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Roger Saul
University of New Brunswick, roger.saul@unb.ca

Casey Burkholder
casey.burkholder@unb.ca

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Making Waste as a Practice of Freedom

On Temporality and Time Wasting in the Academy

Roger Saul & Casey Burkholder

Abstract

Time's neutrality is a ruse. Its steady beat has embedded within it a political project that shapes and is shaped by the life of the institutions that prize its articulations. In this critical, conceptual, reflective essay, we begin by theorizing time, and argue that producing temporal waste is a practice of exercising freedom in context of the academy's institutional rigidities. We make this argument in three parts: *Making Waste as Critique*, *Making Waste as Equity*, and *Making Waste as Experience*, in which we suggest that a scholarly disposition toward making temporal waste can support and elevate stances of critical being, doing, and experiencing within the academy. The seductions of orientating to time in the ways institutions intend us to are great, as are the incentives offered for doing so. And yet to attempt to achieve time differently is a praxis whose value holds the potential to allow us to perceive ourselves divergently in the academy.

Keywords: temporality, time, resistance, neoliberal university, waste

Introduction

Is there a more pervasive disciplinary mechanism than that imposed on human bodies by the silent authority of time? As both a construction of modernity and a conduit for the perpetuation of its values, time—or, more precisely, clock time, the

Roger Saul is an associate professor and Casey Burkholder is an assistant professor, both in the Faculty of Education at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. Email addresses are: roger.saul@unb.ca & casey.burkholder@unb.ca

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particular iteration of temporal knowing most ascendant today (Saul, 2016; Postill, 2002)—is totalizing in its incitements. Its conceptual apparatus provides the units of measurement—seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years—onto which we map our lives, and in relation to which we structure, organize, and regulate our experiences (Adam, 2004; Hassan, 2007). Yet if it is the case that modern time imposes its will over vast swaths of contemporary humanity and society, this is because it is so often presumed to be valueless, presumed to be an apolitical, neutral backdrop framing how we make ourselves and the world.

What if time's neutrality is a ruse? What if its steady, unchanging beat, always constant, has, embedded within it, a political project that shapes and is shaped by the life of the modern institutions that prize its articulations (Saul, 2020)? What if what clock time is disposed to value most—regularity, linearity, order, efficiency, economy—silently supports a series of powerfully discreet institutional relations, discreet because its operations are as much perpetuated by self-monitoring as by impositions from above? How, as a consequence, might we negotiate the effects of the clock as a consolidating temporal force in our lives, and strategize to contest it, if we began to see it more clearly for what it was, a conduit for animating and legitimizing several more identifiable discourses and practices we may wish to challenge: capitalist excess, neoliberalism, consumerism, and the surveillance state (Hope, 2016; Martineau, 2015; Snyder, 2016).

In what follows, a critical, conceptual, reflective essay that emerges from our own experiences of working in universities, we focus on the notion of time in making the case that it functions as an under-theorized and subversive authority at the center of institutional relations of scholarly production. We acknowledge that there is not one kind of university, and that depending on context (social, historical, institutional, cultural, geographic), universities can come to embody diverse motivations, values, and faculty experiences. Mindful of such differences, in this piece we critique dominant relations of time in the academy, and engage the political possibilities of subverting these relations through a particular strategy: the production of *temporal waste*.

Temporal waste intrigues us. We are two early career scholars in a Faculty of Education at a Canadian university, both on tenure track and constructed as institutionally productive by those in our localized scholarly contexts, yet increasingly suspicious of this construction and its disciplining effects upon us. In engaging the politics of temporal waste, and in pursuing its productions, we see possibilities for institutional critique, for protest, for equity, and for more interesting and diverse expressions of scholarly experience.

Central to our theorizing is that waste need not only be thought of through notions of deficit, or exclusively as a material contaminant (Douglas, 2003; Li-boiron, 2019; Mountz, Bonds, Mansfield, Loyd et al., 2015). In some instances, waste has been understood alternatively as “matter out of place,” and as “a way to think about the relationship between “brute” materials (PVC, dead bodies, recyc-

bles) and the social, political, and cultural work of uneven relations with materials (toxic injustice, purity, abjection)” (Liboiron, 2019, para. 3). While it is true that when considering waste in its material forms it is hard to imagine how its willful production could support a sustainable project of emancipatory protest or critique, in the case of *temporal waste*, waste need not be conceived of as pejorative, need not exist on the other side of value, but could instead assume its own structure of values in ways that contest the excesses of late stage capitalism. In a society that fetishizes efficiencies, making temporal waste can be seen as an important critical intervention, a subversion of what neoliberal logics value most.

From our privileged perspectives as white, middle-class, tenure-track faculty members working within universities,¹ where these logics are ascendant, time wasting can mean finding ways to resist the onset of institutional agendas that seek to make professors into routinized instruments of capitalist production—efficiency metrics, quantifiable scholarly production, student opinion surveys, working within institutions and benefitting from pension plans funded in part by investments in extractive industries (Walker, 2009). We are not outside of the system that we critique, but we see ways of working collectively to disrupt these institutional agendas. This can mean strategizing with like-minded others in uncovering ways to do scholarly life differently. It can mean working only at work, during regular work hours, and spending/wasting time with our families and loved ones.² And it can mean pursuing work that matters to us, and with the communities we care about, even if the work takes longer than it would otherwise take or is circuitous in ways not rewarded by the rigidities of clock time (and so is less amenable to immediate institutional credit with respect to the kinds of outputs the academy tends to value most). In sum, our orientation to waste involves finding ways to prize it in a temporal context that asks us not to.

To make our case, we begin by drawing on socio-cultural theories of temporality, seeking on the one hand to complicate popular discourses of time and, on the other, to animate alternative ways of thinking about it that rescue it from its definitional orthodoxies (Adam, 2004; Hassan & Purser, 2007; Sharma, 2014). We then devote the bulk of what follows to presenting a case, stated in this paper’s title, for *Making Waste as a Practice of Freedom*, or for making *temporal waste* as a practice of exercising freedom in context of the academy’s institutional rigidities. Locating ourselves as early career university scholars, we set out to do so through three separate but interrelated arguments. We call the first *Making Waste as Critique*, in which we suggest that a scholarly disposition toward making temporal waste can support and elevate stances of critical being within the academy. We call the second *Making Waste as Equity*, in which we suggest that making temporal waste can support discourses and practices of equity in the academy. We call the third *Making Waste as Experience*, in which we articulate a vision for existing in the academy as institutional actors less bound by the rigidities and values of clock time, thus opening space for a series of alternative affects and engagements.

Theorizing Time

Time inquiry spans the academic disciplines. In a variety of fields - physics (Hawking, 1998/88), literary theory (Ricoeur, 1984; Simms, 2003), psychology (Murray, 2003), philosophy (Gale, 1968; Deleuze, 1989), anthropology (Fabian, 2002), sociology (Adam, 2004), history (Carr, 1986; Holford-Strevens 2005), gender and women's studies and feminist praxis (Mountz et al., 2015), and cultural studies (Ehn & Löfgren, 2010; Sharma, 2014)—diverse forms of scholarship, drawing on various bodies of knowledge, exist that put time at their centre. If a common theme can be said to join these orientations, it is this: time is much more complicated, variable, and contested than tends to be understood in the dominant discourses and practices of the everyday, where the linearity and rigidity of clock time predominates. In theorizing time as a means of disentangling it from its popular presumptions, we focus on three interrelated strands of inquiry in contextualizing our work, those informed by cultural, sociological, and historical mindedness.

Through the lens of historical mindedness, much is revealed about the fallacy of assuming that clock time is definitionally universal, stable, or enduring. Any one of a number of historical entry points attempting to gauge how peoples and cultures make and have made relationships to time tells us as much. If today many of us live our lives in global agreement with the routinized dictates of clock time – to the extent that, for example, precise and measurable hours in the day can come to prompt in us particular behaviors (eating, sleeping, working, resting)—history tells us that throughout most of human existence there has been no such agreement across geographies, nor does any such agreement persist across cultural contexts (Martineau, 2015; Raybeck, 1992; Strang, 2015).

Behavioral and dispositional allegiances to the precisions of clock time have come about through uneven historical processes. These have been constructed for vast swaths of humanity through, for example, the invention of the first water clocks in ancient Egypt (Cotterell, Dickson, & Kamminga, 1986), the mechanical clock in Europe at the start of 14th century, the pendulum clock in the 17th century, and the commercially motivated formation of a global time standard near the end of the 19th century (see Martineau, 2015). Where it concerns global standard time, many of the world's most powerful nations conferred to construct and standardize what had been thousands of diverging local times, and in so doing imposed onto disparate peoples and cultures a system of global timezones (Lesko, 2012). Economic considerations were paramount: a globally linked conception of time met the presumed needs of industry, in which new communication and transportation technologies, dependent on temporal precision and uniformity for their optimal functioning (coordinated railway travel, global navigation, telecommunications advances), held sway (Alfred, 2010; Martineau, 2015)

The will of politically-supported industrial capitalism in the making and perpetuation of universal conceptions of time, or in what McLuhan (1964) has called

the development of a “theology of cohesion” (p. 138), is paramount. As industrial labour came to organize the work lives of increasing numbers of people around the globe, human life for many began to correspond with monetized exchange values (Walker, 2009). Time was at the centre of this exchange, an independent variable against which outputs of human and commercial productivity could be precisely measured, and in relation to which temporally determinative subjectivities and conceptions of human worth were newly imposed (Saul, 2016; Hassan, 2003; 2007; Lee & Liebenau, 2000). Other institutions—the family, the school—underwent their own restructurings in conjunction with these machinations of industry (Clubine, 2012). A deeper inquiry into any of the above animates the frailty of assuming that modern time’s operations upon our lives is apolitical, ahistorical, everlasting, or somehow intrinsic to human experience.

Through the lens of sociological-mindedness, we can likewise move into the present to glean how modern institutions shape the temporal selves and communities in their command, as well as function to legitimate national and political allegiances. Systems of education offer a useful example of this.³ Consider how time operates in schools: the strict schedules, the regularity of bells, the temporally defined curriculum expectations, the age-based systems of promotion (Saul, 2020; Popkewitz, 2013). All of these rigidities operate in the name of structure, order, consistency, and efficiency, and on the presumption that time—uniform, neutral, the same for all—elevates meritocracy and equality.

But does it? All students must adhere to the rule of the clock, an equalizing and uniform entity, in order to function successfully in schools. Yet this does not mean that all students experience their temporal selves in the same way. Just as we accept that modern human lives are made in relation to a series of intersecting social categories that help to construct us differently—race, class, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality—our relationships to time, itself a social category, do not exist apart from these constructions. On the contrary, myriad social categories, time among them, intersect in helping to inform our interpretations and experiences of self and other. The clock, an instrument of institutional authority, is therefore not a neutral backdrop against which schooling takes place. School actors—administrators, teachers and students—may see time as absolute in its functions, but it is more appropriately conceived as particular and discriminating in the individual and social attachments it enables. The institutional time of schools is tied to a whole structure of values: nation building, morality, notions of appropriate conduct, elevations of particular discourse patterns, and perpetuations of socially acceptable norms of behavior (Adam, 1995; Popkewitz, 2008, Saul, 2020). In this sense, particular kinds of students—students marginalized through the social categories of oppression they occupy—will encounter institutional time in ways that are less affirming and more discriminatory than is the case for others. Absolute and totalizing notions of time are in the end far from egalitarian—they help to structure people and groups differentially.

Still, temporal relations are not merely determined from above. In this regard, a proliferation of scholarship in cultural studies has more recently considered the role of time in relation to people's emerging cultural practices (Sharma, 2014). The growth of online communications and cultures have in part brought about this proliferation, in that online life can be said to open myriad potentialities for disengaging from the rule of clock (Hassan & Purser, 2007). This disengagement manifests in a variety of ways. When online, the social acceleration of time is made possible by the rapidity of information exchange, possibilities for asynchronous communications render users less wedded to the dictates of clock time, and informational outputs are largely stacked rather than blended (in contrast to the pre-structured and integrated information chains contained in older media like books or film (Eriksen, 2001; 2007; Hassan and Purser, 2007). Likewise, the Internet's global reach brings people into virtual proximities that do away with the previous communicative restrictions of time zones (Lee & Liebenau, 2000).

Some cultural studies theorists refer to the new temporal conditions inherent in online cultures and communications as speed theories, and there are no shortages of these (see Sharma, 2014). Such theories open possibilities for thinking anew about our relationships to time. One variant of these, of particular relevance to our thinking, urges speed theorists to forefront older questions about oppression and inequity—often overlooked in totalizing conceptions about emerging communicative relations—amidst talk of the dissolution of clock time (Sharma, 2014). This view suggests that time does not automatically become less oppressive amidst these dissolutions, but can in many circumstances become differently oppressive. For example, Sharma (2014) coins the term “power chronography” (p. 9) in writing about how the benefits of new, contemporary cultures of speed are not at all inclusive. Rather, cultures of communicative speed and flexibility position people differently in context of how and to what extent they can exercise competencies and privileges within these cultures, in which older categories of oppression still hold sway.

If time is not absolute, if the version of it we tend to acquiesce to is historically locatable, and if our experience of it is variable and made in relation to a series of intersectional social categories and cultural competencies, then how might we understand it differently? We find it compelling to think of time as a contextually situated attribute, a series of intersecting and overlapping pluralities of which clock time is just one version (Adam, 2004; Hassan & Purser, 2007). Just as it is habitual for us to perceive space in multi-textured ways as part of our habitual practice of interpretive seeing (through perspective, color, foreground, background, proximity, distance), it is possible to do the same with time. Temporal seeing (Saul & Burkholder, 2019b) seeks to perceive phenomena as not simply comprising a linear, endless, forward moving series of moments proceeding one after the other (an over-determined notion of time whose silent authority is the clock). It seeks instead to perceive phenomena as likewise made in context of a series of intersecting, plural, and contextual histories; relational chronologies; internal rhythms;

definitional presumptions informed by variously accelerating and decelerating flows of information; and social meanings and critiques informed by all of these (Saul & Burkholder, 2019b). Doing the preceding is not beyond the realm of regular, conscious decision-making, but the overwhelming hegemony of clock time often precludes it (Saul, 2016).

The above time theorizing informs our inquiry into temporal waste in what follows. It suggests that in spite of human possibilities for making diverse relationships to time, modern institutions like universities overwhelmingly locate those who work within them according to rigid temporal relations (Walker, 2019). They sustain little temporal nuance and they do not aim to, for the version of time they most often endorse—uniform clock and calendar time—is synchronous with the dictates of production and accumulation (of knowledge, of capital, of prestige) (Walker, 2009).

As university professors, we wish to point out that our positions as writers of what follows is fraught—our acquiescence to our institutions' temporal values helps them to function, even when we spend time in works such as this considering how we might contest them.⁴ In this way, we endorse rigid temporal definitions and the relations of domination that underlie them by acting in accord with the versions of time that our institution privileges, and we are aware that we ourselves exercise a series of privileges in performing these contestations. Yet we are also steadfast in our resolve that acknowledging these privileges does not preclude our responsibilities toward rethinking and resisting rigid temporal structures – tied as they are to a deeper set of oppressive values. What, then, would worthwhile attempts at temporal contestation look like in a university? What could these attempts accomplish? We now turn to a discussion of temporal waste.

Making Waste as a Practice of Freedom

We wish to put forward the case that making temporal waste can subvert existing practices of institutional domination and support new practices of freedom. In this regard, we undertake this work in the tradition of Marizio Lazzarato (2012; 2015), highlighting the ways that other scholars such as Ryan Evely Gildersleeve (2018) have conceived of noncompliance and laziness as direct strategies when engaging with the temporal. Some examples of this temporal noncompliance within the professoriate include slowing down the work of professors and spending time reading and theorizing instead of accelerating knowledge production and increasing neoliberal metrics through amassing grants and quick publications (Berg & Seeber, 2016). We see the notion of 'making temporal waste' as different than 'wasting time.' Wasting time conjures the discourses and practices of consumption. To say that one is wasting time is to acquiesce to a set of values that re-inscribes time as a commodity. It is conceding that time is a thing that can be wasted, and it locates us pejoratively in relation to this wasting. Time is therefore wasted only in con-

text of dominant institutional discourses of time. We are interested in a different formulation. Making waste, an active construct, instead refers to engaging with time—practically, conceptually, relationally—in a way that purposely subverts what the academy expects of us as temporal beings. Making waste is performed in order to make room for a different set of temporal relations, relations that counter notions of time preferred by institutional rigidities. We see the expression of these waste-making temporal relations as necessarily contested and uneven—partial rather than totalizing, and taking place within the confines of what our institution is willing to tolerate (and, as in cases of ironic subversion, celebrate) even as we act in protest of its temporal values.

Making Temporal Waste as Critique

How does making temporal waste manifest as critique in and about the academy? Given that modern capitalist institutions are constructed to value temporal rigidities—placing human bodies within arrangements meant to maximize production and accumulation—a worthwhile entry point into this question, for us, has been to try to ascertain and assert our own values amidst the over-determinations of the institutional structures we inhabit. In response to the regular communication of new policies, mandates, initiatives, and encouragements regularly transmitted to us within our university, our resolve is to persistently consider and reconsider a version of the following question: who is our university's ideal institutional respondent in putting forth these communications, and in what ways does this constructed respondent match with what we recognize are our own ideals in doing our work?

The notion of an ideal subject position, borrowed from textual and media analysis, is useful here. Davis (1993) defines an ideal subject position as, “the type of reader that the text beckons through its structure and content.... [It] suggests the identities and perspectives that the producers assume to prevail among the readership and/or those whom the producers desire to read the texts” (p. 170). In our university, as in others, the ideal subject can be thought of as an imaginary institutional actor whose “identities and perspectives” are moldable, conformable, and uncritically amenable to the will of whatever institutional dictates happen to predominate at a given time. An ideal subject actualizes an institution's values and visions with complacency and conformity. On the contrary, a critical subject is discerning in making decisions about the same, while a critical temporal subject foregrounds time in making these decisions. A critical temporal subject therefore considers how rigid discourses of time are wielded through institutional disciplining in the interests of hegemony, and attempts to subvert these rigidities through waste making processes such as re-imagining how an ideal subject might use and conceive of their time, as well as by bringing those re-imaginings to bear on one's practices and relationships.

A strategy that emerges when we dialogue about achieving the preceding in-

volves moving more resolutely, more deeply, and with more contextual specificity, toward unpacking the notion of an ideal subject within our own institutional milieu. In this regard, we come away with the strong sense that in spite of rhetoric otherwise, our university—as with many today—often chooses to value what some have referred to as “experts” over “intellectuals,” or technocratic employees whose job is to maximize temporal efficiencies over autonomous and communitarian thinkers whose job is to follow curiosities, in imagining their ideal subject. Endeavoring to be critical temporal subjects, we therefore seek to contest this formulation.

Said (1994) is helpful here (see also Chomsky, 1967). In *Representations of the Intellectual*, Said writes about the ways in which professors in modern universities are beholden to various incentivizing mechanisms that can compromise desires to take on embedded structures of oppression and injustice, precipitating a “drift towards power and authority” (p. 80). These incentives find form in university structures that implicitly prize pleasing governments, industry, special interests, and, in some cases, a consuming public. Consequences can include apolitical scholarship, the valuing of expertise over knowledge, the professionalization of knowledge, narrow specialization, and intellectual conformity. For Said (1994), the antidote for scholars is to embrace amateurism, a formation that instead prizes originality in thinking, thoughts that cannot be easily pinned down by pacifying agents, morally relevant inquiry, and the support of persons who aim to ask uncomfortable questions that seek to challenge their audiences rather than satisfy them.

Zižek (2012) puts forward some of the same. In his own formulations about experts and intellectuals, he suggests that the role of an intellectual is primarily to ask questions rather than to provide answers, the latter being the domain of an expert. Experts support systems as they are and look for greater efficiencies in the functioning of these systems, without aiming to disrupt the structures of power that support them. Intellectuals, on the other hand, seek to destabilize assumptions of expertise with questions that disrupt the structures of power that enable them. Foregrounding temporality in our thinking about the preceding thus prompts in us our own overriding questions: As professors of education in universities, how will we endeavor to use our time? Do we wish to support discourses of expertise—a view that in our case necessarily concedes that school systems and professional research cultures are largely fine as they are, and that our work should focus on helping them to improve their efficiencies—or do we wish to support practices of intellectualism through questioning and critique? The ideal subject position from the perspective of our institution asks us to spend time pursuing systemic efficiencies. Our ideal subject position, temporally deviant and wasteful according to the dictates of institutional preferences, aims where possible for the opposite.

We see expert and intellectual dichotomies play out in additional ways within our institution. For example, the tension between quantitative and qualitative notions of time—the former hegemonic, the latter marginal—is arguably mirrored in scholarly discourses and practices. In our observation, quantitative research is

a preferred form of knowledge production in the academy because its language of communication—statistical output, comparative sorting, numeracy, taxonomy, consistency over particularity—is most easily actionable in governance and public policy contexts where technocracy and neoliberalism predominates (Currie, 2004). In the contemporary university, intensified emphases on entrepreneurialism, monetization, and social innovation (the latter often a proxy for research focused on neoliberal efficiency) find form through these quantifying imperatives, pushing researchers to conceive of their work through a language of narrow ‘deliverables’ and outputs (Currie, 2004; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Funding structures in university programs of education—which in addition to their research imperatives function as professional schools of teacher training, which means they work closely with public schools and governments—are no different. Just as is the case in compulsory schools, where standardization and data quantification are likewise in ascendance (Coles, 2018), the price of not acquiescing to this communicative language and its temporal presumptions can be marginality within the academy.

The specter of bumping up against marginality can be enough to discipline new faculty. Such is the case in our own context. For example, Roger, whose educational work does not tend to need funding, rarely pursues it. Yet his decision is not consequence free. It comes with the perception—possibly self-imposed, although its source is arguably less important than its existence – that he is not fully actualizing what is being asked of him in his professional role. On the other hand, Casey has a well-funded research program, and counts on this funding to provide opportunities to employ graduate students, to carry out socially relevant work with young people, and to support sustainable capacity building within the communities she cares about. Yet she also encounters university officials and research officers wedded to discourses of monetization and entrepreneurship who struggle to understand, showcase, or promote her work through official channels as they might for others. These circumstances again prompt questions of how one’s time should be put to use in an institutional context where not following along with preferred dictates is constructed as wasteful rather than optimal.

Foucault (1997) once reasoned that the purpose of critique is to enable the exercise of “not being governed so much” (p. 29). Critique is in this sense an exercise in asserting one’s freedoms, in our case freedom from the dictates of institutional imperatives that favour a particular version of temporal efficiency. Our reiterated intervention is that making temporal waste can subvert these imperatives. To make temporal waste is to perform critique, critique that can open space for divergent ways of being in the academy. If a consequence of this attempt at divergence is the potential for marginality, the price paid is an exercise of freedom (to think for oneself, to set agendas in the interests of communities and constituencies one cares about, to participate in those communities). We therefore aim to exercise this freedom by paying attention to the ways in which time is wielded in institutions. We aim to repurpose time - to make waste of one version of it and lay claim to another, by

putting time to use in service of issues that matter to us. We write about one such issue, equity, in what follows.

Making Temporal Waste as Equity

How can making temporal waste support equity and counter the embedded politics of institutional temporality? We find it helpful to consider this question in relation to the two predominant criteria our university uses to assess our worth as institutional citizens—teaching and research—seeking to recover alternative means of constructing worth in relation to each of these.⁵

To make temporal waste in support of equitable teaching means to engage in a particular temporal politics of teaching. We currently teach students in teacher preparation programs, and we teach working teachers, administrators, and educational researchers in graduate programs. In doing so, our institutional position asks particular things of us: we are to prepare our students to be effective teachers, they are to demonstrate competencies toward accepted standards of teaching practice, and they are to exemplify the ethical imperatives demanded of the teaching profession. All of these criteria appear sensible and unremarkable, but they risk definitional emptiness in absence of attaching to them more penetrating questions. It is fine to value instruction that enables preparing effective teachers, but what do governments, school systems, and programs of education today imagine an effective teacher to be? What do they imagine adhering to standards of practice and ethical imperatives to mean?

Increasingly, it seems that answers to these questions match the same institutional will from which orthodox notions of time are perpetuated. Systems of education value STEM education above all else (Coles, 2018), and with it philosophies of precision, efficiency, standardization, conformity, linear developmental presumptions about young people, and a decision-making apparatus that uses data-analytics to inform policy about all of these (Saul & Burkholder, 2019a). To an extent we feel responsible for teaching our students how to survive in institutions that value these philosophies, and so we engage our students in discussions about them in our teacher preparation work. On the other hand, we find it important to encourage in students an awareness of the fact that there are alternative conceptual and practical approaches to carve out among these over-determining philosophies of educational competence, including the notion that these philosophies can be contested through alternative understandings of time. We consider these alternative understandings of time in relation to critical pedagogies that seek to contest connecting the purposes of education with utopian ideals of equality, and that instead take up how absent of critical intervention by teachers, schools more easily become vehicles for social reproduction, sorting, banking, and discrimination (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2017).

To encounter time in this way is therefore to encourage our university students to consider the ways in which their students—students in compulsory schools—are located differentially in relation to time. It is to consider the ways in which under-

lying compulsory schooling policies is often a spatial bias, in which there is the perception that simply bringing together diverse students in the same space will somehow facilitate democratic engagement among them (Sharma, 2014, Saul, 2016; Saul, 2020). We seek to elevate notions of the temporal within such spaces, seek to put forward the idea that just because various students are occupying the same space, this does not mean they are occupying uniform times. To the collective spaces they occupy, they will bring into contact with each other various intersecting histories of experience, multiple chronologies of development—highly particular and highly dependent upon the material and contextual conditions of the activity they are engaged in—that will brush up against the chronologies of others in various ways, and highly subjective internal rhythms that will affect their learning and engagements from one day to the next. Some will move faster, some slower. Some will learn more quickly, some less quickly. In which case the wisdom and effectiveness of their teachers will depend on seeing time in these textured ways rather than succumbing to totalizing definitions of time that all are expected to adhere to in unison.

In research, questions of how and in what ways time is institutionally wielded emerge as well, in which context a disposition toward making waste of institutions' preferred temporal conceptions can likewise support equity. Universities today unambiguously favour fast over slow research output, the rapid accumulation of publications over unhurried scholarly deliberation, and, in context of their assessments of tenure and promotion, measurement mechanisms that arguably privilege quantity ('How many publications?' 'How much funding?') over quality ('Is the work interesting?' 'Is the work relevant?') (Currie, 2004; Menzies & Newson, 2007). This institutional pressure for more hurried research outputs sometimes leaves us—again, still early in our careers—wondering if these pressures come at the expense of achieving greater intellectual depth in our work.

In response, our conceptual disposition toward making temporal waste here means actively countering these institutional pressures where we feel we can. Our precarious institutional positions—new, not yet tenured, laden with student loan debt, not yet with the cultural capital we imagine we might have in later years—renders this endeavor a constant negotiation. For Roger, whose research tends toward the theoretical and whose research subjects are invariably ideational and textual rather than human, this involves an ongoing internal dialogue about doing work that matters—work in support of concepts and projects of equity according to terms that are not determined by institutional imperatives seeking to co-opt them. For Casey, who works closely with research participants, graduate students, and colleagues at multiple universities, research that counters the temporal imperatives of the academy must privilege sustainability in what it prospectively offers its participants. Her research is therefore premised on the notion that the researcher's purpose is to support research participants in community making, capacity building, activism, aesthetic expression, and advocacy toward issues of concern to them and the com-

munities they care about. In practice, this means committing to a methodology that involves research participants in decision making about how research is conceived, designed, disseminated, and archived (Burkholder, 2018a; 2018b; forthcoming). As the slow and collective scholarship of Alison Mountz, Anne Bonds, Becky Mansfield, Jenna Lloyd et al. (2015), makes clear, to refuse the time/productivity continuum in the neoliberal university is to enact an ethic of care, of feminist praxis. To produce temporal waste as an equity stance is to commit to “good scholarship and a feminist politics of resistance to the accelerated timelines of the neoliberal university” (Mountaz et al, 2015, p. 1238, see also: Halberstam, 2011; Meyerhoff, Johnson & Braun, 2011).

These stances come at a price. In an institutional context where time is a commodity whose use is legitimized by measurable outputs, and according to which the seduction of producing faster rather than slower outputs is an ideal, this price can range from questions about the legitimacy of what one does with their time in individual circumstances of slow output, to the adoption of self-imposed disciplining mechanisms in individual circumstances where fast output is seen as achievable (Walker, 2009). Neither option is optimal for engaging in equity focused scholarship: not in cases in which scholarship must necessarily develop slowly, which can occur either when seeking to engage research participants in deliberate decision making in the manner Casey suggests, or in challenging systems and institutions on their notions and practices of equity, which can incur the kinds of hurdles that often accompany willful contrarianism; and not in cases where scholarship can necessarily develop more quickly, which can create conditions that encourage narcissistic careerism and individual allegiances rather than communitarian ones that better align with projects of equity. In both cases, there are difficult decisions to make about how to do away with one set of allegiances to time in favour of elevating others, decisions that we as institutional actors are necessarily thrust into having to make. If we do not make them, we are deceived into believing these decisions are not being made for us. And given the proclivities of institutional motivations outlined here, these decisions will not necessarily be made in service of equity.

Making Temporal Waste as Experience

Having centered time in considering how we aim to enact critical and equitable stances in the academy, unarticulated concerns remain for us with respect to time’s influence on our day-to-day experiences of university life. At stake are lingering questions about preferred ways of temporal being in the academy: What does it mean to be collegial? What does it mean to be appropriately service oriented in an institutional context whose values do not always match our own? What kinds of relationships should we value in our daily interactions? How can we enact these values? And, what kinds of social forces can work against enacting them?

The deleteriousness of competition appears as a central trope in our delibera-

tions about these questions. A discourse of ‘scholarship as contest’ abounds: How much did you publish? Where did you publish? What funding did you get? Who has read your work? How many people have read your work? How often has it been cited? To the extent that there is a deep structure of competition underlying how professors are encouraged to understand their contribution to life in universities, acquiescing to this structure is well-rewarded—so much so that it can be difficult to think of oneself outside of its dictates (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Walker, 2019). We wonder if turning concentrated attention onto time, as a category of intersectionality that underlies this competitive structure, offers an opportunity to interrupt it. We wonder too if doing so can make visible a different set of collegial relations, relieving us, in moments, from clock time’s disciplining effects and influences over us.

One strategy we enact to repurpose time in service of opposing the competitive structures we exist within occurs through an otherwise banal practice we have come to view as deeply significant to the ways in which we experience our work life. With several of our colleagues, we routinely schedule time for meetings and conversations that do not have instrumental ends. We do so purposely, in order to interrupt the institutional pulse of clock time. We are aware of the irony of ‘scheduling’ these conversations, but embrace this irony and take seriously its meanings—chief among them, that we are not immune from participating in the temporal hegemonies we contest. Rather, we aim to make room for engaging these contestations even and in spite of existing in an institutional structure that disfavors them. Our conversations—often over coffee early in the day, or during self-imposed breaks later on—take up areas of personal, cultural, and intellectual interest to us without any premeditation about their intended or measurable outcomes, and so are consciously transformed into experiences that temporarily disengage from the instrumentalities of institutional time.

We see it as operative that we pursue these practices consciously. We expect that we would participate in these humanizing practices anyway, as would others, but to consciously plan to do so is to engage in a subtle act of recognition of the fact that we exist within an institutional system of relations whose default setting can be to dehumanize (by conceiving of us primarily through neoliberal logics of value and production) (Currie, 2004). The paradox of our attempt to repurpose our time in these ways is that our practices of contestation often support the productivity imperatives of our institution—early morning coffees prompt thoughts about future research collaborations as well as plans for future writing, and conversations that aim to interrupt the temporal rigidities of university life offer us energy to re-enter these rigidities.⁶ Pursuing these practices of temporal waste making is also an opportunity to recognize our privileged social circumstance, to recognize that the consequences of our temporal contestations, and the agency we claim in making them, do not come with the sorts of costs—safety, security, vulnerability—that are incurred by many others across vast swaths of the globe, for whom conditions

of workplace exploitation take place according to relations of domination that are unambiguously dire (Coles, 2018).

With respect to the partialities of our own context, a predominant privilege we increasingly perceive in our positions as professors is the opportunity to exist ‘in time’ somewhat differently than do many others in our close periphery. Which is to say that many of the modern employment structures we observe, even if largely more unstable and more precarious than in past decades (Snyder, 2016), continue to hold to a somewhat defined separation between compensated work on the one hand, and non-compensated work as well as leisure on the other. Workdays and/or work shifts are precisely and punitively constructed for most, and the notion of leisure, if at all achievable, is conceptualized only outside of the hours of one’s paid work. The realization that as professors we do not have set work hours outside of scheduled teaching, and that the traditional surveillance of ‘nine to five’ work days and precarious employment does not apply to our context—even if other surveillance and production imperatives do—prompts in us feelings of privilege and responsibility, although feelings whose disorienting underside can also take shape as self-surveillance. Which is to say that we largely make our own hours as professors, but this is a freedom countered by the constraint of not knowing when work hours stop. And it is a temporal formulation about which our institution is well aware, just as it is aware that our institutional conditionings over a lifetime will prompt in us an affect of wanting to work more rather than less, as well as an affect of self-recrimination to the extent that we do not do so.

These intersections of choice and prior conditioning also extend to other areas of university experience. For example, the performance of university service is required of professorship, but as in its other domains, this performance is fraught because institutional structures of temporal measurement reward certain kinds of dispositions and activities over others. Sitting on faculty and university committees—for which we are credited toward promotions—can be important work. But so is counselling students in myriad capacities, using whatever influence we may have to support external community members and groups, advocating to support student admissions and hiring decisions in support of equitable decision making, and supporting colleagues in their own endeavors toward doing the same. None of the preceding fits easily, if at all, into credit structures of acceptable university service. It is temporally undocumented service. The temptations of constructing an experience of being in the academy outside of this service can therefore be great, this in spite of the fact that service such as this arguably exemplifies an ethic of institutional citizenship whose social benefits far outweigh service that is institutionally credited. Here again temporal consciousness leads us to the matter of how we spend our time and to what ends.

Conclusion

Time is a central organizing mechanism in the life of the academy, and as such consciously making oneself and one's relations in ways that recognize its political imperatives and partialities can constitute an important intervention into the dominant discourses and practices university's value most. We have proceeded with this in mind, aiming to subvert dominant discourses about how universities can come to imagine themselves as operating according to optimally functioning temporal relations—relations that are quantifiable, accountable, output oriented, capitalistically productive—considering instead the value of inverting presumed temporal productivities and transforming them into waste.

We have contended that making temporal waste opens new paths toward alternative ways of being in the academy, and suggests new prospective freedoms, freedoms that can come in the form of understanding ourselves and encountering each other in ways not wholly determined by the institutional over-determinations of life in modern universities. Drawing on our own experiences and negotiations as early career scholars, we have considered what it would mean to make temporal waste as a practice of critique (in which we consider critically disentangling how it is that our institutions construct time's proper uses from our own definitions of the same), as a practice of equity (in which we suggest particular temporal dispositions to teaching and research that can counter the embedded politics of preferred institutional temporality), and as a practice of experience (in which we set out to articulate the idea that divergent experiences of daily temporal being in the academy are possible, if not humanizing and redemptive).

Throughout, we have held to the notion that none of the above is easily actionable. The seductions of orientating to time in the ways institutions intend us to are great, as are the incentives offered for doing so. And yet to attempt to achieve time differently, to attempt to de-center it as a category of domination, to attempt to lay waste to the ways in which it dominates us, instead trying to see it anew—often in institutional contexts where the imperative is not to see it at all—is a praxis whose value holds the potential to allow us to perceive ourselves divergently in the academy.

Notes

¹ Here we wish to acknowledge that we invoke particular privileges in articulating the claims of this paper—this is to say, we understand that we are positioned in specific ways in endeavoring to 'make waste,' and that most workers do not have the ability to waste time in such ways without explicit oversight and specific consequences (See also: Berg & Seeber, 2016; Eriksen, 2001; 2007).

² We recognize that invoking time in this way risks reinscribing its capitalist features, but we do so purposely, for our aim is not to rescue readers from capitalist relations—a superficial endeavor. Rather we want to invoke time, as constituted in the academy, as a means of perceiving it differently.

³ Just as an inquiry into the structures and functions of many modern social institutions would reveal the same (Martineau, 2015; Snyder, 2016).

⁴ In saying this, we don't wish to rescribe or rearticulate the work/labour distinctions that are a hallmark of capitalist functioning. We do advocate for "working only at work" here, but we see our formulation of this as a subversion of capitalist norms (and a sneaky subversion, because we are at once locating ourselves within capitalist structures (from which there is little escape) while attempting to operate differently within them).

⁵ We touch on a third criteria often used to assess worth in universities, service, in our next section on temporal experience.

⁶ In making this point, we acknowledge that capitalism often subsumes protest and reiterates it as a new form of capitalist relation. Google, for example, encourages employees to spend 20% of their time working without an agenda—doing nothing—to encourage creativity and spark new innovation (Rajan, 2019). In this way, Google is arguably coopting the practice of doing nothing for capitalist gain. However, we still conceive of our "meetings about nothing" as resistive, resitive of the notion that Google or any other corporation holds sway in overdetermining the meanings we make of this practice.

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