and the departments, but that it would be unfair to other academics and students in the university who would be forced to ‘subsidise’ such underachievers. But the important critique of such practices, which have become increasingly common in recent years, is not that simply they are off-putting or ingenuous. The real problem is the way in which they constitute exploitation and competition as the necessary conditions of scholarship itself. If we do not recruit large numbers of fee-paying students to our courses, we are encouraged to leave the academy. And according to Ross, if we do recruit fee-paying students to our courses, we contribute to the long-term indebtedness of at least those who will need loans in order to finance their studies.

Ross writes from the United States, where the problem of educational debt is more acute than presently in the United Kingdom; in 2011, student debt held by US lenders passed the \$1 trillion mark (Johnson, 19 October 2011, *Washington Post* in Blacker 2012; Ross 2012). However, the advanced state of the system in that context allows us to appreciate some complexities that are not yet visible in contexts where the institutionalisation of educational debt is still in early stages. Unlike other types of loans such as mortgages or personal loans, student loans incurred in the US carry otherwise impermissible interest rates, otherwise illegal collection practices, and are not dischargeable through bankruptcy. Recent statistical indicators show that individuals positioned in marginalised and oppressed social groups within the United States – who are on one hand said to have benefitted most from the

expansion of higher education – are now also the most heavily indebted, with 27% of African Americans owing \$30,000 or more after graduation, ‘compared with 16% of white, 14% of Hispanic and 9% of Asian graduates’ (Ross 2012).

Despite these inequalities and injustices, however, the accrual of substantial debts for higher education is culturally normalised in the US through its institutionalisation (with US admissions officers offering loan advice and negotiation as part of admissions), moralisation (with the repayment of loans in general being defined and often as a measure of moral, social and legal character) and stigmatisation (with individuals ashamed or afraid to admit that they owe large amounts of money or have defaulted) (Ross 2012). Recent ‘testimonials’ about the consequences of educational debt reveal experiences not simply of extended hardship, but indeed of truncated futures. As reported from the Strike Debt Initiative, many people ‘spoke of depression, some of divorce, while others described the kind of future – owning a home, having children – they believed was now hopelessly unattainable’ (Ross 2012).

In the United Kingdom, statistical information less robust as loans lower and more recent; also, emphasis has been on qualitative studies of *perceptions of* and *attitudes towards* debt to anticipate how it might affect people’s choices to go to university. Emphasis on how normalised it is – interesting as catching a moment in time when it is not yet normalised, and complex assemblages of race, class, gender, age and experience of university articulate around this in different ways. Conclusion is that... But also some articles on relation between debt and rising house prices in the UK.

Such experiences are becoming common for university students who themselves become higher educators and academic researchers, particularly as the conditions of academic employment become increasingly competitive and precarious. As of this year, approximately three-quarters of academic faculty and an even greater proportion of academic staff in the United States are employed on insecure, temporary, un-benefitted and increasingly precarious contracts. The majority of these are concentrated in private and community colleges (Coalition on the Academic Workforce 2012), and a large proportion carry heavy burdens of student debt accrued to finance their own education. As similar trends in the segmentation and disarticulation of the academic workforce are at work in Canadian (Bauder 2006) and British universities (Laoire and Shelton 2003; SIGJ2 2012), it is the political subjectivity and material futures of this emerging population of academic workers that I would like to use as a way of thinking about meaning of scholarship in the university today.

Student debt as indenture

In the progressive tradition, the primary purpose of higher education (as with all education) is to expand the possibility of people – students and teachers alike – to experience increasingly open, agentic and liveable futures. This aspiration is variously imagined as the progression to a fulfilling career, an ontologically and materially secure existence, an ongoing project of self-cultivation, or a radical process of emancipation. These purposes are uneven and often incommensurate, and are all situated within a depoliticised discourse of education which

makes no reference to the particular forms it takes or the material conditions of its possibility. What unites them, however, is that all presume some sort of relationship between higher education and individual or social freedom.

What should we make, therefore, of arguments that attending university has become the first step into a long-term relation of financial and political indenture, and that the act of assuming large debts in order to finance this opportunity has a pedagogical effect of disciplining the very nature of society itself? According to Jeffrey Williams, educational debt is ‘not just a mode of financing but a mode of pedagogy’ which ‘teaches that higher education is a consumer service’, ‘teaches career choices based on earnings’, makes the capitalist market appear ‘natural, inevitable and implacable’, and educates people to accept, tolerate, manage or even desire fear and stress (2011: 90-93). To what extent may we thus understand the political economy of student debt as a feudalist regime, and of indebted academic labour as a form of new capitalist indenture? A number of writers are now eager to persuade that these are descriptive rather than metaphorical categories. David Blacker, for example, draws on the prohibition of debt bondage in the UN Supplemental Convention on the Abolition of Slavery (1956) to argue that the ‘non-dischargability and non-collateralizability’ of educational debt in the US translates into the creation of human beings who are indebted to a commodity which, in legal terms, is actually their own person (Blacker 2012).

This argument is relevant for reconsidering the politics of the academic teaching profession. In the first instance, it puts an ironic spin on common critiques of the teleological instrumentalism of study that many university teachers find so frustrating. As Blacker argues,

‘given the inescapability and long-term nature of the debt, the debtors are, as intended, rendered ever more precarious and subject to the volatilities and downward wage pressures of the globalized labour market; the *first* question is, of course, does the job *pay* rather than whether it is consistent with one’s own conception of human flourishing....The sense of having an open future consistent with one’s personal ideals crashes hard against the rocks of the debt repayment imperative’ (2012: 4).

It also of course crashes hard against the rocks of normalised academic identities, which are divergent but share common principles of personal and professional autonomy, intellectual responsibility, and often privileged styles of life. Invoking Max Weber’s desire to advance what he called ‘plain intellectual integrity’ in academic work, we may ask whether academics can, with intellectual integrity, expect university students to embody principles of a ‘disinterested’ or non-economically driven passion for knowledge within political-economic conditions that systematically devalue such commitments.

The politics of vocation

This question is mirrored for academic in what Mark Schwehn says is the funny business of asking them about their work. He often gets a curious response: they say, ‘because I have been so busy working this term, I have not had any time to do my own work’. Here, Schwehn

highlights the way in which ‘writing, composing and experimenting’ are defined as ‘real work’, and teaching (or more commonly administration) as subsidiary and potentially distracting. The definition of ‘real’ work, and of the university as a place in which this ‘real’ work should happen, is what Schwen refers to as the ‘hegemony of Weberian conceptions of scholarship’. As he explains, there have long been struggles over three different versions of the academic vocation: ‘making knowledge, transmitting knowledge and skills (in liberal and vocational education), and helping students lead more ethical, fulfilling lives through processes of *Bildung*’ (1992: 2, 4); to this, we might add the more vocational articulations of the academic vocation on the one hand, and transformative visions on the other..

The point of invoking Schwen’s argument is not to explain why one conceptualisation of scholarship prevails over another in any particular context. I am rather interested in what Weber had to say about the relationship between the ethos of the academic specialist and the constitution of the academic self in any of these approaches. Weber’s dedicated scholar – like his ideal-type Puritan whose performed religiosity fuelled the development of European capitalism – was, in addition to being quintessentially male, highly specialised, devoted to discipline and disciple, unconcerned with the broader social or spiritual meaning of his work, expecting and accepting of others superseding him, anti-romantic, scientifically rational, and indifferent to ‘spontaneous enjoyment, emotional satisfaction, and communal affections’ (Schwehn 1992: 5). For Weber, only such ascetic subjectivity could tolerate the failures, repetitions and isolation that he believed yielded rigorous scholarly knowledge, and only such disregard for service, status and recognition would allow someone to endure the consciousness of the irrelevance of one’s work for the problems arising in everyday life. For this imagined scholar, a ‘sense of self-sacrifice and cloistered disregard for worldly things is a source of intellectual autonomy and disciplinary strength’ as well as an extremely precarious existence (Mills 2010: 345). Weber himself doubted that many people could hack it (1922).

Few people defending the university today aspire consciously to this ascetic mode of academic scholarship. And yet, a similar concept of the academic subject presently imbricates smoothly with cultures of competition and performativity in universities, and with the logic of academic capitalism itself. Academics may have private lives and interests, but contemporary labour erodes the boundaries between them; ‘is not uncommon to be expected to be engaged continually in research or academic reading, nor uncommon for calls to be at weekends and evenings – work may impinge on home in a way that is uncommon in other settings, but home must not impinge on work’ (Munn–Giddings 1998: 58). National policies reward universities that reward academics who can demonstrate a single-minded commitment to excellence in their field of research, the development of specialised ‘research capacity’ and concentrated centres of expertise. These institutions, along with (in the UK) metrics such as the Research Excellence Framework, National Student Survey and Key Information Sets, socialise academics into dominant discourses of scholarship as an exchangeable commodity, encourage them to compete ruthlessly with one another for scarce status and resources, and cultivate deep personal investments into dominant forms of academic recognition while devaluing others (Amsler 2013; Burrows 2012; Holmwood 2011, 2013).

Can Weber's characterisation of the academic vocation as the organisation of disciplines 'in the service of self-clarification and knowledge of interrelated facts', and his exhortation towards the practice of 'plain intellectual integrity' in the academy, be meaningful within these conditions? I argue that it can. What Weber described as the internal 'calling' to academic work now plays a particular role in naturalising academic capitalism as it valorises the activity of scholarship even when the production of scholarly work takes form as an irrational process of exploitation and commodification. It describes a passionate devotion to one's intellectual project, which enables a person to not-mind-so-much about whether the labour of the project is institutionally supported or recognised; in other words, it carries a 'spirit of capitalism' that justifies our work as part of it (Boltanski and Chiapello 2007: 8). As a result, scholarship is no longer simply a vocation, but a condition of employment; employment becomes something that we endure in order to 'work', and we exchange control over the conditions and products of our intellectual labour in order to remain employed.

The material nature of this symbiotic exchange becomes visible in small ways, such as through the wording of another invitation, received by academics in my acquaintance, to 'sever' themselves voluntarily from the university. It was suggested that those who did not 'wish' to meet the university's 'minimum research standards' of highly-ranked publications and generation of external income could consider reducing individual pressures by resigning from their posts. As Kathleen Lynch argues, messages such as this, although seldom so explicit, illustrate how a 'care-less academic culture sends out a strong message...as to who is and is not an appropriate candidate for academic life' (Lynch 2010: 58). But is it possible that other conceptions of scholarship, such as teaching in its didactic sense or character formation in a more broadly pedagogical one, can be cultivated to counter this hegemony? Is it still possible for an academic 'opt out' of the dominant forms of recognition and dedicate themselves in a vocational sense to the education and care of their students? The work of critical political economists such as Jodi Dean suggests that revalorising alternative practices in this way might contribute to redirecting the history of the university itself, for:

'if political struggle is always an irreducible dimension of capitalism and capitalism always interlinked with conflict, resistance, accommodation, and demands, then refusals to engage in these struggles, rejections of the terms of these struggles, will affect the form that capitalism takes' (Dean 2007: xxx).

I am not sure, however, that in the present conjuncture this possibility of opting-otherwise exists. To explain why, I will turn first to an autonomist critique of capital and then to Silvia Federici's alternative feminist critique. Before this, I offer a brief thought on the elements of the academic profession in British universities that make it simultaneously 'careless' and 'careful', but in both forms neoliberal.

Why specialists with spirit are not an alternative

Weber famously concluded the *Protestant Ethic* with someone's prediction (perhaps Nietzsche's, although no one seems quite certain) that the logic of capitalism would one day nullify humanity; that the 'last stage of [our] cultural development' – or more specifically of the development of the culture of capitalism – would be advanced by 'specialists without spirit' and 'sensualists without heart'. This quotation has been used many times to describe what is regarded as the modern disenchantment of higher learning and knowledge itself. Kathleen Lynch, for example, has argued that the corporatized university is a 'careless' space, with a culture rooted in a 'classical Cartesian view of scholarly work... separate from emotional thought and feeling', aiming to create an 'autonomous, rational person' and 'grounded in the separation of fact and value'. What intensifies this within the contemporary neoliberalised academy, she argues, is the 'moral status' that is bestowed upon carelessness, as 'the pursuit of unbridled self-interest (rationalised in terms of a "career") has not only been normalised, it has status and legitimacy', and in some institutions, is a condition for employment (Lynch 2010: 59).

The flip side of this, however, is that universities are also populated by teachers and administrators who are increasingly required to be specialists *with spirit* of a particular kind, and increasingly by people who specialise in the *care of the spirit*. Specialists in pastoral care, in student 'feedback' and 'engagement', in knowing which institutional centre of support to direct people to in times of persona; need, in seeking and finding ways to ensure students' 'satisfaction' and pleasure in learning, in helping students cope with individualised experiences of anxiety or debt, and in – as in the title of one workshop recently offered at an institution suggests – helping academics 'turn stress into success'. The growing dependence of universities on private finance and on the normalisation of student debt demands new types of affective and social work that reduce the tensions and contradictions of massification in environments of increasing demand for care. 'This labour, often unacknowledged by either administrators or faculty themselves as intellectual work for which they should be compensated, is rather seen as a work of "care," "moral obligation" or "ethical virtue"' (Takševa 2012) – even when it is in fact it is a labour of achieving 'dual outcomes of customer [student] satisfaction, and profit for the management' (Constanti 2010). This care is disproportionately provided by women and those in subordinate positions in the professional hierarchy, particularly as universities' dependence on the symbolic and financial capital of knowledge demands that particular academics concentrate their resources on specialising in grant writing and research.

What emerges is an unequal distribution of academic work, in which those who perform highly-valued research depend upon the devalued labour of those who maintain the social and pedagogical reproduction of the student and faculty body, and vice versa. Because both require intense commitments of energy and time, academics may succeed in conceptualising their scholarly vocation as a combination of teaching, research and service, but often at physical and psychological cost. Such costs are internalised as justifiable or even desirable because this imaginary of scholarship *looks* historically and morally legitimate – for who

would not desire to be ruthlessly dedicated to one's intellectual project, and to the care of one's students, and to be recognised for both? And yet within this system, both passionate intellectual work and genuine relations of care are often the work-that-one-can-never-get-to-because-of-work, distorted because they are already sutured with the logic of capital through the pedagogy of debt. One wonders whether, in such situations, academic professionalism in its best of senses is not more like a siren song than a calling. But if both Weberian scholasticism and the politics of care can be elements of a new spirit of capitalism within the university, what sort of academic might one, with 'plain intellectual integrity', aspire to be?

Academic labour and class struggle

Here we may invoke another argument, one that is sympathetic to Weber's notion of a materialised ethic, but in reverse. It asks not what type of subjectivity and norms make capitalism work, but what types of subjectivity demystify and break the cultural power of capital. The argument was formulated first by autonomist Marxists such as Antonio Negri, Paul Virno, Moishe Postone and others is that it is workers' (in this case, academics') rejection of the capitalist work ethic and logic of value that forces capital to retreat. Collectively, they have argued that alternatives and resistances, combined with the shift in the global north from material industrial production to immaterial virtual production, are read as signs of hope that the era of capital-dominated labour is cracking and that we are 'moving towards a higher level of production and social relations' in cognitive work.

Feminist political economist Silvia Federici, however, argues that this is a misunderstanding of how capitalism really works. She points out that the new 'immaterial' labour that Negri and others are so interested in is dependent upon the increasingly exploitative material labour of those working to extract the raw materials and produce the basic equipment for technology. She also reminds us that labour has always been precarious, primarily for women, as it is

'built on an immense amount of unpaid labor, ... not built exclusively or primarily on contractual relations; [and] ... the wage relation hides the unpaid, slave-like nature of so much of the work upon which capital accumulation is premised.' (Federici 2006)

We can draw on Federici's specific arguments about the gendering of capitalist labour to rethink the corporatisation of education from a different perspective. We can see, for example, how many of the illogical and unsustainable conditions of scholarship within British universities are sustained or ameliorated through unrecognised, devalued, often invisible and sometimes deliberately hidden forms of work that mitigate both individual damage and collective dissent, and that in some cases work more deliberately to cultivate resilient subjects for whom such remedial labour will not be necessary.

We can see implications of this in debates that emerge whenever academics go on strike. As Federici points out, the politics of resistance are different when one risks 'destroying the people one cares for' as a direct result of struggling for relationships in which one does not

contribute to their exploitation. She relates this back to her earlier experiences in the feminist movement, recalling that ‘we became able to conceive of a fight against housework now understood as the reproduction of labor-power, the reproduction of the most important commodity capital has: the worker’s “capacity to work,” the worker’s capacity to be exploited’ (Federici 2006). Her argument is that by refusing *some elements* of such work, we not only do not abandon people, but in fact help lay wider paths for their liberation. Understanding unpaid labour of this sort as an integral part of the labour process rather than simply as a moral or natural vocation enabled women to transform exploitative conditions of domestic reproductive labour.

A similar logic can be used to critique exploitative notions of the academic vocation and reconstruct liberatory ones. If we understand the struggle for non-corporatised, democratic and socially financed higher education as a political project, then like all projects it is necessary to prioritise the care and reproduction of its members. This requires mutual aid and solidarity – neither of which are currently normalised as part of a serious academic professionalism. But the care and reproduction of academics and students, in both intellectual and material senses, are precisely what is being minimised and economised today, as those with vocation struggle to survive its contradictions. Those with the least security and occupying the most precarious positions are likely to work harder to ensure the survival of the institutions that, without a justificatory logic would potentially disintegrate, and within their own justificatory logic contribute in certain ways to the naturalisation of debt bondage and the emergence of neo-feudal professional economies and subjectivities.

True to form, Weber’s work does not direct us in addressing these contemporary problems in the politics of the university. But there is inspiration to be drawn from the way he decoupled the subjective commitment to knowledge and justice from the more peculiar desire to be an academic, and the way he denaturalised and demystified the notion of the scholarly calling to expose the sort of human subject that lies behind it, or may be precluded by it. Being able to distinguish between the material conditions of the university as an economic and political institution and more general activities of learning and advancing knowledge creates space for reconstructing conceptualisations of academic scholarship today. It allows us to see that within the current system, even the most depoliticised forms of scholarship, produced ‘in the service of self-clarification and knowledge of interrelated facts’ simultaneously contributes to the reproduction of an institution whose reason for being denies this very purpose and strengthens conditions for the re-feudalisation of society itself. It allows us to see that this system runs on the steam of a powerful debt economy that is being built on the backs of young people who buy promises of an open future that may or may not be possible, and that if realisable may be so only through a life of dependency on wage labour. And it allows us to acknowledge and take responsibility for the hidden curricula and pedagogies of debt that we may not only legitimise but produce in our everyday academic work.

These insights also allow us to imagine that we can reconceptualise scholarship to some extent independently from the identity of the academic; that we might be able to reclaim the work-that-we-do-outside-of-and-despite-work form the market logics in which it is

embedded. We may consider redirecting these resources towards the creation of humane institutions of learning in which we are not structurally forced to subsume all vocation into labour and all relations to exchange. Weber's demystification of the academic 'calling' offers us a sound model for challenging our own fantasies that teaching under exploitative conditions constitutes a politics of care, and that conducting critical research within oppressive systems constitutes an act of radical critique. Weber challenged both his peers and the aspiring academics of his day not only to interrogate the belief that the purpose of the university was to advance the pursuit of scholarship as a vocation, but to challenge their guarded conviction that it was indeed the *only* institution suited for this purpose. What he could not do, given both his positionality as an academic and his place in time, was point to alternatives.

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