12 Care-full reading

Towards a speculative practice of study in the university

Andrew Goodman

Can we want not to be subjects? Can we want not to be sovereign?… How can we want not to be ourselves?

Fred Moten[1]

The needs for care are infinite.

Joan Tronto[2]

Introduction

We sit, sometimes in a circle, more often not, some on chairs, some on the floor, some with their backs turned, avoiding the frontality of neurotypical learning (eyes to the front! sit up straight!). Someone reads a sentence, a paragraph or a footnote. We pause, ask questions, discuss, nut out ideas, run with the text and circle back. Some talk a lot, some not at all, but all give attention, both to the words and to the technics, which must be rethought continually: how do we read this? How can we think this? What thought is emerging in and through the group? It is all absurdly slow, as we steal time from the university.[3] We lose our way, misunderstand and forget. Sometimes we read half a page in a session, occasionally three. Often, we double back, doubting and rethinking. It becomes clear that to finish the chapter will take months, to finish the book might take years; it is impossibly far away, and the goal loses meaning. We are always in debt: to the text, the process and each other. At its best, lost in process and forever in the middle, we can no longer assess our learning (what did you learn today?) or progress (when will you finish?), and no longer own any thought that arises.

What is it to read together? How might this gathering, this attentive presence with a text, and this care for collective processes differ from the pedagogical models we usually encounter in the university? How might this luxuriating in an unhurried, unassessed and uncompleted activity decenter the 'scholarly, bureaucratic and corporate' 'political logics' of the institutional form?[4] Here, I want to examine the potential of techniques of 'artful' reading as a form of 'study': reading together without end in sight as

a *detournement* from the demands and arrangements the university places on all who are within its boundaries.[5] Reading together has the potential, I suggest, to reinsert forms of care centered less on the subject and their needs (as we might commonly find within neoliberal life), that instead 'reach out to something other than the self,'[6] and that offer less a 'freedom' (which is 'burdened with individuality'),[7] than the possibility of 'fly[ing] away into a movement that exceeds any one person's perspective.'[8]

The careless university

It is apparent that the university does not care for you. Yet it is also too simple an equation: the university *does* care for you as a consumer, as an assessor of yourself and your peers, as an administrator of your own teaching and learning, and as a standardised statistical indicator within an empty culture of excellence.[9] If it cares less than it used to about modelling you as a citizen of the state, it does care deeply about your completion/accreditation, and your satisfaction rating of the delivery of its product. It cares about your successful negotiation of its hurdle-based education, and it cares to outsource your learning and teaching to your private time and space, which is never again to be truly your own (a 'hectic' education).[10] The university, 'saturated' as it is by 'market rationality,'[11] requires your integration into systems and lexicons of procedural management. If the university *values* you at all, it is in the sense of valuing a metrics of efficacy, transparency and quantification: the university does not value what it cannot administrate, that which cannot be answered or completed, which is precisely the value of such fugitivity.

It may seem strange to state that the university in its present form does not value reading. Surely, one would think, it is precisely a place of reading, whether this impression is gained from cultural imaginings of dusty libraries crammed with books, or from personal experience of daunting reading lists and tutorial discussions that suggest that everyone else has conquered the seemingly insurmountable content.[12] However, as writer and activist Stefano Harney and Barbadian curator and arts activist Tonika Sealy Thompson have argued, all too often 'the classroom is a reading free zone,' loaded with expectations that students have 'done the reading' and are available to be judged individually on their performance.[13] Reading is then 'piecemeal' work apportioned out to private homes.[14] Such expectations to perform knowledge fall as much on the tutors as it does on students – tutors who are likely nowadays to be casualised labour 'teaching for food'[15] and therefore also studying on their own, unpaid time.

The 'outsourcing' of reading-as-labour might be counted amongst the many faults of the care-less university, replacing the institution as a place for the work of thinking-with the accounting of this thinking *that has already taken place, a priori*. In this contemporary iteration of the university that 'knows no wonder,' learning becomes a mode of production, a 'means, not a

source.'[16] The neoliberal university becomes a microcosm of the neoliberal state that reduces *care* to a perverted form of self-care-as-self-production that both enforces the individual as the unit of concern and capitalises on this subjectivity.[17]

Where then to turn? Not, as some do,[18] to nostalgia for a 'lost' university, which was always a strategic field of play for power.[19] While some might longingly recall the mid-20th century cold-war-funded education boon, as English scholar Bill Reading points out in his pivotal critique of the university, this inevitably collapsed as power dynamics shifted to stateless and borderless neoliberal capitalism.[20] Decolonial critiques that dig deeper into the history of the university remind us that the liberal university was always gendered, racialised and class based: a colonial system of exclusion and capture (including the capture of land[21]). Writing from within these structural 'ruins,' the genealogies uncovered by various authors provides a sobering reminder of the role such liberal institutions have played within governance and colonisation.[22] Today neoliberal universities have repositioned themselves as aspiring transnational corporations,[23] and the contract of culture building, Reading argues, has been largely replaced by administration as a total idea.[24] Politics is converted to economics and enterprise formations[25] in a university system that is non-ideological but bound tight *within* the overarching and essentially administrative and operational logic of capital.[26] This means that traditional leftwing approaches that focus on revitalising and re-radicalising content and teaching cohorts have effectively lost whatever meaning or efficacy they had ('there are no (leftist) heroes in bureaucracy'),[27] and the alt-right's attempts to wage a 'culture war' on the site of the university are mistaken in the belief that the university still has any serious investment in culture building. Universities' cultural values have been rephrased 'in economic rather than political terms.'[28]

There is therefore, I suggest, an urgent need both to question the lack of care and recognise what is devalued within these 'limitless' systems of learning-production and their metricisation.[29] In order to avoid fantasies of reanimation of the liberal university, I turn to Black scholar, poet and activist Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's concept of 'study,' and to my own experiences of various reading groups operating as speculative, impersonal and 'artful' adventures. Reading together, I argue, constitutes a potential bracketing out of a 'third' space and time[30] in order to experiment with acts of collective thinking-with that have no end or use-value: an 'incompleteness' that is radically transpersonal. In considering this dissident potential I begin with Harney and Moten's concept of study as a technics of care, a fugitive practice hidden in plain sight, invisible precisely because of its transpersonal and incalculable values.[31] Here care is reoriented towards a 'sociality': an activity devalued specifically because it precedes and exceeds the personal.[32]

Study as fugitive practice

To study without end, without completion, either personal or scholastic.[33] To study without credit, and yet to be in unpayable debt to the event, the collective, the emergent sociality. To be unprofessional, untimely, an-administrative and decentered, an un-believer, uncompleted and fugitive.[34] To be a criminal stealing time and space. With these aims Harney and Moten propose care for an undercommons, neither a space nor a class proper, certainly not a social space nor a care package for individuals, but a trans-subjective *sociality*, a radical *care for events*. Such an undercommons – a non-space-time for a mode of care both exceptional and everyday – is not a liberal, nostalgic or utopian project. It is resolutely a pragmatic one located in the complexity and precarity in which we always find ourselves, even as it attempts to eke out some relief in collective movement-thought.

This concept of study needs to be distinguished from 'studying' and/or 'research' within the education system: whether this is a series of piecemeal tasks and revisions oriented towards assessment, publication-oriented writing or so-called learning for its own sake. Firstly, it differentiates, in that study, in contrast to normative learning, is never done alone.[35] Secondly, autonomous study is as or more likely to take place before or after classes. Indeed study refuses the call's distinction between education and life in its unfolding.[36] Study in this sense is a practice of life lived in a speculative manner (like a 'workshop' or 'jam session'), with its own already-active modes of thinking.[37] Thirdly, there is a question of value or care: what is it that is valued in learning tasks and differentially valued in study? In the former, at its most altruistic, value is placed on the growth of the student's knowledge capacity, engagement and so on. In the latter, though these may be effects, value is focused impersonally in care for the event. Thus study exceeds pedagogical care, and its priority is not *what* is being studied, or how *effectively* are we studying, but always how can we continue to create study in excess of individual need, a question that must be readdressed in each instance.[38]

Amongst the elements that American political theorist Joan Tronto uses to build an ethics of 'care as a practice rather than a disposition,'[39] are three concerns – 'attentiveness,' 'responsibility,' and 'responsiveness,'[40] – that resonate with aspects of study. This is particularly true if we extend Tronto's powerful conception of care as necessarily interdependent, ongoing and singular[41] towards *events in and of themselves*.[42]

Firstly, to articulate attentiveness Tronto cites Simone Weil's argument that it requires an emptying of thought, in order to 'be available, empty and ready.'[43] It is, in other words, a suspension of goals and ambitions, and a willingness to address situated experience.[44] Likewise, to study together is to be in the moment/middle: it is neither reportage of work already done nor a focus on future.[45] To be in debt to study is never to finish – in finishing one gains credit and measurement, recognition, terminus and rehabilitation

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into the system. To continue studying, beyond or outside endpoints, is to circumvent the system that makes you learn what you should know, and not what interests you,[46] and that pulls you out of your conditions towards a projected future. While study might suspend individual goals, it is always done in the midst of lives, with their conditions, situations and arrangements. It folds these easily into itself (since it is without purpose) and does not require a suspension of living as the classroom can. Rather it *attends* to these and recognises their value.

Secondly, Tronto positions responsibility as different to 'obligation,' which for her consists of 'a set of formal rules or series of promises.'[47] Instead, she argues for a 'flexible notion of responsibility,' that is 'embedded in…practices.'[48] For Harney and Moten, study is similarly embedded in and emergent from practices of living that are always going on, collectively: in workplaces, lunchrooms, on porches and streets. Study can even occur in the classroom before the teaching calls students to order and 'proper' learning, obliging the students to abandon their own interests for the curriculum. In the case of study, responsibility is truly without obligation to either learn or participate; its base is necessarily one of refusal of the contract of credit, the responsibility is to refuse the call to order, whether internalised or imposed by others.

Thirdly, responsiveness emphasises the mutuality of care, a vulnerability challenging 'the notion that individuals are entirely autonomous and self-supporting.' In doing it so recognises the differentials: ways in which needs are all different and evolving.[49] Vulnerability coupled with attentiveness challenges the neoliberal emphasis on autonomy as it opens us to the specificity of needs and situations,[50] away from what Australian media theorist Andrew Murphie terms the 'closed world assemblages' of abstracted and 'scripted behaviours' that produce 'ongoing closure within events,'[51] and the 'permanent consensus' of the neoliberal rationale.[52] Vulnerability thus suggests incompleteness – one that might be generated or cultivated rather than patched over. We find just this cultivation in the mutual debt-as-socialisation of study (unlike credit with its *obligations*),[53] which 'makes us incomplete together, and partial towards each other, for each other,'[54] encouraging 'vulnerability, needing other people.'[55] Responsiveness and its cultivation of vulnerability situates care and study as ongoing, 'a concern of living' rather than as solutions.[56]

Through all this study is a *practice*, as Tronto insists care must be: thought in the moment and responsive to specificities. But this pragmatism is not grounded in orientating this moment towards a more productive one (so-called 'student centered' learning that starts from the position of the student in order to draw them towards the desired curriculum). Care as a practice rather than a disposition orientates it clearly towards the impersonal: it challenges the sentimentalisation and individualisation of care (and accompanying gendered and racialised connotations).[57] It also means that we care each and every time – all the time – rather than apportion or distribute

care according to judgment of need until it is completed or resolved. Care is therefore always present, always in question, as study always first addresses how to invent a sociality, and as reading together always first asks how can we read, how can we move ourselves? Answers to these questions are always fugitive; they cannot be prescribed if we wish to stay attentive and vulnerable to process.

Study does not attempt to remediate the university: it does not attack it front on and it does not need the university in order to occur. Studying in Harney and Moten's sense of the word is 'coming together on our terms, rather than theirs.'[58] In this sense it attunes to the ways that 'systems of power are embedded in everyday life,' including all aspects of university life, and it rearranges the social rather than attempting a 'total resistance.'[59] Study 'multiplies' and 'moves across';[60] it is its own subject of investigation. It is not a position nor a technique to be held and passed on, and in this sense, it is both caring *and* fugitive.

Art-full reading without end

What happens when we read to each other? Perhaps, as Harney speculates, it becomes less a situation 'where everyone dissolves into the student, but where people sort of take turns doing things for each other and where you allow yourself to be possessed by others as they do something.'[61] And, we

Figure 12.1 Andrew Goodman*, Radical Reading Room*, 2019, Phyllis Palmer Gallery, La Trobe University, Bendigo, gifted and lent books, photocopies and comics, PDFs, furniture, computer, "Ground Provisions" printout. Photograph: Jessie Boylan.

are possessed and dispossessed as much by the movement of the text.[62] In this it might be closer to a gifting, affirmative in its cycling of debt without end, than merely the construction of an alternative classroom. As much as a reading group gives attention to the text, its attention is always on the question of what it is to read; it is itself 'an occasion for study.'[63] It needs to remain in this mode of problematisation of its own tenuous existence in order to avoid the ossification of a series of tacitly agreed upon short-cut abstractions of its modes of studying (a pedagogy), which, although expedient, nullifies the dissident enquiry into more-than-educational value that is at its core.[64] Each session starts again, not in habit, but with attentive care for process – how can we read-think-move today?

In my experience, reading collectively is perhaps the most important technique for fostering care in a reading group, situating the event resolutely in the moment. Words, read before, take on new meaning through tentative group thought. Knowledge we have brought opens up to question again in the sounding of the text – we craft thought together. To require reading beforehand demands not only more privatised work from participants, it also risks both the mere reproduction of knowledge and a return to a so-called criticality that is much more about positioning and normative valuation (one's own relative intellectual worth versus the worth of other thinkers) than it is about an inquiry into the potential movement of a concept. Such empty criticality functions are yet another mode of surveillance of both intellectual territories and academic performance.[65] Instead, what we might hope to bring forth is affirmation, which is not the same as post-modern pluralism, nor acceptance of the authority of the text, but is grounded in an immanent ethics – again, Tronto's 'care' as a 'concern for living.'[66] Reading together, for its own sake and pleasure, situates it as 'an activity in itself, not merely a support of something else,'[67] somewhere else or sometime else.

The first philosophy-reading groups I attended required pre-reading, and I experienced (self-imposed) pressure to have understood the text and found interesting passages, and to have something to say. I found it hard to stay in the moment with thought emerging, as I was always concerned with what might happen, what had happened, and with how to act and react. Mostly I remained silent. Although I still learnt a lot about philosophy, I found I was processing the ideas later on rather than forming them with others. In contrast, when reading every word aloud, I do often find myself in the midst of collective thinking that seems to go beyond myself and surprises me.[68] In such moments I am more present, thinking less about what should be said, or what I have already thought. As I have learnt to sit more with the discomfort of thought's impersonal movement, I have become more able to contribute, more willing to wrestle with concepts I cannot understand, and have experienced ideas in-forming that seem generated by and only possible in the event of the group coming together. It is in these moments of feeling thought-in-the-making when I think that I have finally begun to understand and experience 'study.'[69]

Two separate instances that come to mind are in groups reading impenetrable texts by Guattari and Ruyer.[70] In both cases the extreme difficulty of the text fostered a speculative responsiveness that could not but be tentative. The process itself became vulnerable rather than the individuals' lack of mastery (which was a given), and the leveling effect of this forced the group as a whole to creatively, as Manning says of such collective precarity, do the challenging 'work of crafting conditions of a minor sociality.'[71] Here the vulnerability experienced is no longer an individual one (did I get that right? Am I smart enough?), but a vulnerability or responsiveness to thought moving outside itself transductively: those fragile moments where the next connective thought or word is unknown or unknowable, and yet we are still able to keep moving. The risk is now less to ego, but more one orientated to the precarious dynamics of coming together, a deep dependence tended to collectively.[72] Responsibility that one might feel as a teacher (to make the group 'work' or 'cohere') turns to care for and *responsiveness* to the work of the text.

This care-as-practice is transpersonal, or transductive, of the personal into an emergent collectivity through practice. If transductive processes intersect and knot together 'at the intersection of diverse realities,' they then allow these differences to sit in emergent and provisional formation,[73] activating a 'group subjectivity' that orientates towards 'shapings yet to be invented.'[74] This emergent transindividuality is 'neither interior or exterior to a body' but an activation of potentials moving beyond such limits out of which a specific and collective train of thought might emerge. Thus, the transpersonal is not the accumulation of individuals' potential as per the social, but the individuation of unrealised remainders of potential beyond the individual's genesis.[75]

In a reading group on William James,[76] for example, we became mired for several sessions in trying to grasp the concept of the 'terminus.' At some point we managed to move beyond individual attempts to explain the term and translate James' example, and began to build a thesis from the ground up (almost as a 'fabulation'), in which our thoughts and ideas began to fold or nest together such that at no point could I pinpoint who said or thought what (and indeed this became irrelevant). There was a 'Eureka!' moment, in which a lightbulb seemed to go on (but collectively over the whole group), and we came to a provisional understanding of the terminus. It is hard, writing now as an individual, to exactly grasp the event, or indeed to recall our explanation – which I have since attempted and failed to write down – though the feeling of thought emerging in this manner remains as surprising as it was in the moment. I now think that it required that particular confluence of the situation for the thinking to occur, and that as such it remains steadfastly beyond my individual reach. It was not that we moved together as individuals towards understanding, but that we were activated by some remaindered collective potential sparked by the text. If the concept has gone with the event, what it did cement in that particular group was a belief in

the ability to attune to how and what moved in and through the text beyond ourselves,[77] activated through the shared vulnerability of transpersonal thinking-with.

Conclusion

In all this 'study' I find an energetic 'sociality.' That is, not a 'social life' or necessarily personal friendship,[78] but a time and space in which, as Harney and Thompson state, 'we begin to lose our individual status as producers and feel our common materials and our common and differentiated materiality.'[79] In reading together we do not complete each other, or each other's thoughts, but dwell in a state of uncompleteness (we 'uncomplete' each other as Moten and Harney say),[80] opening up again to the movement of impersonal thought: a precarity shared. Uncompleteness is an act or state-in-motion of fugitivity: a 'being in motion,' refusal or dispossession that allows ongoing experimentation with what it is to come into the world again, collectively.[81] Of course neither care nor study are limited to reading. Their emergent sociality can also be found in 'dancing together, driving together, watching movies together, building and culturating together – and making together.'[82] What does the text bring? Perhaps an 'insistence' that can remain open, since it is impersonal, without loyalty and without subjectivity.

The reading group is not exactly 'time for ourselves,' since our selves are exactly what is metricised as all time becomes work-time ('total education'). Rather it is time away from our busy selves, a 'partial education'[83] away from lives that are 'individually wrapped.'[84] The reading group ekes out a stolen space-time within the university (an 'internal outside')[85], within over-worked lives and individual worries. We come together to 'worry' some-thing else: how to think together, how to be together not as individuals but pulled into the middle of thought-in-motion, how to give attention. It is stolen space, stolen time, time 'for yourself' not to be yourself. It might be moments of 'radical duplicity' (since 'there is no individualised path to rise above complicity'),[86] through which we do not seek to extract ourselves from the university's reach, but instead, where, as 'unseen accomplices', we conspire 'without a plot.'[87]

Notes

1 Fred Moten, in Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, "The University: Last Words," YouTube. Online video. FUC 021, 2020.
2 Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethics of Care* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 137.
3 Stefano Harney, and Fred Moten. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (New York: Minor Compositions, 2013), 26.
4 Tai Peseta, Fyffe, Jeanette, and Fiona Salisbury. "Interrogating the 'Idea of the University' through the Pleasures of Reading Together." In *Resisting Neoliberal-ism in Higher Education*, edited by Catherine Manathunga and Dorothy Bottrell

(Palgrave McMillan, 2019), 202. On the pleasures of slow scholarship, see also Emilie Dionne, "Slowing Down with Non-Human Matter: The Contribution of Feminist New Materialism to Slow Scholarship." In *Posthuman and Political Care Ethics for Reconfiguring Higher Education Pedagogies*, eds. Vivienne Bozalek, Michalinos Zembylas and Joan C. Tronto (New York: Routledge, 2021), 91–106.

5 On the arrangements of power and their rethinking, see Lori Lobenstine, Kenneth Bailey, and Ayako Maruyama. *Ideas Arrangement Effects: Systems Design and Social Justice*, (Brooklyn: Minor Compositions, 2020), 48, 145. On reading as a refuge, see Sandy Grande, *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought* (Oxford: Bowman & Littlefield, 2004), 122–4. On artfulness, see Erin Manning, *For a Pragmatics of the Useless* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 44–5.

6 Joan C. Tronto, *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethics of Care* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 102.

7 Saidiya Hartman in Erin Manning, "In the Thick of It." (2020): *Mulitudes* 2020/3, 174.

8 Manning, Ibid., 2.

9 Bill Readings. *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 2; Jeffrey J. Williams, "Innovation for What? The Politics of Inequality in Higher Education," *Dissent* Winter 2016, 2.

10 Stefano Harney, in Michael Schapira, Jesse Montgomery, and Stefano Harney, "Stefano Harney Part 2," *Full Stop Quarterly*, no. 5 (2017): 7.

11 Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: Zone Books, 2015), 181.

12 Erin Manning, "Keyword-University," In *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, Third Edition. Eds Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler (New York University Press, 2020), 1–5. As Horton notes, such feelings of failure are inequitably apportioned. John Horton, "Failure Failure Failure Failure Failure Failure: Six Types of Failure within the Neoliberal University," *Emotion, Space and Society* 35 (2020): 3.

13 Stefano Harney and Tonika Sealy Thompson. "Ground Provisions." *Afterall: A Journal of Art Context and Enquiry* 45 (2018): 121. See also Peseta et al., 203–4, 210–11.

14 Harney and Thompson, 121; Michael Taussig, *The Corn Wolf* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2015), 5–6; Peseta et al., 203–4.

15 Harney, and Moten, *The Undercommons*, 27.

16 Taussig, 5; Peseta et al. 202–3.

17 Brian Massumi, *99 Theses on the Revaluation of Value* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 59, 79; Carstens, 80; Carenotes Collective. *For Health Autonomy: Horizons of Care Beyond Austerity, Reflections from Greece* (Brooklyn: Common Notions, 2020), 7.

18 See, for example, Sara Ahmed, who despite her pertinent critique of power in the university upholds a romanticised belief in the possibility of transforming 'the organization that employs us'. "Resignation Is a Feminist Issue," In *Feministkilljoys*, 2016: 1.

19 Harney, and Moten, *The Undercommons*, 32; la paperson, 103–5.

20 Readings, 125.

21 la paperson, 84–5.

22 Grande; la paperson; Eli Meyerhoff, *Beyond Education: Radical Studying for Another World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019); Danny Butt, *Artistic Research in the Future Academy* (Bristol: Intellect, 2017). See also Harney, and Moten, *The Undercommons,* 71.

23 As Readings charts, the nation-state itself has (somewhat) lost its grip on foundational power and has been 'swallowed up' by borderless and transnational businesses. 44.

24 Readings 152–3; Brown, 190–198.

25 Brown, 17, 22. Market reasoning therefore becomes the logics of the state. Ibid., 58.

26 Readings, 38–41.

27 Ibid., 45

28 Ibid., 144, 168. As Reading points out, 'the university as an institution can deal with all kinds of knowledges, even oppositional ones, so as to make them circulate to the benefit of the system as a whole." Ibid., 163.

29 Peseta et al., 200.

30 la paperson, 106. The third world university is, for la paperson, both made of the 'scraps of the 1st [neoliberal] and 2nd [liberal] universities', and 'already exists' as an assemblage within these sites. 106, 122. See also Trento 6–7.

31 Massumi, 79–80.

32 Fred Moten, "Black Topological Existence," 2–3; Erin Manning, "Fugitively, Approximately." *Fibreculture Journal* 33 (2019), 14; Erin Manning, "In the Thick of It," 2.

33 Harney and Moten, *The Undercommons*, 67.

34 Harney, Stefano, Fred Moten, Yollotl Gomez Alvarado, Juan Pablo Anaya, Luciano Concheiro, Cristina Rivera Garza, and Aline Hernandez. "Converscion Los Abajocomunes: Stefano Harney and Fred Moten in "Conversation on the Occasion of the Spanish Translation of the Undercommons" *The New Inquiry* (September 5, 2018): unpaginated,

35 Which is not to say that it always literally requires the presence of other bodies. Rather, the conceptual personas activate thought's immanent formation and *sociality* to go beyond the personal ('carried by a crowd'), beyond what is known and stretching into the future as what might be, what is just coming into being. Erin Manning, *For a Pragmatics of the Useless*, 10–11.

36 Jack Halberstam, in Harney, and Moten. *The Undercommons,* 16; Moten, *The Undercommons*, 132. This is differentiable from the homogenised blurring of work and life that neoliberalism insists on, in the fact that it is unproductive and unprofessional (not, in other words, the professionalisation of our private time), and in that it refuses centering and shaping of normative education to the general good. On autonomous care, see Carenotes Collective, 7–10.

37 Harney and Moten. *The Undercommons*, 110–11.

38 Ibid., 109.

39 Tronto, 118.

40 Tronto, 127–33. Here I avoid her term 'competence,' with its potential association, in academic circles at least, of professionalism and administration. See Harney and Moten. *The Undercommons*, 34–8.

41 Tronto, 162, 104, 138–9.

42 Thus unlike the new materialist extensions of Tronto's work which authors such as Carstens have taken, and which are still about *things*, if resolutely non-anthropocentric in their remit, I would suggest that a more radical ethics or care is for events. (See Carstens, "An Ethics of Immanence," and the edited book as a whole: *Posthuman and Political Care Ethics for Reconfiguring Higher Education Pedagogies* edited by Vivienne Bozalek, Michalinos Zembylas and Joan C. Tronto, (New York: Routledge, 2020.) Which is not to say that my proposition of care for events is opposed to a new materialist position, rather that it seeks to go one step further, placing emphasis on the coming into being rather than the material expressions of such processes.

43 Simone Weil, cited Tronto, 128.

44 Tronto, 128. As Tronto points out, this needs to be distinguished from self-sacrifice with its gendered and class-based histories. Ibid., 131.
45 Harney and Thompson. "Ground Provisions," 124.
46 Harney and Moten. *The Undercommons*, 62
47 Tronto, 131. See also Readings, 165. Tronto's explanation of responsibility is centered on the responsible individual, or the social group as a set of responsible individuals, however I do not think it is antithetical to her ideas to extend it beyond this. See Émilie Dionne, "Slowing Down with Non-Human Matter: The Contribution of Feminist New Materialism to Slow Scholarship," in *Posthuman and Political Care,* 92; Elizabeth Grosz, *The Incorporeal: Ontology, Ethics, and the Limits of Materialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 1; and Cousens, (80–82).
48 Tronto, 131–3.
49 Ibid., 134–6.
50 Ibid.
51 Andrew Murphie, "Technics Lifeless and Technics Alive: Activity Without and With Content," in Jonas Fritsch, Jette Kofoed and Bodil Marie Stavning Thomsen (eds.) *Affects, Interfaces, Events* (Millersville: Imbricate! Press, 2021), 29–30.
52 Foucault, cited in Brown, 69.
53 Harney, and Moten. *The Undercommons*, 61
54 Harney and Thompson, 122.
55 Michael Schapira, Jesse Montgomery and Stefano Harney, "Stefano Harney Part 2," *Full Stop Quarterly*, no. 5 (2017): 6.
56 Tronto, 104.
57 Tronto, 118–9.
58 Harney and Thompson, "Ground Provisions," 122.
59 Lori Lobenstine, Kenneth Bailey, and Ayako Maruyama. *Ideas Arrangement Effects: Systems Design and Social Justice* (Brooklyn: Minor Compositions, 2020), 9.
60 Manning, "Keyword-University," 3.
61 Harney and Moten. *The Undercommons* 109.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 See Meyerhoff, 202.
65 Reading groups that fall back into this mode of operation are, I would argue, merely an extension of our common experiences at conferences and in peer review processes, where as experts we present already digested knowledge and endure the theatre of one-upmanship (and here I leave 'man' in the term intentionally), whereby peers attempt to demonstrate their superior understanding through statements that masquerade as questions, or by diverting the discussion into their own area of expertise. As such, critique and the critic always recognise and are always recognised by the university, and comfortably accommodated within its walls (see Harney, and Moten. *The Undercommons*, 31; Harney and Thompson, 124).
66 Tronto, 104.
67 Harney and Thompson, "Ground Provisions," 124.
68 Amongst the many such reading experiments I have participated in, I first encountered slow reading of every word of the text in the *Ecofeminist Fridays* reading group, then coordinated by Hayley Singer.
69 Harney and Thompson, 124.
70 Felix Guattari's *Schitzoanalytic Cartographies*, translated by Andrew Goffey (London: Bloomsbury, 1989); and Raymond Ruyer's *Neofinalism*, translated by Alyosha Edlebi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).
71 Manning, *Pragmatics*, 14.

72 Manning, "Fugitively, Approximately," 18.
73 Adrian MacKenzie, *Transductions: Bodies and Machines at Speed* (London: Continuum, 2002), 18, 50.
74 Manning, *Pragmantics*, 189.
75 Gilbert Simondon, *Individuation in Light of Notions of Form and Information*, translated by Taylor Adkins, Vol. 1. 2 vols. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 340.
76 This reading of James' *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (Memphis, Tennessee: Longmans, Green and Co., 2010) was conducted at La Trobe University, Bendigo in 2019–20.
77 Manning, *Pragmatics*, 306.
78 Manning, "In the Thick of It." 174.
79 Harney and Thompson 122; Manning, "In the Thick of It," 174.
80 Harney and Moten, et al. "Converscion," 13; Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, The University: Last Words. Youtube. FUC 021, 2020.
81 Halberstam, in Harney and Moten. *The Undercommons,* 18.
82 Harney and Thompson, 125; Harney and Moten. *The Undercommons,* 110.
83 Stefano Harney, "Stefano Harney Part 2," 7.
84 Bailey, Kenneth, and Lori Lobenstine. "Social Justice in a Time of Social Distancing." In *The Design Studio for Social Intervention*. ds4si, 1.
85 Harney and Moten. *The Undercommons*, 31.
86 Moten, in Harney and Moten, "The University: Last Words." See also Massumi on creative duplicity, 87–8.
87 Harney, in Harney and Moten, "The University: Last Words."

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