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Making Other Futures Possible: Toward a Pedagogy of Study Practices

Having created a new beginning, a new relay, with Whitehead's proposition on the university, this chapter will play back the thread from back to front. Uncoiling the line, starting from Whiteheadian adventures and matters of study, and zigzagging through Campus in Camps' practice of study, the aim is to unfurl a pedagogy of study practices. Indeed, having outlined a conceptual framework to grasp what is at stake in the course of practices of study, the speculative-pragmatic experiments which make other futures possible, the question is to further define a pedagogy of study for triggering, in the words of Stengers, "events where a 'becoming able to' is at stake."¹ Hence, a pedagogy that does not just address those involved in the way they perform their "characteristic activities," as Dewey would have it, but pre-eminently as "being capable of." Being capable of here means, more than just prone to adapt to changes in the environment, to be engaged in a situated process of sympoiesis that wagers on a possible transformation of the milieu *and* its inhabitants—a relational transformation that is always of the order of the event.

After that, the thread will be further recoiled by returning to the questions regarding the place of the sciences at the university, and its relation to study. Thinking together sciences and study affords a perspective on the university as an institution again, including its relation to society—the problem I began with at the beginning of the book. Now, however, the perspective is not so much informed by any general normative Idea of the university, or by critiques of its current capitalization. Instead, the point of departure lies in the actual practices of study that still inhabit the institution of the university, the unpredictable, eventful effects of studious gatherings, and which, as such, constitute a multitude of impulses for experimenting with the pedagogy of study, and thereby reclaiming the university as an ecology of study.

Studying within Ruins

At the end of the previous chapter, five features of matters of study have been discerned and preliminarily defined that set them, to a certain degree, apart from matters of fact, matters of concern, and matters of care. These five features were artifactualization, association, possibilization, transformation, and materialization. The question now is how these features relate to one another in the process of study, what their precise meaning is when thought of together with the actual practice of study of Campus in Camps, and how they generate starting points for a pedagogy of study. In other words, I will try to further differentiate between those features of matters of study that have to do with those practical constraints that effectuate an event of study on the one hand, and those features that describe what happens during study, the efficacy of study, on the other hand.

The constraints that have to be respected to achieve a moment of study, an achievement which is always of the order of the event, can be grasped by referring to the features of artifactualization, association, and materialization. Importantly, these features are not entirely independent from one another, as it seems that association and materialization invariably play a part in artifactualizing a situation at stake, in constraining thinking to produce an interstice, a difference that inflects our habitual ways of thinking.

After the studiers of Campus in Camps left the seminar room where they had envisaged the future of the camp in at times optimistic, at times pessimistic projections,² and started to investigate the camp, they came back with photographs and maps of the camp. It was due to the *materialization* of their thinking about the camp in these photographs and maps, as well as in written accounts and conceptual schemes, that they started to become able to think anew about the camp, in the presence of and while actively relating to these material objects. This, however, does not mean that these objects were simply used to convince others of “their” individual vision, but to give the camp, their shared environment, the power to slow down their thinking, to object to the many individual projections they had cast onto the camp, and against the conclusions they consequently had drawn (“the right of return is the only viable future!”).

In that sense, going out and doing fieldwork in the camp, materializing their thinking in photographs, maps, and stories forced the studiers of Campus in Camps to generate study materials, materials that could be used to produce a difference that matters in the discussions—a difference, moreover, that does

not replicate a difference of opinion, in which two parties confront each other and struggle to make their point and convince the other, but that emerges, transindividually, as a transformation induced in the thinking of each and every studier in relation to the materials that had acquired the power to generate such a difference.

It is at this point that the relevance of *association* becomes evident. It should be emphasized from the beginning that this does not merely mean the bringing together of people, a collective or gathering of studiers in a strictly anthropocentric way, as if it were an association of human beings only, performing and conjoining their “characteristically” human activities. Instead, from the outset, the association includes other-than-human beings as well, makes them present via photographs, stories, and maps, study materials that interrupt the exclusive conversation of humankind, and produce a shift in the perceptions and thoughts of those gathered around them. Hence, the question is not only who or what is brought together, but also—and perhaps primarily—*how* they are brought together, which role they assume in this coming together, and what this role allows or disallows them to say, how it changes the modes of expression.

In *Campus in Camps*, for instance, the studiers did not just talk *about* the pictures or think *about* the maps. Instead, the making of maps and pictures became a vital ingredient in the process of thinking itself, assuming a subjectivity in objecting against specific interpretations studiers might a priori have voiced about them, and requiring the studiers to think *with* them. Giving life in the camp a forceful presence in the discussions about the future of the camp, these study materials acquired the power to obligate the studiers to hesitate, not to jump to conclusions, and not to indulge in rivaling opinions either, yet to transform the relations they have toward the situation they find themselves in, or in other words, not to yield to victimization or normalization, but to think about life in settler-colonial ruins.

Together, materialization, the creation of study materials, and association, the bringing together of a collective of studiers around these materials, *artifactualize* the questioning situation that required study—in the case of *Campus in Camps*, decolonization and the possibility of life in ruins. The artifice operates as a way of making a questioning situation present through matters of study around which a collective of studiers gathers. Artifices initiate a collective learning process through an experimental convocation of something that makes the people who gather around it think, instead of recognize.

Stengers makes clear that “the artifice complicates the process, slows it down, welcomes all doubts and objections, and even actively incites them, while also transforming them and listening in a different mode.”³ To that extent, the artifice disrupts the kind of conversation in which everyone gives his or her reasons, in which everyone comes together to reach a rational agreement; instead, the artifice, the materials it makes present, and the roles assumed by those gathered around them, forces to go slower.

In other words, the concept of the artifice and the practice of Campus in Camps dramatize the fact that thoughts do not come “naturally,” that we are not thinking subjects relying on Reason as some innate infrastructure. Instead, the efficacy of the artifice is to force the *divergent* reasons in relation to a concrete, material questioning situation to express themselves in a way that allows each reason to relate to other reasons, in order to become what it desires to be, namely an adequate response to the initial questioning situation. This means that the situation becomes able to resist arguments that transcendently impose themselves by disqualifying others.⁴ And indeed, matters of study as well as the presence of other studiers—all representatives of the situation—are vital ingredients in resisting such general judgments.

More than it is a matter of *purifying* the scene of study, a critical operation of debunking and denouncing that removes a position from a debate, thinking with artifices means to *densify* the scene of study. In that sense, it is a speculative-pragmatic test to make something present that insists upon thought and gives consistency to the interdependency of reasons of which none can, on its own, claim the capacity to define a response. It incites those involved to take care of the consequences of the possibles that make themselves felt, including the responses they inspire.

Here I come to the two remaining features that do not so much define the constraints study imposes on thinking, but rather shed light on the efficacy of study, what study “yields” so to say. First, there is the aspect of *possibilization*, which can now be defined as the process in which something that went unnoticed before can start to insist upon the thinking of the studiers, drawing their attention. In the case of Campus in Camps, it was life in exile, and more precisely, the communal aspects of life in exile, beyond the divide of public and private, that demanded to be taken into account within their thinking about decolonization. This insistence opened up the possibility to think differently about the right of return, and to rethink it as a return to the common, the possibility to go to the sea.

Speaking in terms of possibles instead of potentials might sound strange. However, it is to omit the logic that is immediately related to potentials, namely

the all too often heard demand that potential should be actualized. This demand, moreover, can only be resisted by paradoxically leaving the potential inoperative, impotent. The possible, on the contrary, is something that is always already present—it should not be *made* present. However, the presence of the possible is often obscured by established habits of thought, rendering us insensitive to its lure.

Moreover, a possible does not demand to be realized, since it is already real in the effects it produces, the ways in which it insists upon our thinking, how it, for instance, changed the perceptions and understandings of the camp when its inhabitants started to pay attention to it, study it. More precisely, the possible is present as a work-to-be-done without defining *how* it can be done, in contrast to the potential, which suggests a one-on-one relationship with the actual.⁵

Lastly, the feature of *transformation* points to the experience when the studiers have become capable of responding to the questioning situation that demanded a response, that instigated a process of study, bringing studiers together around the study materials they had produced, making them sensitive to the possibles already present in the camp. Such a transformation does not take place on behalf of an active subject kneading the environment at its disposal as malleable matter, nor is it the passive undergoing of a transformation required by the environment, an adaptation. Instead, it is a sympoietic co-becoming of the world and its inhabitants, a mode of habitation, being the achievement of a practice of study.

It is due to the collective experiments on the public square in Fawwar, for instance, that the square had been transformed into a commons—a place where people could dwell and make use of it, instead of an empty space where people felt alienated from, even to the extent that they saw it as a threat because it risked to normalize the camp. At the same time, those who gathered on the square had also been transformed by starting to relate to one another and to the square in a different way. It is in that sense that studying within ruins afforded a way not only of inhabiting the ruins, but also of transforming them, reclaiming them to make another life, a life in common, possible.

A Practice in the Middle Voice

Study is, in that sense, a highly interdependent and generative process, a practice in the middle voice, in the words of Stengers. It transforms divergent experiences into a javelin projected beyond the limits that define these divergences, initiating

an adventure in the Whiteheadian sense. Practices of study induce and deploy ways of affecting and being affected, of doing and undergoing, gathering those who are concerned by a transformation in the middle voice that it seeks to activate.

Conceiving of study practices as practices in the middle voice forces us to consider our relation toward the situation we study as neither active nor passive. Studying in the active voice would mean that our relation is one of appropriation, that we, as studiers, make the matter of study our own, that we acquire control over it so we can put it to use in our jobs and everyday lives. To that extent, the modern sciences in the current culture of academic capitalism study in the active voice, by appropriating and capitalizing what is studied via patents, publications, and degrees. Studying in the passive voice, on the contrary, would imply that our relation is one of pure exposure, that a matter of study is disclosed before our eyes, forcing us to undergo what it demands of us.

Studying in the middle voice, however, requires letting oneself be affected in order to affect, to let oneself be touched in order to touch—and vice versa. It ties together the becoming of the world with the becoming of a collective of studiers inhabiting this world. Moreover, it makes it possible to conceive of learning processes as adventures that engage a collective of studiers around a questioning situation, and that will transform not only this situation but also the studiers that have accepted to become affected by it.

To that extent, it affords an experience of thought in the pragmatic sense. According to Dewey, it is indeed more precise to say, “it thinks” rather than “I think.”⁶ Thinking, in this view, is like a raging storm that sweeps by, and that absorbs everyone and everything it overblows. Thinking is not an activity to be done on behalf of an intentional subject that chooses to think; it is rather what one gets caught up in, like one gets caught up in a storm. What is at stake is not to play with thoughts, but rather to be put at play by thinking. Thinking, in that sense, is a transindividual event in which doing and undergoing become thoroughly enmeshed. As such, it cannot be understood in either the active or the passive voice. Instead, it is the effect of an experience that can only be grasped in the middle voice.

The middle voice, according to Stengers, triggers the following questions: How does this situation concern us? What does this situation ask from us? How can we respond to what the situation demands? These are posed in such a way, moreover, that the response given can never be general nor generalizable, that there is no transcendent criterium with which the legitimacy of the response can be evaluated.⁷ Besides, it requires of those who come together that what will

emerge from their assembly will not belong to any one of them individually. In that sense, assembling matters of study seems to be an obligatory passage point if this learning process is not just a random process of transformation or change (learning in the general sense), but becomes a real educational event, an event where “a becoming able to’ is at stake.”⁸

What is of importance is not so much that the questioning situation has been transformed, or that the hopes, fears, dreams, and doubts of the collective of studiers have been transformed. Instead, what matters is that this questioning situation, which has been granted the power to involve a collective of studiers in an experience of thought in the presence of these matters of study, has triggered the event of *becoming able to* respond. This response, more particularly, is not motivated by political opinions or economic interests, but comes forth from the event of study itself.

Composition, Problematization, Attention

The event of study, just like the experimental achievement sought after by the scientists, does not happen out of nothing, yet neither can it actively be produced in any determinate fashion. Rather, it requires a pragmatic testing that tries to enforce such an event without knowing exactly how it can be produced. Relying on Stengers, three arts can be distinguished of which the efficacy, when practiced concurrently, consists precisely in generating an event of study. These three arts are the art of composition, problematization, and attention, and together they constitute a pedagogy of study. Important to emphasize is the fact that these arts do not follow a functionalist means to ends logic, which would presuppose a sense of predictability or probability, but rather reinforce each other in the practical experiment which wagers on the *possibility* of an event.

The first art, of *composition*, has to do with how people are brought together around something and what kind of role they can assume in the gathering. Stengers refers to the slow and often repetitive palaver, as it was practiced in many African societies, to illuminate what it means to speak in an assembly, and the mode of speech elicited by the palaver comes strikingly close to the one practiced during study. Stengers stresses that the palaver in no way resembles the democratic debate as we know it. Whereas the democratic debate should be open to all citizens, the palaver only summons the elders. In that sense, it is radically anti-democratic because it excludes those who do not belong to the group of elders. Being an elder, however, should not be understood as belonging

to a group that grants a sense of identity and privilege. Instead, being an elder, Stengers explains, means to assume the *role* of an elder, and to accept that this role puts a constraint on what can and cannot be said, and how it can be said in the course of the palaver.⁹

Since the word of the elders cannot be contradicted, they should extract from their experience those syntaxes, rhythms, and ways of saying that elicit contradiction, that put forward an intentional “I” that defends “its” reasons. Speaking like an elder brings about an impersonal experience that verily transforms the speaking subject into an elder. Every speech act should express a thought that does not contest the question around which the elders gather.¹⁰ Similarly, during practices of study, people gather as studiers, which means to refuse attempts to convince others of what one already knows—using rational arguments or not. The assumption is that the questioning situation has the power to gather, precisely because there is hesitation, divergence, and risk for conflict, over and against any individual opinions.

Despite the presence of such an issue at risk, over which there might be conflict, a practice of study, just like a palaver, is characterized by a specific kind of trust. People do not gather because an agreement has to be made, which makes every participant responsible, but instead because an agreement is expected to produce itself. Such trust transforms the listening habits of those involved. They no longer listen for clues that can help them construct a counter-argument, or for clues that will unveil the intentions of the interlocutor. Hence, the efficacy of the composition is not due to the goodwill or tolerance of some of the participants with regards to their more persuasive associates. Rather, its efficacy is due to the matters of study having given a forceful presence of the questioning situation, granting it the role of a participant in the composition, which can object and induce hesitation.

Consequently, the slow and repetitive process produces a common sensibility concerning the consequences of the response that is being risked—a response that belongs to no one. Here, the impersonality of the common is of importance, since the decision is not taken by an individual someone, not even by the democratic collective, but it will have produced itself: “The decision to be made is made without anyone being able to appropriate it, without anybody else being able to guarantee that it is the best possible decision. The decision will have received ‘its’ reasons.”¹¹

Put differently, the art of composition fosters a mutual sensibility and readiness to be affected by a questioning situation made present via matters of study. It brings people together in a way that undoes both personal intentions

and general solutions in order to make them susceptible to a sympoietic process of interdependent co-becoming. It is a composition without a composer and certainly without a transcendent position from which it is possible to evaluate the response that will have been produced as the effect of the composition.

Secondly, the art of *problematization* has to do with *how* something is made present within the composition, namely, as a matter of study. How can something—a situation, a cause—be allowed to make us think? How can it be transformed into a question in order to suspend the conclusive “and thus” of rational debate, the logical consequence based on givens, and slow down reasoning, taking care of the consequences? Stengers argues that “the problematization does not go back to the most general but confers on the situation, always this or that situation, the power to question what seemed to be self-evident.”¹²

Here, Stengers refers to the only moral advice that Leibniz has ever given—“Dic cur hic? Respice finem,” “Say why here? Consider the end,” since it reflects the relevance of the situatedness of every response for the art of problematization. What is at stake in Leibniz’s dictum is, in the first instance, not so much the response itself that will be given, but rather the affective and existential transformation the advice induces, which Stengers describes as an enlargement of the imagination. Respecting the demands of Leibniz’s “Dic cur hic?” requires to take into account all the dimensions a response to a questioning situation might play into, to take care of the consequences, and imagine what a response might imply for the ones that are not immediately present in the gathering of studiers, but who, due to the situationist injunction, are made present in their thinking.

Leibniz’s dictum problematizes general reasons that could be invoked in a discussion in order to make the situation and our relation toward it truly problematic. To that extent, “the question *Dic cur hic* aims to have the efficacy to problematize the general reasons by making the ‘here’ [hic] come to matter - suspend your action, let yourself be affected by the ‘this,’ that is to say by *this* world.”¹³ This means that general reasons—“the camp is unjust and should be abolished,” “the right of return is the only viable claim,” or perhaps more familiar to our ears, “growth is the only solution,” “human beings are naturally selfish”—do not count in the conversation, unless they are reconfigured as *situated* reasons. The only reasons that can be taken up are those that come forth from and engage with the situation, henceforth a truly problematic situation.

In sum, the art of problematization affords the possibility of what Haraway calls response-ability, of being able, given *this* situation, to respond.¹⁴ A response, in this sense, is always a response *for* and *to*. It is a response *for* because it takes

place in the presence of the problem it engages with. It is never a response informed by general reasons, but always specific reasons. Hence, it is also a response *to*, always situated by the problem it addresses. It requires warding off all transcendent reasons that could be given, and engage with all the divergent dimensions that the problem plays into, to effectuate a transformation that takes up these reasons in an always local, situated, precarious, and partial response.

The art of *attention* is the third and final art that, together with the arts of composition and problematization, constitutes a pedagogy of study. Moreover, the presence of this art transforms practices of study into truly educational assemblies. A mere combination of the arts of composition and problematization would engender the coming into being of what Latour calls a Parliament of Things, an assembly around matters of concern, and is, as such, more an assembly of the political kind.¹⁵ The practice, however, of the art of attention ensures that what appears due to the pedagogy of study not only is a matter of concern, but is intensified to become a matter of study. Whereas a matter of concern induces a discussion that cannot be reduced to general arguments and logical conclusions such as “sciences proves that ... and thus,” or “as evidence shows ... and thus,” a matter of study does not only summon us to give our situated and hence divergent reasons, but also forces us to slow down reasoning, to study.

Stengers defines the art of attention as “an art of the middle voice, a tentacular art because it is about letting oneself being touched, and to give what touches us the power to make us feel and think, but always ‘here,’ never ‘off the ground.’”¹⁶ As such, the art of attention is a relational art, tentacular, in the words of Stengers. Haraway clarifies that tentacle comes from the Latin *tentaculum*, which means “feeler,” and that *tentare*, the Latin verb from which it is derived, means “to feel” and “to try.”¹⁷ Conceiving of the art of attention as tentacular foregrounds the fact that it is a mix of touch and try. It is reminiscent of someone who is blindfolded and suddenly has to trust his haptic senses in order to find his way. The art of attention is, therefore, perhaps rather a way of paying attention with the hands than with the eyes. Moreover, it is a risky art since one never knows what one will touch or where it will bring you since destinations at a distance are literally out of sight.

The risks involved in the art of attention, however, point in yet another direction than merely unpredictability or uncertainty. Claiming that the art of attention poses a risk also means to stress the sense of the possible that it affords, how it allows for attending to the possibles that insist in every questioning situation, and for which our current modes of abstraction have made us

insensitive, anesthetized. In that sense, paying attention also means to become susceptible to these possibles and what they might demand, the transformations they allow for, and the futures they render perceptible. Put differently, matters of study play an important part in forcing us to pay attention to the questioning situation at hand: not just to project an interpretation onto them or give a general reason for them, but to slow down and experience the situation we find ourselves in, in a new way, to learn anew.

The Creation of the Future

Having pursued the proposition on the university as an ecology of study practices, including the pedagogical consequences it entails, it is now time to directly address the initial questions of this book—how to think about the tasks of the university? how can the relation between university and society be conceived differently? and what could the future of the university be, given the state of ruin it finds itself in?—and articulate a provisional response.

To begin with, traditionally, or more precisely, with the birth of the modern research university at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the tasks of the university have been defined as teaching, research, and service to society—an educational, scientific, and societal task. Thinking about these tasks from a practice-theoretical point of view, it is first of all easy to distinguish scientific practices such as laboratory experiments, fieldwork, archival research, and surveys on the one hand, and educational practices such as lectures, seminars, excursions, and internships on the other hand. How can these tasks now be redefined from the perspective of practices of study?

With Stengers, we have seen that the question that drives scientific practices (the question that makes them converge without submitting them to the general rubric of “modern Science”) is the question of *how to learn something new*? This question matters to all scientific practices, although the way it matters, and the responses given to the question may differ significantly. For an archaeologist, for instance, learning something new requires performing excavations and bringing findings to the lab to estimate their age, provenance, and former use. For a sociologist, it might require conducting a mass scale survey in order to acquire an idea of the dispositions and opinions of a segment of the population. For a physicist, learning something new often requires devising a specialized experimental apparatus that affords a (hypothetical) particle the possibility to demonstrate its attributes. Hence, although the different scientific practices—

each with its own requirements and obligations—which have come to fruition within the university in the last two centuries have other ways of learning something new, learning something new still matters to all of them, throughout the diversity of the often very practical responses to this question.

Within study practices, the question of how to learn something new gets thoroughly entangled with the question of how to learn *anew*? This question is associated with the experiences of ceasing to take the existing order of things for granted, of problematizing, and trying to create a setting in which it becomes possible to start to think differently, to open up futures that diverge from the one that already has started to actualize itself, and to pragmatically experiment with the enactment of a future that had been rendered imperceptible due to our modes of abstraction. It is these kinds of practices that we encountered in Campus in Camps, where studying the camp afforded the possibility to think differently about its future, and where the right of return to the private house of the past was transformed into a future-oriented return to the common. And again, it needs to be stressed that this is not a moral story, telling us that nothing is impossible to the brave of heart, but precisely a *technical* story, about the requirements and obligations of a practice, the risks involved in every questioning situation, and the consequences that had to be taken care of.

As such, practices of science and practices of study are deeply intertwined: to a certain extent, learning something new seems to be a precondition for learning anew, since the very coming into being of something new always forces us to think about and hesitate before how it might come to matter, to take care of the consequences it entails and the possibles it activates. In that sense, the university can be understood as a place where scientific practices are genuine practices of study, where the questions of how to learn something new and how to learn anew are indeed thoroughly entangled. To that extent, the university proposes an altogether different ecology for the sciences than, for instance, the laboratories of private companies, because its primary aim is—or at least should be—not to sell the products of scientific labor, and thus violate the pragmatic constraint to take care of the consequences, by leaving it up to the market to decide how these products will be used.

Instead, the university aims to effectuate a combined effort of two uses of reason, namely an experimental use of reason and a diplomatic use of reason. Whereas the experimental use of reason dates back to the invention of modern science with Galileo's inclined plane, the diplomatic use of reason is much older and was practiced by the studiers of the medieval *universitas magistrorum et scholarium*, who tried to negotiate an agreement between contradictory claims.

When properly taken together, these uses of reason may effectuate a coming into being of something new, while at the same time taking care of the consequences it entails, and raising the question of which futures it unlocks.

Interestingly, it is along similar lines that Whitehead had defined the aims of the university, when he wrote at the end of *Modes of Thought* that “the task of the university is the creation of the future, so far as rational thought, and civilized modes of appreciation, can affect the issue. The future is big with every possibility of achievement and of tragedy.”¹⁸ In that sense, which is also the sense I associate its conception as an ecology of study with, the university has nothing to do with harmonizing or stabilizing the present (like in the medieval university), nor with the idea of disinterested, pure science and *Bildung* (like in the Humboldtian research university), nor, lastly, with the commodification of knowledge for a capitalist market (like in the university of the postwar knowledge economy). Instead, its task consists in the creation of the future, and it is at that point, in its concern for the new, that its scientific and educational tasks become indistinguishable, aligned in study.

Claiming that the university is oriented toward the future, however, does not mean that the university can control what is to come in any determined way. In his apparently innocuous proposition, Whitehead does not relate the future to growth, accumulation, progress, or any predefined outcome. He does not even suggest that the university could *achieve* the futures it creates. There is no sense of probability or predictability at work in his proposition. Instead, the future seems to come with radical uncertainty, as it is impossible to know how “rational thought, and civilized modes of appreciation” can concretely affect it.

It is at this point that the third, “traditional” task of the university—societal service—comes to matter, not in the least since it again brings to mind the second key question of this book, namely how to conceive of the relationship between university and society? Understood as an ecology of study, the university is not so much the thinking head of humankind—a space where the issues humanity confronts are solved or where humanity’s cultural and intellectual heritage is being transmitted to younger generations. Such a conception would place the university *outside* of the world that it should provide service to, decoupling it from the societal issues and questions that it is supposed to engage with.

Rather, understood as an ecology of study, deeply enmeshed and entwined with the world it inhabits, the university, a collective of studiers, gathers around the very issues and questions that make common sense ruminate, joining forces with a public that was already thinking long before the university took action or raised its voice. The university, then, studies these questions that people were

already thinking about—be it how to teach children to be brave in battle, how to use a public space in a camp without normalizing its exceptionality or, how to deal with GMOs taking into account all those who will be affected by them. It activates divergent dimensions of the questioning situation and takes them up in a Whiteheadian adventure, an adventure that will allow learning anew, to inhabit the world in a new way.

The pedagogy of study interweaves and complicates the diverging lines of thought that are already ruminating in the landscape of common sense in order to make a transformation possible that engages these different perspectives without an imposition of a unifying rule that transcends them all, but rather through situating them by something that makes the people gathered learn anew, a particular matter of study. These entanglements between partial and, therefore, divergent perspectives that make up common sense are made in a tentacular way, via reciprocal, composite ways of affecting and being affected, without dramatic moments of absolute rupture where an agreement would be imposed, informed by one of these perspectives only.¹⁹

Instead, the agreement, or perhaps the response, will be of the order of an impersonal and transindividual event, achieved due to the constraints associated with the pedagogy of study. Put differently, when studiers generate matters of study with regard to a questioning situation that makes common sense ruminate, the diverging dimensions of common sense are taken up in processes of commoning, of making sense in common, and making another future possible. This brings us to the third question. After having discussed the task of the university and its relation to society, the remaining question now concerns the future of the university, or formulated in the speculative-pragmatic mode: What can be done?

Resist, Reclaim, Relay

Based on the perspective developed in this book, one might be tempted to think that the only thing that could be done is to do away with the institutional university altogether. Has the history of institutionalization of the university not predominantly been a history of decline and decay, of ruination? Ever since the first studiers came together around ancient texts at the beginning of the long twelfth century, the university has been laid claim on by a variety of powerful authorities. Only shortly after its emergence, both religious and political authorities tried to curb the university, putting it to use in ensuring that the Christian doctrine was taught in the right way, by means of the *licentia ubique*

docendi (Paris), or for educating laypeople for juridical and administrative professions that could strengthen imperial dominion (Bologna).

Centuries later, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Humboldtian refurbishment of the university was precisely aimed at making it a site for independent research and *Bildung*, assuming that when the university would be set free from direct state power, it would more easily contribute to the cultivation of the German nation. In that sense, the university became part of a process of nation-state building. Although direct intervention from the state was averted, its societal mission was emphatically understood as being a hotbed for national culture, to educate the professionals that could take care of the nation's physical, social, and spiritual wellbeing.

After the Second World War, and with the development of a knowledge economy, the university became an important site of *production*. This went hand in hand with a massification of student numbers and an increase of partnerships with state and industry for the development of Cold War technology. Later on, these processes have only been intensified due to neoliberal reforms that started to reinterpret academic freedom as the freedom to engage in whatever partnerships to pursue whatever knowledge, as long as they are commercially profitable. Following the analysis of Readings, it seems that the contemporary discourse of Excellence has decidedly proven to be mostly an empty shell, symptomatic of the evaporation of any steering Idea of the university.

Given this development, it would be all too easy simply arguing to do away with the university, to return to its glorious, pure origins, when corruption had not yet set in, and to follow the lead of the many small-scale practices of study that have come into being outside of the university. Nevertheless, it might be worthwhile *not* to get rid of the institution of the university so quickly, and to stay with the trouble a bit longer. In the end, universities are still extremely resourceful sites, in terms of both intellectual repositories (e.g., libraries, collections, archives, laboratories) and networks (e.g., study groups, departments, disciplinary societies). Instead, what might be required is *another mode of inhabiting* the institution of the university. This means to inhabit the university not as a knowledge factory (with its incessant injunction to produce, publish, patent) or an ivory tower (risking to decouple the university from the ruminations of common sense and thereby paradoxically deliver it to domineering Ideas), but rather as a precarious ecology of study. This mode of habitation calls for a threefold course of action, namely to resist, to reclaim, and to relay. And it is precisely this threefold course of action that I wish to associate with the challenge of decolonizing the university.

Resisting can have three different meanings. In the first instance, it means to resist the university's way of capitalizing on knowledge practices, both educational and scientific, by always trying to install disconnections that disembody the production of knowledge from the contexts where it comes to matter. Separating knower (e.g., expert, professor) and known (e.g., patent, course content), and uncoupling knowledge from their "objects" (e.g., population, situation), these disconnections, separations, and uncouplings play a crucial role in the commodification of knowledge as "expertise" that can be sold to present and future "professionals." Resisting hence means, in the first instance, to actively resist those university policies that play into the hands of an increasing capitalization of knowledge, of which the critical tradition has made us all too aware.

Secondly, resisting also means to acknowledge that more money or more autonomy—a call often heard from protest movements—will not by itself provide a solution to the predicament of the university. Whereas more money will only result in the call for more output, more autonomy risks to decouple the university from the worldly problems it could concern itself with, from its response-ability. This second sense of resisting means to resist acting like the so-called "goose with the golden eggs," that requires not to be impeded while performing its work, yet instead coming to terms with the many non-innocent ways in which the university plays its role in the world, to exercise the pragmatic art of taking care of the consequences of its responses, its response-ability.

Thirdly, resisting means to resist the temptation to give in to cynicism, to resist the lure of the academy of misery with its complaints and its grievances. This means to recognize that, overall, most of the European universities are still resourceful sites where appropriate tools can be found to study. And to study, importantly, implies to resist, it means to organize, problematize, and scrutinize despite the many attempts to capitalize on study. Resistance requires study, and to study means to engage in joyful practices that connect with and transform from within the ruminations of common sense. In the words of Stengers:

To resist a likely future in the present is to gamble that the present still provides substance for resistance, that it is populated by practices that remain vital even if none of them has escaped the generalized parasitism that implicates them all.²⁰

The great advantage of such a practice-oriented point of view is that at the local level of practices, as opposed to the institutional level, things can be done relatively easily. As such, the many practices in which people at universities still engage are potent sites of resistance. Hence, an important work to be done is reclaiming the practices of the university.

Here we touch upon the second course of action, *reclaiming*. Although reclaiming might at first evoke a sense of rediscovery of something old and authentic that has been forgotten, it is essential to clarify that here it does not imply such a conservative-restorative operation. It is not about going back to the past, but about inventing manners of inheriting the past so that it can come to matter here, now, and for the future. Within the field of ecology, reclaiming designates processes of renewing and restoring ecosystems and habitats in the environments that have been decayed, damaged, and destroyed due to capitalist exploitation. The aim of reclaiming is not to restore the land to how it was before, but instead to render it capable of fostering life again, to wager on the possibility of life in capitalist ruins.

Similarly, reclaiming the practices of the university does not mean to repeat in the same way what has been done before, but about inventing ways of engaging in study practices that resist and transform the current kinds of parasitism. It means to experiment with pedagogies of study that might be of use in giving *this* situation—always *this* situation—the power to make us think. As such, reclaiming is not so much past-oriented, as it is future-oriented. Reclaiming study practices does not mean to consolidate a certain image of the university (e.g., as a public institution for the production and transmission of knowledge); it is much more about giving shape again to an image of the university through study practices within the university that are situated by questioning situations which require response-ability.

Lastly, and this relates to practices as sites of resistance, reclaiming, which seems to be by definition situated on the level of practices, is always, or at least most of the time, a joyful activity. Reclaiming practices excites the feeling that things can be done otherwise and that there are many other people who are willing to become engaged together in such practices of study, to make another future possible. As opposed to the sadness of complaining, which always foregrounds the bad and the ugly, the joy of reclaiming takes actual situations, including the unpredictable possibles that abound in their interstices, as a starting point for collective creation of the future.

The last proposal concerns not only the question of what can be done, but also the strange question of how this book can be concluded. Not so much one of concluding, the task at hand is rather one of *relaying*. What matters is above all *not* to conclude, *not* to formulate any “and thus” that would follow logically from and seal the argument, the patterns and ideas that have been elaborated, for every “and thus” marks an arbitrary cut in the process of thinking that will have made this “and thus” possible.

Relaying means to hold out. What is held out here is not so much a blueprint for a university to come, or for an ecology of study that has already started to actualize itself. Such knowledge would indeed once again be of the “and thus” of the “conclusion.” Instead, relaying means to trust in the creative uncertainty of the encounter, trusting that what has been held out will be taken into new hands that will draw out new patterns, new transformations, new ways of decolonizing the university and reclaiming an ecology of study.

Emphasizing the creative uncertainty that accompanies every relay foregrounds the fact that what has been held out comes without any theoretical guarantee, without any security that it will work in whatever situation. Instead, what has been held out always comes with a pragmatic challenge, namely the challenge to take it in hand, to take up the threads, to perform the necessary transformations that will make it work, that will give *this* situation *here* the power to make *us* think.

Hence, relaying a conclusion that is not of the kind of “now we know that ... and thus,” but of the kind of “given this situation, it is possible to,” demands to activate a possible amidst the diverging lines of thought that transform a situation into a question, that transform the university into an ecology requiring reclaiming, and for which the practices of study that still inhabit this ecology are like a thousand different initial impulses to give a situated significance to the all too general words that, indeed, another university is possible.