

## ***Stupidity and Study in the Contemporary University\****

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### **Abstract**

*Will study be possible in the university-to-come? Or will it be necessary to abandon the university in order to study?* In this paper, I confront these questions through an analysis of the relationship between stupidity and study in the university today. The first two sections of this paper are focused on exploring the concepts of stupidity and study. In §1 I explore stupidity, and further, systemic stupidity, through a combined reading of Gilles Deleuze and Bernard Stiegler. In §2 I explicate the notion of study – and the connected notions of debt, credit, and the undercommons – through Stefano Harney & Fred Moten. Synthesising their concepts, I go on to explore two particular modes of the *practice* of our contemporary stupidity in the university connected to everyday bureaucratic practices: (1) the metricised governance of research and teaching; (2) the manner in which the university acts as an agent of the border. This is the task of §3. Building on the identification of these two examples, in §4 I then go on to suggest and argue for two projects of study in the university-to-come: (1) the debureaucratisation and decommodification of knowledge; (2) the explosion of the host/guest distinction in the contemporary university's practices of border enforcement. Ultimately, this paper seeks to help open up a conceptual-practical space for exploration of alternative futures for the university beyond its present of neocolonialism and stupidity.

### **§1 Stupidity**

When Deleuze claims, in *Difference & Repetition*, that without *stupidity*, thought would not be possible, it is not, for all that, a lament. When describing thought (its conditions, movements, failures, joys and sadnesses), Deleuze refuses to romanticise or fetishise reason as an ontological or epistemological safe-haven from stupidity. Rather, stupidity is situated within a battleground of thought with reactive and active forces at play, whereby the ever-present potential of a confrontation with stupidity constitutes the ever-present potential of thought itself (Deleuze 2014: 191-207; 361).

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By way of an introduction and definition of Deleuze's approach to stupidity, it is first important to note that he, of course, distinguishes stupidity from error (2014: 361). Error pertains to the domain of sense, wherein *truth* and *error* constitute the two possible *end-points* for thought when it, for example, asks *sensible* questions. Errors are thereby akin to mistakes or oversights, undesirable effects due to a failure in the proper application of thought (with truth as its desirable end-point and proper *telos*). That is, error is positioned as a mistaken – but always in principle *correctible* – application of the *will to know* within the context of apophantic discourse (Foucault 2013: 64). Error is in this sense positioned as *external* with regard to thought insofar as its occurrence can be identified, explained («a failure of good sense, absent-mindedness or a poorly educated faculty of judgement» (Voss 2013: 43)), and thereby corrected or cured («with a dose of knowledge» (Cutler and MacKenzie 2011: 108)). Insofar as it is positioned as external to thought, error «cannot endanger the in-principle good nature of thought» (Voss 2013: 43).

However, stupidity is an onto-epistemological category different in kind from error. *Internal* to the movement of thought itself, stupidity constitutes a *weakness* in thought – an expression of its baseness – the experience of which is necessary for thought to be forced into being at all. No doubt, thought is by no means guaranteed whenever stupidity is experienced. It is here the category of error often re-enters: as when error is ascribed to thought's movement, one does not confront stupidity at all. Rather, one *repels* thought through explaining one's own stupidity in terms of empirical and external factors (momentary confusion, bad methodology, misrecognition, lack of empirics). Such externalising explanations *avoid* thought and one remains, to an extent, stupid; or more precisely, such explanations constitute *expressions of stupidity* (Deleuze 2014: 195-196). When thought does occur, it is precisely through an *active* confrontation with stupidity, which is always an unpredictable adventure in thought. This is another way of saying that the process of thought *exceeds* predictability and lacks a predefined *telos* precisely insofar as thought only thinks in relation to its own stupidity, but that this factor is also conducive to thought going beyond itself by overcoming stupidity, however temporarily: «Stupidity (not error) constitutes the greatest weakness of thought, but also the source of its highest power in that which forces it to think» (Deleuze 2014: 361).

To situate stupidity as a *structure of thought as such* is to mark it by an irreducible presence. One never overcomes stupidity once and for all in Deleuze's battleground of thought:

Stupidity is a structure of thought as such: it is not a means of self-deception, it expresses the non-sense in thought by right. Stupidity is not an error or a tissue of errors. There are imbecile thoughts, imbecile discourses, that are made up entirely of truths; but these truths are base, they are those of a base, heavy and laden soul. The state of mind dominated by reactive forces, *by right*, expresses *stupidity and, more profoundly, that which it is a symptom of: a base way of thinking*. In truth, as in error,

stupid thought only discovers the most base – base errors and base truths that translate the triumph of the slave, the reign of petty values or the power of an established order. (Deleuze 2006: 105)

Here, Deleuze notes how the problem of stupidity is immediately political insofar as it is bound up with those imbecile discourses and petty values which *institutionalise* stupidity and *reactive thought* generally. Indeed, the institutionalisation of stupidity is, for Deleuze, immediately connected to tyranny: «a tyrant institutionalises stupidity, but he is the first servant of his own system and the first to be installed within it» (Deleuze 2014: 197). In short, insofar as stupidity is irreducible, that is, permanently possible, this is not at all to be disconnected from the stupidity and baseness which institutions not only express, but which they work in the service of, transforming stupidity and baseness into something *actively desired or pursued*. This is Deleuze and Guattari's precise point when, discussing capitalist bureaucracy in *Anti-Oedipus*, they note that:

[Capitalist bureaucracy] alone doubles the capital and the flow of knowledge with a capital and an equivalent flow of *stupidity* that also effects an absorption and a realization, and that ensures the integration of groups and individuals into the system. Not only lack amid overabundance, but stupidity in the midst of knowledge and science. (1983: 236, my addition)

This *integration* of groups and individuals constitutes the institutional transformation of stupidity into something which is actively desired or pursued. To say more on the institutionalisation of stupidity, I will now pivot towards Stiegler's development of Deleuze's conceptualisation of stupidity. Indeed, the *tyrannical* status of our contemporary stupidity is how Stiegler problematises our present moment, where systemic stupidity is produced through «the industrial exploitation of the drives» towards a «planetary-wide extension and universalization of what Gilles Deleuze described as *baseness*» (2015: 16-17). For the purposes of this paper, the main aspect I will extract from Stiegler's account of the processes through which we have become integrated in global systemic stupidity (indissociable from stupidity being transformed into that which is desired and pursued) is how he describes the contemporary transformation of theoretical activity into automatic procedures, which he describes in terms of the transformation of *reason* into *rationalisation*. The university, on this account, is absolutely central to today's global systemic stupidity.

Stiegler describes this transformation of reason into rationalisation – drawing on Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (2002) - in terms of a *regression* through which theoretical activity is *subordinated* to “rational” automatism. Examples here are plentiful. Algorithmic analysis of “big data,” as conducted “by” Google, «no longer has any need for either theory or theorists» (Stiegler 2016: 1; Anderson 2008): the data analyses, judges, and decides for itself. Or, to take an example Stiegler notes frequently:

that of Alan Greenspan's appearance, in October 2008, in front of a Congressional hearing in the wake of the financial crisis in which he placed a large part of the blame on the «whole apparatus of computerized formalization and automated decision-making undertaken by financial robots» (Stiegler 2016: 2). Greenspan is, for Stiegler, an example of a *proletarianised elite*; of, that is, elites «*deprived of knowledge of their own logic and by their own logic* – a logic of calculation without remainder and leading as well to a market of fools» (Stiegler 2010: 47). Or relatedly - as I will discuss later in this paper - the metricised governance of university research in the UK today. What these all have in common is simply that «*calculation prevails over every other criteria of decision-making*» (Stiegler 2016: 8). There are two key aspects of Stiegler's account of the dominance of calculation today for the purposes of this paper:

1. It constitutes the subordination of the non-calculable and the theoretical, by definition, and the exclusion of that which is non-calculable from participating in the formation of decision-making.

2. It is increasingly tied to *automatisms* insofar as these calculations and (increasingly) decisions are conducted by digital technologies at a speed and complexity surpassing human ability, and as such, these automatisms are procedurally *managed* rather than *thought*, towards the *generalised automation of decision-making*.

The transformation of reason into rationalisation today involves the *subordination* of thought to calculation, calculations themselves conducted by digital technologies as part of a tendential process towards a *generalised automation of decision-making*: a vast and complex architecture of stupidity. No doubt, the commodification of knowledge *necessitates* the subordination of knowledge to calculation, and it is on this point where I can say a little more on the contemporary university's role in global systemic stupidity before concluding this section.<sup>1</sup>

As Gerald Raunig rightly notes, the university «has always been an institution supporting authorities, if not altogether an institution for exercising and accommodating to subjugation» (2013: 24-25). As such, my focus on the contemporary university is *not* a gesture of romanticisation, nor an argument in favour of any "return" to any previous model or epoch. Nonetheless, today, universities are engaged in national and international competition organised primarily around the *production of knowledge* and the *production of graduates* (Heaney 2015; 2016). Flows of knowledge and graduates are subject to economic competition insofar as research and teaching are subordinated to

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<sup>1</sup> When using the term *commodification of knowledge*, I am using this term in connection with a myriad of overlapping other terms and themes: cognitive capitalism (Boutang 2011) the knowledge economy (OECD 1996), hyper-industrial capitalism (Stiegler 2014b), immaterial labour (Lazzarato 1996), platform capitalism (Srnicsek 2017), and so on.

regimes of calculability, predictability, and control, tracked to putative logics of supply and demand (Glynos and Howarth 2007: 168-171). As Stiegler notes:

[T]oday, the extension of the global mnemotechnical system via analogue and digital technologies has led to an unprecedented functional integration of knowledge into the apparatus of production and consumption. The *total integration* of knowledge into the functions of conception, design, production, consumption and speculation – which is a kind of *dis-integration* of knowledge itself – has occurred during a global economic war in which knowledge has become a commodity, both for those who are the players conducting the war, and for those who want to ‘learn’ so that they may be *enlisted in this war against themselves*. Education thus finds itself reduced to these strictly miserably ‘war aims’, which destroy *otium* and knowledge itself, which produce an essentially proletarianized knowledge, that is, disindividuated knowledge « ... » The effect of the commodification of knowledge – and what, in the now global competition between universities, establishes a logic of supply and demand such that, increasingly, the academic world is faced with the threat of finding itself *prescribed* by ‘demand’, in terms of the demand for employment, not the demand for knowledge – is that the retentional criteria that form a discipline are subjected to extra-academic criteria. (2015: 168-169)

In other words, it is *through* this subordination of knowledge, teaching, and learning to calculability that stupidity flows. Or, to put this another way, *the university’s perpetuation and participation in our contemporary regime of calculability constitutes the contemporary university’s stupidity*: economic calculability is that which ought not be *thought*, but rather that which researchers and students ought to subordinate themselves in relation to. Economic calculability in regimes of accounting and economics constitutes the «unthought» (Deleuze 2014: 199) expression of our stupidity today: «Economic knowledge has become an automatism without decision, while simultaneously presenting itself as an inevitability without alternative» (Stiegler 2015: 101).

The generalised subordination of thought to calculability, of life to the market, has a further structural aspect with attached effects which is important to mention. This is the *short-termism* or *carelessness* of such systems of calculability. I will not go into detail on Stiegler’s precise account of this - which incorporates his distinction between drives and desires as well as his account of financial capitalism – but his following comments on the financial crisis will help elaborate these themes:

The ultraliberal parameters of the technical system which led to what proved to be the catastrophe of 2008 were directed solely by the short term, that is, by technical facts organized and produced through marketing – a marketing which denies that long-term tendencies exist: nothing other than the market can direct becoming, we are informed by this “managerial dogmatism,” and it is just too bad if this becoming [*devenir*] turns out to no longer have any future. (2010: 124; also see Legendre 2007)

The “technical facts” and “economic knowledge” through which, for example, financial instruments or metrics of governance operate, may well be true. They are, however, truths of heavy, laden, and base souls, together constituting a vast and toxic assemblage of short-termism and stupidity. This is expressed in, to name only some indicative examples, the planned obsolescence of consumer products and hyper-levels of product innovation and turnover; financial crises; metricised governance of university research which incentivises *not* thought, but merely the continual affirmation of the logic of metrics; ecological crises, where our global systemic stupidity, carelessness, and present inability to construct long-term plans for the to-come is reproduced on an global, structural, institutional, and daily basis (Connolly 2017; Scranton 2015), and so on. This is why Stiegler call contemporary capitalism a system of *disinvestment* (2010: 6; 81), concerned not at all with the long-term, concerned only by the next accumulative cycle, the next innovation, the next inflation figures, the next metrics and league tables, the next growth figures, and so on: «a *short-termist macro-tendency*, which in future can only lead to closing the system off from any future» (2010: 91). The generalised subordination of thought to calculability, dovetails with and intensifies those tendencies of short-termism and stupidity which are internal to thought and desire.

There is, to conclude this section, another important aspect of Deleuze’s account of stupidity which is worth clarifying here. If stupidity is irreducible, this raises, for Deleuze, the transcendental question of stupidity: «how is stupidity (not error) possible?» (2014: 198). This question, Deleuze continues, is an element «which can only be thought» (2014: 199). The claim here is that stupidity opens up the potential for thought itself, giving stupidity what Benoît Dillet describes as its power (2013: 268) or what Stiegler describes as its pharmacological dimension. *Fighting* the reactive forces of stupidity becomes a permanent task, insofar as stupidity is thought’s double: «stupidity can never be expelled from our condition but gives the energy to go beyond our condition» (Dillet 2013: 267). Actively conducting this fight is a task which always must be redone *anew*; thinking, this is to say, the stupidity of the present: «Stupidity and baseness are always those of our own time, of our contemporaries, our stupidity and baseness» (Deleuze 2002: 107). As I noted above, for Deleuze (and indeed, in a related but distinct sense, for Stiegler), such active confrontations with stupidity are unpredictable adventures in thought, insofar as since thought only thinks in relation to its own stupidity, thought *exceeds* predictability and calculability. Deleuze most succinctly and famously expressed this when he noted that «one cannot prejudge the outcome of research» (2014: 188). The problem, then, this paper wishes to open up is that of *thinking* the stupidity of the present, defined by Stiegler thusly: «Our epoch is, however, very singular: unlike any other before it, *it has made carelessness into the very principle of its organization*» (2010: 126). Thinking the stupidity of the present, as will be clarified further as this paper develops, is immediately a question, indeed practice, of *study*.

## §2 Study

In order to outline Stefano Harney and Fred Moten's concept of *study* - which they develop in *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* - there are some connected notions which I should first preliminarily define in order for this explication of study to be as clear as possible. The connected notions I will briefly note here are: (1) the distinctions they offer between debt and credit; and (2) the *undercommons*.

### §2.1 Debt and Credit

They say we have too much debt. We need better credit, more credit, less spending. They offer us credit repair, credit counselling, micro-credit, personal financial planning. They promise to match credit and debt again, debt and credit. But our debts stay bad. We keep buying another song, another round. It is not credit we seek nor even debt but bad debt which is to say real debt, the debt that cannot be repaid, the debt at a distance, the debt without creditor, the black debt, the queer debt, the criminal debt. Excessive debt, incalculable debt, debt for no reason, debt broken from credit, debt as its own principle. (Harney and Moten 2013: 61)

Debt and credit constitute two vastly distinct terms utilised by Harney and Moten to provide an account of, on the one hand, the myriad, complex, and informal ways in we are mutually and *inescapably* indebted to each other; and on the other, the attempt to *capture* and appropriate this mutual indebtedness through regimes of credit, accounting, and accreditation.

For Harney and Moten, *debt* is not simply produced as an effect of economic exchange, rather, debt is a means of socialisation (2013: 61); it is in-part *through* mutual indebtedness that we interact and exchange, and it is through such interactions and exchanges that debt is continually *elaborated*. As such, on this account, it makes little sense to speak of "paying back" one's debts: debt is mutual, permanent, inexorable, *unforgiveable*, it «runs in every direction, scatters, escapes, seeks refuge [...] [with] no payment possible» (2013: 61, my addition). We may forget our mutual indebtedness, but we cannot forgive it; forgiveness exists in the realm of credit, of accounting, of individual indebtedness, of Maurizio Lazzarato's indebted neoliberal subject (2012). Debt is generative, productive, abundant, and decidedly *not* reducible to any particular "indebted individual." Consider, for example, as Harney does, the debt between a parent and a child: there are flows of indebtedness, there is mutual indebtedness, but there is no crossing off of this "balance sheet" precisely because no accounting regime (which is also to say no regime of credit) exists. This debt passes *through* each, a «generative form of affect» (2013: 154), which is always *newly elaborated*: debt as a «principle of elaboration» (2013: 150). Our indebtedness to each other, that indebtedness which is never repaid but always elaborated anew, is a *site of refuge* from regimes of credit and accounting; the mutual

exchange of debt-without-credit constitutes a «fugitive public» (2013: 61) participating in *incalculable mutual indebtedness*.

Credit (and creditors), on the other hand, seeks to govern and control this fugitive public and incalculable mutual indebtedness. Credit is a «means of privatization» (2013: 61), which seeks to isolate indebtedness in this or that individual, territorialise it through accounting and credit regimes. As such, credit, for Harney and Moten, is «asocial» (2013: 61), it isolates, divides through individualisation, quantifies, calculates. Forgiveness suddenly becomes possible; one can “pay off” one’s debts, but this payoff is possible *only on the condition that one remains within the regime of credit*; the restoration of the debtor’s credit, and no more.

The type of debt I discussed above, bad debt, is an affront to the creditor; creditors «research it, gather information on it, try to calculate it» (2013: 62). Credit is a calculable system of memory, guilt, and *ressentiment*; that is, of accounting, and as such, it seeks to transform our bad debt into debt captured within credit regimes («Only by spreading *ressentiment* the tyrant forms allies, namely slaves and servants» (Deleuze 2013: 173)). Credit sees only faults where its regime does not yet extend («We hear them [creditors, governors] say, what’s wrong with you is your bad debt. You’re not working. You fail to pay your debt to society. You have no credit, but that is to be expected. You have bad credit, and that is fine. But bad debt is a problem» (2013: 66, my addition)). How to capture the incalculable and fugitive public marked by mutual indebtedness? How to render this fugitive public governable? This is problem faced by creditors and governors, the solution of which requires a (violent) process, for our bad debt is incalculable and regimes of credit demand calculation.

Harney and Moten call this violent process *governance*, distinguishing it from governmentality but in a position of complementarity with regard to it (2013: 52). Governance is a process of capture into regimes of credit; the process through which the incalculable bad debt of the fugitive public is “offered up” to the creditor and governor. The violence of this process is often effaced in those practices of governance which attempt to capture our bad debt into regimes of credit, a bureaucratic integration, offering the fugitive public a chance to “articulate their interests,” which is to say, offer themselves up to regimes of credit:

Bad debt is senseless, which is to say it cannot be perceived by the senses of capital. But there is therapy available. Governance wants to connect your debt again to the outside world. You are on the spectrum, the capitalist spectrum of interests. You are on the wrong end. Your bad debt looks unconnected, autistic, in its own world. But you can be developed. You can get credit after all. The key is interests. Tell us what you want. Tell us what you want and we can help you get it, on credit. We can lower the rate so you can have interest. We can raise the rate so you will pay attention. But we can’t do it alone. Governance only works when you work, when you tell us your interests, when you invest your interests again in debt and credit « ... » [G]overnance

will gain new senses, new perceptions, new advances into the world of bad debt.  
(2013: 66)

Through governance, that which capital (governors and creditors) cannot sense *becomes* sensible to it in the process of capture by regimes of calculation. So much for the distinction between debt and credit for Harney and Moten.

## §2.2 The Undercommons

In that undercommons of the university one can see that it is not a matter of teaching versus research or even the beyond of teaching versus the individualisation of research. To enter this space is to inhabit the ruptural and enraptured disclosure of the commons that fugitive enlightenment enacts, the criminal, matricidal, queer, in the cistern, on the stroll of the stolen life, the life stolen by enlightenment and stolen back, where the commons give refuge, where the refuge gives commons. (Harney and Moten 2013: 28)

It would be an error to simply say that the *undercommons* exists *against* the university, even though it is opposed to the university's mission of professionalisation (even that of the "critical academic") (Harney and Moten 2013: 40). The *undercommons* traverses those spaces of bad debt, those fugitive sites of refuge *from* professionalisation and credit, away from the «reduction and command of the social individual» (2013: 42). For Harney and Moten, the undercommons is constituted by those informal spaces that permeate our everyday lives: smoking areas as much as much as the non-accredited extra-curricular reading group.

Just as, for Deleuze, *sense* emerges from *non-sense* (Deleuze 2013), for Harney and Moten, *form* emerges from the *informal* (2013: 128). The *undercommons* - the «underground of the university» (2013: 28) - exists in those informal spaces which are both the *condition* of formal, professional spaces in the university, but also that which is never fully captured by such processes. The informal spaces of the undercommons are not at all chaotic or formless, but that which *gives* form, and that which is permanently subject to attempted *capture* into form (administration, governance, policy, professionalisation). The university, this is to say, *needs* the undercommons - its mission of professionalisation requires objects to be worked upon and labour power to participate in such processes - but such governance is not easy: «The university still needs this clandestine labor to prepare this undifferentiated labor force» (2013: 29). Despite this, the undercommons remains immature, unprofessional, naïve, impractical, hiding from interpellation (2013: 28). To *remain* in the undercommons, in other words, is an immature and unprofessional refusal to submit to interpellation, or, at least, an admission that one simply cannot «initiate the auto-interpellative torque that biopower subjection

requires and rewards» (2013: 28). The *undercommons* just don't get it. They are neither pragmatic nor cynical enough; they are too premature for all that. The informal spaces of the undercommons are in permanent disruption of the university's task of formalisation and professionalisation – they are *in* but not *of* the university (2013: 26) – and, indeed, it is this *antagonistic* aspect of the undercommons which will become vital as I move on, now, to consider the concept of *study* they develop:

The riotous production of difference which is the general antagonism cannot be tamed either by the feudal authority or social violence that is capitalism much less by policy initiatives like agonistic dialogues or alternative public spheres. *But where the aim is not to suppress the general antagonism but to experiment with its informal capacity, that place is the undercommons or rather, wherever and whenever that experiment is going on within the general antagonism the undercommons is found.* (2013: 110, my emphasis)

### §2.3 Study

With these notions briefly defined, Harney and Moten's notion of study will be much clearer. For *study occurs in a state of permanent debt, through the mutual elaboration of debt, in the undercommons*. Harney and Moten's concept of study pertains to those practices of thought which are not subsumed within logics of individualisation and competition – study is not “knowledge production” in the sense promoted by the contemporary university – and takes place where the undercommons «meet to elaborate their debt without credit» (2013: 68). Study, as such, occurs outside of regimes of credit, in which debt is always calculable and payable (that is, within calculative regimes of stupidity); it is also an *amateur* practice, *unprofessional*. In or through study, the undercommons do not acquire credit, graduate, articulate interests, nor do they construct policies (indeed, professionalisation and policy are attempts to *capture* the capacity to study that the undercommons have). So what do they do, those «committed to black study in the university's undercommon rooms?» (2013: 67).

They study without an end, plan without a pause, rebel without a policy, conserve without a patrimony. They study in the university and the university forces them under, relegates them to the state of those without interests, without credit, without debt that bears interest, that earns credits. They never graduate. They just ain't ready. They're building something down there. Mutual debt, debt unpayable, debt unbounded, debt unconsolidated, debt to each other in study group, to others in a nurse's room, to others in a barber shop, to others in a squat, a dump, a woods, a bed, an embrace. (2013: 67-68)

What informal space is not a site of study? A site of planning? Study surrounds us. Despite regimes of credit, despite policies to capture the undercommons into

accreditation and professionalism, which is to say despite the professionals' attempt to locate and make policy to address the undercommons. Policy as instruction from above; policy as correction (curriculum as policy; curriculum as professionalisation (Hall and Smyth 2016; Heleta 2016)). Planning, launched from anywhere («any kitchen, any back porch, any basement, any hall, any park bench, improvised party» (2013: 74)), is a continuous experiment with the informal, it is «the ceaseless experiment with the futural presence of the forms of life that make such activities possible» (2013: 75). *Study as futural and experimental being-with-others*. As such, the university is, no doubt, a place of study, but study is by no means *of* the university; indeed, try as it might (through governance, through policy, through curriculum), the university cannot fully exclude study (2013: 113). Will study be possible in the university-to-come, under the governance of our contemporary systemic stupidity?

In study - where debt is permanent, inexpressible, and always being elaborated – one can lose track. This, in fact, is necessary for study's open-endedness. When we enter study, we forget our debts, and «begin to see that the whole point is to lose track of them and just build them in a way that allows for everyone to feel that she or he can contribute or not contribute to being in a space» (2013: 109). An ongoing experiment with the informal, “with and for” each other in their projects of study. No longer simply “in but not of” the university, but also “within and for” the undercommons of the university. Not that this movement is without its difficulties:

When you move further out into an autonomous setting, where you get some free space and free time a little more easily, then, what you have to attend to is the shift, for me, between the *within and against* – which when you're deep in the institution you spend a lot of time on it – and the *with and for*. And that changes a lot of shit. All those things are always in play. When I say “with and for,” I mean studying with people rather than teaching them, and when I say “for,” I mean studying with people in service of a project, which in this case I think we could just say is more study. (2013: 147-148, my emphases)

How to be “with and for” is thereby itself a project of study. The undercommons are still working out what it means to be with and what it means to be for. It is through this point that we can describe why Harney and Moten will often use the term *prophetic organisation* when discussing the activities of the undercommons. That the undercommons participates in prophecy is another aspect of their lack of professionalism and naïvety. Their *planning* is of a prophetic type; of, as I have already noted, an experimental and futural type. Administration, policy, and governance has no time for planning, for prophecy, for futural projection; it foresees risks, governs, and controls, such is its stupidity. It demands knowable objects: the state, economy, civil society, populations, border flows and security risks. Such are the proper objects of academic research, governance, and integration into the flows of stupidity. In study, there are no

objects to be known, but rather experiments to conduct. Or, to put this slightly differently, the “object” of study is refigured as «future project» (2013: 27); study involves an investment or commitment to the future. This is not at all to say that there undercommons have no *objects of study*, that they do not focus on this or that problem, project, or experiment. In study, the undercommons organise around problems, around projects of study. However, through this (prophetic) process, they do not articulate a position, enunciate interests, or clamour for representation. They just keep on studying, planning, project-ing, creating, problematising. Too open, too playful (2013: 131), the undercommons are always exceeding any declaration of interest or representation, always slipping away from correctional institutions (the university, the prison):

Politics proposes to make us better, but we were good already in the mutual debt that can never be made good. We owe it to each other to falsify the institution, to make politics incorrect « ... » We owe each other the indeterminate. We owe each other everything « ... » We are the general antagonism to politics looming outside every attempt to politicise, every imposition of self-governance, every sovereign decision and its degraded miniature, every emergent state and home sweet home. We are disruption and consent to disruption. We preserve upheaval. Sent to fulfill by abolishing, to renew by unsettling « ... » we got politics surrounded. We cannot represent ourselves. We can't be represented. (2013: 20)

By way of concluding this section, let me briefly try and offer some conjunctions between this section and our previous one on stupidity and consolidate some of the ways in which the two problematics I have explored are intensely connected, before looking more closely at the university in §3.

#### §2.4 Conjunctions

##### [I. STUPIDITY/GOVERNANCE/INTEGRATION]

Recall the following, from *Anti-Oedipus*:

[Capitalist bureaucracy] alone doubles the capital and the flow of knowledge with a capital and an equivalent flow of *stupidity* that also effects an absorption and a realization, and that ensures the integration of groups and individuals into the system. Not only lack amid overabundance, but stupidity in the midst of knowledge and science. (1983: 236)

When I cited this above, one of points being developed was the manner in which stupidity, when bound up with institutional apparatuses, becomes something actively desired or pursued; an architecture of stupidity that works towards the integration of groups and individuals into systemic stupidity. No doubt, in its own distinct sense, Harney

and Moten's notion of governance, policy, and regimes of credit can also be situated here. Recall one of the central problems of governance: how to effectuate the (violent) capture of our bad debt into mechanisms of credit? Of course, to reiterate, credit is a regime of calculation; to be under a regime of credit is to be subjected to a regime of calculation, calculability as that which subjects ought not *think*, but which they ought to subordinate themselves in relation to: «Economic knowledge has become an automatism without decision, while simultaneously presenting itself as an inevitability without alternative» (Stiegler 2015: 101). The process of governance Harney and Moten outline passes through certain tactics of governance which offer the fugitive public a chance to "articulate their interests" and offer themselves up to regimes of credit. As such, this is our first conjunction:

CONJUNCTION I: *Governance, policy, curriculum, and credit function as recruitment processes, as a process of bureaucratic integration into our contemporary systemic stupidity.*

## [II. STUPIDITY/CALCULATION/CARELESSNESS/STUDY]

As I noted above, for Stiegler – in his *For a New Critique of Political Economy* – the accounting regimes through which capital operate are mechanisms of *disinvestment*, of short-termism, of, this is to say, stupidity (2010: 79). Such short-termism, disinvestment, and carelessness are *tendencies* for Stiegler, *irreducible* precisely insofar as stupidity itself is irreducible, as hardened institutional expressions of the internal dangers stupidity poses to thought:

The consumerist model has reached its limits because it has become systemically short-termist, because it has given rise to a *systemic stupidity* that *structurally prevents the reconstitution of a long-term horizon*. This "investment" is not an investment according to any terms other than those of pure accounting: it is a pure and simple reestablishment of the state of things, trying to rebuild the industrial landscape without at all changing its structure, still less its axioms. (Stiegler 2010: 5)

Stiegler's invocation of the truths of accounting regimes is particularly interesting contextualised with Harney and Moten's comments on regimes of credit and accounting. For all its policy, for all its governance, for all its bureaucracy; or indeed in-part because of these things, contemporary regimes of capital and governance perpetuate a tyrannical stupidity which functions as a *systemic blockage to study*. This is our second conjunction:

CONJUNCTION II: *Our epoch of generalised calculability, insofar as it systemically short-termist – systemically stupid – functions as systemic blockage*

*to futural experiments and to the construction of long-term horizons: regimes of calculability as systemic blockages to study.*

### [III. STUPIDITY/STUDY]

I concluded §1 noting that the transcendental question of stupidity - a question, recall, always of our own stupidity - is immediately question of study. To put this another way, what is being argued for here *for our stupidity itself to be a project of study.*

As I noted with Deleuze above, confronting our stupidity is always an unpredictable adventure in thought; a factor which is intensified when such a confrontation is conducted as part of a project of study, in conditions of mutual and inextinguishable debt, with and for the undercommons. Such thought (/such study), to reiterate, *exceeds* calculability and predictability; it functions through a *futural and experimental being-with-others* in permanent elaboration of our unpayable debt; is an ongoing experiment with the informal, hiding from interpellation; and is of a prophetic, future-oriented type. This leads us to our third conjunction.

CONJUNCTION III: *Our contemporary systemic stupidity is to be confronted through study.*

It is through this third conjunction, the confrontation of our contemporary systemic stupidity as a project of study, that the two sections of this paper will focus a little more consistently on the contemporary university. More specifically, in the next section, I will articulate *two key elements of our contemporary systemic stupidity* connected to the day-to-day bureaucracy of the university (metricised governance of research and teaching; and the manner in which the university acts as an agent of the border). Building on this, I suggest two projects of study in the undercommons of the university-to-come (debureaucratization and decommodification of knowledge; explosion of the host/guest distinction).

#### **§3 Stupidity in the University today: Bureaucracy, Knowledge, and Borders**

When David Graber suggests, in his recent book *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy*, that bureaucratic institutions in contemporary capitalism operate through the creation of internal cultures of complicity, we are given what Harney and Moten might describe as an *unprofessional* insight into the logic of violent “integration” I have visited a couple of times already in this paper through Deleuze and Guattari:

In theory [bureaucratic institutions] are meritocracies. In fact everyone knows the system is compromised in a thousand different ways « ... » The first criterion of loyalty to the organization becomes complicity. Career advancement is not based on merit « ... » above all, it's based on a willingness to play along with the fiction that career advancement is *based* on merit, even though everyone knows this not to be true. (2015: 27, my alteration)

Such is the logic of governance: articulate your interests, buy into regimes of credit, play along with the meritocratic façade. As I have also noted, the process through which the activities of the undercommons becomes *captured* into calculative regimes of stupidity is a violent process. This is not at all metaphorical. As Graeber also outlines, more bureaucracy equals more surveillance, more impersonal rules and regulations tied to logics of incentives and punishment; indeed, bureaucratisation itself, for Graeber, is a continuous affirmation and extension of the threat of force (2015: 32). Attached to this is a key feature of bureaucracy which is essential to note: its mundane, repetitive, and ritual-like character. Bureaucracy, for Graeber, functions crucially as a distractive mechanism, covering over the structural violence necessary for bureaucracy to exist in the first place and which bureaucracy continually perpetuates (2015: 57-67), thus easing its integration into everyday life. By participating in such bureaucratic procedures, for Graeber, we blindly reproduce structural violence on a daily basis («Policy is correction, forcing itself with mechanical violence upon the incorrect, the uncorrected, the ones who do not know to seek their own correction» (Harney and Moten 2013: 78)).

Having said this, I will now turn to two specific examples within this bureaucratic context: first, the governance of knowledge production and the commodification of knowledge; second, the relationship between bureaucracy and the university as an agent of exclusion and border enforcement.

On the first example. The contemporary entanglement of the university with corporate and state power is evidenced in-part through the corporatisation of the university, as predicted by Deleuze (1992; also see Giroux 2009), through which metrically and bureaucratically produced competition explicitly seeks to incite division (competition) amongst those within the institution, and with others in other institutions, for the aim of “efficiency” and “excellence.” As Graeber notes, in the UK and US, the past thirty years has seen an explosion in working hours spent by academics on administration (2015: 133), itself indissociable from corporate management techniques which proclaim to be incentivising efficiency, excellence, leadership, and so forth. The stupidity expressed by putative institutions of research can be crystallised into the observation that being a “researcher” today entails spending more time on internal administration, bureaucracy around teaching, grant applications, book proposals, and so on, than doing any actual research; and certainly, thereby, no study:

What these management techniques invariably end up meaning in practice is that everyone winds up spending most of their time trying to sell each other things: grant proposals; book proposals; assessments of our students' job and grant applications; assessments of our colleagues; prospectuses for new interdisciplinary majors, institutes, conference workshops, and universities themselves, which have now become brands to be marketed to prospective students or contributors. Marketing and PR thus come to engulf every aspect of university life. The result is a sea of documents about the fostering of "imagination" and "creativity," set in an environment that might as well have been designed to strangle any actual manifestations of imagination and creativity in the cradle « ... » [Academia] is now the domain of professional self-marketers. (Graeber 2015: 134-135, my addition)

Further still, such proposals regularly require that "outcomes" can be "predicted" in advance, or in other words, require that thought ought to know *in advance* what the outcome of thought will be. Or further, the incentives which exist in the context of metricised governance ("excellence frameworks"), namely, incentives to *obey* the metrics, to subordinate one's research (and teaching practices) to the values embedded in metrics of "excellence" (Saunders 2015; Sutton 2017). Take the UK: the Research Excellence Framework, the Teaching Excellence Framework (Heaney and Mackenzie 2017), the National Student Survey, university ranking at national and international levels, and so forth:<sup>2</sup> which of these is not structurally short-termist? Such requirements and incentives are, of course, stupid, functioning as a systemic *blockage* to any confrontation with our stupidity and to study. As Stiegler notes, the general subordination of thought to calculability, itself on his account dependent on contemporary digital technologies and upon the concentration of administrative architectures, «have given rise to *knowledge performance agents* [...] [who] subject this knowledge to economic criteria» (2015: 94). The notion of a "knowledge performance agent" is, here, particularly useful when considering the role of metricised governance of university research. Knowledge performance agents are precisely those "technical facts" which we *ought* to subordinate research to, and *not* think. Our contemporary systemic stupidity – «global unreason» and «speculative madness» (Stiegler 2015: 178) – proliferates, expands, and *integrates* more and more through performance agents of various types of activity subjected to economic criteria (credit rating agencies from the individual to the national level; "GDP growth;" inflation; et cetera), producing base truths and enacting governance.

On the second example. Joyce Canaan notes Margaret Thatcher's introduction of tuition fees – applicable only to "international students" – into the UK tertiary education sector in 1980 (2013: 24; Edwards 1989: 212): Thatcher's move would prove indicative (and a part) of a general trend towards the commodification of knowledge; a trend which continues today to exhibit border dynamics. For example, at the time of writing, nearly

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<sup>2</sup> Also see: Amsler and Bolsmann 2012; Feges 2016; Page 2017; Raaper 2017; Watermeyer and Olsson 2016, which go beyond this UK context.

one in five students in the UK universities are considered “international” (EU or non-EU) (Universities UK 2017: 2); and further, the tuition fees paid by these students constitutes approximately 14% of university income (£4.8 billion), before considering the multiplicity of extra costs that are required, which more than double this figure (Universities UK 2017: 3). No doubt: “international students” are “lucrative,” within and beyond the university, largely due to the differential tuition-fee structure which is applied to them. Or, in other words, due to the different mode of governance through which “non-domestic” students are governed, that is, through the UK’s *regime of conditional hospitality*. The question of hospitality is immediately a question of the relationship between “host” and “guest,” between the security of the home and potential threats to the security of the home, of the border, and the border’s generalised extension through practices of (in)hospitality. Power, border enforcement, conditional inclusion and exclusion: these are the themes of an analysis of hospitality (Bulley 2013; 2014; 2015; 2017). Insofar as the “market for international students” is a “lucrative” one, the corporate university’s marketing is often that of an open and internationalist one in kind, depicting the university as a site of *hospitality and inclusion*.

The university, however and in effect, through its bureaucratic practices, acts as an *extension of border technologies*, as a site of *monitoring and control*. As Raunig notes:

Competition in the international market for tuition fees has opened up an additional source of revenue, above all for Anglophone educational institutions. Cultural exchanges are used as a cover to recruit students who promise to bring in even higher revenues than the local student clientele. Those who cannot afford these higher tuition fees continue to be increasingly subjected to forms of racist exclusions. (2013: 39)

As an extension of border technologies, the university operates within and as part of the UK’s *regime of hospitality*. Hospitality, as Dan Bulley (with Jacques Derrida (Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000)) highlights, is always immediately a question of security, of *who* and *how* to welcome particular guests: «For hospitality to operate at all, in any context, it requires hostility and exclusion in order to maintain the home as a home. Without that hostility, complete openness destroys the home and, with it, an ethics of hospitality» (2014: 176). This is also to say that, as practiced, regimes of hospitality are always regimes of conditional hospitality. The offer of openness, hospitality, and inclusion offered by the marketing of the corporate university is an offer extended to those who fit within extant regimes of credit, accounting, and governance, which is also so say that this offer operates through class and racialised dynamics.

The UK’s regime of hospitality is increasingly constituted with and through all those calculative technologies we have discussed at length already, this time with metrics of border flows and biometric, biopolitical-racialised surveillance beyond but also continuously within the territory of the state (Amoore 2006; Vaughan-Williams 2010;

2009; Salter 2006), the organisation and co-ordination of this information constituting an immense bureaucratic operation within which the university participates. For example, Canaan notes (speaking then in a future tense that is now, for us, the present), «lecturers must act as an arm of the UK Border Agency, monitoring student attendance ostensibly to ensure that no potential terrorists lurk amongst the ranks of foreign students» (2013: 43). The UK government's *Prevent* programme is another aspect of the UK's regime of hospitality and governance, applying differential rules of hospitality towards "domestic" and "non-domestic" students who exhibit "signs of radicalisation": «We will support the [university] sector to improve their capacity in this area, training staff to recognise the signs of radicalisation and helping them improve their awareness of the help that is available» (2011: 76, my addition; also see Heath-Kelly 2017). Young people and those from «lower income and socio-economic groups» (2011: 16) are identified as needing further surveillance and *Prevent* pleas for co-operation by universities in order to spot such "signs." The UK government's ambition goes as far as to include *Prevent* training into undergraduate curriculums (2011: 84), and has even appointed dedicated police officers to certain universities of «particular risk» (2011: 74; also see Foucault 2003: 61-62). The UK government laments, further, that *only* 45% of universities engaged with frequency with the police on *Prevent* activities, and calls for more vigilance and more «information sharing» (2011: 75). More governance, more policy, more bureaucracy. The bureaucratic flow of information enables the indication, normalisation, and exclusion of those identified "risk factors" in the service of reproducing a "secure" home for inhabitants and those privileged guests.

To repeat a point made above: the distractive mechanisms of bureaucracy cover over the structural violence necessary for bureaucracy to exist in the first place and which bureaucracy continually perpetuates (Graeber 2015: 57-67). By participating in such bureaucratic procedures, we blindly and stupidly reproduce structural violence on a daily basis («Policy is correction, forcing itself with mechanical violence upon the incorrect, the uncorrected, the ones who do not know to seek their own correction» (Harney and Moten 2013: 78; also see Gillborn 2005). The main point to highlight here is that bureaucratic technologies of hospitality must be situated in this analytic, too, as vast mechanisms of *racialised and rationalised governance and exclusion*, as a continuous extension and intension of the border through the university's bureaucratic apparatuses. Rather than functioning as a site of inclusivity and hospitality, the university acts as an exclusionary space, an extension of the border and a site of governance and (ab)normalisation, with attached hierarchies and conditions of hospitality. Racialised and class dynamics function as part of the UK's bureaucratic logic of conditional hospitality, where "appropriate" guests – who exhibit the appropriate class status and who ought in the long term, and in the words of the *Prevent* strategy, «develop a sense of belonging to [the UK] and support for our core values» (2011: 5) – are (conditionally) welcomed and "hosted." Hierarchies upon hierarchies: host/guest; appropriate guest/inappropriate guest. The "outward

looking” and “cosmopolitan” feature of the neoliberal-corporate university’s hospitality PR is, no doubt, of a highly conditional character.

Having discussed the integration of the governance of knowledge and the governance of bodies into the contemporary university’s bureaucratic practices, I will now turn to the final section of this paper.

#### §4 Projects of Study for the University-to-Come

[I]t cannot be denied that the university is a place of refuge, and it cannot be accepted that the university is a place of enlightenment. In the face of these conditions one can only sneak into the university and steal what one can. To abuse its hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony, its gypsy encampment, to be in but not of – this is the path of the subversive intellectual in the modern university. (Harney and Moten 2013: 26)

Recall how study was initially defined above: as occurring in a state of permanent debt and its mutual elaboration in the undercommons, as an amateur (unprofessional) practice. We cannot be sure what the “outcome” of study will be, although it will not be commodified “knowledge production” as it has become today; nor will it attempt to calculate, and thereby govern, the incalculable (Stiegler 1998: 225-232). Study is irreducible to “knowledge production” even in a broad sense, insofar as to speak of study in Harney and Moten’s terms is to speak of social relations and their complexity, it is to speak of our incalculable mutual indebtedness to each other whenever we work together, and it is to speak of the activities of the undercommons traversing those spaces of bad debt. The undercommons and their practices of study is only incidentally related to the university. So, having noted this, this final section will not seek to pre-empt any such outcomes. It will, however, project a little, and raise some of the problems to address in a confrontation with our contemporary stupidity in the university.

*First Project of Study: Debureaucratisation and Decommodification of Knowledge in the University-to-Come*

In accord with my comments above on the disincentives for study within metricised governance of knowledge production, Raunig notes that under bureaucratized measurement and management, «Content is secondary at all stages of the research process. What counts for the university is the external funding fetish, what counts for the funding institutions is the evaluability and measurability of results» (2013: 34). What is primary is the permanent bureaucratic management and measurement of these processes (Raunig 2013: 31). No, doubt, we also here must add to this the bureaucratic management of teaching and its attached commodificatory processes which I highlighted

above. To debureaucratise our relation to research, teaching (the «pedagogical construction itself» (Stiegler 2015: 220)), and to each other, as an ongoing experiment with the informal, to remain in the undercommons of the university, to escape and explode regimes of stupidity, credit, and professionalisation: these are the implicated tasks in our first project of study.

Such processes of debureaucratisation and decommodification could follow multiple lines of flight, and as such the points developed here can only be suggestive on these themes.<sup>3</sup> One line of flight could be pursued through the mounting of an *offensive* against professionalisation and bureaucratisation, subverting and short-circuiting these mechanisms from within the university, towards the *multiplication* of informal spaces and opportunities for study. Such would constitute an intensification of the “in but not of” and creative explorations of the “with and for” aspects of the positionality of the undercommons in the university. On this, Raunig gives us an interesting list of tactics which could be pursued in such a line of flight which he is theorising in terms of a “desertion” of the university of the present:

First of all, desertion occurs as the development of precarious forms of autonomy *within* the institution, in the development of little monsters that thwart the structures and institutional antagonisms through their obstinacy. These would be micropolitical strategies, such as refusing to pass on the institutional pressure from above, at all stages of the institution; awarding credit points for transversal events that transgress the internal logic of the institution; striking against peer reviews and ranked journals, especially on the part of tenured teachers; actively recognizing journals, magazines, newspapers and essays in anthologies that are not peer reviewed and do not belong to any established hierarchy of ranking, but instead try out new forms of sociality in publishing; inventing and defending free spaces for non-conformist thinking and action; and finally reterritorializing the space of the university as a movement of reappropriation. (2013: 27)

Further, the second aspect of desertion Raunig notes is that of the university's relationship to its *outside*. This is a process he envisages in terms of «alternative formations of knowledge production» (2013: 28) beyond the university and of a connective process whereby struggles and study within the space of the university become more and more connected to struggles and study beyond it. Félix Guattari made a similar gesture in a late article (calling for his version of transdisciplinarity in 1992) in which he discussed localised modes of knowledge production, «incarnated in a social body whose destiny is in question» (2015: 132), that is, through an enlarged horizon and practice of research which connected the university to its outside, and importantly, in-

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<sup>3</sup> There are other existing projects that could well be explored here in affirmative manner, such as, for example, the Social Science Centre in Lincoln, UK (see Neary 2015, who explores this drawing partly on Harney and Moten). Further, see Cowden and Sing 2013.

part directed against «the technocratic visions that reign» (2015: 133). Interestingly, in this article Guattari claims that the UN Charter of Human Rights should include a «right to research» and goes on to argue that: «All social groups, all professions, minorities...have a need of the research that concerns or implicates them» (2015: 132). Both Raunig and Guattari articulate a desire for a rupture of the professionalisation and commodification of research – and those hierarchies through which “professional research” is “applied” to those outside the university, of which *governance* has been one of our central examples or, further, the gentrifying role universities can play in local areas (Raunig 2013: 38) – as well as those mechanisms of bureaucratic control which keep research bounded and tamed.<sup>4</sup>

In short, our first project of study is a futural experiment which seeks to imagine and practice “research and teaching” in the university-to-come in manners which *offend* bureaucratic mechanisms and professionalisation, and the multiplication of practices of study within and beyond the university in research and pedagogy.

#### *Second Project of Study: Hospitality and Refuge in the University-to-Come*

It cannot be denied that the university is a place of refuge. The university has a history. As Hilde de Ridder-Symoens notes, in a chapter in volume II of *A History of the University in Europe*, the university functioned as a site of refuge for political and religious refugees in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. As she further notes: «The universities are more responsible than is generally believed for the major migratory movements of modern times» (1996: 427-428). What might it mean to make the university-to-come a site of hospitality, refuge, and study? To make the university a site of «radical inclusivity» (Raunig 2016: 189)? To *study* the systemic stupidity evidenced in the university’s practices of (in)hospitality, with its contemporary «logic of inclusion and exclusion according to economic criteria» (Raunig 2013: 31) and, Raunig further notes, «racist exclusion» (2013: 39; also see Law 2017)? To study with is not to surveil, or to foresee, but to be engaged in the elaboration of mutual indebtedness, and project-ion (Stiegler 2003). It to be engaged in a *futural and experimental being-with-others*, as an ongoing experiment with the informal; and as such is about relating to each other in new ways. A further point is worth making: how have these webs of incalculable mutual indebtedness penetrated our histories, and the history of the university? What parts, if any, of the history of the university are worth preserving? Projects of study in the university-to-come will be concerned with re-figuring and re-inventing the relations in the university, but importantly, this also means re-figuring and re-inventing the university’s relationship to its own history. Importantly – and building on Bulley discussion of UK “sanctuary cities” (and their related attempts to build coalitions with schools, universities, and museums)

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<sup>4</sup> Although I will not be discussing this here, these broad themes are also articulated by Stiegler and in his praxis with *Ars Industrialis* (2014a).

which seek to provide more hospitable host-guest relations through, for example, developing approaches to public services being provided in an «immigrant status-blind» manner» (Mancina 2013: 206; Bulley 2017: 82-85) – such a project of study would seek rather to experiment and explore possibilities of «exploding the distinction between guest and host» (Bulley, 2017: 85) *as such* in the university-to-come. No doubt, one only maintains and reproduces systemic stupidity when one's solutions remained tied to bureaucratic procedures, monitoring, control, governance, credit, and accounting. Conditional hospitality, filtered through stupid bureaucratic mechanisms, is constituted today by those attempts to capture those who enter the space of the university through mechanisms of credit and governance, and importantly, have the effect of controlling *which* "others" enter this space in the first place, on which terms, under what conditions, and so forth. Study, as concerned with experimental and futural being-with-others, in order to be a constitutively open-ended project, will seek to explode this process of filtration and expand and enlarge what we mean by being-with-others in our projects of study. To say a little more on this, I will briefly conclude with some comments on a further example the contemporary university's othering practices found in its global scope and penetration.

The university also has a history, and a present, of colonial ambitions and practices. This is evidenced today, for example, in what Raunig calls «neocolonial franchise arrangements» (2013: 39) through which universities sell their «know-how and personnel» to franchises across the globe. Relatedly, there are the practices of building "branch campuses" in different regions of the world (Wikins and Huisman 2011a; 2011b). What sort of relations of hospitality are at work through such branch campuses, where universities are, in a sense, guests; but guests who act as hosts? Such a question, no doubt, requires study. Towards the end of *Orientalism*, Edward Said develops a similar line of thought, noting what he calls the «accommodation between the intellectual class and the new imperialism» as one of the «special triumphs of Orientalism» (2003: 322). He goes on to note that «universities in the Arab world are generally run according to some pattern inherited from, or once directly imposed by, a former colonial power» (2003: 322). Engaging with the university and the academy's practices of spatial and epistemic colonialism (historical and contemporary) becomes part of our second project of study in the undercommons of the university-to-come. No doubt, much work on this has already been done (here I am gesturing towards the growing amount of work on epistemic violence (Spivak 1988: 280; Bennett 2007; Teo 2011; Berenstain 2016) and decolonial theory and practice (Grosfoguel 2007; Mignolo 2011; Tuck and Wang 2012; Sanjinés C. 2013; Motta 2016; Savo 2016)). I cannot devote sufficient attention to this issue, but the main point to extract here is that the study of hospitality and refuge in the contemporary university cannot be limited or reduced to this or that building, but rather to a vast array of global neocolonial practices which the contemporary university remains, today as when Said wrote, absolutely central to.

In short, our second project of study is a futural experiment which confronts the “host/guest” relations pertaining to the university today. Not just the manner in which “host” institutions “welcome” new “guests,” but also as it pertains to how the university, through contemporary (spatial and epistemic) neocolonial practices acts as “host” across the globe. Such a project is not mitigatory, nor participative in practices of control, but is rather about the creation of new modes of relations in and towards the explosion of the host/guest relation in the university-to-come as such.

## §5 Conclusion

The university-to-come will be, and this is the hope, a place of refuge and study. Such a future, however, is by no means guaranteed given the prevalence and dominance of our contemporary systemic stupidity. I have tried to gesture towards and begin to develop two indicative projects of study that can be developed in the undercommons of the university to confront such regimes of credit, accounting, and governance, but by no means have I exhausted – or even begun to exhaust – the issues, relations, further projects, and practices that could emerge from study. Processes of debureaucratisation, decommodification, and the explosion of the host/guest relation are long-term projects, and especially difficult given the embeddedness of our stupidity in the university today, embedded in our (violent) everyday practices. Participating in the undercommons, remaining in compliant, naïve, and elaborating our mutual and permanent in indebtedness to each other, such are the affect-imbued practices that such study would require.

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