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Alienation and Precarious Contract Academic Staff in the Age of Neoliberalism

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> "They's a big son-of-a-bitch of a peach orchard I worked in. Takes nine men all the year roun'...Takes three thousan' men for two weeks when them peaches is ripe. Got to have 'em or them peaches'll rot. So what do they do? They send out han'bills all over hell. They need three thousan', an' they get six thousan'. They get them men for what they wanta pay. If ya don't wanta take what they pay, goddamn it, they's a thousan' men waitin' for your job." (Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* 218).

> "There are no bad jobs"
> – Canadian Finance Minister Jim Flaherty

Precarious academic labour is victim to forces of neoliberalization of the institution that naturalizes "competitiveness" and "efficiency" according to an almost mystic or transcendent understanding of economy that is self-actualizing and axiomatic in nature. This article will attempt to provide a brief survey of the precarious academic labour from in the Canadian context, subsequently assess this on the basis of alienation, and furnish a few possible solutions.

As public universities are under pressure to adopt more neoliberal practices with respect to operations and labour relations, the increase of the casual labour force (marketed as "flexible employment") has led to a variety of challenging consequences for contract faculty (hereafter named CAS, or "contract academ-

ic staff"). Internally these include: a divide and rule strategy by administration at the level of collective bargaining that becomes a source of division within union constituencies that pit the interests of tenure-track and tenured faculty against contract faculty where both bargaining units are combined rather than separate, a larger burden of teaching responsibilities placed upon contract faculty to absorb enrollment expansion policies, and the peripheralization of contract labour to insulate academic units from budgetary shocks. Externally these include: the tendency to characterize in the public press the concerns of academic labour in general as one indexed on unearned entitlement, or otherwise employing artful concealment of the real numbers of contract faculty currently relied upon by Canadian universities. What may further exacerbate these consequences of labour precariousness may partially be indexed on the possibly outdated policies associated with the hiring process, and possibly in some cases an institutionalized bias against contract faculty to achieve higher visibility and representation due to chronic and potentially harmful misperceptions that contract faculty are second-rate academics – a perception that lacks any empirical study to grant it validity.

The optics are dissonant: insofar as it is simple to write off CAS as second-rate and not worthy of fair pay, departmental governance participation, and so forth, they are entrusted with large number of students – ostensibly the "customers" of the commodified university. There is no empirical evidence to support the assertion that CAS as a whole are less qualified to teach and do research at a level and quality commensurate with their tenured colleagues. In many cases, the limitations are institutionally structural and circumstantial: CAS may not be eligible to apply for major research grants that might improve their professional status, and research output may generally be lower (not in all cases) on account of heavier teaching duties and issues associated with access to appropriate resources for carrying out research. Pecuniary pressures may prompt CAS to take up more teaching duties at the expense of time devoted to research, the latter generally being of more weight in being considered for more secure positions. However, research output is not a guarantee of progression from precarious to secure employment. Some longer-serving

CAS may have impressive research CVs, but are ritually denied secure employment for a multitude of reasons that may be strictly economic in nature. In addition, the level of competitiveness has arguably also increased: as one colleague said to this author, "the hiring committee did not care that I had published a book with a reputable academic press, and instead told me I should reapply once I've had a second one published." Whereas the hiring waves of the 1960s and 70s were a response to an acute shortage of faculty to meet the demand of a post-war population, a shortage of tenure track lines and an oversupply of qualified candidates will mean more competition.

The lack of adequate, nation-wide statistical data further exacerbates the issue by concealing the marginalization of an academic labour force by omission, which thus strengthens the hand of those who trivialize or dismiss the heavy reliance on part-time labour, if not abiding by a program of willful blindness to the issue. With the discontinuation of the Statistics Canada's UCASS system, the victim of budgetary constraint signals an end to the collection of data pertaining to the labour health of university full-time faculty. Although said numbers are still collected by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), which is distributed as part of their annual almanac, there is still a dearth of specific data on contract faculty. Those wishing to obtain a reliable picture of the socioeconomic realities facing full-time faculty would only have recourse to do so by obtaining these statistics via universities individually, and then go about the process of combining, collating, and interpreting the data provided – if each university complies or makes these data available. However, one of the weaknesses in the UCASS system was in not acquiring and compiling statistics for part-time faculty, also known as contract academic staff (CAS). The last comprehensive study on the issue of CAS in Canada was conducted by Indhu Rajagopal in 2001-2 in the book, *Hidden Academics*. Rajagopal's study had to rely in part on some statistical data, but also the goodwill of deans to volunteer said information if available. Since then, collection and distribution of statistics pertaining to CAS receives a failing grade. By contrast, in the US there are mechanisms and instruments in place that track these data. We now know that the

labour situation facing contingent faculty is particularly dire, if not more pronounced than that faced by their Canadian counterparts. We know, for example, that 75.5% (1.3 million out of 1.8 million) of the instructional workforce are non-tenure track academics sometimes earning a median of $2,700 per course, with a significant number of them teaching at multiple institutions (otherwise known as "freeway flyers" or "roads scholars"), and some of whom have no other recourse than to supplement their income using social assistance programs, with nearly 75% of contingent faculty respondents reporting that their labour for the university was the primary source of income, with over half reporting a personal income of under $45,000 per annum.[1]

By not collecting these data on contract faculty appointments, what we are left with is a black box scenario. Without reliable data, the legitimacy of the issue is impeded by a fundamental lack of evidential support, thus having to rely on more subjective criticism based on individual testimonies, anecdotes, and perceptions.[2] Without reliable statistical data available, this proves challenging in making the case to senior administrations and the public that CAS may be an exploitable industrial reserve army. Tenbrinke makes the case thus:

> The higher education sector in Ontario lacks shared, comparable, and publicly available data – data that is needed in order to make well-informed, evidence-based policy decisions. Obtaining better data on contract and part-time faculty in universities is an important first step in addressing the data gap. While we know that institutions rely increasingly on large numbers of contract and part-time faculty, we do not have sector-wide data that

[1] Coalition on the Academic Workforce, 2013. According to the American Association of University Professors, since 1975, the number of tenured faculty dropped from 29.0% to 16.8% in 2009, while part-time faculty increased during this time from 24.0% to 41.1%. Cf. the AAUP chart here: http://www.aaup.org/NR/rdonlyres/7C3039DD-EF79-4E75-A20D-6F75BA01BE84/0/Trends.pdf

[2] This data gap has been addressed several times in the Canadian context, and occasionally in the US. One article of note that addresses this would be Linda Muzzin (2009) "Equity, Ethics, Academic Freedom and the Employment of Contingent Academics" in *Academic Matters*, May 2009, pp. 19–22.

> would provide accurate numbers and allow for more complex analyses.[3]

The plight of the contract academic is all too familiar for those who have spent up to a decade or more effectively on the fringes of an institution that refuses to commit to them in any long-term way. In pursuit of professional credentials, the subsequent struggle to secure a full-time position rather than a series of precarious contracts can prove particularly demoralizing. Generally with but a few exceptions in Canada, contract academics face these grim realities:

1) Their teaching labour is compensated at a fraction of the comparable rate of their full-time, tenured colleagues. This may range from approximately $8,000 to $15,000 for full course equivalent pending institution, compared to up to $20,000 or more for tenured faculty, some of whom may have *less* teaching experience than CAS.

2) They are largely ineligible for benefits such as health and dental, and in some isolated instances can voluntary contribute to a pension fund. A chronic lack of access to health-based benefits among CAS who do not have partners with an appropriate benefits plan may arguably diminish the health and wellness of CAS members, which may in turn have a deleterious impact on work performance.

3) They may lack adequate access to resources such as office supplies or even office space; or, office space may be shared accommodations. This points to minimal institutional support.

4) The designation of "part-time" may be a misnomer when considering the full range of duties CAS perform, some of it entirely voluntary.

5) They generally lack access to competitive research grants and opportunities which thus continues the cycle of not being able to distinguish themselves as researchers.

[3] Tenbrinke, 2013, n.p.

6) Hiring may be largely based on the quantitative scores derived from student evaluations. This is problematic insofar as no peer evaluation is performed, and that some CAS may be inclined to inflate grades to appease students who now may expect higher grades on account of a confluence of secondary school grade inflation and higher tuition fees. Although this may erode educational quality, some CAS feel it is the only way to protect what little security they may possess as their contracts may depend on maintaining a high evaluation score.[4]

Despite the grim outlook for CAS both in Canada and abroad, the one advantage Canada may have over the US and other countries is the fact that Canadian universities are among the most unionized sectors.[5] This places CAS in a unique position of potential advantage. Although there are no statistics that tell the story of CAS participation in faculty associations, one can infer that there is some evidence of strong activity according to the creation of part-time bargaining units at some institutions, or the creation of separate unions entirely. Although this article will not address the issue of advantages or disadvantages in having a separate bargaining unit or one that is inclusive of all faculty ranks in solidarity, it does remain a controversial issue, and it may actually be preferable for CAS to make their concerns known and thus represented in a faculty association that can be inclusive of all ranks to prevent administrations from playing one side against the other. What can be retained, however, is that Canadian universities may have the labour power to exert specific changes in

[4] "Part-time professors do not fill out these forms. No one asks us what we have done during the past year, nor what we plan to do in the future. This may be because it is taken for granted that we do not do anything that matters during the year, or that no one cares whether we do or not. The university gets the benefit and credit for our professional activities, while we get no credit or benefit at all." (Diane Huberman Arnold, http://www.cautbulletin.ca/en_article.asp?articleid=2185). Such performance metrics were steadily introduced under the guise of quality enhancement and New Managerialism, but threaten to inject private sector values in public sector environments that may not be suitably compatible unless universities abdicate its critical and transformative roles and adopt a complete commodification model whereby students are clients and faculty members are operationalized as service delivery personnel.

[5] Dobbie and Robinson, 2008

working conditions as they have in the past, specifically in terms of workload, compensation, and promotion and tenure articles through the collective bargaining process.

Adoption of neoliberal practices has a direct impact on job precariousness and in exposing labour to market shocks,[6] with the inevitable outcome that already marginalized groups such as contract faculty find themselves increasingly vulnerable to budget-based reasons for non-renewal or a dearth of secure positions being created. As the ambient and trickle-down effects of provincial government fiscal restraint creates the conditions for unpredictable university funding, there is little incentive for cash-strapped universities to replace retiring faculty with the exception of hiring more contract employees to fill course gaps and meet program capacities. Generally speaking, most Canadian universities have adopted the "grow or die" diktat so that individual faculties and departments are intimidated by budgetary changes that earmark any funding to a performance metric that is entirely consumer-based; i.e., program expansion to increase student enrollment capacities so that an increased number of students function as a revenue driver in the form of tuition. Other budgetary levers are used to make up a shortfall in government subsidies, such as annual increases in tuition, a push toward "internationalization" to attract students from abroad, and a shift in what "counts" as research whereby full-time faculty members who do not obtain large-scale funding among a narrowing field of funding options (with decreased funding available among these agencies) may be "punished" with more teaching responsibilities. Moreover, there has been a considerably conspicuous absence of discussion surrounding succession planning to create more secure junior faculty positions to replace retiring faculty, thus presenting a major gap in the professoriate.

One of the perils of pressuring universities to adopt less reliance on contract academic staff would be the prospect of using productivity models that would attempt to maximize existing tenured resources by increasing workload. This is particularly of

[6] Peck and Tickell, 2003; Fanelli and Thomas, 2011

issue where faculty associations are not as strong to resist an administration's push to radically alter the workload articles in a collective agreement. The new trend among some university administrations has been in promoting large team-based research, and such research programs favour the STEM disciplines over the humanities. Pressure "from above" at the federal and provincial levels of government also plays a strong role in steering the mission of universities, which has an appreciable impact on hiring practices.

The jobs-skills mismatch trope has been championed by the current Canadian government, and this plays to the broader context of the perceived value of postsecondary education. That is, a pervasive belief has been that too many students are graduating from "soft" programs such as those taught in the humanities who then cannot find employment. Currently, youth employment (defined as those aged 15–24 in Statistics Canada documents) is nearly twice the national average, hovering near 14%. The chorus from the public, some politicians, and business leaders has been that young people are not being specifically trained for what the labour market requires. Steadily, universities have been under pressure to provide more vocational and skills-training in curricula, thus taking on more of the roles once played by colleges and businesses that would provide this training. Governments at both the federal and provincial level continue to trumpet the need to steer students into programs that will lead to better employability in fields where there is perceived acute labour shortages. However, as past attempts by governments to manipulate or stream educational choices using a variety of levers indicate, such interventions are based on what the labour market may need now, and this is not always particularly useful as a predictive instrument as to what the labour market may require in four years' time once the cohort has graduated. Labour demand in key areas are always subject to change, thus making interventions potentially

parlous, if not also diminishing the autonomy of both students and universities.[7]

Entrenched Labour, Intensification, and False Solutions

The deepening and widening of global capital and the instruments of assuming a global market price in what can be seen as a commodification of academic delivery services forms part of the broader frame for labour entrenchment. The proletarianization of academic labour as a function of changes in industrial relations was initially recognized by Tom Wilson.[8] Coupled to this is the transformation of perceptions of labour from asset to liability, and the overall intensification of academic labour in general which has enabled the conditions of overload. The specific working conditions of the CAS can be understood in the discrete rather than continuous nature of their contingent employment, one that can be characterized as serialized or episodic labour. This is opposed to more secure forms of employment in academia where there is some continuity. This is of an integral piece to the academic mission in both structural and interactive terms: a dearth of continuous and secure positions poses challenges to curricular planning in a program (despite the counter-argument that ad hoc staffing's flexible options might be said to resolve this), and in developing and sustaining student-teacher interaction over a longer period. For CAS, much of their teaching can be considered serial insofar as they are "one-off" events that accumulate over time without sufficient institutional recognition. What instead accumulates is possibly a growing stigmatization of being a perpetual part-timer, as though this demonstrates a

[7] This remains one of the enduring paradoxes associated with neoliberalism, something this author classifies as "selectively modified neoliberalism": inasmuch as the orthodox neoliberal ideological motive includes freer markets and less government intervention, it has been noted that in Canada especially governments at various levels have increased their intervention. At the provincial level, by using funding levers to compel universities under the guise of accountability and performance that align with fiscal restraint and the shift to jobs training; at the federal level, the pressures put on major research granting bodies to award grants to those whose research has some connection with commercializability.

[8] Wilson, 1991.

deficiency in the individual and not in the structural apparatus of the academic job market itself.

CAS are a highly detachable, disposable, segmented workforce – what Marx would call the industrial reserve army. They are "nomadic" in a non-romanticist sense; that is, they are not nomads in the eccentric and self-determining sense of Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of the nomad as having resisted the State's apparatus of capture.[9] Instead, they are "fugitives" within the system, attempting to find a reliable pathway to become part of a system that dismisses or rejects them. The very means by which CAS can accumulate academic capital is simply not available to those whose contracts limit them to teaching duties alone. Although working conditions for the general contract academic are not as severe as Marx reported with respect to the itinerant working population that were set up in ad hoc fashion in ramshackle cottages, there is still the sense that the academic reserve army is in effect a "mass of human material always ready for exploitation." [10] In the academic context, the institutions themselves are naturally disposed to the function of alienation. As Castoriadis says, this is achieved in two ways: the institutions sanction class division and rank, but also their own inertia binds classes into roles that serve these institutions and not the other way around.[11]

One of the enduring issues pertaining to academic labour at all ranks is an increased intensification of workloads:

> A punishing intensification of work has become an endemic feature of academic life. Again, serious discussion of this is hard to find either within or outside universities, yet it is impossible to spend any significant amount of time with academics without quickly gaining an impression of a profession overloaded to breaking point, as a consequence of the underfunded expansion of universities over the last two decades, combined with hyperinflation of what is demanded of academics, and an audit culture that, if it was once treated with scepticism, has now been almost perfectly internalized.[12]

[9] Deleuze and Guattari, 1987.
[10] Marx, 1967, p. 632.
[11] Castoriadis, 1987, p. 110.
[12] Gill, 2009, n.p.

Morale is doubtless jeopardized by work intensification without proportional compensation or any other means of recognition and acknowledgement. This is not restricted solely to contract academics, but has now spread to all faculty ranks as more university administrations are seeking to optimize efficiencies and, in some cases, implement private sector inspired performance metrics as an instrument of control or punishment in the name of accountability. Work intensification and lack of security are effectively partial causes to diminishing morale.

As a further systemic problem that weakens the contract faculty's bargaining power is the issue of labour oversupply; with more universities embracing expanded graduate school enrollments, graduate students in the completion phase of their degree may be tasked with sessional teaching duties. The existence of this ready-to-hand labour pool does not provide incentive for university administrations to create sustainable and secure faculty positions, let alone commit to contracts of longer duration, preferring to adopt "short-termism" as a flexible solution to ad hoc staffing issues, rotating this reserve labour force into courses when convenient. Generally, when corporations defend their use of contract labour (including variants of the zero-hours contracts used in England's National Health System, or more classical models of contract labour where the appointment already comes pre-loaded with the termination notice), they highlight only the most optimistic benefits of such arrangements, such as providing flexibility for both employer and employee. Zero-hour contracts commit the employee to be perpetually "on call" to deliver services with no obligation from an employer to provide work, and this is particularly patent in the assignment of courses where an academic worker may be given as little as a day's notice to prepare a course

for immediate delivery, or may find a course suddenly cancelled.[13] This is arguably a form of idealization of the labourer as someone who merely "steps in" en route to something different on a perpetually shifting landscape of serial mini-careers, and who does not want to be "fixed" to one position which would limit their future job prospects. Trumpeting the issue of flexibility as a global good (or, as the new reality of the global marketplace) serves the interests of the idealized labourer only, not those who seek a measure of security and stability in their employment, and who wish to be compensated at a rate commensurate with their training and experience. It also does not speak toward the development of reciprocal loyalty between employer and employee.

One of the chief battlegrounds with respect to the casualization and exploitation of CAS is language; that is, the rhetoric that divides the two terms of *flexible* and *contingent*. As Gullì notes, the economic value of relying on CAS is marketed as flexible is seen as a healthy financial and operational model by senior administrations, whereas the dehumanizing and alienating aspects of casualized academic labour is felt by CAS as pejoratively indexed on contingency whereby it is internalized as a descriptor of one's human labour value: "the way in which *contingent* is used with respect to contingent labour hides the fact that is labour is most of the time, if not always, not contingent at all" and is instead "a permanent feature of a given workplace."[14] From a basic premise of human dignity, it should be noted that CAS are more than just components that can be plugged in or removed at will. Senior administrations would need to acknowledge that relying on ad hoc contingency measures has quickly become the norm. So, inasmuch as administrations view flexibility positively and may provide anecdotes that some CAS see it in this way in

[13] It should be noted that most collective agreements do have in place a "course cancellation stipend" which compensates an academic worker for course cancellations occurring either from the point of contract to before the course is scheduled, or during the course itself. These stipends may not be adequate in reflecting the actual labour time involved in course preparation, nor may it be sufficient if the course is cancelled at the last minute given that the academic worker would have already committed to the school and thus having already declined other offers.

[14] Gullì, 2009, pp. 9.

offering some degree of casual freedom, for a growing number of CAS who rely almost primarily on this form of employment with aspirations to gain secure employment as a full member of the professoriate, the term flexibility is synonymous with uncertainty, anxiety, and alienation.

Anecdotally, the number of courses taught by contract faculty may have reached the tipping point of fifty per cent in Canada; however, the difficulty in obtaining reliable statistical data from university administrations is a pernicious problem in order to transform anecdote into statistical fact. One cannot politically act on anecdotes alone. This lack of record-keeping or access ensures that contract faculty do not have stable data from which to launch arguments against the inequities of the system. Without these vital statistics being collected or accessible, CAS members cannot raise their visible profile in criticizing administration with the backing of statistical proof. The frequent invocation of *invisibility* as it pertains to CAS as a real condition of their experience is nested in the plain fact that CAS are becoming a majority on campus, and so their continued invisibility is not on the basis of numerical considerations, but due to institutional structures that engage passively or actively in willful blindness to the working conditions of CAS. The heavy reliance on CAS also presents a safety mechanism for full-time tenured faculty: "it could be argued that the stability of tenured faculty positions is functionally dependent on the existence of a sufficient number of flexible sessional and adjunct faculty. Without this flexible academic labour force, the stability of a segment of tenured professors would be threatened."[15] As stated above, it is this massive peripheral contingent of CAS that exist as a budget buffer, whereby it is the labour periphery that presupposes the centre.

Visibility for CAS can only be achieved through strong awareness campaigns and collective engagement to exert pressure on the institution. It is unlikely that any university advertising would boast of its heavy reliance on contract workers. There exist a plethora of institutionalized mechanisms that inhibit the full vis-

[15] Bauder, 2006, p. 231.

ible realization of contract faculty. Inhibitory factors that may prevent the realization of full "class consciousness" among members of this constituency may fairly be indexed on fear or indifference, and that any gesture to agitate for better working conditions may result in passive punitive action such as non-renewal of contract. However, with a few isolated exceptions, mobilizing this constituency proves difficult for a variety of reasons that are endemic to the labour situation CAS find themselves in. The most toxic might be the perception of fear in being associated with a politically active CAS movement, for it may be believed that the employer takes notice of the activity and punishes accordingly. Equally toxic for a different reason would be apathy borne of resignation and a feeling of marginalization: the situation may be perceived as being so intransigent that there is little that the individual can do. From a more circumstantial standpoint, another issue is the nature of the contracts themselves that may limit the CAS member's available time on campus, or limits on being informed of any CAS-led movements for labour improvements. If one works in an environment that is alienating, where deeper involvement in university affairs is not encouraged, then the CAS member may simply stay in a withdrawn, resigned, or silent state. We must also acknowledge that CAS constitutes a very diverse membership,[16] including those who are professionals in established careers who teach a few courses on occasion, but this constituency – despite the convenience for administrations to believe are the majority of CAS – are not in fact the majority at all outside of the disciplines of law, medicine, or engineering.

At issue would be developing strategies to delegitimize the neoliberalization of the academic environment and harmonizing the vision of both management and labour with respect to constructing a conciliatory plan to ensure the security and sustainability of academic labour, but in such a way that such planning can move beyond merely formal rules that honour equality and potentiality. This would necessarily require collective buy-in to exert a counter-pressure that resists the further commodification of higher education. The failure of university administrators to find

[16] Tuckman and Tuckman, 1981.

a satisfactory solution to what can be classified as systemic and chronic underemployment of its academic labour force is commonly attributed to external market pressures that have a considerable impact on budgetary resources. However, it may be noted that the call for "shared restraint" under the rubric of neoliberalist policies is not necessarily reflected by means of *equal* shared restraint, and thus under the aegis of providing "competitive salaries" to top administrators, a certain proportion of revenue is earmarked exclusively in the attraction and retention policies of universities for upper echelon administrative positions.[17] However, there is little to no attempt to apply retention policies with respect to casualized academic labour, nor are there any truly effective incentives to recognize long-standing employment and loyalty to the institution. In a service-centred economic model, academic labour is routinely devalued, and the "product" takes full precedence over the "producer." Although considered an entirely reasonable shift according to neoliberal advocates who believe the university should not be some special preserve insulated from the reality of economic oscillation and accountability, this does expose the university to the hostile climate of competitiveness which is indexed on market performance, which may not be in alignment with the initial mission of university education itself. In its place are new forms of top-down organizational power that extracts surplus value from both students and faculty who assume risk and responsibility, while upper administrations profit financially and by increased managerial power.

Willmott states that the organizational model has moved toward finding new ways of regulating academic production according to marketization pressures, and that funding sources are the last buffer to protect against full commodification.[18] The changes in

[17] Succinctly expressed by Culum Cannally: "This process is often termed the "neoliberalization" of higher education by its critics and has resulted in universities taking on the feel and function of large for-profit corporations complete with highly-paid senior administrators who demand economic rather than humanistic justification for the actions of faculty." in Antipode, March 30, http://antipodefoundation.org/2012/03/30/intervention-wheres-our-agency-the-role-of-grading-in-the-neoliberalization-of-public-universities/

[18] Willmott, 1995.

the funding environment has empowered administrations and not faculty members.[19] There has also been growing concern that administrations, bowing to the pressures of accountability, have been pursuing new managerial tactics for imposing performance metrics on teaching and research without proper consultation with faculty.

Competitiveness, as naturalized rhetoric in the neoliberal discourse, splits two ways: on the upper end, this justifies paying higher salaries to administrators as a means of obtaining "top talent", whereas it means pitting a large pool of itinerant labour to compete for low paying jobs without the guarantee of security. As administrative and managerialist positions increase, and gainful jobs for faculty stay frozen or suffer retrenchment in new policies that shutter entire programs due to lack of marketability, one wonders where this logic will lead. One possible outcome will be an expanded pool of contract faculty labour performing the tasks of teaching in the push for higher enrollment. Once the current generation of tenured faculty (especially in disciplines that are not considered as economically viable) retire, the hope that new replacement full-time probationary and tenure-track positions will be created might prove unrealistic given that this may not align with the university's pursuit of "efficiencies" and reduction of "liabilities" as university administrations continue to pursue cost containment strategies according to a manufactured budgetary crisis that preaches austerity. It is precisely this "sea change" in perception that underlines neoliberal economic theory: the viewing of labour as liability and not an asset.

Two "solutions" have been advanced by cash-strapped universities and technological optimists. The first has been the welter of literature in praise of teaching-only streams, and the second "magic bullet" takes the form of a push to adopt more virtual teaching resources (such as MOOCs), which thereby reduce reliance on physical infrastructure building-starts or improvements,

[19] An argument also made by Parker and Jary. "The McUniversity: Organization, Management and Academic Subjectivity." *Organization* 2.2 (1995): 319–338

this "virtualization" of academic teaching labour is seen as a viable cost containment strategy which may in itself remain blind to expensive up-front costs in the necessary computing infrastructure to support adequate course delivery. Yet, at the same time, many universities have not kept pace with the mounting concerns over intellectual property in terms of authoring and licensing agreements. The massive push toward digital solutions (such as MOOCs, blended learning, and flipped classrooms) may result in a radical reconfiguration of the professoriate, if not contributing to a shrinking of faculty labour. Although it is premature to make any solid predictions as to what the academic labour workforce will look like should an aggressively expanded digital curriculum is established outside of online-only institutions, faculty of all ranks would do well to be exceptionally leery about the motivations for adopting these methods (again, under the neoliberal umbrella of "choice" and "flexibility"), and the potential consequences of such a drastic change. We must here acknowledge that digital learning is not in itself culpable for any shifts in faculty complement or labour conditions per se, but in how top-down management chooses to roll out such policies. As digital learning options may be inevitably here to stay with plans to enhance digital course offerings in the future, any such implementation must ensure full faculty consultation and buy-in, ensuring that any changes positively impact the conditions of academic labour. For example, any move toward offering a few core, popular courses taught by celebrity academics should not be a justification for the effective demotion and de-skilling of less popular academics who might then find themselves hired simply as online discussion facilitators or assignment graders.

As for the teaching-only streams, this runs the very real risk of creating a two-tier system where only the very few and select will be granted the opportunity to perform research, while a preponderance of new academic labour will become entrenched in teaching-only positions among those of the CAS who may wish to pursue both avenues of activity. While this may be entirely suited for those disciplines that have a more vocational aspect, such "teaching-stream" positions might be complemented by paid time for pursuing analogous professional activities, such as

maintaining a professional credential or attending workshops and seminars in the faculty member's teaching area. However, if applied uniformly to all disciplines, this may imperil the academic mission on the basis of proper integration of teaching and research, as it neglects to acknowledge the generative dynamics of necessary interplay between the roles of teaching and research.[20] Although some CAS groups have advocated for the creation of stable and secure teaching-stream positions, this caters to one constituency of CAS who would prefer teaching duties instead of pursuing an active research practice. Should these positions be created at the exclusion of research-based positions, as is being considered at several Canadian universities and already in place at universities such as York, members of the CAS who would choose to pursue a more traditional appointment with the 40-40-20 formula (teaching, research, and service) may find no opportunities to pursue this. Teaching-only streams may create secure employment for a number of CAS, but it should be considered as complementary to a broader hiring initiative that facilitates broader CAS inclusion.

Alienation

Expansion of any business or corporatized institution generally requires drawing ever more from a labour market to provide the labour-power required to match the capacity of the indus-

[20] see Farr, M. (November 3, 2008). "For teaching-only faculty, a controversial role." University Affairs http://www.universityaffairs.ca/those-who-can-teach.aspx. [Retrieved 10 September 2013]. In addition, those CAS with research aspirations are presented with the challenging pressures of juggling a heavy teaching load while simultaneously attempting to develop their research profiles through consistent high quality publications. Such demands, though not impossible, are not realistic.

try, while at the same time keeping costs low.[21] As Marx notes, this creates the need for a vast "reserve army" of wage-labour that can be employed or unemployed on an ad hoc basis.[22] When there is high demand, a proliferation of wage-labourers may be required, just as a reduction in demand will facilitate a discharge of this group. Yet, in the case of Canadian universities, enrollments have steadily inclined as an after-effect of both the baby boom and the baby boom echo, if not also on account of government initiatives to make university more "accessible" to more potential students. This is usually packaged as a "public good" as provincial governments strive toward meeting global benchmarks for highest proportion of an educated population. Others more cynically point out that increased access has devalued the university degree, making it the "new high school diploma," and thus a base requirement for the labour market. Despite a steady increase in student enrollment, secure and full-time faculty jobs have not kept pace. Instead, from a cost containment standpoint, governments, and the university administrations who generally comply with the former, have incentivized the "doing more with less," which may include decreasing labour liabilities by increasing class sizes or pursuing digital learning options that can be delivered to a broader student base.

Debord notes that any economic expansion is synonymous with the manufacturing of alienation.[23] So, too, does expansion in universities contribute to the alienation of labour in terms of production. The labour of CAS is entirely abstracted as commodi-

[21] Expansion among university ranks appears to mirror that of the trends in broader class structure. Just as there has been an increase in managers and administrators in the private sector, the same can be said of Canadian universities as a whole. The increased reliance on under-waged part-time and contract workers in precarious employment situations holds equally true in both the private and public sector. In addition, the shrinking of the tenured professoriate due to retirements without replacement mirrors that of a shrinking middle class. This parallelism may demonstrate the fuller integration of the universities' financial situation and that of the national economic fate. The university thus becomes a reflective microcosm of the broader labour situation in Canada.

[22] Marx, 1967, p. 316.

[23] Debord, 2000, aph 32, n.p.

ty labour. Thus, too, when CAS cannot precisely identify what is alienating, or attempt to use the instruments of the system's alienation to combat alienation itself, this produces a false revolutionary instrument that achieves nothing. The "trick" would be in acquiring the means for development to fairly compete within the system *without* contributing to the continued alienation of contingent workers.

For a large proportion of contract faculty, there may be no viable and equitable access to the instruments of academic development. In addition, for those whose contract is restricted to solely teaching duties, research output (possibly diminished due to heavily compressed teaching loads) may not be in a position of marketability to apply for more secure academic positions. Issues of visibility may also be a problem among the precarious labour pool as they may lack access to sufficient office space, library privileges, and a lack of "hallway rapport" enjoyed by full-time faculty. Moreover, they may be blocked from participating in the academic life of the unit in not being able to sit on program committees or, if they are permitted, this is done on a voluntary basis without compensation. At the root of alienation is a perceived loss of identity. In occupying the role of CAS, there is a strong propensity to feel particularly contingent and thus dehumanized as little more than a teaching factotum.[24]

In contributing their labour power to the institution, CAS inadvertently empower the very apparatus that sustains the over-reliance on CAS. However, for many CAS just "quitting" is not a viable option, and any such measure would have to be collective in scope to have any effect. For, it might be noted that condition of precariousness may not be limited to the CAS member's status at a particular institution, but may extend to a generalized precariousness in relation to the broader labour market. As Guy Standing argues, increased emphasis on globalization has been the root cause of cementing this precarious social class as one of the fast-

[24] It should be noted that there is a fundamental disagreement as to whether alienation is an objective and material construct (Marxism) or a subjective and psychological one.

est growing labour segments, and the perils of not addressing this growth may result in social disruption and violence.[25]

Addressing the aspects of alienation from a more subjective and thus psychological approach, Ylijoki[26] provides a useful typology for understanding CAS according to three predominant types that are aligned with perceptions of time:

1) Instant Living: focusing on the present task and ignoring the uncertain future, a form of capsularization which is easier to embrace when contracted tasks such as teaching load may be particularly heavy. This may encourage passivity in longer-term planning.
2) Multiple Futures: Bet-hedging on a variety of possible alternatives both inside and outside the university system. Their connection to the present is tentative. Wanderlust, always open to new opportunities. Thompson and McHugh attribute this to one of the four potential responses to identity loss in the workplace.[27]
3) Scheduled Future: a belief that by disciplined effort and strategic choices with respect to time use, the prospect of a career is something that can be planned for. Agency and autonomy over one's choices.

In all three "types" there is the stain of attendant alienation given that identity is subordinated to varying degrees of connectivity and belonging in the academic institution. Instant living is to separate oneself from the any considerations of past performance as identity-forming, and ignoring an orientation toward the future where potentialities may be capitalized because of an almost Stoic fear of disappointment. Multiple futures caters to the individualistic premise that one is a contingent, almost mercenary, worker who responds to a lack of commitment from an institution by reciprocation. And perhaps the most alienating of all would be the scheduled future type that labours under the illusion that the

[25] Standing, 2011, p. 20.
[26] Ylijoki, 2010.
[27] Thompson and McHugh, 2002.

coveted positions are entirely attainable if proper planning is involved – and the sundry members of the CAS who have followed the perceived traditional path are testament to the plain fact that no amount of personal planning will change the academic labour market as a whole.

In all three types, there is the alienation that relates to multiple time registers. For example, the full realization of "adult" benchmarks may be deferred indefinitely due to a lack of secure employment, such as starting a family or home ownership. The broader societal narrative that holds these benchmarks as valued may exert a certain pressure on the CAS member, thus resulting in feelings of failure and deficiency whereby the broader sector's failures are internalized as personal failure. It is useful to understand the working conditions of CAS in terms of the triple register of alienation whereby contingent faculty may feel alienated from their own professional selves as "contingent" or "part-time" has the demoralizing effect of internalizing a feeling of deficiency, alienated from others of higher rank who may not see them as colleagues, and alienated from the department and/or university at large on account of having little to no means for significant participation in the life of said department and/or university. They may further feel alienation due to a prevailing cultural narrative that repeats the meritocratic mantra that diligent work, perseverance, and demonstrated excellence in performed tasks as a professional is a clear path to recognition and security. It can prove challenging and thus alienating for long-serving CAS to reconcile their strong efforts with a lack of advancement; as many CAS have opted for a longer educational apprenticeship during peak earning years, and possibly a long probationary period of performing instructional duties, lack of upward mobility into more secure academic positions can make the prospect of ever attaining them illusory and Sisyphean.

Assuming consistent high performance, at what defined point should a contingent and thus probationary member of the faculty be considered "good enough" for being granted a secure position? As this is not precisely defined, although the goal is fairly clear, the means by which to attain it remain ambiguous.

Instead, what CAS face is a form of perpetual entry-level position with no clear indicators for progression or promotion beyond, at some institutions, a modest salary grid based on accumulating seniority points based on experience. Long-serving CAS are also perpetually eligible to apply for tenure-track positions, yet may find themselves equally perpetually declined. This precipitates a kind of arresting function that further alienates the CAS through an act of deferred career gratification and retains the status quo of labour entrenchment with only the illusion of real progression and mobility. And, instead of upward mobility, the transformative aspect of modern labour sees ever more lateral mobility that is effectively segmented and short-term in nature. The "meaningful striving" that characterizes the activity of the non-alienated worker is not technically denied the CAS. Instead, where the objective of entering the secure professoriate resides is in an enclosure of *ideal potentiality*: the desired position and its privileges is out *there*, somewhere, and doing "the right things" despite the chronic adversity and challenges CAS face will somehow secure this through the usual adherence to the shibboleths of determination, discipline, and diligence. However, in reality, for many CAS it is a receding horizon if not a complete mirage. Unless clear provisions for transitioning CAS to more secure positions becomes institutionalized practice, selective interpretations of the economic situation will continue to dictate the alleged necessity of contingency hiring.

Following from a Post-Marxist standpoint, alienation is the result of a social relation, governed in part by both class and power structures. Alienation becomes a properly social *problem*. The social problem of alienation in the continued industrialization and proletarianization of education consigns the contract worker to a position of detachability. Furthermore, and perhaps more troubling, given that several contract academics possess the proper credentials on par with their tenured colleagues, their marginalization in teaching-only duties at a rate not commensurate with equity represents a squandering of potential resources, skills, and talents among this constituency. From the Marxist standpoint, the contract academic is alienated from the product of his or her labour (in this case, the educational "product"), and is unlike-

ly to have any control or say on the very processes involved in how they carry out their labour, when the labour is to take place (course scheduling), and in some cases the very tools they employ are dictated from above. The classrooms and the in-class technologies represent the physical tools that the contract academic does not own, and the more abstract tools such as curriculum (in some cases the course content itself), teaching materials, and so forth may also not technically belong to the contract academic. Moreover, the contract academic's labour functions as a benefit to budgetary constraints while still delivering much-needed courses that add to the revenue stream, and these savings assist in maintaining a department's commitment to its existing full-time faculty salary and benefits, if not also freeing up full-time faculty from teaching in order to pursue their research or the additional burdens of administrative work.

The contract academic is also thrust into alienating competition with others at their rank. Competition for these lower-waged and short-term positions can be quite fierce. This separation, alloyed with desperation to secure even short-term employment, can prove challenging in building solidarity.

Since any change in the mode and ownership of production must, in Marxist terms, precipitate a change in the social division of labour and the relationship between the worker and the product, the increasing "McDonaldization" of university education cannot do anything other than follow its economic course of alienating academic labour by treating it as a commodity. When decisions to shift the bulk of lecturing duties to contract academics takes place, and although this may be euphemistically packaged as a kind of probationary or apprenticeship method for accumulating experience, this is done according to the abstract quality of money; i.e., it is the budgetary situation that dictates the preferential reliance on precarious academic labour to answer contingencies. When the euphemisms of accumulated experience do not apply in cases when the contract academic has put in several years of lecturing duties, the rhetoric changes to characterize the CAS as somehow failing to distinguish themselves.

It should be noted that CAS labour differs from simple Marxist reification insofar as the performed function is not always repetitive as one might expect on an assembly line: a lecturer may have the autonomy to deliver a course in innovative ways. The problem is that such performative and/or content innovations remain invisible in most cases to all but the students. Quantitative performance metrics, such as student-supplied course evaluations, are collected by the employer and take the place of peer evaluation. The employer, deans, or hiring committee may intervene if the evaluations are low by simply not renewing the CAS worker. Strong student course evaluations are a necessary but not sufficient condition for future employment. If there are no meaningful mechanisms in place to recognize distinction in teaching, the CAS are effectively dehumanized. The analogy might be between a functioning machine and a CAS worker who maintains consistently strong teaching evaluations: notice is only paid when there is a drop in functionality.

Between the Church and the Factory

Reconciling two opposing views of the university and the context in which academics inhabit, proves challenging. On the one hand, the more classical model of universities is closer to that of a church with its ecclesiastical divisions of rank, whereby its academic labour force follows their "calling" in pursuing a life of teaching and research. On the other hand, built out of various pressures of the Post-Fordist economy, the university runs like a factory insofar as academic labour power is leveraged to one of the university's most essential products of delivering teaching services to its many "customers." In the factory context, contract academic labour is in many respects akin to Castells' idea of "reprogrammable" labour insofar as this fragmented and mobile reserve army can be placed and replaced at will.

The welter of public opinion will continue to traffic in mythologies. Whenever the issue of university funding emerges in the public print, there is an overwhelming assumption that is based on the absolute claim of all faculty making large salaries for little work. As much as this is insulting to hard-working tenured

and tenure-track faculty who continue to be saddled with more administrative duties which erode their mission to teach and research, this also obfuscates the reality in the "trenches" of undergraduate teaching especially when nearly half the courses are taught by itinerant professionals with no security, inadequate compensation, lack of access to benefits, and no clear ladder mechanisms for career mobility. And, without reliable data on hand to make the case that contract faculty are being exploited by a university-as-corporation, there is little press coverage and thus little sympathy from the general public. Moreover, when administrations do not factor the considerations of its precarious and proletarianized academic labour class, this sets continuing precedent to conceal the concerns of this constituency from public view.

When a society is geared toward the belief that the only pursuits of value are those that are indexed on economic growth and development (narrowly construed), then the mission of academia itself is imperiled, dismissed as either a frivolous luxury or tacking to the current trend of broader public accountability in euphemistic language on the order of "innovation" and so forth that are generally indexed on transforming universities into job-preparation institutions. Aggrandized entitlement with respect to the turn in pandering to taxpayers as victims of "wasteful practices" can thus be appealed to by populist politicians eager to locate scapegoats and employ fear-mongering tactics that only distract from actual wasteful practices in the form of administrative bonuses. Anti-intellectualism, resistance to cultural and community empowerment practices, and the marketization of education as having value only according to extrinsic factors, all contribute to the policy initiatives of the day. The real losers in this scheme are the contract faculty, but so too are the tenured faculty who will be put upon by central administration by degrees to shift towards a vocational model for education that will no longer honour knowledge for knowledge's sake, nor grant value to intellectual and cultural pursuits with more affective and thus less tangible economic benefits. However, in a political climate that falsely dichotomizes academic freedom against economic concerns, academic freedom is denigrated as anti-freedom, this

freedom sanctified by a self-actualizing belief in a transcendent notion of economy and market logics.

Stratification and academic underclass

The massive restructuration of higher education institutions also functions in terms of restructuring the very relations within those institutions, employing an endocolonization of neoliberal rhetoric and policy. The spectacularity of power has its engine in the images that are produced that represent the goals and values of the institution itself, adapted in part to the perceived demands of the public and those who create public policy. In Debordian terms, we know that images dominate social relations, and so the nested image of the CAS as social relation preconditions their identity as a group. There is, for many CAS, the haunting image of a previous arrangement – the romantic illusions associated with meritocratic scholarship in being treated with respect and fairness, being rewarded for good work, and forms of recognition that may lead to career advancement – is at odds with the new image whereby commitment of CAS to the institution is unilateral yet expected; that is, commitment by any and all means through rigorous exertion and voluntary work is presented as the pathway to advancement, but there is rarely any reciprocity. Moving in one direction, emerging from the labour of CAS is a modified version of a gift economy, but in the opposite direction it is purely the instruments of neoliberal capitalism that dictate the labour relations.

Solutions

The nature of the problem of contingent academic workers as a function of alienation and commodification of labour is easily answered from a Marxist perspective: resolve the core sources of alienation, reject reifying influences and structures, and reverse the atomization of the contingent academic working class that alienates them from one another so as to seize the collective opportunity for re-humanization of their labour. Or, as Gullì's solution to exploitation as continuing practice would be to simply

eliminate the corporatization of the university.[28] Such structural overhauls may be too imposingly large to tackle individually, and would take a concerted, collective effort with a clear array of viable strategies and tactics.

Inasmuch as some university administrators may point to the negatives of tenure as protecting complacent workers who have a job for life, there is much to be said about employers committing to their employees in a fair and reasonable way in the spirit of reciprocity. An enfranchised faculty to whom the employer shows reasonable commitment will be more likely to commit in turn by good performance and loyalty. The *bellum omnium contra omnes* that adheres to promoting arch-individualism also carries the secondary effect of mistrust and fear that separates and alienates all academic workers. Moreover, initiatives such as Canadian Association of University Teachers' push for pro-rated pay for contract faculty (thus honouring the principle of equal pay for equal work) and Fair Employment Week are indicative that there are preliminary solutions at hand to raise awareness about the chronic issue of alienated and precarious academic labour. However, the obstacle is the disappointing record of university administrations in their failure to adopt these principles or in showing a collaborative willingness to address an issue that is arguably eroding the quality of educational institutions. A growing faculty complement of contract workers may, in fact, be a morale sink. At present, the University of Victoria currently has the best policies regarding labour equity and compensation for its CAS, yet it still falls just short of a more equitable system of treatment.

University administrations will be quick to point out the economic challenges and pressures in maintaining high quality education during a time of decreasing funds and expanding enrollments. It is under these conditions that they will seek cost-containment or cost-cutting strategies to reign in budgets, and the most convenient and most vulnerable target would be non-tenured and non-tenure track faculty. However, it can be argued that educa-

[28] Gullì, 2009.

tional quality will be undermined by the continued practice of relying too heavily on CAS. Despite how neoliberalization has opened the way for universities to emulate private sector methods in its employment and retention practices, it does so selectively. Whereas in the private sector there are generally clearly defined performance benchmarks for career progression, these are all but lacking for CAS in the university context. As some have commented, the idea that CAS positions are entry-level would suggest a probationary period, not an indefinite purgatory.

A modest and practical proposal that might meet the needs of both administrations and CAS would be a similar practice found in the private sector: a clearly marked career progression whereby CAS can enjoy the security and benefits as appropriate to their career stage, and that continued employment need not take the form of having to reapply for the same or similar position every year or semester, but continuing for as long as they continue to perform to the professional standards expected of faculty. Such a mechanism already exists in several Canadian universities, taking the form of multi-year contracts that vary in length from one to five years. Other Canadian universities have also bargained for a clear program of accruing seniority points that can be the basis of transitioning to full-time employment. The danger of the latter policy, however well intentioned, is in ensuring that there are adequate provisions to "backstop" security so that these CAS are not priced out of the market just prior to obtaining better compensation and security.

Academics, as a whole, value their autonomy and may be said to resist regulatory pressures to conform to policies in which they have not been consulted. Moreover, not all faculty view the current issue of contract academic staff as a distinctly class-based issue. Policies at several universities are in place that govern the workplace culture to some extent in terms of discrimination, harassment, and respect. These policies may receive additional legal support from legislation on human and labour rights. However, the less tangible aspects of workplace culture cannot be institutionalized. While CAS might have leverage in participating in unionized activities that have a bearing on collective agreements

in order to fight for fair employment standards, no university-wide policy or collective agreement can legislate the intricacies of departmental culture whereby all faculty members would have to abide by a model of ideal, non-rank based equity, or in at least a more equitable distribution of power so that CAS would be made to feel welcome as stakeholders in academic decision-making at departmental, faculty, and university-wide levels.

Feelings of alienation and the evidence of precarious labour entrenchment can lead some CAS to adopt a more militant stance – especially when the perception of hopelessness in inaction is stronger than fear of reprisals. In this author's view, waging militant campaigns that target full-time and tenured faculty are not only flawed insofar as it risks generalizing the attitudes of full-time and tenured faculty as being of one mind on the matter, but it also may indicate a lack of full awareness of the intricacies of the power structure of which full-time and tenured faculty are but one component. Although there may be several cases where members of full-time and tenured faculty demonstrate class prejudice, developing a constructive way forward might better involve engagement rather than simply adopting tactics that attempt to reverse ill-feeling and alienation. To tar all tenured faculty with the same brush in terms of perceived attitudes is as unhelpful in constructing dialogue as is viewing CAS as a class of deficient underachievers or amateurs. Merely reversing perceived hostility and alienation will be highly unlikely to achieve meaningful gains for CAS. It is for this reason that both full-time and part-time faculty should seek collaboration and solidarity to collectively address their respective issues, seek compromise, and target the employer using the mechanisms of contract negotiations and bargaining.

Inasmuch as it may be considered essential for tenure-track and tenured faculty to be made aware of the labour conditions of CAS, and the composite challenges they face, equal accord must be paid to the established professoriate and the distinct challenges they also face in the continued neoliberalization of the institution. This not only shows reciprocity of concern, but also informs

CAS of the very challenges they also might face should they be granted a position among the tenure-track and tenured ranks.

What follows are some modest potential solutions to the ongoing issues of CAS labour conditions:

1) CONTINUITY: Faculty continuity is a cornerstone in developing and sustaining faculty community and a healthy workplace environment, and this continuity can be strengthened by means of a more proactive retention policy. Continuity also enables consistent course delivery and harmonization with departmental cohesion in curriculum. Predictable rather than ad hoc staffing can also reduce administrative burden (less job postings, smoother course time-tabling, and other similar efficiencies). Faculties should strive to retain its longer-serving CAS who show demonstrable consistency and performance in course delivery, and this should be concomitant with tangible recognition (security, compensation, etc.).

2) SECURITY: There must be action toward tenure-eligibility requirements extended to contract faculty, thus putting an end to termination via non-renewal practices. Depending on the strength or weakness of a university's collective agreement, termination or non-renewal empowers the employer not the employee, and arguably fosters curricular instabilities. If job security is considered a privilege and not a right, there must be policy that allows and not restricts contract faculty from *earning* credit for research and service. By keeping in place glass ceilings in preventing contract faculty from full enfranchisment in these pursuits, hiring practices would need to be adjusted to keep this in consideration. Some Canadian universities have negotiated for a process of automatic short-listing of longer serving CAS when full time positions are posted. This practice ought to be made universal, and the progression requirements clearly indicated.

3) COMPENSATION: To echo the call of James Turk of CAUT and several before him, equal work for equal pay necessitates a policy for pro rata. Although this may place additional strain on budgets, and may not smooth over all class-based divisions

within the university, it may achieve compensation parity and respect in the area of teaching. This proposal is liable to be contentious since it does seem to court a Marxist conception of the labour theory of value, and attempts to reverse the conditions whereby academic labour's commodity production increases (more students per class, more courses taught at part-time rates) proportionately impoverishes the academic labourer. If class sizes must increase in the short term, other mechanisms that compensate additional workload can be implemented. For example, at Queen's University and McMaster University, there are enrollment supplements for courses where number of students that exceed previously stipulated capacity is calculated. It would be hoped that such provisions would provide a disincentive to the employer in increasing class sizes and thus harming the educational quality through increases of student-to-faculty ratios.

4) RECOGNITION and REPRESENTATION: Departments must recognize the valued service of their contract faculty, and must do so by aiding in the enfranchisement and visibility of these precarious members. Access to internal research grants earmarked solely for contract faculty, proportional representation on all councils and program committees (where appropriate), voluntary mentorship programs linking tenured and contract faculty, showcasing or profiling high-achieving contract faculty in departmental promotional materials, and creating committees that deal specifically with part-time issues as part of a department's governance structure are a few ways by which any department can acknowledge its debt to a labour pool that is diligent and reliable. This may potentially foster community and promote dialogue on working conditions.

5) EVALUATION: Modifying existing evaluation procedures by valuing CAS on more than simply student evaluations to honour the institution's commitment to peer evaluation. Basing contract renewals solely on the basis of student evaluations may be considered a flawed instrument that potentially can erode educational quality due to the pressures to inflate grades, liable to "sour grapes" student feedback if grading is

rigorous, and is insufficient to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction overall.

6) PROMOTION: Where there is demonstrable teaching, research, and service contributions (whether or not these were part of the contract), these must be factored into any tenure review. All work must be "clock-able" and not a non-event. This is especially true for tenure-track faculty who may have soldiered through more than a decade of contract employment. If we are to abide by the apprenticeship model, then all experience in the field is valid and should be counted.

7) DIVERSIFICATION: Teaching-only positions are, at best, a temporary solution for a particular subgroup of CAS. It not only risks the creation of a two-tier faculty system, but also disregards the important role research plays in the teaching and research dynamic. Although teaching-only positions may alleviate acute enrollment pressures where there is limited full-time faculty, these can quickly become an instrument of labour entrenchment and should only be relied upon in times of acute emergency, with a clear plan from the outset to resolve the emergency instead of creating the conditions of dependence.

8) SOLIDARITY: Although it may seem a plausibly good idea for CAS to certify as an individual union or bargaining group, continued sustained attacks on unions as part of the federal government's, and some provincial governments', agenda might suggest that it is easier to wage an assault against smaller unions given the ability to employ divide and rule strategies. Although some CAS may perceive that, rightly or not, full-time faculty do not have any vested interest in protecting or improving CAS working conditions, involvement in a faculty association is key to representation. Assuming that CAS alone possess the leverage necessary to compel the employer to provide fairer working conditions on the basis of a large volume of courses taught by this constituency fails to realize that labour oversupply provides the employer with a vast source of new labour that can be cycled into existing positions.

Conclusion

The enduring plight of contract academics must be addressed, and any action cannot be deferred until there is an enforced policy for suitable data collection as this may never materialize. Although it is essential that data be collected, the complex and differentiated nature of the Canadian university sector presents several major obstacles that may not be overcome without a strong national strategy. The alternative to relying on data prior to action is to take note of the testimony of current CAS and develop home-grown solutions that may be circulated as possible resources for CAS at other institutions. Identifying the problems that are both global and local, political and economic, is the foundation for devising a workable strategy. Moreover, union participation that is inclusive and representative of all faculty rank interests not only promotes solidarity, but may work to diminish the more subjective feelings of alienation among a credentialed, professional, and arguably essential labour force. Emphasizing areas of common concern rather than fixating on divisive differences may help build solidarity, for ostensibly faculty members of all ranks are concerned with educational quality and the mission of the university as a place of free inquiry, discovery, and the transmission of knowledge, and not simply as a consumer-based credentialing body.

Ultimately, it cannot be stated that the current political and economic conditions have caused the "adjunct crisis," but that university administration responses are to blame. The preliminary solutions tendered in this piece are an attempt to reframe the discussion of academic labour that values the human inputs as primary over the economic concerns and austerity narrative promulgated by university administrations. Dispelling myths and misperceptions about CAS, and among them, may serve to be an initial step to one of the most significant obstacles to the improvement of working conditions: alienation.

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