Common language: *Academics Against Networking* and the poetics of precarity
Dr Sarah Bernstein and Dr Patricia Malone
University of Edinburgh

In her introduction to Issue #1 of the zine *Academics Against Networking*, Nell Osborne writes that the project 'was conceived as a creative and critical response to the ongoing institutionalisation of Networking Culture within academia; as a site of resistance to the banal perversion of language & knowledge that it enforces' (3). *Academics Against Networking* ran for two issues in 2019-2020; it was put together by Osborne and Hilary White, then U.K.-based PhD researchers working on experimental writing by women, and circulated for the cost of postage. The issues comprise lyric essays, poetry, prose, Tweets, images and combinations thereof that respond in some way to the provocation of the title. The contributions take a wide variety of formal approaches, but they share much in common: each writes against networking's instrumentalization of grammar, against its impoverished modes of thought, and against the debased sense of subjectivity and community the logic of such a grammar engenders. The question underpinning the innovative writing in these issues asks, as Osborne puts it, 'What are the costs of narrating oneself as an academic commodity with these depleted words?'

In this essay, we read the vital contributions in *Academics Against Networking* (*AAN*) as articulating a poetics *against and in spite of* the market logics of the contemporary academy. In its form, and in its methods of production and circulation, the zine models a poetics and a praxis geared instead towards 'the commons', which we define as what is shared: space, resources, knowledges. Our foundational suggestion here, then, is that the poetics of precarity, which we trace back specifically through the neoliberalisation of the academy, has a much longer history insofar as poetic language has always expressed meaning in excess of the law, whether that language be in poetry or prose. What we want to explore here is the ways in which this excess does or might constitute a seizing of the means of

production inasmuch as we recognize that language itself is a means of producing reality. What we want to suggest, then, is that the poetics of precarity as modelled by *AAN* constitutes a new grounds for the perception and creation of realities. In this account, we address this as against the 'business language' of the neoliberal academy, but in a wider sense we draw upon theorists such as bell hooks and Audre Lorde to acknowledge the necessity of removing hierarchies (whilst still recognising expertise) and in treating language seriously as a perceptual tool.

3 chords and a guitar

AAN is rooted in a punk-feminist DIY ('Do-It-Yourself') tradition and, like riot grrrl before it, operates according to an ethos and an aesthetic of spontaneity, community, and autodidacticism. Punk, as Malone has written elsewhere, seeks to 'disrupt or counter dominant capitalist networks of exchange and in doing so disrupt the ideology of value'. As such, we find it more useful to consider 'punk' as a processual term or mode of practice (praxis) and so to see it as a means of refusing that 'crisis of confidence in the future' Lee Konstantinou outlines as the definitive feature of the 1970s punk movement, which is markedly different in character and ambition to that future-building punk mode that emerged in the 1980s and after, particularly although not only in the USA (Konstantinou, 106). Inspiration for riot grrrl praxis is often attributed to Kathy Acker, who famously told the young Kathleen Hanna that she should start a band rather than continuing as a writer or practitioner of spoken word; the reason given was that musicians enjoy a greater sense of community (see, e.g., Konstantinou, Malone). As community is central to the poetics of precarity we outline in this chapter, it is worth taking a moment to consider the full meaning of Acker's suggestion here.

Acker may have employed a radical poststructuralist practice (and an 'amateur' aesthetic that many have struggled to reconcile with her deeply theoretical engagement with

literary criticism) but she came to it by way of modernism and the myth of tradition and her own dis/placement within it. Acker wrote out of tradition and wrote herself into it by so doing; she wrote to 'present the human heart naked so that our world, for a second, explodes into flames. The human heart is not only the individual heart: the American literary tradition of Thoreau, Emerson, even Miller, presents the individual and communal heart as a unity. Any appearance of the individual heart is a political occurrence' (Acker, 31). Thus Konstantinou's account of Acker – his suggestion that the author wanted 'reception without understanding, production and circulation without consumption' (139), and that this exemplifies 'punk' modalities – requires some adjustment. Acker did not write to be read; she wrote to be writing. It is those writers she names above (and Ballard, Poe, Burroughs, de Sade, anyone who writes despicable books) amongst whom Acker sought to circulate, with whom she sought to commune. Acker's texts quite simply do not care about their readers or rather, do not imagine the reader as the Other of the text. When Acker calls writing a 'scam' she means that the commodity form of the book is a scam, or that the transformation of the act of writing into a saleable object (and the 'professionalisation' of authorship that goes with this) is a scam, whereby both writer and reader are conned.

Thus the 'amateur' aesthetic of Acker's textual assemblages is quite different to those literary forms of riot grrrl, most notably the zine form which draws closely and self-consciously on epistolary and diaristic forms (see Malone; Spiers). The zine is a communicative form designed to create community in its circulation, which stands in stark opposition to those commodity forms that circulate to create 'value' under the logic of capital.[1] Despite the association between riot grrrl and the wider Olympia music scene, where faux-naïf stylings of K Records founder attracted no small amount of scepticism (see Michael

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[1] This is not to say that certain forms of social capital did not inflect the circulation of these objects; Mimi thi Nguyen (2012) addresses the 'commodification of craziness' at length, as well as offering numerous other criticisms of the failures of intersectional practice within the '90s riot grrrl scene.

Azerrad, 2001), riot grrrl was a very different project. Within this project or process a spontaneous and self-generating community was created and sustained through the circulation of cultural materials that were autobiographical without being personal, as Lauren Berlant put it in her preface to *The Female Complaint* (2008, vii). Where Berlant posited 'women's texts' as 'gendering machines' (35) the specific basis of the riot grrrl project reformulates such understanding. Riot grrrl zines sought to build a community based in large part of the shared experience of gender-based violence and oppression, and here the debt to the second-wave feminist model of consciousness-raising is apparent. Even the term 'grrrl' offers a mode of thinking the female without assuming limiting definitions of 'womanhood,' although the aesthetic of riot grrrl zines was often based on a reclamation of reviled markers of girlhood (hearts, stars, ornate calligraphy, and so on). In this sense, the zine form within riot grrrl praxis can be seen as a means by which members of a certain 'folk' community might address each other without interpellation. Although Greil Marcus' account of the folk community might not be entirely accurate in describing riot grrrl as political praxis, his suggestion of folk communities as those in which 'artist and audience are indistinguishable' is important here (Marcus, 2000, 750).

Part of the reason for the lack of distance between 'artist' and 'audience' in riot grrrl is its political function: the use of shared experiences of systemic oppression, discrimination, and violence as the basis for a protest community.[2] That the individual experience of these forms of harm is autobiographical, but that their effects are wide-spread and generalizable (i.e. connected to structural abuses of power, systemic inequities, and wider socio-economic and legal states of inequality) is at the centre of the ironic use of 'personal' forms (the diaristic, the epistolary, the poetic) as fugitive forms (after Fred Moten and Stefano Harney)

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[2] As above, the lack of reckoning with intersectional experiences of oppression, discrimination, and violence was a grave failure that speaks to the limitations of consciousness-raising during the 1990s.

through which officially prohibited knowledges may be circulated, and, through their circulation, establish a politically powerful community whose protest actions are conducted outside the 'formal' sphere of the political. This process is a necessary reaction to the fundamental failures of 'mainstream' political modes of representation and redress. The DIY ethos of post-'70s punk from which riot grrrl took its impetus also relied quite crucially on independent distribution 'networks,' a pre-internet model of long-distance connection often traced back to seminal hardcore band Black Flag, whose guitarist Greg Ginn set up the SST record label in 1978, drawing on his own entrepreneurial expertise in the world of ham radio to use business models of networked distribution to circumvent corporate record labels and to release music, tour live shows, and promote artists. Others quickly followed suit, with Alternative Tentacles adopting a similar approach the following year and labels such as Kill Rock Stars, K, and Dischord becoming essential to the countercultural punk scene in the US (see Azzerad for more).

What is most significant about this model is that it demonstrated how the DIY ethos of punk – all you need is three chords and a guitar – could be transferred to other fields and could allow the circulation of countercultural materials without the interference of capitalistic organisations. In a sense, this model used business practice against capitalism, and, although the total success of these efforts is questionable (with the possible exception of Dischord Records), we might extend this logic to suggest that riot grrrl used punk against punk in forming a 'minority' protest community within these structures and practices. In a similar vein, we discuss below the way in which *AAN* makes use of the 'resources' of the university to exploit precarity or rather to see the liberatory possibilities in existing without the institution, which is to say, not being institutionalised. Thus *AAN* seeks to establish a community, which is a network form, against the rationalities of networking, often using the language of the institution against the institutional logics. In thinking about the formal

capacities/construction of the zine, then, the idea of appropriated or wilfully misdirected 'resources' is an important one, which might also remind us of the link between this textual form and Audre Lorde's writing on self-care, which involves the redirecting of 'resources' (emotional, psychological, material) towards oneself in service of thriving rather than merely surviving. So too might we trace a certain mode of fugitive action, per Moten and Harney, in the liberation of knowledge that 'belongs' to the university through its translation into praxis in the form of zines. This draws from riot grrrl a politics of play(ing) that bemused as many as it delighted, as is documented in the review Molly Neuman reads over the intro to 'Thurston Hearts The Who' which scathingly asserts that 'Bikini Kill are activists, not musicians,' to which one might reply, 'Isn't that the point?'

A word of warning

Mimi thi Nguyen discusses at length the legacies of white supremacist thinking in riot grrrl, where she describes riot grrrl culture as built on 'an aesthetic of access' (Nguyen, 2012, 174) and demonstrates the need to be careful that critique drawing on one's own subject position (which is to say, a critical mode in which experience is allowed as a form of expertise i.e. a testimonial critique) does not result in adjustments to the self rather than attention to systemic structures of oppression. This mode of 'adjustment' is likely familiar to many working within precarity (in the university 'sector' and elsewhere) and follows Sara Ahmed's work on complaint; to name the problem is to become the problem, and so you can either adjust your attitude or face disciplinary action. While we seek to make plain that the use of the autobiographical mode beyond or outwith the personal is a core feature of the poetics of precarity as seen in *AAN,* it is still necessary to think through the difficulties that might arise through the re-registering of structural critique as individual distress, a logic upon which the institution of the university crucially depends to discredit and dismiss detractors.

This story will no doubt be familiar to precariously employed readers who have found themselves seeking to combat issues of sexual predation, structural discrimination, or any of the other myriad abuses that proliferate in the atomised and atomising academic system of the twenty-first century. Although any systemic built on ideas of singular genius, mentorship, and exceptionalism contains within itself the possibility of abuses of power (is practically built to enable such abuses, even), the situation in contemporary academia is distinct from earlier iterations of the system. There are a number of reasons for this, including the increase of fees (which, let us remind you, were set at a maximum of £9k - just as speed limits indicate the maximum speed at which it is safe to drive, not the speed at which one must drive, universities were not obligated to increase their fees); removal of the student cap (resulting in ever-larger class sizes); and the wilful mistreatment of skilled administrative staff that has seen many leave the 'sector' altogether, only to be replaced by precarious workers on a much lower pay scale. This leaves academics with more administrative work to do - which many of us are not very good at, given that we spent a decade or so training to be scholars rather than administrators - which is built into the role without acknowledgement of this lack of skill or ability. Even 'permanent' staff are made precarious, then, by being asked to do work they're not good at; of course this impacts one's sense of ability and dignity in work.

Indeed, this generalised precarity goes further too. The myth of scarcity created by the ruthless over-recruitment of doctoral students in the post-2008 period has allowed hiring panels to standardise the exceptional, with a published monograph or book contract now considered a basic requirement for a permanent post. This increased 'ask' is also evident in the privileging of experience by hiring panels, which is itself a discriminatory practice drawn from business logics rather than scholarly ones: the ability to get a job has little to do with one's scholarly aptitude, and while it is true that the 'job' of being a university lecturer

requires no particular brilliance, the work of scholarship is quite different. This system disadvantages those who labour under precarious terms, disproportionately women and non-gender conforming folk, peoples from the global majority, those with disabilities, caring responsibilities, and other 'real life' circumstances that impede the smooth movement from one stage of study to the next. It also means that many precarious early career staff have publication records and teaching experience that would (and do) put securely employed staff to shame, which creates a gulf between academic generations, as those in secure employment (ever less secure as the latest round of redundancies shows) come to fear the general brilliance of those for whom the ladders have been well and truly pulled up.

So precarious staff are asked to be extraordinary and to continually demonstrate their exceptionality, not least through labouring without the basic dignity of secure employment. Permanent staff are made to distrust younger colleagues by these demonstrations as well as fearing and resenting new modes of scholarship that might 'expose' their own inability to keep pace with innovations within their field (for instance, early career scholars tend to have a much more interdisciplinary approach due to the scope of their teaching, which often falls outside of their field of expertise). The myth of scarcity and the tactical destabilisation of security through the use of redundancy and other managerial tools also means that permanently employed staff will often take jobs very far from their primary place of residence. This further damages morale and splinters any sense of academic community. And if anyone should complain? Well, aren't they lucky to have a job?

What we want to suggest here is that the zine form acts as an ideal textual vehicle by which to circulate complaints that reveal structural inequities without individualising these complaints (the 'tyranny of intimacy,' per Nguyen). In utilising a form in which the reader is always kept in mind - because the text is designed to circulate but is not a commodity object - collected material can address the reader, which is to say, re-interpellate them with a hailing

that does not force them into any particular position: the reader is acknowledged, but not assumed. Not a reader but a creator – a thinking with that is also a call to action, not a passing on of knowledge but an invitation – or provocation – to do it yourself, make a zine, complain, put your ideas out into the world without the gate-keeping of peer review, torturous publication schedules, or nepotistic school-tie bonds.

Further, where the cut up form that more properly describes Acker's work draws directly on deconstructive practice (advancing the work of montage and collage often associated with modernist artistic practice), the zine - *AAN* in particular - relies on *putting things together,* on making common: this is, as stated above, a collective praxis through which fugitive knowledges about the academy may circulate without intentionality (without use). Nguyen calls zines *minor objects*, a term by which she also describes her understanding of punk:

> By way of a minor object, exclusion and normativity might be
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> laid bare (though perhaps in no straightforward manner), and
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> the contingent quality of knowledge or other claims fold under
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> scrutiny. Punk as one such minor object saved my life (as the
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> saying goes), because it gave me words and gestures for once
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> inchoate feelings about the cluster of promises (the state and
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> capital are on your side! the ring on your finger is a sign of love
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> and protection!) that constitute what Lauren Berlant calls a
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> cruel optimism. *The good life, fuck that!* (Nguyen, 2015, 12)

Here we come to the crux of that 'poetics of precarity' we seek to outline in this essay. Language, as we discuss below, is a tool by which we name reality and in doing so, create it. One of the reasons for the attention that has been paid to Mark Fisher's concept of 'capitalist realism' is that the term (if not its theorisation exactly) seemed to give shape to a certain lack

of imaginative futurity widely felt after the financial crash of 2008. Sitting somewhere between the 'popular' and the 'academic,' as well as the 'personal' and the 'political,' Fisher was among the first to edge towards a new language of critique, or a more precise theoretical vocabulary for our moment of lived experience. We argue here that the poetics of precarity offers a way to liberate such critique from the normative strictures of the academy, namely by using the language by which the university re-presents itself as a business rather than a scholarly institution against its own normative grammars (here, that of 'networking'). A poetics of precarity offers a mode of critical praxis by which a scholarly community may be created (and creative) against the network; a space where one both knows and does not know; and a site of connection despite that which would see us divided and conquered. A poetics of precarity might, we suggest, be empowering for readers and writers; might even allow us to smuggle this critique into parts of the academy where it seems it cannot go. Who knows?

Against Networking

The epigraph to Issue 2 of *AAN* offers the following definition for networking: '(noun): the action or process of interacting with others to exchange and develop professional or social contacts; to experience a sudden taste of metal in one's mouth'. Networking is a noun: it is the process by which interaction becomes objectified, people become 'contacts', sized up for potential use value. The curious grammar of networking also works to void agency: networking is not something one does (it is not a verb); rather it describes the process by which one might become the object of action. As Joey Francis writes in *AAN #2*, 'Everything becomes the ways I have networked and been networked': like ideology, the language of networking interpellates individuals into specific ways of being in the world. In an academic context, networking is the process of assigning a use value to those parts of academic culture that otherwise threaten to destabilise or even disprove the business ontology of the neoliberal university. What Osborne calls networking's 'bad grammar' has an attendant structure of

feeling, a way of being in the world. Bernstein, glossing Gertrude Stein's 'Poetry and Grammar', writes that 'the process of seeing is also the process of saying' (213). In other words, one's perception of the world is inextricably bound up within the language of its articulation. Dana Cairns Watson, in discussing how Stein's difficult grammar 'dishabituates' readers to language, suggests that, 'By writing the way she does, Stein conditions her readers to understand words differently than they have before. Once we hear differently, we can see differently. We then treat words differently, altering how others can hear' (7). Stein does this, Watson argues, in an effort to 'change the ways Americans articulate their thoughts in speech, making room for thoughts that evade the binary pollster lingo of yes or no, approve or disapprove, guilt or not guilty' (10). Unfortunately, as Hilary White's piece in *AAN #1* suggests, this process can also be used as a way of foreclosing meaning, of making meaningful social interaction impossible.

White's piece, entitled 'Networking Event', highlights how the insidious grammar of networking conscripts those exposed to it into a specific structure of feeling. The poem imagines a two-day-long team-building gathering at which the speaker (a collective 'we') is trapped by a sinister 'they', who make a series of demands that begin with the merely '*off-putting*' -- '*You must introduce yourselves with a list of achievements*' -- and end with those calculated to humiliate: '*Tell us your biggest fears!... Now perform them in front of the crowd!*' At first, the speaker(s) resist these injunctions, telling 'they': '*That's not going to work for us*'. By the poem's conclusion, however, the speaker(s) 'could only concede'. The space in between explores the process by which networking's business language -- its grammar -- filters into and alters the structures of feeling of its subject. White's speaker lays bare these operations in one of the poem's final stanzas: '*You are having so much fun, / I can see it!* They had recalibrated our language to suit them. / *Fun*, we repeated and nodded' (n.p., emphasis in original). Here, the speaker connects the 'recalibration' of language 'they' have

undertaken directly to a recalibration of feeling, via the medium of perception ('*I can see it!*'): *saying* becomes *seeing*, which becomes someone else' reality.

The language of 'they' in the poem is limited to single-clause imperative statements that reflect the tautology of what Nick-e Melville has called 'Imperative Commands': a kind of 'institutional instructional language' that instrumentalises both language and relation (6). Drawing on Althusser, Melville suggests that such language 'closely conforms to the illustration of interpellation as getting hailed by an authoritative voice' (62). That networking's grammar is successful in recruiting the speaker by the end of the poem has partly to do with the way the imperative grammatical mood 'interpellates' its subject. Melville explains that the imperative *has no subject*: 'having *no* pronominal subject makes [the imperative] applicable to *all* subjects who encounter' it (Melville 68). In encountering these imperatives, the poem's speaker(s) interpellate themselves: as Althusser suggests, we are always already subjects. White's speaker(s) sense this when they admit that 'By the end, we blamed ourselves / … / We wanted nothing more than to strengthen our network' (n.p.). Also characteristic of the imperative mood is its 'tenseless phrases'. Per Melville, tenseless here 'means the infinitive is used with no specific tense assigned: it can be present and future at once' (68). The temporality of networking is, to be sure, so amorphous as to encompass and envelop both present and future. The poem's final lines are: 'We knew then it was about the process. We could never / stop forming the network'. The network here becomes the horizon of the future: there is no beyond networking.

And yet, the poem's appropriation of the language of networking creates a kind of irony, in that in their repetition, these statements come to say one thing and mean another. The effect of this 'to have official language say something else in its own words, to have it say something that "reflects our real conditions of existence"' (Melville 19). This is Melville's own project in his *Imperative Commands*: the empty institutional imperatives are

repurposed and reassigned meaning in subversive ways -- among other things, the move highlights language's instability. Melville's is an approach also taken by many of the contributors to *Academics Against Networking*, and it is one of the strategies by which *AAN* makes use of the 'resources' of the university (insofar as such a poverty of expression can be considered a resource). In identifying and turning the language and the logic of the university against itself, the pieces in *AAN* resist institutionalisation. In being *in but not of* the institution (to paraphrase Moten and Harney), they gesture towards the liberatory possibilities in existing without the institution.

Helen Charman's 'They Shoot Horses, Don't They?', for instance, explores the widespread, but typically unacknowledged, problem of sexual misconduct in universities, in which senior colleagues (usually men) use their influence, authority and prestige to engage in sexual relationships with students and/or precariously employed junior colleagues (usually women). Charman's poem highlights the crucial role that institutional language plays in making this kind of predatory behaviour possible. More specifically, she highlights the way the absurd logics of this language are the grounds by which predatory behaviour can be hidden in plain sight, pivoting on the instability of language in order to create an atmosphere of plausible deniability. The piece juxtaposes the vocabulary of a university's Dignity at Work statement with the copy for another kind of networking event: academic speed dating. In so doing, Charman's piece highlight the vacuity of such institutional documents, and the incongruity of claims of commitment to the welfare and dignity of 'the brightest and best' by institutions whose continued success depend on the subjection and silencing of its most vulnerable workers (Charman n.p.). Charman's piece is comprised of eight sections, with a final section subtitled 'N.B.' The poem's opening section contrasts two passages of similar length: the first reads 'Personal relationships between students and staff, where a member of staff has a professional responsibility for a student, should be avoided' (Charman n.p.). This

same phrasing, or slight variations on it, is used in institutional Codes of Conduct in universities across the U.K. Our own institution's version of it differs very little. It is language that, in its institutional repetition is supposed to be unexceptionable, and yet, in Charman's appropriation of it here, the statement is qualified in a series of declensions that make its intention far from clear. This, coupled with the passive tense of the central verb ('should be avoided'), also defers the question of accountability. In an equation that is ostensibly highlighting an unequal power dynamic and attempting to set parameters to mitigate an abuse of this dynamic, the formulation obscures responsibility and rolls back, even while it articulates, its own code of 'best practice'. The statement ends not with a full stop, but with a comma, and, after a paragraph break, rolls into the following announcement: '*I am pleased to send you further details of the second Research Leadership workshop: Academic Speed Dating, which will focus on how to network effectively in an academic context*' (n.p., emphasis in original). There is a clear irony in that what is supposed to be prohibited (using one's professional relationship as a cover for an inappropriate personal relationship, often referred to, equally euphemistically, as sexual misconduct) is repackaged by the 'Leadership workshop' into something desirable.

In the poem, academic speed dating pairs up an '*early career researcher with a senior academic*', who will assist the former '*to build positive professional relationships is critical to career success*', as we learn in the poem's second section. The linguistic elisions evident here create the grey area that makes predatory behaviour possible: the proximity of supervision and the social, academia and dating, even the 'hotel room opportunity' -- which refers, we assume, to the longstanding practice of holding interviews in hotel rooms at international conferences like the MLA. These are not options: they are, like the imperative commands in White's poem, injunctions to participate, to engage, to subjectify oneself. After all, in academic speed dating, activities are 'chosen at the senior academics discretion --'.

This section, the poem's seventh, ends on this em dash, a punctuation mark usually employed to mark a break in a sentence or to separate off additional information. This suggests there is something unspoken, something unacknowledged about the nature of this senior academic's discretion. The word discretion has a dual meaning in the poem: it means both *the power to decide or to act* and *the quality of being discreet*. To have the discretion here is to outline the rules of the game while also embodying them. In this poem, as indeed in life, the casualty of this discretion is an unnamed 'she': 'I think she left under a cloud', one standalone line reads; 'She's always so upset about everything now', reads another that opens the poem's sixth section. These accusations levelled at her assign blame according to the rules of discretion: she was indiscreet (*left under a cloud*); she was out of control (*always so angry*); she was out of her depth. The poem's title, which refers to the 1969 film starring Jane Fonda, burlesques the pyramid-scheme/scarcity model of academia while also providing a solution for what to do with people who cannot or will not abide by the codes of *discretion*. *They shoot horses, don't they* is uttered by the character played by Michael Sarazzin when he is questioned by police about his motives in the shooting of Jane Fonda's character, Gloria: the implication being, even a horse gets put out of its misery. The way the poem frames its subject -- predatory sexual behaviour -- in the language of the institution highlights the failure of the institution to reckon with its own investment in maintaining inequitable power relationships. Section Two opens: 'The form is the content--', which suggests that the content (the old story) will carry on repeating itself if the form (inequitable structures of power) does not change. The institution is 'of course committed to maintaining Dignity at Work for the brightest and best', a statement which tells us all we need to know about whose 'dignity', whose security, whose body will be protected.

Poetics in commons

What the pieces by White and Charman gesture towards is not a simple matter of laying bare, of uncovering the bad grammar of networking and its pernicious social logics in order to 'raise awareness' about the particularities of precarious employment in the contemporary academy. Instead, in using the language of networking against itself, White and Charman acknowledge language as a means of producing reality, and gesture towards the attendant possibility of perceiving and creating new realities via the medium of literature. In a 2020 article, Bernstein asks what a poetics would look like that 'can challenge the logic of enclosure', that is, challenge a logic of scarcity, privatization and individualisation; she calls this imagined poetics a *literature in commons*. We suggest that *AAN* is an example of a literature in commons, both, as we have shown, in the way individual pieces treat language -- as a resource to be reappropriated, to be shared, to be transformed -- and also in the methods of its circulation -- open to contributions, distributed for the cost of postage, printed on the university's paper, using the university's ink and stapled together with the university's staples. We might read zine's fugitive production and distribution, its linguistic appropriations, as an example of what goes on in what Fred Moten and Stefano Harney call the 'undercommons'.

The undercommons is the place of the 'subversive intellectual' who recognises both 'that it cannot be denied that the university is a place of refuge, and it cannot be accepted that the university is a place of enlightenment' (26). The path of the subversive intellectual is to acknowledge that 'In the face of these conditions one can only sneak into the university and steal what one can. To abuse its hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony, its gypsy encampment, to be in but not of' (26).To return to our definition of the commons (following Raymond Williams) as shared resources, spaces, knowledges, then the undercommons is what is shared undercover, against and in spite of, in but not of systems that seek simultaneously to interpellate and to deny its ways of thinking of being. *AAN* makes

poetry in common; it dips into and renews repositories of language and form and, more than this, its modes of production are capacious. They make space, in that they model ways of making that in turn helps to ensure the conditions of reproduction for other fugitive art of this kind. Its existence is also a set of strategies for future or alternative collaborations. The temporality suggested here aligns with a key aspect of 'commoning' (doing or being in common), per Stavros Stavrides: 'ongoingness', or what Gertrude Stein (1925) describes as 'A beginning again and again within a very small thing'. As an example of a poetics in commons, *Academics Against Networking* signals a world-in-the-making rather than a world ready-made.

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