

Making it with the University of the Future: pleasure and pedagogy in higher and higher education

In this paper Mike Neary presents a set of principles on which to design the university of the future, where the future is understood as post-capitalist (communist) society. These principles are set against the current vogue for iconic university buildings that sell a particular capitalised version of academic life. Mike's principles for the University of the Future are derived from a number of sources: firstly, a recovery of unbuilt 1960s' architectural schemes for higher education: the Fun Palace (Price and Littlewood 1962) and the Potteries Thinkbelt (Price 1965), secondly, by remembering the utopian thinking that underpinned the construction of campus universities in England; thirdly, a conceptualisation of teaching and learning spaces through Critical Pedagogy and Marxist social theory, and, finally, with reference to a teaching space 'a psycho classroom' (Lambert 2011) that Mike developed with colleagues and students at the University of Warwick in 2006.

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'...nothing needs less justification than pleasure...' (Brecht 2006 60)

'Can we devise a fine architecture or ecstatic muscle and musical light' (Nuttall 1970: 186).

'Dog so hated the world that he sent his only son to destroy it' (Graffiti, September 2014).

Campus Porn

Have you ever wanted to fuck a building; or, were so attracted to a man-made construction that you thought about marrying it? That's what Erika Eiffel and Mrs Eija-Ritta Berliner-Maurer did in the 1970s; they got married to the Eiffel Tower and the Berlin Wall, changing their surnames as a public demonstration of their object-love (Wilkinson 2014 264). They belong to a group who define themselves as 'Objectum Sexuials': people who derive sexual pleasure from their relationships with buildings and other inanimate objects (Marsh 2009 and 2010).

This attraction to inanimate monumental objects puts a new spin on what Marx referred to as 'commodity fetishism', in this case exploitation is now not only hidden, but involves people being physically and emotionally attached to the man-made structures through which they are exploited. This relationship of exploitation is how JG Ballard in the novel, *Crash* (1973 [2014]), defines pornography: people using each other and the objects around them in the most brutal and immediate way for personal satisfaction. *Crash* is a fictional reality exposing people's sexual fantasies about another inanimate object: the motor car, and how relationships with the motor car and other 'sinister technologies' force them to live in an infantile perpetual present: a 'nightmare marriage between sex and technology' in which any consideration of the future is overwhelmed by the possibility of the instant gratification made available by object-porn for their sex lives and life-styles (Ballard intro *Crash* 1973 [2014] v - vii).

Evidence of a version of Objectum Sexual is apparent in the architectural boom that became part of the learning landscape of higher education in the UK since the late 1990s (Harrison and Hutton 2014): let's call it campus porn. Over the last two decades, many universities have invested in eye-catching architecture aimed at attracting investors and business, as a way of transforming their institutions into marketing-driven 'brands'. Students now became 'customers', and providing a positive satisfying customer experience is a paramount preoccupation for university managers and a key instruction for architectural briefs (Glancey 2010).

In this paper I want to challenge this phenomenon by looking at some university architecture designs based on very different ideals for of higher education: not the 'business ontology' (Fisher date) of university managers, but modernist, utopian and socialist ideals; and, in this way, to provide inspiration and motivation for current and future designs for teaching and learning spaces in higher education. Of particular interest is the relationship between material spaces and technology which, in the most extraordinary cases, have sought to meld not just the real with the virtual, but the physical and the intellectual, like a membrane or skin or body tissue or organ or orifice or limb, to create dynamic patterns of student mobility circulating like blood. All this amounts to the possibility of a very real form of intimacy with our pedagogic environment in ways that transcend our current alienated preoccupations, so that we might come to '...share in a delicate game of desire' (Neto 2008, Lambert 2011 34) and a very peculiar kind of intellectual intimacy (<http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/ernesto-netos-intimacy/>)

I want to use this framing as a way of proposing 'the university of the future', not just as an idea but as a principle of building design, written up as a sort of social science fiction (Neary 2002 and 2014). My university of the future is derived from a theory of the future based on a reconceptualisation of social time (Neary and Rikowski 2002) now conceived as 'free-time' (Marx 1993) and a new version of social wealth, now conceived as communism 'from each according to their capacity, to each according to their needs' (Marx 1875). Communism now depends on the abolition of capitalist work: intensified labour and/or under/unemployment, i.e., 'work as a form of living death' (Dinerstein and Neary 2002) and the opportunity for new forms of social activity where humanity and nature are the project rather than the resource.

This social science fiction will draw on the work of William Burroughs (1914-1997), Charles Fourier (1772 - 1837), Anais Nin (1903-1997), JG Ballard (1930-2009) and Anthony Burgess (1917-1993) to create not just an emotional as well as an intellectual reading experience, but as a sort of radical imaginary space for creative reading as well as creative writing (Penfold-Mounce, Beer, Burrows 2011, Burroughs date). A version of social science fiction will appear later in this paper as a satire on the notion of student satisfaction and social learning spaces.

I am basing my university of the future on ready-made visions and already built university buildings, focusing on campus universities in the 1960s, as well as designs for futuristic universities that were never built in the same period. I will supplement this with research I did at the University of Lincoln into academic involvement with the design of learning spaces, 2008-2010, as well as an account of a teaching space, The Reinvention Classroom, that I developed with colleagues and students at the University of Warwick in 2006. What connects these spaces are the principles, practices and politics of utopianism, modernism, indeterminacy, pleasure, emotionality, intimacy, experimentation, time; and all of it grounded, one way or another, in a critique of the factory-based principle of work: anti-work.

But first, I want to begin in another space, the John Henry Brookes Building, a new addition to Oxford Brookes University estate, opened in 2014, as an exemplar of contemporary university design, or campus porn.

John Henry Brookes Building, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford

The John Henry Brookes Building stands in the centre of the Gipsy Hill Campus at the Oxford Brookes University. John Henry Brookes (1891-1975), after whom the building and the University is named, was a key figure in the development of higher and further education in Oxford. He was a compassionate and effective leader, as well as a talented artist and silversmith and a committed teacher of art (Addison 1979). Brookes was also a conscientious objector, refusing to fight in WW1, although you will find no mention of his principled refusal to go to war within the new landmark building¹.

The building, constructed in the style of Hi-Tech Modernism, presents itself as 'a gateway' to the University. In its citation for selection as a candidate for the Stirling Prize, the University describes the building, somewhat blandly, as 'designed to meet the University's vision for a holistic approach to enhancing the student experience. Oxford Brookes' campus redevelopment provides an adaptable and flexible environment for a dynamic range of teaching and learning spaces' (17th July 2014) <https://www.brookes.ac.uk/about-brookes/news/john-henry-brookes-building-judged-to-be-one-of-top-15-new-buildings-in-the-country/>

Despite its award winning credentials not all architectural critics are convinced, describing the facade as 'there's something of the glossy business/technology park about it', so that it resembles more of an 'office block' than a university. The effect is 'shiny and just a bit sterile at first glance' (Pearman 2014). Although once inside the building the same critic gushes with praise, describing the inside as 'remarkable', the social spaces a 'teeming mosh pit of what's called the Forum.' The Atrium has 'interesting things ramming into it from all sides' (Pearman 2014), including a lecture theatre 'hanging in the space', a walkway that works like ' a supercharged minstrel's gallery' and a library without walls. Interestingly, the teaching rooms, situated away from the central area, are described as 'more conventional'. But overall, this is an 'intelligent building' and more than an icon (Pearman 2014).

While the student experience is presented as being one of the main rationales for the building, students were not involved in the design:

'Certainly we had interaction with end users who were part of the Steering Group who were part of the process of understanding how the building was going to be made to work. I think, in truth, in terms of interaction with students it has been fairly limited...the reasons for that probably are the scale and programme of projects like this don't necessarily fit in with programmes in term of education programmes... at times there could have been more of it [interaction] I suspect in terms of that process, but in terms of end-users there was good interaction with the client side of it.'
(Richard Jobson, architect for the building, date <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/space-to-think/campuses/headington-campus/john-henry-brookes-building/build-talk-videos/build-talk-1/>)

Despite its claims, there is nothing exceptional about the John Henry Moore Building; it is an example of what Hatherley might describe as a pseudo-modernist building: 'That is, the Modernism of the icon, of the city academies [although he could just as well have said universities] where each fundamentally alike yet bespoke design embodying a vacuous aspirationalism, [evident in its own Stirling statement]; a modernism without the politics, without the utopianism, or without any conception of the polis; a Modernism that conceals rather than reveals its functions; Modernism as a shell' (Hatherley 2010 xxiv,). Also, in the words of another architectural critic, who in a further politicization of Hi-Tech architecture describes this kind of building as an 'anaesthetized formal language... a perfect complement to the hollowed out shell of social democracy' (Murphy 2012 92).

In spite of the vacuousness of its self-description, these are not vacuous spaces, but have their origins in Fordist factories designed and built in the USA in the early part of the 20th century: huge sheds 'more glass than structure...vast impersonality...the last word in architectural rationalism' (Wilkinson 2014 207). It was in these massive structures where the new mass production automated labour processes were invented, based on the principles of clock-work scientific management and the logic of time and motion: the space-time of capitalist production (Wilkinson 210-214). There is no pleasure in these factories, only an orgy of sado-masochism, where people might be made to love their pain through the injection of wages and consumerist fantasies (Wilkinson 2015). The industrial aesthetic that frames these structures was very influential for European modernist architects, futuring buildings to cast a new process of production out of 'the white heat of technology' (Wilkinson 2014 219). But, as we now know, this vision of the future was to appear always tantalisingly out of reach.

But how might we do things differently, as designs for teaching and learning spaces, in a way that attempts to fully engage the challenges of the future? In what follows I want to explore some buildings that self consciously attempted to create a futuristic university.

The Fun Palace: University of the Streets (East London 1962)

The 'University of the Streets', or the Fun Palace as it was officially known, was to provide higher education as a form of play and entertainment for the local population of East London. The idea was developed in the early 1960s by Joan Littlewood (1914 - 2002), actor and communist activist, who combined her interest in education with avant-garde theatre based on the principles and practices of Berthold Brecht and Russian Constructivism (Mathews 2005 and Mathews 2007); and Cedric Price (1934-2003), an anti-establishment architect and committed left-wing socialist (Mathew 2007 15) with 'a rational, collaborative approach to design' (Mathews 2007 21). The Fun Palace was not a building in any conventional sense, but a scaffolded-construction made up of prefabricated temporary structures, manipulated by a number of tower cranes: more like a shipyard than a building, within which indeterminacy was *the* design principle, with an instruction from Price that the building should not stand for more than ten years (Mathews 2007).

The design was based on thinking derived from the social sciences, in particular Game Theory and Cybernetics, in a way that allowed for variation and real structural

change. The structure was to respond to the recorded activity of its users, which would be converted into malleable data and algorithms to further develop the space, built initially as a series of zones: for research, film-making and scientific experimentation. The Fun Factory was to be an exemplar of anti-form and anti-function, where the structure found a way of articulating a vision of its users through a type of 'anticipatory design' (Mathews 2007 41), or 'calculated uncertainty' (Mathews 2007 41), that took into account cultural and social issues as well as aesthetics. The building was to be literally and figuratively alive (Colombino 2012).

This was not really a building at all, but a sort of 'interactive machine, a virtual architecture merging art and technology' (Mathews 2007 13). The main issue for Price and Littlewood was not the aesthetics of the structure, but how to create a framework or armature on which a model for the improvement of the social world could be built, and in which 'an extraordinary interactive and cybernetic model of architecture would be arrayed' (Mathews 2005 90).

This development of the building was pre-occupied with the issue of work, and more particularly, the future of work in a society in which it was anticipated that work would be increasingly automated and workless. Work was the central issue for Littlewood and Price, i.e., the design for their futuristic universities was based on a vision of non-alienated human activity (Mathews 2005). The Fun Factory was designed in a way that would reclaim subjectivity through increased leisure.

The Fun Palace was never built, although a scaled-down version did appear as the *Interchange Project* in 1976 in North London. This structure was based on a steel frame that could be manipulated through the arrangement of ready made plug-in portakabins, containers and other industrial artefacts, all imbued with 'the sense of potential for expansion and contraction' (Murphy 2012 98). The structure was used for community activities and education until it was demolished in 2003 on Price's insistence <http://www.audacity.org/SM-26-11-07-02.htm>.

The Fun Palace's design principles were hugely influential, laying the ground for High-Tech formalism, but without the left wing politics (Mathews nd 90, Murphy 2012). The Fun Palace and the Interchange building were the inspiration for *Les Halles* in Paris as well as the futuristic Archigram group of architects working in the UK in the 1960s and 1970s. Inspired by the anti-establishment cultural celebrities of the time: the Beat writers, the late-Beatles experimental period, Surrealism and Pop Art, Archigram promoted 'architecture without architecture' (Sadler 2005), pushing the logic of the Fun Factory to extremes in an extensive portfolio of building designs, the majority of which were never built. For Archigram, modernist architecture was too static and permanent and needed to be replaced in an environment where constructions would be expendable, expandable and ephemeral, making use of balloons, dirigibles, tents, shelters and awnings, which emphasised the processual feature of architecture: as a series of *events*. A very strong theme in the work of Archigram was that buildings should be made to work like skin or parts of the body, imitating bowels and breasts, muscles, stomachs and the heart, as an 'architectural-biological machine' (Sadler 2005 25).

All of this was the antithesis of the Fordist shed-like car factory, although buildings would be consumed like cars, in an architectural movement that was driven, following on from Price and Littlewood, by 'the shock of pure indeterminacy' (Sadler 2005 6). One of the stand-out buildings from the design collection is a Plug-In city, which has its own Plug-In university (Sadler 2005). But if Price and Littlewood were driven by a socialist sensibility, Archigram was motivated by ultra-optimism rather than

utopianism. This optimism included the re-invention of work-time based on promoting the advantages of consumerist society, but in a way that could only ever end up by eating itself (Sadler 2005).

Thinkbelt [Tb] (The Potteries 1965)

During the same period, the mid 1960s, Price worked on another building project based on a vision for the future of higher education. Left to himself this solution was altogether more instrumental, although it had at its core ideas to reconsider the nature of work in the context of higher education. His plan was to create an environment that regenerated UK industry and technology to support the new 'white heat of technology' revolution (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007). Thinkbelt, as the project was known, was not a university but 'a plan for advanced educational industry' (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 13), against the notion of campus style universities, of which the nearby Keele University was a prime example. Price considered Keele too detached from the local population and with almost no contact with local industry. The Thinkbelt was meant to convert a post-industrial wasteland in the Potteries region into an education-technology park, in which not only would strong connections be made between industry and learning, but higher education would become its own industry. All of this would revitalise existing industries, e.g., ceramics, acting as a catalyst for further improvement in the local socio-economic environment and encourage enterprise so that over time all of the Potteries would be revolutionised.

This was a large site, more than one hundred square miles, across North Staffordshire, with space for twenty thousand students. The site would be designed around the concept that 'cities can be made by learning' (Architectural Design 1966 484 in Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 37), including housing and amenities that could be used by the local population, with space for up to forty thousand residents. The accommodation would be based around modular prefabricated housing of different types: *crate* - pressed steel containers in a thirteen storey concrete frame; *sprawl* - timber framed units built on a tray-like structure; *capsule* - fibre-glass living spaces in a steel frame built primarily for single occupation, and *battery* - living units in a sealed environment with their own services enabling progressive expansion (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 46).

Roughly triangular in shape, each vertex of the Thinkbelt [Tb] site would contain a Transfer Area, promoting rapid mobility, with accommodation for staff and students as well as laboratories and workshops. These transportation links could be used by Faculties as sites of mobile learning, in train carriages and specially situated rail sidings as well as buses. The teaching accommodation would include self-teaching carrels, areas for fold-out decking and inflatable units for up to thirty students. The [Tb] was to be built around a highly developed transport and electronic communications network, connected to national and international transportation links, including air travel, with the intention to create a 'literate, skilled and highly mobile society' (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 18). Anticipating wikipedia and the web: the pedagogy and teaching styles of this new institution would encourage students to make use of electronic communication equipment so as to create connected sites in an 'information store, which lets student develop their own patterns of study' (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 18).

At the heart of the [Tb] design lay a reconceptualisation of time and the future of work. Students would be paid a salary, 'If people are doing a job society wants them to do, they must be paid for it' (Price in Architectural Design 484 in Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 37). Professors at [Tb] would work part-time in industry and spend the rest of their working time at the Thinkbelt; but for Price, time was not just redistributed it was to be distorted: the Tb was designed to 'distort time...to devise not a new aesthetic, but to give an aesthetic quality to the ideas of indeterminacy' (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 99); and through the extension of education time, what Price referred to as 'lifelong learning' before the term was commonly used: 'This is what education should do... to distort time in order to allow you more control and to bring benefit to yourself and by extension other people' (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 99).

Taking these two university designs together, the Fun Palace and Thinkbelt, the key design principle was 'total invention and imagination' (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 85), with designs that show 'absolutely no compromise' (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 11), so as to 'create conditions hitherto thought impossible' (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 11), as part of 'a continuous manifesto for education' (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 11). Price's work consciously confronts university buildings designed in the way of Fordist factories and assembly line production, '...challenging the hegemony of this idea, with all its pseudo-functional and deterministic baggage' (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 71), producing 'a very serious critique of what was becoming an imprisoned way of thinking about university building' (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 71), as a sort of lightness made real by the removal of architecture (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 107).

The problematics confronted by Price and Littlewood: the relationship between time, space, technology, mobility, work and play are still important issues for higher education, and for which no university has found a solution (Hardingham and Rattenbury 2007 105). It is important that we recover the practical idealism and the leftist politics on which it is based to reconsider the spaces and places for the future of university life.

The Campus University

There are other visionary architectural buildings on which we can draw inspiration, built as part of the expansion of higher education in the UK and around the world in the 1960s, characterised by their campus style construction and location. The building of university campus(es) formed part of a 'utopianist mood' (Muthesius 2000 1), or, at the very least, a commitment to 'social architecture' (Muthesius 2000 282) that managed to convey both an idealistic and practical frame of mind (Muthesius 2000 290), in what amounted to a form of 'New University Modernism' (Muthesius 2000 2). What distinguishes these buildings in the UK is that they were:

'Not animated only by concerns for cost and utility...but also by less quantifiable considerations: beauty, visual drama and, above all, ideas of higher education, old and new...[as] art and machine...aimed to embody utopian principles and to facilitate their realisation...to provide a place that gave memorable expression to a philosophy. If the talk was of revolution, of a bright start, tradition and memory continued to maintain a central presence' (Ossa-Richardson, 2014 131).

And, in line with best modernist principles:

'The postwar campuses...have in common a sense of higher purpose and the embodiment of an ideal... [so that staff and students]... can experience the campus as a place in its own right, with its own history and meanings, have the opportunity of finding their own part in a community and in a tradition - of participating in the ideal of the university' (Ossa-Richardson 2014 154), expressing the sensual and aural aspects of science buildings (Ossa-Richardson 136 from Saint 1984).

To focus on one campus: the University of York set out to be different. At York there was much thought put into providing a collegiate system so that staff and students were in close proximity across different subject areas and disciplines, including the Arts and Science:

'The intention was to replace the anonymity of the mass lecture, the isolation of over specialisation and the tyranny of end of course examinations with tutorials, multidisciplinary connections and novel, multiforms of continual assessment. At the heart would be colleges, places not just of learning and teaching but of residence and living...the core faith in college and community' (Smith 2008 40).

The colleges would be made up men and women, with public spaces for students, academics, porters and cleaners to 'stop and talk, eat and drink, or walk on' (Muthuseis 2000 135). The intention was to maintain connections with teaching, student life and residential living so that students 'spend much of their time in their own or another college' (Muthuseis 2000 134). The plan was to create a sense of community, applicable 'to life in a modern democracy' sharing an 'intellectual and emotional experience' (Muthuseis 2000 136-137). Derbyshire, the architect of the York campus, admitted to 'a socialism as incarnated in his buildings' (Ossa-Richardson 2014 146 from Saint 1984). This was not simply utopian but a pragmatic way of achieving social economic and cultural regeneration (Muthesius 2000).

At York the colleges were to be built in close proximity with connecting paths to stimulate interaction and effect encounters between staff and students from the Science and Arts buildings (Ossa-Richardson 2014 136). The lake was crossed by 'delicate bridges' (Ossa-Richardson 2014 148), settled within the campus so the buildings became part of the natural beauty of the landscape (142). Built away from the city, the campus provided a secluded space for private contemplation, more like a monastery with cloisters (138). There was a strong sense that buildings should encapsulate the nature of higher education (Ossa-Richardson 139) even 'if the meaning was not articulated beyond philosophical abstractions as something between the emotional and the rational' (141) while at the same time infused with a new brutalism that was both futuristic and technological (143).

All of this was striving for an 'aesthetic language' for university architecture (Ossa-Richardson 142). Most notably as something that is characterised by a sense of 'incompleteness' (143), and of being open-ended, making a link between the design principles of Derbyshire, Price, Littlewood and Archigram. All of this was reflected in the ease in which it is possible to get lost on campus, of creating a sense of never having arrived, encouraging 'mystery and disorientation' (Ossa-Richardson 2014152), i.e., a space for private and shared discovery, the opportunity to cultivate self-hood, so that one has to find oneself in the complex labyrinth (Ossa-Richardson 2014 152).

Faced with the idealistic principles on which the design of York campus was based, the contemporary concept of 'student experience' becomes a much reduced way of thinking about what these architects and administrators had in mind when they were designing this university of the future. Now the issue is not so much about Utopia, but rather how to create an 'image' to enhance league table rankings (Muthuseis 2000 1 and 291).

These visions were not matched on all the new campus(es) built in the period, for which Utopianism became a form of 'disguised instrumentalism' (Muthesius 2000 290-291) or at worst a 'capitalist-technoid instrumentalism' (Muthesius 291). This is apparent from the University of Warwick's white tiled Library exterior walls, built on the same design as St Thomas's Hospital in London: 'as if human beings (students) was some kind of disease' (Colombino 2012 27, Powers 1992).

DRAFT

The Interzone - learning p[a]lace, a satire on student satisfaction and social learning spaces

WetWet sat on a plastic bum shaped seat in the *Dog Eat Dog Cafe* with the rest of her chingus. They were vibrating on an orgy of body shape furniture. Stone tits. Pussy rubber. Wooden Leg. Steel penis. Copper skin.

Eating dog off styrofoam plates, picking at the meat with ivory chokaracks, skewering garnished quinces, compact pears and medlar fruit.

This was the first week of term and everywhere had the whiff of guaranteeism; or, managing expectations as the backstory behind Student Guides. It stank.

WetWet was reading out-loud comments her tutor, Dr Bandwidth, had made on her essay: *Eudemonism. Don't make me laugh. Discuss?* 'She says it's like fucking graffiti. Does she love it or hate it? What the fuck is graffiti anyway?'

Exetera, with a mouth full of roast dog, 'Graffiti is an art crime. It's like the writing on the wall. She hates it dumb fuck.'

In the Study Garden students as producers sat around a table shaped like an oversized guitar plectrum. Hand-in was an hour away and they were writing up research reports after experimenting on themselves 'Come to Students as Producers and be Your Own Research' How fucking cool is that, screamed the Marketing Manager postergirl.

Venus ingested Mescaline: 'I puked, then fainted'. RawRaw had slashed her wrists: 'The tourniquet failed to stop the bleeding. I needed a blood transfusion'. PeaPea took a high voltage electric shock: 'My hair caught fire. That is unusual. This is my unique contribution to knowledge.' Marmight was working out how long it took to smoke a cigarette, calculating when he would catch cancer. His report was going to be late.

BeBe was the star student. She crashed her car as an experiment, head-on into a family saloon at 50mph. BeBe broke both legs and her uterus was damaged. She will never have children. 'The driver in the other car, a woman, was killed outright. The child passenger was not wearing a seat-belt and smashed through both windscreens, landing in the back seat of my roadster. She is now in hospital on life support. 60mph and she would have died, no doubt'.

OohOoh's eyes were closed, with consciousness streaming down her face 'I am a fucking hoodlum scientist'. 'I know you are, I know you are', whispered Wet Wet, 'it only works if you are completely honest.'

A gigantic wooden slatted structure, sculpted like a pterodactyl, soared above the students, close to the glass ceiling of the High Rise Atrium. Its clockwork wings cast shadowy down-draughts, swaying the branches of the fake palm trees on the floor of the canyon-like building.

YieYie screamed 'I am feeling hypodermic', before squeezing the needle into her bulging vein. An overdose to escape her overdraught. She would be approved for extenuating circumstances and granted a posthumous degree, with full university

honours: Latin and a Coat of Arms. 'It is the least that we could do'. [*Quod minime faceret*]

Big Dog's image was on the TV screens, reading out the last night's Varsity football scores: Interzone (Male) 4 Outerzone (Male) 2; Interzone (Women) 3 Outerzone (Women) 9; Interzone (Queer) 8 Outerzone (Queer) 2; Interzone (Intergalactics) 3 Outerzone (Intergalactics) 0.

The 'Fairies' (student helpers) were working the space, looking for sexual deprivation. Handing out questionnaires *Are You Getting It?*, granulated from one to five on the Licksuck scale. The Institution had ditched 'excellence' and rebranded as the 'University of orgasms'. When students were off the register, falling below the 'amorous minimum', they were booked into the Court of Love, where their sensual needs would be satisfied. Sado-macks, heart attacks, strangulation, official orifice penetration, delayed gratification. They had stalled the League Table and Big Dog was fretting. The Fairies' worst nightmare was Banglams secreting themselves into the building, that's a made forced private entry into the Court of Love. The Campus Cops shot them in the face, but students loved the dirty public engagement.

To be honest, Interzone was not built for people. It looked better empty. Frozen. On the end of a fuck. Like a psychic event, or psycho classroom. There was an atmosphere like everyone was waiting for everyone else to die.

Scrawled on the wall 'Big Dog so hated the world that he sent his only son to destroy it.'

WetWet mumbled with a mouthful of pear pie 'Sometimes I feel as if I was living in the future that had already taken place and will now be exhausted. By contagion I am become impregnated with the philosophy of Dog'.

Meanwhile, Dr Bandwidth sat out of sight in a high backed work-pod on the mezzanine floor, playing the long game, for now.

Learning Landscapes in Higher Education (Lincoln 2010)

These visionary campus designs were mainly at the level of master planning and had little to say about how their visionary pedagogies for teaching and learning spaces might be manifest as part of the architectural design. Learning Landscapes in Higher Education, a research project carried out in the UK between 2008 - 2010, made a link between 'the idea of the university' and the precise character of learning and teaching spaces. It made the connection by encouraging a critical academic sensibility to inform classroom design, and how this could be expressed at the level of the campus: not only through the usual measures of *efficiency* and *effectiveness*, but, more demonstrably and architecturally, through the way in which the idea of the university is *expressed* (Neary et al 2010).

The methodology for Learning Landscapes was enriched by grounding the empirical research in radical sociology and critical pedagogy, worked up as design principles and framed by a Marxist theory of the production of capitalist space (Lefebvre 1991). For Lefebvre space is the outcome of the productive principle out of which societies are derived. In capitalist society space is capitalised, by which he means space is given over to the logic of class struggle, imposed by the rationality of capitalist work - abstract labour: as factories measured in time (Fordism) and other clockwork forms of institutional life, like prisons and schools and house-work (James and De La Costa 1975). Lefebvre was interested in the way the rationality of factory time is resisted as counter-spaces, evident in the way capitalist space is colonised as public space, including, and in particular, the life of the street.

Lefebvre argued for an urban revolution in which higher education plays a key role, involving new forms of knowledge institutions based on a new science of urban society: as 'a critique of everyday life', or 'subversive knowledge'. These would be very different from current higher education institutions, not based on disciplines and faculties but organised around the 'unity of the sciences' against the dogma and authoritarianism of subjects and the mediocre compromise that emerges from interdisciplinarity (Lefebvre 2003 54). The organising principle for Lefebvre's university is not the failed universalism of philosophy, but negative dialectics, 'or dialectical anthropology' or 'immanent critique' (Lefebvre 2003 65). The main issue is that solutions are not pre-ordained as in most futurological social science or based on acquired knowledge with an already developed final goal; rather, solutions emerge out of the urban problematic that is under review and the grounded social relations out of which the problem is produced. So that from out of the conflict and contractions pathways emerge while all of the time the future horizon is kept in view, 'introducing rigour in invention and knowledge in utopia' (Lefebvre 1996 151).

For the Marxist geographer, David Harvey, this was personified in the figure of the 'insurgent architect' with the capacity for: 'utopian thinking of spatial form...by imagining entirely different systems of property rights, living and working arrangements, all manifest as entirely different forms and spatial forms and temporal rhythms ...[which]...makes possible a radically different consciousness...together with the expression of different rights, duties, obligation founded on collective ways of living' (Harvey 2000 237-238), and, one might add, working and loving.

This Marxist interpretation of space was given a further radical twist in the Learning Landscapes report (Neary et al 2010) by an insistence that classroom design be imbued with the concept of gender. An example of gendered design was taken from the work of Virginia Woolf who, after having been excluded from a library at an Oxford College, argued that women should have a 'Room of One's Own' (2008), and be supported financially so that they might write and study. She pursues this theme of design principles for university architecture in 'Three Guineas' (2008) where she argues that higher education should be free from the principles of competition, acquisition and militarism that currently dominate research and teaching. In a speech to raise money for a new women's college she anticipates the impermanence principle established by Price, Littlewood and Archigram:

'Before you begin to rebuild your college, what is the aim of education, what kind of society, what kind of human being it should seek to produce...the old education of the old college breeds neither a particular respect for liberty nor a particular hatred of war - it is clear that you must rebuild your college differently. It is young and poor; let it therefore take advantages of those qualities and be founded on poverty and youth. Obviously then it must be an experimental college. Let it be built on lines of its own. It must be built not of carved stone and stained glass, but some cheap, easily combustible material, which does not hoard dust and perpetuate traditions. Do not have chapels. Do not have museums and libraries with chained books and first editions under glass cages. Let the pictures and the books be new and always changing. Let it be decorated afresh by each generation, by their own hands. Cheaply.' (Woolf 2008 198-199)

As well as an appeal to gendered sensibilities, the Learning Landscapes report (Neary et al 2010), insisted that classroom design should reflect the design principle of anti-discrimination; taking its cue from bell hooks who, writing as a black feminist educationalist and activist, argues against all forms of educational discrimination; and how this must be negated by turning the classroom into a paradise:

'The academy is not a paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom with all its limitations remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have to opportunity labour for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades and openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imaging ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom' (hooks 1994 207).

Neary and Saunders (2011) further developed the theme of academic engagement in the design and development of teaching and learning spaces by arguing that classroom design could be informed by promoting a collective critical reflexivity among academics about the meaning and purpose of higher education: 'the idea of the university', and how this could be represented in architectural design of the pedagogical environment. This collective critical reflexivity should be informed by the academic literature so that universities might come to know their own institutional story and create their own radical history of the university, including its engagements with student protests and occupations (Neary 2012, Neary and Amsler 2012b); and to use this as the basis on which they might confront the undermining logics of 'academic capitalism' (Slaughter and Rhoades 1994) and the pedagogy of debt (Williams 2009). They argued that academic input can be given greater academic credibility by making use of approaches to space and spatiality from across a range of academic disciplines, including Geography and Physics, as might be expected; but, also, and often with spectacular unexpected results, from less obvious

disciplines, for example, English Literature, following the example of Virginia Woolf, incorporating these poetic problematics into actual classroom design.

But what might all of this look like. Can we provide a concrete example?

Reinvention Classroom (University of Warwick 2006)

The Reinvention Centre was a collaborative project between the University of Warwick and the University of Oxford Brookes from 2005 - 2010. Central to the project was the promotion of research activities for students as the organising principle of the undergraduate curriculum, and, in this way, for undergraduate students to become part of the academic project of universities. A key issue for the project was the design of teaching spaces to facilitate this radical proposal.

The Reinvention Classroom at the University of Warwick incorporates the principles and practices of radical sociology, critical pedagogy and Marxist theories of space, infusing the political aesthetics of fine art into classroom design. The space is an experiment as well as a work of art (Lambert 2011 31, 42). The aim of the classroom was to create a space that would encourage collaboration between teachers and students for the production of knowledge and meaning. The room was designed by academics and students working with architects and Estates professionals and university administrators; it was opened in September 2006 (Lambert 2011 35).

The Reinvention Classroom is situated in a remote site at the northern outer-limits of the Warwick campus, housed in a detached building, co-habiting with a cafe and shop. It is rectangular in shape, one hundred and twenty square metres of light and colour, stripped of all decoration - bare white walls with a blue floor covered in rubber stretched like a skin-membrane across the entire surface, primary coloured cube shaped seats, round yellow oversized bean bags and long monochrome grey and black plastic benches. There are no tables and chairs. The space is lit by uplighters in the floor, halogen strips of electric light from the ceiling and sunlight streaming on sunny days through windows in the slanted roof. Polluted air from the nearby arterial road circulates through 'windcatcher' ventilators warmed by an under-floor heating system. The acoustics are sound-around. Along the wall at intervals are dance rails, melding the energy of the room with performance theatre and the critical sensibility of the fine arts.

The main artistic influences for the space are Purism and Neoplasticism: utopian art movements that emerged in the 1920s as a protest against the chaotic carnage of the First World War. Purism, or Cubism without the decoration, is noted for its 'geometric forms and large areas of colour' as well as its 'cool and detached paint surfaces' and careful composite chromatic order. The space contains an exemplar of purist design, Le Corbusier's chaise-longue (1928) otherwise described as 'a relaxing machine' (Neary and Thody 2009). Neoplasticism is an extreme form of Purism, stripped bare to the barest elements of design with no recognisable figurative content. The artistic sensibility is reinforced by Liam Gillick's, 'Double Back Platform' (2001), fixed high up on one of the walls, made of plexi-glass and aluminium, '*...the materials of McDonald's signs, and display cases in Prada, of aeroplanes and bullet-proof screens in banks, of really sexy nightclub floors and riot shields*' (quoted in Neary and Thody 2009 38). Not the kind of material or objects found in standard university classrooms.

Technology is ubiquitous. With no fixed projector or televisual screens there are no dominating lines of sight. The pure white walls act as a surface for images thrown from a mobile projector that can be rolled around the space. This lack of dominating focal point reflects the cubist anti-perspectival sensibility (Berger 1998), with no pre-allocated point from which teacher might stand to give a lecture: there is no powerpoint in the space, no space for teacher to dominate; each space needs to be negotiated and claimed (Rose 1993). All of this consolidating the utopian tendency of the room in which the space and, therefore, the future is something to be made and constructed: there is no ready-made. There is no fear of the future in this space: no 'future proofing' (Miller 2001). The future emerges out of the real world in which the present is grounded by the significance given to the floor which acts as a reality check for the whole room. The floor provides a sense of gravitas and gravity for the entire space. The floor is a surface for working on as well as walking on. The heated rubber provides and all around feeling of warmth and comfort: as a site for social interaction, reminding us of the significance of the floor as a social space for other cultures, giving the room a racial and ethnic intelligence.

The space is not designed for any specific subject, all can be taught here to some extent. The room is uncomfortable and uncompromising. 'The Learning Mould is Smashed' (Independent January 2011), perhaps. This is a 'Psycho classroom' (Lambert 2011).

Through the work of Ranciere (2004) Lambert frames the space as 'a site of dissonance and critique through which the potential of space to influence pedagogy can be realised...[in a way]... that invite[s] adventurous participation...[presuming]...an equality of the intellectual capacities of those working within the space, accompanied by a willingness to allow uncertain outcomes' (28); and not only cognitive intellectual capacities, but 'embodied and emotional knowledges' (28) as well as desire (33). The room is infused with the principles of pleasure and 'spatial play' (39), like a primary school classroom, or a Fun Palace. Through the work of Ranciere (2004) Lambert frames this space as a site for 'aesthetic encounters' (28) understood as 'a regime for configuration of sense perception' (28), suggesting ways in which this aesthetic sensibility might be 'redistributed', through what she calls 'pedagogic art': the convergence of pedagogy and art' (3) as alternative modes of knowledge and expectations (30) after Joseph Beuys and Guy Debord. Through the work of Readings (1996) Lambert frames the classroom as an architectural space based on an architecture of endless questioning' (30) grounded in the principles of 'dissensus and ruin' (Readings 1996) (30), not in the sense of despair 'but as critique and reconstruction' (37). 'Dissensus here becomes a generative force breathing life into the metaphor of ruin' (37), present in the design of the space. And as something that can be self-generating in other places so that: 'Psycho classrooms can become sites of antagonism in relation to the dominant ideologies of the neo-liberal institutions in which they are embedded: an antagonism that generates spaces of potentiality' (42).

Parked outside the classroom is the Reinvention Bus, a jumbo transit van with spaces for eighteen passengers, and disabled access. The bus is not just for driving students to Oxford Brookes and back, but to set up mobile teaching spaces on the M40. Without knowing about Price's ideas, the Reinvention Centre was reinventing the Thinkbelt's commitment to mobile learning.

Far Away

Despite these attempts to create utopianist spaces, it can be argued we are as far away from revolutionary architecture as we ever were (Murphy 2012 3). The problem is that the revolution depends not on innovative technologies or original designs, but on political transformation (Murphy 2012 95). Recent work on the condition of contemporary architecture has pointed to where that revolution may be found: concretely, based on an architecture of the people, rather than speculators, landlords and corrupt bureaucrats (Wilkinson date 312); or, from within the abstract contradiction between the instrumentalism of capitalism and the utopian principle it contains (Murphy 2012 140). This means finding something utopian in failure, out of the ruin as a possibility that was already present (Murphy 2012 141).

This conundrum can be addressed by looking into the spaces imagined by Price and Littlewood, and other radical architectural imaginaries made real in this paper, around the concept and practice of capitalist work and at the issue of exploitation where this paper began; and to do this in a way that not only suggests play and leisure as meaningful human activities, but goes beyond these affirmations to strive towards the abolition of capitalist work.

Marx argued that value in capitalism is based on the exploitation of human labour, by which he meant workers contribute more value (profit) to the capitalist than the value needed for their own reproduction (wages). This value has to be forced out of workers by the dull compulsion of economic relations extending beyond the workplace into all aspects of social life (Marx Vol 1 date). Machinery and automation is introduced when the capacity of human labour reaches its limits, appearing as illness, injury, ageing and death; and, of course, worker resistance to the intensification of work in the form of unionisation, absenteeism, strikes and sabotage. Automatic machines and technology are themselves a materialised form of human labour, not just the manual labour it takes to build the machine, but also the intellectual knowledge of the human mind embodied within the machine: now appearing as science and technology and turned against the labour that created them, dead labour brought to life by living labour, giving birth to the Frankenstein syndrome and other forms of science fiction.

A weird feature of automatic production is machines appear to be able to construct themselves, robotically; but in a way that is far from a frictionless 'perpetual mobile'. In fact, two unresolvable problems emerge for capital in the production process. Firstly, as surplus value can only be produced by human labour, machines increase the quantity of commodities but can not expand the amount of surplus value produced. The result is that in an atmosphere of manic competition machines have a tendency to overproduce, resulting in waste, devastation and dramatic falls in profitability. Secondly, human labour is expelled from the labour process by these algorithms of value, manifest as the machinic logic of technology. This expulsion results in mass unemployment, the collapse of work, and the creation of a surplus population who are forced to imagine themselves as living beyond the limitations of capitalist work.

One version of this radical imagination, although within the limits of capitalist dreaming, is the leisure society in which work is replaced by play (Russell and Vernon 1997), another more challenging scenario, sometimes referred to as socialism, is a society in which capitalist work is shared out evenly with a reduction of working hours and a basic income for all citizens (Gorz 1994). Another more dangerous form of radical dreaming for capitalism is communism: in which the logic

of capitalist production is inverted: human life becomes the project rather than the resource (Bonfeld date), and the capitalist world of poverty and waste is turned into a society of abundance (Kay and Mott 1982). Capital seeks to contain this radical communist imagination through forced work schemes, welfare, poverty, austerity and the Police (Neocleous 2000).

In the communist version of this new dream world workers will have more free-time to pursue their own interests. What is more, having reached the limits of capitalist expansion and with its negative destructiveness contained, science can be restored for the benefit of humanity at the level of society rather than institutions: 'the general intellect' (Marx 1993), or 'mass intellectuality' (Hardt and Negri 2000), a sort of higher and higher education. Lefebvre (1991) tells us that this transformation is not only about time, but also about space, or space-time, now with its own peculiar distortions (Neary 2014, Stanek 2011) out of which new social formulations are already emerging, in embryonic forms, e.g., commons (Linebaugh 2014), commonism (Dyer- Witheford 2006) and communism (Dean 2012). Each of these formulations has its own pedagogic mentality to which a new constructive spatiality can be applied. Given the central role of universities in the production and manufacture of science this is bound to have extraordinary consequences for what we now regard as the institutional forms of higher education.

Six Principles

Based on all the above I suggest six principles to consider when creating university teaching and learning spaces of the future:

Ground - the space needs to be grounded theoretically in its own version of historical materialism; and practically, to provide the room for social transformation or utopia, even. The floor should be fascinating, a surface for working on as well as walking on. Giving Gravity and Gravitax. While, at the same time, facilitate a lightness of being by the removal of anything that looks too much like architecture.

Dynamic - the space should promote movement and mobility, demonstrating learning and teaching is more than a mental activity, but requires physicality and bodily functions - inter, intra and extra-mural, or Dance Dance Revolution. The spaces between classes can be transformed into learning events, as corridors, transporters, e.g., lifts and other vehicles, all in an environment that promotes walking as a philosophy and the root of *pedagogy*.

Power - the space should be democratic, with all arrangements to be negotiated and agreed. There is no locus of power or powerpoint in the room, no space for teacher or student, and with all of the spaces designed for cooperation and collaboration. There should be Fun House mirrors on the walls to promote distortions of space and time and future possibilities.

Open - the space should be indeterminate and open-ended, as if it has yet to be complete. Sexy. Stretched like a membrane right up to its edges, except there are no edges, only the smooth curves of complexity. This is what we strive for: to be fully rounded. Sometimes we want it so bad it hurts, like an uncomfortable principle which should be reflected in the furniture.

Play - all work in the spaces should be kept to a minimum and only ever when it enriches life and pleasure. The space should contain the most labour-saving devices and work should be apportioned according to ability. An important part of play is learning to carry out activities that will enhance the life of the group using the space and our own lives as a sort of role-play area.

Anti war - the space should scream anti-war, recognising that violence can be 'divine' (Benjamin 1921) justified not as an absolute ethic, but as a sign of the injustice of the world, depending on each circumstance that cannot be pre-judged: as an excess of love, or anti-pornography or 'Educative Power' (Benjamin 2009). The concept of educative power should be scrawled on the wall, as graffiti: *Learn, Learn, Learn - Teach, Teach, Teach* (after Zizek 2009)

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[1](#) Interestingly, the founding director of Oxford Polytechnic, Brian Lloyd, was a conscientious objector in World War 2

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