

INTRODUCTION:

NEOLIBERAL CULTURE / THE CULTURES OF NEOLIBERALISM

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ABSTRACT

This introductory essay situates the contributors' articles in relation to the over-arching questions for this special issue: how has neoliberalism impacted on culture, and how is neoliberalism thought from cultural perspectives; or, what happens to the idea of culture under neoliberalism? We acknowledge extensive disagreement among commentators as to what neoliberalism is, its coherence as a concept, and its duration. We trace the different values attributed to neoliberalism, from social democratic inflections that decry growing disparities in wealth distribution, to those perspectives that emphasise its promise of self-determination and the individual, social and ethical potentials of self-determination and consumer choice in market relations. Noting that neoliberalism is a term used to explain wide range of contemporary cultural phenomena, we argue that it maintains enough coherence as a project to act as an influential force on material life, even if it operates in some spheres more as a 'structure of feeling' than an explicit platform. We trace its reorientation of the key principles of classical liberalism, and its relationship to, and ascendancy over, postmodernity and globalisation as terms that have been used to designate the current cultural conjuncture. Neoliberalism emerges out of the same moment and conditions, but more directly names a particular mode of political economy and governance that is inextricable from cultural life, from intra-subjective through to collective levels.

The remainder of this introduction groups the contributing articles under three headings, indicating the three spheres of cultural life that our contributors debate in particular. The complex interplay of neoliberal policies and Indigenous cultural rights, ranging from enthusiastic participation in the market economy to resistance, is discussed in the context of Aboriginal language policy by Sue Stanton, Chie Adachi and Henk Huijser. The articles by Juan Sanin

and Eileen Oak are related by an interest in the contemporary 'remoralisation' of the market form, even though they address opposite ends of the consumption scale: Sanin analyses appeals to ethical consumption and patriotic values in Australian supermarket branding, while Oak's study of neoliberal social policy in New Zealand observes the systematic demoralisation of those who are unable to participate in the formal economy. The issue concludes with two articles on the neoliberal university by Andrew Whelan and Edwin Ng. Although they draw on distinct intellectual traditions of (respectively) critical sociology and deconstruction, both authors raise concerns that the academic critique of the corporatised university threatens to further erode intellectual hospitality and community.

Keywords: Neoliberalism, culture, market relations, postmodernity, globalisation, consumerism

INTRODUCTION

This special issue of *Sites*, 'Neoliberal Culture/the Cultures of Neoliberalism', arose out of our concern to reflect on the cultural dimensions of what is commonly considered a primarily economic and governance-related formation. Working from the premise that we are at least to some extent 'in' neoliberalism, weighing it as one of the most significant factors in recent social and cultural life (premises we anticipated would be challenged as much as affirmed), we sought papers that would probe such questions as to what extent neoliberalism has impacted on culture, how neoliberalism is thought from cultural perspectives, and whether neoliberalism has its own cultural characteristics or tendencies, or whether neoliberalism is a cultural as much as an economic formation. We issued our call for papers fully aware that 'culture' would be as much a contested and contestable term as neoliberalism, but this in fact was part of the larger question framing the issue: what happens to the idea of culture under neoliberalism? Are there specific ways culture is thought or interrogated under neoliberalism? Has culture been subsumed into neoliberal terms? Posing such questions from within the remit of *Sites* – siting such questions across the disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies, and in relation to the geopolitical and cultural space(s) of Australasia and the Pacific Rim – the contributors to this issue bring their own specificities of perspective, their own critical modalities, and their own stakes.

The first point to make about neoliberalism is to acknowledge the extensive disagreement among academic commentators as to what it is or was, or whether it has existed at all as a coherent concept, and if so whether it will carry

through any lasting impact from the spree of privatisation and economic reform of the 1980s and 1990s into the advancing decades of the 21st century (Venkatesan et al., 2015). Among those who acknowledge the term, perhaps the breeziest account of neoliberalism is that of Deirdre McCloskey (2006), who flicks it away as the fantasy of a few vulgar fellows at the country club, amounting to little more than a passing page in the larger story of the global expansion of bourgeois values. At the other end of the scale sits Wendy Brown, who argues in *Undoing the Demos* that neoliberalism is a ‘ubiquitous and omnipresent’ force (2015, 48). Of those who grant credence to neoliberalism as a coherent concept, there is just as little agreement as to its duration. Neoliberalism is variously described as spent by 1989 (Slater and Tonkiss, 2001); in decline as China recasts the relationship between the market economy and state in the shape of Confucian values (Duncan, 2014); or properly confined to an intensive but brief phase of economic reform that swept industrialised economies through the 1980s, easing by the mid-1990s into less purist, more melded forms of governance (Larner and Craig, 2005). Others maintain it is still going strong, as neoliberalism constantly ‘falls forward’ through periods of crisis and its own directionless momentum (Peck, 2010). Or perhaps it is just getting into its stride as a paradigm shift, presaging what Brown calls the ‘dawn’ of a ‘novel world in the making’ (2015, 47). In Brown’s vision, neoliberalism is ushering in an era of ‘civilizational despair’ which is overturning the key tenet of modernity: the belief in the human capacity to ‘craft and steer [humanity’s] existence or even to secure its future’ (2015, 221).

In a sceptical assessment of the use of the term ‘neoliberalism’ as a concept, Rajesh Venugopal (2015) points out that it has virtually no currency in recent economic theory and does not appear in the index to numerous standard texts of macroeconomics. In New Zealand, we could note, along similar lines, that the term appears nowhere in the ACT Party’s statement of principles, even though the party is founded on a political philosophy that closely resembles a neoliberal worldview (ACT is an acronym of the Association of Consumers and Taxpayers). As Venugopal puts it, neoliberalism is a phenomenon that ‘dares not speak its name’ among those who are deemed to hold most closely to its tenets (2015, 15). In critical studies, by contrast, neoliberalism is regularly invoked as an omnipotent force and endowed with an explanatory heft and scope that, for Venugopal, strains credibility, as the term appears in such contrasting and mutually incompatible ways. Social-democratic inflections, for example, tend to emphasise the decline of support for redistribution of wealth within industrialised nation states, making neoliberalism not only a pejorative value but also, at worst, a dismissive term of contempt that needs no further examination. Conversely, in some branches of development studies, and perhaps

also Indigenous studies, the promise of self-determination as a break from state paternalism, the opportunity for access to global markets where culture can be marketed to add value to products and services, and the rise of an Indigenous middle class with consumer power, all support a positive interpretation of neoliberalism that is closely aligned with global competitiveness, as well as global politico-legal frameworks. Neoliberalism is, Venugopal concludes, too contradictory and vague a term to be used without careful advisement.

However, what an economist finds unserviceable about a concept may be precisely the grounds for concern and engagement for people working in culture-based disciplines. Here the opposite effect can be found: neoliberalism is far from an invisible concept but is, instead, *hypervisible*, being used to explain a wide range of cultural phenomena from the rising popularity of Bollywood-style weddings to the prevalence of violence in recent Australian cinema, the stifling of the intellect in contemporary universities, and the surge of ‘weakest link’, elimination-based reality TV shows. Terry Flew gives these examples in building his case that neoliberalism has ‘had its intellectual currency devalued through excessive use’ (2014, 51), amounting to a nine-fold increase in frequency from 1990 to 2007 (as demonstrated by a Google Ngram search). Academics in a range of disciplines, he suggests, use the term ‘with a surprisingly strong degree of confidence about what the concept means’ (50). Flew analyses uses of the term into six categories, ranging from ‘an all-purpose denunciatory category’ through to ‘an expression of the *zeitgeist* of global capitalism or as a conspiracy of ruling elites’ (66). He concludes by situating neoliberalism concretely as ‘a project of institutional transformation in the face of path-dependent national capitalisms’ (67). Andrew Whelan, in this special issue, also observes the incoherence of the concept of neoliberalism as a ‘lumpy, rather ad hoc descriptor, produced by aggregating inconsistently collected components’. Whelan surveys three approaches to neoliberalism, noting that academic proponents of the term rarely attempt to explain the linkages between them. Neoliberalism is a political economy centred on a raft of policies and enforcement systems at national and international level, designed to financialise or marketise existing social systems. It is also a political rationality: a form of hegemonic discourse setting out the moral imperatives to enhance our personal life chances. Finally, neoliberalism is cast as a form of governmentality, a process of invoking subjects who are ‘appropriate to the managerial techniques and market logics by which they are governed’. To rediscover what it is that makes people really care, Whelan cautions, we need to avoid a ‘neoliberal smudge’ that blurs the factors of daily life into one big blot of negativity, a mere ‘list of things we [leftish intellectuals] don’t like’.

British cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall, joining numerous commentators in finding the term ‘neoliberal’ similarly vague, nevertheless argues that ‘there are enough common features to warrant giving it a *provisional* conceptual identity’ (2011, 706), before insisting that ‘neo-liberalism is ... not one thing. It combines with other models, modifying them. It borrows, evolves and diversifies. It is constantly in process’. So:

There are critical differences between American and British variants. European social market versions differ significantly from the Anglo-American market-forces one. The competitive ‘tiger’ economies of South East Asia rely on substantial state involvement, without which they could not have achieved their high growth rates or survived the Asian crisis. The same is true of those Latin American countries where economic growth is evident. The former Soviet Union became the test-bed for a particularly virulent version – the privatization of public assets, generating a predatory oligarchic class and a kleptomaniac [sic] model which hollowed out the state. Chicago Monetarists first put Latin America through the neo-liberal wringer before the more recent moves towards more radical social alternatives. China’s ‘state-capitalism’ version combines a one-party, repressive, *dirigiste* state with strategic, highly sophisticated interventions in un-reregulated world markets and currency manipulation. (708)

Inevitably, then, neoliberalism will take particular forms with particular characteristics in the Pacific Rim contexts under discussion in this issue of *Sites*. Further, we need to ask what solidarising effects are produced by invoking neoliberalism as the primary enemy of progressive action; and what avenues of thought are eclipsed or obscured by the near-hegemonic status of neoliberalism as an umbrella term to describe the conditioning of daily life from the global economic infrastructure right down to intra-subjective effects.

The double-barrelled title of this special issue of *Sites* implies our own way of mediating at least some of the complexities of invoking neoliberalism as an organising term. The singularity of the phrase ‘neoliberal culture’ indicates that we hold considerable sympathy for the view that neoliberalism maintains enough coherence as both a political and epistemological project to act as an influential shaping force on material life. At least in theory, neoliberalism provides a closely integrated set of principles that together set out a comprehensive vision of the economic means to satisfy human needs and desires. It holds that free markets offer the optimal provision of choice; and the exercise of choice, in turn, is upheld as a most highly prized value that both expresses and underwrites the essential human spirit of freedom (such that one of the

architects of neoliberalism in New Zealand, Roger Douglas, stated in the opening to his credo *Unfinished Business* [1993] that the provision of opportunity is more fundamental than provision of income). To be fully responsive to price signals such as relative scarcity and consumer preference, the market must be kept free of distortions such as regulation, subsidisation or political interference. Consumers, in turn, ensure the 'discipline of the market', constantly reviewing performance indices to engage the providers that best suit their interests and, as financially literate market actors, supplementing and even replacing the state as regulator. Since markets require tradable property interests, new forms of property rights are created; since markets are inherently unstable, financialisation – the art of spreading risk to minimise pecuniary losses – becomes inbuilt into institutional, professional and personal life. Granted, neoliberal principles have not been implemented in their 'purist' form in any governmental arena, though New Zealand gave it a pretty good attempt during its most intensive period of reform from 1987 to 1993. No doubt, also, the effects of neoliberal policies on the ground have been muddled and partial, falling short of the triumphal march that Perry Anderson accords to neoliberalism as 'the most successful ideology in world history' (Anderson 2000, 13). But even the most hardened sceptic of the term 'neoliberalism' would surely have to acknowledge the renewal of market idealism as an animating force of economic and social life in the decades leading up to, and arguably beyond, the turn of the twenty-first century.

Whether neoliberalism remains an accurate way to describe the contemporary policy mix into the present moment is more of a moot point. Certainly it is difficult, these days, to find anyone who self-describes as a card-carrying neoliberal. Yet the contributors to this special issue all agree, at some level, that the analysis of neoliberal reform remains an important contemporary concern, not merely of recent historical interest. In the New Zealand context, for example, Paula Pereda-Perez and Christopher A. Howard characterise the policies of recent John Key-led governments as fundamentally promoting a neoliberal agenda, through policies that maintain wide wealth disparities. Eileen Oak pursues a similar line of analysis in her discussion of social policy. Drawing on Louise Humpage's (2015) analysis of three decades of attitudinal studies in New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom, Oak regards neoliberalisation as an ongoing, three-stage historical process consisting of the roll-back of the state in the most intensive period of reform, the roll-out of a policy platform underwritten by principles of free-market capitalism, and the rollover of civil society. Neoliberalisation is also a process of generational accommodation to a broad shift in power and influence from the state to corporate spheres of activity, and from centralised to devolved processes of planning and decision-

making. It is thus difficult to say when neoliberalism as an event came to a conclusion, if at all; the whole point of 'structural adjustment', after all, is to permanently shift the grounds on which we work, including how we go about the daily business of our lives.

The other contributors to this issue are similarly open to the view that the English-speaking world, at least, has become acculturated to a 'new normal'. 'Roger's children', so called because they have been raised under the drivers of flexibility, competition, and user-pays so enthusiastically endorsed by Roger Douglas, the New Zealand Minister of Finance from 1984 to 1988, have now reached adulthood.¹ One generation on from the crucial reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, commentators are concerned to trace the ways in which the implications of the free market form have become common sense, acting on our relational capacities and normalising certain 'negative affects' (such as anxiety), 'such that the sustained and collective critique and refusal of neoliberalism is inhibited', as Edwin Ng puts the case in his discussion of neoliberal academia in this issue. Indeed, American scholar Patricia Ventura describes 'neoliberalism as a cultural structure' as 'a newer framework for analysis' (2012, 1). She defines neoliberal culture in terms drawn from the cultural studies of everyday life and Raymond Williams' notion of 'structure of feeling', as 'the massive infrastructure that creates the environment in which these quotidian routines and habits are lived out – that is, the structure of feeling that shapes everyday life' (1). Its status as a 'structure of feeling' may go some way to explaining its invisibility within both analytic fields and social, political and economic formations for which it forms the ground rather than the object of understanding.

The pluralised second phrase in our title, 'the cultures of neoliberalism', draws attention to the fundamental premise in Cultural Studies and Social Anthropology that knowledge is situation-specific and that even the most 'globalised' ideologies will fracture into multiple aspects and tendencies when we ask the question: 'from whose point of view?' The articles gathered in this issue thus call for careful attention to context and purpose when the concept of neoliberalism is pressed into arenas of social and cultural debate. In a comparative analysis of the very distinct ways in which economic reform was introduced into Chile and New Zealand, Pereda-Perez and Howard discuss the quite different cast of neoliberalism in almost diametrically opposed situations. In the case of Chile, reform was imposed upon a collectivist culture at the point of a gun by a military regime, generating a strong anti-neoliberal momentum under a restored democracy, continuing into more recent, post-GFC politics. In New Zealand, by contrast, a generally individualistic culture voted in governments that enacted successive waves of neoliberal policy, leading to what

the authors regard as entrenched attitudes that undermine socially-oriented action into the present day. In the remainder of this introduction we expand on three spheres of cultural life that our contributors debate in particular: the complex interplay of neoliberal policies and Indigenous cultural rights (Sue Stanton, Chie Adachi and Henk Huijser); the ‘remoralisation’ of the market (Sanin and Oak); and the transformation of academic community along the lines of a corporate model (Whelan and Ng). First, however, we discuss how the ascendance of neoliberalism as an explanatory term relates to previous ‘isms’ commonly used to describe the current cultural conjuncture, and consider the implications of terminology for the (always speculative and partial) attempt to understand how the current moment relates to broader historical processes.

POST-, NEO- OR RETRO? SITUATING NEOLIBERALISM

Neoliberalism has gained currency in the effort to characterise, not only contemporary political economy, but also the wider cultural and social context. To a large extent it has displaced such terms as postmodernity and globalisation, even if they have sometimes been used as synonyms, or interchangeably, with neoliberalism. Such shifts in terminology may be subject to intellectual fashion (as Flew’s [2014] caveat on the devaluation of the term ‘neoliberalism’ implies), but we would suggest that they are not arbitrary and are worth trying to untangle. In discussing terms that claim to define the contemporary moment, there are often debates around whether what is being named is a continuation, in ‘late’ form, a movement beyond, or a reorientation of prior formations and their terms. Hyphenated temporal modifiers or prefixes, attached to root terms, articulate varying relations to prior formations or moments: capitalism and late-capitalism; modernity or modernism and postmodernity or postmodernism; colonialism and postcolonialism; and liberalism and neoliberalism. Globalisation does not modify a root term, though it emerged to displace ‘universalism’ as characterising the scope, in spatial rather than temporal terms, of a world imagined ‘as one.’² Globalisation, though, emerged at a particular temporal moment characterised by technologies that changed the very meaning of world unification, from universalism’s basis primarily in the ‘values’ or ‘grand narratives’ of modernity – liberation, democracy, progress – to the informational, communicational and other technological ‘flows’ of postmodernity (Baudrillard, 2003).

However, the range of modifying prefixes, including ‘post’ or ‘neo’, have somewhat different connotations, and especially in the case of ‘post’ there is frequent disagreement about what even that signifies – whether supersession of an ‘ex-

hausted,' 'inadequate' or 'failed' paradigm; whether it signals persistence in the face of ostensible shifts; or whether it encompasses a critical movement or otherness inhabiting the root term even from its earliest manifestations. Neoliberalism is another term that signals a relation to a root term, liberalism. We suggest that whereas 'post' broadly signifies the 'exhaustion,' 'delegitimation' or 'supersession' of its root term, 'neo' denotes a sense of revival or reanimation, albeit reaccented or reoriented to different circumstances, a positive programme in contrast with the sense of the decline of modernity's grand narratives. What seems clear, at the broadest level, is that the multiplicity of terms shows the extent to which the current period is churning in the wash of modernity, still tied to the paradigms of an earlier age but with speculation of some new, as yet indistinct, emergence.

Neoliberalism can be situated as a revived and reoriented transformation of some basic tenets deriving from classical liberalism, founded on 'an idea of limited government, the maintenance of the rule of law, the avoidance of arbitrary and discretionary power, the sanctity of private property and freely made contracts, and the responsibility of individuals for their own fates' (Ryan 2012, cited in Gane 2015).³ Neoliberal proponents (most obviously in Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, originally published in 1944) effectively constructed a historical narrative in which these principles had become derailed through the rise of socialism. With all best intentions of enhancing social wellbeing, centralised state intervention could only end up eroding it through the frustration of the basic human drive to creative enterprise and self-expression. To remedy this problem, the market was seen as a means for checking the reach of government: it presented a truly meritocratic, impersonal mechanism by which individuals and communities could leverage their capital (financial, cultural, social, and creative resources) to promote their self-defined interests and priorities, against state imposition or interference. For all the rhetoric of rolling back the state, however, neoliberal economic transformation needed a strong state to create the conditions that would allow for the expansion of markets. Seeking what is truly 'new' in neoliberalism (as opposed to merely reinvoking an earlier mode of liberalism), Carolyn Hardin emphasises the phenomenon of what she terms 'corporism': 'the privileging of the form and position of corporations' (2014, 199). Here corporism represents, not just a counter-balance to the state, but also the shape which the newly reconstructed state was to take. In the name of flexibility, responsiveness and accountability, neoliberal public policy drove the restructuring of public services along the lines of 'new public management', installing an unelected managerial class into positions of institutional power (Mattei, 2009; Christensen and Laegreid, 2007).

Stuart Hall, tracing neoliberalism's passage through liberalism, similarly points out that 'political ideas of 'liberty' became harnessed to economic ideas of the free market' (2011, 710). This linking had a double effect: neoliberalism gained popular momentum in English-speaking countries during the 1980s by capturing the rhetorical appeal of freedom, but it also promised the free market as a path to liberty (conceived of as self-realisation through choice). Neoliberalism's primary goal, however, is to liberate capital, rather than to ensure political liberties as they had developed through modern liberal principles such as 'one person one vote' and the freedoms of expression, movement, association, voting and belief. Indeed, a neoliberal perspective does not necessarily endorse democracy as the best political institution; as long as capital flows remain open, the specific form of government used to secure them may be a secondary or even agnostic consideration. That is why hybrids of market economy and various forms of centralised or authoritarian government seem possible. Where modern liberalism protected life, liberty, and property, neoliberalism reverses that order: in the creation and protection of a right to profit, lives must be sacrificed (where, for example, transnational corporations can sue governments for loss of profits caused by social programmes that attempt to curb the harmful effects of their products). For large numbers of people whose lives have been subjugated to colonial and imperial interests, this prioritising of capital expansion against all other values has been the central story of modernity, not necessarily a new development; it has even been argued that the phenomenon of 'neoliberal authoritarianism' is an extension of Western powers' long historical exploitation of authoritarian governments in the Third World to secure resource extraction (Canterbury 2005). What is different now, perhaps, is a matter of scale. Given the protection of corporate interests in munitions, pharmaceuticals, genetically modified seeds, and greenhouse-gas emitting industries (to name some of the major global economic powers), a neoliberal world view that persists in promoting an idealised concept of the self-organising, self-calibrating free market may threaten, not only the lives of individuals and peoples, but planetary life itself (Connolly 2013).

As with the promise of liberty, neoliberalism also trades on the liberal concept of equality, narrowly construed as equality of opportunity (with no guarantee of equality of outcome). Hall describes this as 'one of liberalism's fault-lines which re-emerges within neo-liberalism' (2011, 710). Such faultlines are clearly evident in liberalism's implication in colonialism and slavery, where progress, wealth and freedom for some comes at the cost of violence against, subjugation of, and authority over, others, as well as in its oscillation between contradictory strands of social conservatism and free-market economics (Hall 2011, 713). However, market logic entails winners and losers; unlike liberalism, neoliber-

alism is founded on an assumption of inequality between competing actors, rather than the inherent equality of persons. The ultimate inversion of logic, for Brown, is the undermining and sacrifice of the very sovereign individual that supposedly lies at the heart of liberalism. Where the modern concept of the social contract was built on individuals consenting, as the *demos*, to delegate their decision-making powers to the state, the individual-as-capital is 'an instrumental and potentially dispensable element of the whole' (Brown 2015, 38). As Brown demonstrates, individuals are also expected, explicitly or implicitly, to maximise their personal 'credit rating' and capital for some larger entity, whether employer, nation, kinship group, or other 'postnational constellation of which we are members' (Brown 2015, 37), a point illustrated in Sanin's article in this issue. If the corporate model prevails, 'non-performing' elements can be either discarded or placed under monitory controls, leaving individuals with 'no guarantee of security, protection or even survival' (Brown 2015, 37). As Stanton, Adachi and Huijser point out in their article, we have every choice, except the ability to choose to contribute to the polity in ways that are not recognised in narrow construals of 'economic contribution'. Thus the ideal of freedom alongside the continuing presence of coercion, or the terms of capability-building alongside the realities of social abjection, need not prove incompatible in neoliberalism, any more than they did in the 'on the ground' application of its parent philosophy of liberalism.

The relationships between neoliberalism and postmodernity (historical moment)/ postmodernism (aesthetic programme), or globalisation, are more complex and intricate, not least because of disputes about the meanings and values that have attended these terms. However, critics who point to their emergence out of the same, or at least related, conditions, further reveal their connections across particular analytical frameworks. Although periodisations are contested, Patricia Ventura argues that 'postmodernism is a product of the same energies that produced neoliberalism – namely, the economic crises of the 1970s and the after-effects of the 1960s' revolts against imperialism as well as race, gender and sexual oppression' (2012, 6fn5). Similarly, in 'Choosing Precarity', Australasian cultural critic Simon During posits a connection between the social revolutionary energies of 1968 and the rise of neoliberalism: 'the 1960s' revolutionary impulse paradoxically helped enable the market to become an increasingly important agent of and for governmentality, since the market, too, could reward indifference to hierarchy, entrepreneurial energies and new imaginations and experiences'; as 'after all, the market, too, was interested in access and inclusion, at least into the machinery of consumption' (During 2015a, 25-26).

Those who take up the question of the relationship between postmodernism and neoliberalism tend to identify two key theoretical articulations of postmodernism (and postmodernity, given that the terms are sometimes used interchangeably): Fredric Jameson's *New Left Review* essay, 'Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism' (1984), and Jean-François Lyotard's *La Condition Postmoderne* (the English translation, *The Postmodern Condition*, also appeared in 1984). During casts Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* as 'a primer on undoing social-democracy', particularly the 'universal social and political projects legitimated by grand narratives of human progress towards full emancipation', to be replaced by 'the triumph of pragmatism, and of efficiency and performativity' (During 2015b). However, while Lyotard's postmodernism assumes the end of metanarratives, Ventura argues that 'the concept of neoliberalism implies that capitalism has emerged in the post-Cold War era as precisely the kind of totalizing narrative that postmodernism writes off' (Ventura 2012, 6fn5). This is closer to what postmodernity means for Fredric Jameson, who argues that capitalism is the grand narrative, and postmodernity is 'an epoch within capitalism's trajectory' (During 2015b). Postmodernism, the 'cultural dominant' of postmodernity, entails such qualities as the loss of historical perspective, weightlessness and depthlessness, simulation and play as opposed to modernism's values of authenticity and originality (During 2015b). These terms resonate with Lyotardian pragmatism, efficiency and performativity, all echoed in neoliberalism's localised, adaptable, shifting forms. In fact a number of elements of contemporary life now attributed to neoliberalism were previously seen as symptoms of postmodernity or late capitalism, including, for example: deprofessionalisation; the decline of the bourgeois public sphere and the collapse of critical space; depoliticisation; social fragmentation; mediatisation and the elevation of image over substance; and cultural capitalism. However postmodernism's aesthetic programme 'has no truck with the insecurities, precarity and radicalism that come with neo-liberalism' (During 2015b).

What, then, are the conceptual gains and losses of referring to neoliberalism rather than similar terms to denote the current era? Perhaps use of the term 'neoliberalism' in cultural discourse implies recognition of a new, or at least greatly intensified, inextricability of a particular kind of economics and governance from cultural life, from the intra-subjective to the collective level. Along similar lines, the centrality of neoliberalism over the last two decades implies a wider understanding that some (but by no means all) of the energies of postmodern discourse have been harnessed into promotion of the free market, presented as an impersonal and supposedly value-neutral mechanism to realise cultural diversity without imposing a normative 'blueprint' or utopian social vision. Hopenhayn (1993) makes a similar argument when he sug-

gests that ‘reculturization, via a seductive postmodern narrative, could serve to legitimize the market offensive of the eighties’ (98) by way of an ‘effective articulation of euphemisms’ (100): diversity, desire, play, personal creativity, global communication, autonomy standing in for the market, profit maximisation, conflict, planning, or private appropriation of surplus. However, he makes the case for the ongoing potential of the postmodern narrative to articulate a reanimated cultural dimension of development that cannot be subsumed to the neoliberal hegemony. The experience of neoliberalism in Latin America, he suggests, calls for a shift in emphasis from the ‘so-called crisis of modernity to the equally important question of the crisis of *styles* of modernization’ (1993, 94).

GLOBALISATION AND NEOLIBERALISM

That globalisation and neoliberalism may be used at times interchangeably is understandable, given that, seen from a particular angle, they share so much. To be sure, a long history of globalisation can be told, prefigured in earliest sea and land explorations, establishing trade routes, imperial expansion and the slave trade, through to the founding of strategic military and economic zones. However, the term is generally identified as emerging in its contemporary form in the 1980s, against a background of economic and energy crises, and with both financial and communications technological and structural developments. As financial transactions were internationalised by way of electronic transfer, and multinational corporations began to outstrip some national economies in terms of trade exchange and value, as new markets were opened up for trade and consumer goods flowed at a rate that saw consumption and services transformed into not only measures but indeed major drivers of economic prosperity, the economic reforms associated with the groundwork of globalisation were, precisely, neoliberal. In a sense, then, neoliberalism and globalisation cannot be fully prised apart, since they can be seen as the same phenomenon, just described with slightly different emphases.

Globalisation, as a term, seems to hold out the promise of access to a whole world of goods and experiences, of human interconnectedness across vast distances and in instantaneous time – universalism’s ‘family of Man’ with the technologies to enable and sustain immediate contact. It offers possibilities of access and appeal to alternative forums, tribunals and political or judicial bodies beyond the confines of nation-state polities, and for causes and interests to be articulated across geopolitically and/or socially dispersed collectives. However, globalisation is also a term limited by its appeal to an idealised ‘globe’ and similarly idealised notions of ‘flows’ of peoples, goods, finance, technolo-

gies and ideologies, masking the structural inequalities that characterise and 'fuel' this world system (Appadurai 1990). While particular models of cultural studies have largely celebrated globalisation's liberatory energies and potentialities, others have regarded it sceptically as – like postmodernism – essentially the Euro-Americanisation of the world; Americanisation sometimes synecdochally cast as McDonaldisation (Ritzer 2000). Critical analyses might point to the role of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, or the World Trade Organisation as hubs of a centripetal economic system, drawing smaller and vulnerable regions into 'development' and other kinds of debt. Globalisation's victory over the East-West divide of the Cold War era is replaced by neoliberalism's North-South divide of developed and 'developing' regions; non-participation is barely an option. On the other hand, global cultural flows have indeed not been one-way traffic from American and Western Europe to the rest of the world. All of Appadurai's global 'flows' have moved in multiple and cross-cutting directions, which is not to overlook crucial differences in the terms of exchange, and the translations of significance and effect taking place between source and destination. Any notion of 'the West and the rest' has become untenable under the contemporary neoliberal global dispensation. Further, from trade in primary and manufacturing industries to state and privatised security and arms deals, neoliberalism remains at best indifferent as to whether these flows instantiate 'straight' or (systemically or anomalously) 'corrupt' transactions, and at worst helps install brands of neo-authoritarianism.⁴

Globalisation and neoliberalism are both invoked ambivalently, as opportunities to appeal to, and extend beyond local nation-state spheres of authority and influence, or conversely as threats to core cultural and community values under assimilative ideologies and operations of the free market. These are some of the modes of engagement with, and responses to, neoliberalism registered by Indigenous commentators, and taken up by Stanton, Adachi and Huijser in this issue. What significance can we draw from the 1970s-80s convergence of politicised calls for state and social recognition of cultural difference from assimilative hegemonic white settler 'norms', and the global shift – expressed precisely by the understanding of 'globalisation' as a model of multidirectional cultural flows – toward neoliberal economic transformations privileging market relations that cast 'cultural difference' as a resource within an increasingly culturalised economy? Is this the apotheosis of 'cultural difference' capitalising on neoliberalism's impulse to cast fundamental aspects of social life (including tribal tradition, consumption patterns, working conditions and even poverty) as matters of self-expression and life-style? The matter cannot be so smoothly resolved given the resurgence of intolerance, expressed in part as the defense of Western cultural values, that followed the World Trade Center attacks of

2001. Tracing a series of dead-ends in progressive cultural theory from 1968 into the new century, During contends that after 9/11, 'it became clear not just that the 1960s' revolutionary energies had disappeared into increasingly market-oriented politics, but that popular reaction against globalised neo-liberalism would to a significant degree take place as a conservative resistance to the 1960s' democratisation of the life-world' (During, 2015a, 26). As During also points out, current frameworks of analysis (he particularly singles out Subaltern Studies and Cultural Studies) may not bring adequate intellectual resources to critique what he sees as the central factor in the new conditions of global capitalism, that is, the political and existential problem of precarity.

In the following sections, we outline how contributors have responded to these overarching global questions within local circumstances and challenges. In the first instance, what purchase has recognition of cultural difference (or cultural identity) had on the social and economic disadvantage experienced – not solely, by any means, but disproportionately – by Indigenous peoples in these contexts?

INDIGENOUS CULTURAL PROPERTIES

For postcolonial settler/invasor states like Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, the question of 'culture' has been politically cathected, as the possibilities of a particular articulation of decolonisation struggles have been premised on the recognition of 'cultural difference' as well as of material (economic, social) and political disparity and disadvantage. Elizabeth Rata's (2000) materialist analysis of 'neotribal capitalism' in Aotearoa New Zealand rarely refers to neoliberalism as such, but she emphasises two themes through her discussion that bear on cultural analyses of neoliberalism – or, a political economy of culture under neoliberalism: the transformation of cultural materials into capitalist commodities, and the production of an excluded group, those whose detribalised status accords them no part in the neotribal system of resource (re)allocation. Rata argues that the advent of the Waitangi Tribunal resulted in a stratification of Māori ethnicity, 'channelling a pan-Maori ethnification movement into a retribalisation movement. As a consequence a large proportion of detribalised Maori have become excluded from the economic benefits of the claims settlements' (97). A similar theme has been taken up by Lucas Bessire, who argues, with reference to the Bolivian context, that a state regime of neoliberal culturalisation produces both a delimitation of authorised or legitimate culture, enshrined within multi- or biculturalisms, for example, and the effect of hypermarginality for those Indigenous subjects considered 'decultured' in relation to those legitimised forms, or whose cultural lives do

not conform to state ideals and agendas. He characterises hypermarginality as ‘a development that articulates the well-documented capacities of late or neoliberal political economies to redefine the values of life as such and fracture subjectivity’ (2014, 278).

Arguably the dominant figure in neoliberal-era articulations of Indigenous concerns is that of ‘Indigenous cultural properties’, invoking the dimensions of identity, economy and governance or authority as the contemporary stakes of ‘culture’. Similarly, the term that appears to govern the points of view of both advocates and critics of neoliberalism in relation to Indigenous communities, is ‘self-determination’. However, as Fiona MacDonald argues with reference to Canadian First Nations/Aboriginal self-determination, ‘this overlap in discourse around the principle of autonomy does not automatically indicate an overlap in values and/or objectives’ (2011, 263-64). She urges the need to account for ‘the practical benefit to neoliberal governments of conceding certain forms of self-governance’ (264), including the greater attractiveness to the state of policies and processes that privilege the marketplace over those promoting dependence on the state, especially where devolution of responsibility for welfare from state agencies with poor records of performance to Aboriginal communities themselves can relieve the state of such responsibility while appearing to accede to demands for Aboriginal self-determination (265). Neoliberal culture, across the ‘fractured’ subject position of postcolonial indigeneity must therefore be weighed in terms of differential effects. From the point of view of some Indigenous communities, and contrary to Brown’s socialist argument (2015), neoliberalism may well be seen as an improvement over liberal democracy because mistrust of the state already runs deep. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) argues that the Māori renaissance and retention of tribal ties left some iwi in a strong position to take up the vacuum left by the rolling back of the state in the 1980s. Further, innovation in property rights has reinforced existing Māori common law rights, fostered co-management arrangements, and created openings for Māori in potential new areas such as water rights. On the other hand, Maria Bargh’s edited volume, *Resistance: An Indigenous Response to Neoliberalism* (2007) is dedicated ‘to everyone everywhere resisting neoliberalism and continued colonisation’ (n.p.)

Stanton, Adachi and Huijser take up these complex questions in their article in this issue, ‘Revisiting Neoliberalism: Aboriginal Self-Determination, Education and Cultural Sustainability in Australia’. Acknowledging self-determination as a ‘core concept of neoliberalism’, they argue that this does not extend to Indigenous affairs in Australia, where colonial paternalism and authoritarianism still govern relations with the state. They point to the state emphasis on

'Closing the Gaps' as an assimilative policy in which Indigenous peoples are identified with deficit, cast as the 'Aboriginal problem'. Stanton, Adachi and Huijser cite Aileen Moreton-Robinson's (2009) point that 'Indigenous people are perceived and talked about as the undeserving poor who lack effort, proper money management skills, a sense of morality, the ability to remain sober, the ability to resist drugs and a work ethic'. This deficit and 'problem' model echoes the '(re)moralising' approach identified by Oak in her article in this issue; similarly, Bargh refers to persistent colonial attitudes that 'view Indigenous peoples and cultures as obstacles to economic development ... which can nonetheless acquire a greater level of civilisation through the right kind of training', where the 'market is the most important mechanism in the civilising process' (2007, 13). In relation to their own Australian context, Stanton, Adachi and Huijser argue that this position both implicitly and explicitly demands that Aboriginal people renounce "long-held socio-cultural systems and values" in order to 'embrace neoliberal, market-driven economic and social imperatives'. They call for the power to define and achieve 'success' in Indigenous terms to be held in Indigenous hands. Indeed a central point of their article is the insistence on Indigenous communities being in the position to 'set the agenda' in relation to the full range of questions that affect them, from the specific case of language revival and development determined through education policy driven at local community levels, through to wider questions of Indigenous participation in the mainstream neoliberal political economy.

There is indeed evidence of significant Indigenous support for, and participation in, neoliberal formations. Stanton, Adachi and Huijser acknowledge Aboriginal proponents and advocates of neoliberalism who, for example, see neoliberalism as a more enabling alternative to an Old Left social model premised on victimhood and welfare dependency, and who call for Aboriginal people to take individual responsibility. Similarly, in relation to Māori, Bargh refers to 'corporate warriors', those 'Māori who claim that the economic development of their iwi (tribe) is the most important component that will lead to greater social and political development. The corporate warrior perspective claims to be attempting to combine a social and an economic position' (2007, 35-36). She continues:

Corporate warriors believe that Māori involvement in business can support social ends, without being solely about profit, thus attempting to establish some form of middle ground between ethics and business. Some have argued that this fusion of the social back into business ethics means that the presence of Māori business provides a new perspective from which 'dominant ethics of the Western order can be questioned'. (36)

Such a view casts neoliberalism as providing the pathways and means to achieve social goals, 'at times articulating these views in terms of Māori self-determination and independence' (36). However, terms like independence and responsibility, according to Stanton, Adachi and Huijser, overlook institutional and structural racism, and risk situating many Indigenous individuals and communities between the rock-and-hard-place opened up by refusal of colonial paternalism while advocating for success in the mainstream economy as the solution to Indigenous economic and social wellbeing. The self-determination they call for, like the power to set the agenda, needs to be conceived and enacted at the community level, even if this may well encompass what they refer to as a 'black-branded neoliberal approach' to participation in the neoliberal economy.

The notion of a 'black-branded neoliberal approach' calls up the second key theme in Indigenous engagements with neoliberalism. Stanton, Adachi and Huijser identify the problem of knowledge transformed into capital to invest, dissociated from the uses of knowledge for self-definition and for expanding freedom and justice, but also, importantly, dissociated from Indigenous systems of control and circulation. Similar arguments have been made regarding the challenges facing Māori as knowledge and cultural properties are commodified and instrumentalised. Elizabeth Rata suggests that 'people's creativity and imaginations are reified in this rationalisation process as knowledge becomes fetishised or disassociated from its creators', appropriated to the global cultural and informational market and the consumer economy (2000, 117). Such tensions are evident in rearguard legal and commercial efforts to limit or control the circulation of cultural knowledge, or cultural materials – such as the Mataatua Declaration,⁵ or the Toi Iho Māori Made system of trade marks of authenticity – while at the same time articulating a relation to cultural materials and knowledge that remains outside either the commodity circuits of exchange or the legal frameworks for protecting them. Māori film-maker, the late Barry Barclay's 'mana tūturu' is one such articulation of a principle of Māori relation to tāonga/treasures outside the 'intellectual property rights' legal framework. He proposes it in light of his concern that

the attempt to use a quasi-legal phrase (Indigenous intellectual property rights) to re-name Indigenous living treasures as tradable property might somehow represent an assault on the spiritual foundations of at least some Indigenous communities and contribute in some way to an unravelling of the context of their lives and cultures and eventually to the extinction of those peoples who buy into it. (2005, 89)

Thus the very system of ostensible protection endangers its object at a deeper level than that system can encompass. Barclay's concept serves to interrogate the limitations of 'property' as a concept, in favour of installing such ideas as *kaitiakitanga* and *whakapapa* as interests generated by reciprocity, guardianship and inter-relationship. In this special issue, Stanton, Adachi and Huijser's claims for the need for a language revival and development policy – indeed education policies driven at the community level that would foster such revival and development – are similarly premised on the notion of language as articulating links between land, law, kinship and ceremony, alive to the dialectic of tradition and constant evolution, rather than preserved in some static form. However, a true state commitment to Indigenous self-determination would support these measures with adequate resourcing to make them possible, rather than simply off-loading responsibility.

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME? REMORALISING THE MARKET

The articles by Sanin and Oak are contemporary outworkings of long-standing debates about the moral implications of market form; here again, the retrospective prefix of the term 'remoralisation' signals the reprise of well-established justifications of market relations, alongside distinctive contemporary pressures and innovations. Bracketing questions about what or who is traded in the market and how profits from market 'winners' ought to be distributed, the market form *per se* is routinely defended as the optimal means of channeling the foibles and peculiarities of human nature for the greater good. Markets are said to provide 'trickle-down' effects, as the pursuit of egocentric ends flows through into larger social benefits of provision and productive work. Similarly, markets keep people honest: those who trade on the market thrive when they maintain a good reputation, with customers quickly switching to a competitor when they sense bad dealing. Markets guard against 'moral hazard' by ensuring that negative consequences fall upon those who mismanage risk or are insensitive to market signals. And unlike people – especially those charged with bureaucratic duties in a central bureaucracy – markets (in this line of thought) are never prejudicial, capricious or arbitrary in doling out pecuniary punishment and reward. More recently, behavioural psychology and neuroscience have weighed into the debate. Markets are now also justified because they provide an evolutionary advantage, as 'the design of market economies ... is congruent with our evolved genetic predispositions' (Zac 2008, xiv). Given that we are 'hypersocial' animals, markets also enable us to freely express our natural urge to make a fair deal. Thus 'exchange in markets is virtuous: one may consider not only one's own needs but also the needs of another' (Zac 2008, xv). Whether the premise is that we are innately selfish or other-directed, naturally

inclined to benevolence or corruption, markets are said to furnish our highest ethical strivings as well as our material needs.

In their respective articles, Sanin and Oak debate the consequences of market remoralisation in two seemingly quite different contexts, the use of appeals to consumer patriotism by Australia's two giant supermarket operators, and the persistence of punitive measures against the poor in New Zealand social policy since 1990. Yet both articles proceed from the common insight that the terms of social inclusion are now linked to consumption capability and choices. A 'responsible' and hence valued citizen is one who not only generates value in the formal economy through work, but who also wields the power of consumer choice thoughtfully by supporting companies that promote ethical policies. This virtuous circuit becomes all the more important in a climate of deregulation, where consumers, rather than a state authority, are charged with exercising the 'discipline of the market' to rein in, or ameliorate, the more voracious aspects of corporate dominance. A further corollary to this understanding, as discussed in some detail by Oak, is that as the state has retreated from its role in redistributing wealth through universal provision, charity has increasingly become the implicit model for managing the most vulnerable members of society.

In his article, 'A Big Responsibility! The Moralisation of Markets and the Rise of Supermarket Patriotism', Sanin concisely sets out the shift in the channels of social distribution that has seen the giant corporation replace tax transfers to the state with programmes in corporate social responsibility, which allocate a portion of profits to organisations whose profiles are deemed compatible with the corporate brand. In a case study of the 'Buy Australian Made' campaigns of supermarket giants Woolworths and Coles, Sanin observes that nationalistic values can play a significant role in corporate social responsibility, which perhaps more visibly plays out at a global level through fair trade schemes and environmental causes. Sanin acknowledges the positive case for corporate social responsibility as a potential redistribution of powers in market relationships between producers and consumers, but also draws attention to the more diffuse, potentially negative social impacts. As participation and interest in formal political institutions falls, a form of consumer-citizenship rises: consumers can now 'vote with their dollar' as to how a portion of profits may be distributed. But this model of citizenship has a limited social sphere as ethical consumption opportunities tend to target wealthy consumers, for whom 'participating in them has become a marker of cultural distinction that generates social exclusion.'

In 'Methodological Individualism for the Twenty-First Century? The Neoliberal Acculturation and Remoralisation of the Poor in Aotearoa New Zealand', Oak reminds readers that we need to ask 'whose experience of neoliberalism?' before entering into debate as to whether neoliberalism is still an accurate way to describe current economic and social policy. In welfare policy, Oak writes, neoliberalism has clearly 'taken hold' for the 790,000 New Zealanders estimated to be living in poverty in 2013. Oak traces a continuity in New Zealand social policy from the cutting of benefits in Finance Minister Ruth Richardson's 'Mother of all Budgets' for the National government in 1991 through to intensive monitoring and 'case management' of beneficiaries in the most recent National-led governments. Policies such as mixed public and private ownership, some initiatives in social housing and an ambition to reduce child poverty have mollified an older 'hard-line' neoliberal agenda, to the extent that some commentators believe that it is no longer meaningful to describe the platform as neoliberal. Yet a punitive treatment of working-age beneficiaries, who are sometimes represented as imperilling the work ethic in the general population, remains a strong, and often under-publicised, element of National's social policy. It is failure to work, rather than traditional moral categories such as religious faith and sexual behaviour, that most irks middle New Zealand, a mentality that makes this population relatively reluctant to support the use of government funds to alleviate poverty.⁶ For Oak, a key result of sustained neoliberal policies over more than two decades has been the steady 'drip-feeding' acculturation of the population to adopt enterprise values based on methodological individualism – the idea that social institutions are conceived and structured as an aggregation of individual actions based on contractual obligation. For the extensive number of people for whom this model fails, neoliberal social policy mobilises hard-line attitudes against the 'undeserving poor', deemed to have arrived at their misfortunes through a lack of 'moral fibre'.

The 'remoralisation' of the market can thus be linked to the 'demoralisation' of those who are unable to enjoy the self-expressive responsibilities of ethical consumerism. Through a kind of 'short circuit' where the very act of consumption includes the price for its opposite, the well-off can buy their own good conscience without committing to structural changes to the distribution of wealth (Žižek, 2009). As markets become the alternative vehicle for social care, wealth distribution becomes increasingly structured around the model of charity, that is, optional giving to causes that reflect the personal interests of the well-off. Most importantly, the charity model also inflects the perceived role of the state, as entitlement to social provision goes from being an inherent human right in a decent society to a discretionary boon of government, subject

to individuals meeting obligations to participate in the market. State agencies are now empowered to exact such a high level of monitoring and invasive control over the daily lives of the poor that the relationship between the central state welfare agency and its clients in New Zealand has been likened to an abusive intimate relationship (Hodgetts et al., 2014). Meanwhile, a constrained economy of austerity, sharing and ‘make-do’ is re-emerging, along with a new science of the ‘scarcity mindset’ (Mullainathan and Sendhil, 2014). In a two-tiered society where ‘hedonism takes cover beneath a superficial global moralism’ (Hill 2013), the most vulnerable members of society continue to face sharp enclosures of their lives.

CRITIQUING THE NEOLIBERAL UNIVERSITY: REFOCUSING SOLIDARITY

The issue closes with articles by Whelan and Ng on a matter that is particularly close to academics’ personal interests: the nature of their working conditions. Both authors write in a context where recriminations against the stultifying culture of the neoliberal university have become something of a refrain. Demands for ever-increasing outputs, rising compliance and reporting requirements, threats to academic freedom, frequent restructuring and the constant need to gather evidence to justify one’s continuing (under-)paid existence mean that the university has not been exempt from the anxieties of the post-Fordist workplace. Whelan and Ng acknowledge some validity in the view that the ideal of the modern university as a community of intellectual integrity is in crisis, particularly in the emergence of a two-tier workforce. The tenured academic continues to be regarded as the implicitly normative subject of intellectual endeavour, even when a greater proportion of the academic workforce consists of YIYOs, or ‘year-in year-out’ workers on casual contracts – amounting to over 60% of academic staff by head count in Australia, as Whelan points out. Both authors recoil at the descent of intellectual life into the swamp of endless audits and paperwork, but they do so with particular awareness that a reactionary critique of neoliberal academia can end up merely entrenching hierarchies within the institution, particularly when the institutional culture under investigation is also a location for strong personal, intellectual, and affective attachments.

With this element of methodological self-reflexivity in their discussions, Whelan and Ng address some of the concerns raised by ‘neoliberal sceptics’ discussed in the first section of this introduction, particularly around the question as to whether neoliberalism can or should be characterised as an all-pervasive and all-culpable force on every aspect of our lives. The authors arrive at distinct conclusions on this point: for Whelan, the claim that aca-

demics are able to know and label ‘neoliberal reality’ more accurately than others serves as a marker of social distinction and solidarity, one that does not necessarily promote effective resistance to the most untenable aspects of this reality. For Ng, by contrast, the work of critique – and, ultimately, institutional transformation – cannot even meaningfully begin until we register the ‘depoliticising, injurious and silencing effects of the neoliberal regime’ as they operate at affective and interpersonal levels, as well as in the more disturbing and absurd aspects of the mission, infrastructure, and management practices of the corporatised university.

Some might point out that the university’s image as a model intellectual community was always only a mirage, and that the modern university needed dramatic reform to become more responsive to the needs of the real community located outside the institutional walls. Few institutions would now tolerate some of the features of our younger days as students and junior lecturers in the 1980s: drunk lecturers, entire degree programmes without a single course evaluation completed by students, ivy-covered professors with few publications to their name, and other foibles which would now be considered breaches of professionalism. But did we really want to end up with a situation where it takes five tiers of committees to approve a new learning outcome for a course, where academics are incentivised to award passing grades to marginal students, where prestigious research centres are shut down by political whim, or where junior academics have to abandon social and family life to produce the outputs now considered the minimum requirement for even an entry level lecturership? If we academics express how wearied and disgruntled we feel by all this distraction from the real pleasures of teaching and research, then the knowledge-economy discourse mentioned by Ng comes into play: the idea that knowledge work holds its own inherent satisfactions, irrespective of actual working conditions. The academic grind is wearying, but how can we complain about it, when intellectual work is meant to be stimulating, when this is work we love, and when (as we are occasionally reminded by management) this is a privileged job that we are lucky to have?

None of these developments, of course, is unique to the tertiary sector. As Whelan comments in his article ‘Academic Critique of Neoliberal Academia’, our (leftish tenured academics’) indignant question, ‘why should I have to put up with conditions like this?’ elides a more far-reaching line of inquiry: ‘why should *anyone* have to put up with conditions like this?’ Whelan expresses reservations about the intellectual and rhetorical manoeuvres of a form of critique that has become self-regarding and intransitive: a way that broadly progressive elements of the academy recognise and affirm each other as good

people. He thus queries the nature of the academic community that is formed through (not just ‘around’) the work of critique itself; the act of constructing an object of critique, he argues, creates a sense of solidarity between insiders, but achieves few other material victories. Taking his argument a step further, he suggests that ‘the marketised and instrumentalised university’ in fact dovetails with, rather than clearly departing from, long-standing and entrenched aspects of a cloistered academic culture.

In ‘Questioning the Role of ‘Faith’ in a Micropolitics of the Neoliberal University’, Ng takes up the challenge as to how an ethics of care might be conceived and fostered within an institution that he sees as subjectively injurious. Writing from the position of a ‘para-academic’ who does not enjoy ‘a secure institutional base from which to construct a ‘dissident faith’, Ng conceives the work of critique quite differently from Whelan. For Whelan, critique is too often based on academics’ over-readiness to uncover, and sagely deplore, the real conditions of life behind the fog of neoliberal rhetoric. Ng, by contrast, works from the premise that we are indeed alienated from our truer self-awareness when obliged to operate within the institutional drivers of the neoliberal university. Rationalising the insecure, competitive, and isolating conditions in which they work, academics ‘disavow their own docility’ by saying that they choose to work in such conditions and that the rewards of a job where free inquiry is valued outweigh the negative elements. Ng proposes, as a first step toward finding both the energy and avenue for change, that intellectual workers acknowledge and share their sense of exhaustion and failure. Ng describes this changed mindset and micro-practice as an “in-here’ activism’ where feelings of inadequacy are not seen as evidence of ‘innate personal shortcomings’, but of ‘the normative effects of power’. In a conceptually rich interlinking of testimony and faith informed by his own Buddhist faith, Ng then expands on the idea that faith may undergird the effort to re-imagine, and reinstall, the university as a place of exemplary intellectual hospitality.

Underlying both articles is (in Ng’s words) ‘a conviction that the critico-political value of scholarly work ... is worth fighting for’. Both authors seek a more nuanced account of how to situate oneself, not only in relation to a sustained period of complex institutional change, but also alongside others who may be experiencing the same events, but from a different subjective (and material) position. Citing Moten and Harney (2004), Whelan asks whether the academic who churns out pages of critique is simply devoted to ‘the impoverishment, the immiseration, of society’s co-operative projects?’ – starting from the co-operative prospects of academic labour itself, which is founded on the work of the academic precariat. Ng, in partial response, suggests how such co-operation

might be built piece-by-piece, day-by-day, through a micropolitics of resistance, through small (but not inconsequential) moments of collegial exchange. This special issue of *Sites* will, we hope, continue that momentum of collegial dialogue and exchange on matters that shape our daily lives both within and beyond corporatised institutions.

NOTES

- 1 Studies that take a generational approach to the effects of neoliberal restructuring in the New Zealand context include Karen Nairn, Jane Higgins and Judith Sligo's analysis of detailed interviews with 'Roger's children' in *Children of Roger-nomics: A Neoliberal Generation Leaves School* (2012), and Andrew Dean's discussion of his own experience in *Ruth, Roger and Me: Debts and Legacies* (2015).
- 2 Other terms are of course in play, between or among them: internationalism, transnationalism and cosmopolitanism are among the most important. Although the terms are subject to extensive commentary and debate as to their derivations or histories, and past and present meanings, a very broad-brush distinction might suggest that internationalism develops from the liberal idea of the nation to name political and economic cooperation among nations, or perhaps society and culture viewed in comparative terms across nations; transnationalism is closer to globalisation (and consistent with neoliberalism) in that it suggests institutions or perspectives that move across, or even transcend national boundaries, and thus contribute to the weakening of those boundaries; while cosmopolitanism implies something along the lines of global citizenship, a 'citizen of the world' perspective that has principally socio-political, cultural and ethical significance, rather than state-political or economic.
- 3 In *The Making of Modern Liberalism* (2012), Alan Ryan distinguishes between classical liberalism (e.g. Locke, Smith, de Tocqueville, Hayek) and modern liberalism (e.g. Mill, Hobhouse). In a review of his book, Gane argues that neoliberalism derives more closely from classical liberalism, which always had an anti-democratic and anti-welfare strain (Gane 2015).
- 4 As recent corruption scandals in organisations like FIFA, the International Olympic Committee and the International Whaling Commission have shown, the system of 'one state, one vote' in international bodies has not prevented corruption, and may even normalise it given that in perhaps the majority of the world's countries, the economy relies on informal payments.
- 5 Barry Barclay writes that 'Article 29 of the UN's Draft Declaration on the Rights

of Indigenous Peoples, released two years after the Mataatua Declaration, reads: “Indigenous peoples are entitled to the recognition of the full ownership, control and protection of their cultural and intellectual property. They have the right to special measures to control, develop and protect their sciences, technologies and cultural manifestations, including human and other genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs and visual and performing arts” (2005, 63).

- 6 Pereda-Perez and Howard, in this special issue, cite an ISSP study published in 2006 which reports that only 50 per cent of New Zealanders believe that it is the country’s responsibility to reduce income difference between the rich and the poor, compared to 91 per cent in Chile.

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