Occupy: a new pedagogy of space and time?

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> *'The creation (or production) of a planet-wide space as the social foundation of a transformed everyday life open to myriad possibilities – such is the dawn now beginning to break on the far horizon' (Lefebvre 2008: 422).*
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> *'The supreme good is time-space: this is what ensures the survival of being, the energy that being contains and has at its disposal' (Lefebvre 2008: 350)*
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> *'Change life! Change society! These precepts mean nothing without the production of an appropriate space' (Lefebvre 2008: 59).*
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> *'You can't evict an idea whose time has come.' (Occupy Wall Street 2011)*

Abstract

This paper forms the first part of a project of inquiry to understand the theoretical and practical potentials of Occupy through the recent wave of occupations that have emerged in response to the politics of austerity and precarity around the world. We do this as educators who are seeking to 'occupy' spaces of higher education inside and outside of the institutions in which we work.

Occupy points to the centrality of space and time as practical concepts through which it is possible to reconfigure revolutionary activity. By dealing with the concept (Occupy) at this fundamental level of space and time through a critical engagement with Henri Lefebvre's notion of 'a

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new pedagogy of space and time', we hope to open spaces for further revolutionary transformation by extending a critique of the politics of space and time into the institutions and idea of education itself.

Lefebvre considers the 'pedagogy of space and time' as a basis for a new form of 'counter-space'. He suggests that 'deviant or diverted spaces, though initially subordinate, show distinct evidence of a true productive capacity' (2008: 383), and in doing so reveal the breaking points of everyday life and the ways in which it might be appropriated as exuberant spaces full of enjoyment and hope. In the Production of Space, he identifies the space of leisure as a site within which such a resistance might be contemplated and activated. In our work we replace the principle of leisure with the concept of Occupy. We consider here how attempts to occupy the university curriculum, not as a programme of education but as the production of critical knowledge, may also constitute 'a new pedagogy of space and time'. We will describe this occupation of higher education with reference to two projects with which we are involved Student as Producer and the Social Science Centre, the former at the University of Lincoln, and the latter across the city of Lincoln.

Practice and Theory

We have each been committed to developing new pedagogies of space and time over a long period.

Practically, from a direction which emphasises institutional and systemic transformations, this work has involved the design, in 2006, of a classroom with students and colleagues at the University of Warwick associated with the Reinvention Centre for Undergraduate Research (Neary and Thody 2009). The classroom was created to promote intimate intellectual interaction between staff and students, undermining the dominating power relations that normally exist in university teaching spaces (Lambert 2011). This work morphed into a much larger research project exploring academic involvement in the design of teaching and learning environments

across twelve universities in the UK (Neary and Saunders 2011; Neary *et al*. 2010). A feature of this work was not simply how to promote 'student engagement' or ensuring 'student satisfaction', but finding ways to encourage debate about the meaning and purpose of higher education, or 'the idea of the university', as a 'collective intellectual' project (Waquant 2007 57).

From another direction, which emphasises resistance to the commodification of intellectual and social work through prefiguring its alternatives in everyday life, this work has involved the development of critical pedagogies in existing educational spaces and situations, the building of cultural resistance to the logic of capital in academic institutions (Amsler 2011a, 2011b), and the collaborative creation of new autonomous spaces of knowledge production in 'non-educational' contexts of social struggles and public spaces (Amsler *et al*. 2010).

Most recently, these projects have come to include new work with which we are both involved: *Student as Producer* and the *Social Science Centre*, the former at the University of Lincoln, and the latter across the city of Lincoln.

Theoretically, this new pedagogy is based on an understanding of space and time as space-time, in which human life is understood in cosmological terms as part of a 'very developed totality' (Marx 1993), grounded within the Marxian theory of value. In this arrangement it is not simply abstract spaces that are produced by the social relations of capitalist production (Lefebvre 2008); but, rather, that the substance of the social universe is space-time, produced as particular forms of social practice: commodity-formation by which use/concrete value is transformed into exchange/abstract value in a process dominated by the 'violence of abstraction' (Lefebvre 2008), as well as resistance to that practice. In other words, the commodity is a peculiar form of space-time that contains within it its own explosive contradiction (Postone 1993).

Our purpose is to re-appropriate ('detonate'), 'occupy', these moments of space-time through 'a new pedagogy of space and time', which can be characterised as the production of critical knowledge in everyday life. The basis of this critical knowledge is critical practical reflexivity. Critical practical reflexivity adheres to our space-time

formulation in that theory and practice are considered as immanent to each other (Gunn 1989). The essential aspect of critical practical reflexivity is that it questions the validity of its own concepts, which it does by recognising itself as inhering in the practical social world emerging out of, and inseparable from, the society it is attempting to understand. This process is expansive, creating new knowledge and meaning, avoiding circularity and infinite regress: 'good conversations' (Gunn 1989).

In practical terms, this means that 'education' cannot be separated from 'life' in institutions, and that thinking about education cannot be separated from the spaces and times in which we produce knowledge – which, in this formulation, are potentially everywhere and always. It has also been described as the 'ruthless critique of all that exists, ruthless both in the sense of not being afraid of the results it arrives at and in the sense of being just as little afraid of conflict with the powers that be' (Marx 1843). But the work of those living the life of Occupy across the world, and our own experiences, teach us we must recognise that critical practical reflexivity is more than simply intellectual or theoretical knowledge production; that it is embodied, affective, intersubjective and collective; and that the production of new radical subjectivities and revolutionary relationships is central to resistance against dominated spaces and times more generally.

Situating Occupy

It is hard to say where and when the Occupy movement began, now that there are rhizomatic occupations of everything, everywhere – public spaces, privatised spaces, schools, banks, libraries, government buildings, education, politics, even patriarchy (Colvin and Philips 2011; Lunghi and Wheeler 2012). Indeed, the new and deterritorialised ubiquity of #Occupy has bred excitement. Why? The use of occupation as a tactic in political struggle – or what Tim Gee refers to more specifically as the 'tactic of creating autonomous space as a form of resistance' – is not new, having roots in the revolutionary, anarchistic and feminist politics of the 1960s and 1970s. Even the 'birth' of the OWS movement in Zuccotti Park was itself one in a series of occupations (Brown 2012; Federici 2011; Gee 2012; Graeber

2011).[2] Just prior, in 2007 and 2008, students in several European countries had organised sit-ins and teach-outs to protest the privatisation of higher education; and in 2009 students in the UK occupied more than thirty universities to protest the institutions' refusal to cut ties with Israel after attacks on the Gaza Strip. During that same year, in less-remembered struggles to slow processes of industrial disemployment, UK workers occupied the Vestas wind turbine plant on the Isle of Wight, and Prisme in Dundee; in 2011, Waterford Glassworks. New waves of campus and workers' occupations, and new politico-intellectual groups such as the Edu-Factory and Occupy Everything, swept across Europe soon after. States across the world have responded by developing ever more antidemocratic mechanisms for preventing, repressing and dispersing occupations (Calhoun 2011; Brown 2012).

Scholarly interest in occupation as a serious theoretical and political phenomenon began to accelerate in 2010, after the early actions of the international student movement, UK Uncut actions and civic occupations in the US (Hancox 2011; Penny and Palmieri 2011) and consolidated more vigorously following the viral mobilisations of the revolutionary Arab uprisings (Butler 2011; Federici 2011; Graeber 2011; Zizek 2012; Possible Futures 2012).[3] Since then, the movement has been celebrated as a rebirth of radical imagination, direct democracy and popular political will, on the one hand, and denounced as a directionless diversion of time that is detached from the lived experiences, desires and interests of wider publics, on the other.

Beyond this polarised debate, however, there are deeper questions pressing. To what extent do the critical, democratic, horizontal and prefigurative dimensions of Occupy – particularly as materialised through the act of occupying space and time – constitute

[2] It is beyond the scope of this working paper to discuss the influential Latin American workers' occupations, but for more, see http://dev.affinitiesjournal.org/index.php/affinities/article/ view/10/30.

[3] Extensive collections of scholarly resources on Occupy can be found in the *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* (http://bjsonline.org/2011/12/understanding-the-occupy-movement-perspectives-from-the-social-sciences/), the U.S. Social Science Research Council's 'Possible Futures' project (http://www.possible-futures.org/category/occupy-movement/) and *Tidal* (http://bjsonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/TIDAL_occupytheory.pdf).

the material and cultural foundations for wider societal transformations? Do the core principles and diverse practices of Occupy, as well as its weaknesses and contradictions, suggest a new 'pedagogy of space and time' (Lefebvre 2008: 354) that can inform the increasing struggles against all forms of dehumanisation in contemporary society, including, but not solely, those which have their origins in the violence of capitalist abstraction? Do they offer hope for the many people who cannot physically occupy, divert or re-appropriate spaces or times? And for our purposes in this paper, does Occupy open new possibilities for reclaiming higher education from capitalist logics; for creating new forms of teaching, learning and critical inquiry that enable the production of autonomous subjectivities and liberating relationships within, but more importantly beyond, formally 'occupied' territories and environments?

Occupy and education

In many ways, the Occupy movement is explicitly pedagogical. As some of its roots extend into longstanding critiques of capitalist institutions of knowledge and education, there are strong educational elements in its formal constitution. Students and academics are now occupying educational buildings in order to slow their total absorption into the logic of commercial capitalism – or, as in Arizona just now, the logic of racist hegemony. Within the US movement, there are a number of working groups dedicated expressly to educational questions (e.g., the Empowerment and Education group – a hub for Occupy University, Student Debt and Forum on the Commons).[4] In London, Tent City University was an integral and publicly prominent part of the encampment in St. Paul's Square, popularising the idea that 'anyone can teach, anyone can learn' and transgressing boundaries between formal and informal education and 'traditional' and 'organic' intellectuals. Besides these most visible activist endeavours, there are many more efforts across the world to occupy schools and colleges as teachers and students discover the courage, solidarity and hope that empower them to resist corporate and managerial domination in their own institutions. Thus, although it is not clear that Occupy is actually shifting ground in political and

[4] See, e.g., the California 'Occupy Education' site at http://occupyeducationca.org/wordpress/.

economic battles against capitalist hegemony, it is certain that the movement educates.

Beneath these obvious manifestations of radical pedagogical politics, Occupy also belongs to longer and more diverse histories of what Mark Coté and others refer to as the 'educational dimension of struggles within and against neoliberalism' (2007: 3).[5] As the primary function of both formal and informal education is to produce docile neoliberal consumer-citizen subjects, struggles for autonomy have always embraced efforts to produce 'institutions of knowledge, of creation, of care, of invention and of education that are autonomous from capital' (Bifo 2007: 10). This has facilitated the emergence of 'an expanded concept of struggle, one that emphasizes the importance of everyday practices and of contests over meaning in the reproduction and transformation of hegemonic power relations' (Cote et al. 2007: 5). Radical knowledge politics have thus been central to the work of the revolutionary feminist, anti-colonial, grassroots workers' and anarchist movements of last century, and to the 'newest' social movements of this one, and in order to practice them such movements have often created autonomous educational institutions (Day 2005; Federici 2011; Graeber 2011c). The logics and languages of Occupy resonate with these projects, being experimental, emergent, focused on journeys rather than destinations, valorising the critical attitude, positioned outside of hegemonic discourses and practices, and radically hopeful (Cote *et al*. 2007: 14).

Even further beyond these explicitly educational concerns, the type of occupational practices now emergent are pedagogical in so far as they do what the philosopher Jacques Rancière argues all genuinely critical pedagogies do – 'reconfigure the common experience of the sensible' and 'create a new landscape of the visible, sayable and doable' (2010: 140, 148). Occupations disrupt dominant political subjectivities, precisely because the production of new social relations also produces processes of alter-subjectivation. As Silvia Federici thus argues, 'the Occupy

[5] For a richer contextualisation, see Federici's (2011) genealogy of Occupy in, *inter alia*, anti-globalization, anti-war, community work, Act Up, mutual aid societies, feminisms in everyday life and student movements.

movement is…developing an alternative to representative politics and becoming, in effect, a school of direct democracy and self-government' (2011: 2).

But is the Occupy movement – or the Occupy 'event', as some prefer to call it, a 'school'? If so, what type of 'school'? Does one have to be 'in occupation' in order to learn and teach within it? What do the experiences of these occupations teach us about the forms of knowledge and knowledge-production practices that serve democratic life? In a public statement issued just after being evicted from the Zuccotti Park occupation in November of last year, its dissident-residents asserted that 'this burgeoning movement is more than a protest, more than an occupation, and more than any tactic'; indeed, that its members far exceed those 'on site' (Occupy Wall Street 2011). They also asserted that because it was primarily an *idea* or collectivised sense of agency, it could never be 'evicted' from social relations.

While this ode to the radical power of the idea of Occupy is entirely appropriate, the question of its social resonance and resilience may be more complicated than the optimistic assertion implies. We would like to develop this argument in two directions. The first is to suggest that Occupy cannot be adequately theorised as *only* an idea, and therefore why its eviction – though not its annihilation – will remain a permanent crisis unless it is understood in a more holistic materialist way. The second is an attempt to imagine how the revolutionary energy of the movement might be extended beyond the most visible occupied spaces and into the institutions and everyday practices of capitalism. For, while the call to 'occupy everything' is growing louder, outside the encampments we seem to be giving up faster on the belief that there is any hope left for the university. I suggest that the concept of 'appropriation', as used by Lefebvre, may offer more to this project than the concept of occupation.[6]

[6] 'It may be said of a natural space modified in order to serve the needs and possibilities of a group that it has been appropriated by that group. Property in the sense of possession is at best a necessary precondition, and most often merely an epiphenomenon, of "appropriative" activity, the highest expression of which is the work of art' (Lefebvre 2008: 165).

Occupying the curriculum?

Here, we are particularly interested in the possibility of occupying the curriculum, or of appropriating the social space and time of education in ways that enable us to articulate what, how and why people learn. But why try to occupy a curriculum? Within the dominant frame, the word evokes little more than repressive canons, standardisation, 'benchmarking', quality audits and examinations. Indeed, in so far as our understanding of the relationship between knowledge and power is reduced in institutionalised curricular forms to 'a confirmation of the undefined and indefinable multiplicity of things, and gets lost in classifications, descriptions, and segmentations', curricula may be regarded as violent abstractions in their own right (Lefebvre 2008: 81). Rather than occupy the curriculum, should we not rather abolish or abandon it – 'deschool' society (Illich 1971)?

Indeed, the abolition of 'the curriculum', sometimes in exchange for a blank and seemingly transparent grid of empty times and spaces to be filled by anyone wishing to teach anything, is regarded as democratic pedagogy *par excellence* in many radical education projects today.

But perhaps, following Lefebvre, it is illusory to believe that society can be deschooled in this way. There can be no 'empty' spaces in social life, no ideologically vacant forms that await filling with radical content. 'We are always in occupation', write the Really Open University, 'of time, of space, of our values, ethics and beliefs. Everything around us is also occupied at every single moment'. The practice of occupation is thus a process and praxis of learning 'how to understand what it is that is "occupying" a given space' and then how to appropriate these tools for alternative or even impossible purposes – recognising all the while that we occupy a complex reality of embedded spaces and times, and that the effects of their intersecting trajectories often lie beyond our immediate intelligibility (Really Open University 2010). Social life may be considered curricular in so far as the production of knowledge is directed, paramaterised, disciplined and controlled. In addition to the explicit and hidden curricula which determine what people learn in schools and universities and which are often viscerally politicised, there are 'forms, processes and

sites of education occurring beyond formal schooling' through public pedagogies, and strong educational elements of wider social and political struggles, all of which contribute to the constitution of political subjectivities (Sandlin *et al.* 2011).

While we can escape or refuse a particular notion of curriculum, we therefore cannot escape the necessity of producing the social relations through which knowledge is created; i.e., curriculum. As Lefebvre argues, 'social relations, which are concrete relations, have no real existence save in and through space' (2009: 404). A curriculum thus cannot be understood *only* as an abstract set of ideas, bodies of knowledge or pedagogical methodologies. It can only exist when enacted within particular social relations and material environments, spaces and times. A 'curriculum' is a name for the practices that mediate the politics of knowledge and education, the political economy of space and time, and the possibility of autonomy. The question is thus not whether we should have theories and practices of curriculum, but rather how to assume collective control of determining 'for whom, by whose agency, why and how' knowledge is produced (Lefebvre 2009: 116).

So what might it mean to 'occupy' a curriculum?

The most explicit methods are to teach people *about* the Occupy movement in formal educational curricula (Reynolds 2012), or to take 'the occupation' into classrooms and youth organisations through outreach (Richardson 2012). Another approach, taken by US-based Educators' Network for Social Justice and Rethinking Schools organisations, is to organise a situation of simultaneous but decentralised pedagogical acts: to 'teach something you have been wanting to teach but haven't because it doesn't fit in [to the standardised curriculum] blah blah. It's your classroom; occupy it with some important and creative lessons!' (ENSJ 2011) Here, the spirit occupation is evoked in a deterritorialised way: 'We don't need to take tents and sleeping bags to our town squares to participate in the Occupy movement', it is argued; 'we can also "occupy" our classrooms, "occupy" the curriculum, and then collect stories about what we have done (Bigelow 2011). Such practices resonate with other forms of academic activism in spaces where 'cognitive capital cannot be totally closed' and where it is possible to 'maintain radical curriculum content alongside these

mainstream practices, and even to mount some countervailing initiatives' (Dyer-Witheford 2007: 59).

Perhaps this subverts or 'cracks' capitalism; to be sure, and the very act of refusing domination and acting autonomously can have a politically transformative power of its own (Holloway 2009). However, while such acts embody the radical spirit of Occupy, they also confuse the sustained, collective practice of occupation with an individualised, symbolic and out-of-time act which may temporarily disrupt status-quo relations but bypass disruptions in the political economy of space, time and subjectivity. As Judith Butler advised, while acting out can give a buzz of empowerment, 'it's really important to be able to situate one's rage and destitution in the context of a social movement' (Bella 2011).

It is also important to be able to situate one's anger and imagination in the lived experiences and material conditions of our everyday lives. As with all deterritorialised systems of power, we cannot just refuse to move from the curriculum. What intellectual and political tactics might be appropriate for conceptualising an occupation of curriculum? What are the spaces and times of curriculum that we might inhabit otherwise? And what external macro- and micro-politics must this project be connected to in order for it to have any transformative potential beyond individual perception?

Curriculum as a pedagogy of space and time

Unlike teachers of ethnic studies in Arizona schools whose books of people's history have recently been banned, academics in the UK have not entirely or explicitly lost control over what we teach. We have rather lost control over the form, structure and function of academic knowledge; the determination of the times and spaces in which we teach and learn; the relationships between educational philosophies and the material environments of teaching; and relationships between students and teachers. The critical literature on academic capitalism is replete with critiques of neoliberal pedagogies of space and time in teaching and learning: of the 'cramping', 'squeezing' and 'shrinking' of intellectual space and time, the 'overcrowding' and 'crowding-out'

of physical space, the 'colonisation' and 'capture' of political space; the 'erasure' and 'enclosure' of social space, the 'foreclosure' of future space, and – less metaphorically – the alienation and exhaustion that come from the intensification, exploitation and abstraction of academic labour.

This hegemonic capture of the conditions and relations of production of the curriculum, and particularly the disciplining of knowledge through its channelling into abstract and quantifiable forms, is central to the global project of transforming educational institutions into business machines (for historical context, see Hall in Coté *et al*. 2007: 113). The spatial and temporal organisation of teaching and learning in universities is what makes the production of capitalist knowledge possible, as the space of the university is 'mobilized for the purposes of production' through its commodification, abstracting, converting into exchange value, fetishizing and modularising' (Lefebvre 2008: 338).

Educational curricula are thus dominated and dominating spaces, and, like the current occupations are therefore 'sites for the construction of a non-capitalist conception of society' (Federici 2011: 3). To alter the relationships of the production of educational space and time *by producing them otherwise* is therefore an act of the highest political seriousness – one that requires material as well as mental appropriation, and ultimately, political action. It is therefore likely that any really promising occupation of the curriculum, which appropriated it to communalise, defetishise and decommodify education, would constitute a direct threat to the logics of capital and give rise to political struggle.

It is not clear whether this work can be done in the long term though the practices of occupation which have thus far done so much to ignite the radical imagination, democratise teaching and learning in public, proliferate the production of new critical political theories and practices, popularise alternative models of radical democracy, and breathe new life into both politics and education. To what extent are the occupied spaces to which Federici refers, *diverting* space and time or *appropriating* them? In Lefebvre's view, 'appropriation should not be confused with a practice which is closely related to it but still distinct, namely diversion (*détournement*)' (2008: 167).

Appropriation is not simply an act of taking space, but is more fundamentally the other of dominated space in practice: a 'natural space modified to serve the needs and the purposes of a group' (2008: 166). It should not be presumed, however, that there is a hierarchy of potentiality here. According to Lefebvre,

> the diversion and reappropriation of space are of great significance, for they teach us much about the production of new spaces. During a period as difficult as the present one is for a (capitalist) mode of production which is threatened with extinction yet struggling to win a new lease on life (through the production of the means of production) it may even be that such techniques of diversion have greater impact than attempts at creation (production). Be that as it may, one upshot of such tactics is that groups take up residence in spaces whose pre-existing form, having been designed for some other purpose, is inappropriate to the needs of their would-be communal life (Lefebvre 2008: 168).

Indeed, part of the power of the diversionary tactics of Occupy is just this; its capacity to demonstrate the extent to which once-common or enclosed public spaces are inappropriate to the needs of egalitarian, socially just and democratic societies. But is it also possible to intensify the appropriative potential of these occupations by viewing them through a more cosmological version of space–time/time–space?

It's Cosmic: space–time and the violence of abstraction

Lefebvre is clear: *'The supreme good is time-space: this is what ensures the survival of being, the energy that being contains and has at its disposal'* (Lefebvre 2008: 350). For Lefebvre, the substance of time-space is Marx's labour theory of value, by which use value is converted into exchange value in a process dominated by *both* the violence of abstraction and resistance to abstraction, which Lefebvre describes as 'counter-projects'.

Lefebvre finds radical subjectivity at one pole of the bipolarity of the commodity-form, as use-value: 'use value constitutes the only real wealth, and this fact helps to restore its ill appreciated importance' (2008: 341). For him, use value is the 'socially real' (342), the 'natural, material and immediate' stuff of life (344), whose 'material characteristics are placed in abeyance along with the needs to which they correspond' (343–344). In order for the politics of appropriation to overcome the politics of domination, Lefebvre argues for 'the primacy of use over exchange' (410).

Merrifield repeats this formulation, calling for a world in which 'use value outbids exchange value' (2011: 161). The basis of this alternative conception of value is not critical social theory or critical political economy, but rather a moral code: 'social ethics' rather than 'business ethics' (161), grounded in what Merrifield describes as the Other of abstract labour, 'the nature and capacities of *concrete* people' (21).

Merrifield provides an evocative exposition of what this form of radical being might look like. 'What's at stake is temporal, concerning not linear time but the rhythmic feature of organization, the rippling diffusion of militant sensibility, so struggle, of general insurrection; it's to do not so much with people connecting spatially as with the time they take to connect humanly, to feel the groove of insurrection resonances around the world and around them' (Merrifield 2011: 76).

The strength of this formulation is that it provides a framework within which to conceptualise resistance to capitalist social relations. The limitation, though, is that it perpetuates the approach it is attempting to critique – for no matter how radical the grooves, they go around and around in ever decreasing circles, replicating and repeating struggles in more fragmented forms without posing a fundamental challenge.

By locating the radical subject as use-value, Lefebvre and his followers are therefore replicating the theoretical formulations that Marx is attempting to deconstruct, and which Lefebvre himself has been arguing against: 'the undefined and indefinable multiplicity of things, and gets lost in classifications, descriptions and segmentations' (2008: 81). This is what Marx refers to as fetishisation. Use value does not sit naturally outside the social relations of capitalist production, but is itself a social form of objectified social relations. Use value is as much a characteristic of 'value in motion' as exchange value: as the materiality of immateriality. The attempt by Lefebvre and other critical social theorists to attribute anti-capitalistic tendencies to use-value by naturalising its ontological capacities, often associated with inherent creativity and a positive reading of humanity, is to attribute to it a form of being it can not possess according to Marx's formulations:

> The hypostatisation of the concrete and the identification of capital with the manifest abstract underlie a form of "anti-capitalism" that seek to overcome the existing social order from the standpoint which actually remains immanent to that order' (Postone 2000: 18).

The implication of Marx's critical social theory is not that we should privilege use value over exchange value, but that we should detonate 'value in motion': the capital relation itself (Holloway *et al*. 2009). This detonation is inherent within the commodity form – including knowledge that is commodified – and the explosive contradiction between use value and exchange/abstract value, in a process of commodification dominated by the violence of abstraction. This 'violence of abstraction' does not simply produce surplus value, the substance through which the social universe expands; but, also, resistance, class struggle: the (im)possibility of life as living death, creating another space–time dimension, i.e., the future; or, the power of human life brought under control for the benefit of humanity, so that time is no longer simply a measure of work, but a rhythm which corresponds to the 'beat or pulse of human life' (Neary and Rikowski 2000). *Living labour*. We might describe this resistance in our reconstituted 'social universe' as anti-value in motion (Dinerstein and Neary 2002).

And so it becomes possible to conceive of radical subjectivity as being located not in use value, but in the production of new forms of critical knowledge in everyday life, or practical reflexivity. Critical practical knowledge is formed from the same social substance as 'anti-value in motion': just as time inheres in space, use value inheres in exchange value, so to does theory inhere in practice as critical reflexivity or living knowledge, including life itself.

In the next section we describe two attempts to 'occupy the curriculum', i.e., create practical reflexivity through a new pedagogy of space and time. The first is within a university, the University of Lincoln, the second is across a whole city, the city of Lincoln.

Working it out in Practice

Student as Producer

Student as Producer is the organising principle for teaching and learning at the University of Lincoln, in the UK. The project has been ongoing at the University since 2007 and is now supported by a grant from the Higher Education Academy, 2010–2013. Student as Producer did not emerge from out of the Occupy movement, but it shares many of its characteristics and ambitions. Like Occupy, Student as Producer is aware of its own radical history, in this case the university as a political progressive project (Lyotard 1979), and its roots in the revolutionary politics of the 1960s. Like Occupy, Student as Producer is written through the critical social theory that inspired May 68: Benjamin, Debord, Lefebvre and others. The slogan Student as Producer is taken from a lecture, *Author as Producer*, given by Walter Benjamin to the anti-Fascist committee in Paris in 1933, to answer the question how do radical intellectuals act in a moment of crisis (Benjamin 1970). Like Occupy, Student as Producer has links with other revolutionary educational projects, e.g., Edu-factory, the Knowledge Liberation Front (KLF), the Occupy movement itself (e.g. Tent City University) and the recent student protests in Europe and around the world (Neary 2012). Like Occupy, Student as Producer is grounded within an explicit critical pedagogy, set against the consumerist ideology of neo-liberalism, i.e., student as producer rather than student as consumer. Like Occupy, Student as Producer is framed within a broad idealistic framework: to recover 'the idea of the University', not as a philosophical discussion but as a course of action, or a curriculum 'in and against' (Holloway date), the contemporary university. Like Occupy, Student as Producer is an anti-curriculum (University of Utopia 2009), whose substance is not simply teaching and learning but the production of knowledge as a revolutionary political project: 'the theoretical and practical knowledge of social life in the community' (Lefebvre 1969: 155), or 'living knowledge' (Roggoro 2011).

Although derived from 20th century avant-garde Marxism, not all teachers at the University of Lincoln are revolutionary Marxists. Student as Producer creates a framework for debates and discussion about policy and strategy for teaching and

learning across the university based on a radicalised political vernacular. Given the extent to which the language of managerialism has overwhelmed the discourse of higher education, this is no mean achievement.

Student as Producer works on different dimensions.

On one dimension, Student as Producer is the paradigm for curriculum development across all subjects and programmes at all levels within the university. At the point of programme (re)validation academics are invited and challenged to design their programmes using 'the techniques' (Benjamin 1933) of Student as Producer. This intellectual challenge encourages academics to defend their current teaching practices in the context of the Student as Producer debate. They are asked to explore pedagogical research that points to the effectiveness of learning by discovery and doing (Healey and Jenkins 2009; Brew 2006); and engage with the argument that the modern university is fundamentally dysfunctional, with its two core activities – research and teaching – working against each other (Boyer 1998).

The Student Producer 'techniques' which academics are asked to design into their curriculum include student research and research-like activity at all levels of undergraduate programmes, for the production of new knowledge and not simply as a pedagogical device. And, where is student voice in the design and delivery of programmes, for the purposes of democratising ways knowing. And, in what framework is the curriculum contextualised, what are the spatial learning landscapes within which teaching is set: at the geographical level of the classroom, the campus and beyond; but also as a horizontal space within which collaborations can multiply. And, in a learning environment that is saturated with digitalised educational technologies how are students made aware of the politics of machinic production. And, finally, in what ways does the curriculum point towards the future, during their time at the university and when students leave, giving them the sense that they are part of creating that future – as subjects/makers rather than objects/victims of history.

This approach is supported by a teaching educational programme, as well as an (in)formal network of support for teachers at the institutional level and across

Lincolnshire, in collaboration with Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln. As well as this regional focus, Student as Producer is working with other universities, nationally: Warwick, on a Student as Producer funding programme; the University of Central Lancashire on the promotion of the British Conference for Undergraduate Research and Plymouth on peer- assisted student learning. Student as Producer is developing new relationships with Christ Church Canterbury, the University of Hertfordshire and the University of the West of Scotland; and internationally at the University of Galway in Ireland, Maastricht University in the Netherlands and Macquarie University in Australia.

At another more fundamental level, however, Student as Producer is a response to the current crisis in higher education, which is part of the wider social-political crisis defined by the politics of austerity and precarity (Roggero 2011). Like Occupy, it is possible to frame Student as Producer as a radical reaction to the crisis of HE in both spatial and temporal terms.

This 'crisis of the University' is described by Andy Merrifield in his writing on Henri Lefebvre: 'Abstract space started to paper over the whole world, turning scholars and intellectuals into abstract labour and turning university work into another abstract space. Suddenly free expression and concrete mental labour – the creation and dissemination of critical ideas – increasingly came under the assault from the same commodification Lefebvre was trying to demystify. Suddenly and somehow, intellectual space – academic and ideational space in universities and on the page – had become another neocolony of capitalism, and scholars at once the perpetrators and victims, colonizers and colonized, warders and inmates' (Merrifield 2011: 119).

In temporal terms, Merrifield (2011) makes a connection with the revolutionary science of quantum mechanics, and 'The Coming Insurrection', demanding: '…a politics of time as well as a politics of space, a two-pronged radical attack in which activists become furtive double agents, time travellers as well as space cadets, voyagers and protagonists in a new Marxist quantum gravity'. And quoting from 'The Coming Insurrection': '"for us it's not about possessing territory. Rather it's a matter of increasing the density of communes, of circulation, and of solidarities to the

point that the territory becomes unreadable, opaque to all authority. We don't want to occupy the territory, we want to *be* the territory"' (The Invisible Committee: 108, cited in Merrifield 2011: 181).

And so the question is how to *be* resistance: the revolutionary space–time cosmology ('turn') becomes the existential question (Taylor 2011). What is the substance of this existential turn? (Taylor 2010).

The substance of the existential turn is critical reflexive knowledge in a particular context: the space and time of Occupy. Student as Producer is attempting to became that form of critical reflexive knowledge in the context of higher education. It is a 'collective intellectual' (Waquant 2007: 57) project radicalising Bourdieu in which the central issue of 'the idea of the university', the meaning and purpose of higher education, is reinvented at the level of curriculum development as a democratic, horizontal pedagogical process. In that sense, Student as Producer might be said to occupy the curriculum as a form what Richard Gunn has described as critical reflexive practice/practical knowledge.

Student as Producer is set firmly 'within and against' the idea of the university as a neoliberal institution, but within that context the student remains, resolutely, 'the student' (Neary and Hagyard 2011). The limit of Student as Producer is that the student does not *exceed* its own institutional and idealised form: 'the idea of the student' (Neary 2010). In order for the student to become more than themselves, the neoliberal university must be dissolved, and reconstituted as another form of 'social knowing' (Neary 2011).

Social Science Centre

Outside the university, a group of academics/scholars and students also operating in the city of Lincoln are attempting to create a new form of social knowing. This new form of social knowing is the Social Science Centre (SSC). Although many, but not all, of the academics/scholars and students involved with the Centre work at the University of Lincoln, the Centre has no direct relationship with the University of Lincoln, nor with any other university.

It is rather an emerging educational cooperative that aspires to create opportunities for advanced study and research in the social sciences which are both free of charge, and intellectually and politically democratic. The SSC aims to organise its curriculum according to 'academic values, including critical thinking, experimentation, sharing, peer review, co-operation, collaboration, openness, debate and constructive disagreement' rather than the 'short-termist, highly competitive, profit driven motives of the private [and increasingly the public] sector'.[7] Like a number of other alternative education projects in the UK, the SSC was established by academics, students and political activists in early 2011 as a protest against both the defunding and privatization of universities, and as an attempt to create a space for higher education in the social sciences that is autonomous from institutional dependencies (Eve and Jones 2011; Fuller 2011).

Unlike some of the projects with which it shares affinities, however, the SSC is not 'in occupation' of any of these institutions. Indeed, apart from scheduled gatherings in social and community centres, it does not have a permanent terrestrial home, and may never have. It rather works through the creation of 'counter-spaces' of education, in which the production of emancipatory knowledge is accomplished through the re-appropriation and, where necessary and possible the production, of social spaces, times and relations of learning. Brown defines occupation as an 'organized attempt to mobilize squatting to its limit, in terms of scale, number and speed, within a range of legal and illegal activities, as well as through negotiation and confrontation' (2011: 56). Unlike in occupations undertaken as tactics of political defense, in the SSC educational practice is being re-imagined and reconstituted through the spaces and times of everyday life. However, Brown also argues that the recent occupations are just one manifestation of a broader project to 'recover the commons – from environment and natural resources to our minds, bodies and labour, something that was long ago taken away from us by capitalist privatization'. As such, 'the target of occupation is no longer just physical spaces or objects but everything, everywhere – including ourselves to begin with' and is therefore possible for everyone, everywhere (Brown 2102: 56).

[7] From the SSC website, retrieved from http://socialsciencecentre.org.uk/.

The members of the Social Science Centre are thus not seeking to producing new educational possibilities in the face of imminent threats of eviction or violence, but to refuse hegemonic forms of institutional recognition and build autonomous ones. Richard Hall (2011) calls it an act of 'pedagogic resistance'. It is an experiment – not quite (or not yet) an experiment in 'dissolving higher education into a form of mass intellectuality' throughout society (Hall 2011), but one in radically de-institutionalising it by, for example, rejecting hegemonic forms of evaluation and accreditation in order to appropriate the use-value of critical knowledge while simultaneously reducing its value for exchange. This curricular project does have radical political aspirations, as 'in this process, the hope is that students as scholars become revolutionary social beings within open, socially-driven spaces, rather than becoming institutionalised agents', and that this in turn will proliferate learning that is 'geared to communal problem-solving and transformation' (Hall 2011).

Hall's reckons that, like all acts of political refusal, working in the Social Science Centre demands a certain amount of courage. He recognises 'the courage it takes to reclaim and reproduce our politics and our social relationships in the face of their enclosure' (Hall 2011). At the moment, much of this work is given over to what often feel like mundane tasks of formulating collective understandings of critical concepts, organising spaces and times to meet, planning for activities and events, and slowly building more open and reflexive relationships with one another. It may not look much like an urban insurrection, but this is precisely the point. Like others developing alternatives to capitalist social systems by occupying space and time elsewhere have argued, the micropolitics of resistance and creation are vital to the movement' (Feigenbaum 2012). The processes of occupying knowledge, and more pragmatically of reinventing the university, follow a similar logic. And through learning to work in this way, learning how to be critically and practically reflexive both individually and together, new spaces and times of possibility are opening.

Learning curves: what are we learning?

Many who are part of the Occupy movement, particularly those living and working in territorially diverted spaces, often refer to their experience in these spaces as a

'learning curve'. Our attempts to occupy – to create diversions in and, as far as possible, to appropriate – the spaces and times of our own educational work share elements of the acceleration, expansion and intensification of possibility which emerge through refusing to be determined through existing social forms and through collectively–autonomously producing our own relationships with space, time and one another. Not simply by the re-ordering of space and time, but to create a radical form of space-time by unleashing the social power of humanity locked up in the commodity- form as a way of appropriating the future as something other than crisis and catastrophe (Neary 2004).

Student as Producer and the Social Science Centre are, in one sense, each attempts to occupy the curriculum. Both aim in different ways to revolutionise the social relations through which knowledge is produced, refuse institutional injunctions to capture it as abstract labour, and create conditions for collective learning whose usefulness cannot be captured by existing measurements of value. However, they are also very different projects. The first remains committed to working within and against the existing university system in order to transform it. The second, although in no way escaping from the institution entirely, seeks to construct spaces, times and relations of learning which are autonomous from the neoliberal university, in opposition to the abstraction of social relations through monetary exchange, and embedded in the everyday life of local communities. Both are ongoing experiments. What resonates between them is an understanding that desires to reinvent the contemporary university for human purposes 'mean nothing without the production of an appropriate space' (Lefebvre 2008: 59), and that the production of such spaces – and times, and relationships, and ways of knowing – is ultimately a political project.

These experiments in critical-practical reflexivity, undertaken in the spirit and atmosphere of the Occupy movement, also afford critical insights into the limits and possibilities of occupying the curriculum. It is not enough to simply say, for example, that we work 'in-against-and-beyond' higher education, universities, the state, the class system, patriarchy or capitalism (Asher *et al.* 2010; Holloway 2009). Indeed, assuming this position within highly institutionalised spaces can often legitimise a conceit that we can be everywhere and nowhere at once – critical of capitalism, yet

reproducing it through habit and investment; critical of the capture of social knowledge and human creativity within the university, yet producing knowledge that is captured by these same forms of institutional recognition. It is not possible to be merely in, or against, or beyond the existing conditions of social life – as Lefebvre points out, 'no space ever vanishes utterly'. Occupying the curriculum thus demands that we become open to diverting and reappropriating our selves. Occupy illustrates the kinds of collective, creative struggle that such critical-practical *self*-reflexivity demands, and challenges those nurturing the spirit of Occupy within higher education to dare harder in appropriating the spaces, times and relations of critical knowledge production in everyday life.

The crisis – of higher education, and the university, as part of the general and historical crisis of capitalism – has opened up increasingly promising spaces for the radical critique of this system and of the violences of abstraction upon which it depends. Occupy revitalises hope in the power of ideas through the power of doing, and demonstrates how it looks and feels to reappropriate the times, spaces and sensibilities that are necessary for engaging in critical practical reflexivity about the conditions and future of our own existence.

Our next step is to have 'good conversations' (Gunn 1989) with those living the life of Occupy in its various articulations, and with ourselves.

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