Chapter 15
Spaces of Life: Transgressions in Conceptualising the World Class University

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Abstract Beyond knowledge, critical thinking, new ideas, rigorous science and scholarly development, this chapter argues for the university as a space of life. Through the complexities and incommensurabilities of academic life, and drawing on Julia Kristeva's notion of revolt, Emmanuel Levinas' notion of Otherness, and Novalis' concept of Romantisierung, it makes a philosophical argument for recognizing what might appear as uncomfortable transgressions of the marketable, measurable characteristics of World Class Universities. In various ways, the chapter asks where there is space, in the World Class University, for elements which may not overtly align with the neoliberal clamour for international recognition and esteem. In elevating everyday life in the university, the chapter blurs boundaries of the celebrated, strived for rankings with the spaces of life that are dark and heterotopic, messily entangled with histories, polyphonic human and more than human voice, beings and energies, within the university. Revolt provokes a re-turn to re-question the ethics and boundaries of treatments of 'world' and 'class' in conceptions of the World Class University. Here, 'World Class University' is not necessarily a globally streamlined and internationally bench-marked institution, flexing its socio-economic muscles in the face of the world. Instead, it is an institution that speaks for others who have been made silent and deprived of their own critical voice. It speaks for the suppressed and marginalized, and it speaks for the ones who

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are no longer with us, or who have not yet arrived. It speaks for the people and the times yet to come.

Introduction

Original knowledge creation, critical thinking, rigorous science and scholarly development are all elements of world class universities. World class, most often classified as "research-oriented" universities, "are recognized as basic social infrastructure for national development" as Jang and Kim (2013) assert, which is "ultimately, […] a core hub of knowledge creation that determines national competitiveness" (p. 725). Indeed, in their outline of an "ideal emergent concept of world class universities" Rodriguez-Pomeda and Casani (2016) point out the reified position held by research universities, as "the pinnacle of the world's academic systems" (p. 1270). But what inheres in the spaces of those universities, upheld as the pinnacle for knowledge creation and thinking? What kind of a place is it to live in, where 'basic social infrastructure' is developed, sufficient to lead to 'national development', where we write, know, and build university and national competitiveness? Competition is fierce, in the creation of knowledge (Jang and Kim 2013), and "building global research capacity is central to the creation of a world class university" (p. 726).

This chapter investigates what lies behind these 'pinnacles of knowledge'. It takes up Julia Kristeva's (1998) questioning of where we *are*, in our academic space, in our 'core hubs', our 'pinnacles', where we *do* our "thinking-writing" (p. 8), together with Levinas' (2000) proposition that personal growth occurs when the self is somewhat diminished, and Novalis' (1960b) suggestion for a transformative metaphysics. The chapter elevates the complexities of the mysterious. Suggesting that our thinking-writing represents a "passage to the limits of the self, a crossing of frontiers" (Kristeva 1998, p. 8), Kristeva, for instance, helps us to blur the boundaries of the space of the world class university, and our place within it. Conceptualising the world class university, the *where* of such boundary crossings, where we think and write, what we propose here may be akin to what Kristeva calls a "space of life" (p. 8), what Levinas describes as "an ethical language" (p. 94), and what Novalis may be striving for as a site of "free *concatenation*" (Wood 2007, p. 168).

Rethinking the idea of the world class university through various lenses on 'spaces of life' recognises *reverberations*—as people, for example, reverberate with the placefulness of the university. Places and people connect in experiential co-existence, which can result in engagement or estrangement (Gieryn 2000, p. 476). Our thinking-writing-living in this instance arises through our co-existences from our distinct contexts: We are four academics, lecturers, and researchers, at two different universities, *placed* almost as far apart as we could be, in Denmark and New Zealand. As distant as they are from each other, our universities latch on to similar pinnacles, imbued with neoliberal competitiveness, creating knowledge, building research capacity, and 'internationalisation', upholding the values of global esteem,

benchmarks, and international impact factors (University of Waikato 2017). Profit-driven motives risk subjugating academic rigour and critical thought, placing us as academics in this perplexing international realm, where thoughtfulness and local connectedness often become side-lined or relegated to superficiality and marketing speak (Lund and Arndt 2018; Arndt and Mika 2018). Grappling with such conflicting complexities, whilst striving to make meaning of them, our connections across the countries derive from the very issues of concern in this chapter. Our work together is arguably the result of world class university encounters and connections, (collective and individual) otherness, emerging at international conferences and striving for what we may not yet know. Kristeva, Levinas and Novalis invite a distinctly different idea of the university to that driven by globalised instrumental knowledge creation, in the arguments made through this chapter for reclaiming heterotopia, heterogeneity, estrangement and arationality. First, however, we will elaborate our conceptions of space and place in this rethinking of the WCU as spaces of life.

Re-configuring the Space of the World Class University

Being *in* the world and being *a* world simultaneously, the university manifests itself as *location*, *locale* and *sense of place* (Cresswell 2004, p. 7). First of all, the university has a location, some fixed coordinates on the Earth's surface which enable us to find it on a map: it is a specific localisable *where*. Secondly, the university has material form—locale—that enable us to enter and leave it and its offices, rooms, squares and so on: it is an occupiable *thing* through its buildings and campus. Finally, the inhabitants or users of the university might have academic, personal and emotional attachments to the university as a place through its ability to evoke a sense of place: it becomes a habitat through its ability to be a vitalised *body* that creates sense, meaning and belonging.

Besides having location, locale and sense of place, the university can be further characterised as a 'striated' or 'smooth' space (Casey 1997). Striated university space is characterised by being organised by fixed schemata and is 'counted in order to be occupied' as well as assigned determinate values. Such university space is shaped from a fixed point of view—an indifferent *any-where*, *any-thing* and *any-body*—and occupation of such space becomes movement from point to point, from one location to another; it is the university as transitional, universal space or circulation area. It is not a place to find life or become vitalised.

Smooth university places, on the other hand, are characterised by allowing for considerable irregularity and can be "occupied without being counted". They present themselves as heterogeneous and brimming with "qualitative multiplicities". Such places are without external point of view—they are intimate contact points always being *some-where*, *some-thing* and *some-body*. Occupying smooth places requires wanderlust, indwelling as well as embracing diversity and cohesiveness; it is a "polyvocality of directions" (see Casey 1997, p. 303–304).

In striated space the Whole or World of the university is brought to order through an imposed system of interlineation and segmentation of fixed positions. The result is a university as 'space of localities' rather than 'region of sensed places'. Conversely, we can experience dwelling by moving into smooth place—a life of movement in thought, action or being. Such a university as place for *vitalising academic events* require that we view and treat the idea of the university as *placeful smooth architecture*. Through this, the university not only 'takes place' but also 'gives place' by creating room for things to happen:

> We are reminded of Heidegger's emphasis on *Räumen* (clearing space), *Einräumen* (making room) and *Raumgeben* (giving space). Similarly, 'spacing,' a term that persists throughout Derrida's writings, implies the clearing of space for events to happen: spacing is giving them room in which to occur. *Such room is room for place*. (Casey 1997, p. 313).

Off course, it is never the case that *all* inhabitants of a place such as a university feel that they belong or are 'given place.' But if the university does not manifest itself as a smooth, vitalised place, large portions of its inhabitants risk becoming *persona non locata* or 'people out of place' such as refugees, expats, minorities, homeless, displaced or other excluded people. In this way, a home for one group of people to dwell, can cause another group of people to become outsiders or expats if the university is a striated space organised for certain ways of 'being a proper academic' without clearing space, making room or giving place for alternative and potentially 'improper' ways of being an academic (Cresswell 2004, p. 13).

The opposite of the university as 'indifferent striated space' for the passer-by, Bachelard calls 'felicitous place' for the dweller—some-where we can fall into and fall in love with. A 'eulogised place' that fosters 'topophilia' or a 'love of place' (Bachelard 1958). Felicitous smooth places form a university where thinking, doing and being can come alive and grow affectionate bonds through the development of a 'feeling-link' between people and place (Tuan 1997). Through promoting topophilia, the university comes alive as vitalised some-thing—*it becomes a place-world or a world of places* dreamed, imagined, loved, remembered and read (Casey 1997). Universities capable of infusing topophilia in their inhabitants will often emerge in the form of heterotopias rather than utopias:

> Whereas utopias are 'sites with no place' and represent a perfected (and thus radically transformed) state of society [or university], heterotopias are real places that contest and reverse sites within a given society [...]. Each of these heterotopias is at once 'absolutely different' from the surrounding places they reflect—and yet at the same time actually locatable in geographic reality. (Casey 1997, p. 300)

In short, heterotopias consists of architectural spaces that form a some-body configured as a 'diverse us' and that provide heterogenous places for that 'us' to live without emplacing that living. The university as a space of life is configured as a simultaneous dwelling-in and spacing-out, where the 'out' also implies a *trans-* as in transition, transformation and transgression. Consequently, a vitalising university is on the move towards becoming a place—or a space of life—in all its heterotopic imperfection and disrupted transgressions—a place configured as a 'detotalized

totality' or something seizing to be an organised any-where and emerging as a living event (Casey 1997).

Developing the conception of the university as a space of life even further, Lefebvre and his call for movement against the colonization of places to reclaim the places of everyday life comes to mind. For Lefebvre this can be accomplished through insurgent 'counter-discourses' based on new practices of and in 'concrete places'. Concrete place, for Lefebvre, signifies a bottom-up and autonomous reaction to those systems or institutional agents whose dominance have degraded smooth and 'sensed place' to striated and 'abstract space'. To vitalise university space and transform it into a sensed place its inhabitants and users need to challenge the striated space and recapture it as smooth place:

> Places have power sui generis, all apart from powerful people or organisations who occupy them: the capacity to dominate and control people or things comes through the geographic location, built-form, and symbolic meanings of a place. The array of building-types is, on this score, also a catalogue of how places differently become terrains of powers [...] spaces become the focus of government [or institutional] development policies, and control of territory is one measure of effective state sovereignty. Place enables power to travel, to extend its reach over people and territory. (Gieryn 2000, p. 475–476)

Following this, heterotopic place becomes vital for our ability to think, be and do at the university. To be a space of life and have world class, the university needs to reconfigure itself as a vitalised and vitalising place centred around the being-well and well-being of its inhabitants (Casey 1997). The university must be a *friend of being*.

Following this thinking, it becomes clear how engagement or estrangement can be built into the university. Building on Gieryn, the places most conducive to lively academic communities are 'disordered' and 'unpurified' and give the academics a stake in the process of place-making. The places are open-ended, un-finished, multipurpose and non-determined—leaving it up to the inhabitants to shape the space into a lively place that suits their current dreams, needs and aspirations best. This is in opposition to the specialisation of function and stratification of ownership, affiliation and participation in relation to the 'systematised' and 'stratified' university that creates 'enclaves' (see Gieryn 2000, p. 476–478).

The 'striated' university displays an architecture that determines proper academic use and discourages displays of academic resistance, activism, takeover or transgression (see Gieryn 2000, p. 478–480 for a similar account of the cityscape). The *hegemony* of striated institutional space—the system's exercise of repressive power over the university as a Whole or World, as idea and environment—grows from the concurrent instrumentalisation, homogenisation, compartmentalisation, colonisation and 'technical' systematisation of university space. In this neoliberal transformation, striated space is produced and smooth place is eroded. This hegemony of striated space weighs down on academic life—it systematises, unifies and rationalises it on the backdrop of neoliberal institutional logic—in effect flattening the academic sphere and diluting its thinking, doing and being. This is the overall effect of losing lived smooth academic place to abstract striated institutional space.

> Abstract space, the space of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism, bound up as it is with the exchange (of goods and commodities, as of written and spoken words etc.) depends on

consensus more than any space before it [...] So long everyday life remains in thrall to abstract space, with its very concrete constraints; so long as the only improvements to occur are technical improvements of detail (for example, the frequency and speed of transportation, or relatively better amenities); so long, in short, as the only connection between work spaces, leisure spaces and living spaces is supplied by the agencies of political power and by the mechanisms of control—so long must the project of 'changing life' remain no more than a political rallying cry to be taken up or abandoned according to the mood of the moment. (Lefebvre 1974, p. 57–59).

Taken together, to be without life-giving place is to be almost non-existent as a living being, nothing more than a working vessel for the university system. Here, a re-configuration of the university and its conception of world class, through a change in the conceptualisation and construction of university space and place, becomes necessary for the university to obtain 'worldhood' and for academics to feel that they belong in that world (Nørgård and Bengtsen, 2016; Nørgård and Bengtsen, 2018). To do so we must connect what Lefebvre calls 'representations of space' (conceptualising, designing and constructing the university) with 'representational spaces' (inhabitation, practice, experience and lifeworld of the university).

As of now, the university as 'conceived and constructed' is strangely different from the university as something 'lived through'. The way forward, it seems, is to create 'vitalising interventions' by way of re-configuring university space through collective transformation, transgression and production. We need to re-configure the world-class university as place, rather than setting it up as a space of power. To do so, we need a framework for 're-critiquing', 're-voking' and 're-conceiving' the world class university. In the next sections of this chapter we will try to do just that through the thinking of Kristeva, Levinas and Novalis in order to see the university as a heterogeneous space of life of disconcensus, dissidence, disobedience, and even exile.

Re-Critiquing the World Class University

Following the above outline, perhaps, the 'World Class University' is not only a globally streamlined and internationally bench-marked institution, flexing its socio-economic muscles in the face of the increasingly globalised world. Through Kristeva's (2014) notion of revolt, a return to re-question the ethics and boundaries of treatments of 'world' and 'class', in conceptions of the university, and of its worldliness and class is in order. Perhaps, then, this is an institution that speaks for others who have been made silent and deprived of their own critical voice, and perhaps that is what makes it 'world class'? Maybe it speaks from an ethical imperative (Lingis 1998) for the suppressed and marginalized, and for the ones who are no longer with us, or who have not yet arrived, or for the people and the times yet to come.

Whilst potentially viewed as brutal, Kristeva's notion of revolt calls for a cautious approach. It requires the utmost sensitivity, respect and concern not only for

the diverse cultures and individuals involved, but for the past, present and future of their knowledges, languages and ways of being. At the same time it is a call for a certain ruthlessness, for standing up for what is important—for resisting the danger of (re)colonisations in university spaces and behaviours. As with Novalis who, as we shall see, understood all representations as deeply world-entwined acts, thinking with Kristeva (2014) is not a call for a large-scale overthrow of the (university or societal) regime, but rather a deep and critical questioning and thought: a vital and transformative process. Practically and theoretically, revolt calls for constant re-negotiation. In a Levinasian (2000, p. 75) sense too, revolt is a form of anarchy, a goodness that does not hold back but shatters the totality of the fixed, the said, and the hardening and brutality of exclusion. Revolt, is thus the sheer force of vulnerability unleashed. Anarchy, Levinas states, is always 'non-thematizable' and 'metalogical'; it cannot be contained in the logos of reason (Levinas 2000, p. 102). Positing revolt as a disturbance of university agendas, not to argue against them, but to unsettle its spaces and the lives within them, it offers a provocative rupture of dominant orientations towards heterogeneity in the form of cultural Otherness, for example, where revolting might lead to a decolonizing openness. One might imagine a revolting re-orientation—withholding fully seeking to 'know' the Other, as Levinas (2000) warns against—towards the Other, the lost, the academic refugees referred to above, and to what are considered 'improper ways of being an academic' through the normalizing practices of international benchmarks, measuring tools, impact factors and citation levels. In what ways might revolt (re)-elevate diverse academic Othernesses, in the form of 'slow' academia, for example, when all around there is pressure to do more, and to do it faster?

Kristeva distinguishes revolt from revolution, rejection or destruction, and instead sees it as an ongoing questioning, where to "think is to question" and "to question is to revolt" (Roberts 2005). In questioning, revolt elevates the "little things, tiny revolts" that are necessary, in Kristeva's (2002) view, "to preserve the life of the mind and of the species" (p. 5). Rather than being some kind of movement, then, revolt becomes a "temporal disposition of subjectivity" (Sjöholm 2004, p. 84), implicating each of us and our limits, frontiers and boundaries. It follows Kristeva's positing of thought as a 'true' form of dissidence, as we mentioned in the introduction. Countering what Kristeva laments as a dangerous *lack* of revolt in society, universities *should* perhaps be seen not only as spaces of vitalization, but also of heterogeneity and dissidence. Dissident thought in this sense implies a "ruthless and irreverent dismantling of the workings of discourse, thought, and existence" (Kristeva 1986a, p. 299). In terms of the university, this means taking the time to get to know its discourses and to learn about thought and what it means to exist within it. As a space of life, what would it mean, then, for the university to foster revolt "first and foremost" in "opposition to already established norms, values and powers" (Kristeva 2014, p. 4)? Might this opposition cultivate spaces for liminalities, allowing for attitudinal shifts, the ethical and moral, onto-epistemological imperatives, of the university and what it means to exist in 'world class' spaces outlined earlier?

Compelling us in a temporal return, to revolt also invokes pasts, forgotten, perhaps idealised, histories, localities, as well as presents and futures. It compels us to difference, rather than sameness, to recognise and accommodate the foreigner, even when s/he inheres within each of us, as Kristeva (1991) insists, as she urges us "to live *as others* (p. 2), which we find described in Levinas as "finding oneself while losing oneself" (2000 p. 11), which defines our being as a being *for* the other in contrast to the Heideggerian being-*with*. Novalis, similarly, but perhaps more metaphysically, also wants us to question our existence, but now in relation to the living matter of all things in the world—not as complete-Other but as co-constitutive-Other. Rather than offering a solution, revolt and our own Otherness, therefore, alert us to liminal potentialities, of "unique, uncompromisingly questioning *inner* experiences" towards "re-formative" (Kristeva 2014, p. 3) shifts and reconceptualisations of what fundamentally may remain foreign even to ourselves. These rediscoveries of the self, of one's self, beyond frontiers, thresholds and boundaries, lead to re-forming the inner subjective 'I' within our universities' interpersonal, contextual and relational milieu (Arndt 2013).

The 'worldly class' of a university might further tap into the potential of revolt to work actively with our inextricable connectedness and relational interdependencies in times of global scale refugee crises, wars, and anthropocentrisms. Not writing specifically about universities, but of a societal level of perception, Kristeva (2014) notes that "[p]opular uprisings, indignant youth, toppled-down dictators, oligarchic presidents dismissed, hopes dashed and liberties crushed in prisons, fixed trials and bloodbaths" raise the questions: "[c]ould 'revolt', … be—at this digital age—in the process of shaking up humankind of its dream of hyperconnectedness? Or could it just be a trick played on us by the culture of spectacle to last longer?" (p. 1). Within this heightened human implicatedness in ecological and global uncertainties, the possibilities of not-knowing, non-knowledge become elevated as an imperative of the global university, aligning with and forming a bridge to a posthumanist (Braidotti 2013) and vital, or 'new' materialist, thinking (Barad 2003; Bennett 2010). Kristeva's (2014) challenge is whether revolt is "even possible—in our times, where misery is everywhere, debt, austerity and unemployment are endemic, when local wars can turn into global ones and when we run the risk of being flooded by the melting of the icecaps" (p. 1). At the level of the sharp-edged, overly epistemic university, Novalis' (1960a) words, too, foreshadow a current disregard for certain kinds of registers in universities, in favour of heavily demarcated empirical discourses:

> [Shrewder] members busied themselves tirelessly with purging the poetry from nature, the earth, the human soul, and the sciences—eradicating every trace of the sacred, spoiling the memory of all virtuous events and people by sarcasm, and divesting the world of all colourful decoration. Due to its submission to mathematics as well as its brashness, light had become their [those members'] favourite. They delighted in the fact that it would sooner be refracted than play amongst colour, and so their great concern—Enlightenment—became its namesake] (trans. Mika 2013, p. 165).

Reconfiguring our dream of hyperconnectedness may indeed be what is needed to rattle our images of contemporary global concerns and their local implications.

What are the 'culture of spectacle' or the 'virtuous events' and 'colourful decoration' to which Kristeva and Novalis refer in a world class university? Might these be the realisation of Kristeva's argument, that within society today there is a lack of a comprehensive narrative, that the complexity is flattened and histories and stories forgotten? Might they be the narratives of heterogeneous spaces and relationalities necessary in the university that is in dire need of revolt? Revolting against hegemonic cultural expectations and otherness calls for many forms and sensitivities, to (re)insert and (re)validate multiplicities and difficulties, to reveal and value, rather than continue to marginalise, multiple subjugated stories. Revolt pushes us to linger, to ruminate in the liminalities, in what we might call a certain chaos of rethinking the nuances of raw, brute, intimate senses of subjectivities, identities and dignity. It is, in Levinasian terms (2000, p. 47), to resist the 'nominalization' where the identity will be 'congealed' into a particular form, gender, sex, persona, profile, or type. The true responsibility that lies at the heart of revolt is a responsibility for the 'unrepresentable' and the 'irrecuperable' (ibid.).

Revolt then involves a 'patient and meticulous' dismantling of the workings of the university and its culture, and "requires ceaseless analysis, vigilance and will to subversion" (Kristeva 1986b, p. 299), provoking an *attitude* of dissidence as much as *acts* of revolt. New forms of consciousness combine, including the unconscious, with "the pressure of desire" (Kristeva 1986b, p. 307), as we ruminate amongst our university spaces and directives. Revolt, it seems, may bring us closer to accepting the uncertainty of our own and the university's evolving identities. Perhaps through revolt we might shift the (invisible and visible) chaos and displacements of the space and place, of *all* of our histories, situatedness and Otherness, in the 'world class' of the university?

Rather than negating policies aimed at moulding 'world classness' into our universities, increasing openness to the impermanence and fragility, the nuanced, non-static identity of university spaces, implies critical philosophical engagements. Such engagements are likely to expose and unsettle knowledges that represent and create privilege and marginality, through purposeful attention to historical and cultural examinations. We might question knowledge further: to make space for the expected richness that all participants, human and non-human actants, should bring to an educational setting, for example, when dominant conceptions of knowledge alone seem inadequate to render meaningful engagements and 'knowledge production'. Rather than striving for narrowly defined, rankable knowledge, perhaps even a relative state of ignorance, or not knowing, could allow a more open, decolonising orientation towards the enmeshed complexities and uncertainties inherent in experiences of Otherness within the university.

To do this, revolt requires a vital and transformative process of re-negotiation, of our evolving identities, where each of us, like our universities, is rendered, to a certain extent, unknowable. Work is necessary to avoid merely to challenge and question, which only "opens the way to madness" (Kristeva, 1984 p. 145). A critical counteraction to the moral transgression of *non-revolt* turns us to Levinas, and questions of estrangement, or alienation, of and within academia.

Revoking the Tendency to Know the Other

Spaces for life in the university are found, too, in dark and unsettling forms of learning and existing, places that are askew, dislocated, and other. Such forms of learning and being are not always fully lit and possible to detect. Even highly active forms of learning may take place without us being able to register and assess them immediately (Bengtsen and Barnett 2017; Dall'Alba and Bengtsen 2019). New knowledge, encountered through critical dialogue, does not always align well with a student's or teacher's preconceptions, and it may 'cause ontological discomfort' (Barnett 2007, p. 76) and 'displace' them. Becoming aware, through historical studies and revolt, for example, of one's own country's oppressive colonial past may be disturbing, and realising in a critical debate that one's truth claims are not as strong and well-fortified as one thought may be unsettling and leave an imprint of fragility and uncertainty. Through deep learning, students are drawn into alien learning places, which, according to Barnett, is one of the aims of "genuine 'higher' education […]—to displace the student's being into not just new, but strange places" (ibid.). Such places, new and strange, widen the polyvocality of higher education and expand the spaces for life in ways in which experiences of doubt, frustration, and perhaps even anger become part of learning *as* revolt. Spaces for life in the university are not only redeeming and releasing, but may be spaces where our thought and very being becomes 'unhinged' (Sparrow 2013).

Spaces for life may indeed feel alien in their liminality, and they exist at the very limits of order and familiarity. According to Waldenfels (2011), the experience of the alien "emerges in the shape of something extraordinary that cannot find its place in the respective order, and at the same time, as what is being excluded, it is not nothing" (Waldenfels 2011, p. 4). The experience of alien forms of understanding, or the feeling of alienation through critical discussion with peers, takes place on the verge between the known and unknown. Similarly to notions of Other in Kristeva and Novalis above, the "radical character of the alien' is not 'something entirely different from the own and familiar, but at the same time it cannot 'be deduced from the own'" (Waldenfels 2011, p. 35). Novalis also identified this peculiar return to self but also the "sheer otherness" (Kuzniar 2003, p. 435) of the world, including the self. The in-between space, or the "darkness of learning" (Bengtsen and Barnett 2017, p. 123ff.), creates a twilight zone in which it becomes difficult to know what beliefs, thoughts, and realities one should hold on to. In spaces for life, we find a wanderlust, where some students, teachers, and researchers are led astray, perhaps even lured into places of reasoning and critique that are dubious and worrying. Being able to reach such to oneself unfamiliar and uncanny modes of thinking, and to be able to critically resolve them, is indeed a sign of a 'higher' or 'world-class' form of learning. This space for life is found in the very darkness being, where the list of academic allies may run thin, where one's hope may start to flicker, and where the entire project of one's higher education is blurred. This space of life is powerful, yet troubling.

Even though such alien spaces for life may make us feel uncertain, vulnerable, and dislocated from previous knowledge, literacies or forms of behaviour in the university (and beyond), they are central for deep and advanced learning. The notion of the alien differentiates between a learning space, where new knowledge becomes neatly assimilated into earlier preconceptions and worldviews, and places for learning, where a deeper and more profound learning commitment is made possible. The revolt takes place in an alien space for life. To revolt is to welcome the alien, the unfixed, and the unhinged. The vulnerability and openness connected to alien places make a deeper form of belonging to the university possible. As Levinas points out, it is when I "posit myself deposed of my sovereignty" that a more profound opportunity for learning and growth appears, and "[p]aradoxically it is qua alienus—foreigner and other—that man is not alienated" (Levinas 2000, p. 59). As Barnett argues, in line with this point, there is a "[h]ospitality to be found in pedagogies of strangeness" (Barnett 2007, p.76), and through encountering what's alien to us, we not only find our own self in new ways, but we find each other. We learn from being with each other in alien places that "thickets cannot suddenly clear" and that students, and sometimes teachers too, have "to be enabled to live with this sense of being lost" (ibid.). This is an honest pedagogy in the sense that it invites not only the traversing of higher education learning spaces, but to locate, dwell and *be* in its places for learning. Alien places bring out new forms of life.

Spaces of life, then, are places of exile. Deep thinking and learning in the world-class university manage constantly to test and challenge norms for academic thinking, literacies, and even for being. Doukhan (2014) defines exile as "the very breakdown of the social bond in that the exiled finds herself either cut off from her community or alienated and enstranged within a new community, and [t]he exiled is she who never fits a given social consensus (...) and always carries the trace of another world, or another way of life, worldview" (Doukhan 2014, p. 21). To revolt is to move into temporary exile from the status quo. Through critical dialogue, a place of exile is created, where the social and cultural norms for thinking and understanding are suspended and a tremendous and powerful openness manifests itself. Here, the academic confronts herself with utter openness in thought and experience that may pose a real threat to the consensus and norms of the academic tradition or discipline to which she belongs. The process of transformation may, provisionally (and in rare cases permanently), threaten to overthrow the consensus of firmly established norms for academic reasoning, practices, and forms of behaviour.

Paraphrasing Levinas, we argue that through the deep listening involved in critical dialogue we become aware of our interlocutor's otherness and his "exiling of [our own] being" (Levinas 2003, p. 75), and the other person emerges as a 'stranger, destitute or proletarian' (ibid.). The notion of revolt and dissidence thus reveals the very essence of a 'higher' education—to experience what it means to step outside social and cultural norms of understanding and finding oneself, if only temporarily, exiled from a familiar and safeguarded worldview. With Levinas, we argue that in the critical dialogue we experience the other person in his nakedness and "exile which appeal[s] to my powers [and] address[es] me" (Levinas 2003, p. 213). Students who courageously push themselves to the boundaries of coherent thought

expose themselves to possible ridicule from their peers and teachers; however, as Novalis (2005) would have it, these very students are those who understand the will of nature, and its construction of the human self, much more truthfully.

These students also make possible a deeper commitment and a stronger academic bond, which requires a certain exile, as a further form of dissidence. Having experienced exile is central for being able to welcome the other with care and hospitality. Doukhan argues, "the experience of exile paves the way to an ethics understood as a relationship with an other, which welcomes the other's alterity and transcendence" (Doukhan 2014, p. 22). Experiencing exile, if only in glimpses and at somewhat safe distance from more violent social or natural catastrophe, is to experience "a de-centering, a de-positing of itself as center of the universe", which is absolutely central "if an encounter with the exilic dimension of the other to be possible" (ibid.). Contrary to the common understanding, the place of exile may very well open up spaces for life.

In a globalised world, where many countries are confronted with refugees and persecuted groups, the importance of the world-class university becomes ever more significant. The world-class university not only leads understanding into areas of high disciplinary expertise, but also invites its students and teachers to develop a deeper sensitivity to personal, cultural, and epistemic otherness and strangeness, to a certain productive alienation. To think and to be in the world class university is to develop an ability for deep listening to viewpoints and forms of being that are different and even alien to oneself, reconceiving what we mean by 'world' in the world class university.

Re-Conceiving the 'World' Within the World Class University

Revolt is also familiar to the Early German Romantics, who premised their propositions on an onto-epistemological, even metaphysical, critique of dominant perceptions of things in the world. Chief among its members was Novalis, also known as Friedrich von Hardenberg, an ethereal character who, perhaps because of his own asynchronous fit with a world that was becoming ever more empirically focused, wanted to move an individual's encounter with a thing to an arational realm. Novalis does not therefore particularly help the neoliberal's agenda or even ours if we simply want to tinker with knowledge; instead, he wants us to understand phenomena as always already interconnected. It is the first, deep self-ordering of entities that is most at stake for Novalis and *then* our reflection of their arrangement in our utterances and representations. Our appreciation of those deeply co-entrenched phenomena may give rise to a certain kind of knowledge, it is true, but most likely not the kind that is valued in the university of today.

Novalis' philosophies guide us to the following summary: that entities participate in a primordial substance that arranges those things (Stone 2008); that the world is hence self-arranging in an uncertain way (Frank 1997); that the thoroughly foundational 'I', embraced overall by his contemporary, Fichte, but also important

to Kant, is untenable because there is always an excess that cannot be cognitively reached (Mika 2017); and that knowledge is always contingent on primordial Being. Human agency takes place within the arational intrusion of the world: Novalis has no truck with any formal logic that relies totally on human understanding (unless he is seeking to encourage a mutiny against that starkly human obsession).

To represent a thing in the world, the self has to understand that s/he is indeed *presenting* it as a holistic entity. This ambitious tenet, which dethrones the intellect in favour of the All, has mammoth repercussions for education because it signals that the self is materially connected with his/her very language and ideas. Here we first encounter a deep division between the 'muscle-flexing' of current intellectual practice in the university and Novalis, whose work is replete with warnings against, and solutions to, that problem. Whilst not locating his views in the workings of the university—his argument was broader than that—he wants us to understand that the self's distance from a thing, and hence the entirety of the world, is the beginning of all error.

Novalis, we should note, spends roughly equal time commenting on the distance between human self and world and proposing a novel approach. His dual critique/proposition mode comes to the fore in his educational fragment, *The Novices of Sais*, and sets the scene for a dialecticism that reflects the fundamental unknowability of the world. *Novices* revolves around a group of students, based in an esoteric school, and their responses to various scenarios. However, Novalis is at pains, again, to present the totality of the world in any discussion and, in the educational process of the students, "the thousandfold natures" (Novalis 2005, p. 73) speak as much as the humans (students and teacher). Light and shadow—elements of the non-human world—commission themselves to the education of the humans too. Students thus come to understand that there are otherworldly, even imperceptible elements to thinking and knowledge.

Possibly most telling in *Novices* is that Novalis does give a distinctively critical voice to nature. Of humans, nature has this to say:

> The magic of gold, the secrets of colors, the joys of water are not alien to him, he surmises the wonder of ancient stones, and yet he lacks the sweet passion for nature's weavings, the eye for our [nature's] entrancing mysteries …. [f]eeling would bring back the old time, the time we yearn for; the element of feeling is an inward light that breaks into stronger, more beautiful colors. Then the stars would rise within him, he would learn to feel the whole world, and his feeling would be richer and clearer than the limits and surfaces that his eye now discloses. (Novalis, 2005, pp. 71, 73)

We can discern here the following: that humanity relies too heavily on its own apprehension of things; that the fundamental ability to rejoin with the world in a more fundamentally holistic way is not completely lost; and that educational humanity needs to reclaim an aspect of mystery when regarding the world. Here, we find links to Levinas' (2003) descriptions of 'epiphany' and 'exteriority' as accompanying any experience of moving beyond oneself. Growing as a person is responding to a mystery that always escapes understanding. But how can Novalis' attribution of voice to nature, his holistic manifesto and his reconnection of self to things in the world have any bearing on our present dilemma, which shows itself in the

ascendancy of what he calls the "deeply learned" (Novalis 1960b, p. 360) or the empirically driven "numbers and figures" (ibid)? Firstly, we should be aware that Novalis would not concern himself so much with the administrative aspect of universities as with the type of response to the world it encourages. Thus, his critique is both metaphysical—to the extent that he views the first principles of formal logic to constitute a flawed relationship with things in the world and hence to teaching and learning—and ontological, insofar as he wants us to understand things as comprising all other things in the world. Universities, then, should encourage a certain kind of thinking that appreciates the fullness of the world in all things. This kind of uptake of a thing is fraught with mystery and uncertainty, and in the context of our current discussion, students would need to think about and discuss an idea in that vein. To avoid the "superstition and error of all times" (Bowie 1997, p. 66), we would need to always acknowledge the surplus of the All that remains, no matter how hard we try to identify "the symbol with what is symbolised", strive towards "true complete representation" (ibid), in facing the self as Other, for example, or the world as fraught and complex, as raised earlier by Kristeva, or as an experience of excess (Levinas 2000) where coming into contact with the world is also a coming into contact with something more, or otherwise, than being.

Human agency for Novalis (1960c) finds its expression in what he calls 'Romanticising'. The thinking self has an ethical duty to reflect uncertainty in his/her representations and, in that act, both the encountering self and the encountered world are mysterious. Romanticising is that process by which the banal description of things is deliberately changed so that those things are once more unknowable, darkly present and enigmatic. In the university context, instead of simply collecting data at doctoral level, for instance, students would either be encouraged to avoid that gathering act altogether or turn that data into something thoroughly uncertain, through perhaps creating art from them or philosophising on the nature of the connection to the world through the associations that data strikes up for the user. In that latter scenario, such questions might arise: what is the emotional nature of both the voices in the data *and* the written data as it sits on the page (that is, what is the mood that the text of data evokes for the thinker)? The unknowability of the Other, even in oneself, raises Kristeva's (1980) notion of intertextuality, and might ask what aspects of world-fragmentation or –interconnection do the words and their relationship with other terms point to? And when that act of thinking is apparently complete, how does the excess of Being that remains insist on further mysterious thinking of that data?

It is patently obvious that Novalis wrote at a time before the university took its current shape, but his philosophies are particularly salient in an era that values a deeply rationalistic approach to the world. Universities, with their rankings and their pursuit of measurable knowledge, for Novalis would not be fulfilling their ethical duty. We suspect his greatest challenge to the orthodoxy of university rankings and instrumentalism lies in the first instance in some most unwavering and challenging propositions about the world which, regardless of their political context, would insist that universities rediscover "the dignity of the unknown" (Novalis 1960c, p. 545). Kristeva's (1991) idea assertion that "the foreigner is within me"

and thus, "we are all foreigners" (p. 192), and Levinas' (2000, p. 157) accentuation of the 'enigma' as "the dawn of a light" that will not reduce the Other to the same, both bring the knower into a closer touch with the Otherness enveloping and saturating his own identity.

Conclusion: A Space of Life

Unsettling the university space has raised four central principles of 'world-class' universities throughout this chapter. These principles do not align well with current state league tables, excellence tracks, entrepreneurial initiatives, or learning analytics. Nevertheless, drawing on the work of Kristeva, Levinas and Novalis, this chapter has argued that these principles support and promote the 'world-classness' of a university: 1) Heterotopia as the place-ful vitalization of the world-class university; 2) Heterogeneity through revolt-ful world-class engagements; 3) Estrangement of the voiceful otherness of world-class higher education; and 4) Arationality in the magicful world-class things of university thinking.

A university that aspires to become world-class must be willing to embrace what have been posited as the wilder or darker sides of world-class thinking, being and doing. To see itself as being in charge of vitalising lifeworlds, revolt-ful adventures, alien otherness and supernatural enigmas. To be world-class, this suggests, *is* to be a space of life, and to be world-class implicates extensive ethical, relational and existential obligations. Creating a shaky ground makes thinking, being and doing at the university come alive. And ultimately, a university that makes itself into a space of life, gives space to life—however inappropriately, revolting, alien, arational or effervescent that may be.

When the university rises as a space of life, higher education has the potential of embracing and supporting the 'highest' of higher education: Heterotopic spaces, heterogeneous identities, alien thinking and academic magic. In order for this to happen, it is necessary that the world-class university undertakes the ethical responsibilities of 'world-classness' that come with these principles.

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