ACME An International Journal for Critical Geographies

Creating Care-full Academic Spaces? The Dilemmas of Caring in the 'Anxiety Machine'

Harriet Hawkins

Royal Holloway, University of London
harriet.hawkins@rhul.ac.uk

Abstract

Good supervision is understood as key to successful graduate research, and recent years have witnessed a proliferation of handbooks and critical accounts of how to be 'good'. Amidst this growing volume of conceptualisations and accounts of the function of the supervision process very little literature addresses the emotional labours of being a good supervisor. This is despite an acknowledgment within the literature that practices of care and empathy are a key component of good supervision. This essay draws together feminist work from within and beyond geography on institutional intimacies and pedagogic practice with recent work in this journal and elsewhere on ethics, self-care and wellness to reflect on the challenges of being a 'good' supervisor in the context of the 'anxiety machine' of the neoliberal academy. As well as addressing the 'dilemmas of care' the paper reflects on the evolution of a wellbeing programme for graduate students and the challenges and ambiguities of such a programme as a critical care-full space.

Keywords

PhD; graduate supervision; care; emotion; feminist pedagogy; neoliberal university; wellness

Published with Creative Commons licence: Attribution–Noncommercial–No Derivatives

Depleted

> *Educating is always a vocation rooted in hopefulness. As teachers we believe that learning is possible, that nothing can keep an open mind from seeking after knowledge and finding a way to know* (hooks 2003: xiv)
>
> *To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin* (hooks 1994: 13)
>
> *There is a politics to exhaustion. Feeling depleted can be a measure of just what we are up against* (Ahmed 2013a)

Sometimes I am not hopeful, sometimes I am left exhausted, demoralised and spent, wrung out and depleted by creating and holding the spaces, atmospheres and practices for caring for students and colleagues that leave me with very little left for myself or my family. I am deeply unsettled and sometimes down-right horrified by the experiences of graduate students and early career scholars, by the emotional and physical pressures we witness them undergoing, and that we are often complicit within. Not only is there a thesis to be negotiated, but also the myriad other things that have cemented as requirements for entry to an academic career, as well as the general course of lives that keep on going despite the ticking thesis clock. I am supposed to be reading a PhD draft, another sits in my inbox, together with a host of forms to fill in, several tangled email threads with colleagues and the research degrees office about student deadlines, extensions and the vexations of fiddly examiner selection forms that seem resistant to electronic completion. This is not to even consider those students who are just ticking along, but whose chapter drafts I have taken too long to get to, yet again, whose book reviews, conference abstracts and excitedly composed paper drafts require reviewing. Or those CVs and cover letters that need commenting on, and the letters of reference that need writing. These are documents I want to read, work I love supervising, individuals I admire and often find inspiring and whose potential to engage the next generation of students and to contribute to the discipline I deeply respect and am proud to support. Yet, I feel depleted, and with this depletion I lose patience and fight resentfulness as chapter drafts are delivered (or not delivered) with basic elements still missing, or flurries of emails impart excuses or convey late-night last minute submissions or requests for extensions. I feel overwhelmed, I react badly, I rage, ‘would they do this to [insert name of respected male professor in here]?’, ‘is my time not worth anything, why don’t they respect me?’ In the same moment I am overcome with guilt and shame, dismayed by my lack of empathy, by my failures to be a ‘good’ caring supervisor who takes time to understand these very human behaviours. I resolve to be more patient, to do things differently, to somehow make more time.

This essay is part of this doing things differently, it is one way in which I am endeavouring to pause, to be mindful of my reactions to these relationships with colleagues and students, to draw energy and support from the many others who have thought through these issues before me, and to attend to why it is that something I find so very rewarding so often becomes yet another tension filled part of the academic endeavour. I want to think about the nature of the ‘work’ of PhD supervision, about what it means to strive to be a feminist teacher in the contemporary academy, about how current thinking on intimate publics, emotional academies and a feminist ethics of care might enable me to feel my way through the kinds of conflicts I seem increasingly to spend my time managing. Conflicts that emerge from the tensions between my identity and aspirations as a teacher and an academic and the operation of the mass stress of a saturated university system on the material conditions of my working life (Berlant 1997). This is an essay that, when it comes down to it, is about trying to understand how my increasing feelings of depletion and frustration are less about my failures (not that I am of course blameless), about compassion fatigue or the behaviours of those I supervise, but are rather about how bodies (of supervisor and supervisee alike) can become depleted in material and somatic ways by institutional requirements (Ahmed, 2013a). It is also about an experiment in creating more care-full spaces and practices where things might be otherwise, principally through the evolving form of a well-being programme for graduate students.

The Anxiety Machine

'Undergraduates Matter,' a colleague has for the purposes of a department meeting made what is clearly not a joke from the standard agenda item 'Undergraduate Matters,' I feel rebuked, of course students matter, does anyone really need to be reminded? Clearly we do, but as the rest of the meeting makes clear everything else matters too – postgraduates, service/administration, publications, grant money (of course grant money) and so on, and so on – and increasingly so and in increasingly bureaucratic ways. The pages of academic journals, especially critically engaged ones like this one, as well those of the Times Higher, The Chronicle, the Financial Times and the New York Times and even the Atlantic and the New Yorker[1] are awash with explorations of how, in the words of feminist scholar Lauren Berlant, 'the nervous system of Higher Education is out of wack' (1997: 159). Richard Hall 's (2014) descriptor of the academy as an 'anxiety machine' has become an increasingly popular short-hand for the normalised material conditions of the neoliberal academy. The result has been a transformation in the structural conditions of academic knowledge production and the creation of atmospheres of 'uncertainty, instability, and mental distress for students and faculty members alike' (Peake and Mullings 2016: 267; see also Taylor and Lahad, 2018; Berg et al. 2016; Mott et al, 2016; Gill, 2009, Meyerhoff et al. 2011).

In the few years since I first started writing this paper, and certainly the year it has taken me to respond to the very generous reviews, there has been a growing visibility of the challenges of these conditions. This has been accompanied by a move to catalogue forms of push-back against them — what we might think of after Ahmed (2017) as 'living a feminist life.' Building on deep currents of feminist scholarship and practice (e.g Moss et al. 1999) there is an energising body of work emerging, much of which is by early career scholars, that details myriad forms of 'activism from within'(Mountz et al. 2015; Mullings et al, 2016). There are accounts of the formation of collectives, of the evolution of writing groups, of conference interventions and of strategies for self-care and the creation of more caring academic spaces and practices (Askins and Blazek, 2016; Domosh, 2014; see also the papers in the special issues of the *Canadian Geographer*, 60,2 on Cultivating an Ethic of Wellness and in *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 101,1 including, Oberhauser and Caretta, 2019; Bono et al, 2019; Puawai Collective 2019). Feminist ways of being underpin many of these practices: space is made for bodies and emotions (whether exhausted, depleted, joyous, anxious or spent) and the attendant messy, contradictory, uncertain processes of always - emergent academic subjectivities. More than merely 'add emotions and stir' (to use a classic formulation) these accounts call for (and create) more emotional and care-full academies. Increasingly and importantly, however, they recognise as they do so the complexities and ambiguities of the emotional labour of academic intimacies (Askins and Blazek, 2016; Berlant, 1997, 1998). To take for example the feminist ethics of care literature that so often grounds these debates (Mountz et al. 2015; Parizeau et al. 2016), accounts increasingly attend to the complexities of such an ethics of care, the need for it to become sustainable to prevent the exploitation of individuals who practice care giving for others, and to ask difficult questions about the place and form of self-care within a feminist ethics of care (Mountz et al, 2015).

---

[1] See for example Fish, 2009; Hale and Vina 2016, and Patterson, 2016

Whilst teaching feeling, and feelings and teaching are increasingly topics for discussion, especially for practitioners of radical and feminist pedagogy and those teaching challenging topics such as interpersonal violence, less often have the practices and emotional labours of caring as a supervisor of graduate students been addressed (Chinn 2011; Sheffield 2011 and see *Transformations* special issue on Teaching Feelings 2011, 22, 2). Amidst the accounts of mentor-mentee relationships, and of doctoral student's networks of care (Oberhause and Caretta, 2019; Puawai, 2019; Dombroski et al. 2018; Peake and Mullings, 2016), this essay focuses on the supervisory relationship, and does so from the perspective of the supervisor. It tracks questions of emotion through literatures on the nature of PhD supervision, and then explores the dilemmas of caring for graduate students in the contemporary academy. It closes with an account of the ambiguities and challenges of trying to find, following Ahmed (2014) 'ways to exist in a world that is diminishing'. Offering an account of the evolution of a well-being programme for PhD students, I address some of the challenges and ambiguities around attempting to create a more care-full academic space.

I write from the position of immense privilege, but also as a scholar whose academic identity has been thoroughly shaped by almost a decade of precarious roles. Without doubt part of the motivation for my coming to these questions is my lived experience of the emotional, social and financial hardships of such early-career precarity, and its enduring and deeply felt effects. The essay's core emerges from my evolving supervision practice, based on nearly a decade of experience of supervising PhD students in a UK University, and a more recent role leading a large multi-disciplinary doctoral training partnership of nine universities and thirteen non-academic partners awarding 60 PhD studentships a year. In writing this essay I have sought to respect the 'unstated ethics that exists in the silent space between teacher and student' (Jagodzinski 2002: 81). As such, the material contained here tends toward my own personal reflections set alongside a range of secondary accounts, surveys and qualitative materials rather than primary anecdotal accounts involving students.[2] In a field in which writing is often a team effort, going it alone felt odd, perhaps even risking appearing individualistic. Yet to write alone seemed better enable the acknowledgement of care as sometimes confronting, including making plain on the page some of the ambiguities around the labour and performance of personhood that PhD supervision calls you towards, ambiguities that we are often encouraged to keep hidden. After-all, to think of precious and valued relationships as 'work' and potentially as hard work is a difficult thing to confront (Berlant 1997). Yet to hide the multiple dimensions of this as labour would be to do a disservice to PhD students as critical thinkers and as potential teachers-in-waiting, and would be to participate in the reproduction of the invisibility and essentialisation of certain kinds of work, and the cultures of silence that encourage us to feel the effects of working in the contemporary academy alone and un-protesting.

Intimacies

> *The demand has increased for faculty not only to provide exclusive intimate intellectual, political and emotional mentoring but to help in negotiating an increasingly unstable economy whilst also engendering the defeat of the kinds of racism, xenophobia, misogyny, homophobia and labour exploitation that are increasingly arising in these economic bad times. In the forced flexibility of this moment, these pedagogical tasks become more crucial and somehow less possible. The a-priori unboundedness of the academic life, which is evidence of its privileged, less alienated status, turns for many*

---

[2] This essay was circulated to some of the students attending the group in draft form for comments and reflections

into a service economy whose attractions and exploitations are all bound up with each other (Berlant 1997: 159)

The quality that supervision needs above all to offer is that of personal support (Salmon 1992: 20)

Pedagogy as a social relationship is very close in. It gets right in there – in your brain, your body, your heart, in your sense of self, of the world of others, and of possibilities and impossibilities in all these realms (Ellsworth 1997: 6).

The supervisor can make or break a PhD student (Ives and Rowley 2005)

Literature on the PhD process is rife with prescriptions for supervisory duties to ensure successful graduate work. Amongst the litany of models and to-do lists for how to be a 'good' supervisor (see summary of literature in Hockey 1991) are the growing force of debates that emphasise the emotional dimension of supervision. Hockey's (1994, 1995) foundational account identified two principle dimensions; the provision of intellectual expertise and of counselling practices. Given evidence that the ability to be sensitive, empathetic, flexible and caring is a crucial part of the supervisor's skill-set, something students themselves affirm, it is perhaps unsurprisingly that debating this relation has become an important part of the literature (Taylor and Beasley 2005; Wisker et al. 2003).[3][3] The diverse debates can largely be parsed in terms of questions around, 'how much emotion and in what forms,' engaging issues of boundaries, appropriate levels of personal exchange, psychoanalytic transference, and offering 'sage' advice for the frequency and duration of meetings as well as their location (to have coffee or not to have coffee?) (Bartlett and Mercer 2000; Hemer 2009; Johnson et al. 2000). Valuing emotional intelligence within the supervision process has ushered in new models and concepts for how we understand the figure 'supervisor'. For Halse and Malfroy (2010: 85) supervisors need to cultivate particular 'habits of the mind' to build effective learning alliances with students. Such alliances require of the supervisor understanding, interest, responsiveness and engagement with the individual student and their experiences and circumstances. For Manathunga (2007) this shift in relationship situates supervision as a form of mentoring which makes space for the 'whole person'. Grant (2015) understands this 'whole person' as an expression of the twentieth^th century psychological subject. Her psychological discourse of PhD supervision constitutes a loyal 'psy-supervisor' as a caring, expert professional - a source of motivation and support for the psy-student, both of whom are 'whole people' with emotions and personalities relevant to proper psy-supervision. Thus supervision is a supportive interpersonal relationship that requires sensibility and flexibility in which 'trust and respect for the personhood of the other are central' and is 'based on responsivity and relationships rather than rights and rules' and as 'grounded in concrete circumstances rather than abstractions, and expressed as an activity of care rather than a set of principles' (Halse and Malfroy 2010). What the literature has yet to really confront are the congruencies and incongruences of how such relationships — which are both full of care and require care-full negotiation — 'fit' within the contemporary academy. If the pedagogic literature on supervision has caught up to the 'whole' person aspect of supervision, what follows will explore some of the tensions and dilemmas of these intimacy exceptions in the contemporary academy.

---

[3] See for example http://berkeleysciencereview.com/article/mind-grad-school/ last accessed 29/8/2016; https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/04/22/berkeley-study-finds-high-levels-depression-among-graduate-students last accessed 29/8/2016

Data Bodies

> *In environments that privilege endurance and hard work, there is little space for discussion of ailments, burnout and breaking points* (Mountz 2016: 208)

'If you're not suffering you are not doing it right' is worryingly a common belief of current postgraduate students.[4] The increase in the number of students and staff seeking mental health services has prompted the identification of a 'mental health crisis', wherein mental distress for students and faculty alike is being seen as the new normal (Peake and Mullings, 2016: 253). Alongside statistics, qualitative studies such as Hawkins' et al. (2014) study of geography postgraduates in the United States reveals the degree to which these academic-subjects in formation have already internalized cultures of academic overwork. They report feelings of inadequacy, guilt and isolation within graduate school communities, that are further substantiated by observations of my own students who regularly express feelings of failure, and are often undone to the point of paralysis by the strains of competition that leaves them feeling inadequate when peers publish more or when they are overlooked for job interviews. These never-ending insecurities often express as an almost compulsive need to take on more and more alongside the PhD. It is not just PhD research that suffers but often mental wellbeing, and not only in the immediate moment but also in the future, as an early internalization of the neoliberal ethos of individuality, competition and measurements of productivity sets us up to be ideal, if miserable neoliberal academic subjects.

We live through intimate intersections of our workplaces and our health, yet cultures of metrics and audits largely fail to take account of the embodied nature of that which they count. As a result, the labours of caring not only involve caring for the individual, but also care-full negotiations to help combat the debilitating effects of the intensification of bureaucratic practices that reduce student bodies complete with messy lives (life-course changes, chronic illnesses and personal relationships) to metrics of completion rates, job conversion, and publication numbers. For as PhD students become metrics, the pressure for completion is intensified, after all it is not the numbers you enrol but their completion rates that signal success. The usual completion period for a full-time PhD student in the UK receipt of research funding is four years. Non-completing students pose a serious risk to departments, graduate schools and funding consortia as well as to individual staff. Such blanket approaches discourage risky experimental work and discriminate against the possibilities of success for those students facing chronic or long-term debilitating conditions. Once the latter group of students have exceeded the allowed extension time they often no longer count in the completion statistics. With a combination of policy innovations (requiring students do more training) and the expectations of professional production (publishing, attending conferences, developing social media profiles and teaching) alongside thesis production, the pressure is on students and supervisors to ensure completion in a timely manner, come hell or high water.

The challenges and emotional and even physical violences that data and metrics can enact on messy, fleshy bodies is well acknowledged by feminists and data geographers (D'Ignazio and Klein, forthcoming; Davidson, 2016). Combine the pressures of PhD tenure with the greater impetus for academics to ensure completion and the growth in students, and the result is a toxic cocktail for PhD students and supervisors alike. In the best cases this involves tricky decisions around how to advise on the balancing of core research activities and the expanding portfolio of things students undertake to ensure their employability. In trying to manage the ever-present risk of compromising the quality and focus of the thesis and assert the desire for the thesis to be better than 'just passable' the supervisor who expresses caution over the work of the extra grant, or that other publication risks being seen as unsupportive. One of the worst case situations in this miss-match of metrics and bodies, concerns supporting graduate students with mental health issues, this is the sharp end of how 'academic discourse operates not just to omit, but to abhor mental disability, to reject it to stifle and expel it' (Peak and Mullings 2016). The in/visibilities of mental health in the academy are complex, and the metrics surrounding the PhD process and its completion rates are often ill-attuned to these complexities. Well-meaning systems often lack connections, differing deadlines for university and research funders combined with unclear messages on policies on extension and interruptions leave student and supervisor alike in a quandary that is only intensified if the student in question has a study-related visa. Many systems for extension and interruption are predicated around a 'crisis' that sees a student 'interrupt' for a discrete period of time and then return apparently well (hopefully having got better, often having exhausted their 'allowed' periods of interruption). Less well accommodated are those individuals whose health concerns do not fall into a discreet period of 'illness', with effects stretching long before 'a crisis' if one ever happens, and continuing long after the bureaucratic time-clocks of completion have counted down the allowed period of interruption. As the deadline nears the situation becomes gradually more fraught for student and supervisory team alike as each tries to balance their professional responsibilities with their duty of care towards self and other, what is best for the student is not always best for, or even compatible with, the demands of the metrics.

---

[4] https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2014/mar/01/mental-health-issue-phd-research-university last accessed 29/8/2016

These metrics and their negotiation are an example of the neoliberal academy's propagation of what Ahmed (2015) terms a narrative 'against students'. Such a position, through speech acts and actions, wrongly locates issues as the fault of the students, rather than as they might be better comprehended as the manifestation of the challenges of the neoliberal university rendered on the bodies of suffering students. The 'problem student' in the neoliberal university is a constellation of related figures, the late student, the non-completing student, 'the consuming student, the censoring [protesting] student, the over-sensitive student, the complaining student', the 'needy student'. Critique becomes dismissed as 'consumerism', protest as censorship or complaint, concerns over racism or sexism as oversensitivity, and individuals whose learning process take up more than the allotted resources are dismissed as 'needy' and not up to the trials of the academy (Ahmed 2015, n.p.). To be alert to the differences between issues with individual students and those that are the manifestation of the effects of the neoliberal academy on individual and collective student and supervisor bodies is a vital skill.

Invisible Labour

> *The intensification of institutional pressures on academics to perform at high levels has required that we be more disciplined and structured about time and interaction with students* (Halse and Malfreay 2005: 84-85)

Understandings of supervision as an emotional, caring relationship are emerging at a time when there are more students, and a student body who is considered to need more care. Recent columns in the UK's Guardian newspaper, backed up by academic blogs and statistical studies, reveal the horrifying ways that cultures of academic work and the conditions of the neoliberal academy are making graduate students ill. Mental and emotional distress are increasingly common, with issues ranging from sleep disorders, to depression, eating disorders, alcoholism and self-harming. Even for those not suffering from specific conditions, the completion of a thesis is not only an intellectual challenge, but also a practical and mental one as precarious forms of living erode self-esteem, security and personal support networks and demand juggling acts that often include several jobs, all of which is often interwoven with prolonged states of geographic transience.

The university response to mental distress is often contradictory. One example is the efforts made to address individual needs through the provision of 'care' based services, from clinics and counsellors to yoga sessions and puppy-petting, whilst at the same time cutting support staff, restructuring in ways that ensure support services remain disconnected across the institution and enabling staff care-giving activities to go undervalued. What is being presented as an intensified need to care for our students is occurring in the context of metrics that fail to account for how 'spending more time talking to students about their mental health than about their (often non-existent) work', has become a normalised part of the job for many of us (Peake and Mullings 2016: 254; Mountz 2016). My own institution's 'academic time allocation' survey attempts to account for caring under the sub-category teaching, where after a list of the 'direct contact time' forms from lectures to lab classes, an aside notes 'it also includes other student contact time relating to educational matters including counselling'. Here we are free, during our three allotted weeks of the survey to enter the amount of time we spend (in hours or as a percentage) on caring for our students. No such notation is offered for accounting for post-graduate supervision.

Compounding care's resistance to being totted up and entered into institutional ledgers is its contingent nature. Such 'attentive actions' can rarely be planned in advance, and are hard to 'register in a temporal field measured by clock or calendar' (Berlant 1997: 156). What is more 'the economies of energy in the academy are not evenly distributed and some bodies bear the effects of this depletion more than others' Ahmed (2015: np). Extensive research has identified the gendered nature of 'negotiat [ing]greater workloads and the effects of intensified audit cultures' (Mountz 2016: 206), effects that are ramified by the continual overlooking of care-work which often falls to already marginalized staff.[5] In a recent essay Green (2015) explores how for some professors the profusion of 'private' and 'confidential' conversations, that she characterizes as the 'underbelly of academia' are a rare occurrence. For these staff such conversations, rather than valued, are often cast as the result of some sort of deficiency in other colleagues (being 'over-available', encouraging it, just being in your office). Female and other minority groups often find themselves exposed disproportionately to this 'underbelly work', or what Hochschild (1983) once detailed as 'emotional labour', due in part to the gendered caring constructions of women. Worryingly, studies have demonstrated that students tend to place caring expectations on female lecturers, with negative consequences for non-conforming. By comparison, male lecturers receive disproportionate praise for being caring and easy to talk (MacNell et al. 2015; El-Alayli et al, 2018). Care-work, and managing its associated ideologies (monitoring conformity, enacting resistance), requires energy and investment, it requires a willingness to be undone by the other. What is more, responsibilities for such essential, yet overlooked, feminized work are often unevenly distributed. When already marginalised care work remains invisible to audits and metrics it further 'compound[s] the inequalities of university communities' (MacLean 2016: 188).

Always Failing

> *Articulated in and to the demands of the university, virtuousness can mean over-extending such that it is impossible to stay apace, to be sufficiently responsive, available,*

---

[5] My own department offers examples of the truly outstanding contribution that men can make to care work. Without wishing to detract from their labours, which I have no doubt have shaped the experiences of many students and staff in my department including myself, it is notable that many such roles are often recognized by official roles and job titles they carry, from education support roles, to Research Group Directors, whilst it is the daily burden of unrecognized care work that is more the focus here.

> *intimate, politicized…a good feminist fails if she cannot attend constantly to the nurturing/facilitating project in every domain of her commitment* (Berlant 1997: 147)
>
> *We're undone by each other. And if we're not, we're missing something* (Butler 2006)

As a supervisor it sometimes feels like I carry the 'intimacy expectations' of PhD supervision and my failures to live up to them, around with me on a daily basis. I am not alone in this. Berlant outlines a common figure that has long sat central to the feminist project;

> the promise of a teacher who is infinitely patient, available, and confident in her knowledge, an intellectual… role model who uses her long office hours therapeutically to help students develop subjectivity and self-esteem to solve personal as well as intellectual problems (1997: 147).

Yet this mythical super-ableist teacher is, she observes, a teacher without anxiety, without struggle, without concerns over boundaries, and we might add not a teacher who would survive working in the contemporary academy. While PhD literature might go back and forth about the kinds of boundaries you should and should not develop, for Berlant (1997, 1998) these boundaries and their endless negotiation are part of the evolution of necessary but complex institutional intimacies, between colleagues and between staff and students. Berlant's writings offer eloquent condensations of the experiences of teaching in academic spaces (e.g. Women's Studies) replete with expectations of politically engaged pedagogic practices (see Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010 and Mott et al. 2015 for a related discussion in geography). Despite her specific focus, given that PhD supervision might be considered an intensified site of institutional intimacy it feels appropriate to draw on Berlant's writings to grapple with this issue.

Berlant notes the expansion of the mythical feminist teaching figure and the way it,

> inspires workers in the university system to make themselves vulnerable to the impossible higher expectations about institutionally and intellectually mediated personal relations that are hardwired into the feminist pedagogical project. It motivates taking on the kinds of therapeutic and mentoring functions that are way beyond our expertise, it motivates us to over-identify with student's happiness or unhappiness as the source of our value; it motivates the ways we shield students from experiencing the various kinds of ambivalence we have toward being called to personhood in this way (1997: 152).

There is an unfortunate dovetailing between long held ideologies of selfless women and these new feminist commitments that might begin with a self, but which are only legitimated through the erasure or overlooking of many of the boundaries of this self, and often an overlooking of practices of self-care (Sedgewick 1990: 62, quoted in Berlant 1997: 155; Mountz 2016; Mountz et al. 2015;).

Yet how should such boundaries be constructed and maintained? For as Butler's statement above makes clear, to care, indeed to form any kind of relation with the other is to be undone. Her statement is a pointed reminder, as Ahmed (2014) observes following Butler, about with-ness, about the wear and tear of human relations. It would not be done, as the quote makes clear, to not be undone by others, to not witness their suffering, to 'not take care, not to care what happens to this person or that, here or there, we miss each other when we are not undone by each other' (ibid: np.). This being the case, to understand, to invest, in practices of caring in the academy is necessarily to be undone, to be worn down, to be overrun.

This is a central dilemma of supervision for me, I can't not care. But to care is to be, as Butler makes clear, undone and that takes time and is an investment of energy. Such transformations, such un-doings might, of course, not always be about being run-down. To be undone is also to be transformed in other ways; by the shared joy of knowledge production; to be enlightened and inspired by the grace with which PhD students bear significant challenges with physical and mental wellness and sometimes drastic changes in life circumstance, and to participate in the excitement that comes when successes large and small, intellectual and personal are shared and celebrated. What follows will reflect on the evolution of a programme of seminars, workshops and writing sessions that tried to reflect on these questions of care, for self and others, on being undone and of negotiating depletion.

Strategies for caring differently

> *Caring within the academy is a creative diversion- of time, of attention, of affection, of academic positions designed to foster individual achievements and competition. It is a wink of recognition…within a totalizing space. It is an act of resistance… Although it may seem unsatisfactory and insufficient, maintaining possibilities in the face of exhaustion is critical- it is the basis of everything, including change* (Simard-Gagnon 2016: 224)

'Just another few months' I cox, 'you are nearly there, you can do it', failure is not an option I silently implore (mindful of the need to complete students). In a powerful essay reflecting on academic care during the PhD process Simard-Gagnon (2016) observes how the well-meaning accommodations available were simply not enough and too often were based in logics of resilience. I am guilty of falling back on the same logics with my students, 'if you can just re-draft this chapter' yet such resilience imagines 'a future moment when the unsustainability of (poor) caring practices will abate'… but 'within an increasingly competitive academic context, demands are ever emerging and there is no final moment of grace' (Simard-Gagnon 2016: 223). Many of us can recognize this pattern of thinking and working, and have felt its destructive effects in our lives for decades. What might it mean however, to experiment with practices of care that work in other ways other than to reproduce those logics of resilience? What might it mean to develop spaces and practices of care that rather than seek to create tougher academic subjects up to the heroic task, enable acknowledgement of the challenges, and offer resistance and push-back against the logics of the neoliberal academy? What is clear is that such practices have long been in existence within and beyond geography (see for example Moss et al. 1999). What is perhaps newer is the rise in their visibility as biographies of project development and autobiographies of individual and collective experience are shared in journal articles and blog postings. What is more, as Simard-Gagnon and others suggest, to care might in fact come to be a form of politics, a creative diversion, a playful form of resistance, that retains possibilities that things might be otherwise (Dombroski et al, 2018; Moss et al. 1999; Mott et al, 2015; Mountz, et al. 2015; Puawai Collective 1999). To end, I want to reflect briefly on the origins and development of a programme of activities for PhD students that emerged from the desire to maintain possibilities, to enact such creative diversions, I do so less to offer an exhaustive documenting of the programme, or to hold it up as some sort of model, but rather to direct attention to the ongoing ambiguities, challenges and failures that occur within its contexts.

Collectivizing Care

> *In a supportive learning community, education is understood as a relational achievement, rooted in engagement and interaction* (Conradson 2016: 239)

It began, to be honest, as an attempt to practice economies of scale, to 'care-at-scale,' through a fortnightly 'writing group' aimed at offering more support with writing practices than I could offer within the context of regular supervisory meetings and in a packed timetable of duties. Across my then ten strong PhD student group, many of the same writing issues where appearing, confidence was being lost and there seemed to a shared sense of disempowerment in the face of pressures to produce not only a thesis but also published works (Hawkins et al., 2014; Dombroski et al. 2018). Held in addition to my

Department's existing post-graduate research and support programme 'Landscape Surgery', I hoped these sessions would enable the kind of focused attention on writing practices that was needed and wanted, which would in turn free up supervisions for addressing other pressing aspects of the thesis.

Mobilizing feminist critical pedagogy in its design and practice the group was inspired by epistemological frameworks critiquing traditional notions of learning through acknowledging the inherent relations between power and knowledge, and a desire instead to create collective, cooperative learning groups of peers (Dombroski, 2018; Conradson 2016).[6] Early in the year we would meet as a group to identify mutual topics and plan our schedule. Directed by need rather than any enforced programme, the discussions range from workshops on specific topics, such as how to write with theory or good note-taking strategies, to sharing and workshopping writing samples. Getting over my initial guilt around inadequately planned sessions, and a questioning of what I could possible offer, the discussions (of course!) worked best and found their flow when we all turned to each other for advice. Shared experiences often blended the emotional and the intellectual, gaining not only practical advice but coming to find solidarity in shared fears and worries (Dombroski et al. 2018; Puawai Collective, 2019).

As such, the group of anywhere between five and ten functioned like many feminist classrooms in foregrounding lived experiences and emotions in the process of knowledge making. A session might start with writing techniques but in the course of the discussion would cover insecurities, concerns with publishing, the competitive nature of the PhD and how this can compromise work-life balance. A central element of a feminist classroom is to build a learning community, a community in which 'questions of listening, speaking, risk-taking, respect, reconciliation and mutuality is central to success' and to do so in a way that stresses collective as well as individual experience' (hooks 2015). Our activities heeded observations that feminist classrooms are not 'about simply and uncritically sharing emotions but instead analyzing how they inform perspectives and actions' (Ellsworth et al. 2014). As such, reflection was encouraged where appropriate and subsequent discussions, either individual or collective, enabled individuals to reflect on their changing perspectives. Heeding cautions that feminist pedagogies can often give 'illusions of equality' but risk re-institutionalizing power differences, here power was recognized and mobilized as a tool for empowerment. Enabling individuals to 'reflect on their positions in the classroom, to consider themselves as holders of knowledge, and to consider their implicit authority'.[7] In common with the noted effects of many writing circles and peer-mentoring experiences, I watched people from different year groups and different backgrounds coming to find validation for their experiences when they saw them echoed in others, and find renewed confidence when they realized their role as a source of advice and help for their peers.

Whilst never explicitly about promoting 'care', over the course of two years of activities of the group I came to understand it as a care-full space where discussion might start with the 'problem' of the literature review or how to take notes, but would often entwine academic discussions with more personal issues. For several hours once a fortnight we come together to practice forms of collective-caring that in some small way challenged the competitive, individualized and isolating elements of academic processes. What became clear over the course of several years was that so many of the challenges were underpinned by struggles with depression, anxiety, fear, issues with work-life balance and burnout. As such, during the third year the programme morphed naturally to make space for discussing issues that we, not uncritically, grouped around 'well-being.' The group retained the principals of selecting the topics collectively, whether in person or electronically, but widened out to include the broader PhD community in the Geography Department. Never more than about fifteen people strong, the group meets on average once a month during term time. The sessions take a series of different forms. The writing group element is retained in the form of 'shut up and write sessions,' intermixed with discussions of shared writing practices and struggles; as well as a series of well-being orientated discussion-based workshops. The latter have covered a range of topics including procrastination, work-life balance, imposter syndrome and slow-scholarship. These are supplemented with weekly yoga/ yoga nidra sessions taught by one of our departmental administrative staff who is also a qualified yoga teacher. Once the topics have been selected, I, together with any volunteers from the wider group amass resources from online communities, self-help groups, and websites such as 'thesis whisperer' to develop each session. These activities ranged from, taking 'life audits' to help gauge our priorities and how to balance them best for us rather than try to reproduce a 'one-model fits all' sense of 'work-life' balance, to deploying feminist research methods like body mapping to explore Imposter Syndrome (mapping our own bodies in relation to perceived 'successful', 'academic' personas. Often interwoven with social time, a profusion of fruit, berries and nuts as well as coffee, cake, pizza and Thai food, these sessions felt energising and informative.

---

[6] A Guide to Feminist Pedagogy, https://my.vanderbilt.edu/femped/ last accessed 28/8/2016

[7] Cited on https://my.vanderbilt.edu/femped/habits-of-heart/power-authority/
last accessed 28/8/2016

Entirely voluntary in terms of attendance and provision, and given I have no training as a well-being practitioner, the renouncement of my normal role as supervisor was balanced with a sense that as someone seen as 'successful' in an academic context, in that I had a coveted professorship, my own challenges, struggles and reflections were valued by the group, this brought its own ethical challenges. Interestingly, and perhaps unsurprisingly given the academic constitution of the group (and its occasional focus on critical academic literatures around slow scholarship, self-care and well-being) the practical strategies and tips were often combined with a degree of critical reflection on the material being discussed as well as its deployment within our lives. What we came to appreciate was that academic spaces of care often needed to be critical care-full spaces.

Creating critical spaces of care

> *Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare* (Lorde 1988)
>
> *We need to demonstrate how they can be well and succeed in academia, even if they eschew dysfunctional behaviors or participation in coercive hierarchies* (hooks 2004: 18)

One of the topics the group often circled around was what kind of academics we should be, how much time could we take for ourselves and how could we enable ourselves to do this in a context in which to take time for self-care, for your own work-life balance can often come at the expense of sometime else's time. For many feminist scholars self-care is a profoundly collective political practice. In a rousing statement, following Audre Lorde, Ahmed exalts us,

> Self-care: that can be an act of political warfare. In directing our care towards ourselves we are redirecting care away from its proper objects, we are not caring for those we are supposed to care for; we are not caring for the bodies deemed worth caring about [author note: ie those bodies the institution cares about]. And that is why in queer, feminist and anti-racist work self-care is about the creation of community, fragile communities, assembled out of the experiences of being shattered. We reassemble ourselves through the ordinary, everyday and often painstaking work of looking after ourselves; looking

> after each other. This is why when we have to insist, I matter, we matter, we are transforming what matters.

For Ahmed such practices of self-care and care for others offer ways to create communities of care, to find 'ways to exist in a world that is diminishing' (Ahmed, 2014).

If self-care practices offer the means to 'devalue and militate against' the academy, they are however, not easy to enact. Drawing on the Buddhist philosopher Thich Nhat Hanh, bell hooks expands at length on the practices of the teacher as healer. Within this she observes the importance of the teacher themselves being self-actualized 'the practice of therapist teacher or any helping professional should be directed towards his or herself first, because if the helper is unhappy he or she cannot help many people' (2004:15). As hooks goes onto explain, an intellectual is someone who seeks to be 'whole, well-grounded in a context where there is little emphasis on spiritual well-being, on care of the soul' (2004: 16). hooks is seeking to reconnect the dualistic separation of 'public and private, encouraging teachers and students to see connections between life practices, habits of being and the roles of professors' (ibid.). To practice self-care might then actually be a central part of being a 'good' supervisor, offering an appropriate model of academic working practice that enables our students to see success not only in the reproduction of neoliberal academic cultures of work and emphasis on individualization and competition, but in practices and strategies that challenge and resist these logics.

As academics we can tend to offer the worst role models for graduate students and for a different sort of academy, even cognizant of the issues many of us, myself included, continue to embrace a model of 'continuous achievement, and a capacity to take on work that is infinitely elastic' (Mountz et al. 2016, 273). Performing as good neoliberal subjects we respond, at least on the surface, to practices of meritocracy and individual responsibility, achievement, advancement, persistence, competition and the winner-takes-all ethos. This supports Giroux's (2014) claim that many academics, and I would count myself amongst them, are 'complicit in the very processes that have shifted the mission of the university towards market defined ends.'

Inspired by papers and writings on slow scholarship as well as broader work on mindfulness we discussed the strategies for self-care that involved drawing clear boundaries around work-time and relationships, taking up practices that reduce work-related stress, attending to our mental well-being including taking time out, and experimenting (not always successfully) with good practice around email and social media use (Mountz et al 2015; Berg and Seeber 2016). These discussions where often shaped by the complexity and ethics within these practices. We individually and collectively confronted our failures in this regard. Personally, I was forced to confront my lack of courage and commitment to changing deep-seated individual and collective behaviors, that however damaging had become a safe way to negotiate the contemporary academy. We explored together the challenges we felt around standing against entrenched ideologies and cultures of overwork that seem to present a singular route to success, and of retaining significant faith in a mode of practicing academia that often seems at odds with those individual research practices and modes of 'saying no' that undoubtedly yield recognition and promotion more quickly and efficiently. These are not easy things to do from a professorial position, let alone from a precarious position.

Our discussions tracked across some of the debates around self-care. From the specifics of how Gill (2016), for example, explores how self-care for detention centre guards can involve a turning away from suffering others, to the more conceptual, as Raghuram (2016) argues, care practice must be emplaced and as such must be negotiated, rather being assumed as a global practice. Emplacing our own self-care practices we explore the tensions around saying 'no', and the risks of foregrounding the needs of the self over and against collective forms of collegiality. Hotly debated was the so-called weaponisation of work-life balance, and how we saw this unfolding within our peer groups. Some individuals, and most departments likely have them, are experts in refusal often of certain tasks they deem unworthy, somehow remaining blind to the ways their choices can intensify the uneven distribution of the economy of energies in the academy, often at the expense of those overburdened and already marginalized staff members (Ahmed, 2013b; Berlant, 1998). These are thorny ethical issues and we sought ways to negotiate these individually and collectively. We reflected on the role of leadership as integral to challenging these entrenched practices of refusal, and on the need to cultivate departmental cultures of self-care that are orientated towards collectivization. We explored the challenges of opening up collegiality as a point of departmental discussion, and how to shift away from fostering practices of resentment for uneven labour, and then of condoning such feelings as 'character flaws rather than structural effects' (Meyerhoff, 2011, 493). Caring is hard, whether for self or others, but it requires a with-ness, an intimacy expectation that is as integral to academic departments as it is to society at large.

Counting caring?

Since I wrote the first incarnation of this paper in 2015 as part of now compulsory (in my UK institution) post-graduate diploma in Teaching in Higher Education, and then edited it for submission to *ACME* in late 2016/ 2017 it feels like there has been a shift, albeit a small if potentially contentious one, in the care that the academy takes of care. Whilst the surveys and workload models still exist, the rise in the UK of the Teaching Excellence Framework (an award system for undergraduate teaching), and the mainstreaming of discussion around mental health and wellbeing, has provided a context in which care becomes linked to a focus on teaching practices in ways that render the value and importance of caring perhaps more visible than before. Since the first draft of this paper, we have been awarded a University Excellence Teaching Prize for the wellbeing programme, and a small pot of money for the pilot development of pod-cast resources. The programme also found a place in our Department's successful Athena SWAN application, with the assessors noting it as an example of 'best practice'. Such accolades, and associated invitations to talk to our university-wide doctoral training fora and Equality and Diversity Champion Networks reminds me of Ahmed's writings on how 'good practice' can become 'a set of practices that enable an organisation "to look good"' (107), but also by extension, enable me to look good. We have helped evolve a university-wide Graduate Mental Health and Well-Being task force led by University senior management, and have contributed to sector-wide funding initiatives that seek to address these issues. All these, together of course with this paper, represent a rendering visible of the care-full space of the programme and its coming to count. But each come with their own ambiguities, in some cases enrolling the programme into what Ahmed terms the university's 'technologies of excellence' and 'languages of merit' (2012, 110).

Such enrolments pose practical and ethical questions. Practically we have concerns about proposals to scale up the programme beyond the Geography department and to make some sessions compulsory. The sessions we have designed could become situated as part of the PhD training programme that all students must attend a certain percentage of, and that the staff could be required to deliver sessions in the programme. This all feels difficult, not every student is going to feel comfortable in these spaces, nor will every member of academic staff feel comfortable about facilitating these discussions. How will the community of trust and care that has been created scale up, how do people feel about sharing when there is a sea of faces in the room, does this make it easier? Harder? Can our care-full spaces still retain their role as diverting, as energising if they become enrolled within the suite of ways that the university seeks to demonstrate it cares. Ahmed has explored similar ambiguities when it comes to doing diversity work, indicating the tensions and discomforts that emerge when stories of challenges and responses too them morph into 'institutional success stories' (2012, 10). As colleagues across the university are excited by the programme, and as various teams across the institution mobilise it within the production of university equality and diversity documents, our activities become part of an institutional demonstration of caring. As Ahmed cautions, 'its as if having a policy becomes a substitute for action' (11). Does the co-opting of the programme by the university and its mobilisation of it within its own materials become a form of what Ahmed calls 'institutional happy talk', which 'work[s] to obscure the troubling issues that led to the need for such a programme in the first place (2012,14)? I worry that the programme has enabled a 'mode of attention' to wellbeing that substitutes exploration and addressing the route of the problem, with the generation of a series of solutions.

Further, in the midst of the arguments about making care count, I came to reflect on how discomforting it can be when care does get enrolled within these metrics of merit. I am not sure from what place I am resisting care counting, it is less here a concern with a shift in the nature of the programme and its content, I will continue to run it in the form that works best for those students who want to engage rather than through any centrally mandated sense of content and form. But as Ahmed reflects on then tensions of writing on doing diversity work 'I had no intention of writing on these experiences. If anything I welcomed being involved in institutional work that was not related to my academic scholarship. The imperative to transform all experience into writing can reduce the value of an experience by treating experience as a means to this end' (2012, 5). The programme was not created within the context of any of the infrastructures of excellence and merit that it has now become enrolled within. Partly what it seemed to do was to help me rethink and rework my relationship to 'institutional worlds' it sat within, it helped counter to some of the alienation I was feeling, I recognised in it, the experience Ahmed describes as 'the energising and often inspiring experience of working 'on' the institutions we work at' (Ahmed, 2012,5). As such, something starting feeling lost or compromised by the increased visibility of the programme and its awards. Perhaps it felt instrumentalised, perhaps its becoming visible had made it a potentially risky diversion of the economies of attention away from the harder tasks of addressing solutions through structural change, had we somehow absolved the university of responsibility through finding our own solutions to the problems we collectively face?

Energized

> *One more thing: I wrote this blog when I was feeling depleted. And in that fact is another political lesson: sometimes we can feel less depleted by writing about being depleted or even just sharing that sense of being depleted with others* (Ahmed 2013a)

Feeling less depleted, less of a failure describes how I feel in the researching and writing of this essay. Through the making of feminist connections between my own personal experience of PhD supervision and wider discussions of the contemporary state of higher education this essay in fact constituted an act of self-care. Mountz (2016) observes how

> as I found myself engaged in conversations [about women's experiences in the academy] I found that they helped, that finding ways to discuss overwhelming stress and heath struggles make me realize that many people around me were experiencing similar things. There was relief and hope in and for something bigger, there was power in forging the collective (207).

This essay therefore performs the belief that 'the promotion of caring and healthy ways of working and the valuation of academic care work… involves the active discussion of care work as an essential and important part of life and work' (Mountz et al 2015). In its writing I found conceptual reinforcement for what I have instinctively known, that good supervision requires the sometimes tough process of inserting a 'logic of relationship, responsibility and inter-dependency within a structure grounded on individuals' and on competition for both student and supervisor. Such caring practices should occur hand-in-hand with practices of self-care otherwise they risk reproducing dominant and depleting ideologies of care in the academy. To practice care in a way that also cultivates and sustains self-care can imply inserting a transgressive current of practice within the institution and having the courage to sit there with it, to practice it no matter the time and space it takes up and despite (indeed because of) its resistance to academic command and control and its untraceability within the metrics and matrices of audit and of promotion. As this essay has also hopefully demonstrated, a feminist ethics of care does not confine itself to merely creating new spaces and practices for caring, but also seeks to promote the critical engagement with these practices of care and the overlooking and devaluing of care work within the academy. The uneven distribution of such care work, its informal nature and the challenges that propagate from the widespread gender stereotyping associated with it, and the costs that exacts on men and women alike, must be faced up to. As an often invisible, feminized and yet thoroughly essential element of how universities function, care work needs to be made to count. Yet this acknowledgement is a tricky process if the if the 'creative diversion' of academic time and energies that care work can constitute is not to become enrolled by the institution as a means to both demonstrate it cares, whilst also absolving itself from having to do the difficult work of confronting and solving the root cause of the problem. To care, is to be undone, but to care critically is also to be transformed and to transform. It is to address the benefits, but also the challenges faced in the constitution of spaces, practices and communities of hope in a world that too often can leave us and those we care about diminished and depleted.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the programme, it has been an inspiring if tricky experience, and all those I have had the pleasure of supervising over the years. Thanks too must go to those who have created care-full spaces for me to prosper outside the academy. The encouraging and supportive comments of two referees and the support and patience of editor Sarah De Leeuw has been invaluable.

References

Ahmed, S. 2012. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Duke University Press.

Ahmed, S. 2013a 'Feeling Depleted' https://feministkilljoys.com/2013/11/17/feeling-depleted/ last accessed 27/8/2016

Ahmed, S. 2013b 'Critical Racism-Critical Sexism' https://feministkilljoys.com/2013/12/19/critical-racismcritical-sexism/ last accessed 27/8/2016

Ahmed, S. 2014 'Selfcare as warfare' http://feministkilljoys.com/2014/08/25/selfcare-as-warfare/ last accessed 27/8/2016 x

Ahmed, S. 2015 'Against students' http://thenewinquiry.com/?essays=against-students last accessed 27/8/2016

Ahmed, S. 2017 *Living A Feminist Life* Duke University Press.

Askins, K. And Blazek, M. 2010. Felling our way: academia, emotions and a politics of care. Social and Cultural Geography, 18 (8), pp. 1086-1105.

The Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010. Beyond Scholar Activism. *ACME: An International E-journal for Critical Geographies,* 9,2, 245-275.

Bartlett, A. & Mercer, G. 2000 Reconceptualising discourses of power in postgraduate Pedagogies. *Teaching in Higher Education* 5, 2, 195-204.

Berg, L. D., Huijbens, E.H., and Larsen, H.G. 2016. Producing anxiety in the neoliberal university. *The Canadian Geographer* 60, 2, 168-80.

Berg, M. and Seeber, B. 2016. *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy*, Ontario, University of Toronto Press.

Berlant, L. 1997. “Feminism and the Institutions of Intimacy.” *The Politics of Research*, ed. E. Ann Kaplan and George Levine (New Brunswick, NJ).

Berlant, L. 1998. Collegiality, Crisis and Cultural Studies, *Profession,* 1998, 105-116.

Bono, F, V De Craene and A. Kenis. 2019. My best geographer’s dress: bodies, emotions and care in early-career academia. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 101:1, 21-32,

Butler, J. 2006. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, London: Verso.

Chinn, S. E. 2011. Once more with feeling: pedagogy, affect, transformation. *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy,* 22, 2, 15-20.

Conradson, D. 2016. Fostering student mental well-being through supportive learning communities. *The Canadian Geographer* 60, 2, 239-244.

D’Ignazio, C and Klein, L. (Forthcoming) Data Feminism. MIT Open, available from https.//bookbook.pubpub.org/data-feminism.

Davidson, J. (2016) ‘Plenary address: A year of living ‘dangerously’: Reflections on risk, trust, trauma and change’, *Emotion, Space and Society*, 18: 28-34.

Domosh, M. 2014. Toward a more healthy discipline. *Association of American Geography Newsletter*. October 2 http://news.aag.org/2014/10/toward-a-more-healthy-discipline/ last accessed 27/8/2016

Dombroski, K. A. F Watkins, H. Fitt, J. Frater, K. Banwell, K. Mackenzie, L. Mutambo, K. Hawke, F. Persendt, J. Turković, S. Ko & D. Hart. 2018. Journeying from “I” to “we”: assembling hybrid caring collectives of geography doctoral scholars, *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 42:1, 80-93.

Ellsworth, E. 1997. *Teaching Positions: Difference, Pedagogy, and the Power of Address*. New York: Teachers College Press.

El-Alayli, A, Hansen-Brown, A.A. and Ceynar, M. 2018. Dancing Backwards in High Heels: Female Professors Experience More Work Demands and Special Favor Requests, Particularly from Academically Entitled Students. *Sex Roles*, 79, 3-4, 136-150.

Gill, R. 2009. Breaking the silence: The hidden injuries of neo-liberal academia. In *Secrecy and silence in the research process: Feminist reflections*, ed. R. Flood and R. Gill. London: Routledge, 228—244. x

Giroux, H.A. 2014. *Neoliberalism’s war on higher education*, Haymarket books, London.

Grant, B.M. 2015. The pedagogy of graduate supervision: Figuring the relations between supervisor and student available from https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/2292/295/02whole.pdf?sequence=9 last accessed 27/8/2016

Green, M. 2015. Thanks for listening. The Chronicle for Higher Education, October 19. http://chronicle.com/article/Thanksfor-Listening/233825. Last accessed: 27/8/2016

Hall, R. 2014. On the university anxiety machine. Richard Hall’s Space, blog post March 19 2014. http://www.richard-hall.org/2014/03/19/on-the-university-as-anxiety-machine.

Halse, C. and Malfroy, J. (2010) Retheorising doctoral supervision as professional work, *Studies in Higher Education*, 35, 1, 79-92.

Hawkins, R. and Manzi, M and Ojeda, D. 2014. Lives in the Making: Power, Academia and the Everyday, *ACME: International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 13, 2, 328-351.

Hemer, S R. 2009. Coffee as a Supervisory technique; power, formality and the persona in supervision available on line from: https://www.adelaide.edu.au/carst/docs/hemer-2009-supercino.pdf last accessed: 27/8/2016

Hockey, J. 1994, Establishing boundaries: problems and solutions in managing PhD supervisor's role. *Cambridge Journal of Education* 24, 2, 289-305.

Hockey, J. 1995. Getting too close: a problem and a possible solution in social science PhD supervision. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 23, 2, 199-210.

Hockey, J. 1997. A complex craft: United Kingdom PhD supervision in the social sciences, *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 2,1, 45-70

Hochschild, A. R. 1983. *The managed heart: Communication of human feeling*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

hooks, bell. 1994. *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom* New York: Routledge.

hooks, bell. 2003. *Teaching community: a pedagogy of hope*. New York: Routledge.

Ives, G. and Rowley, G. 2005 Supervisor selection of allocation and continuity of supervision: PhD students' progress and outcomes, *Studies in Higher Education*, 30, 5, 535-555.

Jagodzinski, j. 2002. The ethics of the 'real' in Levinas, Lacan and Buddhism: Pedagogical implications. *Educational Theory,* 52, 1, 81-96.

Johnson, L. Lee, A. & Green, B. 2000. The PhD and the autonomous self: gender, rationality and postgraduate pedagogy, *Studies in Higher Education*, 25, 2, 135-147.

Lorde, A. 1988. *A burst of light: Essays*. London: Sheba Feminist Publishers.

Macclean, K. 2016. Sanity,'madness' and the academy. *The Canadian Geographer*, 60, 2, 181-191.

MacNell, L. Driscoll, A. and Hunt, A. N. 2015. "What's in a Name: Exposing Gender Bias in Student Ratings of Teaching," Journal of Collective Bargaining in the Academy. 2015, Article 53. Available at: h p://thekeep.eiu.edu/jcba/vol0/iss10/53, Last accessed 27/8/2016

Manathunga, C. 2007. Supervision as mentoring: the role of power and boundary crossing. *Studies in Continuing Education* 29, 2, 207-221.

Meyerhoff, Eli, E. Johnson, and Braun, B. 2011. Time and the university. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 10, 3, 483-507.

Moss, P., K. J. Debres, A. Cravey, J. Hyndman, K. K. Hirschboeck, and M. Masucci. 1999. Toward mentoring as feminist praxis: Strategies for ourselves and others. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 23, 3, 413- 427.

Mott, C., Zuppan, S. Debbane, AM and RL. 2015. Making Space for Critical Pedagogy in the Neoliberal University: Struggles and Possibilities. *ACME: An International E-journal for Critical Geographies*, 14 (4), 1260-1282.

Mountz, A. 2016. Women on the edge: Workplace Stress at Universities in North America. *The Canadian Geographer*. 60, 2.

Mountz, A., A. Bonds, B. Mansfield, J. Lloyd, J. Hyndman, M. Walton-Roberts, R. Basu, R. Whitson, R. Hawkins, T. Hamilton, and W. Curran. 2015. For slow scholarship: A feminist politics of resistance through collective action in the neoliberal university. *ACME: International E-Journal for Critical Geographies,* 14, 4, 1235-1259

Mullings, B. L. Peake, and K Parizeau. 2016 Cultivating and Ethic of Wellness in Geography. The Canadian Geographer 60 (2) 161-167.

Oberhauser, A. M., and M.A. Caretta 2019. Mentoring early career women geographers in the neoliberal academy: dialogue, reflexivity, and ethics of care, *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 101:1, 56-67

Parizeau, K. Shillington, L. Hawkins, R. Sultana, F. Mountz, A. Mullings, B. and Peake, L. 2016. Breaking the Silence: A feminist call to action. *The Canadian Geographer,* 60, 2, 192-204.

Peake, L., and B. Mullings. 2016. Critical reflections for geography on mental health in the academy. *ACME: International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 15, 9, 253-284.

Puawai Collective 2019 Assembling disruptive practices in the neoliberal university: an ethics of care, Geografisk Annaler: Series B, Human Geography, 1001: 1, 33-43.

Raghuram, P. 2016. Locating Ethics of Care beyond the Global North, *ACME: An International E-journal for Critical Geographies*, 15, 3, 511-33.

Salmon, P. 1992. *Achieving a PhD: Ten Students' Experience*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books Limited.

Sheffield, C. 2011. Always Ready for Summer; Reflections on the Emotional Cost of Teaching about Violence against Women. *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusion Scholarship and Pedagogy* 22, 2, 21-29.

Simond- Gagnon, L. 2016. "Everyone is fed, bathed, asleep and I have made it thought another day" problematizing accommodation, resilience and care in the neoliberal academy. *Canadian Geographer,* 60, 2, 219–22

Taylor, S. and Beasley, N. 2005. *A handbook for doctoral supervisors*, Routledge: London.

Taylor, Y. And Lahad, K. 2018. *Feeling Academic in the Neoliberal University. Feminist Flights, Fights and Failures*. Palgrave, London.

Thomas, K. 2014. We don't want anyone to know, say depressed academics. The Guardian online, May 8. http:// www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2014/may/08/academics-mental-health-suffering-silence-guardiansurveyealth. Last accessed 27/8/2016

Wisker, G., Robinson, G., Trafford, V., Warnes, M. & Creighton, E. 2003. From supervisory dialogues to successful PhDs: Strategies supporting and enabling the learning conversations of staff and students at postgraduate level. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 8, 3, 383-397.