Re: Call for Papers
Special Double Issue of *Studies in Social Justice*
Scholarship and Activism

Attention:
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Proposed Title:
Scholarship as Cultural Production in the Corporatized University

Keywords (5):
cultural production, scholarship, activism, gender, labour

Abstract (500 words):
This roundtable paper by Canadian academics working in different international contexts seeks to open up discussion about the potential for activism in scholarship as cultural production. Universities’ current attempts to define their role in society—given late capitalist demands for tangible value to be derived from education—have prompted a renaissance of research practices articulated as ‘deliverables.’ Deliverables may involve artistic and media production, public advocacy, non-profit and private sector consulting, entrepreneurial models, and community interventions. Forming an intrinsic part of scholarship recognized by the corporatized university insofar as they contribute to the institution’s public profile, outreach deliverables remain mostly peripheral to the traditional academic systems for recognition and the long-term commitment often required at sites of activist engagement, despite their potential to broaden academic inquiry into new public and private spaces. The ‘roundtable’ nature of this paper reflects multiple perspectives germane to these hybrid spaces, grounded in the extensive Canadian and international experiences of this research group.

Alison Harvey (University of Leicester, UK) draws on the example of her interventionist work in game design contexts to reflect on how academic activism is received in communities of practice as well as formal research dissemination channels.

Mél Hogan (Illinois Institute of Chicago, USA) draws from her experience in design (mat3rial.com) and academia to bring to light methods and modes of working that push for creative thinking in critical and political work.

M.E. Luka (Ryerson and Mount Saint Vincent Universities, CA) assesses collaborations from two decades of blending national management consulting and digital media production with international scholarly work on creative citizenship at industrial, scholarly, and policy sites.
Mélanie Millette (Université du Québec à Montréal, CA) frames her experience in academia and the private sector to discuss tensions and complementarity of practices and skills developed, as well as the kind of recognition gained.

Tamara Shepherd (London School of Economics, UK) discusses the tensions inherent in both studying media policy issues while also attempting to intervene as a public interest advocate in policymaking.

Jacqueline Wallace (Concordia University, CA) considers the potential for innovating new models of production and recognition, drawing from her return to the academic environment after a decade of senior management and creative roles in a series of successful media and tech start-ups.

Andrea Zeffiro (Brock University, CA) draws on her community and advocacy work and reflects on the emotional labour involved in maintaining one’s ties within and across activist communities and the university.

The work of normative and activist scholarship that extends beyond the university raises questions about the politics of deliverables not only as products of late capitalism, but specifically within the contemporary university as an increasingly precarious space marked by gendered labour. Through this paper, based on roundtable discussions at the International Communication Association and the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities conferences from 2013 onwards, this group of academics seeks to question and imagine the possibilities for activism within scholarship as cultural production—possibilities that rest on an underlying hope that production can help bridge disciplines, practices, and ideological commitments in the service of social justice.

Topic areas (from list, not limited by):
Key theoretical concepts for interrogating activist scholarship
* Role of academic & institutions of higher education
* Activism by & about precarious academic labour
* Neoliberalism, managerial corporatization, branding in higher education
* Production of meaning: discourse analysis in the academy & the media
* Representations of activist academics in the academy & media [collection of articles]
* Ethics of local and international activist scholarship
* Critical service learning as activism
* Gender and activist scholarship
* Policy work and advocacy as activism
* Case studies or critical & contextualized biographical accounts of activist scholarship