

A pedagogy for space: Teaching, learning, and studying in the Baltimore Rebellion

Derek R Ford

West Chester University of Pennsylvania, USA

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Abstract

While most educational literature on space has tended to ask what spatial studies can offer education, this article works primarily to *educationalize* theories of space. It does so by homing in on Henri Lefebvre's theorization of the production of space as a potentially revolutionary activity. After spending some time situating Lefebvre's historical and theoretical analysis, it takes his understanding of the production of space as an educational problematic, and in turn seeks to develop a spatial educational theory and a pedagogy for space, the latter being the mobilization of the former. In particular, I propose to augment Lefebvre's spatial triad of (1) spatial practice, (2) representations of space, and (3) representational spaces with an educational triad of (1) teaching, (2) learning, and (3) studying. I propose that each component needs to be held in a precarious, contingent, and dialectical relation. In order to ask more precisely after this relationship and to grasp how we might deploy this educational theory to understand and produce space, I read the theory through the Baltimore Rebellion of 2015. I contend that the Baltimore Rebellion was a struggle over the space of the city, and that it was a deeply pedagogical affair that entailed the orchestration of teaching, learning, and studying.

Keywords

Henri Lefebvre, Marxism, space, Baltimore Rebellion, pedagogy

Introduction

The recent educational interest in critical geography and analyses of space has sought to counter the historical emphasis on time in critical education scholarship (e.g. Ferrare and Apple, 2010; Ford, 2013; Gulson and Symes, 2007a, 2007b; Lipman, 2011; Peters, 2011). This work continues to uncover the complex interplay between education policy and practice and local and global spatial configurations, both in the present and the past. Yet

Corresponding author:

Derek R Ford, 515 Wayne Hall, West Chester University of Pennsylvania, 700 S. High St., West Chester, PA 19382, USA.

Email: drford@syr.edu

this growing body of research has been limited in two regards. First, it has tended to focus on conducting spatial histories and analyses of education; it has generally not inquired into the relationship between space and educational *theory*. Second, and most importantly, it has tended only to ask what spatial tools and analyses can offer education; it has generally not sought to address the absence of educational and pedagogical theories within critical geography and critical analyses of space. This latter aspect, I believe, is particularly problematic for critical educational scholarship that seeks to advance struggles against exploitation, oppression, and privatization. The contribution of critical educational researchers and activists to social movements is precisely in the area of educational and pedagogical theory, as “the production of an unprecedented social condition is essentially a process of teaching and learning” (De Lissovoy et al., 2014: 80). There have, of course, been gestures toward joining educational theory and critical geography (e.g. Morgan, 2000; Neary and Amsler, 2012), yet these gestures tend to remain at the epistemological level. John Morgan (2000), for example, ends his article “Critical pedagogy: The spaces that make the difference” by arguing for an understanding of space as socially produced so that we in turn acknowledge that it can be produced differently, which entails reading space as “social texts” (285). He writes: “A critical pedagogy of space would involve analysing examples... to help students recognise the ways in which space is used to dominate and oppress some individuals and groups;” it also “enable[s] students to consider that there are also geographies of resistance through which people deal with, and resist, oppressive practices” (283).

This article works, then, not only to spatialize educational theory but, more importantly, to *educationalize* theories of space, and to do so in a systematic manner that is oriented toward ontological transformation. It does so by homing in on Henri Lefebvre’s (1974/1991) theorization of the production of space as a potentially revolutionary activity. The article begins by situating Lefebvre’s historical and theoretical analysis. This is a necessary task because Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space* is a book that is cited frequently in educational literature but rarely deeply engaged. When it is engaged – and not only in educational literature – the focus tends to be exclusively on the spatial triad developed in the book’s opening chapter. Thus, the crucial distinction between abstract and differential space is glossed over or ignored.

After situating Lefebvre’s work, I take his understanding of the production of space as an educational problematic, and then develop a spatial educational theory and a pedagogy for space, the latter being the mobilization of the former. In particular, I augment Lefebvre’s spatial triad of (1) spatial practice, (2) representations of space, and (3) representational spaces with an educational triad of (1) teaching, (2) learning, and (3) studying. To do this I draw primarily on the work of Tyson Lewis, Gert Biesta, and Peter McLaren. I argue that, while Lewis and Biesta provide us with an ontology of education, this ontology has to be thought of in relationship with political economy, lest education end up merely reinforcing and strengthening relations of exploitation and oppression. I propose that each component of the educational triad needs to be held in a precarious, contingent, and dialectical relation. The purpose of this educational triad is to assist in the struggle for differential space against abstract space, or to advance the position of the proletarian class camp (Marcy, 1979) in the class struggle. In order to ask more precisely after this relationship and to grasp how we might deploy this educational theory to understand and produce space, I read the theory through the Baltimore Rebellion of 2015. I contend that the Baltimore Rebellion was a struggle over the space of the city, and that it was a deeply pedagogical affair that entailed the orchestration of teaching, learning, and studying.

Abstracting and producing space

In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre performs a transdisciplinary reading of the history of space and its production, drifting from and between political economy, history, sociology, architecture, philosophy, art, and geography. The primary overarching claim in the book is that space is not an empty or neutral container within which – or blank canvas upon which – social interactions take place. Rather, space is produced again and again by and through social interactions: “Space,” Lefebvre (1974/1991) proclaims, “*is* social morphology” (94, emphasis added). As social morphology, space is produced and productive. It is by approaching and theorizing space through its production that Lefebvre is able to unify “first, the *physical*—nature, the Cosmos; secondly, the *mental*, including logical and formal abstractions; and, thirdly, the *social*” (11). In this schema it is the social that dominates and serves as the unifying force. This effort, however, is not about producing “a (or *the*) discourse on space;” it is instead concerned with working “to expose the actual production of space by bringing the various kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis together within a single theory” (16). Space is produced, and Lefebvre wants to demonstrate these processes of production so that we might begin, collectively and intentionally, to produce space differently, more justly, in accordance with use and use-value against exchange-value. This theory, uniting as it does the physical and the social with the mental, is simultaneously an epistemological and ontological endeavor; it entails a reworking of things and our conception of things, things as they are lived and things as they are conceived.

Why the emphasis on space, and why the necessity of producing space differently? To begin answering this question, Lefebvre points to several developments happening around the time of the publication of the book in 1974. Lefebvre marks three historical phenomena: (1) the worldwide consolidation of the state; (2) resistance and transgression in the face of this consolidation; and, relatedly, (3) the persistence of the class struggle (as the dominant expression of resistance and transgression). The consolidation of the state has to do with the strengthening of the state that began with the Keynesian social-democratic state, in which the state takes on many aspects of social reproduction and inserts itself more and more into the everyday.¹ The resistance and transgression to this state refers to the movements of 1968 that sought to break free from the rule of capital and exchange-value, from the hyper-planning of the city and of life. Finally, this resistance is always expressed through class struggle, as Lefebvre insists on the primacy of political economy even as he concerns himself constantly with difference and subjectivity.

We can begin to see the importance of the dialectic for Lefebvre and his insistence on the persistence of class struggle: “State-imposed normality makes permanent transgression inevitable... differences can never be totally quieted. Though defeated, they live on, and from time to time they begin fighting ferociously to reassert themselves and transform themselves through struggle” (23). Lefebvre insists repeatedly throughout his works on the endless persistence of use and use-value (see Ford, 2013). Lefebvre maintains that this dialectic, between use and use-value, between identity and difference, between homogeneity and heterogeneity, and between capital and labor, takes place not only *in* space but is ultimately manifested through struggles *over* and *for* space and its production.

The increasing importance of space for Lefebvre has to do with transformations in the capitalist mode of production, in which space takes on “a sort of reality of its own, a reality clearly distinct from, yet much like, those assumed in the same global process by commodities, money and capital” (26).² There are multiple reasons why space becomes central in capitalist production and in the reproduction of capitalist social relations.

If capital is, as Marx (1939/1993) says, a “*unity of production and realization, not immediately but only as a process*” (407), then space serves as a product, a form of production, and a means through which realization takes place. As Lefebvre (1974/1991) writes: “Though a *product* to be used, to be consumed, it [space] is also a *means of production*; networks of exchange and flows of raw materials and energy fashion space and are determined by it” (85). When space becomes a means of production, the relationship between production and realization is altered, or “widened” (85). Not only is production no longer taking place behind the factory gates, in Marx’s “hidden abode of production,” but both production and realization can take place in the same absolute space.

The introduction, or “invasion,” of space into production and production relations means that space has been subjected to the capital–labor dialectic. As such, in order to uncover the production of space, Lefebvre employs what he calls *architectonics*, the task of which “is to describe, analyse, and explain” how “the preconditions of social space have their own particular way of enduring and remaining actual within that space” (229). Things have a way of remaining in space; “In space,” Lefebvre writes, “nothing ever disappears—no point, no place” (212). The idea is that social relations remain etched in space throughout time, to varying degrees of course. But this lasting presence means that we can uncover the history – and the present – of the production of space, with an eye toward the future.

Lefebvre is particularly concerned with understanding what he calls abstract space, which is associated with space under the capitalist mode of production. Abstraction here does not refer to a mental activity as it does, for example, for Marx (Ollman, 1993). Abstraction for Lefebvre is rather the ontological process akin to, or really even synonymous with, rationalization. The abstraction of space is, to begin with, the subjection of space to capitalist reification through the rule of exchange-value. Employing architectonics, Lefebvre reads this historical process through the history of urbanization, which would be defined as the generalization of the rationality of the town. Historically, this process is located as beginning in the 16th century, when “the town [was] separated from the countryside that it had long dominated and administered, exploited and protected” (268). More than separation, the growing import of the town was the beginning of the decline of the feudal organization of society. Indeed, the rationality of the town is “the rationality of calculation and exchange – the Logos of the merchant” (269). The town assembles people and goods in time from across space for the purpose of exchanging use-values, but over time exchange-value comes to dominate. The city is defined in part, then, as “the space of accumulation” (263). One can sense an echo here of the Marx and Engels of *The German Ideology*, in which the co-authors write about the town–country antagonism. They write: “The town already is in actual fact the concentration of the population, of the instruments of production, of capital, of pleasures, of needs, while the country demonstrates just the opposite fact, isolation and separation” (Marx and Engels, 1932/1970: 69). Lefebvre (1974/1991) marks this separation of town and country as the first “spiral of spatial abstraction” (269). The second spiral was the domination of the state and productive forces over the city, both having superseded the city-scale.

At this point we can more concretely develop exactly what Lefebvre means by abstract space, by the subjection of space to the domination of exchange-value. Mercantile and, later, capitalist logic reifies the lived space of the city. It seeks to produce and organize space in order to facilitate the production and realization of surplus-value. The city is reified, it comes to be seen as a finished *thing* instead of a *process* and *product* of social labor. Development, housing patterns, roads and transportation networks, the distribution of

goods and labor-power, and circuits of exchange are all put to the service of capitalist accumulation. As these lived spaces come under the domination of exchange-value, differences are sought out, flattened, and absorbed within capitalism. Or at least the attempt to reduce and contain difference is made. "On first inspection," Lefebvre notes, "it [abstract space] appears homogenous; and indeed it serves those forces which make a *tabula rasa* of whatever stands in their way, of whatever threatens them" (285). Upon closer inspection, however, after insisting on the persistent resistance of use and difference, Lefebvre argues that this abstract "space that homogenizes thus has nothing homogenous about it" (307), for difference and use can never be totally disappeared.

Abstract space embodies contradictions it cannot fully contain. The task is to study and seize upon these contradictions in order to produce a new space, a space of difference. Only through struggles directly over the production of space can capitalism and its attendant injustices be overthrown. To make this proposition, Lefebvre turns to Marx's concept of constant capital as congealed, or dead labor, that is consumed productively: "Capital," writes Marx (1867/1967), "is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks" (224). It is only through the private ownership of the means of production (dead labor) that capital is produced. Lefebvre's political goal is to turn this upside-down, or, better, right-side up:

But how could what is alive lay hold of what is dead? The answer is: through the production of space, whereby living labour can produce something that is no longer a thing, nor simply a set of tools, nor simply a commodity. In space needs and desires can reappear as such, informing both the act of producing and its products. . . In and by means of space, the work may shine through the product, use value may gain the upper hand over exchange value. (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 348).

Under capitalism, space is abstracted and mobilized as a means of production; more specifically, it becomes mobilized as a means of productive consumption. Abstract space presents itself as dead, objectified labor towering over and ruling works and inhabitants. But this presentation, this form of appearance, is challenged and ultimately demystified in social movements and in smaller everyday practices. In space, goods and services are appropriated by social groups to be *used* in a way that cannot happen in, say, a factory – which is not at all to say that the factory is no longer an important site of struggle. But the factory remains a fragmented site of life, whereas in space – urban space, in particular – the totality of life, its encounters and contradictions, is present in simultaneity. Struggles have always taken place *in* space, of course, but Lefebvre observes that struggles are increasingly *over* and *about* space: "Space is becoming the principle stake of goal-directed actions and struggles. . . it has now become something more than the theatre, the disinterested stage of setting, of action" (410). The production of space has been foregrounded recently by the various Occupy movements, for example, and also by the recent uprising in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, to which I turn later in the article. These are struggles about economic exploitation, state repression, and oppression more generally, but the demands made are manifest through the staking out and taking up of space, and the struggles ultimately work toward the generation of new, alternative spaces.

Lefebvre convincingly demonstrates the importance of space in capitalist production and the reproduction of capitalist social relations, and the importance of space in social struggles and everyday life. He shows how capitalism has made space abstract and sought to homogenize differences. Further, he demonstrates how difference always persists and resists. Most importantly, he locates space – and the space of the city, in particular – as a

privileged site of revolutionary activity, where living labor can appropriate dead labor, where use-value can reign over exchange-value, where use can annihilate the law of value altogether, and where social groups can be constituted as subjects. In short, through the production of space the expropriators can be expropriated.

The question, of course, is *how* these insights and forces can be harnessed for such a revolutionary transformation. This, I proffer, is ultimately a pedagogical question, and so the lack of an articulated educational theory haunts all of Lefebvre's formulations.³ What I want to do in the rest of this article is advance one contribution to the question of how revolution can occur through the understanding and production of space. In order to develop a pedagogy for space I turn first to Lefebvre's spatial triad that he sketches for understanding spatial production. I then move to developing a spatial educational triad to add to this understanding, giving an explicit educational inflection to the production of space and providing one pedagogical approach – rooted firmly in revolutionary critical pedagogy – to working for revolutionary social transformation. In the final section, I provide an example of the mobilization of a pedagogy for space by reading the educational triad developed through the 2015 Baltimore Rebellion.

Lefebvre's spatial triad

To begin formulating such an educational theory I want to turn to one of Lefebvre's conceptual schemas put forth in *The Production of Space*: the spatial triad. It is introduced as a conceptual framework for understanding spatial practice and production as well as for understanding how it is that abstract space has come to be the dominant spatial experience. The spatial triad consists of: (1) representations of space; (2) representational spaces; and (3) spatial practice. This is introduced early on in the book but, as Andy Merrifield (2006) notes, it “is more implicit than explicit, assumed rather than affirmed” (109). It makes a brief appearance and then remains latent throughout the rest of the work and is, in true Lefebvrian fashion, never to make an appearance in a later work. This openness, however, means that we can “add our own flesh, our own content... rewrite it as part of our own chapter or research agenda” (109).

Representations of space

Representations of space order, or attempt to order, social relations. These spaces are produced by technocrats and city planners, bankers and bureaucrats, real estate developers and landlords. We might think here of the “bird's-eye-view” map of the city available in the local tourist shop at the highway rest stop on the way into town. Representations of space prescribe the path from the café to the mall, from the park to the workplace. They are thus concerned with consumption, with order, with exchange-value. Lefebvre refers to representations of space as *conceived* spaces, which is to say, as spaces as they are conceived of by technocrats and planners; they are “tied to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes” (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 33). Representations of space tell us what to do in certain spaces: they tell us what is allowed and what is not, where we should stand or sit, nap or congregate. They tend to represent space through signs that, of course, are always backed up by state power. In this way, representations of space are always “informed by effective knowledge and ideology,” they are soaked in the power of capital and “must therefore have

a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space” (42). Exchange-value will be a determinant in representations of space.

Representational spaces

Representational spaces are those of the inhabitant, of the dweller who makes the space through her own use; spaces as they are directly *lived* in everyday life. These spaces are “linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art” (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 33). Whereas representations of space are found on maps in tourist shops, representational spaces are found in community archives or urban folk stories; they are etched on walls with graffiti and relayed through spoken work in corner stores and cafés. A representational space “is alive... It embraces the loci of passion, of action and of lived situations” (42). As such, representational spaces are less epistemological, less about codifications and signage, and are more ontological: they are about being and feeling. In fact, these spaces resist codification and abstraction. Yet representational spaces can be turned into – but not reduced to – symbols, which always escape official knowledge.

Spatial practice

Spatial practice refers to the production and reproduction of a given social formation (e.g. capitalism). There are three levels to spatial practice: (1) biological reproduction; (2) the reproduction of the working class; and (3) the reproduction of production relations. Spatial practice, then, is that which produces the everyday organization of life, from the family to workplace, from the community to the state. It is that which “secretes... society’s space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction” (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 38). Spatial practices include a host of infrastructures and networks that move and guide people through space. In bodily terms, Lefebvre will refer to these spaces as *perceived* spaces, because they are tied up with the ways in which we think of – or fail to think of – the spaces that structure our lives. Under what Lefebvre calls “neocapitalism,” which I would refer to as social-democratic capitalism, perceived spaces and spatial practice could “be defined – to take an extreme but significant case – by the daily life of a tenant in a government-subsidized high-rise housing project” (38). There is “continuity and some degree of cohesion” (33) in these spaces, which means that subjects can move about the space of society in some orderly manner, but they will not always do so in predetermined or mechanical ways. Spatial practice mediates between representations of space and representational space and through this mediation works to reproduce contemporary social relations, whatever those happen to be.

The triple dialectic

Although dialectics commonly denotes a unity of two elements (hence, *dialectics*), a triple dialectic mediates this spatial triad, although Lefebvre won’t – or perhaps can’t – say exactly *how* this mediation takes place. He is sure, however, that all three elements “should be interconnected, so that the ‘subject’, the individual member of a given social group, may move from one to another without confusion” (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 40). This interconnection makes the experience of space commonsense, and thus it takes effort to decode and break it apart, and this is precisely what architectonics does. For Lefebvre

the dialectic is not a linear movement of progress, but a dwelling within and between contradictory spaces. The purpose of the triple dialectic “is not to deny one or other term nor to transcend them (*dépasser*), but to reveal the continual movement between them” (Kofman and Lebas, 1994: 10). Thus, the spatial triad of representations of space, representational space, and spatial practice – or, in bodily terms, of conceived, lived, and perceived – is not posited by Lefebvre in order to privilege one over the others, or to claim that we must, for example, fight for representational spaces in order to annihilate representations of space.

It is absolutely clear, on the other hand, that representations of space dominate in the capitalist production of space, and hence in the way that we, today, experience space. This domination encroaches on the ability of lived space to exert itself. The domination of representations of space is inextricably tied to a spatial practice that produces and reproduces capitalist social relations in that they demand abstraction through the rule of exchange-value which is based on *abstract* and not concrete labor. Lefebvre’s spatial triad helps us pose the problem of capitalism and space in the following way: the problem is that the dialectic between these three elements has become stuck; it can no longer move fluidly between perception, conception, and life. If we are to deploy this spatial triad to both understand and transform space, then the relationship between the different elements of this triad must be thought of pedagogically, and it is here that educational theory can make a unique contribution. In order to develop such a theory I augment Lefebvre’s spatial triad with an educational triad consisting of (1) learning, (2) studying, and (3) teaching.

An educational triad

Learning

Learning is often what is most associated with education, yet it is less a specific educational practice because learning as a process has become so thoroughly generalized throughout society. We are now living, we are told by politicians and policy makers at all scales of society, in a “learning society.” In this learning society, “A range of activities – from child-rearing, having sex, eating, or communication, to traveling and using free time – are regarded as being competency-based and in need of a prior learning experience” (Simons and Masschelein, 2008: 391). The learning society is caught up in transformations in the capitalist mode of production, namely the increasing importance of information and knowledge and the transition from social-democracy to neoliberalism. The former has made learning a never-ending process that one must engage in throughout one’s life, and has thus accompanied the rise of lifelong learning, while the latter has made learning an individual rather than a social responsibility (Biesta, 2011; Simons and Masschelein, 2008).

There are several problems with learning. For Biesta (2006), the problem is that the language of learning “has facilitated a redescription of the process of education in terms of an *economic transaction*” (19). This has the effect of relegating questions about the content and direction of education to market forces. Learning, that is, describes a *process* and doesn’t denote the content that should be contained in that process, which eclipses discussions about the purpose of education. Maarten Simons and Jan Masschelein argue that learning has become crucial to the ways in which we refer to and understand ourselves and each other. Learning, they caution, is a historically specific assemblage of concepts and practices, and not a timeless thing. There are four problems with learning that are

interwoven: “the necessity of learning for a knowledge economy, the importance of learning in order to guarantee freedom in a changing society, the educational expertise concerning learning and instruction, and the importance of the employability of learning results” (Simons and Masschelein, 2008: 396). Learning is, according to this view, both a problem and a solution in contemporary capitalism.

Tyson Lewis (2011; 2013) argues that learning is the *educational logic* of contemporary capitalism in that it insists on the actualization of potential. Drawing on the work of Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, Lewis (2011) writes that the problem with learning is “not that it views the child or student as a lack but that it views the child as an infinite potentiality that *can* and *must* be actualized through constant performance testing” (587). In other words, the logic of “learning” demands an investment in potential in order to maximize economic viability and, thus, profitability. According to this view, “Learning is... the putting to work of potentiality in the name of self-actualization and economic vitality” (Lewis, 2013: 5). Learning is purely about ends, and it is about reaching those ends as efficiently and quickly as possible. In agreement with Biesta, Simons, and Masschelein, Lewis holds that these ends are always predetermined to correspond with the current and anticipated needs of global capital.

Each theorist views learning as a process of the acquisition of knowledges, skills, habits, forms of life, ways of being, and so on. Learning is, then, about competency, about gaining the know-how to think or take some action. It is thus always measurable, hence all the talk about “learning outcomes.” It is in particular “the measurability of learning that lends itself to becoming the educational logic of biocapitalism. Learning *improves* performances, *maximizes* outputs, *increases* productivity” (Lewis, 2014: 114). Learning is, I would argue, fundamental to – but certainly not sufficient for – any process of production and reproduction. This is especially true for the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production, which is based on the constant expansion of value. In this sense, learning shares an affinity with representations of space, which “offer an already clarified picture” (Lefebvre, 1974/1991: 189) of the world. Life is presented in a prefigured package; lines are already drawn, connections are already established, and signifiers already have signifieds. The only thing to do is to understand and master these relationships, and perhaps work to improve them, make them more efficient, more productive. Learning, therefore, is about the acquisition of the *already-is* and, as such, the relationship between learning and the production of space will depend not only on the current configuration of space but, more importantly, on the dialectic movement between learning and the other two components of the educational triad.

Studying

Studying is one way in which to operationalize “student;” a student is literally one who studies. But what is it that constitutes study? To begin, study names the generation “of thought and experimentation that leave one intoxicated, those moments of encounter in a text or conversation that blow one’s mind, driven by curiosities that are closer to pleasure, to play, to wandering, to leaving work” (Arsenjuk and Koerner, 2009: 8). Studying is oppositional to learning in many ways, for while learning is always a means to a predetermined end, studying is not about arriving at any destination. In fact, it is definitional of studying that one does not have a particular destination in mind. While lost in the archives, traveling between references, or moving between definitions in a dictionary, one is detached from any predetermined end.

Lewis has most richly developed a theory of studying, again drawing on the work of Agamben. Whereas learning, for Lewis, is about the constant actualization of potential, studying is about im-potentiality. Im-potentiality is different from impotence, for the latter indicates that one cannot, but the former indicates that one both *can* and *cannot*. Or, as Lewis (2013) puts it in one formulation, “Studying suspends ends yet does not retreat into pure potentiality. It is the ambiguous state of recessive sway that holds within itself this and that without choosing either” (147). What this means is that studying is not about inaction or mere laziness. On the contrary, it is about perpetual activity, about activity that does not come to an end because it lacks an end; studying is a means without end, as the command of the end would actualize – and thus destroy – potentiality.

Whereas learning as the passage to actualization is always “in accordance with the expectations of *this* world,” studying leaves the studier open to “the possibilities of a world beyond the current order of things” (Lewis, 2013: 63). Studying is linked closely with representational spaces in that it is concerned with endless playful generation and appropriation, with the discovery and expression of difference. Indeed, Lefebvre (1974/1991) might say that studying “need obey no rules or consistency or cohesiveness... it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic” (41–42). Studying is about inhabiting and dwelling within texts, concepts, and possible worlds. But there are no hard and fast rules here. We could say that studying is one method for generating representational spaces; it is concerned exclusively with *use*; use for the sake of use. As such, studying resists the reduction to official knowledge (although such reduction is not impossible or even necessarily undesirable).

Teaching

Teaching is generally seen as a key component of education, yet it is also subject to a good deal of confusion. What, for example, is the purpose of teaching? It is predominantly thought that teaching is about learning. As Gert Biesta (2015) writes, “The phrase ‘teaching and learning’ has become so prominent in the English language, that it often feels as if it has become one word—teachingandlearning” (230). For Biesta (2014), this ultimately amounts to an attack on teaching and this animates “a very practical concern about the disappearance of teaching and the demise of the role of the teacher as someone who has something to say and something to bring” (56). Biesta locates the ascent of this threat with the rise of constructivist learning theories and pedagogies. Constructivism, in the way that it has been taken up in education at least, has “promoted the idea of teaching as the creation of learning environments and as facilitating, supporting, or scaffolding student learning” (45), which has positioned the teacher as a mere resource for learning.

Against this, Biesta repositions teaching as *definitional* of education and defines teaching as a transcendental act in that it is “something that comes from the *outside* and brings something *radically new*” (2014: 52). More accurately, this is a “weak” transcendence, in which the act of teaching, the act of bringing something new to the student from the outside, cannot be guaranteed or secured. There is always risk, misunderstanding, and the possibility of failure. Understood in this way, teaching is a form of weak authority: “the teacher’s power to teach is a weak, existential power, a power that relies on interaction and encounter” (53). Teachers are made, that is, in the moment of teaching, not prior to the act. Moreover, teaching has to have a purpose, as does education more generally. As Biesta (2015) writes, “the point of education is not that students learn, but that they learn

something, that they learn it for particular *reasons*, and that they learn it *from someone*” (234). Teaching is the act of bringing something new to the student, some idea, concept, object, or action; the teacher is responsible for arranging encounters. Although it should be remarked – and as far as I know Biesta has not addressed this – that this new thing will be something that is new to the student, but not necessarily new to the world. Additionally, teaching is also concerned with learning and with the acquisition and attainment of knowledge, skills, and so on. Teaching has resonance with spatial practice in that it holds both production and reproduction in tension, allowing for the new and for the reproduction of the same, or for learning *and* studying. Here it is important to note that learning and studying are not entirely or purely oppositional. Indeed, as Lewis (2014) notes, “one must know how to do something (be in potential) before one can experience the im-potentiality of study” (114). Again, studying entails the logic of “I can, I cannot.”

Biesta’s conception of teaching is educationally and politically important because it insists on the possibility of the truly new to emerge through the educational encounter, on ceaselessly working to allow for differences to emerge. Further, it wrests teaching away from learning, reclaiming teaching as an act of intervention and not of facilitation. This, in turn, opens the act of teaching up to the possibility of political intervention, of changing the order of things. Yet Biesta only provides this opening, and so we might say that his conception of teaching is only concerned with ontology, or with *staging* the educational encounter. In fact, this same critique also holds for Lewis, who is concerned with the act of studying, not with the content. For teaching, studying, and learning to be political, that is, for education to be about actually changing the order of things, we have to think also about *situating* a project, and this is an epistemological endeavor. Unless teaching has an explicitly political purpose it can serve not to change but to reinforce current arrangements of exploitation and oppression. This is where, I believe, revolutionary critical pedagogy is so important. According to Peter McLaren (2005), its leading theorist, revolutionary critical pedagogy “is a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nation-state” (83). While teaching and studying allow for the possibility of the new and of difference, unless these acts are situated in a critique of political economy the new and different can be subsumed within capitalism and made to recirculate within relations of oppression and exploitation.⁴

Teaching, learning, and studying in the streets: a pedagogy for space

Like Lefebvre’s spatial triad, the educational spatial theory I have sketched is posed in a triple dialectical and antagonistic unity. The next thing to do is to ask more precisely after this relationship. In other words: How might we deploy this spatial educational theory to understand and produce space? To answer this question I want to read this theory through the Baltimore Rebellion of 2015.

During the end of April and the beginning of May 2015 in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, there was a popular rebellion, something that is best referred to as an urban insurrection. The insurrection was urban not only because it took place in a city, but because it took place *over* the city, over the right to inhabit the city, the right to the city as differential space, as use and use-value, the right to move freely throughout the city without fear of repression. This fire was sparked before 9am on April 12, when 25 year-old Freddie C Gray was beaten and

arrested by three cops, Lieutenant Brian W Rice, Officer Edward Nero, and Officer Garrett E Miller, who were patrolling the area of the Gilmore Homes low-rise housing project in the Sandtown neighborhood on the Westside of Baltimore City. Gray was walking in his own neighborhood – a dangerous activity for any person of color – when the three cops spotted Gray who, according to police reports, “made eye contact” with them and then ran away. A chase ensued, and Gray was attacked and arrested for carrying a small pocketknife (which the State’s Attorney for Baltimore City, Marilyn Mosby, has said was of legal size). The arrest was recorded by two community members, and the recording documents Gray screaming in agony as cops beat and drag his limp body.⁵ The cops threw him in a police transport van.

Gray was taken for what people in Baltimore – and cities across the country – call a “rough ride,” during which the cops place a victim unrestrained or improperly restrained in a van and drive it chaotically around town. That the cops had other things than “justice” on their minds is confirmed by the fact that they chose to make four stops between Gilmore Homes and the Western District police station, a distance of about half a mile. Further, it took them 30 minutes to make the five block trek. When they finally arrived at the police station, paramedics were called in. The paramedics treated Gray for just over 10 minutes before taking him to the University of Maryland R Adams Cowley Shock Treatment Center. Gray was in a coma, had multiple broken vertebrae, and had a severed spine at the neck.

When news of this brutal act of aggression spread through the streets, spontaneous protests began. Baltimore has a fairly rich activist scene, with Black churches, community organizations, a fairly active left (dominated by anarchists, but with a fair share of Marxist organizations), and the Nation of Islam. The first protest took place on April 18 outside the Western District Police Station on North Mount St. on Baltimore’s Westside, less than a mile away from where Gray was first arrested (Fenton, 2015). This action was organized by Black religious leaders like Rev. Jamal Harrison Bryant of the Empowerment Temple Family Life Center (who would later give Gray’s eulogy) and was attended mostly by local residents of the Westside. Hundreds of people marched on the police station. Unafraid, once they got to the station they went right up to the station’s entrance, standing and dancing on the steps and on a short wall that is positioned in front of the station, symbolizing and enacting a barrier between the people and the cops.

Gray died in the hospital on April 19, and demonstrations got increasingly militant as a result. The first arrests of protesters took place on April 23 during a march from City Hall to the Western District; one for “disorderly conduct” and another for “property destruction” (Iletto, 2015). The march was routed through the city’s Inner Harbor, which is truly a flawless example of abstract space, of the city as exchange-value, with sports arenas, corporate headquarters, high-rise hotels and condominiums, and chain restaurants taking up the majority of space. If you watch the videos available from this protest you can clearly see that there were no permits secured for the march. Instead, protesters weave through traffic, blocking it as they see fit for a spontaneous “die-in.” Again, when the people arrived at the police station they took a confrontational stance toward police, shouting in their faces. The police responded by putting out the hashtag #WeHearYou.

A mass march was planned for Saturday, April 25. There were actually two marches organized, one by the Peoples Power Assembly and another by the Black community and religious organizations, such as Black Lawyers for Justice. People from all over the city and county of Baltimore (which are distinct entities) showed up, as did comrades from Washington DC and the surrounding areas. One rally started out at City Hall and another took place in the

heart of the Gilmore Housing Project, where Gray was arrested. Marches proceeded throughout downtown Baltimore. When they got to Camden Yards – home of the Orioles – in the Inner Harbor at 6pm, however, protesters were attacked by drunk sports fans (Soderberg, 2015). As protesters chanted “Black lives matter!” a handful of white bar patrons yelled back “No they don’t!” The white bar patrons turned into counter-protesters and escalated the struggle, throwing beer cans and bar stools at demonstrators, who responded in kind. Fights broke out in front of a few restaurants. Protesters attacked private property in the downtown area and smashed the windows of cop cars.

The protests continued into the night, and the militancy of the people was channeled directly toward the police, particularly at the Western District Police Station. And something happened at this point, something pedagogical: there was a shift from learning to studying. I couldn’t find out if protest permits had been secured for the march, but the mass demonstration was marked by a high level of coordination and planning. In most respects, it fit well within the confines of protests that take place in – and are acceptable to – bourgeois democracies. There were organized contingents of groups, scripted chants, well-formulated slogans and demands, printed placards, painted banners, and a clear spatial trajectory through the city. But the learning stopped when night fell and a real battle began.

I watched this battle unfold on social media. Several close friends and comrades were on the frontlines, reporting on Facebook and Twitter through their phones. One of my closest comrades, Andrew Castro, an organizer with the ANSWER Coalition and a leader in the Baltimore branch of the Party for Socialism and Liberation, was at a battle between the people and the cops at the Western District Police Station during the late hours. He posted a one-minute video that captured succinctly the tragedy and hope running through the streets. The sun had long since set and the first mass protests that took place earlier that day had ended. The video shows a nondescript street corner in Baltimore, with multicolored row houses and a corner store in sight, and a few dozen riot cops are standing behind the barricades. We don’t get a full view of the street but it looks like the cops outnumber the people. Most of the people are Black and, although we can’t see the cops’ faces, we know what color most of them are.

There is no march taking place, no rally, no speeches. Instead, people seem to wander about. They are yelling at the cops, and for the duration of the video bottles, cans, rocks, and other objects are constantly being hurled across the barricades. Many people are recording the interactions, and some others are standing right up at the barricades, unafraid of the cops and the state power that they represent. Most of the people are just around the corner, and that’s where the attacks on the cops originate (the spatial layout of the battle and barricades makes this the safest place to be). Others approach the barricades, shouting and gesturing at the cops, and then retreat again so they don’t get hit by flying bottles and rocks. One woman – the only one that we can see who holds a placard – is standing near my comrade as he records, and so her voice is clear. “Y’all still a bunch of bitches!” she yells. She then begins chanting, “Fuck y’all! Fuck y’all!” Meanwhile, the cops, clad in full riot gear, cower behind their shields.

In another video that is a bit longer (over three minutes) posted by *The Guardian* (2015), we see the cops try to advance against the people. The cops duck out from behind the barricades and march toward the people, most of whom remain calm and put their hands up in the air. The video shows that there are at least a hundred police officers. Most of the cops form a new barricade at the location from where most of the objects were being thrown, and then they retreat, marching away from the protest. A few dozen cops remain behind for

a bit, harassing protesters and forcing them back just a bit. At this point the video cuts out, but the victors are clear. The people, armed only with bottles and outrage, bandanas and determination, cell phones and will, defeated the riot cops.

Watching this unfold, I couldn't help but see an act of studying taking place. No clear, predetermined goal was expressed through the actions captured on my comrade's camera phone, no plan unfurling. What took place instead was a certain wandering within and beyond boundaries, or rather experimentation with those boundaries and our relationship with them. Instead of well formed chants and orchestrated contingents, there were cries of indignation and anger and multitudinous swarms forming and disbanding; advancing, retreating, and advancing yet again. The skirmishes with the cops weren't leading up to a big finale; they were rehearsals for a revolutionary event, for something that we can't quite envision yet, but we know is immanent in the present.

The next day was eerily quiet, suspiciously so. But the streets weren't quiet for long. On Monday, April 27 a full-scale rebellion broke out all over the city. This was the day of Gray's funeral, which took place at the New Shiloh Baptist Church, near the transportation hub on W. North Ave, a main gathering center for Baltimore's Black community on the Westside. It was an open casket funeral, and the speeches delivered were a contradictory mix, expressing outrage but calling for calm. Outside the funeral, multiple spontaneous swarms were forming through social media. At 3pm – notably *after* school got out – a group of students met up at the Mondawmin Mall, less than a mile away from the funeral, and right by Frederick Douglass High School. The police were aware of the gathering and had hundreds of riot cops stationed at the mall. They also began circulating a rumor that “rival gangs” had formed a pact to “take out” police officers (this rumor was disproven quickly). The police tried to prevent people from getting to the mall, stopping buses and forcing young people out of them and blocking roads.

Groups of students were at the mall, many of them stranded there by the police blockades; the cops “did not allow the after-school crowd to disperse” (Brodey and McLaughlin, 2015). The cops started marching toward the students, and violence broke out. There is remarkable footage showing the students fighting off the cops, throwing rocks at them and forcing them to retreat (Wing, 2015). The cops were also throwing bricks and rocks at the students. The whole Westside erupted. At the Penn/North transportation hub another crowd had assembled. They broke into a CVS (drug store) and began “looting” (read: expropriating goods). Cop cars were burned. As tanks rolled through the streets the people hurled anything they could find at them. It was an insurrection, an insurrection of violence and joy, love and rage. As stores were being reclaimed and cops were being attacked, people danced in the streets. Watching on live stream I saw people smiling, dancing, and having their pictures taken in front of burning cop cars. All of this has to be placed in the context of insurrection:

As the young people came to feel their collective power, they have first gone after the easiest targets, the retail stores in their own neighborhoods. The police and the politicians above them were of course perfectly willing to let this happen. When state authority appears to collapse, people go after the things they have long been denied or cannot normally afford. For many in Baltimore, that includes basic household items, food, cleaning supplies and diapers – which is what one could see being taken from CVS. (Party for Socialism and Liberation, 2015)

The rule of exchange-value over the city and city life was directly challenged with force. Use and use-value reigned supreme as people claimed and consumed goods without regard

for price or the laws of exchange. Privatized spaces were destroyed. Fixed capital was no longer fixed capital but the target of indignation. The streets and sidewalks were not being used for production proper nor for social reproduction under capitalism; what was dead was taken hold of by what was living, as Lefebvre wished.

I contend that all of this was an act of studying. The rules of protest were suspended and new forms of action were experimented with. But this is not to devalue organized protests and demonstrations, for these too are rehearsals for revolution. And organization is needed for revolutions to succeed and, most importantly, to consolidate. This is where the act of teaching comes in. We need spontaneity and organization, studying and learning. But just as the logic of learning has come to dominate at the expense of studying, so too have the received forms of protest that bourgeois democracies can accommodate come to dominate at the expense of insurrectionary tinkering. The hope is that these tinkering can generate new knowledges, skills, subjectivities, and forms of organization that can then be generalized and subsumed in a mass movement and, ultimately, an insurrectionary moment and a new revolutionary social, political, and economic order. Yet we need teachers to perform the delicate balancing act of studying and learning, to perform the contradictory act of *directing* and *organizing* the processes of learning and studying. During the Baltimore Rebellion the teachers were the Fruits of Islam and a triad of gangs: the Bloods, Crips, and Black Guerrilla Family. These organizations had all united to “minimize looting and refocus the youth’s righteous militancy” (Party for Socialism and Liberation, 2015). This is precisely the role of the teacher, which in a revolutionary situation becomes the Party, which serves as a collective organ that anticipates the transition from learning to studying and back again, from insurrection to organization.

Conclusion

Police violence was the spark that set the Baltimore Rebellion off, but the rebellion wasn’t just about police violence. It was about the right to be in and move through space, about the right to have control over the production of space. On any given night around 3000 people sleep without a home in the city of Baltimore (Health Care for the Homeless Inc., n.d.). Meanwhile, there are 47,000 vacant homes and other properties throughout the city that are boarded up so that people can’t enter them, sleep in them, or fix them up. If someone breaks through the boards and enters into one of these properties, the police arrive to evict and arrest them. In Gray’s neighborhood over 50% of people between 18 and 65 are unemployed (Justice Policy Institute, 2015). Yet on May 18, 2015, the state of Maryland voted to spend US\$30m on a new jail for youth in Baltimore. And two days later the Governor took US\$11.6m from Baltimore school aid. It’s not that the resources and materials needed to employ, educate, and house people aren’t there, it’s that they are privately owned. It’s the capitalist mode of production that has produced this reality and the radically uneven spaces of Baltimore, and the city isn’t unique in this respect.

Capitalism has abstracted space, producing an uneven and constantly shifting landscape adequate to its needs. This space suits the needs and desires of the ruling class, those who have the power to consume space as finished product, space as exchange-value. But as Lefebvre reminds us again and again, differences and class struggle resist indefinitely. The Baltimore Rebellion was an expression of this resistance. Space is both the site and stake of such struggles. In the struggle against capitalist exploitation and oppression we have to understand the relationship between capitalism and spatial production so that we can produce space and society differently. It is toward this end that I hope to have offered a beginning.

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Notes

1. To be sure, Lefebvre also has his share of critiques of actually existing socialist states. In fact, Lefebvre dangerously (and incorrectly, in my opinion) conflates the social-democratic welfare state with the socialist state. For the sake of clarity and concision I have chosen to exclude his critiques of socialist states.
2. It is somewhat unclear why Lefebvre adds capital to this list, as money and commodities are both forms of capital, and in particular the *circulation* of capital. But such categorical errors are not uncommon in Lefebvre's writing.
3. Lefebvre does refer to "pedagogy" fleetingly throughout his work, but nowhere is this developed in any depth. The one educational attempt to do so has only gestured toward things like "engaging students in 'doing' spatial histories" (Middleton, 2014: 181), and thus remained strictly at the level of epistemology.
4. David Harvey's (2001) work linking culture and rent provides a compelling example of the ways that differences thought outside of political economy can be subsumed within global capitalism. Harvey begins by noting that it is now commonsense that culture is and can be commodified. Yet how does this commodification take place when culture is something that is directly lived (as opposed to, say, worn or eaten)? To answer this question he turns to Marx's theory of rent. Monopoly is the basis of rent, but there are a few different ways that rent arises. The first has to do with differences in the quality or characteristics of land, such as when a plot of land with high fertility – due either to technological or natural means – yields higher levels of productivity. The second has to do with centrality, or locational advantages, such as when a piece of land is positioned near a bustling part of a city or near a transportation hub. Both forms of rent can be socially produced. Harvey argues that monopoly rents "are as much 'an effect of discourse' and an outcome of struggle as they are a reflection of the qualities of the product" (401) or service produced on or through a plot of land. Demonstrating how monopoly rent connects with culture, Harvey writes that "capital has ways to appropriate and extract surpluses from local differences, local cultural variations and aesthetic meanings of no matter what origin" (409). This is precisely how tourism generates profits, through "claims to uniqueness, authenticity, particularity and speciality" (404). The music industry is another case in point of a sphere of production that is able to appropriate various local cultures to create "unique" (i.e. monopolizable) commodities. It is along these lines that differences detached from a critique of political economy can be absorbed into capitalism, advancing and even perfecting it.
5. The cops, of course, paint a different picture, but I do not legitimate this picture by mentioning it. This is a political and epistemological choice, based on the recognition that including the cops' narrative, even under the pretense of "fairness" or "showing both sides of the story" would only work to reinforce that narrative, doing a grave injustice to Gray's legacy and the movement against police brutality.

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Derek R Ford is a PhD candidate in Cultural Foundations of Education at Syracuse University. His research is located around the intersection of space, political economy, and critical pedagogy. His work has appeared in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *Critical Studies in Education*, *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, *borderlands e-journal*, *Policy Futures in Education*, and the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies*. He is co-author (with Curry Malott) of *Marx, Capital, and Education: Towards a Critical Pedagogy of Becoming* (Peter Lang, 2015). His current book project, *Political Economy and Alterity in Education: Subjectivity, Materialism, and Pedagogy* is under contract with Lexington Books. He currently teaches in the Department of Professional and Secondary Education at West Chester University of Pennsylvania and is chair of the Education Department at The Hampton Institute. More information can be found at derekrford.com.