Philosophy thus traditionally practices a critique of knowledge which is simultaneously a denegation of knowledge (i.e., of the class struggle). Its position can be described as an irony with regard to knowledge, which it puts into question without ever touching its foundations. The questioning of knowledge in philosophy always ends in its restoration: a movement great philosophers consistently expose in each other.

> Jacques Rancière, *On the Theory of Ideology – Althusser's Politics*

I am a black man number one, because I am against what they have done and are still doing to us; and number two, I have something to say about the new society to be built because I have a tremendous part in that which they have sought to discredit.

> C. L. R. James, *C. L. R. James: His Life and Work*

THE ONLY POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP TO THE UNIVERSITY TODAY IS A CRIMINAL ONE

"To the university I'll steal, and there I'll steal," to borrow from Pistol at the end of Henry V, as he would surely borrow from us. This is the only possible relationship to the American university today. This may be true of universities everywhere. It may have to be true of the university in general. But certainly, this much is true in the United States: 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. 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 – this is the path of the subversive intellectual in the modern university.

Worry about the university. This is the injunction today in the United States, one with a long history. Call for its restoration like Harold Bloom or Stanley Fish or Gerald Graff. Call for its reform like Derek Bok or Bill Readings or Cary Nelson. Call out to it as it calls to you. But for the subversive intellectual, all of this goes on upstairs, in polite company, among the rational men. After all, the subversive intellectual came under false pretenses, with bad documents, out of love. Her labor is as necessary as it is unwelcome. The university needs what she bears but cannot bear what she brings. And on top of all that, she disappears. She disappears into the underground, the downlow lowdown maroon community of the university, into the *undercommons of enlightenment*, where the work gets done, where the work gets subverted, where the revolution is still black, still strong.

What is that work and what is its social capacity for both reproducing the university and producing fugitivity? If one were to say teaching, one would be performing the work of the university. Teaching is merely a profession and an operation of that onto-/auto-encyclopedic circle of the state" that Jacques Derrida calls the Universitas. But it is useful to invoke this operation to glimpse the hole in the fence where labor enters, to glimpse its hiring hall, its night quarters. The university needs teaching labor, despite itself, or as itself, self-identical with

and thereby erased by it. It is not teaching that holds this social capacity, but something that produces the not visible other side of teaching, a thinking through the skin of teaching toward a collective orientation to the knowledge object as future project, and a commitment to what we want to call the prophetic organization. But it is teaching that brings us in. Before there are grants, research, conferences, books, and journals there is the experience of being taught and of teaching. Before the research post with no teaching, before the graduate students to mark the exams, before the string of sabbaticals, before the permanent reduction in teaching load, the appointment to run the Center, the consignment of pedagogy to a discipline called education, before the course designed to be a new book, teaching happened.

The moment of teaching for food is therefore often mistakenly taken to be a stage, as if eventually one should not teach for food. If the stage persists, there is a social pathology in the university. But if the teaching is successfully passed on, the stage is surpassed, and teaching is consigned to those who are known to remain in the stage, the sociopathological labor of the university. Kant interestingly calls such a stage "self-incurred minority." He tries to contrast it with having the "determination and courage to use one's intelligence without being guided by another." "Have the courage to use your own intelligence." But what would it mean if teaching or rather what we might call "the beyond of teaching" is precisely what one is asked to get beyond, to stop taking sustenance? And what of those minorities who refuse, the tribe of moles who will not come back from beyond (that which is beyond "the beyond of teaching"), as if they will not be subjects, as if they want to think as objects, as minority? Certainly, the perfect subjects of communication, those successfully beyond teaching, will see them as waste. But their collective labor will always call into question who truly is taking the orders of the enlightenment. The waste lives for those moments beyond teaching when you give away the unexpected beautiful phrase – unexpected, no one has asked, beautiful, it will never come back. Is being the biopower of the enlightenment truly better than this?

Perhaps the biopower of the enlightenment knows this, or perhaps it is just reacting to the objecthood of this labor as it must. But even as

it depends on these moles, these refugees, it will call them uncollegial, impractical, naive, unprofessional. And one may be given one last chance to be pragmatic – why steal when one can have it all, they will ask. But if one hides from this interpellation, neither agrees nor disagrees but goes with hands full into the underground of the university, into the Undercommons – this will be regarded as theft, as a criminal act. And it is at the same time, the only possible act.

In that undercommons of the university one can see that it is not a matter of teaching versus research or even the beyond of teaching versus the individualisation of research. To enter this space is to inhabit the ruptural and enraptured disclosure of the commons that fugitive enlightenment enacts, the criminal, matricidal, queer, in the cistern, on the stroll of the stolen life, the life stolen by enlightenment and stolen back, where the commons give refuge, where the refuge gives commons. What the beyond of teaching is really about is not finishing oneself, not passing, not completing; it's about allowing subjectivity to be unlawfully overcome by others, a radical passion and passivity such that one becomes unfit for subjection, because one does not possess the kind of agency that can hold the regulatory forces of subjecthood, and one cannot initiate the auto-interpellative torque that biopower subjection requires and rewards. It is not so much the teaching as it is the prophecy in the organization of the act of teaching. The prophecy that predicts its own organization and has therefore passed, as commons, and the prophecy that exceeds its own organization and therefore as yet can only be organized. Against the prophetic organization of the undercommons is arrayed its own deadening labor for the university, and beyond that, the negligence of professionalization, and the professionalization of the critical academic. The undercommons is therefore always an unsafe neighborhood.

As Fredric Jameson reminds us, the university depends upon "Enlightenment-type critiques and demystification of belief and committed ideology, in order to clear the ground for unobstructed planning and 'development.'" This is the weakness of the university, the lapse in its homeland security. It needs labor power for this "enlightenment-type critique," but, somehow, labor always escapes.

The premature subjects of the undercommons took the call seriously, or had to be serious about the call. They were not clear about planning, too mystical, too full of belief. And yet this labor force cannot reproduce itself, it must be reproduced. The university works for the day when it will be able to rid itself, like capital in general, of the trouble of labor. It will then be able to reproduce a labor force that understands itself as not only unnecessary but dangerous to the development of capitalism. Much pedagogy and scholarship is already dedicated in this direction. Students must come to see themselves as the problem, which, counter to the complaints of restorationist critics of the university, is precisely what it means to be a customer, to take on the burden of realisation and always necessarily be inadequate to it. Later, these students will be able to see themselves properly as obstacles to society, or perhaps, with lifelong learning, students will return having successfully diagnosed themselves as the problem.

Still, the dream of an undifferentiated labor that knows itself as superfluous is interrupted precisely by the labor of clearing away the burning roadblocks of ideology. While it is better that this police function be in the hands of the few, it still raises labor as difference, labor as the development of other labor, and therefore labor as a source of wealth. And although the enlightenment-type critique, as we suggest below, informs on, kisses the cheek of, any autonomous development as a result of this difference in labor, there is a break in the wall here, a shallow place in the river, a place to land under the rocks. The university still needs this clandestine labor to prepare this undifferentiated labor force, whose increasing specialisation and managerialist tendencies, again contra the restorationists, represent precisely the successful integration of the division of labor with the universe of exchange that commands restorationist loyalty.

Introducing this labor upon labor, and providing the space for its development, creates risks. Like the colonial police force recruited unwittingly from guerrilla neighborhoods, university labor may harbor refugees, fugitives, renegades, and castaways. But there are good reasons for the university to be confident that such elements will be exposed or forced underground. Precautions have been taken, book lists

have been drawn up, teaching observations conducted, invitations to contribute made. Yet against these precautions stands the immanence of transcendence, the necessary deregulation and the possibilities of criminality and fugitivity that labor upon labor requires. Maroon communities of composition teachers, mentorless graduate students, adjunct Marxist historians, out or queer management professors, state college ethnic studies departments, closed-down film programs, visa-expired Yemeni student newspaper editors, historically black college sociologists, and feminist engineers. And what will the university say of them? It will say they are unprofessional. This is not an arbitrary charge. It is the charge against the more than professional. How do those who exceed the profession, who exceed and by exceeding escape, how do those maroons problematize themselves, problematize the university, force the university to consider them a problem, a danger? The undercommons is not, in short, the kind of fanciful communities of whimsy invoked by Bill Readings at the end of his book. The undercommons, its maroons, are always at war, always in hiding.

THERE IS NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY AND PROFESSIONALIZATION

But surely if one can write something on the surface of the university, if one can write for instance in the university about singularities – those events that refuse either the abstract or individual category of the bourgeois subject – one cannot say that there is no space in the university itself? Surely there is some space here for a theory, a conference, a book, a school of thought? Surely the university also makes thought possible? Is not the purpose of the university as Universitas, as liberal arts, to make the commons, make the public, make the nation of democratic citizenry? Is it not therefore important to protect this Universitas, whatever its impurities, from professionalization in the university? But we would ask what is already not possible in this talk in the hallways, among the buildings, in rooms of the university about possibility? How is the thought of the outside, as Gayatri Spivak means it, already not possible in this complaint?

The maroons know something about possibility. They are the condition of possibility of the production of knowledge in the university – the singularities against the writers of singularity, the writers who write, publish, travel, and speak. It is not merely a matter of the secret labor upon which such space is lifted, though of course such space is lifted from collective labor and by it. It is rather that to be a critical academic in the university is to be against the university, and to be against the university is always to recognize it and be recognized by it, and to institute the negligence of that internal outside, that unassimilated underground, a negligence of it that is precisely, we must insist, the basis of the professions. And this act of being against always already excludes the unrecognized modes of politics, the beyond of politics already in motion, the discredited criminal para-organization, what Robin Kelley might refer to as the infrapolitical field (and its music). It is not just the labor of the maroons but their prophetic organization that is negated by the idea of intellectual space in an organization called the university. This is why the negligence of the critical academic is always at the same time an assertion of bourgeois individualism.

Such negligence is the essence of professionalization where it turns out professionalization is not the opposite of negligence but its mode of politics in the United States. It takes the form of a choice that excludes the prophetic organization of the undercommons – to be against, to put into question the knowledge object, let us say in this case the university, not so much without touching its foundation, as without touching one's own condition of possibility, without admitting the Undercommons and being admitted to it. From this, a general negligence of condition is the only coherent position. Not so much an antifoundationalism or foundationalism, as both are used against each other to avoid contact with the undercommons. This always-negligent act is what leads us to say there is no distinction between the university in the United States and professionalization. There is no point in trying to hold out the university against its professionalization. They are the same. Yet the maroons refuse to refuse professionalization, that is, to be against the university. The university will not recognize this indecision, and thus

professionalization is shaped precisely by what it cannot acknowledge, its internal antagonism, its wayward labor, its surplus. Against this wayward labor it sends the critical, sends its claim that what is left beyond the critical is waste.

But in fact, critical education only attempts to perfect professional education. The professions constitute themselves in an opposition to the unregulated and the ignorant without acknowledging the unregulated, ignorant, unprofessional labor that goes on not opposite them but within them. But if professional education ever slips in its labor, ever reveals its condition of possibility to the professions it supports and reconstitutes, critical education is there to pick it up, and to tell it, never mind – it was just a bad dream, the ravings, the drawings of the mad. Because critical education is precisely there to tell professional education to rethink its relationship to its opposite – by which critical education means both itself and the unregulated, against which professional education is deployed. In other words, critical education arrives to support any faltering negligence, to be vigilant in its negligence, to be critically engaged in its negligence. It is more than an ally of professional education, it is its attempted completion.

A professional education has become a critical education. But one should not applaud this fact. It should be taken for what it is, not progress in the professional schools, not cohabitation with the Universitas, but counterinsurgency, the refounding terrorism of law, coming for the discredited, coming for those who refuse to write off or write up the undercommons.

The Universitas is always a state/State strategy. Perhaps it's surprising to say professionalization – that which reproduces the professions – is a state strategy. Certainly, critical academic professionals tend to be regarded today as harmless intellectuals, malleable, perhaps capable of some modest intervention in the so-called public sphere. But to see how this underestimates the presence of the state we can turn to a bad reading of Derrida's consideration of Hegel's 1822 report to the Prussian Minister of Education. Derrida notices the way that Hegel rivals the state in his ambition for education, wanting to put into

place a progressive pedagogy of philosophy designed to support Hegel's worldview, to unfold as encyclopedic. This ambition both mirrors the state's ambition, because it, too, wants to control education and to impose a worldview, and threatens it, because Hegel's State exceeds and thus localises the Prussian state, exposing its pretense to the encyclopedic. Derrida draws the following lesson from his reading: the Universitas, as he generalizes the university (but specifies it, too, as properly intellectual and not professional), always has the impulse of State, or enlightenment, and the impulse of state, or its specific conditions of production and reproduction. Both have the ambition to be, as Derrida says, onto- and auto-encyclopedic. It follows that to be either for the Universitas or against it presents problems. To be for the Universitas is to support this onto- and auto-encyclopedic project of the State as enlightenment, or enlightenment as totality, to use an old-fashioned word. To be too much against the Universitas, however, creates the danger of specific elements in the state taking steps to rid itself of the contradiction of the onto- and auto-encyclopedic project of the Universitas and replacing it with some other form of social reproduction, the anti-enlightenment – the position, for instance, of New Labour in Britain and of the states of New York and California with their "teaching institutions." But a bad reading of Derrida will also yield our question again: what is lost in this undecidability? What is the price of refusing to be either for the Universitas or for professionalization, to be critical of both, and who pays that price? Who makes it possible to reach the aporia of this reading? Who works in the premature excess of totality, in the not not-ready of negligence?

The mode of professionalization that is the American university is precisely dedicated to promoting this consensual choice: an antifoundational critique of the University or a foundational critique of the university. Taken as choices, or hedged as bets, one tempered with the other, they are nonetheless always negligent. Professionalization is built on this choice. It rolls out into ethics and efficiency, responsibility and science, and numerous other choices, all built upon the theft, the conquest, the negligence of the outcast mass intellectuality of the undercommons.

It is therefore unwise to think of professionalization as a narrowing and better to think of it as a circling, an encircling of war wagons around the last camp of indigenous women and children. Think about the way the American doctor or lawyer regard themselves as educated, enclosed in the circle of the state's encyclopedia, though they may know nothing of philosophy or history. What would be outside this act of the conquest circle, what kind of ghostly labored world escapes in the circling act, an act like a kind of broken phenomenology where the brackets never come back off and what is experienced as knowledge is the absolute horizon of knowledge whose name is banned by the banishment of the absolute. It is simply a horizon that does not bother to make itself possible. No wonder that whatever their origins or possibilities, it is theories of pragmatism in the United States and critical realism in Britain that command the loyalty of critical intellectuals. Never having to confront the foundation, never having to confront antifoundation out of faith in the unconfrontable foundation, critical intellectuals can float in the middle range. These loyalties banish dialectics with its inconvenient interest in pushing the material and abstract, the table and its brain, as far as it can, unprofessional behavior at its most obvious.

PROFESSIONALIZATION IS THE PRIVATIZATION OF THE SOCIAL INDIVIDUAL THROUGH NEGLIGENCE

Surely professionalization brings with it the benefits of competence. It may be the onto- and auto-encyclopedic circle of the university particular to the American state, but is it not possible to recuperate something from this knowledge for practical advances? Or, indeed, is it not possible to embark on critical projects within its terrain, projects that would turn its competencies to more radical ends? No, we would say, it is not. And saying so we prepare to part company with American critical academics, to become unreliable, to be disloyal to the public sphere, to be obstructive and shiftless, dumb with insolence in the face of the call to critical thinking.

Let us, as an example, act disloyally to the field of public administration and especially in masters of public administration programs, including related programs in public health, environmental management, nonprofit and arts management, and the large menu of human services courses, certificates, diplomas, and degrees that underpin this disciplinary cluster. It is difficult not to sense that these programs exist against themselves, that they despise themselves. (Although later one can see that as with all professionalization, it is the underlying negligence that unsettles the surface of labor power.) The average lecture, in the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at NYU for instance, may be more antistatist, more skeptical of government, more modest in its social policy goals than the average lecture in the avowedly neoclassical economics or new right political science departments at that same university. It would not be much different at Syracuse University, or a dozen other prominent public administration schools. One might say that skepticism is an important part of higher education, but this particular skepticism is not founded on close study of the object in question. In fact, there is no state theory in public administration programs in the United States. Instead, the state is regarded as the proverbial devil we know. And whether it is understood in public administration as a necessary evil, or as a good that is nonetheless of limited usefulness and availability, it is always entirely knowable as an object. Therefore it is not so much that these programs are set against themselves. It is rather that they are set against some students, and particularly those who come to public administration with a sense of what Derrida has called a duty beyond duty, or a passion.

To be skeptical of what one already knows is of course an absurd position. If one is skeptical of an object then one is already in the position of not knowing that object, and if one claims to know the object, one cannot also claim to be skeptical of that object, which amounts to being skeptical of one's own claim. But this is the position of professionalization, and it is this position that confronts that student, however rare, who comes to public administration with a passion. Any attempt at passion, at stepping out of this skepticism of the known into an inadequate confrontation with what exceeds it and oneself,

must be suppressed by this professionalization. This is not merely a matter of administering the world, but of administering away the world (and with it prophecy). Any other disposition is not only unprofessional but incompetent, unethical, and irresponsible, bordering on the criminal. Again the discipline of public administration is particularly, though not uniquely, instructive, both in its pedagogy and in its scholarship, and offers the chance to be disloyal, to smash and grab what it locks up.

Public administration holds to the idea both in the lecture hall and the professional journal that its categories are knowable. The state, the economy, and civil society may change size or shape, labor may enter or exit, and ethical consideration may vary, but these objects are both positivistic and normative, standing in discrete, spatial arrangement each to the other. Professionalization begins by accepting these categories precisely so competence can be invoked, a competence that at the same time guards its own foundation (like Michael Dukakis riding around in a tank phantasmatically patrolling his empty neighborhood). This responsibility for the preservation of objects becomes precisely that Weberian site-specific ethics that has the effect, as Theodor Adorno recognized, of naturalizing the production of capitalist sites. To question them thus becomes not only incompetent and unethical but the enactment of a security breach.

For instance, if one wanted to explore the possibility that public administration might best be defined as the labor of the relentless privatization of capitalist society, one could gain a number of unprofessional insights. It would help explain the inadequacy of the three major strains in public administration scholarship in the United States. The public ethos strain represented by projects like refounding public administration, and the journal *Administration and Society*; the public competence strain represented in the debate between public administration and the new public management, and the journal Public Administration Review; and the critical strain represented by PAT-Net, the Public Administration Theory Network, and its journal *Administrative Theory & Praxis*. If public administration is the competence to confront the socialisation thrown up continuously by

capitalism and to take as much of that socialisation as possible and reduce it either to something called the public or something called the private, then immediately all three scholarly positions become invalid. It is not possible to speak of a labor that is dedicated to the reproduction of social dispossession as having an ethical dimension. It is not possible to decide the efficiency or scope of such labor after the fact of its expenditure in this operation by looking at it once it has reproduced something called the public or something called the private. And it is not possible to be critical and at the same time to accept uncritically the foundation of public administrationist thought in these spheres of the public and private, and to deny the labor that goes on behind the backs of these categories, in the undercommons, of, for instance, the republic of women who run Brooklyn.

But this is an unprofessional example. It does preserve the rules and respect the terms of the debate, enter the speech community, by knowing and dwelling in its (unapproachable) foundational objects. It is also an incompetent example. It does not allow itself to be measured, applied, and improved, except to be found wanting. And it is an unethical example. Suggesting the utter dominance of one category over another – is this not fascism or communism? Finally, it is a passionate example full of prophecy not proof, a bad example of a weak argument making no attempt to defend itself, given over to some kind of sacrifice of the professional community emanating from the undercommons. Such is the negligent opinion of professional public administration scholars.

What, further, is the connection then between this professionalization as the onto- and auto-encyclopedia of the American state and the spread of professionalization beyond the university or perhaps the spread of the university beyond the university, and with the colonies of the undercommons? A certain riot into which professionalization stumbles – when the care of the social is confronted with its reaction, enforced negligence – a riot erupts and the professional looks absurd, like a recruiting booth at a carnival, professional services, personal professional services, turning pro to pay for university. It is at this riotous moment that professionalization shows its desperate business,

nothing less than to convert the social individual. Except perhaps, something more, the ultimate goal of counterinsurgency everywhere: to turn the insurgents into state agents.

CRITICAL ACADEMICS ARE THE PROFESSIONALS PAR EXCELLENCE

The critical academic questions the university, questions the state, questions art, politics, culture. But in the undercommons it is "no questions asked." It is unconditional – the door swings open for refuge even though it may let in police agents and destruction. The questions are superfluous in the undercommons. If you don't know, why ask? The only question left on the surface is what can it mean to be critical when the professional defines himself or herself as one who is critical of negligence, while negligence defines professionalization? Would it not mean that to be critical of the university would make one the professional *par excellence*, more negligent than any other? To distance oneself professionally through critique, is this not the most active consent to privatize the social individual? The undercommons might by contrast be understood as wary of critique, weary of it, and at the same time dedicated to the collectivity of its future, the collectivity that may come to be its future. The undercommons in some ways tries to escape from critique and its degradation as university-consciousness and self-consciousness about university-consciousness, retreating, as Adrian Piper says, into the external world.

This maroon community, if it exists, therefore also seeks to escape the fiat of the ends of man. The sovereign's army of academic antihumanism will pursue this negative community into the undercommons, seeking to conscript it, needing to conscript it. But as seductive as this critique may be, as provoked as it may be, in the undercommons they know it is not love. Between the fiat of the ends and the ethics of new beginnings, the undercommons abides, and some find comfort in this. Comfort for

the emigrants from conscription, not to be ready for humanity and who must endure the return of humanity nonetheless, as it may be endured by those who will or must endure it, as certainly those of the undercommons endure it, always in the break, always the supplement of the *general intellect* and its source. When the critical academic who lives by fiat (of others) gets no answer, no commitment, from the undercommons, well then certainly the conclusion will come: they are not practical, not serious about change, not rigorous, not productive.

Meanwhile, that critical academic in the university, in the circle of the American state, questions the university. He claims to be critical of the negligence of the university. But is he not the most accomplished professional in his studied negligence? If the labor upon labor, the labor among labor of the unprofessionals in the university sparks revolt, retreat, release, does the labor of the critical academic not involve a mockery of this first labor, a performance that is finally in its lack of concern for what it parodies, negligent? Does the questioning of the critical academic not become a pacification? Or, to put it plainly, does the critical academic not teach how to deny precisely what one produces with others, and is this not the lesson the professions return to the university to learn again and again? Is the critical academic then not dedicated to what Michael E. Brown termed the impoverishment, the immiseration, of society's cooperative prospects? This is the professional course of action. This enlightenment-type charade is utterly negligent in its critique, a negligence that disavows the possibility of a thought of an outside, a nonplace called the undercommons – the nonplace that must be thought outside to be sensed inside, from which the enlightenment-type charade has stolen everything for its game.

But if the critical academic is merely a professional, why spend so much time on him? Why not just steal his books one morning and give them to deregistered students in a closed-down and beery student bar, where the seminar on burrowing and borrowing takes place. Yet we must speak of these critical academics because negligence it turns out is a major crime of state.

INCARCERATION IS THE PRIVATIZATION OF THE SOCIAL INDIVIDUAL THROUGH WAR

If one were to insist, the opposite of professionalization is that fugitive impulse to rely on the undercommons for protection, to rely on the honor, and to insist on the honor of the fugitive community; if one were to insist, the opposite of professionalization is that criminal impulse to steal from professions, from the university, with neither apologies nor malice, to steal the enlightenment for others, to steal oneself with a certain blue music, a certain tragic optimism, to steal away with mass intellectuality; if one were to do this, would this not be to place criminality and negligence against each other? Would it not place professionalization, would it not place the university, against honor? And what then could be said for criminality?

Perhaps then it needs to be said that the crack dealer, terrorist, and political prisoner share a commitment to war, and society responds in kind with wars on crime, terror, drugs, communism. But "this war on the commitment to war" crusades as a war against the asocial, that is, those who live "without a concern for sociality." Yet it cannot be such a thing. After all, it is professionalization itself that is devoted to the asocial, the university itself that reproduces the knowledge of how to neglect sociality in its very concern for what it calls asociality. No, this war against the commitment to war responds to this commitment to war as the threat that it is – not mere negligence or careless destruction but a commitment against the idea of society itself, that is, against what Foucault called *the conquest*, the unspoken war that founded, and with the force of law, refounds society. Not asocial but against the social, this is the commitment to war, and this is what disturbs and at the same time forms the undercommons against the university.

Is this not the way to understand incarceration in the United States today? And understanding it, can we not say that it is precisely the fear that the criminal will rise to challenge the negligence that leads to the need, in the context of the American state and its particularly violent Universitas circle, to concentrate always on conquest denial?

THE UNIVERSITY IS THE SITE OF THE SOCIAL REPRODUCTION OF CONQUEST DENIAL

Here one comes face to face with the roots of professional and critical commitment to negligence, to the depths of the impulse to deny the thought of the internal outside among critical intellectuals, and the necessity for professionals to question without question. Whatever else they do, critical intellectuals who have found space in the university are always already performing the denial of the new society when they deny the undercommons, when they find that space on the surface of the university, and when they join the conquest denial by improving that space. Before they criticise the aesthetic and the Aesthetic, the state and the State, history and History, they have already practiced the operation of denying what makes these categories possible in the underlabor of their social being as critical academics.

The slogan on the Left, then, "universities, not jails," marks a choice that may not be possible. In other words, perhaps more universities promote more jails. Perhaps it is necessary finally to see that the university produces incarceration as the product of its negligence. Perhaps there is another relation between the University and the Prison – beyond simple opposition or family resemblance – that the undercommons reserves as the object and inhabitation of another abolitionism. What might appear as the professionalization of the American university, our starting point, now might better be understood as a certain intensification of method in the Universitas, a tightening of the circle. Professionalization cannot take over the American university – it is the critical approach of the university, its Universitas. And indeed, it appears now that this state with its peculiar violent hegemony must deny what Foucault called in his 1975-76 lectures the race war.

War on the commitment to war breaks open the memory of the conquest. The new American studies should do this, too, if it is to be not just a people's history of the same country but a movement against the possibility of a country, or any other; not just property justly distributed on the border but property unknown. And there are other spaces situated between the Universitas and the undercommons, spaces that

are characterized precisely by not having space. Thus the fire aimed at black studies by everyone from William Bennett to Henry Louis Gates Jr., and the proliferation of Centers without affiliation to the memory of the conquest, to its living guardianship, to the protection of its honor, to the nights of labor, in the undercommons.

The university, then, is not the opposite of the prison, since they are both involved in their way with the reduction and command of the social individual. And indeed, under the circumstances, more universities and fewer prisons would, it has to be concluded, mean the memory of the war was being further lost, and living unconquered, conquered labor abandoned to its lowdown fate. Instead, the undercommons takes the prison as a secret about the conquest, but a secret, as Sara Ahmed says, whose growing secrecy is its power, its ability to keep a distance between it and its revelation, a secret that calls into being the prophetic, a secret held in common, organized as secret, calling into being the prophetic organization.

THE UNDERCOMMONS OF THE UNIVERSITY IS A NONPLACE OF ABOLITION

Ruth Wilson Gilmore: "Racism is the state-sanctioned and/or extralegal production and exploitation of group differentiated vulnerabilities to premature (social, civil and/or corporeal) death." What is the difference between this and slavery? What is, so to speak, the object of abolition? Not so much the abolition of prisons but the abolition of a society that could have prisons, that could have slavery, that could have the wage, and therefore not abolition as the elimination of anything but abolition as the founding of a new society. The object of abolition then would have a resemblance to communism that would be, to return to Spivak, uncanny. The uncanny that disturbs the critical going on above it, the professional going on without it, the uncanny that one can sense in prophecy, the strangely known moment, the gathering content, of a cadence, and the uncanny that one can sense in cooperation, the secret once called solidarity. The uncanny

feeling we are left with is that something else is there in the undercommons. It is the prophetic organization that works for the red and black abolition!