Making Hope Possible: An exploration of moving popular Pedagogy Forward in Neoliberal Times from the Streets to the University.

Abstract:

In this paper, taken from a fuller discussion in my Doctoral Thesis carried out under a bricolage methodology, I will argue, utilising the fictive and imaginative elements of bricolage, that there are possibilities to engender a popular education through several sites of learning; a social movement (Occupy London), a cooperative higher learning provider (The Social Science Centre) and a reorganised University (The University of Lincoln, Student as Producer). I will also discuss, through the use of generative themes, the possibilities of creating nurture and support networks between these sites by understanding their organisational potential and their pedagogical structures. I will attempt to imagine a cyclic trajectory of solidarity and support between them in order to engender a more popular education in all the sites that allows for emancipation from the enclosure of neoliberalised social relations and the fundamental transformation of sociality and social organisation. The paper concludes that there is potential for not only convivial relations between these three layers of pedagogical interaction, but also the potential to create an action research-type cycle on a grand solidarisitic scale.

Key words: Occupy, critical education, popular education, bricolage, universities, curriculum

Break. We want to break. We want to create a different world. Now. Nothing more common, nothing more obvious. Nothing more simple. Nothing more difficult.

(Holloway, 2010: 3)

What is important is not to draw dividing lines, but see the lines of continuity.

(Holloway, 2010: 25)

This paper is a result of my Doctoral thesis on the pedagogy in the London Occupy LSX camp (Occupy). The thesis examined Occupy to attempt to understand the nature and the potential of the pedagogy that occurred from the point of two particular pedagogical

paradigms: The Universal Teaching ideas espoused by Ranciére (1991) and the critical, democratic power sharing classroom detailed mainly by Shor (1996) but including the thinking of many other critical education scholars. The Doctoral thesis then went on, utilising a Bricolage methodology (Kincheloe, et al., 2011; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004; Kincheloe & Tobin, 2006; Kincheloe & Steinberg,1998), to explore the possibilities contained within two further sites of learning: The Social Science Centre, a cooperative higher learning provider; and the University of Lincoln's Student as Producer project, a new organisational structure for the University in opposition to the student as consumer ethos, utilising research engaged practices. The argument contained in this paper, as in the thesis, is that a trajectory of popular, critical pedagogies, framed around the ideas of universal teaching (Ranciére, 1991) and the democratic power-sharing pedagogy of critical educators (for example Freire, McLaren, Giroux, and particularly Shor, 1996) could be created, that may engender a popular education from the streets to the academy and back. This trajectory would enable the creation and use of 'learning loops' between the various levels of educational provision, from social movements to academe.

Therefore, this paper examines the arguments around this, and explores the learning from the three sites. I will examine them in themes to understand the implications to education, research and social relations. I will argue that there is the potential to build strong connections between the various forms of organisation and that those forms discussed here have varying potential for promoting voice, justice and democracy in the socio-political juncture surrounding the writing of this work. The paper will then continue on to argue that, at the current moment, there may well be a need for forms of organisation that have a critical pedagogical vanguard in order to begin a cultural transformation and escape from the enclosure of individuals into dominating and oppressive behaviours so that we might, one day, be able to dispense with these forms and create a more organic, non-hierarchical and fluidic form of education.

In order to do this, several generative themes have to be understood in specific and politicised ways. Running throughout each of the pedagogical projects are the contentious themes of occupation and reclamation (of space, of cities, of the intellectual subject, the heart and the mind); experience and conscientization (of the individual, the collective and the human as political animal). I argue that it is through these themes that the strongest lines of continuity can be seen. To do this, I will utilise the permitted fictive and imaginative elements of the

bricolage (Kincheloe, et al., 2011; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004; Kincheloe & Tobin, 2006; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998).

As Holloway (2010: 3) insists, "we protest and we do more. We do and we must. If we only protest, we allow the powerful to set the agenda". This is the point. Holloway states that activism does not produce change, however important it may be. It is therefore necessary to connect the three sites together in order, not to assimilate or indoctrinate each other, but to create a dialogue to assist each other to grow, to become more, to reach into those forbidden places of utopian thinking and create the world of education that exists-not-yet (Holloway, 2010).

Cowden and Singh (2013: 3) describe what is happening in education as, "a crisis of thinking, feeling and doing" and insist, "it is crucial to understand the wider linkages". Therefore, linking these attempts at restructuring, through a solidarisitic cycle of praxis becomes paramount so that educators might be ready to ensure the 'crisis of thinking, feeling and doing' does not become pervasive throughout education and indeed society. I will now look at how the three sites presented in this work might do this through the themes of occupation, reclamation, story and experience and conscientization.

Occupation

> *Occupy: … keep busy, engage, employ*
>
> *Occupation: the state of having one's time or attention occupied*
>
> (Oxford English Dictionary, 2007: 1978)

> *Occupy: inhabit; ensconced in; populate; engage; engross; immerse*
>
> *Occupied: engaged; active; absorbed; engrossed; involved*
>
> (Oxford Thesaurus of English, 2006: 604)

Brown (2012: 56) argues, "the target of occupation is no longer just physical spaces or objects, but everything, everywhere – including ourselves to begin with". In addition, Neary and Amsler (2012: 109) remind us that there are now, following the Occupy movement, "rhizomatic occupations of everything, everywhere – public spaces, privatised spaces, schools, banks, libraries, government buildings, education, politics, even patriarchy".

Of particular interest here is the movement to 'occupy the curriculum', and as Bigelow (2011) insists, "we don't need to take tents and sleeping bags to our town squares to participate … we can also "occupy" our classrooms, "occupy" the curriculum, and then collect the stories about what we have done'". Neary and Amsler (2012: 114) agree, "we are particularly interested in the possibility … of appropriating the social space and time of education in ways to enable us to articulate what, how and why people learn". This is the basis of occupation in this work: that people occupy the *space and time of the event* - even though the tents are now long gone from the Occupy LSX camp at St. Paul's, the *spaces and times* were created and people can occupy those relations, learn from them and create reflection and thought that will assist in future struggles. Otherwise, as Shantz (2013: 14) says, "the thrill of immediacy of the street eruptions quickly subsides, leaving little of real gain in its wake". Occupy may feel like this to many, but from a popular, critical pedagogical point of view, the energy that was spent there must be recouped and be learnt from. Holloway (2010: 30-1) explains it like this:

> Often such explosions are seen as failures because they do not lead to permanent change, but this is wrong: they have a validity of their own, independent of the long-term consequences. Like a flash of lightening, they illuminate a different world, … the impression that remains on our brain and in our senses is that of an image of the world we can (and did) create. The world that does not yet exist displays itself as a world that exists not-yet.

This world that exists not-yet in the case of Occupy is one of relations attended to otherwise, experimental democracy and, of particular interest here, open education (Neary & Winn, 2012), politically charged education in a place where the agora is reclaimed; reclaimed through filling the empty place of power (Lefort, 1988) with discussion, creativity and liberated desires to commune. However, these dissipating spaces and relations also need to be occupied and reflected upon. "The practices of occupation … 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" (Neary & Amsler, 2012: 117). These practices, thus far limited, need to be extended if the social world is to escape from enclosure, because "two centuries of capitalism and market nihilism have brought us to the most extreme alienations – from ourselves, from others, from worlds" (The Invisible Committee, 2009: 16).

This world that exists not-yet, in opposition to the 'extreme alienations', could possibly become the new space of occupation. There is a notion that occupation freely moves into the 'empty place of power' (Lefort, 1988). However, it is argued here, as elsewhere, that there are no empty places of power as they are prefilled with privatised and corporatized ideological property:

> 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, '… Everything around us is also occupied at every single moment'. The practice of occupation is thus a process and praxis of learning (Really Open University, 2010 quoted in Neary & Amsler, 2012)

> (Neary & Amsler, 2012: 114)

If this is so then, Merrifield (2011: 133) has a point when he asserts that

> we need another zone of indistinquishability, another space of slippage, a space in which there's a lot of spontaneous energy as well as a few signs indicating where to go and what time the action begins. We need a new space of slippage in which we can organise and strategize, act without self-consciously performing, encounter others without walls, and hatch en masse a daring Great Escape from capitalism.

Shor (Shor in Macrine, 2009: 121) argues that "participation in critical learning helps …classrooms to function as vigorous public spheres, that is, as active public forums of broad deliberation….. Because discourse is a material force in the construction of self and society, such public spheres are instruments for the democratic construction of self in society and society in self". However, The Invisible Committee (2009: 53) assert that "control has a wonderful way of integrating itself into the commodity landscape, showing its authoritarian face to anyone who wants to see it. It's an age of fusions, of muzak, telescoping police batons and cotton candy. Equal parts police surveillance and enchantment". We are under surveillance, but we need not be enchanted.

Therefore, it is argued that occupation can be viewed as a transgressive act, rather than an overt, physical act. The sites of learning discussed here transgress the normative rules in education and instead occupy the creative imaginations of those who wander/wonder in. However, as Foust (2010: 3) states, "transgressive actions incite reactions due to their relationship to norms: Transgressions violate unspoken or explicit rules that maintain a particular social order. Yet, as scholars and practitioners have figured it, transgression's threat to social order runs deeper than violating the rules and expectations that govern what is

normal". The race is on to outrun those attempts: "If capital chooses to repress us, to co-opt us, to imitate us, so be it, but let it be clear that we lead the dance" (Holloway, 2010: 50).

Reclamation

Occupy literally occupied space, the space of Holloway's world that exists not-yet; the SSC claims to occupy a co-operative space, based on the free association of its members in order to occupy their own person's and relations with each other; the SaP initiative attempts to occupy the space of the consuming subject, rejecting it and nurturing it to realign to become (co)producer of knowledge. Nevertheless, when individuals occupy, their task is then to reclaim.

"We have been expropriated from our own language by education, from our songs by reality TV contests, from our flesh by mass pornography, from our city by police and from our friends by wage-labour" insist The Invisible Committee (2009: 36). Moreover, Shantz (2013: 4) adds, "neoliberalism seeks an extension of commodification into all spheres of social and ecological life". Peters and Freeman-Moir (2006: 2) add that the individual "political will to imagine much beyond the present seems hardly to exist. And the idea of utopia or the value of utopian thinking is easily dismissed as idle and silly. …Nothing like an alternative to global capitalism seems remotely possible". This is apparently not so in the sites discussed here where, for the most part, hope springs eternal. The reclamation of our humanity seems possible inside these places. In Occupy individuals attempted to begin the collective task of finding the solidarity required to find this will, to escape from their ordinary lives and to find others to work with; in the SSC the pedagogical project has the potential to create a greater awareness of how to dream, how to use utopian thought, to find an alternative; and in the SaP project, the potential is there to create an organisational structure that can support the theorising and the building of such alternatives.

Occupy reclaimed the right to public assembly and protest; the SSC reclaims the right to imagine in the terrain of the urban; and SaP reclaims the right to engage critically as co-producers of knowledge. All of these rights position the participants against an enclosure of public and civic life and the imagination. This is key. If the mass schooling of our creative imaginations is to be challenged, then the assertion of the right to freely associate, to

assemble, to imagine and to produce our own knowledge should be defended. Shantz (2013: 2) asserts, "there is a need now (as necessary as ever) to think through what we – non-elite, exploited, oppressed – want, and how we might get it. There is an urgency to pursue constructive approaches to meet common needs". The three sites under discussion do this, to varying degrees according to their constrictions. But as Foust (2010: 3) insists "transgressions that are permitted or escape the notice and discipline of boundary-policing authorities, push the boundaries further … In other words, transgression redefines lines of distinction, giving new meaning to identities and social practices". Therefore, what is acceptable tomorrow will be *different* to what is acceptable today, in one way or another. In the case of SaP and the SSC, I would argue that if they were able to escape the 'notice of the boundary policing authorities' they could become accepted and normative practices, but only if they are celebrated for their reclamation of thought, imagination and a popular curriculum.

However, due to the full enclosure of 'all spheres of social life' and the notion that 'the political will to imagine much beyond the present seems hardly to exist', the first urgent reclamation can be argued to be that of *ourselves*. Reclaiming humanity, because, as discussed earlier, there is nothing external to ourselves that is not already full and enclosed. It is true that "the recognition of one's ability to affect change, to produce another world is a crucial first step" as von Kotze (2012: 109) says, and that "creative collective experiences can help break through from seeing others as barriers rather than essential allies and make conscious the potential of solidarity in action". This entails reclaiming sociality, a strong theme in the sites: reclaiming what is common to all of us, our species experience as social beings, creating, in other words, commons. According to Dyer-Witheford (2010: 106), "the notion of the commons presupposes collectivities – associations and assemblies – within which sharing is organised". Shantz (2013: 19) adds to this "in commonism we reappropriate our own productive power, taking it back as our own". Therefore, an educational philosophy that enhances the reclamation of sociality seems essential for initiating the process.

However, are hearts and minds currently free enough from the repression of the status quo to be occupied and reclaimed? What is perhaps needed is for individuals to rediscover themselves, collectively, as agentic beings, as the very notion of the necessity of occupation of ourselves suggests that the spaces within us, as we have previously heard, are full of toxic ideology and enclosures.

Story and Experience

Individuals in Occupy discussed at length each other's stories and experiences in order to make sense of what was happening to them and the rest of their society; The members of the SSC use the '*Sociological Imagination*' (Mills, 1957/2000) to make sense of their experience by inserting their own biographies into its framework of questions; and SaP uses the experience of the students' knowledge production and their experience of 'scenarios' as the starting point for their research engaged teaching and learning programme.

Cavanagh (in Borg & Mayo, 2007: 45) suggests, "story telling is a tremendously powerful medium, pedagogy and much more". Cho (2013: 78) adds "the voices of those who are marginalised can/do provide 'evidence for a world of alternative values and practices whose experience gives the lie to hegemonic constructions of social worlds' (Scott, 1992: 24)", making these stories from the margins important for escaping the enclosure of the TINA (there is no alternative) syndrome. Ollis (2012: 213) adds fuel to this notion by insisting that "adult learners are rich sites of knowledge… their capacity to take on new knowledge is dynamic because they are agentic", especially, it is argued here, when educational activity takes place in conducive and insurgent settings. Ollis says, about activists, that they "act with agency and purpose, demonstrating intentionality in their learning". I would argue that the stories from my fieldwork sites assert that the notion of activist needs redefining to encompass all learners who are beginning to 'occupy' their minds to exorcize those toxic ideologies and hegemonic lies spoken of earlier. As Cho (2013: 78) claims, "building pedagogy and knowledge on experience is regarded as one way to counter the claims of hegemonic truth".

There is an area of caution however, Cho (2013: 82) asserts that

> in the rush to celebrate voices and differences, experience has become essentialized – experience now speaks for itself. Experiences and voices are now treated as irreducible and the only legitimate basis for understanding. In a search for, and in honour of, genuine voices, the source of the voices becomes more important than the content of the voices. In other words, 'who speaks is what counts, not what is said' (Moore & Muller, 1999: 199).

Polletta (2006: 1-2) adds "on one hand, we celebrate storytelling …for its authenticity, its passion, and its capacity to inspire not just empathy but action. Everyone has a story, we often say, and that makes for a discourse with uniquely democratic possibilities" on the other

hand "we worry that stories are easily manipulable.... after all, if everyone has her own story, then whose story should be privileged when it comes to making policy for everyone?"

However, Occupy and the SSC are not only telling their stories and using their experience pedagogically, they are also displaying their intellectual prowess in public. SaP also attempts this through a great deal of public engagement, but is confined by its space within the university as an institution. However, it is this element of public performance of other social relations that makes the pedagogy activism in and of itself:

> I have argued the practices of ... activists are not only social but embedded in the everyday interactions of practice, whereby learning is inherently connected to the emotions and driven by passion, a desire to change the world, and a need to promote social justice. It is difficult to comprehend that an epistemology of learning such as this is so often neglected by educators as a legitimate form of knowing, particularly when the practices of activists are so educationally rich

> (Ollis, 2012: 225)

It is this idea that connects SaP, and its desire to engage its students in real world scenarios and problems for research, to the other sites, this epistemology of learning is not ignored by them.

The role of experience and storytelling is of particular significance in HE, as academe can have a tendency to become wrapped up in its own 'ivory tower' pomposity and therefore connections with activist groups and ordinary people can ground what happens within its walls. For example, in a study of academics practicing popular education carried out by Johnston (2005: 71) one of the respondents

> specifically stressed her involvement with a young anarchist group as a 'wake-up call', a challenge to our assumptions as educators, demonstrating a 'need to reinvigorate ourselves from time to time staying in touch with new ideas'.

Ollis (2012: 224) takes this notion a step further after her study of activist learning : "in an environment of lifelong learning in education, which focusses on core graduate attributes in students, like the development of communication skills and problem-solving and critical thinking skills, there is much to learn from .. activists' important pedagogy". Critical and popular pedagogy/education has seen the advantage and understood the gains of shared experience and storytelling and here I would argue there is evidence that the university can benefit from involving itself with activists who engage in the sharing of experience.

Conscientization

As Kane (2005: 34) argues, "the understanding of what constitutes critical consciousness, a basic concept in popular education, is something which can vary dramatically in accord with more generalised political-ideological beliefs" and therefore the notion should be approached with caution. Nevertheless, a condition I utilise for examining critical consciousness is the lack, or absence, of what Steinklammer (2012: 26) describes as "the dominant world view seems like the natural order, and is taken for granted". This attitude is made possible because "the success of neoliberal politics was partially due to their ability to capture the public's imagination" (Milojevic, 2006: 28-9). Therefore, it is possible to assert that a state of critical consciousness is an absence of this way of thinking, an escape from the enclosure of this 'natural order', from the prescriptive, capture of the imagination.

As Ranciére (1991: 23) insists, "the student must see everything for himself [sic], compare and compare, and always respond to a three part question: what do you see? What do you think about it? What do you make of it?" Although Ranciére is not advocating familiar forms of critical pedagogy or popular education, his statement is familiar from a popular critical education perspective and seems to be true of our pedagogical sites. Neary and Amsler (2012: 132) add this: "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 type of reflexivity should be emergent from authenticity of the human experience, Freire (1998: 31-2) understood that "when we live our lives with the authenticity demanded by the practice of teaching that is also learning, we are participating in a total experience that is simultaneously directive, political, ideological, gnostic, pedagogical, aesthetic and ethical. In this experience the beautiful, the decent and the serious form a circle with hands joined". I argue that, it is this joining of hands, this collective experience of questioning the validity of our own concepts, that brings us into a state of conscientization. The prefigurative, and therefore intensely pedagogical, nature of Occupy makes this questioning inevitable. The SSC and SaP have this questioning built into their curriculums as a necessary dialogue between all parties. "Popular educators/activists in social movements would say radical interventions happen through the concerted, purposive building of critical consciousness, through analysing power relations, through fashioning a constantly vigilant attitude" (von Kotze, 2012: 104), this is contained within the rhetoric from both the SSC and

SaP. In addition, Freedman (2011: 10) argues that "we will also need a clear vision of what the university should be: a public service, a social entitlement, a space for critical thinking and a place of discovery", The University of Lincoln seems to have this vision, through the SaP project, and are attempting to implement it as both a practical project and an idea. Neary and Amsler (2012: 113) report that Occupy "asserted that because it was primarily an idea or collectivised sense of agency, it could never be 'evicted' from social relations", and so once the idea of conscientization is planted and exercised, it becomes part of the emergent and flourishing social relations.

Fitting the case studies together: finding the trajectory

Ollis (2012: 8) argues that "all activism, in fact all politicisation, is an invitation to learning. To be politicised is to learn". Here I would turn that argument on its head and assert that all learning is (should be) politicisation, in fact, all learning is (should be) activism. It is from this premise that I will attempt to construct an interruptive cycle from the sites.

Newman (2005: 22) insists "to practice popular education … we need to form an understanding of action, identify the kinds of action open to us, and consider the implications of engaging in each kind". However, not every kind of action is open to everyone for various personal and social reasons and, I assert, it need not ever be. Everyone taking to the streets and setting up camp, under the threat of violent repression from the authorities, may sound to some like the best option to elicit change; however, I would argue it is not a realistic one. All one can do from the streets *on mass* is to either refuse or demand. The Occupy camp, had it involved all the individuals who sympathised, supported and showed solidarity out on the streets, would not have been able to prefigure a new society even to the extent they did. There is a danger that these collective actions become too big to succeed as they overreach their capacity and too many voices shout at once. Holloway (2010) makes a valid point in his assertion that cracks in capitalism need not be homogenous and indeed should not become that way. The lines of continuity and the solidarisitic activities between them are what counts.

Each of the learning sites is considered here a form of activism, a form of reflection, a form of prefiguration and a form of knowledge (co)production. However, the questions needing answers are as follows: who has the time, space and inclination to apply the learning from the knowledge generated? Who is in a position to take up any new theory that has been produced from these activities and turn it into a sustainable project of experimentation and

implementation? In addition, who can set up new ways of doing interruptional activism based on the activities of the rest? The answers to these questions are for each individual to decide and reflect upon at different times in their own lives, fluidity is key. However, there are some constants: academic researchers are in a position to record, reflect upon and theorise what is happening; organisations such as the SSC are positioned perfectly to take the learning and implement it in ever increasingly sustainable ways; those we currently identify as social movements are in a position to take the theories and apply them as new forms of interruptional activism.

I argue that the task for educational researchers and teachers then, as Holloway (2010: 12) insists, is to "learn a new language of struggle, and by learning, to participate in its formation". The argument follows that we must find each other, dialogue and create, thus creating networks of solidarity, feedback loops of the learning that we all so desperately need to enclose the enclosers, to escape from the fatalism of the neoliberal agenda .

> This looking for (and creation of) cracks is a practical-theoretical activity, a throwing ourselves against the walls but also standing back to try to see the cracks and faults in the surface. The two activities are complementary: theory makes little sense unless it is understood as part of the desperate effort to find a way out, to create cracks that defy the apparently unstoppable advance of capital, of the walls that are pushing us to our destruction

> (Holloway, 2010: 8)

Ollis (2012: 9) says of theory that it can "help you find your voice; it can help you to understand inequality and hegemony. Theory can also provide insight into what needs to be challenged and changed". The Occupiers (Interview data) said that when the Occupy camp started they 'hit the ground running' and had no time for reflection and theorising, they just had to act; The SSC have applied theories to the unpacking and analysis of their own biographies; and SaP hopes to produce both theoretical and lived knowledge via the inquiries of its students and academics. Therefore, if the attention of the SaP initiative, wherever possible, were to be directed at scenario's where there was a goal of social change, for example, Occupy, then new knowledges, theories and even epistemologies could be (co)produced. This production could become fully co-production, without the need for bracketing any contribution. The co-production would include not only the students and academics in the university, but also the activists carrying out the projects. This is not a new idea, I know, however, these new theories, these tales, ideas and philosophies could then be

fed through an organisation such as the SSC: open, democratic and inclusive, where anyone could openly study them in order to exploit their explanations of the world to the ends of improving actions for transformation. If the SSC model spread to more sites: who carefully challenged ideologies not compatible with social justice, then used, as teaching points, culturally hegemonic sticking points and behaviours, discussed as a central tenet the dynamics of its members in a non-threatening way, then activists and academics alike may find these spaces places to reflect upon the theories produced by academics about the actions of the activists. This is how a 'grand' cycle of action research-type activities could conceivably come about, producing in its wake a wave of countervailing discourses where a Multitude (Hardt & Negri, 2004) of democratic voices could be heard.

This combats Milojevic's (2006: 30) assertion that "unless there is a dialogue between the various utopian, dystopian and other futures imaging, dominant social groups and ideologies will continue to define what is seen as utopian (implying impossible and naïve) and what is seen as 'the truth about the future'. This is problematic because it facilitates the colonisation of the future by particular visions and images". However, if the status and relations between activists and academics were to change to become equals in the same struggle, understanding what the limitations are for each other, the dialogue that Milojevic suggests is essential could actually take place, rather than the insider/outsider dichotomy presented in some activist/academic circles. In addition, Kane (2005: 41) suggests further benefit from this alliance:

> I believe that popular education movements [and I would argue social movements generally] everywhere should consider more explicitly the role of ideology in their work. This is a task in which the engagement of the academy should have something distinctive to offer. But academics also need to do this for themselves: whether writing papers, teaching students or setting up international networks, the more explicitly we can address questions of ideology, the less confusion will surround the multiplicity of practices purporting to be popular education [and indeed social movements]

It seems there is a need for linking struggles together. This is where the need to reassess the nature and practice of research plays a role. Roggero (2011: 5) says that "co-research questions the borders between research and politics, knowledge and conflicts, university and social context, work and militancy" and it is these borders that, I would argue, not only need to be questioned, but to be redefined if learning loops and feedback systems are to be

produced. Shantz's (2013: 1) words strengthen this notion when he insists, "in the period of crisis and opportunity, movements of the global North have been largely perplexed by questions of how to advance, to build strength on a sustainable basis in a way that might pose real challenges to states and capital". Shantz also hints here at the idea of the inclusion of other epistemologies, other modes of struggle, other imaginaries of change being brought into the consciousness of the movements of the global North, building a "new language of an emerging constellation of struggle" (Holloway, 2010: 12). Again, to reiterate Kane's point, this is where universities have something distinctive to offer; not only the co-production of knowledge, but the exchange of global knowledges and ways of thinking, acting and being.

As Mezzadra and Roggero (2010: 33) assert, what becomes key in the present period is "the capacity of the movements themselves to create their own institutions that … assert themselves within a common space".

So what does it all mean?

Changing the world feels like hard work. It feels like no ground is being gained. It feels like countervailing discourses are marginalised and ignored. It feels like there is a need to think really carefully about what is being done and ensure that it is *something*, something that allows us to learn. As Newman (2005: 22) says, "in popular education we learn in order to act, and act in order to learn", this, then, seems like what should be being done. I argue that it is these *processes* that ought to be captured in the newly liberated commons, the commons of our reclaimed, occupied selves, of the reclaimed and occupied spaces of sociality and utopian thinking and of the occupied pedagogies. If these processes are not captured as belonging to us, collectively and freely, they may be lost, to mechanisms of co-option and enclosure.

Therefore, it is the argument of this work that thought should be given to what creating critical, popular education links between social movements, community groups and universities means. If there were strong 'learning loops', feedback systems that cycle learning from one group to the next, the impossibility of change starts to crack, the more learning is shared, the stronger solidarity becomes. As a result, the less impossible the task of changing the world becomes, because all turning back seems even more impossible then to stay where we were.

The way we Educate

> *In our view, the time is ripe for some dissonance and dissent – and for dissident voices to be heard.*

<div align="right">(Crowther et al., 2005: 1)</div>

It seems to me that skilled pedagogues are needed to initiate the required change, well versed in popular education and who understand the nuances of oppressive behaviour. This allows these behaviours, the classroom banter containing sexism, racism, homophobia, ableism and other forms of oppressive and colonial attitudes, to be picked up immediately and be treated as teaching points. As Bahruth and Steiner (2000: 129) say of their experience:

> if we do not postpone the syllabus and utilize the organic teachable moments …we merely 'cover' the curriculum. The curriculum becomes the antagonist of non-engagement while contributing to the development of false concepts about teaching and learning……….critical pedagogues are aware of the 'hidden' curriculum and are politically motivated to be counter-hegemonic.

This awareness of the hidden curriculum comes with experience and the practice of a critical gaze. Bahruth and Steiner (p. 122-123) insist that "teachers must recognise both conscious and unconscious attempts to derail the discourse", can these attempts be recognised if the teacher does not have a good understanding of the subject the learners are grappling with?

Pedagogues need to be experienced enough to organise the learning, in order that the learning remains a collective and wholly collaborative experience. This was one of the reasons cited for Tent City University in Occupy London having been lost, there was no one experienced enough to take on the job of organising a suitable programme once the free space of the Tent City encampment had gone.

Castells (2012) warns, the pedagogical process has to contain interactive communication to focus people's frustration into collective action. This focussing of frustration and other emotions can only happen in an educational context if the pedagogue is occupying the educative moment and the pedagogical process. Otherwise as Freire (1998: 74) says,

> One of the basic questions that we need to look at is how to convert merely rebellious attitudes into revolutionary ones in the process of the radical transformation of society…..it is necessary to go beyond rebellious attitudes to a more critical and revolutionary position, which is in fact a position not simply of denouncing injustice but announcing a new utopia. Transformation of the world implies a dialectic between

two actions: denouncing the process of de-humanization and announcing the dream of a new society

Ranciére's (1991) *Ignorant Schoolmaster*, therefore, is only an adequate philosophy in some specific ways: everyone can teach, anyone can learn, as Tent City University puts it, nevertheless, I would argue that to ensure that knowledges are not lost, subjugated or simply missed, an expert is needed to ensure that any dialogue encompasses 'Other' views and epistemologies. Freire (1998: 38) asserts that "human curiosity, as a phenomenon present to all vital experience, is in a permanent process of social and historical construction and re-construction", which could support either argument. However, Freire adds this: "It is precisely because ingenuous curiosity does not automatically become critical that one of the tasks of progressive educational praxis is the promotion of a curiosity that is critical, bold and adventurous". The argument I want to make here is that without understanding the material that the students or learners are grappling with, the pedagogue may not be able to effectively assist in the development of a critical understanding. Occupy illustrated this by inviting in 'experts' to assist with their ongoing inquiry into the state of things and what to do about it. In addition, Brookfield (2001) argues that people do not spontaneously become critical thinkers, and that even when they do, prompted by some changing life experience, it is a painful process and that this needs to be nurtured by skilled helpers. This process maybe made easier by a skilled pedagogue asking the questions alongside the learner of a corpus of information that the pedagogue knows well and can therefore anticipate the pitfalls, the cul-de-sacs and the potential triumphs.

However, what is indicated by my larger study is that this process of developing critical thinking has to start with a belief in the equality of intelligence in order to ensure that the learner is able to become agentic in the process. I argue that "critical pedagogy changes the relationship between teachers and students. It changes teachers from givers/authority figures to 'co-learners' with students" (Cho, 2013: 88), the SaP project, along with the SSC are examples of this, but this seems, from the studied sites to be especially true when power sharing within the classroom is enacted with an emphasis on research engaged teaching and learning. The Ignorant Schoolmaster, however, cannot share power, but must hand it over to his/her students. This handing over of power could lead to despots emerging in the learning process, manipulating the learners, as was uncovered in some cases in Occupy. There, the safe space required was never created, because there was a bias toward certain groups of people, disavowing others from adding to dialogue (interview data). An expert pedagogue

might have picked this up and challenged it. The Occupy General Assemblies (GAs) were intensely educative and concretised the norms and hegemonies of the movement. However, the deconstruction of the GAs may have been thought necessary by an attending pedagogue whose expertise lies in gender theory, or democratic participation, who would have noticed oppressive or repressive behaviour, had they been mandated to carry out this task.

In this respect, the role of the popular education teacher as merely facilitator needs to be examined and training for adult educators, including university staff, should perhaps include a more critical, dynamic and ongoing assessment of learning relationships. This might include conversations similar to those reportedly had by the SSC (interview data), where preconceptions and prejudices regarding gender, race and sexuality, etc. are unpacked and challenged from a theoretical perspective allowing individuals to confront their own behaviours from an objective stance: critical pedagogy par excellence. The University of Lincoln seems to attempt this with its ongoing engagement between its staff and the goals of the SaP project (University of Lincoln, 2012). This thinking and insight could then filter down into the classroom or pedagogical space and be practiced not merely as staff training, but also as a central tenet of the organisations pedagogy. This may sound like old news, however, it is worth re-stating because as Shor (1996: 2) explains, "a common weakness of intellectuals who receive more education than is healthy for human beings is our trouble recognising the obvious and doing the sensible".

On analysis of my Thesis data it is suggested that there has to be someone in the learning process to guide the newer learners to credible sources in their field, to suggest paths of learning as is happening in the SSC. The SaP initiative, although separating the knowledges gained by the students into disciplinary fields and subjects, does allow for cross fertilisation and an opening up of those fields through interdisciplinary working in a research engaged atmosphere. This could well lead to a post-disciplinary epoch for many subjects and therefore a whole systems view of the world and its relations, connection and, of course, lines of continuity. The same applies to social movements:

> In social conflicts, such informal learning processes are much more likely to take place. However, there is a danger that these learning experiences remain covert and unconscious and, without conscious educational processes in which those resistant and empowering experiences of practice can be taken up and used as a point of departure, they cannot fulfil their full empowering potential. Thus, a task for critical education is to provide the space to bring those informal learning processes to

> consciousness, to reflect on them and to develop further strategies for action in exchange with others
>
> (Steinklammer, 2012: 33)

Bringing out informal learning processes to consciousness, reflecting upon them and developing further strategies for action in exchange with others is something that can be done jointly by researchers and pedagogues (who, of course, can be one in the same). This is also why, I argue, it is important to have some researchers/pedagogues who are relatively external to the processes going on in the social movement; because they need a critical distance to ensure that they can observe the crucial moments when these informal learning processes take place but avoiding the colonial gaze of the traditional researcher, that according to Burdick and Sandlin (2010) could actually lessen the efficacy of the collective struggle and lead it to become just another institutionalised discourse. In addition, this is why it is important, as Neary explained (interview data, 2013), for knowledge to *become the movement*, because the fact that individuals are *learning to resist* the enclosure of capitalist relations has to be explicit to maintain the resistance. Individuals have to be able to reflect critically on what they have done, what they have achieved, otherwise they could become despondent, a phenomenon that I, and I am sure, many, activists recognise.

Newman (2005: 29-30) insists, "we can teach about different forms of social action. We can provide an analysis of the different social sites where popular education might be located. We can teach the different domains of learning. We can teach different kinds of social control". Resulting not in learners "waiting for the professor to do education to them" (Shor, 1996: 10), but in politically literate, critically engaged independent learners for whom education has a different meaning than the schooled consuming of official knowledge organised into a degree with transferable skills in order to score that illusive graduate job. Education could take on a different meaning: "education manages to provide people with greater clarity in 'reading the world', and that clarity opens up the possibilities for political intervention. Such clarity is what will pose a challenge to neoliberal fatalism" (Freire, 2007: 4).

To these ends, the democratic power-sharing that is displayed in the SSC, and to some extent in Occupy, seems the most productive organisation of learning for popular education, both outside and within the academy. Democratic power-sharing, even to the extent seen in Occupy where the 'expert' may never say what he or she wanted to say, but is probed on

issues relating to their expertise, seems the most inclusive and political way to conduct pedagogy.

From their own study of a popular education project, von Kotze (2012: 108) explains that their participants,

> having internalized how conditions of competition for scarce resources translate into competitive behaviour rather than sharing it took a while to recognise just how deep the 'cut-throat' mentality had permeated all aspects of their lives to the degree that it had become naturalised as normal. Reimagining relations as cooperative and reciprocal was a major step – and one that had to be made over and over in different sessions

This experience illustrates the necessity for gently handing over power to the students if the goal is mass conscientization and not marginalisation of efforts toward change: sharing power, nurturing resistance, taking up incongruent and solipsistic behaviours as teaching points. For some students, even those with much schooling, 'education' is quite a new experience and to think of education as a political act, even more so.

The way we research

My argument here is that we cannot decouple education or activism from research. However, as Burdick and Sandlin (2010: 3) suggest, "the limited discursive space posed by an already known construct of how education *looks* and *feels* offers a problematic space to/for researchers interested in the curricula and pedagogies that exist beyond and between institutional boundaries".

When researching activist groups from an educational perspective, there can be many interesting and possibly underexplored activities that for the researcher constitute 'pedagogy', but for the social movement's participants, have not been thought about that way. Therefore, tensions arise, as critique of activities can seem like misunderstanding or misrepresentation if the relationship is not handled sensitively. Holst (2002: 81) sees the shortcomings of analysing social movements as pedagogical from the opposite view point:

> it is recognised in the literature that there has been a general tendency to dismiss the importance and nature of learning in social movements. This reluctance stems from (a) viewing social movement practice as political and not educative; (b) the tendency in adult education to dismiss informal education in everyday life, and (c) the

increasing professionalization of the field away from its historical roots in social movements themselves.

Perhaps, then, if we organise education systems to allow people to relish tensions in their social relations, recognise the informal education in everyday life and begin to see the political as pedagogical and the pedagogical as political, research interventions will become a recognised and valued part of our growth and evolution as a human species.

This entails individuals and groups accepting critique, without that becoming the criticism of competition, but rather the critique of camaraderie. This achieved, people will then be able to build in the cycles of action research in all parts of the social world as the tensions, the critiques and the research interventions will be just another element of the positive social relations being built.

Burdick and Sandlin (2010: 7) insist "researchers must be willing to place themselves into the difficult role of the witness – the uncertain, decentred participant in the pedagogical moment – rather than that of detached educational critic", this position implies the "improvisational enactment of the bricolage" (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004: 5). The position of witness works in several ways, firstly, the critical friend, picking up upon and unpacking the hegemonic attitudes that individuals are unaware they are reproducing in the heat of tense action and, secondly, recording the triumphs and the changes being produced. As Castells (2012: 142) asks, "if people think otherwise, if they share their indignation and harbour hope for change, society will ultimately change according to their wishes. But how do we know such a cultural change is happening?" This is where social movements require a critical secretary (Denzin, 2010). However, consideration that this role definition is subject to change, redefinition and addition is required, for as Denzin (2010: 15) insists, "the open ended nature of the qualitative research project leads to a perpetual resistance against attempts to impose a single, umbrella like paradigm over the entire project". The researcher should, as bricolage methodology suggests, be methodological negotiator, using the imaginative elements of the research process to understand where s/he should be and what s/he should be attentive to at any given time.

The sites in this study have given us what Burdick and Sandlin (2010: 3) call "glimpses of the pedagogical Other – forms and practices of pedagogy that exist independently of, even in opposition to, the knowledge within the common sense 'research imagination' (Kenway & Fahey, 2009) found in the general body of scholarly discourse on education". Burdick and

Sandlin argue that without a careful and imaginative approach to researching these sites of learning outside formal institutions, "researchers risk taking on an institutionalised form of the colonial gaze, applying reductive logics to or even completely failing to witness phenomena that are not easily resolved in dominant cultural meanings and images of teaching and learning" (Burdick & Sandlin, 2010: 3). Researchers need, therefore, to understand that, "these moments embody not just practices to adapt and creatively redeploy, but are in themselves ways of understanding the world and forms of research in action" (Shukaitis & Graeber, 2007: 37). I would argue that researchers of these types of public and popular pedagogy are there to help make this 'understanding the world' and forms of research explicit and effective. Nonetheless, "defining and capturing critical public pedagogies through the lens of traditional educational research has the potential to arrest the potency of such activism" (Burdick & Sandlin, 2010: 8) and therefore using bricolage to "expand research methods and construct a more rigorous mode of knowledge about education" (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004: 1) does seem appropriate.

Cho (2013: 74) insists that these critical pedagogies have "replaced ideology with discourse" and this could now be the job of research. Holloway (2010: 258) asserts that we are all "ordinary people: if we think of ourselves as special, distinct from the masses who are happily integrated into the capitalist system, we immediately exclude the possibility of radical change". When researchers see themselves as ordinary people, and not those who have special insight, but rather those with specialist knowledge, they can open up their research as discourse rather than 'truth' or 'fact'. In this way, it becomes easier to initiate knowledge exchanges with popular education projects and social movements outside the academy. I argue however, that this is only possible if researchers are ordinary people whose specialised knowledge work is part of a dialogue, not a final statement.

 "Universities are, at one and the same time, privileged and contradictory places in which academics, whatever the pressure constraints they encounter, still enjoy a high degree of relative autonomy" (Crowther et al., 2005: 1) and it is this degree of autonomy that provides the opportunity to occupy. Creating a space of slippage, not only in classrooms and teaching activities, but also in research and knowledge work in order to disquiet the flows of dissemination with controversy and politicised, living knowledge.

As Burdick and Sandlin (2010: 6) say, researchers should seek to develop ways of exploring these movements as public pedagogies "for the ways they are unknowable, and practice – as

well as bring attention to – the silences they reveal in our understandings of curriculum and pedagogy". These are the spaces research could occupy, these sites of slippage, these zones of indistinguishability (Merrifield, 2011). These unknowable pedagogies and their silences, the uncomfortable, interruptional and potentially insurrectional spaces that politicised, living knowledge can nurture, and thus allow a reconnection beyond enclosure and begin a journey into new utopias and thought experiments, in turn practiced by those with the energy that justified anger constructs.

In other words:

> we argue that educational researchers must see their work as an answer, a response to the pedagogical utterances of the critical pedagogue or pedagogy: *the Other to our understanding of pedagogy, learning and education in the broadest sense….*taking up the ethical call to answer, then, implores researchers to look beyond the unerring quest for certainty in much academic research and instead to conduct academic inquiry that voices itself as decentred, humble, and even celebratory of the pedagogies that exist beyond our institutional knowing.

> (Burdick & Sandlin, 2010: 8, my italics)

The future of the academy, the community and change agents

> *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?*

> (Neary & Amsler, 2012: 116)

The above questions posed by Neary and Amsler have been central to this work. Kane (2005: 40) has this to say:

> In my experience, the rhetoric of 'academic freedom' still allows us, mostly, to be honest about what we think…Our role is to use our relative autonomy to develop critical consciousness amongst our students, both through posing questions – and making explicit their ideological underpinnings – and, more generally, by exposing students to a range of ideas and literature which is often ignored or not seen as relevant to the dominant instrumentalism.

It could be argued that there is the potential for this in the SaP initiative at The University of Lincoln (UL), through the model of research-engaged teaching and learning. Could this model spread? The SaP model is a start and Neary and others from UL are, on a weekly basis, speaking at conferences, facilitating workshops, writing scholarly articles and carrying out other public engagement activities to promote it[1], so there is evidence of interest and therefore the possibility of further engagement in this type of HE organisation.

Crowther and Villegas (2012: 58) insist that "the [current political] trend all looks very favourable for the educator committed to a democratic project for social justice and equality. The aims of this type of educational engagement is to build a social and political order that is willing to subordinate economic activity to democratic mandates, a goal which many progressive social movements also aim to achieve". Steinklammer (2012: 30) concurs and adds, "it is necessary to connect the claims that education should have an empowering effect with the perspective of resistance". The SSC attempt to do this already and Occupy began to connect the empowering effect of resistance with education. SaP attempts to do this through its organising principle, but is yet to see the awareness of that filter down to the consciousness of its students explicitly. It therefore looks as though Crowther and Villegas are correct in their assertion and that this is borne out by the inquiries here.

It is worth noting here as Peters and Freeman-Moir (2006: 3) do, "that every great educational theory is imbued with elements of what might be called the utopian disposition". It is worth using Peters and Freeman-Moir's description of utopia to illustrate the interpretation of utopian thinking subscribed to here:

> Utopianism is not about specific solutions but rather the opening of the imagination to speculation and open exploration. 'and in such adventure two things happen: our habitual values (the 'common sense' of the bourgeois society) are thrown into disarray. And we enter into Utopias proper and newfound space: the education of desire. …. to open a way of aspiration, to 'teach desire to desire, to desire better, to desire more, and above all to desire in a different way'…..Utopianism, when it succeeds, liberates desire to an uninterrupted interrogation of our values and also to its own self-interrogation' (E. P. Thompson quoted in Peters & Freeman-Moir, 2006: 4). In this education of desire the status quo is opened up to question but the challenge is not restricted to the short comings of the present. The utopian thinker is also free to think of ways of living that lie completely beyond what is currently envisaged.

> (Peters & Freeman-Moir, 2006: 4)

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[1] For example see: http://studentasproducer.lincoln.ac.uk/events/ and https://twitter.com/mikeneary

A friend of mine, a Professor in a fiercely politically contested area of research, was accused once of being too controversial. Controversy, he said, is the job of the university (personal communication). What he meant was that if the university does not tolerate controversy, then ideas will never move on: utopian thinking is controversial, it moves outside the box, it sits on top of the box and ponders for a while, it lifts the corners of the box and peers in often using the ideas contained there to create new ones. It makes the box uncomfortable and the box squirms and shifts uneasily when utopian thought is around. I would argue that the free thought that assists escape from enclosure must be utopian in order to imagine a way out.

As society moves to a more popular ethos for its education, pedagogues must "ensure that critique and the creative imagination fertilize one another, that values and new ideas are activated and become visible in the work of the imagination towards creating a new homeland" (von Kotze, 2012: 111). This is potentially already happening in the researched sites and elsewhere. It is worth mentioning here the recent rise in the number of 'free universities' (for examples see http://sustainingalternatives.wordpress.com/), where volunteer academics teach courses for which there is no fee. Also, public pedagogy initiatives such as The University for Strategic Optimism' (http://universityforstrategicoptimism.wordpress.

com/) a group of mainly post-graduate students who do teach-outs in banks, on the streets, and in other sites of political dissatisfaction.

However, there is no need to give up free time, or teach-out in banks to be part of the struggle (although our efforts are redoubled if we do), there is the possibility to do as Newman (2005: 26) insists,

> Just as corporate trainers seek to turn working organisations into learning organisations, and lifelong educators try to turn suburbs, towns and cities into learning communities, popular educators can help to turn social movements into learning movements.

Scholars can do this both within against and beyond the university, eventually realising the dream of dissolving the walls of the university and turning whole cities into explicitly pedagogical sites. However, until this dream is a reality, Shantz (2013: 72) thinks, "there is a pressing need … for institutions, organisations, and relations that can sustain people as well

as building capacities for self-defence and struggle". He calls these institutions and organisations "infrastructures of resistance".

Denzin (2010: 20), building on the work of others, says, "we need to become more accomplished in linking these interventions to those institutional sites where troubles are turned into public issues, and public issues transformed into social policy (Nespor, 2006: 124; Mills 1959; Charmaz, 2005)". Real opposition to what is happening requires more than momentary joy (Holloway, 2010; Shantz, 2013), "it requires foundations and infrastructures that contribute to significant advances while maintaining a basis for ongoing struggles" (Shantz, 2013: 15). The SSC and SaP, extended and reproduced could constitute those foundations and infrastructures.

This, then, is the *utopian* future for educational institutions, one where alliances can be made in order to dissolve the essentialised dichotomy of teacher and learner. Of course, there are plenty of people who have said this before, however as Kincheloe and Tobin (2006: 4) say, "while we deeply respect those who have come before us and have helped us to get where we are, we are ambitious – we want to go farther into the epistemological and ontological fog". The time seems to be right, society seems to be in a socio-political juncture that lends itself to the possibility of radical change, capitalisms crises have reached the point of destabilisation, there are uprisings all over the world and people are edgy (Thesis interview data; Holloway, 2010; Neary & Amsler, 2012; Merrifield, 2011; The Invisible Committee, 2009). As the neoliberal agenda of policy makers tightens its grip on institutions, they must transgress that grip and intervene as teachers and researchers in any way they can, as Holloway (2010: 256) says, "there is no right answer, just millions of experiments".

The move to a more popular based pedagogy in these institutions is an effective way to transgress. I have discussed that individual's thoughts, minds and hearts are places that are essential to occupy as they are enclosed in a way that is easily transgressed and escaped if people join their efforts: "the more we join with others, the greater our creative power" (Holloway, 2010: 248). "Popular education is concerned with learning to identify, use and resist various kinds of social control" (Newman, 2005: 28), this justifies it becoming the transgressive norm in university institutions. Popular education is also concerned with pedagogy that comes from the interests and needs of the 'people', the students, the community members, the populace, the Multitude (Hardt & Negri, 2004). It is therefore very effective at raising the volume of the silenced and subjugated voices. This challenge to the

hegemonic regime of truth, constitutes in those members of the group who have not been subjugated a form of awareness raising:

> Education is not a habitus, but a force that objects to every kind of habitualisation of habits that chain the human being to what already exists...... on the other hand, this cannot be done in isolation from practice, since the practical sense is structured by practice and at the same time has a structuring effect. Therefore, practical experiences and action learning are necessary for a new practice to be developed and for the practical sense to be worked in interaction with the social world.

(Steinklammer, 2012: 31)

The resistance that education provides to habitualisation cannot be fully achieved in isolation from practice. Peters and Freeman-Moir (2006: 3) say of utopian pedagogy that "utopia links the special dimension of living with the temporal dimension of learning and in that sense any utopian methodology can be said to ground education in the everyday fabric of the imagined society". However, if that society is merely imagined then where is the practical experience insisted upon by Steinklammer? The practical experience that students of higher education can have is creating alliances with groups prefiguring these utopian futures. Starting dialogues in order that they may create mutual benefit by setting up action research projects with stable groups (such as communes, free universities and the SSC, organisations like The Centre for Alternative Technology (http://www.cat.org.uk/index.html) and others) or as witness to protests, street demonstrations and occupations, practicing a larger, slower action research-type cycle there. As these groups of activists and people living otherwise in our society currently have limited access to institutions of HE, groups such as the SSC are ideal grounds for the presentation of findings and discussion of results. Groups such as the SSC could therefore, not only be autonomous education providers, but could also provide an essential link between the universities that will not grant access to community and activist groups. That is, until the divisions are dissolved. This process gives everyone, academics, community members, activists and any other interested parties equal (almost) access to theory and interruptional thought. This should result in the academic voice being heard in the protest and the community action and the subjugated voices of those currently excluded from HE being heard in the academy. This potentially results in a praxis where theory informs the practice of those outside the academy and practice informs the theory of those inside, although one hopes the divide is not as dichotomous as it may seem. This process contains several possibilities: the dissolution of the barriers of HE in terms of the dissemination of

knowledge and access to academic thinkers; the inclusion of more voices and experiences in academic work; the disappearing necessity for public intellectuals in favour of an intellectual public; and the rise and continuation of a radical democracy that encounters and celebrates countervailing discourses as a matter of necessity.

Ollis (2012: 8) says of her own research, and I would like to think of mine in the same way, that "this research, in itself, is a process of activism in that it gives voice to the pedagogy of activists and demands that their knowledge and skill be recognised in the mainstream epistemology". Nevertheless, as with Kincheloe and Tobin earlier, I want to go further, I want to suggest that more is done than merely 'give voice' to the pedagogical Other. I want to assert that HE institutions and researchers *become*, wherever possible and to whatever extent, the pedagogical Other and make that Other the norm, a wonderful destabilised, unbalance, temporal and utopian norm. Shukaitis and Graeber (2007: 37), talking about experiments in militant/co-research say, "these new forms reveal glimpses of a future world, of the possibilities for liberation existing in the present". The Invisible Committee (2009: 96) write, "it's useless to wait – for a breakthrough, for the revolution, the nuclear apocalypse or a social movement. To go on waiting is madness. The catastrophe is not coming, it is here. We are already situated within the collapse of civilisation. It is within this reality that we must choose sides". It is argued then that choosing sides is no longer the luxury of the politically active, of those with the time and energy to involve themselves in the workings of governance. It is a necessity that we all face. It has been said by feminist activists for a long time that the personal must become the political, but the personal should now perhaps become more, it should become pedagogical: "'society is not composed of individuals', says Marx, society is not a 'combination', an 'addition' of individuals. What constitutes society is the system of its social relations, in which individuals live, work and struggle" (Leonardo, 2006: 82).

Education, like insurrection, requires building from the ground up, enclosed as it is in the mechanisms of schooling, testing and surveillance. Therefore, the future of education, like the future of all social relations, should hold the promise of "comradeship, dignity, amorosity, love, solidarity, fraternity, friendship, ethics: all these names stand in contrast to the commodified, monetised relations of capitalism, all describe relations developed in struggles against capitalism and which can be seen as anticipating or creating a society beyond capitalism" (Holloway, 2010: 43).

Each person's struggles within education, to occupy the curriculum that emerges in the academy, in the community and on the streets, have, then, to be connected to the wider struggles, if they are not connected by those in the struggle, they will be connected by those they stand in opposition to. Indeed, they already are, the 'New Precariat' (Standing, 2011, 2013) includes academic workers on zero-hours contracts (Dunn, 2013; University and College Union, 2013). A destabilising of jobs as a means of control, surely? Therefore choosing and subsequently taking sides becomes a necessity: "it is only by taking sides that it becomes possible to understand the whole, and to transform it" (Roggero, 2011: 6).

The escape from enclosure

> *Not only education but social reality itself has become schooled.*
>
> (Illich, 2011: 2)

> *Even if critical pedagogy in particular and education in general cannot by themselves reverse these conditions, they can break the silence moving us into the worst world possible. Interfere by teaching your heart out. Interfere with where we are headed by making classrooms public spaces whose discussions grapple with what is happening to us. Shine bright lights on the mechanisms of power…. Critical classrooms are opportunities to circulate unauthorised democratic discourse against the status quo.*
>
> (Shor in Macrine, 2009: 128-9)

Milojevic (2006: 24) asserts that "the main problem with the prevalence of the dystopian genre is its capacity to legitimise fears while delegitimising hope". This makes escape from enclosure difficult, if not impossible. This, then, is the reality with which we are faced, a reality that Giroux (2001: xxiii), building on Adorno, accuses of being a "prohibition on thinking itself". Therein, I would argue, lays the solution: *thinking itself*.

Walton (2011: 24) reminds us that capitalism "abhors critical thinking, outside its box". So then, there is a start. It may not be activism that changes things (Holloway, 2010), it may not even be as 'dramatic' as the actions of people, but as humble and as obvious as our very thoughts that need to change. From dystopian to utopian, from fear and enclosure, out into the collective commons: trust as a centrally organising principle; social relations that create a safe space to explore our common ground; the understanding of process rather than fixity; the

connection of the self and the social; thinking of each other as intelligent and agentic beings; creating collective experiences that are both confronting and convivial.

Organisations such as the SSC assist in this trajectory out of enclosure; creating this social and intellectual commons allows for what Cho (2013: 79) describes as "the everyday, small, yet significant, forms of resistance are conceived and celebrated as sources of possible challenges to, and eventual transformation of the system. In this way, every voice is regarded as emancipatory …and every resistance is regarded as evidence for a rupture of power". This is due to the insertion of the biographies of the individuals into the Sociological Imagination, allowing them to become celebrated as emancipators and resisters, the SSC does hold the potential to be seen as a 'rupture of power' if individuals do not allow their thinking to be prohibited or co-opted into 'legitimising fears while delegitimising hope' (Giroux, 2001). In the face of austerity and rampant neoliberalism, individuals can attempt to make new forms of corporate capitalism marginal to their lives and create new social relations and, as Esteva (2010: 29) insists begin "enclosing the enclosers".

I argue then, that what is needed now is a social connection based on trust, solidarity, generosity and gift, but as Holloway (2010) warns, for the moment this can only exist as an oppositional form. The imperative for escape then, needs to be hopeful, utopian, but also in opposition, against - this is a battle ground. In the sites in this work, it was acknowledged that Occupy was *against* the banking system, austerity and the corruption in our political system; SaP is *against* the student as consumer model of the neoliberal university; the SSC is *against* the commodification of knowledge and the elitism of the university institution. But all are, or were, hopeful; hopeful of the actuality of new social relations; all believed in the positive possibilities and I argue that there is something very instructive to be learnt from that hope.

I use the word hope instead of optimism because their hope has been, and continues to be, realistic and grounded. Optimism would suggest that they are unaware of the difficulties, the struggles that might be ahead: they are not. Hope however, is the will to accept and overcome those difficulties, those struggles as autonomous projects in a collective struggle. The evidence of these sites suggests, therefore, that individuals need to organise and strategize for hope, for institutions of the commons, for the future of free thought itself. These struggles have to take place within, against and beyond our current enclosure because "there is no longer an outside within contemporary capitalism" (Roggero, 2011: 9).

Final words of radical hope

> *As human beings, there is no doubt that our main responsibilities consist in intervening in reality and keeping up our hope.*

<div align="right">(Freire, 2007: 5)</div>

My study has suggested that what will create the change needed for the escape from enclosure are the individuals and collective thoughts and actions of those people creating new commons in their newly occupied selves. Social movements here are seen as essential sites of slippage, of experimentation, of the collective and vibrant occupation of space and time. They practice essential forms of public pedagogy. However, they can also become sites of reproduction, activism is fast paced and deeply embedded cultural hegemonies are missed in the confusion and urgency of the action, especially when it is focused on external tensions, created by those remote from ordinary people's everyday lives. Therefore, it is my view that when the action, the street eruption, the volcano of anger and emotion is spent – watched, witnessed and recorded as the *pedagogical moment* for the educational researcher of public pedagogy – the activists should have the opportunity to regroup into their now more pedagogical institutions of the commons. Reflection and learning, extending the knowledge and the scope ready for the next action alongside researchers and other academics, embedding new learning at a personal and collective level in order to live otherwise now.

In this scenario, the researcher is not distant or detached; they are inside the pedagogical moment. They do not then 'teach' the activists where they went wrong, or how to be 'better' at activism, but start a dialogue, accepting the equality of intelligence but mindful of the essential roles each group plays in the activities of the other. They dialogue on an equal footing about what was missed, why that might have been, what should be celebrated and how it elicited change both inside and outside the movement. The critical distance of the researcher becomes ally for the group, not enemy, not the ritualised objectivity of a detached observer but the friend who picks you up when your energy is depleted. It is this space where more organisations such as the SSC are required, these places where activist and community members can insert their own biographies into the action, into the imaginings of sociality,

where camaraderie, solidarity and equality can be discovered between individuals who have previously seen each other from a cultural distance. Now they occupy space and time in creative and intellectual ways. Moving collectively from the necessity of the public intellectual toward a fulfilling and vital intellectual public. Then perhaps one day, this organisational ideology could become what we now think of as academe. However, with all this seriousness of task abound, I feel that Merrifield has something essential to add at this point: "everyday politics, too, necessitates fun, means creating a stir and kicking up a fuss; play nourishes politics just as political people should themselves be homo ludens (playing people)" (Merrifield, 2011: 22). People need to learn to enjoy their newly won freedoms too.

I assert here what many community and popular educators throughout space and time have understood. Merrifield (2011) asserts that the time for critique is over. I would disagree, the time for critique is rife, but that critique must escape the enclosure of the divided spectrum: the walls of academe and the activist circles and become a people's critique: a popular critique. A critique carried out in organisations of the commons. However, to echo Holloway (2010) once more, we need to do more, we need to go further, we need now not only a collective critique, but also collective and individual action, infused with collective theorising. Making socially good use of our emergent intellectual public.

One notin has been echoed by the sites under examination here, the sentiment it carries has been useful to the thinking about what is needed to be done. What is required when Marx and Engels (1846/ 2007, p. 123) insist that philosophers only interpreted the world: "the point, however, is to change it"? That notion and the answer from the sites seems to be, to be truly radical and make hope possible, rather than despair convincing (Williams, 1989).

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