Henri Lefebvre (1901-91) wrote around 70 books and hundreds of articles, only a small proportion of which have been translated into English. Although critiques of universities and schools are scattered through his works, none of Lefebvre’s English-language interlocutors—translators, editors, reviewers or textbook-writers—have seen these as worthy even of indexing, let alone discussion. In Anglophone scholarship, most of the secondary literature on Lefebvre has been in geography, so Lefebvre is often regarded as a spatial theorist. But Lefebvre was not a geographer. France’s first professor of sociology, he worked “on the borders of philosophy and the social sciences, although admitting to a tendency to privilege sociology” (Lefebvre 2005: 18). In his writing, time was as important as space. Indeed, *The Production of Space* (henceforth *Production*) (Lefebvre 1991b) was, as Stuart Elden puts it, “based on the premise that space and time need to be thought together rather than separately” (2004: xvii). Appropriations of Lefebvre that highlight *either* space or time, however, remain useful.

Derek Ford’s *Education and the Production of Space* offers what is, at least in English, the first sustained “educational” critique of *Production* and *Right to the City* (henceforth *Right*) (Lefebvre 1996), while Michel Alhadeff-Jones’s *Time and the Rhythms of Emancipatory Education* is the first “education” book to contextualise Lefebvre’s (2004) *Rhythmanalysis* in a transdisciplinary literature on time. Although each author gleans Lefebvre’s educational ideas from a very small selection of his texts, their understandings of them are, I suggest, fair representations of his thinking about education more broadly.
(Middleton 2014, 2016). For, although Lefebvre’s thematic interests evolved over the years, “there is no epistemological break” in his work, which, when read as a whole, “resembles a fluid constellation of concepts” (Kipfer 2009: xxv). So how do their readings of Lefebvre advance each author’s pedagogical project? And what contribution might these innovative books make to education studies, geography and other disciplines?

Overview: Critique as Pedagogy

Scholarly texts are enabled and constrained by their authors’ biographies and spatiotemporal locations. Michel Alhadeff-Jones, a Swiss adult educator in his forties with a background in psychology, has previously written mainly in French. His foray into English-language academic literature is based on the eight years he spent teaching adult education seminars at Columbia University’s Teachers College in New York. He introduces to an Anglophone audience a vast array of French, and to a lesser extent German, social and educational theories of time, most of which are not yet available in English translation. Although Alhadeff-Jones does not address Lefebvre directly until late in his book, its wide-ranging literature reviews all funnel into the concluding discussions of *Rhythmanalysis* and rhythmanalytic case study of a “pedagogy of emancipation”.

Alhadeff-Jones contrasts the study of education in Anglophone universities with that in Western Europe. In France and Germany, influenced by phenomenology’s focus on “being” and “becoming”, “education” is not fragmented into disciplines (as it is in Anglophone universities), but is itself a discipline. Citing Bernard Charlot’s definition of education as “a body of practices and processes through which *l’humain* emerges within human beings” (p.42), he argues that trans-disciplinary approaches such as French educationist Gaston Pineau’s have no counterpart in English.

Derek Ford is an academic newcomer in his early thirties from the USA. There, as in British and Commonwealth universities, “education studies” was historically fragmented into “foundation” disciplines (history, philosophy, sociology, psychology of education). Lefebvre saw disciplinary segmentation as fostering a “fetishism of the partial, and thus of the fragmentary and the specialised” (2002: 68). The only transdisciplinary, and distinctively *educational*, concept is “pedagogy”. Broadly defined, a pedagogy is any practical activity
that is intended to effect learning. With a background in philosophy, political theory, and social activism, Ford had embedded his recent doctoral thesis in the American neo-Marxist literature known as “critical pedagogy”. But this, he now claims, having lost sight of its Marxist roots, has “reached a dead end” (p.6). He continues: “I want to take the advantage (or arrogance?) of my youth and try to start something new” (p.x). His book aims to initiate a “revolutionary political pedagogy”.

Both authors see Lefebvre’s overarching project as at root pedagogical. Lefebvre described his method as a “critique of everyday life”. Neither Ford nor Alhadeff-Jones refers to the “critique of everyday life” by name, or to Lefebvre’s (1991a; 2002; 2005) works with that title. However, Alhadeff-Jones’s reading of *Rhythmanalysis* and Ford’s of *Production and Right* both bring to light its fusion of critique and pedagogy. Influenced by Marx’s early works, Lefebvre identified his object of inquiry as “the process of historical becoming” (2002: 129; see also 2009b). He continues: “active man creates the human world, and through the act of production, produces himself. He does not simply produce things, implements or goods; he also produces history and situations. He creates “human nature”…” (Lefebvre 2002: 95). Oscillating between macro- (global), meso- (institutional), and micro- (local, interpersonal) levels, critique of everyday life problematizes relations between the academic and administrative abstractions of the metropolitan “far order” and subjectivities, practices and experiences of “ordinary people” in everyday settings. Uncovering relations of domination and exploitation, its purpose is at once political and pedagogical:

To study the everyday is to wish to change it. To change the everyday is to bring its confusions into the light of day and into language; it is to make its latent conflicts apparent, and thus to burst them usunder. It is therefore both theory and practice, critique and action. (Lefebvre 2002: 209)

Stuart Elden (2006) locates Lefebvre’s approach “between Marx and Heidegger”. Ford writes mainly from the Marxist “end” of this continuum, asserting “the primacy of material production” as the “fundamental structural antagonism” (p.26). Identifying himself as a communist, Ford allies his revolutionary pedagogy with struggles against the “ongoing
division of the world between oppressing nations and oppressed nations, between the
imperialist camp and the camp of the proletarian and its allies in the colonised and formerly
colonised nations” (p.93). Alhadeff-Jones highlights the continuum’s phenomenological pole:
it is through the experience of rhythms that time becomes “knowable”. Both authors,
however, as Ford expresses it, understand that “political transformations are necessarily
pedagogical events” (p.28).

A Revolutionary Pedagogy for Space
Derek Ford sets out to “stage a deep conversation between critical geography and pedagogy”
(p.x). Neo-Marxist educationists of the late 20th century had privileged “local narratives and
subjugated knowledges at the expense of and disconnection from an overall critique of
political economy” (p.25). Lefebvre’s writings on urban space will help him to integrate
“theories and histories of spatial production within the framework of a pedagogy oriented
toward revolution” (p.x). This will at once “spatialise education theory and educationalise
spatial theory” (p.6).

Since the late 1990s, Production and, more recently, Right had influenced a “spatial
turn” in education studies (Gulson and Symes 2007). However, Ford sees such educational
engagements as superficial, merely “taking space into account” by applying the labels
“perceived, conceived, and lived” as outlined in Production’s opening chapter. Drawing
largely on the three volumes of Marx’s Capital and, to a lesser extent, his Grundrisse, Ford’s
Marxist readings of Production and Right highlight their underpinnings in “political
economy”, rather than their “humanist” or phenomenological dimensions. Although he will
refer to ideology and alienation, these are “situated within the matrix of production” (p.18).
Early chapters introduce key Marxist terms (including “commodity fetishism”, “social
relations”, “fixed and variable capital”, and “abstract and concrete labour”). Clear and
succinct, these sections would be useful introductory reading for students.

Ford uses Lefebvre’s term “urban inhabitant” to update Marx’s 19th century concept
of the working class “from those engaged directly in value production to those involved in
the realm of social reproduction, including not only those labouring for the state (like
teachers) but also those labouring in the domestic sphere” (p.88). This reference to the
“domestic sphere” is his main allusion to women. Other than this, Ford dismisses “gender” as a matter of personal “identification”. When class disappears under communism, people may still construct gendered and cultural identities, but these will no longer matter politically or economically. Ford needed at least to acknowledge feminist challenges over the materiality of bodies, including debates over biological reproduction.

In *Production*, the “concept of space denotes and connotes all possible spaces, whether abstract or real, mental or social” (Lefebvre 1991b: 299). The *perceived* is social space: the embodied world of everyday *spatial practice*—“the practical basis of the perception of the outside world” (Lefebvre 1991b: 38). *Conceived* spaces are abstract, mental (and legal/bureaucratic) *enclosures*—the “dominated spaces” of commercial or state property. *Representations of space* are their codified visualisations (blueprints, flowcharts, timetables, maps) and quantitative measures of their exchange value. This is the city as *habitat*, as product to be consumed. Against this is inhabitation (or dwelling)—the city as lived. The “appropriated” spaces of use value are infused with historical, cultural, and personal meanings, the creative work (*oeuvre*) as against the product. In Ford’s words, the “right to *oeuvre*, to participation and appropriation (clearly distinct from the right to property) are implied in the right to the city” (p.86). He continues: “representations of space dominate experience. The dialectic between the three has become stuck” (p. 106). People were “mystified” by abstractions. In universities, “knowledge accumulates and becomes ‘capitalised’ in the same manner as the material wealth represented by objects or money” (Lefebvre 1969: 146). Ford describes the pedagogical/political task of a “militant” (or “organiser”) as “to focus in on the subjective conditions, on our understanding and critique of the current order of things, on changing ourselves and orienting ourselves and others toward the possible futures that are immanent in the present” (p.xi).

Lefebvre’s (2004: 38-45) distinction (in *Rhythmanalysis*) between *education*, *dressage* and *learning* would have been useful in Ford’s discussion. Learning is effected by dressage and by education. Dressage is drill, routine, the bodily discipline of socialisation and training. In contrast, education opens out possibilities and is centred on “concrete problems that are both practical and theoretical, both empirical and conceptual” (Lefebvre 1969: 157). Education identifies contradictions in human experience and “[c]ontradictions give rise to
problems, and thus to a set of possibilities” (Lefebvre 2002: 209). Lefebvre designated the historical conjunctures of the 1910s and 20s and the youth rebellions of the late 1960s as “critical moments” when the taken-for-granted cracks open and possibilities reveal themselves. Ford sees the early 21st century as another such conjuncture: in contemporary cities “all of capitalism’s contradictions reach their boiling point” (p.94).

He explores how Keynesian welfare states resulted from mid 20th century proletarian offensives in the class war. Ford then discusses how, from the 1980s, capital’s neoliberal fight-back secured “privatisation through dispossession” and saw the “elements of collective consumption … subjected to laws of the market” (p.88). Education was at once neoliberalism’s “means, object, and site” (p.35). As means, neoliberal theory was produced in universities; as object, universities and schools are being privatised; as sites, they reproduce the alienated subjectivity of the “atomised, competitive individual”. Ford describes the city as at once “boiling over with misery and simmering with possibility, an oppressive and liberating formation. For, while the city congregates people and production, letting loose the productive capabilities of humans, it also atomises people” (p.79).

Although these sections are well-written and consistent with Lefebvre’s thinking, it would have been useful here to include Lefebvre’s own accounts of this Keynesian “redistribution of the social surplus” (2009a: 129), the neoliberal turn (Lefebvre 2005), and his discussion of how the “mental spaces of the state” (raison d’état) are pedagogically (re)produced both directly (as curriculum) and indirectly in the course of bureaucratic-regulatory practices (Lefebvre 2009c: 225). In 1981, Lefebvre discerned the commodification of information and predicted that “computerised” bureaucratic practices (pedagogies) of commercial and state bureaucracies would produce a new “human nature”: the “substitution of the ‘user’, figure of daily life, for the political figure of the ‘citizen’” (2005: 78).

Ford concludes with a case study of 2015’s “Baltimore Rebellion”, an urban insurrection sparked by an act of police brutality against an African American. Here he refers (albeit briefly) to The Explosion, Lefebvre’s (1969) account of the student protests of 1968 that had erupted at Paris’ Nanterre University, where he was teaching sociology. There, Ford writes, the class war had “taken on a spatial form”. Ford explains:
… the brutalism of capitalist urban development and control could never fully repress the desires and jouissance birthed through the city form for Lefebvre. By harnessing this side of the city dialectic the people who produce the city can reclaim their right to it; the contradictions of the capitalist city had to burst open. (p.79)

As with Paris 1968 and the recent Occupy Wall Street protests, the Baltimore Rebellion involved the “staking out and taking up of space” and “the generation of new alternative spaces” (p.103): “We wanted to attack the exchange-value of the city and reclaim it for use” (p.ix).

Although acknowledging that Production made “fleeting reference” to pedagogy, Ford comments that “nowhere is this pedagogy developed in any cursory--let alone satisfactory--manner” (p.104). Yet some of these “fleeting references” would have been useful--including pedagogy of appropriation (discussed later) and (as already mentioned) dressage, education and learning (Lefebvre 2004: 38-45). Instead, Ford imports the pedagogical trilogy of “learning, teaching and studying” from Gert Biesta, a philosopher of education. Today “learning” dominates education discourse. As “always a passage to this world”, learning is “a means to a predetermined end”. Learning emanates from “representational spaces” of “the conceived”. It is quantifiable, measurable, and commodified in the form of “qualifications” accorded exchange value. In contrast, studying operationalises the student--“one who studies”. It “names the generation of thought and expression that leaves one intoxicated, encounters with a text or conversation that ‘blow one’s mind, driven by curiosities that are closer to pleasure, to play, to wandering, to leaving work’”. Unlike learning, studying does not require a “destination”. As wandering about, studying opens possibilities of “a world beyond the current order of things”. (Here Guy Debord’s [1958] idea of the dérive, which influenced Lefebvre, comes to mind.) Ford locates studying in the “lived”, appropriated, “representational spaces” of dwelling, “in that it is concerned with endless playful generation and appropriation, with the discovery and expression of difference” (p.109).

Ford depicts the Baltimore Rebellion as shifting from learning to studying. It began as the kind of organised street protest considered “respectable” in liberal democracies: orderly
processions, pre-prepared banners, and chanting of memorised slogans. A shift to studying occurred as “there were cries of indignation and anger and multitudinous swarms forming and disbanding” (p.110), and skirmishes with police. The “rule of exchange value over the city and city life was directly challenged with force as people raided stores for the necessities they had been denied” (p.114). These were not scripted as “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” (p.113).

So how is teaching to be understood? Lefebvre (1969: 155) saw schools and universities as valorising “the teacher over the taught” and (re)producing an “ideology of hierarchisation” between “theory” and everyday experience and activities. As “dressage”, university learning was reduced to “initiation and esotericism, and fragmented specialisation deprived of totality” (Lefebvre 1969: 155). Is there a role for a teacher in Ford’s revolutionary pedagogy for space? Ford starts with Biesta’s critique of 20th century constructivism, which, infused with developmental psychology, saw the teacher as a resource for learning. Challenging this, Biesta, gives back to the teacher “a form of weak authority” (p.109). The teacher must bring “something new to the student from the outside”. Is this “something new” a shared reading of Marx and Lefebvre? Ford seems aware of the danger that even these can be treated as “received knowledge”. Future work might connect Lefebvre’s (1969) “self-management of learning” with his work on “autogestion” (worker control) (Lefebvre 2009d).

_Education and the Production of Space_ is a courageous work by a promising young writer. It is no small ambition “to understand exploitation and oppression in order to rid the world of both and to create a world that we actually deserve” (p.118). Although this book marks a post-doctoral development in Ford’s thinking, it is not his first—he and his activist comrades have co-edited several already.1 Ford is currently editing a special issue on “Lefebvre’s Teachings” for the journal _Policy Futures in Education_ and, as I write, its contributed papers are appearing online.2

2 See [http://journals.sagepub.com/toct/pfe/0/0](http://journals.sagepub.com/toct/pfe/0/0) (last accessed 23 May 2017).
educators, Ford’s at once scholarly and iconoclastic book heralds a promising academic future.

*Time, Rhythms, and Emancipation*

In 1958 Lefebvre (1991a: 3) heralded his project to “critique everyday life” as “built entirely around” Marx’s concept of alienation. Marx’s emphasis had been on *economic* alienation: (Lefebvre 1991a: 178), but regarding his work as unfinished Lefebvre identified “many alienations” (2002: 207), including technological and philosophical. Alhadeff-Jones begins his book with a personal account of his *temporal alienation* as a university teacher in this time of (neoliberal) managerialist intensification. He feels continually “pressed for time”, struggling to keep pace with proliferating external deadlines as courses once taught year-long are compressed into shorter units and bureaucracy colonises hours set aside for family, creativity, and rest. Alhadeff-Jones explains: “Because education is about change, and the study of changes involves time, time appears as an unavoidable issue to consider in education” (p.33). The book demonstrates how pedagogies centred on life-history methods can unveil the “formativity” of temporal alienation, advancing possibilities for emancipation.

The book falls into three parts. The first addresses the “study of time in educational sciences”. Drawing on Edgar Morin’s “paradigm of complexity”, its conceptual lexicon spans biology, philosophy, physics, and the human sciences. Newtonian “clockwork metaphors” of time—as quantitative, measurable, and predictable—still infuse today’s requirements for unambiguous pedagogical goals. *Chronobiology* measures bodily cycles and periodicities—metabolic, epigenetic, evolutionary. In contrast, phenomenological approaches (notably Heidegger’s) distinguish multiple “levels” of temporal experience and languages with which to express them: poetic, mathematical, historical, existential. From the 1960s, ideas such as chaos or *autopoiesis* approached living temporalities as emergences generated by interplay between internal (physiological) and external factors (circadian, seasonal, social).

The process of developing a critical capacity is enabled and constrained by the polyrhythms of everyday living. Alhadeff-Jones reviews sociological and anthropological literature on temporal constraints in educational institutions, the ways these are experienced, and how they have evolved through history. The temporal regularity and predictability of
institutional time “may explain why innovative curricula, more unusual teaching strategies, that lessen the predictability of an otherwise fairly regular temporal environment may lead to a sense of cognitive unease in teachers and students” (p.57).

The second part of the book addresses the “evolution of temporal constraints and the rhythms of education”. It begins with four historical case studies: the rhythmic recitations of the Torah in early Jewish education; the drills and gymnastics of ancient Greek schools for (aristocratic) “good citizens”; the ritualised disciplinary regimes of medieval monastic schools; and the introduction of school regulations during the Early Modern period. The turn of the first millennium saw “God’s time” challenged by merchants’ urban clock time. During the Renaissance, the proliferation of printed texts re-rhythmed the pace of study. In the 17th century Comenius devised a strict “order of reading” of prescribed texts taught by monitors. This was, Alhadeff-Jones suggests, “inspired by monastic education revised through the lens of efficiency” (p.84). The Industrial Revolution and rise of capitalism saw the assimilation of childhood to schooling and its patterning as analogous to the (adult) working day’s rhythms of capitalist production. The telegraph, telephone, and radio erased spatial distance and the electrification of cities undermined circadian rhythms of darkness and light. At the turn of the 20th century, emerging trends (including the Romantic movement) in education fought the rigid linearity of economic rationalism through new “rhythmic pedagogies” centred on music and movement (Jaques-Dalcroze), dance (Laban), gymnastics (Bode) and spirituality (Steiner).

In the second half of the 20th century American researchers (eg. Bloom, Carroll) systematised “instructional time” according to scientific models. Rather than “bright or dull”, children were deemed “fast or slow” as emphasis shifted from teaching time to learning time. What was referred to as “New” (or “Progressive”) education encouraged non-graded schools (Dewey, Montessori) and individualised (project based) curriculum. Teachers were caught in a double-bind—between the economic logic of efficiency and the democratic value of equity. In France, systems theory and structuralism had gained ascendancy and any idea of “rhythm” lost its traction until it resurfaced in new scientific fields. Chronobiology explored children’s biological rhythms and chronopsychology their rhythms of vigilance, attention, and cognition. Policy changes resulted when French authorities recognised that social and school
rhythms were not attuned to those of children. Next Alhadeff-Jones introduces rhythms of lifelong learning: Bergson’s and Bachelard’s conflicting visions of time; Whitehead’s sequence of educational “flows”, from romance (freedom), to precision (discipline), and generalisation. He outlines historical changes in vocational training’s patterns of “alternance” between periods spent in the workplace, on study, in sleep, and on holidays.

The third and final section is entitled “Theorising the rhythms of emancipation in education”. Alhadeff-Jones describes emancipation as a temporal phenomenon composed through specific rhythms that must be contextualised in relation to temporal alienation. An emancipatory pedagogy enables people to “combine and balance the rhythms and times that compose the historicity of their lives to fight against the experience of schitzochrony” (p.183). Influenced by, but critical of, Jacques Rancière, Alhadeff-Jones—citing Biesta (who also featured in Derek Ford’s book)—views the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire and others as grounded in inequality between “knowledgeable emancipatory pedagogue” and “ignorant students”. Alhadeff-Jones sees Lefebvre’s (2004) Rhythmanalysis as a promising alternative.

Focussing on people’s experiences of lived rhythms, rhythmanalysts identify the social arrhythmias that open up “critical moments”—“jolts” that uncover possibilities. Alhadeff-Jones reviews the influence of Rhythmanalysis on two generations of French scholars, whose works are not yet translated and remain unknown in English. He introduces Gaston Pineau and Rémi Hess as pioneers, then Galvani’s and Lesourd’s works on higher education.

Alhadeff-Jones then offers us an analytical lexicon: including pattern, periodicity and movement (Sauvanet); épreuve (recurring tropes of a narration), epiphany (life-changing insight or breakthrough), and syncope (space of renewal). As did Ford, Alhadeff-Jones adopts Lefebvre’s idea of the “moment” when possibilities are revealed. While Ford views the moment as a historical conjuncture, Alhadeff-Jones addresses it at a more personal level by means of his case study of Ruth, a young woman student who—through the cultural dissonances of study and travel—emancipates herself from a restricting familial situation in village Italy. Here he could have referred to the “poets, artists, creative intellectuals … [who] derive their inspiration from a marginal situation” (Lefebvre 1969: 133). Curiously, though,
in an example sensitive to a young female’s experience and perspective, references to French feminist theories of time are missing (see e.g. Kristeva 1986).

A moment “results from a choice or attempt to single a form of experience out”, or, in Lefebvre’s terms, it is “people’s active appropriation of everyday life” (p.194). Alhadeff-Jones writes: “Designating a moment as such is a fundamental operation because it provides the person with a principle of coherence to organise and intensify the meaning of what would be otherwise experienced, either as a continuous repetition of everyday routines or as a discontinuous sum of everyday experiences” (p.194). He alludes to Foucault’s idea of transgression: “As a flash, transgression may be seen as the discontinuity that gives subjectification and emancipation their meaning” (p.196). He continues: “From a temporal perspective, emancipation can therefore be interpreted as the moment of rupture emerging from the repetition of a pattern of transgression” (p.196). Demonstrating how social, historical, and corporeal rhythms intertwine, this example identifies individual rhythms, the collective rhythms of social context, and how they eventually synchronise. Since this is a case study of a student in Alhadeff-Jones’s adult education course on time, presumably his role as teacher was to introduce to her (in Biesta’s terms) “something new” in the sense of the analytical vocabulary outlined in this book.

*Time and the Rhythms of Emancipatory Education* is not an easy read: expect to be tossed in oceans of new names and jargon. The text is inflected with French grammatical idiom that occasionally I found distracting—it would have benefited from a thorough English-language copy-edit. From a “Lefebvrian” perspective, I would have liked more historical landmarks to contextualise the French educators whose timeframes and intellectual antecedents overlapped with his. Although the book is limited to the French, German, and occasionally American educational contexts, it opens spaces to insert British and Commonwealth writers, policies, and institutions. The book is well indexed so offers a useful reference work, especially for those able to access works in French by Hess, Pineau, and others. Until such works are translated, Alhadeff-Jones’s book will remain a lone authority on these educational texts. A long, slow read, but well worth the effort.

In *Production*, Lefebvre (1991b: 205) wrote:
It is possible to envision a sort of “rhythm analysis” which could address itself to the concrete analysis of rhythms, and perhaps even to their use (or appropriation). Such an approach would seek to discover those rhythms whose existence is signalled only through mediations, through indirect effects or manifestations. Rhythm analysis might eventually even displace psychoanalysis, as being more concrete, more effective, and closer to a pedagogy of appropriation (the appropriation of the body, as of spatial practice).

So, while Ford’s book is focussed on the appropriation of space, Alhadeff-Jones is concerned with the appropriation of time through bringing to awareness the polyrhythms of everyday experience. Together, both are suggestive of what Lefebvre might have been referring to by a “pedagogy of appropriation”. These books are, hopefully, just a start in what must be a transdisciplinary conversation.
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