

Social Class, Gender and the Pace of Academic Life: What Kind of Solution is Slow?

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Abstract: My starting point for this article is the increasing pace of academic life. As the other articles in this special section evidence, the Slow movement, which seeks to challenge our contemporary obsession with speed, is being taken up by many in order to intervene into "fast academia". However, in this article, I suggest we should pause and question what kind of a solution this offers to the current crisis of speed. Working auto/biographically and using examples drawn from popular culture, I argue that Slow is both classed and gendered, re/producing wider patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Specifically, I suggest that Slow naturalises a particular relationship to self which requires not just stability of employment but an individualist way of being, constituting selves that calculate and invest in them-selves for the future.

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1. Fast Academia or Academia Through the Looking Glass

In Lewis CAROLL's (1968) tale of "Alice Through the Looking Glass", Alice finds herself a pawn in a giant chess game and is taken on a race by the Red Queen. Pausing, Alice is surprised to find herself both out of breath and in exactly the same place as before they started sprinting.

"Well, in *our* country,' said Alice, still panting a little, 'you'd generally get to somewhere else—if you run very fast for a long time, as we've been doing.'

'A slow sort of country!' said the Queen. 'Now, *here*, you see, it takes all the running *you* can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!'" (pp.167-168) [1]

Those working in academia have long been invoked to do more with less. But now, like the Red Queen, we are getting targets to, as a minimum, raise the ratings students give to our teaching, increase both the number of students we recruit and the level of their qualifications, speed up the pace at which our doctoral students complete, increase our research and consultancy income, and so on. This is simply so that we, our universities, and the sector, can keep in the

same place; to get somewhere else you have to run even faster than that! This is *academia through the looking glass* or *fast academia* and my own identification with the perplexed and exhausted Alice was the starting point for this article. In engaging reflexively with my own working life, and with a variety of popular cultural forms, I am attempting an exercise in what C. Wright MILLS (1970, p.10) called the sociological imagination, "the quality of mind essential to grasp the interplay of [hu]man and society, of biography and history, of self and world", as I relate my personal troubles to the public issues of academic labour and transformations in higher education. [2]

I am far from the first person to draw attention to the accelerated pace of academic life, and many of these accounts too are deeply personal. Bronwyn DAVIES, Jenny BROWNE, Susanne GANNON, Eileen HONAN and Margaret SOMERVILLE (2005) locate speed within neoliberalism, the process through which competitive individualism, economic drivers and audit culture have taken over the public sector:

"Within the terms of the new system individuals are presented with an (often overwhelming) range of pressing choices and administrative tasks for which they are responsible and, having learned to be one of the pairs of eyes that watches and calculates value in terms of the budget, we 'responsibly' gaze on our own acts and the acts of others. And we shape ourselves (or try to) as the ones who do have (a monetary) value to the organisations we work in" (p.345). [3]

Similarly, Ros GILL (2009, p.234) uses the term "fast academia" as I do to denote "the intensification and extensification of work" within higher education in England. She too relates speed to neoliberal modes of governance, ones that work through rather than in opposition to autonomy, and notes how effective these have proved for "extracting 'surplus value'" (p.236) from academics. Her focus is on the psychosocial costs of this—the things we do to each other and to ourselves in living within and through these structures. Andrew SPARKES (2007) has written movingly about mental health problems arising from managing the UK's Research Excellence Framework, a particularly pernicious part of this neoliberal audit-via-autonomy regime. And, in March 2014, an article in UK newspaper *The Guardian* about "A Culture of Acceptance Around Mental Health Issues in Academia" went viral (ANONYMOUS ACADEMIC, 2014; see also, SHAW & WARD, 2014). Thus the question of how to intervene into this damaging cult of speed is an urgent one. Many are turning to the Slow movement to provide such an intervention, as attested to by the popularity of the seminars from which this special section derives. The Slow movement seeks ways "to challenge our obsession with doing everything more quickly" (HONORÉ, 2005, p.4) While initially appealing, this move is problematic, for, as I show in this article, only some selves are in a position to take on slow ways of being and to gain value through so doing. I begin by outlining my own encounters with "Slow academia". [4]

2. Encounters with Slow Academia

Many researchers have identified a central role for technology in creating an expectation of an "always on" academia (for example, GILL, 2009; LEVY, 2007; MENZIES & NEWSON, 2007; ROSA, 2010). As I write this, through a combination of factors, I have not logged onto my institutional e-mail for over four days. This feels transgressive, evoking both guilt and pleasure. I have, however, kept up with my other non-institutional e-mail, through which some of my work gets done, and my Twitter account on which I am hoping to reach 1,000 followers before handing back to [Kim ALLEN](#), with whom I share the account, next week. It is such engagements with new technologies that initially provoked me to reflect on pace and through which I encountered and then came to contest Slow academia. [5]

Since September 2012, I have been working on an ESRC-funded study of [The Role of Celebrity in Young People's Classed and Gendered Aspirations](#). As part of this I am part of a team who have used online communication from the start, blogging and [tweeting](#) regularly about the study, and also using [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) to build interest and share ideas. I love the website that Kim ALLEN, Laura HARVEY and I have created. I enjoy doing online communication; the immediacy and supportive feedback are more to my "taste" than the long timescales and anonymity associated with publishing in peer-reviewed journals. Yet I am disturbed by the alignment between fast academia and going digital. [6]

Writing a blogpost rather than, say, an entry in a research diary, generates fast responses and produces a measurable public output. Using Google Analytics I can track how many people accessed which parts of our website, how long they spent there and whether or not they stayed on the site. I can find out how many people each of our posts reached through Facebook and how many are "talking" about them. Twitter and YouTube too provide multiple ways of measuring the "impact" of our work—which tweets get favoured, which retweeted and which disappear without trace. This all fits remarkably well with the neoliberal version of accountability and self-monitoring via audit and consumerism, and with the growing "impact agenda" which demands both that academic research impact on practice *and* that we can evidence this impact. [7]

Heather MENZIES and Janice NEWSON (2007) in a survey of Canadian academics found that their respondents felt that the pace of technology brought advantages, notably, opportunities for international networking, and disadvantages, notably, raised levels of stress. "Moreover, this performability dynamic can be habit forming, and can fundamentally shape the consciousness, or habitus, of all participants, including academics" (p.94). Of course there are choices about how we engage, and, as my colleague Laura HARVEY describes, we have done it collectively.¹ I like that most people do not know who is behind our Twitter account on any given day. It seems to subvert the emphasis on the individual, entrepreneurial academic, that the internet might otherwise fuel. But,

1 See <http://www.celebyouth.org/team-tweets-and-collective-blogs/> [Accessed: July 8, 2014].

following MENZIES and NEWSON, I too have come to feel that I/we need to be continually asking: How is it shaping my/our consciousness? [8]

For example, while there is no clear distinction between the descriptive and the analytic, the need to formulate my ideas into something that can be blogged or even tweeted is moving me more quickly from a more descriptive to a more analytic register. What I mean by this difference is clear in an Amy HEMPEL short story "The Harvest" (1998 [1987]), cited by Chuck PALAHNIUK (2004). Here, instead of HEMPEL offering the pre-analysed formulation that the character of "the boyfriend is an asshole", she *describes* how, after a car crash, "we see him holding a sweater soaked with his girlfriend's blood and telling her, 'You'll be okay, but this sweater is ruined'" (pp.144-145). While the second account is far from innocent, it is very different and it allows one's thoughts to follow different lines of flight. Which lines of flight does the internet open up for academic work and which close down, I wondered. Here I found writings on Slow useful. [9]

When I blogged my looking-glass experiences, Maggie O'NEILL read my work in the context of the Slow movement. I felt an instant affinity. I remembered enjoying Slow food while on holiday in Nepal at a restaurant where after you ordered, the staff nipped to the shop next door to buy the necessary ingredients before cooking your meal. And I fell in love with Slow television the moment I saw my first five minutes of live-feed [Big Brother](#) during the second UK series. It was so, so slow, the pace of everyday life but not of everyday television, simultaneously fascinating and dull. However, as I read about Slow academia I experienced two key disjunctures. [10]

First, there is Slow academia's predominantly negative attitude towards online communication. This extract is taken from a [Manifesto for Slow Scholarship](#):

"Slow scholarship, is thoughtful, reflective, and the product of rumination—a kind of field testing against other ideas. It is carefully prepared, with fresh ideas, local when possible, and is best enjoyed leisurely, on one's own or as part of a dialogue around a table with friends, family and colleagues. Like food, it often goes better with wine.

In the desire to publish instead of perish, many scholars at some point in their careers, send a conference paper off to a journal which may still be half-baked, may only have a spark of originality, may be a slight variation on something they or others have published, may rely on data that is still preliminary. This is hasty scholarship.

Other scholars send out their quick responses to a talk they have heard, an article they read, an email they have received, to the world via a Tweet or Blog. This is fast scholarship. Quick, off the cuff, fresh—but not the product of much cogitation, comparison, or contextualization. The Tweetscape and Blogosphere brim over with sometimes idle, sometimes angry, sometimes scurrilous, always hasty, first impressions." [11]

While I recognise the experience of submitting what one feels are "half-baked" papers, I am uneasy at the way this text constructs an opposition between "thoughtful, reflective" slow scholarship and "sometimes idle, sometimes angry,

sometimes scurrilous" hasty scholarship. They ignore how submitting a paper with "only ... a spark of originality", can have enormous value for the academics involved in writing it, for example, as part of a process of developing their "academic voice". The writers of the manifesto go on to advocate slow blogs or "slogs" and slow tweets or "sleets", ones that take time and are beautifully crafted. But instantaneity is the point of the internet. By insisting on slow blogs that you write just a couple of times a year and refine to "perfection", you take the fun and conversational-ness out of blogging and transform it into the (for me) difficult business of writing journal articles. More than this you abdicate from a role as a public academic who joins in public debates as they happen,² like I did when I jumped on Twitter after I saw domestic violence on 2013 UK Big Brother and wanted to participate in the struggle to name it as such. [12]

Second, there is Slow academia's alignment with neoliberalism. Yvonne HARTMAN and Sandy DARAB (2012), in their influential article "A Call for Slow Scholarship: A Case Study on the Intensification of Academic Life and Its Implications for Pedagogy", embed their analysis of fast and slow scholarship in a wider understanding of neoliberalism. But I would argue they undercut the criticality of their analysis when, towards the end, they quote a Harvard academic's letter to his students:

"Empty time is not a vacuum to be filled. It is the thing that enables the other things on your mind to be creatively rearranged, like the empty square in the 4 by 4 puzzle that makes it possible to move the other fifteen pieces around.

In advising you to think about slowing down and limiting your structured activities, I do not mean to discourage you from high achievement, indeed from the pursuit of extraordinary excellence. But you are more likely to sustain the intensive effort needed to accomplish first-rate work in one area if you allow yourself some leisure time, some recreation, some time for solitude" (LEWIS in HONORÉ, 2005, p.248). [13]

This suggests that slowing down is mainly a way to be a more efficient and effective scholar, with slow scholarship directed towards the same aims as fast scholarship but offering a superior way of getting there. This is what Carl HONORÉ (2013, n.p.) calls "the delicious paradox of slow" that when we slow down we end up working *better and faster*: "The best way to get ahead in our very fast world is to slow down". Is the purpose of slowing down to turn us into more effective, if happier, "knowledge workers", the shock troops of neoliberalism? My hope had been for something to disrupt rather than reproduce the dominant definition of progress. My engagements with the peace and environmental movements, have brought me to an understanding that what we call "progress" has produced increased economic inequalities, large-scale violence towards human and non-human animals and environmental devastation. As Walter BENJAMIN (2005 [1940], n.p.) evokes, "progress" has failed:

² See <http://digitalsociology.org.uk/?p=998> [Accessed: July 8, 2014].

"A Klee painting named 'Angelus Novus'³ shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. We perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing in from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such a violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress." [14]

These two disjunctures, provoked me to question my initial experience of affinity with Slow. As Diane REAY, Gill CROZIER and John CLAYTON (2009, p.1105) note, disjunctures "can generate not only change and transformation, but also disquiet, ambivalence, insecurity and uncertainty" (p.1105). These are now my feelings towards Slow. As Pierre BOURDIEU and Loic WACQUANT argue (1992, p.127) "when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a 'fish in water': it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted". Who can feel at home within Slow and who feels the weight of the water? Who has opportunities to slow down? And, what difference does it make where you come from, which university you are at, which contract you are on and what other responsibilities you have? If slow subjectivities become those that are valued, who are those people who acquire value through Slow? These are the questions that motivate the rest of this article. They are pertinent given both the increasing stratification of university life and the growing dissatisfaction with fast academia. [15]

3. Calculated Slowness and its Others

The shifts that I traced in the last section enabled me to take a step back and begin to denaturalise Slow.

"All social practices are implicated in processes of inclusion and exclusion, so when these practices take on the status of commonsense, and even present as emancipatory, it is important to interrupt them. Poststructural theory offers a way to do this. For, 'the value of theory lies in its power to get in the way: to offend and interrupt. We need theory to block the reproduction of the bleeding obvious, and thereby, hopefully, open new possibilities for thinking and doing' (MacLure, 2010, p.277)" (HOSSAIN, MENDICK & ADLER, 2013, n.p.). [16]

In what follows I use poststructural theory to interrupt the commonsense that Slow is slowly becoming, as it is adopted by corporations from Volkswagen to Amazon, from Deutsche Bank to Google (at least for those in their upper echelons), and by individual academics wanting to change their working practices (HONORÉ, 2014; O'NEILL, this section). [17]

3 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelus_Novus [Accessed: July 8, 2014].

Poststructuralism demands that we attend to the relationship between knowledge and power:

"I have been trying to make visible the constant articulation I think there is of power on knowledge and of knowledge on power. We should not be content to say that power has a need for such-and-such a discovery, such-and-such a form of knowledge, but we should add that the exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information ... The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power" (FOUCAULT, 1980, pp.51-52). [18]

Thus, knowledge is never innocent and we move from questions about truth to ones about power, from assessing the accuracy of knowledge claims to analysing their effects. This directs us to look at all claims to authority as "fictions functioning in truth" (WALKERDINE, 1997, p.14), and to unpick the patterns of meanings through which they make sense. Slow speaks with authority, it claims to know, for example, that finding the *tempo giusto*, the correct speed, for each activity, supports human flourishing. For this to make sense much is assumed about "human nature". Again, poststructuralism directs us to question not the descriptive accuracy of these assumptions but their productive power. What kind of selves do they fabricate? And who gets to count, in consequence? [19]

In his best-selling and influential book, "In Praise of Slow", Carl HONORÉ (2005) explores different parts of the Slow movement, with successive chapters focused on food, cities, mind/body, medicine, sex, work, leisure and children. In one chapter he tells of a visit to the annual conference of The Decelerators. Keen to move away from stereotypes, he informs us that the participants are not "flaky relics from the hippie era. Far from it. They are the kind of concerned citizens you find at neighbourhood watch meetings around the world—lawyers, consultants, doctors, architects, teachers" (p.39). A similar list of archetypal middle-class occupations occurs in a later chapter, when HONORÉ assures us that, among the participants in his Slow sex class, while there

"are a few archetypal New Agers, in sarongs and beads, ... most of the thirty-one participants are ordinary folk in comfortable street clothes. There are doctors, stockbrokers, teachers. One man has come straight from his trading desk in the City" (p.176). [20]

These are not isolated examples, they are indicative of how the book is written largely for and about the global middle class. We can see how this works through looking in more detail at two chapters—Work and Children—which I consider in turn. [21]

Throughout the book, HONORÉ makes frequent use of the first person singular. Here are three instances from early in the chapter on Work:

"Most of us are more likely to put in a fourteen-hour day than a fourteen-hour week" (p.188).

"Whatever happened to the Age of Leisure? Why are so many of us still working so hard?" (p.189)

"Many of us enjoy our jobs—the intellectual challenge, the physical exertion, the socializing, the status" (p.191). [22]

But who are the "we" and "us" being addressed? Who are the intended audience for this book who are imagined as sharing HONORÉ's experiences? In the chapter, there are mentions of hotel workers—although they work in an office rather than as cleaners, waiters or bar-staff—and of the importance of time autonomy for call-centre workers. But these are fleeting references. They exist as generic categories of workers; none are named and we know nothing of any of their individual lives. In contrast, HONORÉ focuses on those in middle-class occupations; and we get to know some of them as people, such as lawyer Erwin Heller "a lively fifty-six-year-old with a goatee and a mischievous grin" (p.210) and Jill Hancock "a go-getting investment banker in London, [who] used to take her chic, chrome-plated Nokia everywhere, and even answered calls on vacation or in the middle of a romantic dinner" (p.211). As Judith BUTLER (2004) argues, representation is key to which lives are imagined and imaginable as "like us". Within this, naming is crucial—it is why Afghani deaths remain anonymous but deaths of US and UK soldiers in the same war are named, storied and memorialised. [23]

Identity is constructed via "establishing opposites and 'others' whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from 'us'" (SAID, 1995, p.332). Absent from HONORÉ's analysis are Slow's Others: those who are unemployed or underemployed; those on zero-hours contracts who have no stability of employment; and those doing jobs which offer little in terms of challenge and status. Many are now working less, not through choice, but through compulsion, as employment is often short-term, uneven and punctuated by long periods of unemployment (MacDONALD, SHILDRICK & FURLONG, 2013). Their slow pace is read as signifying laziness and fixity, and they are vilified for it in politicians' talk of "strivers" vs "skivers"⁴ and the wave of what Tracy JENSEN (2013) has called "poverty porn" that is being screened on UK television. What HONORÉ (2005) is writing about is not slowness but "calculated slowness", which, like "calculated hedonism" (SKEGGS, TORNHILL & TOLLIN, 2008; SZMIGIN et al., 2008), gains value from its calculation, from its "progressive" orientation to the future not the present. For Slow's insistence on "being in the moment" is aimed at "self-improvement". This is evident too in his chapter on Children. [24]

Slow's message on children is twofold: that parents should slow down in their parenting and that they should allow their children to slow down. Both messages

4 See <http://www.neweconomics.org/blog/entry/mythbusters-strivers-versus-skivers> [Accessed: July 8, 2014].

are nicely captured in a 2013 television advertisement from furniture giant Ikea.⁵ In this commercial, a teenage boy is filmed walking through a beautifully-furnished house, speaking directly to the camera and bemoaning how, despite their lovely home, they rarely get time to enjoy it, as "dad's working crazy hours" and spends his evenings doing e-mail, while he spends any time when he's not at school engaged in a wide range of extracurricular activities from karate to tuba. He pleads to be allowed to be a child and a family—building forts, eating sit-down meals, visiting gran, pretending to laugh at his father's "dad jokes" and watching reruns of his mother's favourite television show "coz there's nothing else to do". [25]

Research on social class and parenting has identified that, while "middle-class mothers were planning, co-ordinating and executing enrichment programmes for their children", working-class mothers and children play (REAY, 1998, p.145). Annette LAREAU's (2003) work in the US produced similar findings to Diane REAY's (1998) UK work. LAREAU describes the middle-class parenting style as "concerted cultivation", compared to the working-class "accomplishment of natural growth". This and other research suggests that slow parenting and childhoods are common within working-class families. Yet, HONORÉ does not look for them there, instead he finds them in middle-class families who are taking up Slow, for example, in tales of parents who move their children from private to state education, not of children who start and end their schooling in the state sector. Moreover, not only do working-class parents not acquire value through their slow parenting, but they are constantly invoked by policymakers to parent in a faster middle-class way (GEWIRTZ, 2001; WALKERDINE & LUCEY, 1989). For example, recently Peter BRANT, head of policy at the UK's Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, suggested that the key to working-class young people's educational success is for them to become "more middle class".⁶ Once again, we can see that what HONORÉ presents is not slowness but "calculated slowness". Just as women cannot gain value for performing femininity in the workplace while men can (ADKINS, 2011), and black actors cannot gain value for playing "cool" on screen while white actors can (DIAWARA, 1998), working-class parents cannot gain value for Slow childrearing while middle-class parents can. [26]

Universities contain a great diversity of workers and we need to be wary of promoting Slow for those higher up the hierarchy only for it to be enabled via the speeding up or devaluing of those people lower down. Slow like economics is unlikely to "trickle down". Similarly we must see universities as part of wider society, and when adopting practices of Slow academia, consider our complicity in the Slow movement's construction of its Others. However, as academics, we do seem a good fit to HONORÉ's professionals who, while enjoying many aspects of our jobs, find ourselves working longer and longer hours. Thus, it is to differences within academia that I now turn. [27]

5 See <http://www.carlhonore.com/2013/09/ikea-makes-a-nod-to-slow-parenting/> [Accessed: July 8, 2014].

6 See <http://www.celebyouth.org/middle-class-universities-must-learn-to-become-more-working-class/> [Accessed: July 8, 2014].

4. Slow Selves, Social Class, Gender and Academic Workers

There has been much debate about the position of academic workers within social class structures. As Paul WAKELING (2010) notes, while the increase in audit has led to a proletarianisation of academic work, within all schema academics are located as middle-class. Further, as paid for thinking, we are in the unusual position of, if not owning our own means of production, at least having more than the usual autonomy within non-ownership. Some have argued that there are class distinctions within academia with "contract researchers ... seen as higher education's own working-class or even *lumpen proletariat*, one which is disproportionately working-class in origin, black and female" (WAKELING, 2010, p.38). Similarly, at the top end, professorial roles are dominated by white men.⁷ However:

"It does not follow that the occupational position and life circumstances of a junior professional such as an academic can be compared to that of someone in a 'solidly' working-class occupation such as a bus driver, cleaner, supermarket checkout assistant or lathe operator. In general, pay and conditions are better in the professions, as are the measurable outcomes for quality of life" (ibid.). [28]

WAKELING's point here is well made but in this section I will suggest that these and other distinctions within academia are important in thinking the effects of Slow as an intervention within academic life. [29]

As noted above, academia contains a large number of contract researchers. There are also many academics who work as tutors on zero-hours contracts (FAZACHERLEY, 2013), with no guaranteed hours, and others who have only a small number of fixed hours each week at any single institution and who end up combining two, three or even four temporary part-time posts in order to obtain a viable income. As Sean WALLIS (2008) points out, more than 1 in 3 academic staff at universities are now on temporary contracts. Often the desire to appear keen in the hope of securing further work, means that people feel obliged to take on extra work, some paid and some unpaid, at the convenience of their employer (MÜLLER, this section). As Sydney CULKIN (2013) discusses, this was epitomised by the recent posting of an unpaid "job" as a junior research fellow in philosophy at Essex. Alexandre AFONSO (2013, n.p.) has likened academia to a drug gang as both operate a dual labour market:

"Dualisation is the strengthening of [the] divide between insiders in secure, stable employment and outsiders in fixed-term, precarious employment. Academic systems more or less everywhere rely at least to some extent on the existence of a supply of 'outsiders' ready to forgo wages and employment security in exchange for the prospect of uncertain security, prestige, freedom and reasonably high salaries that tenured positions entail." [30]

7 <https://admin.ecu.ac.uk/publications/files/equality-in-he-stats-report-2012-staff.doc/view>
[Accessed: July 8, 2014].

There is also huge stratification within the English university sector (REAY et al., 2009). I have worked and studied at universities at different levels and found that, while there is greater pressure to produce research outputs in higher status institutions, it is also much easier to find space for research at such places as this is an expected part of your job and is (at least) officially allocated time. [31]

The last few decades have seen a massive expansion in the higher education sector with nearly half of the age cohort now attending university. The past privileged space of academia was premised on the exclusion of others. Spending time in the ethereal domains of the slow university, requires the unpaid and unacknowledged material labour of others, be they cooking and cleaning for us, caring for our children, or otherwise servicing our needs. Those who advocate slow academia often do not advocate working less (MARTELL, this section). Instead, as Oili-Helena YLIJOKI (2013) shows, they draw a distinction between "real work" (research and to a lesser extent, teaching) and "wasted time" (administration, management, competing for funding, and so on). This construction is gendered with the "academic housework" of pastoral care falling disproportionately to women. It also maintains a nostalgic idealisation of "total commitment" in which one's whole life becomes part of one's academic identity. This

"can be seen as a masculine norm, relying on a hidden assumption that there are others who take care of the private sphere of life. In other words, it 'casts those who have outside interests and responsibilities as an aberrant subset for whom special accommodations must be made' (Fletcher and Bailyn 1996, 258). In a similar vein, it represents a 'manstory' relying on a hero myth that glorifies individual achievements and success (Gergen 1992), thereby sustaining and reinforcing the gendered structures in science and academia. ... In this sense one could ask to what extent the culturally shared ideal of total commitment represents a form of governance and self-imposed compliance, creating 'a company man' who fully internalises the institution's demands and expectations as his (or her) own" (YLIJOKI, 2013, p.249). [32]

The relationship of total commitment and institutional demands was brought home to me recently when a London Underground strike coincided with a large-scale review of Brunel's doctoral provision. When I enquired about arrangements given the difficulties of getting to Brunel via other routes, a colleague sent an e-mail which placed the responsibility onto individuals who will be "forewarned that they will need to make alternative travel arrangements". She then explained that she will probably stay overnight near the university at her own expense, concluding with the words: "Needs must". Here the needs were clearly those of the institution but, as unattributed, appear to be taken-on as her own. [33]

Thus distinctions between academics impact on how far even two people in similar positions—within the multiple intersecting hierarchies of posts, institutions and disciplines—can take up Slow. There is a large auto/biographical literature documenting the feelings of guilt, inadequacy, alienation and anger that accompany being an academic from a working-class background, typified by the collection edited by Pat MAHONY and Christine ZMROCEK (1997). Paul WAKELING (2010), surveying these accounts, notes that they come largely from

women, and compares them with his own experiences as a male academic from a working-class background, "a scholarship boy", to suggest that they show how social class is gendered. In particular, these accounts draw attention to these women's habitus: "how their socialisation in the family and their formative experiences shape an enduring set of dispositions and practices" (p.43). Their habitus persists into adulthood and, as a final point in my focus on Slow's Others, I will suggest that it embodies a particular relationship to self that does not fit with that normalised within Slow. [34]

Slow requires that we think of our-self as something that can be worked on, for, as discussed above, it requires that our slowness arise from calculation and be oriented to the future. Writings on Slow naturalise this self as intrinsically human, but: "the self, as Foucault ... so brilliantly demonstrated, is a category that does not pre-exist the discourses that constitute it" (SKEGGS, 2004, p.19). In order to practice on the self as Slow requires, one must come to think of one's self in terms of property, something which Bev SKEGGS traces back to the establishment of European capitalist colonialism, but which has intensified within neoliberalism:

"It was in the making of this European personhood that the category of the 'possessive individual' was consolidated ... in which it was the ownership of oneself rather than the ownership of objects that created the difference between the individual and others. ... 'The individual' is defined through his capacity to own property in his person. He is seen to have the capacity to stand outside of himself, to separate 'himself' from 'his body' and then to have a proprietorial relation to himself as bodily property. ... These different relationships to property—in objects in the person—have resonance today with those who can invest in themselves and those who cannot. (pp.9-10) [35]

As SKEGGS argues, having a proprietorial relation to one's-self as bodily property, is both classed and gendered. [36]

Given that, as I have argued, Slow includes some and excludes others, where does this leave those of us feeling entrapped by fast academia? [37]

5. Conclusion: The Possibilities and Constraints of Slow Academia

Zygmunt BAUMAN (2000) tracks our changing relationship to time in the move from heavy modernity, that characterised the period of industrialisation, to our current era of light modernity:

"People whose hands are untied rule over people with tied hands; freedom of the first is the main cause of the unfreedom of the second—while unfreedom of the second is the ultimate meaning of the freedom of the first. Nothing has changed in this respect with the passage from heavy to light modernity. But the eternal frame has filled with a new content; more precisely, the pursuit of closeness to the source of uncertainty has narrowed down to, and focused on, one objective: instantaneity. People who come closest to the momentariness of movement are now the people who rule. And it is the

people who cannot move as quickly, and more conspicuously yet the people who cannot voluntarily leave the place at all, who are ruled. Domination consists in one's own capacity to escape and the right to decide one's speed—while simultaneously stripping the people on the dominated side of their ability to arrest or constrain one's own moves or slow down their velocity" (pp.178-179) [38]

In this article I have suggested some of the ways that domination works through the Slow movement's invocation for "escape and the right to decide one's own speed", by attending to Slow's Others who are stripped of the ability to "slow down their velocity". If what is valued is slowing down, then it will be the privileged who, through appropriating Slow, will acquire more value. For the working class, slowness is read as rigidity; for the middle class, it is read as mobility. [39]

However, despite this I would like to recall the original appeal of the Slow movement. Carl HONORÉ (2014) suggests that Slow can be a Trojan horse, something that speaks to a wide range of people in a wide range of settings and for whom their exposure can lead to a more radical rethinking of individual and social priorities. I hope that this is so, but my analysis in this article suggests otherwise. Further, history attests to capitalism's ability to assimilate on its own terms even ideas that initially appear antithetical to it. I feel that a possible way forward would be to look for other genealogies of slow and critically and selectively appropriate them. Could/should we—in line with a desire to denaturalise and contextualise it—think of slow as plural and open to diverse uses and effects? Can we attend to how it fixes selves and individualises struggles, and consider alternative, queer and collective challenges to the increasing rapidity of our status quo? Those of us in more secure posts need to do more to ensure people get fair pay for the work that they do and obtain opportunities to develop within that work. We also need to support collective struggles for improved pay and conditions. [40]

There is a tension in Slow academia in that one of the most effective ways of controlling the extension of working life is to impose limits on when and how much we work. But this goes against the academic ideal of "total commitment" mentioned earlier. Perhaps rather than looking nostalgically back to a golden age of what we imagine academia once was, we should look forward to what it might become:

"One way to cope with the situation is boundary-work between work time and private time, thereby creating a counterforce to cultural expectations of total commitment and ensuring a workfree time dedicated to oneself, the family or other social relations. In the same vein, by relying upon such constructions as a normal working day and normal life, research work is normalised and stripped of the extra glory and high goals embedded in the traditional academic ideals" (YLIJOKI, 2013, p.252). [41]

Treating academic work more like work and less like a vocation or way of life may be the beginnings of resistance. [42]

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