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Academic Friendship in Dark Times

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Bringing philosophical work on friendship to bear on the growing body of critique about the state of the neoliberal academy, this paper defends academic friendship. Initially a vignette illustrates the key features of academic friendship and the multiple demands on academics to account for themselves in the neoliberal university. We locate academic friendship in the context of that neoliberal university before discussing managerialist threats to this relationship. We indicate how the performativity-driven working environment contrasts radically and unfavourably with some defining features of friendship. Academic friendship, we argue, can entail generative intellectual and moral activity and growth though trusting and honest reflection on research and scholarship, and teaching and learning. Contending that it may offer an antidote to aspects of the neoliberal academy, in our concluding section academic friendship is highlighted as both a defence and a means of resistance against the worst excesses of the university in dark times.

Keywords

Friendship   neoliberal university   trust   academic labour   moral commitment   managerialism

As two professors at a leading British university reflect on their recently completed annual Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs), they express relief that their performances have been found adequate. Taylor and Tyler had previously confided in each other that neither expected the highest grading although one of them had been judged outstanding in garnering esteem indicators while the other had been deemed outstanding with respect to their 'outputs'.[i] Yet, they feel uneasy about the number of days the PDR process absorbed, as they amassed the required evidence of their performances and articulated that against the various key performance indicators (KPIs) used to judge them. They share a wry smile as they talk about how they now both feel tired and empty and, yet again, they bemoan their frustration at the effort also exerted on tending their digital footprints and tweaking their online signatures to display recent publications, affiliations and indicators of esteem. They recount how in their PDRs they articulated, as required, their loyalty to their university's chosen values, pondering how those values were decided and what they might have chosen. Both are worried that they will not be able to find enough time to enhance the postgraduate course they teach in a year ahead that, once again, is focussed on targets that leave little space for anything beyond their SMART[ii] objectives. Each is concerned about the evident exhaustion and disillusionment shown by the other. They both despair of having to account for themselves in ways that suggest they may not be trusted to fulfil their professional obligations if left to their own devices. Friends for years, these conversations are not new but, feeling things are getting worse, they talk of their friendship as therapy for 'dark times' in universities. To cheer themselves, they turn to the paper they are co-writing. They both regard their writing as an antidote to their feelings of despondency, while feeling relieved that it will also be counted as a performance objective.

This vignette imagines a conversation between two academic colleagues who are both personal and professional friends. It reflects a friendship that sustains them and their work in dark times, as they deal with the multiple demands to account for themselves in what we now know as the neoliberal university. This paper brings the substantial philosophical literature on the concept of friendship to bear on the growing body of critique about the state of the neoliberal academy. In exploring the significance and value of workplace friendships we draw these two strands together to articulate and defend what we call academic friendship, a relationship under threat. Initially we draw on the vignette

to delineate the key features of friendship by deploying accounts prominent in the philosophical literature. Thereafter our defence of academic friendship locates this professional relationship in the context of the neoliberal university that is staffed by academic labourers. We then discuss the threats to academic friendship posed by managerialism before concluding by defending academic friendship as an antidote to the worst excesses of the neoliberal academy. In drawing our conclusions we suggest that academic friendship offers an important space of both support and potential resistance.

Friendship, personal and academic

A number of the key characteristics of friendship, understood as 'a distinctively personal relationship' (Helm 2017), are exemplified in this vignette. Although the word 'friend' can indubitably cover a 'dizzying array of relationships' (Spencer and Pahl, 2006, 58), some key features are salient in an exploration of friendship for philosophers of education who are well placed to scrutinise and to defend this relationship. We can reasonably infer, in Tyler and Taylor's relationship, a personal relationship that has developed over time. The two characters like and trust each other enough to confide, to share personal experiences and feelings. Their concern for the welfare of each other implies mutuality and a lack of hierarchy as they share activities in and through their work. To this extent their relationship meets Telfer's (1970-1971) necessary, though not sufficient, shared activity condition for friendship. Further necessary characteristics of friendship for Telfer (1970-71, 224) include affection, and concern for one another's happiness and welfare, distinct from both a general sense of duty and benevolence, insofar as friendship is characterised by a 'special concern for friends'. This friendship entails a commitment to each other as particular individuals rather than to abstract others who might happen to hold similar characteristics, personalities or attitudes (Friedman 1993; Hooker and Little 2000).

Neither Taylor nor Tyler made a conscious choice - a decision to become friends - and their friendship was not mandated. Rather, over a period of time, and as a result of certain friendship characteristics that gradually became evident as they worked together, they grew to like and trust each other. They came to enjoy each other's company, to agree on many, though not all, academic and professional issues, and to value each other's opinions – even those critical of each other's behaviour. Hence we can now say their relationship meets all of Telfer's (1970-71, 230) three necessary conditions for friendship: 'shared activities, the passions of friendship, and acknowledgement of the fulfilment of the first two conditions, constituting an acknowledgement of and consent to the special relationship'. On this account friendship is voluntary, chosen rather than given in two ways, following Friedman (1993). Firstly, we choose, within limits, our friends. Secondly, as those friendships develop, we choose with our friends, 'the extent of mutual support and nurturance, the depth of shared intimacy, and so forth' (Friedman, 1993, 208). A given was that they both happened to work in the same university, with some of their academic activity intersecting, but Taylor and Tyler's friendship, a

relationship transcending workplace association, was voluntary. Over time they established and made further choices about the nature of that relationship. So this academic friendship meets Friedman's (1993, 211) 'fullest possible realization' of friendship: it is both chosen and imbued with 'affection and positive regard, mutuality, equality, and trust'. The equality playing out in Tyler and Taylor's friendship goes beyond their job status. While they bring different personalities, academic strengths, interests, and workplace roles to the relationship their friendship is not hierarchical: each regards the other as both an intellectual and moral equal. There is a rough balance, over time and contexts, of giving and taking, supporting and being supported, and learning and teaching from and with each other. On those grounds then, strictly speaking, this academic friendship does not meet an Aristotelian account of ideal friendship requiring equality in status, advantage, pleasure and 'moral goodness' (Cooper 1977, 628). But we assert a conception of real rather than ideal friendship (Friedman 1993, 216) premised on a 'rough equality', an approximate symmetry, between friends. This is not a sentimentalised notion of friendship as it recognises that friends do quarrel, they do occasionally betray one another, and friendships can come to an end.

With initial conditions in place we can now consider each of Aristotle's forms of and motivations for friendship: pleasure, virtue and utility and we do so in that order and premised on their interconnections. Having already alluded to the pleasure Tyler and Taylor derive from their friendship, we note that this plays out with respect to the ways in which they enjoy time together as friends who 'delight not in some commodity produced by their interaction, but in their mutual activities and in what could be called each other's personality' (Alpern 1983, 314). While seeking the company of one's friends is a further key element of friendship for Telfer (1970-71), a relationship of pleasure alone is not an adequate motivation for making or sustaining a friendship. The same pertains to utility and virtue. With respect to Aristotle's ideal friendship of virtue, Cooper (1977, 626) argues that this does not require only friends who are 'moral heroes'. Similarly, Telfer (1970-71) rejects the view that friends must think of each other as perfectly good people all of the time, thereby reinforcing Friedman's (1993) account of real friendship in the real world and our argument that we are not aiming for 'ideal' friendship here. So while Taylor and Tyler most likely do not entirely approve or applaud each and every aspect of each other's characters or behaviours this does not render their friendship untenable or defective. They regard each other with affection and concern and they respect each other. Hence we can term Tyler and Taylor's relationship a virtue friendship because the 'good qualities of the person's character, and not pleasure or advantage' (Cooper 1977, 627) has caused each to like the other. Relatedly, and importantly as our defence of academic friendship unfolds, Taylor and Tyler talk of the trust they place in each other in ways akin to Friedman's (1993) concept of reliable moral witnessing. They speak of the value they attach to the other-regarding and other-trusting space their friendship affords to rehearse and question their own moral and professional

standpoints, concerns and conduct with each other, so benefitting from a perspective 'informed by an alternative set of principled moral commitments' (Friedman 1993, 210).

Having noted the voluntary and alluded to the non-instrumental characteristics of Taylor and Tyler's relationship, we do not deny utility a place in our account of this academic friendship. However, we concur with Brewer's (2005, 723) interpretation: 'neither genuine Aristotelian friendship nor its attendant benefits can be attained by those who value their friends merely as a means to some further good, including the good of self-improvement'. In the conception of friendship we defend as appropriate to the complementary personal and professional dimensions of what we call academic friendship, notions of utility co-locate with mutuality and reciprocity as well as with pleasure and virtue. While undeniably valuable, the sort of friendship enjoyed by Tyler and Taylor is not, for the most part, instrumental: it has been neither forged nor evolved to meet particular goals. Spencer and Pahl (2006, 60) categorise friendship on a continuum of simple to complex with simple including associate, useful contact, favour friend and fun friend, and complex including helpmate, comforter, confidante, and soulmate. Tyler and Taylor, at moments in their friendship, probably realise each of these types. However, our interest here, and the conditions for friendship already explicated, preclude a purely instrumental relationship and focus on the complex elements of this categorisation. We contend that while friendship certainly has some benefits, as White observes: 'for instrumental reasons, even perhaps lofty ones, like its role in the promotion of self-knowledge', it is not predominantly an instrumentally motivated relationship (1990, 82).

However, a voluntary commitment to another as a friend does make particular moral demands. On Friedman's quasi-voluntary account, a number of the general characteristics of friendships noted above might be regarded as 'special requirements of friendship' (1993, 212). At times these requirements may inconvenience friends and may trump what they owe to those not considered friends. Herein, of course, is a particularly thorny issue for friendship which, following Friedman, 'provides for the morally unimpaired expression of personal commitment' that will not pertain to relationships lacking in mutuality and equality (1993, 214). Tyler and Taylor do not have the same degree of personal concern, loyalty or commitment to colleagues not considered friends as they do to each other. Friedman (1993, 213) is, however, clear that this does not mean that special commitments to friends of necessity override or are subordinate to comparable duties in non-voluntary close relationships such as kinship. We return to this later but we suggest that the special duties owed to academic friends will not, necessarily, trump those duties institutionally ascribed to and morally chosen by Taylor and Tyler. They are both loyal to their institution and they readily accept and seek to enact broad institutional, professional and collegial values particularly when these are moral choices. So while some of the features of friendship delineated so far might seem reminiscent of apparently related concepts like solidarity, they are significantly different. Solidarity may also express mutuality

and a principled concern for the good of others, but it does not match the defining features of friendship outlined above.

The personal and professional friendship we have described so far has drawn on a set of complementary concepts that start to distinguish this workplace relationship from those between other academic colleagues. We have emphasised that the concepts of trust, affection, pleasure in each other's company, rough equality, concern for each other's welfare, and shared activities pertain in a chosen relationship that reflects voluntary, beneficial, pleasurable and virtuous friendship. Yet while not formalised or structured by any institutionalized agreement, academic friendships are located and performed in an institutional setting, that of the university. It is to this institution that we now turn, as we consider its contemporary characteristics and their implications for academic friendship.

The academic labourer in the neoliberal university

Writing about friendship and the challenge of resisting the forces of neoliberalism, May observes that if we are to understand ourselves and 'the difficulty and perhaps even the darkness of who we are asked to be, then we must come to grips with neoliberalism' (2012,4). The account of the neoliberal university that follows suggests it is both a problematic context for and a reason to defend academic friendship. The near-global entrenchment of neoliberalism in higher education reflects the hegemonic hold of a market capitalist model of education. For Shamir it is:

> … a complex, often incoherent, unstable and even contradictory set of practices that are organized around a certain imagination of the "market" as a basis for the universalisation of market-based social relations, with the corresponding penetration in almost every single aspect of our lives (Shamir 2008, 3, quoted by Ball 2012, 18).

The market-determined practices that distinguish the neoliberal university include its embrace of a competitive market in delivering commodified qualifications and research outputs to student customers and funding bodies, with institutions competing with one another to be globally competitive in their sales. So, too, universities are in service to competitive national economies, while vying to claw their way up league tables, seeking strategic positionality to make them ever more competitively successful. Higher education is now defined and determined as a saleable product rather than as a public good with a fundamentally social and moral purpose, valued for its intrinsic worth alongside its benefits to society and the economy.

As they embrace the audit culture that now prevails in the higher education sector, 'universities are part of capitalism and academics are embedded into class relations' (Allmer 2018, 56). The features of friendship we delineated above are practised by academic labourers whose working lives are controlled by a battery of technologies intended to optimize their productivity by requiring them to meet defined targets and produce measurable outcomes. The time and labour of academics constitute

an expense measured by workload models designed to extract maximum labour value. Growing numbers of labourers are employed on casual short and fixed term contracts[iii] although some universities have implemented policies to employ academic staff on fixed-term hourly paid or fractional contracts in preference to casual worker or zero-hours contracts. Furthermore, Bothwell (2018a) suggests that: 'Precarity is a significant feature of the academy worldwide', citing a UK professor who felt more secure as a junior lecturer in the 1980s than in today's academy with its 'modern pressure to meet performance targets - with the threat of ultimately losing your job if you fail'. In the dark times of today's neoliberal academy what cannot be readily measured cannot be valued.

The neoliberal academy frames and constrains the identities and ways of being available to academic labourers, the selves they can become, and the workplace relationships they can construct and enjoy. Of import to any consideration of academic friendship, 'Social relationships with colleagues and students, the fulcrum of academic productivity, are reduced to de-humanised performance indicators' (Sutton 2017, 628). At the same time, technologies of performativity to ensure compliance in the measured university are regularly ratcheted upwards. Layered on top of now standard measures of outputs, esteem and KPIs, academic labourers are required to declare their loyalty to institutional values that are often accompanied by a further requirement to state how they have enacted them. Hence there is often an obligation to demonstrate how one realises corporate values such as being passionate, people-oriented, ambitious, flexible, professional and inquisitive[iv] . Such requirements soon become normalised, largely accepted as part of the inevitability of the audit culture, in spite of initially being seen as controversial, if not absurd.

Despite references to 'valuing people' in the display of many universities' avowed values, the culture of checking up and target-setting has displaced more collegiate understandings of the university, its purpose and governance, in which academics were more frequently trusted to do their work. This has had significant implications for the behaviour, relationships and identities of those who work in the neoliberal university. The ethos of the market has required academics to adapt their behaviour to the self-centred competitiveness, driven by the 'insistent individualism' (Bennett 2008, 142)[v] of the academy that rewards displays of success in meeting targets and objectives. Narcissistic displays of excellence are required to account for oneself in acts of compulsory boastfulness. The academic labourer is induced to mimic the entrepreneur celebrated by capitalism, advertising the goods she sells in competition with other entrepreneurs.

These behaviours stand in sharp contrast to traditional collegial behaviours associated with earlier forms of the modern university. [vi] The defining features of academic friendship are also in tension with those of the neoliberal university, and we note these here with particular reference to the concepts of instrumentality, trust and choice. In the neoliberal university, the worth of activities is

almost exclusively determined by their instrumental value, by whether they are a successful investment of time and resource. Hence a battery of measures of performance is now in place to assess all aspects of performance, as in the UK's Research Excellence Framework (REF), to name one prominent example. Pursuit of success and competitive advantage is so relentless and target-driven that academics cannot be trusted to teach their students well or to care about them; instead they must be audited and numerically rated by those students as if by customers buying and reviewing a service. [vii] To survive and if possible to thrive in the neoliberal academy the academic labourer exercises choice as an entrepreneur. Sutton takes up the idea of choice 'as part of the regulatory technology of governmentality' (2017, 628), drawing on Foucault and Rose and Miller:

> The neo-liberalizing university positions academics as 'active agents seeking to maximise their own advantage'; as individuals who are responsible for 'calculating actions and outcomes' (Rose & Miller 1992, p 198). Success at work requires each individual academic labourer to perpetually calculate and choose: for choice is a central tenet of neo-liberalism. (Sutton 2017, 628)

In contrasting the non-instrumentality of friendship with the hyper-instrumentalism, distrust and encouragement of entrepreneurial choice in the neoliberal university, we are not suggesting that universities, as institutions, should model themselves on friendship, which is non-contractual, not bound by institutional procedures, and characterised by loose structures (Cordelli 2015). Indeed, relationships between friends are routinely contrasted with other close relationships that are more appropriately described as institutions, like those between relatives and in marriage. Instead, our purpose is to indicate how the working environment of the neoliberal university contrasts radically and unfavourably with some defining features of friendship. We defend academic friendship as a relationship that ameliorates the 'hidden injuries of the neoliberal university' (Gill 2010). Hence we position the contemporary academy as a harsh workplace in which boundaries with private life are blurred by overwork in pursuit of neoliberal demands which, as we illustrate below, seem to be ramped-up year on year. Such demands may result in what Gill and Donaghue (2015, 91) call 'psychosocial and somatic catastrophe … that manifests in experiences of chronic stress, anxiety, exhaustion, insomnia and spiralling rates of physical and mental illness'. Contending that it may offer an antidote, in our concluding section we highlight academic friendship as both a defence and a means of resistance against the worst of these demands, but first we consider how this relationship plays out in and threatens the neoliberal academy.

Friendship in the neoliberal workplace

When Marilyn Friedman titled her 1993 collection of papers on moral theory and personal relationships 'What are Friends for?' she was not asking how friendship could be used for instrumental purposes. Her question is not about how workplace friendship, for example, might be harnessed to improve performance against measurable objectives - although managerialist forces in

the neoliberal academy would likely ask precisely this question. Indeed, Rumens (2017, 1150) suggests that many well established studies of workplace friendships are focussed on how to improve productivity and performance for organizations thereby exhibiting managerial bias and control which 'chokes out any light we might wish to shed on other aspects of workplace friendships such as the personal and social significance of workplace friendships in their own right' (1151). We turn now to one such study.

While acknowledging the apparently obvious benefits of workplace friendship, Pillemer and Rothbard (2018, 635) point to expanding scholarship suggesting the 'downsides' of such relationships if these conflict with 'core aspects of organizational life' (638). Although not located in the academy, Pillemer and Rothbard's (2018) paper is liable to Rumens' (2017, 1150) criticism of studies which regard organizations 'as though they have an objective existence that is independent of the people who inhabit them'. To take one of their 'downsides', Pillemer and Rothbard (2018) contend that conflict may arise between the socioemotional goals of friendship and the instrumental goals required for workplace success, including being distracted from tasks required at work. Such a concern sits uneasily with the lived experiences of many academics.

Providing further evidence for our earlier claim that the contemporary academy is a harsh workplace, a recent work-life balance global survey (Bothwell 2018b) indicated that most academics work beyond their contracted hours, including weekends and holidays, some believe their job restricts their capacity to see friends and others believe they worked longer hours over the past three years than previously. Any time academic friends spend on non-academic activity is located in a context in which the lines between work and non-work hours have become increasingly blurred. Ultimately, too, the relatively limited time academic friends exert on personal non-instrumental activity is, we suggest, defensible on the grounds that it contributes to flourishing, to leading a meaningful life (Rumens, 2017). Echoing Gill's (2010) aforementioned 'hidden injuries of the neoliberal university', Hodgson (2016) writes evocatively of Lewis' (2013) 'fatigue university' and she points to consolation from colleagues to alleviate our despair at failing to meet targets. Contra Pillemer and Rothbard (2018), that consolation from colleagues confirms White's (1990) suggestion that working with friends not only brings satisfaction to those friends but that it can also benefit the workplace. Seeking consolation as an element of academic friendship providing emotional support and intrinsic rewards will function as a bulwark against work related stress and exhaustion (see Kram & Isabella, 1985). While Pillemer and Rothbard (2018, 640) assert that friends' 'devotion of resources to social relationships that go beyond work-based interdependencies and goals may compromise instrumental goals', we suggest that such a compromise may be of relatively limited duration and minimal effect. So, too, the very notion that the social and emotional goals of academic friendship are as distinct from workplace goals as suggested is debatable.

We have already agreed with Friedman (1993) that special commitments to each other do not necessarily over-ride duties in non-voluntary professional relationships. The special duties academic friends owe to each other may well be subordinated to, at least given less immediate priority than, work-related activities and demands. As Keller (2004, 350-351) observes, 'the good things about friendship do not always fit neatly alongside other goods' and neither are good friends required 'to provide each other with slavish, unconditional affirmation' (334). Academic friends will not, of necessity, 'side' with or show preferential treatment to each other at cost to others. Indeed it may be 'actually misleading to say that we are necessarily or typically partial to our friends' (Blum 1980, 55). Moreover, Keller (2004, 349) reminds us of the 'general moral duties' that pertain within friendship, including not to be manipulative or deceptive or to take advantage of others, and we argue that such moral duties extend to and characterise any and all decent workplace [and other] relationships.[viii]

Yet if our universities follow Pillemer and Rothbard's managerialist appropriation of friendship then they should implement strategies 'to ameliorate the risks associated with workplace friendships' (2018, 652) with, for example, 'cross-functional or organization-wide coffee chats or presentations … to ensure that the boundaries of friendship groups are not perceived as impenetrable' (2018, 652-3). All too apparent here is the urge to manage personal workplace friendships, 'to fully leverage' their benefits in pursuit of organizational goals apparently empowering 'employees to optimize their relationships' (Pillemer and Rothbard 2018, 653). Discernible too is the urge to control relationships in the workplace including the fabrication of acceptable friendships and the disruption of friendships if those are perceived, in any sense, to conflict with institutional goals.

Seeking to manage and so control academic friendship would further evidence a distrust of academic labourers in an accountability culture already intent on 'ever more perfect administrative control' resulting in 'a culture of suspicion' (O'Neill 2002, 46-47). It is amidst such a culture of suspicion that academics are not to be trusted and the very best features of academic friendship may be regarded more as threat than benefit. Nonetheless, we turn now to some of the most obvious activities and benefits of academic friendship, focussing our attention on trust in such relationships in the face of distrust by their institutions.

We have noted the variability of workplace relationships and associations permitting varying degrees of instrumentality, trust and choice. Acknowledging that 'reasonably congenial' relationships will occur across the workplace, White (1990, 85) suggests that 'the situation will be transformed if they are real friends'. Academic colleagues will likely be engaged in shared activities such as co-authorship, co-teaching and supervision, as well as scholarship and research. However, such shared activities will not, necessarily, render their participants 'real friends', rather they will be colleagues working together in, at best, a friendly way which sustains collegiality. It is the degree of voluntariness, non-instrumentalism and, particularly, trust set alongside virtue, utility and pleasure,

which will distinguish a friend from a colleague although, in the literature, there is often an elision of collegiality[ix] and friendship. Academic colleagues might well trust one another to complete a task and they might have chosen to work together but that relationship is outcomes based: there is a job to do and they have opted to collaborate for instrumental purposes. Unless they are friends they may not trust each other to express their doubts about, say, the value of that task or the prescribed procedures and stages for its target-based completion and evaluation. Colleagues working together are not necessarily friends because friendship, on our account, has as one of its central and defining features, interpersonal trust. Although such trust may extend to expecting from colleagues 'technical competence (and minimal decency)', trust in and of a friend will entail 'a kind of moral competence' and an expectation that a friend will appreciate the sort of 'loyalty, kindness, and generosity' required in a range of situations (Jones 1996, 7). Moreover, that moral competence will be predicated on a judgement, frequently developed over time, that a friend will be trustworthy and merit our trust (Hawley 2012). Trust, of course, entails risk and a lack of control as well as 'systematic vulnerability' with 'the self at some danger' and it will be role-related to the extent that an asymmetrical role relationship will result in an asymmetrical trust relationship (Flores and Solomon 1998, 220). We have already noted the rough equality, the approximate symmetry, between friends and hence trust in academic friendship is to be understood in several ways. Academic friendship, by dint of shared academic pursuits, draws on intellectual trust as friends learn from and with each other but this extends to moral as well as intellectual growth. Not only are academic friends open to intellectual learning from each other but so too to what Friedman (1993, 205) describes as 'the possibility of deep-level moral change'. This will demand a willingness for friends to hold to their own values and principles while simultaneously sustaining 'an uneasy, although vital, balance' with the sometimes differing views of friends 'in their unique, whole particularity' (Friedman 1993, 205). This has important implications for both the voluntary and non-instrumental elements of friendship already emphasised and lends to the relationship both particular ways of doing academic friendship and a role in resistance.

Academic friendship: resisting the neoliberal order

Just as there appears to be no prospect of the emergence of any post neoliberal order that might displace or even reduce the dominance of market capitalism and its intrusion into all spheres of life, there is no end in sight to the dark times of the neoliberal academy. Yet we conclude by defending academic friendship as offering both a refuge and a means of resistance against the worst features of Ball's (2016, 1049) technologies of 'Market, Management and Performance'. Continuing to labour in the 'university in ruins' (Readings 1996), we have argued that academic friendship can provide social and emotional support. Concomitantly we have indicated that it can entail generative intellectual and moral activity and growth through trusting and honest reflection on, for example, ideas of practice and principles in research and scholarship and teaching and learning.

This argument matters because ways of doing academic friendship, often realized with humour, and premised on trust, non-instrumentalism and voluntariness stand in stark contrast to goal-oriented performativity and institutionally determined and managed sets of rules and prescriptions. For Friedman (1993) friendship offers possibilities for disruption and 'the right to question the moral legitimacy of any contingent moral claim' (1993, 242). Hence Taylor and Tyler's friendship does entail that they question the moral legitimacy of some institutional claims and prescriptions. It is their particular relationship, as friends who trust, like, and respect each other, that affords them the freedom to share each other's company 'motivated by their own needs, desires, attractions, and fears, rather than, and often in opposition to, the expectations and ascribed roles of their found communities' (Friedman 1993, 249).[x] Accordingly, Tyler and Taylor question some of the prevailing imperatives and directives of the academy today, often echoing Sutton's (2017, 627) claim that technologies of performativity have overridden education's purpose, morally defined as a public good.

In trying to survive and flourish in the neoliberal academy Taylor and Tyler can defend academic friendship by making time and protecting spaces for friendship, both in shared academic work and in being vigilant in shielding pockets of creativity, trust and innovation that foster voluntary and intrinsically rewarding work, regardless of its amenability to measurement against targets and KPIs. Such vigilance calls for critical awareness of managerialism's relentless drive to appropriate and ultimately distort all forms of workplace association, imposing on academic labourers a regime of performativity sometimes overlaid with a veneer of friendliness in the form of superficial conviviality. A drive to hitch workplace friendships to always extrinsically defined ends, such as proffering and requiring mentorship sometimes in the guise of friendship[xi], should prompt protection of friendship precisely because of its voluntary nature.

Under the conditions and virtues we have attributed to friendship academic friends may be prompted to resist imperatives to be entrepreneurial choosers in competition with one another and to enact alternative values. They might regard colleagues and students as allies worthy of care, rather than competitors and customers. The small spaces of authenticity afforded by friendship can encourage forms of honest critical reflection liberated from requirements to display success and measurable outcomes at all costs. Although the form of academic friendship we have defended has been largely focused on an imagined professional and personal academic friendship, it also suggests extending some features of friendship more widely. Understanding friendship and solidarity as distinctive concepts, friendship, nonetheless, entails acting in solidarity with other academic labourers who are also alert to prevailing neoliberal regimes, refusing to be seduced into uncritical compliance and holding fast to shared intellectual interests and commitments. Solidarity with colleagues inspired by the values of academic friendship should also alert us to situations in which we may be complicit in managing fellow academic labourers in various forms including, for example, peer review, in which we might resist the urge to be competitively dismissive. So while we have focussed here on a defence

and celebration of 'real' friendships, in which the personal and the academic complement each other, we should where we can extend the virtues and best features of such relationships to a wider circle of colleagues. While friendship, on our account, will not be mandated and academics should resist any attempts to manage and control it, its best features are those that might usefully be borrowed in any and all academic relationships. Although we have stressed that real friendship is by definition intrinsically valuable it can also create spaces that might foster educationally worthwhile change, imagining different views and practices in the face of homogenizing and stultifying regulation, as well as ongoing reflection on the very idea of the university. Those spaces should not, of course, be the exclusive domain of friends but they might be enriched by at least some of the best virtues of friendship.

Finally, our defence of academic friendship in the dark times of the neoliberal academy is most decidedly not intended to reinforce the 'amiable passivity of the academic life' (Inglis 2011). Reflecting on his [re]formation as 'a neoliberal academic subject' and drawing on Inglis' (2011) image of a beast, Ball (2012) talks of a 'rough neoliberal beast'. In the face of such a beast, one means of responding to both Ball's and Inglis' calls for resistance is, we contend, academic friendship. Educationists are urged 'to become increasingly critically reflexive, politically aware' in order to 'reawaken to their real educational work - the ethical and moral project that most signed up to but which has since become lost' (Ball 2012, 1046). While academic friendship cannot slay Ball's (2016) slouching neoliberal beast, we do suggest it is worth defending it to help us to remain critically reflexive, to help us to wake-up, and to confront and maybe even to go some way towards taming that beast.

Acknowledgements

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[i] 'Outputs' refer to the UK's REF (Research Excellence Framework), a peer review process with three elements, one of which is 'outputs' - publications, performances and exhibitions, see http://www.ref.ac.uk/about/whatref/.

[ii] SMART objectives are, often, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound but different universities use modified forms (e.g. strategic not specific).

[iii] The UK's Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) drawing on HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) data for 2014/15, notes 'at least 53% of all academics employed in the sector are on some form of insecure contract' with many staff 'employed as "workers", paid by the assignment, on lower pay rates and with fewer employment rights' at https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8384/Precarious-work-in-higher-education-November-2016-update/pdf/ucu_precariouscontracts_hereport_nov16_.pdf) . See https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7995/Precarious-work-in-higher-education-a-snapshot-of-insecure-contracts-and-institutional-attitudes-Apr-16/pdf/ucu_precariouscontract_hereport_apr16.pdf for current data.

[iv] These are all listed by various UK universities. A search for 'university values' reveals a plethora of such terms.

[v] While we share Bennett's criticism of competitive individualism, we would wish to distinguish between the self-interest of such *ethical egoism* and *ethical individualism* as a defence of the individual as the primary unit of moral concern.

[vi] But also see Bacon (2014) for neo-collegiality.

[vii] For example the UK's National Student Survey (NSS) at https://www.thestudentsurvey.com/about.php and Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/teaching/what-is-the-tef/.

[viii] Of course we acknowledge the 'dark side of friendship' (Fehr, 1996:179) for both friends and others and so the need for some regulation, e.g. through codes of conduct on workplace relations, to head off workplace romances and sexual liaisons that, misaligned with power, might undermine the moral rectitude of the institution and cause individual harm.

[ix] While collegiality might be understood as 'a structured form of collaborative decision-making' and, often, as 'a mode of behaviour, having in mind relations between colleagues which are mutually supportive, geared to the good of the collective over the individual and not fixated on rank' (Bacon, 2014:3), our argument is that academic friendship is not geared to the good of the collective although, of course, it may yield such a dividend.

[x] Friedman was writing here of friendship amongst women but we are extending her disruptive possibilities to academic friendships.

[xi] We note Kram (1983:620) includes friendship as one of mentoring's psychosocial functions although she notes that will likely develop over time particularly during the 'redefinition phase' when 'the relationship becomes, primarily, a friendship'.