Desiring Higher Education or the End of the Affair?

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Valuing Higher Education

• Is the current recession a crisis of capitalism or a financial crisis that is reinforcing capitalism/social hierarchies?

• What impact has it had on the value and values of higher education?
Tensions, Contradictions and Shape Shifting

• Public/ Private Partnerships

• Winners/ Losers/ Scapegoats

• Desiring/ Dismissing HE
Locus of Responsibility?

- Neo-liberalism cast public sector as profligate, self-serving, and archaic.
- Transfer of private values to public sector e.g. deregulation, liberalisation, QA, private finance initiatives (PFIs).
- State responsibilities reduced and regularised + the migration of power /authority to multinational corporations/global financial and banking institutions.
- Private sector crashes (2008/9)/ state rescues.
- Risk and debt now carried by public sector.

(See Gamble, 2009)

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Cast of Grotesques

- Negative transference
- Legitimating austerity via narratives of public sector ‘underperformance’.
- HE sector implodes/ symbolic and actual violence.
- Who are the monsters in the HE imaginary?
  - ‘Research inactives’ – individuals, disciplines e.g. Philosophy, HEIs.
  - Widening Participation -the ‘wrong’ type of students e.g. lower SES, too many women, not enough international students (CBI, 2009; HEPI, 2009).
  - Baby boomers/ opportunity horders (Observer, 2010).
Knowledge Recession?


- Links between aspiration and accumulation.

- Desires fuelled by economic returns/graduate premium/social differentiation (Morley et al., 2010).

Globally: 1960 - 13 million
2005 - 137.8 million
UK: 1966 - 44,500
2006 - 4,000,000

- Toxic correlation HE/poverty: 4% of UK poorer young people enter HE (Hills Report, 2009)

- With graduate un/under-employment increasing why are numbers of applicants to HE still so high? (+23% on last year).

- Scarcity value?

- With mass consumption, who represents the waste to be disposed of?
Ecology of Higher Education

- Financial crisis = embedded in and re-producing political and democratic crisis.
- Security = major research/ policy priority when insecurity is dominant ontological position.
- Neo-liberal debris = creative destruction?
- Cuba, Detroit, Farmville - back to the garden.
- What are the core/ enduring HE values that will transcend market turbulence?
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