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Early Career Anxieties in the University: The Crisis of Institutional Bad Faith

ABSTRACT

The issue of casualisation in universities has received much attention in recent years, with strike action across the UK highlighting the extent of the issue in the sector. In this chapter, I look at the situation in Irish universities, paying particular attention to the anxieties that confront early career staff. Whilst wider neoliberal trends in employment practices has no doubt played a key role in the changing nature of the Irish university, this chapter intends to look at the issue from a slightly different angle. Ultimately, I argue that the crisis of casualisation is a crisis of bad faith, a term most closely associated with the French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre. Whilst it is useful to explore Sartre's discussion of the individual's role in relation to bad faith, this nevertheless fails to account for the institutional context in which casual academics now work. In response to this, I aim to show how bad faith is *encouraged* by the institution, who in turn profit from their employees becoming like 'things-in-themselves', and with the unguaranteed promise of a more authentic life in the future, those employees then serve – and become subservient to - the institution itself.

1. Introduction: The Casual Academic

Since 2019, university trade unions in the UK have been calling on management to address the pervasive casualisation that early career academics now face (UCU 2019). Those working on a series of fixed contracts over several years are forced to balance teaching commitments with the need to endlessly apply for other temporary jobs, often doing unpaid work in exchange for tenuous promises of 'career development'. With almost 70% of researchers and 51% of teaching staff surveyed by UCU in 2019 on insecure contracts, staff dissatisfaction and anxiety are on the rise. But the issue of casualisation is not just a UK phenomenon. In 2020, a series of investigative articles released by *Noteworthy* made visible the extent of the issue in Irish universities. In the face of others impacted by the so-called 'gig economy', university staff may appear to be a privileged group. And yet, the investigation revealed that the use of precarious contracts is rife in the sector, with over 11,200 lecturers employed on such contracts nationwide, accounting for almost 50% of staff in prominent universities such as UCD (Delaney 2020).

Since 2008, this issue has been exacerbated in Ireland, where, in response to the economic downturn during that time, austerity measures meant a decline in state funding for universities. Where funding *is* available, it appears to have been directed towards 'marketing' the university in line with wider neoliberal trends (See, for example: Ball 2012; 2016; Coulter and Nagel 2015; Courtois and O'Keefe 2015; Kitchen *et al.* 2012). One approach taken to

stimulate the education market in this way related to employment practices at the university, with the *Higher Education Academy* calling for 'more customised employment relationships for those higher education institutions which progress towards a more entrepreneurial and autonomous mode of operation' (HEA 2011, p. 118). And it is out of this context that the so-called 'casual academic' was born.

The model of casualised employment at the university has had far-reaching impacts for the livelihood and experiences of affected academics. Unable to plan for the future, casual academics often rely on supplemental income from elsewhere, including social welfare or, if they are fortunate enough, support from their families (Delaney 2020; Flynn 2020). Since the performance of casual staff is tied to potential (though unguaranteed) career progression, casual academics are often heavily reliant on performance indicators such as student and staff feedback. And since, unlike permanent employees, casualised staff are often excluded from the 'unfair dismissal' process, as well as other employment rights such as minimum wage protection, sick pay, and parental leave, they have little recourse to complain (Heffernan and Heffernan 2019; Delaney 2020). Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, it is easy to imagine how such staff might be especially vulnerable. But even prior to this, casualised staff have faced increasing anxiety around financial stability and the tenuous prospects of permanency. They reported feeling under-appreciated and over-worked, excluded from the recognition afforded to those in permanent positions. This latter point in particular seems to take on subtle but often pernicious forms – from not being included in staff emails or in invitations to staff events, to a lack of office space, as well as a lack of representation on university boards (Percy and Beaumont 2008; Loveday 2018; Heffernan and Heffernan 2019).

And yet, the true extent of the issue remains unclear. For casualised employees, there is often no standardised system of complaints. Union membership can be costly on a casualised salary, and as a result of this, issues of casualised contracts were (until recently) given less weight in union negotiations (Delaney 2020). The very act of unionising is itself can be a frightening endeavour, where their vulnerability perpetuates a fear of being perceived as 'troublesome' and, ultimately, of hurting one's chances for future work. More practically, there also appears to be a serious lack of data on casualised workers at university level, with many universities in Ireland simply not keeping track of employees without permanent contracts (Courtois and O'Keefe 2015). In order to address this, Courtois and O'Keefe (2015) set out to investigate the lived experiences of casualised academics in Irish universities. Their findings echo much of the available data on casualised academics elsewhere – that the *Arts and Humanities* and the *Social Sciences* departments often bear the brunt of austerity cuts, and that these employment practices disproportionately affect women and minorities in those sectors in particular. A stark number of these employees (around 46%) receive salaries considered below the poverty line, particularly if we take into consideration hours worked as opposed to hours paid (Flynn 2020). Many of these employees start work without any clear indication of their pay and conditions, and yet, perhaps most worryingly, many nevertheless feel 'grateful', given the vague assurances of future career development that is often suggested to them (Delaney 2020).

Ironically, however, casual contracts can pose considerable barriers to future progression. For one, permanency requires a solid research profile, evidence of one's capacity to acquire research funding, as well as the accumulation of experience at whatever cost. But such prerequisites prove difficult (if not impossible) to acquire without a secure contract in the

first place (Percy and Beaumont 2008). Indeed, the 'time spent as a precarious worker is indicative of more than just an increase in a reliance on temporary work [by the university]', but rather, speaks to the increasing difficulties of temporary workers 'trying to obtain a holistic academic profile' (Courtois and O'Keefe 2015, p. 57). According to a report issued by the *Marie Curie Alumni Association* in conjunction with the *European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers*, early career academics are especially affected by these challenges, with rates of depression exceeding the general population sixfold (Eurodoc, 2019).[1]

The current climate of university work may certainly affect most academics in the sector, and yet, it is early career academics, a high percentage of which are employed on precarious contracts, that are faced with such anxieties in particular. They are anxious about financial stability and future planning, about their abilities and the sheer exertion it takes to remain in academia. They are anxious about the possibility of being downgraded or denied work for 'speaking out'. Indeed, they are anxious about how they are being 'seen' by their colleagues. It appears that universities are unable to function without some form of casualised contracts, and casualised work has thus become a 'contemporary institutional fact' (Percy and Beaumont, 2008, p. 146). Some researchers (e.g. Heffernan and Heffernan, 2019) have called for an increase in professional development initiatives to support such colleagues. In certain contexts, staff turnover at the university is close to 60%, with 'shifting expectations and the focus of academic work on metricised research output [and] increasing pressure to secure research funding' seriously damaging job satisfaction, particularly for those who are 'new' to the profession (Heffernan and Heffernan, 2019, p. 102). But there is simultaneously a lack of investment and support for those on precarious contracts, not only highlighting the fallacy of meritocratic hiring practices in the first place, but a lack of acknowledgement afforded to the issue in a broader sense.

Whilst wider neoliberal trends in employment practices has no doubt played a key role in the changing nature of the Irish university, this chapter intends to look at the issue from a slightly different angle. Ultimately, I argue that the crisis of casualisation is a crisis of bad faith, a term most closely associated with the French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre. Before turning to a lengthier discussion of this complex idea, it is important to consider *how* anxiety manifests itself in the university sector of late, and how this, in turn, reveals the 'bad faith' by which institutions shirk their responsibility in their relationship with, and understanding of, casualised employees.

2. Anxiety in the University

Anxiety in the university is multifaceted. From the perspective of (early career) academics, it is an anxiety that arises from the expectations of their role, such as the demand to continually satisfy student needs (e.g. Ball 2003) as well as the seemingly insurmountable pressure to increase research outputs (e.g. Burbules 2020). This anxiety comes in part from competitiveness within the sector, and the greater institutional flexibility with which their contracts – and, indeed, their work – is managed. From the perspective of the institution, there

[1] Interestingly, however, only around 19% of those interviewed in the Courtois and O'Keefe (2015) study were in their twenties, suggesting (as *Noteworthy* had also highlighted) that the issue of precarity is not necessarily commensurate with experience in the field.

appears to be an anxiety that arises from the need to be 'cost-effective' in employment practices – ultimately, to minimise the institutional risk of hiring permanent staff. In some respects, there may be an attempt to pacify this anxiety by sidestepping many of the protections afforded to permanent academics, effectively giving the institution the power to expend staff at will. According to Percy and Beaumont (2008), the very production of the 'casual academic' serves to neutralise this anxiety even further, not only due to the precarity through which they are employed, but through relegating responsibility for performance to the individual rather than the institutional framework that 'casualises' them in the first place. And it is these casualising 'mechanisms' – the often pedantic and inaccurate calculation of hours, the separation of research and teaching, the endless continuation of fixed-term contracts – that signal an underlying institutional anxiety which results in increased micromanagement and scrutiny.

Anxiety is often seen as symptomatic of the current climate in which most academics now work, an inescapable institutional fact outside of the university's control in many respects. It may be recognised and even managed, as exemplified through the prevalence of 'mindful' activities for staff wishing to cope with work stress (See, for example: Lemon and McDonough 2018). But such initiatives are often tokenistic, serving to merely 'bandage' the wound rather than treat the source of infection. They can often be incredibly tactless. An institution I once worked at, for instance, offered free yoga lessons to combat workplace stress at the very same time that many of my colleagues were being 'downgraded' for work they had been carrying out for several years. All of this further perpetuates the idea that anxiety is a personal shortcoming - an inability of individual staff members to adjust to the university's competitive and demanding environment.

But, as Hall and Bowles (2016, p. 33) remark, anxiety is 'inherent in the design of a system driven by productivity and the potential for the accumulation of capital'. In the case of the neoliberal university, 'capital' may include measurable components such as research output and student satisfaction (e.g. Ball 2003; 2016). In fact, anxiety is central to the maintenance of the so-called 'entrepreneurial' individual, an 'institutional tactic' that produces idealised academic selves – flexible, over-committed, excellent in research, incited to *do* better and to *be* better, to self-manage in line with institutional expectations (Loveday 2018). Indeed, according to the neoliberal logic by which many universities currently function, the very production of the casualised academic *as* anxious is useful in this regard, since it *responsibilises* staff to increase the competitiveness of the institution as a whole. This 'anxiety of performativity' (Brady 2019) - arising from the need to meet the performative expectations of one's role - is a kind of 'terror', resulting in a neurosis that tyrannises our conception of knowledge, expertise and practices as measurable commodities (Ball 2003; Lyotard 1984). This performativity can also be turned 'inwards' – indeed, we can think of *ourselves* in these fixed and measurable ways, particularly if our 'performance' determines what kind of academic we *are*. In order to explore this further, let us turn to existentialist thought of Jean-Paul Sartre.

3. Existentialism and the Individual in a Disenchanted World

Sartre is often cited as one of the key figures who made 'existentialism' popular, a movement in philosophy and in literature that significantly shaped post-war thought in Europe and elsewhere. Whilst difficult to systematise, Sartre (1973) claims that the commonality around existentialist thinking rests on one simple tenet: that 'existence precedes essence', and that all

philosophy should therefore take the experiences of the human subject as its starting point. For Sartre, this 'concrete experience' of the human being - imbued with a consciousness that distinguishes us from 'things-in-themselves' (trees, rocks, benches), thrown into a godless world devoid of inherent meaning, with selves that are not 'ready-made' - is the perpetual but failed attempt to formulate an essence or identity for ourselves: in short, to say (with some sense of certainty) 'who we are'. Indeed, whilst solidifying our identities is something we strive for, we nevertheless remain 'perpetually incomplete' (Sartre, 2018, p. 136). But it is this very ability to question and to (re)formulate ourselves that demonstrates something peculiar to human beings – that unlike objects, defined by their usage, functions or 'essences', we humans have *no* inherent or 'fixed' self in this way. Rather, we are 'condemned to be free', solely responsible for the lives we lead, and the person we become by virtue of this.

Most commentators agree that challenging times provide a fertile ground upon which existentialist thinking flourishes, and Sartre's brand of existentialism is no exception. Whether it be the fall of feudalism, the waning influence of religious thinking in intellectual circles, or the time before, during, and after the Second World War, most thinkers associated with existentialism have explored the question of what it means to be human in such times of upheaval. Undoubtably, many have turned towards an exploration the individual's place within this so-called 'disenchanted' world. According to Weber, who popularised the term just before the First World War (Grosby 2013; Weber 2010), disenchantment is in part related to a loss of pre-established 'destinies', corresponding to a rise in individualism where each of us experience the liberating but destabilising effect of the new-found freedom in defining oneself. According to Taylor (1989), however, this 'inward turn' of modern societies amounted to a disjointed form of selfhood, and whilst individual freedom is often seen to be the 'the finest achievement of modern civilisation' (Taylor 1991, p. 12), it is a Pyrrhic victory in many respects. For thinkers such as Weber, Marx and Taylor, the freedom of the individual in a disenchanted world is accompanied by a new kind of rationality, one that is based on 'calculat[ing] the most economical application of means to a given end' (Taylor 1991, p. 5), where optimal efficiency becomes the ultimate marker of success. This form of rationality is instrumentalist in nature with its narrow focus on 'ends' and 'outputs', and is also reinforced by the 'soft despotism' of social institutions. As indicated previously, this line of thinking prevails in the neoliberal university, particularly in terms of how 'successful' academics are recognised in 'measurable' terms.

Whether or not individualism is a blessing or a curse is not the primary focus for Sartre, but rather, what becomes of individuals in light of this 'inward turn'. This disenchanted world has indeed allowed more freedom to call into question values that were once seen as having utmost authority in our lives, as well as the roles that are demanded and cultivated by society. But all of this freedom can be destabilising and anxiety-inducing, and it requires us to continuously revalue our own lives, and to take responsibility for how it is that we live. Ironically, acknowledging the 'absurd' nature of the world 'does not liberate: it binds' (Camus 2005, p. 64). It may also tempt us into a form of nihilism, one that is propagated in the 'industrio-technological' society that gives us little space for serious contemplation. Existentialists thus seek to address this wider discourse of instrumentalist reasoning that has pervaded both everyday as well as intellectual life, to expose the false consciousness by which many of us live as a result of this, and to encourage us to instead strive for more committed and 'authentic' forms of life.

Importantly, however, freedom for Sartre is not practical – it is ontological (Detmer 2005). It is not simply about the fulfilment of certain intentions but concerns why we have those intentions in the first place. This relates to what Sartre (2018) calls our 'fundamental project'. In short, the fundamental project concerns the person we are (perpetually) striving to become, an 'ideal' of sorts that we will never quite attain. But it is on the basis of this *striving* that we orient ourselves in the world. This includes the intentions or values that underpin our conduct, by which our 'situation' is brought to light. The very idea that we are 'free' to make ourselves does not preclude the ways in which we are always situated within a particular 'facticity', however – we are socially and historically 'embodied' in the world in ways over which we have no direct control, for instance. Whilst Sartre (2008) recognises that there are often social forces at work that seem to determine us in specific ways, and that the spaces we occupy as bodies inevitably restrict certain choices we can make, we are nevertheless always *responding* to – and thus *responsible* for – our facticity. Rather than our situation determining what or who we can become, we are always responding to or, indeed, making sense of our 'place' in the world. In other words, humans exist as situated beings in the world, but not in the same way other objects who do not get to decide to *be* anything other than what they *are*. Moreover, the ways in which we respond to the world are always open to re-evaluation. However, Sartre admits that, although this 'question' is always there in our experience of the world, it is rarely done, given that doing so would cause a crisis where we must redefine all of our life choices, as well as the person we have 'become' by virtue of these.[2]

The very fact that humans are both free to respond to *and* situated within a particular contexts means that our experiences in the world are always underpinned by an implicit sense of anxiety, something that would not exist if they were to simply exist in the world as any other object. Indeed, for Sartre (2018, p. 718, *emphasis added*), humankind 'carries the weight of the whole world on his [sic] shoulders: he is *responsible* for the world and for himself, as a way of being…. the incontestable author of an event or an object'. But such a weight of responsibility means that, as Bell (1989, p. 32) notes, '…being human is itself a challenge many would prefer to avoid.'

4. Bad Faith

In order to alleviate (or deny) this underlying anxiety, we often resort to what Sartre calls 'bad faith'. Bad faith is sometimes described as the antithesis of authenticity, but although authenticity is implied throughout Sartre's work, it is never fully (or, at least, clearly) defined. Instead, Sartre takes a 'via negativa' approach, creating a space in which to unveil the furtive ways that bad faith functions in our lives. His most extensive discussion on bad faith appears in his magnum opus, *Being and Nothingness*, and it features heavily throughout many of his literary works. Sartre (2000) has also alluded to the times in which he, himself, acted in bad faith, as exemplified by the above quote taken from his autobiography, *Words.*

[2] For Sartre, it is often only when something is 'amiss' that we come to recognise – and perhaps call into question – our fundamental project. It is only then that we come to re-evaluate what we have done, and indeed, who we are. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre (2018) gives the example of a person born into slavery who only later comes to realise that they have been exploited all their lives. Whilst the slave may be unable to overthrow the practical constraints on his freedom, he is nevertheless *ontologically* free in terms of the extent to which he can re-evaluate his situation – and, indeed, himself – since he is able to conceptualise another possibility for the life he may lead.

In short, bad faith involves reducing oneself to a 'thing-in-itself', fully determined by the circumstances and the limitations imposed by facticity, an act that in turn allows us to shirk responsibility for ourselves and for the world. In order to exemplify this, Sartre employs his (in)famous example of the waiter. This waiter is 'a bit too precise… a bit too attentive' (Sartre 2018 p. 102). His behaves like an automaton, imitating its 'inflexible exactitude'. This person, however, is merely 'playing *at being* a café waiter'– a performance intimately connected to an idealised version of what that entails, in part based on what paying customers demand. According to Sartre (2018 p. 103):

> …the public demands [him] to actualize [functions] as a ceremony… We can see how many measures exist, to imprison a man in what he is. It is as if we lived in the constant fear that he might escape from it, that he might burst out and suddenly elude his condition.

For Sartre (2018), our understanding and enactment of roles are intimately tied to (societal) ideals, where we come to know the functions of our role through its 'ideal' representations that carry with them a particular definition of what that role necessitates. These necessary conditions of a role may be implicit, and, of course, they come from a variety of sources – in the context of the university, the institutional frameworks that describe our practices, our colleagues and the sense of competitiveness that may exist between us, the image of the 'philosophy teacher' in movies and in literature that we (perhaps unconsciously) emulate in our practice. Roles inevitably relate to a certain 'performativity' then, where the expectations of that role pre-determine how it is we behave once we adopt it. But often, this stops us from thinking about these roles – and, by extension, ourselves - in any other way.

What the waiter (and, indeed, the customers) fail to remember is that this waiter is *not* just a waiter in the way that an 'inkwell is an inkwell'. The waiter can contemplate and make judgements with regards to his situation. He knows what being a waiter means, and the acts he must perform in order to *be* a waiter (e.g. waking up at 5am, smiling enthusiastically at customers). These meanings are not 'brute facts', but only exist because of human society and human consciousness, as intimately related to how we interpret roles more generally. So whilst the adoption of such roles is an inescapable part of any profession (as well as most social situations) they may lead us into a form of bad faith with ourselves, since they involve reducing ourselves to particular functions, and to the same level of 'being' as inert objects.

The 'bad faith' that Sartre thus describes here relates to the ways in which the waiter might convince himself that he is *not* free – that he has no choice *but* to 'perform his condition', and that, ultimately, he cannot *be* any other way, much as a pen cannot choose to be anything other than a pen. But since the waiter *can* conceptualise a life in which he is not 'forced' to emulate the ideal expectations of his role, he is nevertheless free *in spite* of the circumstances in which he finds himself. And yet - to what extent is the waiter really responsible for calling into question or for 'overthrowing' the conditions of his employment? And what might we then say about the academic who is casually employed?

5. From Individual to Institutional Bad Faith

In *Being and Nothingness,* Sartre seems to relegate the responsibility of recognising (and, perhaps, enacting) one's freedom to the level of the individual. For him, it is the waiter that

fashions *himself* as an object with set functions. It is the *individual* who pretends that his duties are not free choices, and that these prohibit him from responding otherwise. Ultimately, it is the *individual* who fails to transcend his facticity, to constitute himself as beyond those conditions, or to at least conceive of another life where all of this might be possible.

In some sense, it is conceivable that an individual may actively decide to perpetuate bad faith in order to avoid the anxiety of freedom and responsibility. And there is no reason to doubt that one may act in bad faith with the best intentions in mind, like the early career researcher who has convinced herself that playing the 'ideal academic' will pay off in the future. Importantly, Sartre's discussion on bad faith need not be read in an accusatory sense, but a simple fact of being human in a disenchanted world. But does reducing oneself to one's function always signal an act of bad faith? What would Sartre say about the 'casual academic' or the waiter, for instance, who performs their 'condition' willingly in hope of attaining the space and recognition necessary to eventually live and work more 'authentically'? Ultimately, bad faith is, for Sartre (2018 p. 115), an 'unnamed decision'. It is a form of self-deception that is only possible if we believe ourselves *not* to be in bad faith, since *knowing* that one is acting in bad faith destroy any possible deception. Is the casual academic who *knowingly* acts in bad faith (in order to 'pay her dues', or perhaps to give herself the best prospect of an authentic life in the future) acting in good or bad faith, then?

The ambiguity of the role of self-deception in bad faith has led some commentators to distinguish between so-called 'weak' and 'strong' forms. According to Catalano (1980 p. 79), 'weak' forms relate the idea that bad faith is a 'necessary aspect of the human condition' – necessary in the sense that it allows us to 'cope with our freedom by assuming the roles of society'. A weak sense of 'good faith' in relation to this would simply be an awareness of the ways in which we are 'fixed' by our roles and their expectations. A strong sense of 'bad faith', however, involves a failure to see the wider context in which the adoption of our roles are situated, and how this, in turn, might go against our own fundamental values and intentions. We are unwilling to take responsibility for ourselves in this instance not because we have genuinely convinced ourselves of the constraints imposed by our environment, but because we are unwilling to accept the values that have been made manifest in our actions – and the *kind of person we are* as a result of this. A strong sense of 'good faith' would involve not only recognising this, but a genuine 'leap' of sorts – a radical overhaul of what we *do* in order to *become* someone else. But as Catalano (1980) points out, the most we can often hope for is the weak sense of good faith. Indeed, we must expect that most people, even if they *do* recognise the bad faith by which they live, will be unwilling to risk their lives or their self-understanding in this way. Perhaps more importantly, it is society that 'must be open and encourage questioning if the average person is to avoid living a life of bad faith [in the strong sense of the term]'. But would our current 'disenchanted' society want this – and, indeed, the institutions that operate within this context?

Important to our discussion here is in thinking about how those roles are understood at an institutional level, and how this very understanding proliferates such that the 'casual academic' feels compelled to adopt it at whatever cost. Academics may be responding to this situation on an individual level. Indeed, there appears to be an implicit acknowledgement that there is something 'amiss' in our current conceptualisation of the academic, and that, perhaps, things do not need to be this way in the future. But the weight of these responses is inevitably framed and (dis)incentivised by the institutional situation itself. Yes, the 'casual academic'

could refuse to publish, or to undertake unpaid work, just as the waiter *could* refuse to wake up at 5am. Yes, both are *choosing* not to risk their jobs by doing so, and must therefore take responsibility for these choices. But perhaps the issue is less with both individuals 'playing the game', and more with the specific rules through which this game is defined. The waiter must always smile despite the rudeness of a customer if he wants to remain employed. The casual academic must be prepared to publish and to teach if they wish to work in less precarious conditions. Bad faith is therefore encouraged by the institution, who in turn *profit* from those employees becoming like 'things-in-themselves' - expendable resources that, for the moment, serve to emulate the 'ideal' employee as defined by the institution. And with the unguaranteed promise of a more authentic life in the future, those employees thus serve – and become subservient to - the institution itself.

6. The Crisis of the Institution

As discussed earlier, one of the ways in which bad faith is incentivised is through the use of anxiety. The anxiety that is experienced by casual academics is thought to increase the productivity and competitiveness of institutions, and might therefore be thought of as a 'tactic' that helps to increase performativity. Not only does this performativity severely narrow the conception of being an academic, but it also subtly encourages casualised staff to actively reduce themselves to this particular 'ideal' – in other words, to see *themselves* as fixed, expendable 'resources' competing with others, as measurable in terms of fixed performance indicators like rates of student satisfaction and the level of research outputs. But by perpetuating an environment in which casualised academics exist in bad faith, to what extent are institutions shirking their responsibility to the academic themselves – their responsibility to not only facilitate their holistic development *as academics*, but to also recognise them *as humans*?

Academics are not merely 'resources' in the way that chairs or desks or computer screens are. They are fundamentally human beings *in the process of becoming*. They are not merely the knowledge and expertise delineated on their CVs, but a complex culmination of experiences, of undertakings and of relations, of knowledge and of ways of knowing. Some institutions may attempt to more explicitly avoid taking responsibility for this. Equally, it must be said that the context in which university's currently operate effects the extent to which the situation can be resolved. The casual academic may be aware of this problematic situation but feel unable or disincentivised to respond. It seems small steps have already been made to address this – a weak sense of good faith, perhaps, in relation to the awareness that is being raised of these issues. But perhaps a more radical overhaul is needed – a *crisis* of sorts - that first involves a re-engagement with the purposes of the academic and of the university as a whole, and secondly, a removal of the mechanisms that serve to go against the values we wish to see manifested in our institutions.

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