

## **Being realistic by demanding the Impossible: Beginning the bricolage**

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Cassie Earl

Education and Social Research Institute, Manchester Metropolitan University

[Cassie.earl@stu.mmu.ac.uk](mailto:Cassie.earl@stu.mmu.ac.uk)

### **Abstract**

*In this paper, drawn from an educational study of The Occupy Movement (Occupy), I will argue that when studying a complex phenomenon, which is not normally associated with the 'discipline' of education, the only way to understand in depth what you are seeing is to use a radical bricolage approach in order to create an authentic and rigorous interpretation of it. I will also go on to explore the idea that the research method should mirror the phenomena that it investigates, so when studying a radical phenomenon such as Occupy, one should turn to a radical approach to research to create symmetry between object and method. I will then discuss how this is possible in the context of an early career researcher who, by necessity, can only use an unsophisticated form of bricolage due to the inexperience of the researcher at the beginning of her journey, and how they can conceptualise this form of bricolage as 'radical research' in order to avoid unnecessary criticism.*

*A study of Occupy from an educational perspective has to be trans- and multi-disciplinary by its very nature, in order to understand how and why the movement came about and what it might teach us about education. Bricolage, as a radical research methodology captures this nature very well, using transdisciplinary theoretical thinking alongside a mesh of research methodologies, makes this an exceptional way to both understand and capture complexity in both object and method. The paper examines bricolage from an early research perspective and discusses what disciplines the researcher may need to draw upon for the study.*

*This is the beginning of my journey; these are my initial thoughts, which, in the true spirit of bricolage and critical pedagogy, will be re-read, re-written and re-thought throughout my learning journey.*

In this paper, I will argue that when studying a complex phenomenon, which is not normally associated with my usual 'discipline' of education, the best way to understand in depth what you are seeing, hearing and experiencing, may be to use a radical<sup>1</sup> bricolage approach. I will also go on to explore the idea that the research method should mirror the phenomena that it investigates, so when studying a radical phenomenon such as The Occupy Movement (Occupy) as the overarching PhD research here does, one should turn to a radical approach to the research process to create symmetry between object and method. I will then discuss how this is possible in the context of an early career researcher who, by necessity, can only use an unsophisticated form of bricolage due to the inexperience of the researcher at the beginning of her journey, and how they can conceptualise this form of bricolage as 'radical research' in order to avoid unnecessary criticism. I am at the beginning of this journey; these are my initial thoughts, which, in the true spirit of bricolage, the radical research methodology on which this paper is based, and critical pedagogy, the philosophy of teaching and learning upon which my practitioner and theoretical experienced is entrenched, will be re-read, re-written and re-thought throughout my journey.

The two main themes throughout this paper are those of bricolage and critical pedagogy. Bricolage is a radical research methodology, wherein the researcher has to be flexible, well read and well experienced in research methods. Bricolage is considered a radical research method as it is orientated toward the pursuit of social change. The word bricolage come from the French *bricoleur*, a craftsperson who will use any tool at his/her disposal to get the job done. This is the essence of bricolage, it is a multi-tooled, multi-faceted way of conducting research (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004; Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2011). Critical pedagogy is a philosophy of teaching and learning, framed mainly by Paulo Freire a Brazilian educator whose work created a '*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*', an emancipatory form of adult

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<sup>1</sup> In this study, the word 'radical' is used in the sense of 'advocating thorough or far-reaching change' as defined by The Oxford English Dictionary. It can also be understood as a 'different way of thinking and imagining'.

education that has at its centre dialogue, equality and a questioning of the status quo in order to create social transformation. Since then, critical pedagogy has been studied by many educators as an alternative to more liberal theories of education (see authors such as Giroux, McLaren, Kincheloe, Shor and Freire, among others).

My PhD research looks closely at the pedagogical nature of Occupy, which entered the global consciousness and vocabulary as a new social movement in 2011. The movement was partly inspired by the 'Arab Spring' uprisings in 2010 (B. Hall, 2012) and also as a response to the global financial crisis gripping the developed countries of the world (Byrne, 2012; Chomsky, 2012; B. Hall, 2012; Occupy London LSX, 2011b). Occupy was initially thought to have been launched in the USA. by a Canadian activist magazine called *Adbusters* with their question 'are you ready for a Tahrir moment?' This popular explanation is not entirely accurate. In fact it was more simple; a meeting was held in New York with a multi-national group of anti-capitalist activists enthusiastically and ambitiously planning an action of physical occupation of public space that would later catch on in cities around the world (Kroll, 2011, p. 16). Eventually, Occupy was to be seen in one form or another, usually tented occupations in city squares, in around 1500 cities around the world (B. Hall, 2012, p. 128). The research that this paper concentrates on is focussed on Occupy London LSX<sup>2</sup> but I have also reviewed some other actions of the global movement to get a sense of where London fits into this. Of course, all the Occupy movements are linked in order to learn from each other, to provide solidarity to each other and to strengthen the message about equality, justice and a better world for all peoples, and Occupy London is no exception. It was inspired, as were so many others, by the initial Occupy action in Wall Street, USA. The London LSX Occupy action started as a splinter group from the Trade Union demonstration against the government's austerity measures on 15 October 2011. The group occupied the square outside St. Paul's Cathedral in central London, setting up tents and later information stands, kitchens, a 'tech tent' for communications and most importantly, for this study, a people's university and library. Occupy London LSX described itself in its initial public statement as:

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<sup>2</sup> Occupy LSX was the camp outside St. Pauls Cathedral. Members of the camp have asked for it not to be referred to as Occupy St. Pauls as they feel that this de-politicises it from the original plan, to occupy Paternoster Square outside the London Stock Exchange (LSX), which was thwarted by a private security company hired by the City of London Corporation.

part of a global movement that has brought together concerned citizens from across the world, to fight against this injustice and for a new political and economic system that puts people, democracy and the environment before profit. Occupy is a grassroots' movement that values diversity and horizontality, meaning that every individual who participates stands equal to everyone else. (Occupy London LSX, 2011a).

My research on Occupy has an educational focus, as I was interested in how pedagogical the movement actually was and what we could learn about popular (peoples) education as a result of studying Occupy as an educational phenomena. The overall study is steeped in the literature of critical pedagogy (See for example Allman, 1987; Aronowitz, 1993; Darder, 2002; Freire, 1985, 1993, 2007, 2008; Freire & Faundez, 1989; Giroux, 2011; Macedo, 1993; Mayo, 2004; McLaren, 2000a, among many others) and radical adult education (for example see Brookfield, 2001; Brookfield & Holst, 2011; Holst, 2002; hooks, 1994, 2003; Newman, 2006; The Edu-Factory Collective, 2009). This lens has turned up many practices and theoretical expansions from an educational standpoint, such as the idea that learning has a natural curriculum leading to critical awakening and how powerful peer education, sparked by a common cause, can be. Critical pedagogy has much to offer the study of social movement learning. B. Hall (2012) reminds us that the study of social movement learning has always been in the hands of social movement and political theorists. Now, especially in light of the Occupy movement and its highly pedagogical nature, it might be better analysed in the hands of those educational theorists who are interested in the way adult learning might change our world for the better. The work of critical pedagogy, and particularly Paulo Freire, has always been about how to construct and think about education for equality and social justice. How to bring the consciousness and the voice of the people to the fore of social change and to organise education in a way that encourages and even demands critical thinking and political awareness (see particularly Freire, 1993 and his corpus of work). This is the central tenet of critical pedagogy and, arguably, of social movements. If the central purpose of social movements is to bring about change as according to Snow, Soule & Kriesi (2004, p. 8) and the aim of critical pedagogy is to do the same, then critical pedagogy should be able to provide a unique insight into the process and value of social movement learning. Using this lens to observe Occupy indicated an important educational phenomena, which begged serious analysis and study as a previously unseen form of insurrectional education and

public pedagogy erupted in these tented spaces around the world. There have been new educational practices from the Occupy camps themselves (interview with member of Occupy London Education Working Group, 2012), alongside the invitation to academics to speak about theories of revolution and economics which, for those academics have turned up some interesting surprises (Interview with Mike Neary, 2012). Even the general assemblies, visible and accessible to the public have been pedagogical in nature, encouraging, nurturing and implementing new ways of thinking and doing. At first there was no educational ideology involved in the movement at either a local or a global level (interviews with Occupiers in the UK, but globally networked), but it became clear very quickly that there was a mass recognition that education was essential to their journey as an emergent movement and that an educational approach corresponded with their demands for authentic change and a new world order (interview with member of Occupy London Education Working Group, 2012). The realisation that education was needed in order to secure authentic and deep change, led to knowledge from different points of view and different sources being sought (B. Hall, 2012; R. Hall, 2011), to strengthen the change they were seeking and to connect globally in solidarity. It was also clear from the beginning that, from the research point of view, this was no ordinary educational study. At Occupy London, the events; the academics and political commentators invited and offering to speak; the very public general assemblies; the organisation of the more formal aspects of education (especially the School of Ideas working not only within the Occupy movement itself, but also local community and youth groups) were interesting. The very reason for educational spaces being set up were incredibly complex, especially as, for the most part, those creating the spaces for education were not teachers, or educational theorists, or experts in any way, they were just people with a passion to learn and an understanding of the necessity of education in their current context (interview with Occupy London Education Working Group Member, 2012). An additional ingredient that made the study of the educational and pedagogical aspects of Occupy ever more complex was that those who were involved in education *previously* had a very different idea of what was being learned and how, than those who had no expertise at all (interview data from Occupiers). I saw a reluctance from those previously involved to let go of the notion that one could only learn from the transference of knowledge from 'experts', competing with the more generally held belief that they were all learning all the time

and that this collective learning was a vital part of the whole experience (data from interviews with Occupiers, London LSX). There was obviously some ambiguity in the reasoning behind the education of the individuals involved.

The situation required some unpacking regarding why people were partaking in 'education' at all; one might imagine that when sleeping in a tent on freezing streets in order to bring attention to a political crisis, education would be the last thing one might feel was important. Protest has always been about primarily bringing attention to a cause or event, but most commonly to grab the attention of the government or actor to whom you are giving demands, or to prick up the ears of those not involved in order to recruit them to your cause (Ranci re, 2010, p. 7). Therefore, in contrast to the question of how the education became so politicised, Occupy threw up the question of how politics became so educational. A project that has been called for by Giroux (2011, p.71) who insists that as education is always a political act, we need to reinvigorate political agency and therefore democracy by carrying out our education consciously as a political practice, creating the conditions for the political to become more pedagogical. Therefore, this paper attempts to explore how to encompass all the elements that were being observed, creating a complex research problem.

Already, we see three (at least) areas, or disciplines, of study that we need to draw upon: the educational, the political, and the theory of social movements. There is more, should we wish to see it; the reactions of the public, the media, the government and the police, how have these factors impacted on what is being learnt and how? Now we have to consider issues such as public pedagogy: what is the public learning from the movement? What are the media theories of how the reporting of Occupy might influence other movements and protests? In addition, how is Occupy using media itself and how does this use affect the nature of the education being practiced, both internally and externally? I would even argue, in the context of Occupy worldwide, that we could not rule out at least a cursory glance at the study of state terror as a curriculum for public pedagogy, for example the now well-known pepper spraying of students in Oakland California in 2011<sup>3</sup>. Occupy also asserts a necessity for philosophical inquiry both about and within itself, but also as a research tool. According to Badiou (Badiou & Žižek, 2009, p. 5), Occupy is a philosophical

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2011/nov/21/occupy-movement-california>

situation as he insists that 'a philosophical situation consists in the moment when a choice is elucidated. A choice of existence or a choice of thought'.

So with all this complexity at work it becomes very easy to argue for a research methodology that takes complexity into account, that allows for radical research strategies and philosophical inquiry, and that respects all the conditions of human life. A radical form of bricolage seems to fit the context. Kincheloe and Berry's explanation is worth quoting at length:

What the bricolage is dealing with in this context is a double ontology of complexity: first, the complexity of objects of inquiry and their being-in-the-world; second, the nature of the social construction of human subjectivity, the production of human 'being'. Such an understanding opens a new era of social research where the process of becoming human agents is appreciated to a new level of sophistication. The complex feedback loop between an unstable social structure and the individual can be charted in a way that grants human beings insight into the means by which power operates and the democratic process is subverted. In this complex ontological view, bricoleurs understand that social structures do not *determine* individual subjectivity but *constrain* it in remarkably intricate ways. The bricolage is acutely interested in developing and employing a variety of strategies to help specify the ways subjectivity is shaped. (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 74, original stress)

The above quotation from Kincheloe and Berry not only describes very well the art and interests of the bricolage, but also unintentionally raises the questions my research is interested in concerning Occupy. How the individuals involved are imagining a way to be human. How are they being-in-the-world whilst involved in the camps? What is the nature of the feedback loop between what is a very unstable and artificially constructed society and its individual members? In addition, how is power, from both internal and external sources, operating to subvert the democratic processes and what are they doing to combat this? Moreover, from a predominately-educational point of view, how are their subjectivities about their actions and their being-in-the-world being developed and de/re-constructed? This is a fundamental consideration from a critical pedagogy point of view, where the raising of a subjective critical consciousness is central to the educational process and learners need to re-read the world in a way that enables them to understand their power to change it. Alongside this, an exploration of the context and historicity of Occupy has to be included to understand fully how they came to be: why here, why now? What issues and power struggles are at play that created the unique conditions for the insurrectional eruption? These questions are not value-neutral, nor is the researcher

who is situated in the melee of the war of words, the political struggle and the imaginings of outcomes. The questions have to be asked and an attempt at answers has to be sought because this is a situation that could lead to a great many, potentially world changing, outcomes, particularly when viewed on the global scale that these movements that encompass Occupy seem to be operating. Old theory has to be questioned and new theory generated because we have to create tools to understand, to support and to move forward. As Whitehead and McNiff (2006, p. 28) remind us, 'theory generation is far from neutral, but is a deeply politicized practice'. Therefore the research has to take sides in a foray such as this one, indicating a radical form of research from a radical political standpoint; 'radical research in social contexts implies a radical politics because it raises questions that make the powerful feel uncomfortable, even threatened' (Žižek, 2009, p. 1) .

One of the advantages of using bricolage in this context is that it enables the use of insight by concurrently drawing on a multitude of discourses concerning the subject under investigation and questioning their assumptions. Thus allowing the researcher to discern the ways in which these assumptions have shaped what we think we know throughout history (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004). This becomes particularly important when studying a phenomenon that is unparalleled throughout history (Chomsky, 2012; Easthope, 1988, p. 24; Foust, 2010). There have of course been occupations, uprisings, revolutions, protests, including protest camps before, but Occupy has a seemingly global solidarity. A 'personality' that seems unique in protest and revolt, and a distinct pedagogical and educational underpinning that calls for a considered insurrection, not the peasant revolts of the Russian and French revolutions. A peaceful, non-violent, cultural revolution, with shades of the Cuban campaigns, without the taking up of arms (Belsey, 2002; Calhoun, 2011; Coté, Day & de Peuter, 2007). There are similarities with the actions led by Mahatma Gandhi to overthrow the oppression of the British Empire in India with the use of non-violence against the violence of the state. The epistemologies of all these past insurrectional acts are called into the complexity of trying to understand Occupy. Finding the questions not asked or answered in past protests and revolutions becomes an imperative of the research act in order to understand the object of inquiry. This project is already begun by the research intruding into the realm of political and social movement theorists and studying the phenomenon from an education starting point.

As Bricolage, in a contemporary sense, is understood to involve 'the process of employing multiple methodological processes *as they are needed in the unfolding context* of the research situation' (Kincheloe, et al., 2011, p. 168, stress added), it is particularly pertinent to Occupy, as in addition to situating the movement historically with past insurrections and protests, the very conditions under study are themselves unfolding as the research period continues. My first fieldwork interviews were conducted at Occupy LSX just days before they were due at their first eviction hearing; the second round of face-to-face interviews was just after their second hearing when they were always expecting a call from the bailiffs. The conditions of Occupy were, and continue to be, so volatile as to possibly, in the final analysis, render everything I thought I understood about the movement null and void. There have already been four distinct permutations of the movement: a camp, an internet presence, 'pop-up' protests, including 'teach-outs', and an education provider, and even more in the global context. Analysing what Occupy is and what it can tell us about education is therefore a complex matter requiring multiple strategies of inquiry and allowing for change and flexibility at any point.

According again to Kincheloe et al. (2011, p. 164) bricolage can be thought of as critical research which is understood best in 'the context of the empowerment of individuals'. This type of research endeavours to confront the injustice within a public sphere so that the research becomes 'unembarrassed' to be called and to call itself 'political' and unafraid to consummate a relationship with emancipatory consciousness, thus becoming a transformative endeavour. Therefore bricolage is not only concerned with the academic act of research but also with the wider effect of which research is capable. As McLaren (2000a, p. 11) maintains, the world and its social systems should be approached as *created* and *transformable* realities which are constantly in the process of being shaped and made along with the individuals embedded in them, by human interaction and acts that are guided by ideological representations of reality. This is a fundamental assumption for any radical research strategy and for Occupy itself. If the world and its social systems are created and transformable then Occupy could, *theoretically*, achieve their mission of authentic transformation of the social consciousness and economic system and a radical research project could indeed consummate a relationship with them to assist that endeavour.

As our social scientific understanding about the world around us comes from our research, and our understanding shapes our policy and our behaviour toward others, bricolage has the potential to create a scientific and rigorous understanding that could lead to wide reaching transformation because of its respect for complexity and human experience. In his *Qualitative Manifesto*, Denzin (2010, p.35) pertinently asks, ‘...what does science mean in the current moment, and whose science is it anyway?’ Many believe that the social and political future is wide open in the current moment with solidarity insurrections taking place globally; perhaps then, there is an opportunity to transform social ‘science’ along with the possible transference of power advocated by many involved in Occupy? To make social science a practice of the people, rather than confined to the prestige of the elite few? In order to do this, social science has to take into account the complexity of all aspects of the lived experience and every person has to become critically aware in order to practice it, yet in their practice of social science, their criticality grows, creating a society of public intellectuals, or an intellectual public. These are the parallels between the potential of bricolage and what it, as a methodology, could achieve and the potential of the object under study: the educational potential of Occupy. The transference of power and the transference of the practice of social science to the masses from their elite strongholds may be utopian goals, but both are worthy of a moment in the imaginary of those whose research seeks emancipation and is concerned with social justice. It is also imperative in bricolage that one believes in what one is doing; in this case accessing and putting into motion the transformative and emancipatory effects of a research act. As Žižek (2009, p.3) puts it, anyone who only imagines that they believe in themselves and what they are doing loses the ‘performative power’ of what they are doing and the act becomes empty. Bricolage, as a political research act must not be allowed to become an empty signifier of what it aims to be.

If the bricoleur does indeed believe in what they are doing and the empty signifier is avoided then the performative act of bricolage is an ethical pursuit. Ethics are inbuilt into bricolage so long as it is performed correctly, that is, as long as it does seek to consummate the relationship between the research and the emancipatory consciousness. The key in all the elements of this research, and it could be suggested, any research, which would make it successful, is honesty. Denzin (2010, p.36) insists that the bricoleur tests their interpretations against ‘the most severe criteria of all – does it work or not; that is, does it advance a social

justice initiative?’ If it does and this initiative matches that of the emancipatory initiative under investigation, then it is an ethical practice in itself. Freire’s ideas on politics matched this sentiment as McLaren (2000b, p. 14) explains:

politics of liberation resists subsumption under a codified set of universal principles: rather it animates a set of ethical imperatives that together serve as a precipitate of our answering the call of the other who is suffering of heavy heart. Such imperatives do not mark a naïve utopian faith in the future; rather, they presage a form of active, irreverent, and uncompromising hope in the possibilities of the present.

The researcher practicing bricolage should answer this call, to take the people’s active, irreverent and uncompromising hope further, to act as ally and critical friend. Once this is realised by the bricoleur, the necessity for any discussion on ethics becomes all but moot. The interesting point on ethics from Kincheloe and Berry (2004) is not what they have said in their book on bricolage in education, but that they have not explicitly included a discussion on ethics at all. As long as the researcher is honest about their purpose, their motives and where their allegiances lie then any legalistic discussion on ethics with the individuals participating in the inquiry becomes patronising and paternal. Occupy have no obligation to enter this legalistic discourse with me, to allow me to participate in their activities, so what makes my position as researcher so elite as to warrant this discourse from them? Their consent has been informed. I have been honest with those who have agreed to partake in my meaning-making. They know who I am, how to contact me and they have written information explaining their rights concerning my research. However, we are concomitant, they are my comrades not my subjects, we understand that this is mutual participation in each other’s activities. I believe I have met Denzin’s (2010, p.122) list of ethical practices for I have

*Strived to use an informed consent model; strived for intellectual honesty; strived never to do harm, to always tell as much truth as I can, to exhibit compassion and care, to enact a pedagogy and ethic of love, to practice an ethic of equity and a social ethic of resistance.*

So, all this considered, just how does an idealistic researcher at the start of their career become a bricoleur? Kincheloe et al. (2004; 2011) suggests that bricolage is a lifelong pursuit, as one must become proficient in multiple theoretical ideas and multiple research methodologies as well as have a rigorous understanding of the philosophical context. This insight, understanding and potentially unbounded

knowledge is indeed an impossible goal on a doctoral programme, so how and where to start in this context? If one is a natural bricoleur, one will ask 'why should science be done this way or that? Why should I ignore this epistemology in favour of that, even though they both have something to teach me?' (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004). One explanation of how an early career researcher can become bricoleur comes from Freire (1998, p. 30) when he suggests that the answer is to develop one's epistemological curiosity. Research is learning and if one exercises one's capacity for learning critically, rather than merely following a doctrine, or narrow research paradigm, the more one will develop their epistemological curiosity. Freire argues that without the development of the epistemological curiosity, it is not possible to 'obtain a complete grasp of the object of our knowledge'. Research carried out under a bricolage approach aims to 'grasp' fully the object of our knowledge by any means of understanding possible. Therefore, epistemological curiosity is an essential ingredient for the bricoleur, the desire to rigorously know and understand. To really, truly, rigorously know and understand, surely, one has to delve into many different academic disciplines and use multiple methods of inquiry, which is the beginning of bricolage.

According to Denzin (2010) and Kincheloe et al. (2011, p. 168), the French word 'bricoleur' relates to a person who makes use of whatever tools are available to complete a task. Kincheloe et al. go on to say that 'bricolage implies the fictive and imaginative elements of the presentation of all formal research'. If we use these elements to look at Occupy as an educational site, we can see that a curriculum of change is unfolding in the streets. Occupy London have initiated 'level playing field' discussions with those who would normally be at arm's reach inside the academy. They have set up workshops on non-violent protest, taking the teachings of Ghandi, Gramsci, Alinski and others as inspiration. There are classes on economics, revolutionary movements and even how to write protest songs all of which took place in an occupied building that had lain derelict for some time. They have learnt how to do this along the way, using each other's expertise and experience to create a knowledgeable collective. So as an early career researcher this is surely where to start, taking a lead from the Occupy movement and starting with the tools we as individuals have at hand, alongside those we can borrow from 'others'. Adding the fictive and imaginative elements we all possess as creative beings allowing for speculative theory generation, and lastly with the things we know best: in my case

critical pedagogy. Indeed, Kincheloe et al. (2011, p. 167) state: 'it is with our understanding and our commitment to critical social research and critical pedagogy that we identify the bricolage as an emancipatory research construct'.

It is interesting to hear what Denzin has to say on this matter:

we interpret, we perform, we interrupt, we challenge, and we believe nothing is ever certain. We want performance texts that quote history back to itself, texts that focus on epiphanies, on the intersection of biography, history, culture and politics, turning point moments in people's lives. The critics are correct on this point. We have a political orientation that is radical, democratic and interventionist. (Denzin, 2010, p. 38)

What Denzin has to say here fits with both the philosophy contained within the works of Paulo Freire (Freire, 1985, 1993, 1998, 2004, 2008) and within other work on critical pedagogy (Baharuth & Steiner, 2000; Giroux, 2011; Lankshear, Peters & Knobel, 1996; McLaren, 2000a). Therefore, as a starting point, a critical pedagogy framework from which to assimilate and explore other knowledges, epistemologies and paradigms seems to be appropriate. As Freire (1993, p. 53) himself said, 'knowledge only emerges through invention and reinvention, through the relentless, impatient, continuing, hopeful, inquiry human beings pursue in the world, and with each other', this surely, is bricolage and, surely, this is Occupy.

There are many parallels between bricolage, particularly as described by Kincheloe et al. (2011), and critical pedagogy. As Kincheloe et al. explain, the use of pre-existing guidelines and checklists is avoided if it does not enhance the study, and a more active role for all the people involved in the study is sought in order to shape the reported 'reality', the narratives contained within it and the research process itself. Critical pedagogy has never been a method but an adaptive philosophy or strategy for education and the authentic participation of the student is imperative for success. Kincheloe et al. (2004; 2011) argue that this type of active agency within the research leads to a rejection of any form of deterministic view of social reality, avoids assumed effects of particular social, political, economic and educational processes which in turn allows for creativity and critical awakening, or as Freire called it, conscientization (Freire, 1993).

Critics may argue that this allows for only a partial view of the 'reality' of the situation, particularly when those taking an active role are members of a movement like Occupy, that voices from other perspectives will be disavowed in the process. However, Žižek (2009, p.6 original stress) argues forcibly that a partial account is

better than an impartial one because he says that '*truth is partial*, accessible only when one takes sides, and is no less universal for this reason'. Whitehead and McNiff (2006, p. 58) concur, when, although talking about the teaching act, they state that 'when an educator aims to influence, they do so in the clear understanding that what they are trying to communicate will inevitably be filtered through the creative imagination of the other'. If we are taking the view that research is learning and the dissemination of research is teaching, then this idea is applicable in a research context. Žižek's stance also compliments the consistent philosophy of Freire for whom context was the all-important measure of what could be known. And from a bricolage point of view, contributing to social transformation means better understanding the forces of domination that affect the lives and worldviews of individuals outside of dominant cultures, not objectively taking into account the view of a whole range of people and standpoints. Thus, there should be an attempt to remove knowledge production from the control of elite groups and commit the knowledge work of the bricoleur to helping address the ideological and informational needs of marginalized groups. At present one could assume that Occupy is a marginalised group, especially in the UK as the government and the press either vilifies them or ignores them. Kincheloe et al. (2004; 2011) insist that as 'detectives of subjugated insight', bricoleurs eagerly learn from 'insurrections against colonialism', which creates a symmetry between methodology and object of study.

Another area of symmetry exists between Freire's thinking about education and that of the implementation of education throughout the global Occupy movement. It was a fundamental belief of Freire's that the purpose of education is not the transference of knowledge from one person to a class of students but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge (Freire, 1998, p. 30). This is essentially what Occupy have done; created the conditions. Even when an eminent theorist or commentator has been invited to speak, it has been on the understanding of equal status for all. Moreover, the initial education has happened through forms of direct democracy, through trial and error with every voice heard. Occupy tried to apply direct democracy and found it could easily be corrupted or even counterproductive in terms of making decisions and getting things done. This created the conditions for learning, as they were then able, due to the ethos of equality and participation, to discuss what democracy meant and how it could serve them best and for what purposes it was to be used; the education went on from

there. This ethos of Occupy and critical pedagogy coincides with the fundamentals of philosophical inquiry, the inventing of new questions (Badiou & Žižek, 2009), and the intention of bricolage, the creating of new knowledge (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004). Therefore, we can see that Occupy, bricolage and critical pedagogy have much to offer each other, especially when laced with philosophical insight. They also have much to offer the researcher wanting to begin the journey to become bricoleur. In fact, one might go so far as to argue that for the scholar of critical pedagogy, especially when studying a phenomenon such as Occupy, bricolage is the only research methodology that makes any sense, as in Freire's (1998, p. 89) words, 'our teaching space is a text that has to be constantly read, interpreted, written and re-written. In this sense, the more solidarity there is between teacher and students in the way that this space is mutually used, the more possibilities for democratic learning will be opened up in the school'. If we now think of the teaching space as metaphor for the research act and for the insurrectional actions of Occupy, it unveils a relationship between the three elements of this research; methodology, education and the protest space.

Denzin (2010, p.34) offers the view that to begin this kind of research we need a broad-based framework which can travel from 'theories of critical pedagogy, to views of performance as intervention, interruption and resistance'. A form of research that seeks a form of praxis that 'inspires the oppressed persons to act upon their utopian impulses'. This is the emancipatory aspect spoken of above, coupled with those fictive and imaginative aspects Kincheloe mentioned earlier, but now with a solidarity for those under study, those Denzin here calls oppressed persons, those which this research identifies as the Occupy Movement and in Occupy's phraseology, the 99%. It is perhaps a little unusual to think of a political or social movement as oppressed peoples but it was a distinct level of oppression around the world that gave rise to the movement in the first place, and they have certainly been oppressed by the state since they started, so I would argue the description fits. The solidarity that the research can show with the movement is summed up here by Žižek (2009, p.17) when he insists that 'we should control our fury and transform it into an icy determination to think – to think things through in a really radical way, and to ask what kind of a society it is that renders such blackmail possible<sup>4</sup>'. The

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<sup>4</sup> The blackmail Žižek is talking about is the global financial crisis and the national debts that have resulted.

research commits to 'thinking things through in a really radical way'. The members of Occupy are creating a form of what Giroux (2011, p. 6) has called 'a discourse of educated hope', but the research, through a bricolage methodology, can take that discourse a stage further, with further rigour, time for reflection and deep interrogation of the context, coupled with a philosophical view into what is and what could be. As Žižek (2009, p.92) has said, writing before the emergence of Occupy, 'a new emancipatory politics will stem no longer from a particular social agent, but from an explosive combination of different agents' - and the bricoleur can be one of them.

So if we return to the notion of creating at first a framework for analysis from the philosophies of critical pedagogy, with an eye on bricolage as our destination we can at least begin the journey to bricoleur and our research project. Kincheloe et al. (2004; 2011) insist that bricoleurs understand that researchers' interactions with objects of their inquiries, are always unpredictable, and, of course, complex. They argue that these conditions negate planning research strategies in advance and that bricoleurs enter into the research act as methodological negotiators. Having had personal experience of several political movements; the 'who's who' of how to and how not to encourage people to your cause, I had no idea what I would find outside St Pauls when I first went. Was I about to enter a closed community full of cliques and professional activists? Would I find a desperate bunch of 'black block anarchists' bent on violence and destruction as the press had suggested? Alternatively, would I find 'ordinary' people committed to extraordinary acts? Therefore having a loose framework, such as critical pedagogy, means that as long as the researcher can trust his or her own insight as to what is needed at any point, the research can commence. This is because the researcher understands that critical pedagogy enthusiastically emphasises that attention be paid to context of those under study and the construction of generative themes designed to tap into issues that are important to those involved. Thus, the disciplinary articulation of what was carried out can be left until there is time for reflection and deeper thought, with only a surface level of multi - methodological knowledge. Already we see that an idea, that of generative themes, is consistent with the methods of analysis used in grounded theory research (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010) in order to reach what is known as data saturation. Data saturation ensures that the researcher has uncovered the core of the phenomenon or issue under investigation, in order to make interpretive theory

about it. This could indeed be useful in the study written about here as the themes contained within Occupy are, at least at first look, seemingly chaotic and not hierarchical. The appropriate way to reach data saturation might be to do interviews, but what kind of interview would be most applicable? If we turn to the ethnographic tradition, we see a whole host of different interview data-collection techniques. However, when the researcher has limited time because their fieldwork site is about to radically change (in the case of Occupy an eviction of the site was looming) it is important to capture what the individuals interviewed want to say around the theme. Because what I actually found at Occupy was a very welcoming group of people, respectful of what I was doing and happy to engage in any debate or discussion a person wished to have, I employed an interview technique that Wolcott (2008, p. 55) describes as 'casual conversation', which in terms of a critical pedagogy approach could be construed as a 'constructed conversation'. This conversation was themed in that it began with an inquiry into what the interviewee had learned from their experience and how had it been learned, and continued from there. It was essential for me to ensure that the voice of the interviewee was louder in the process than mine because as Denzin (2010, p. 216) reminds us 'as researchers, we belong to a moral community. Doing interviews is a privilege granted us, not a right that we have'. I agree further when he goes on to insist that 'interviews are part of the dialogic conversation that connects all of us to the larger moral community. Interviews arise out of performance events. They transform information into shared experience'. In addition, if we are careful not to impose our own ideology onto the tone of the interview they can indeed 'criticize the world the way it is and offer suggestions of how it could be different', which is definitely the aim of the bricoleur and of Occupy.

This is again where perhaps we need to add philosophical inquiry into the art of bricolage, because as Badiou (Badiou & Žižek, 2009) says there is a philosophical situation when there is a relation where there is seemingly no relationship, or where there is a need to throw light on the value of exception. This is where we may need the philosopher to cast their eye and offer explanation. At first glance we may naïvely ask what is the relationship between the protest camp demanding social change and the education of individuals, or at least the person being interviewed as he/she may or may not have examined this relationship, this experience, critically or philosophically. The ethnographic interviews may throw up a mass of contradictions,

especially if we use bricolage to circumnavigate disciplinary parochialism when analysing the transcripts. How can we be the 99%, personified and real *and* support a group like Anonymous? How can Occupy have the feeling of making progress without declaring an allegiance to a political ideology? How can a leaderless group lead the world into a new world order? As we are attempting to uncover the unaskable questions about creating a world that 'exists not yet' (Holloway, 2010) and produce the unknowable knowledge that leads to the creation of new meaning and imaginative epistemologies, we need indeed to throw some light on the value of this experienced exception, to look philosophically at the value of the described event.

One may ask at this point, with the introduction of the idea of the usefulness of ethnographic inquiry, what is the difference between ethnography and bricolage? Many authors have described ethnography as a research paradigm that borrows from others and uses a mix of methodologies to suit its purpose (Gunn, 1989; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006; Wolcott, 2008). Although as Hobbs (1989, p. 101) states, ethnography is a 'cocktail of methodologies' aimed at understanding a particular culture or social setting and that *description* 'resides at the core of ethnography', he also says that meaning from the 'everyday perspective' of those under study is sought. In this study, nothing is 'everyday' and therefore what could be described as an extension to this description of ethnography is sought. Kozinets (2011, p. 59) insists that ethnography is grounded in context, and similar to bricolage, 'it is infused with, and imbues, local knowledges of the particular and specific'. How then is bricolage different from ethnography? As 'any given ethnography already combines multiple methods' and 'is based on adaptation or *bricolage*; its approach is continually being refashioned to suit particular fields of scholarship, research questions, research sites, times, researcher preferences, skill sets, methodological innovations, and cultural groups' (p. 60, original stress). Kozinets goes on to express that ethnography takes an 'immersive, prolonged engagement with the members of a culture or community followed by an attempt to understand and convey their reality ..... *that is familiar to its participants but strange to outsiders*' (stress added). This study was unable to take an 'immersive, prolonged engagement' due to the volatile nature of the fieldwork site as described above and therefore needed something that did not require the full immersion that ethnography might demand. There is also a disparity between the two methodologies around the notion of 'familiarity to the

participants' as we see some divergence from, but never fully part ways with, ethnography. Bricolage takes the description and understanding one-step further and through the combination of politicisation, philosophical interpretation and problematising of the way things are, bricolage manages to make the familiar unfamiliar because of its focus, gained through its relationship with critical pedagogy, on helping to create change. As Bahruth and Steiner (2000) would say, it reveals the waters in which we swim. Bricolage allows us to illicit change through an unravelling of reality, rather than an explanation or understanding of it. By using the multiple techniques in a creative, rather than a compliant manner, bricolage politicises and problematises what others might merely seek to describe, understand and explain.

There are other research tools and ontologies that will become useful during the period of this research, I am sure, and as Denzin (2010, p. 36) reminds us, no method or approach should be unexplored or ignored, especially if it helps 'illuminate a situation, process or issue'. The bricoleur is obligated to read widely across theoretical, methodological and ethical positions and must take their own learning as a defensible starting point when beginning with bricolage. They must be adaptable and flexible enough to be ready to perform multiple tasks and go beyond what may normally be expected of a doctoral student. The PhD student-bricoleur must not become 'jack-of-all-trades and master of none', an easy cul-de-sac to stray down, but must try instead to set realistic goals for the scope of their research whilst remaining true to the ethos of bricolage; this is not an easy task. But to aim for that discourse of educated hope, spoken of above, one has to take the paths that present themselves and enjoy the ride. In Schostak and Schostak (2008), the image of the methodologist as hitchhiker or skateboarder is used to signify the 'wandering through' and making multiple meanings, connections and association which in the research act become knowledge. I like this image, this 'metaphor plus' as it conjures up the feeling I had when sitting in the freezing cold weather at St. Paul's Cathedral in February, carrying out fieldwork and seeing the complexity of the scene being played out in front of me. I will never lose those images. They changed me as a researcher and a person, the associations made in my mind, the way those scenes changed the way I view the world will stay with me. I cannot undo or extract the political from the educational, or the context from the people, I cannot un-know what I know, and, I can never be sanitised for the next piece of research as, those events will always be 'drawn into other imaginaries for other agendas' (Schostak &

Schostak, 2008, p. 187), not just for me but for everyone who passed through that space.

I was hitchhiker on those days, hitchhiker in the world of the other, for whom I felt solidarity, sympathy and hope, with whom I had to take sides. For whom the context and the complexity mattered. It is true that 'methodology is not naively about knowledge but about love, death and subjection'(Schostak & Schostak, 2008, p. 42) . However, as a PhD researcher, once that space, that context was left and my own context intruded into my schema, I became hitchhiker on the juggernaut of theories, ideas, philosophies, rushing through the landscape, picking up what time will allow, prone to missing some detail in the attempt to record them all, playing at the edges.

When you start to think about research through bricolages' multiple lens the task seems so daunting. Therefore, at first, because you understand that the object of your inquiry is part of a historically situated complex system, and not an encapsulated static phenomenon (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 73), it may be that the best way for a researcher at this point in their career is to accept the ontology but prioritise where the lens falls in order to grasp a starting point. This may sound as if it is not bricolage at all but, because mastering the bricolage is a lifelong pursuit, one has to start somewhere. As long as the researcher acknowledges that this is what they are doing and accepts that their interpretation of any social action is an individually defined snapshot of that action due to the nature of the researchers own situatedness, then the researcher is beginning to think like the bricoleur.

In conclusion, from the findings of the study of both bricolage as methodology and Occupy as research subject, conclusions are not the end point, but rather actions for change. It is not the job of this bricolage research to defend or criticise the 'effectiveness' of the phenomena under study. Revolutions do not happen overnight and as MacKenzie (2011) tells us, even if you are still convinced the Occupy movement is a waste of time, 'no matter, the hacking of your consciousness has begun', so only time will tell. However, the point of the Occupy movement worldwide was to prefigure some kind of change, and the same can easily be said for bricolage, radical research and critical pedagogy. Bricolage creates a radical action research for social change, it may be described as the scientific methodology of social action and, as Marx once famously said, 'The philosophers [and here we might include much social science research] have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways: the point, however, is to *change* it' (Marx & Engels, 1846/ 2007, p. 123).

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