

Towards a rhythmanalysis of debt dressage: Education as rhythmic resistance in everyday indebted life

Jason Thomas Wozniak

San Jose State University, CA, USA

Policy Futures in Education

0(0) 1–14

© Author(s) 2017

Reprints and permissions:

sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/1478210317715798

journals.sagepub.com/home/pfe



Abstract

Debt shapes subjectivity by rhythmically training indebted subjects. Stated slightly differently, there exists a debt *dressage* that produces indebted subjectivity. One of the principle aims of this article is to introduce rhythm into the debt analysis debates. Building on Henri Lefebvre's book *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, this article attempts to theoretically justify, as well as engage in, a rhythmanalysis of indebted life. The article concludes with the claim that education experience can be made up of, and produce, rhythms that disrupt the production of indebted subjectivity.

Keywords

Debt, indebted life, rhythm, rhythmanalysis, education

Introduction

Since the 2008 global financial crisis an important body of scholarship critiquing the effects of financial debt on everyday life has emerged. One of the commonalities of this body of work is that much of it, though to varying degrees, addresses the ways that debt captures, colonizes, delimits, and/or structures time. Debt, the argument goes, is an apparatus (*dispositif*) that has a temporal force which enables it to shape the time of politics, of social relations, of institutions, and of individuals. Some critical theorists, and Maurizio Lazzarato (2012) is exemplary in this move, stress debt's ability to shape subjectivity through its ability to delimit our existential time, the time of everyday life. Stated in simple terms, debt produces what Lazzarato (2012) calls, "the indebted man" by capturing and controlling time.

The temporal analysis of debt, and indebted life, is epistemologically revelatory, and of great tactical importance for those of us seeking to ground arguments for, and direction in,

Corresponding author:

Jason Thomas Wozniak, San Jose State University, 419 Clark Hall, San Jose, CA, 95112-3613, USA.

Email: jazonwoz1@gmail.com

developing emancipatory praxis within the contemporary debt economy. But the analysis has often neglected to take rhythm, both as a phenomenon to be analyzed, and as a tool for analysis, into thorough consideration. If debt is able to shape subjectivity, it is not only because it colonizes our time, but also because it rhythmically trains us. Or in other words, there exists a debt *dressage* that produces indebted subjectivity. Thus, one of the principle aims of this article is to introduce rhythm into the debt analysis debates. Building on Henri Lefebvre's book *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (2013), this article attempts to theoretically justify, as well as engage in, a "rhythmanalysis" of indebted life.

Though it may seem counter-intuitive considering the intricate ways in which debt and education are bound together today, I argue below that education is a realm of everyday life in which we can create experiences that disrupt the rhythms of debt dressage, or training. This is only possible of course, if we engage in a struggle to establish education as a realm which keeps debt subjectification forces at bay. Struggle, and here I am influenced by Monty Neill's (2001) analysis of Zapatista autonomy, for what we might call "education debt autonomy," would include simultaneous efforts to deconstruct the debt economy that we currently live and practice education in, and the creation of education zones liberated from the forces of debt in which alternative social relationships can develop (Neill, 2001: 132–133). Thought of this way, the struggle for education debt autonomy involves on the one hand, efforts to liberate education institutions, and more generally speaking all education processes, from the bonds of debt. That is, the education of individuals and groups should not be bound to, or determined by, debt financing. We must demand and work towards other means of funding educational experience.

On the other hand, and this is where the emphasis of the current article lies, indebted subjects are forced to engage in the repetition of movements over time so as to serve their debts. Such repetition over time produces a rhythm of indebted life which in turn produces indebted subjectivity. This rhythm, however, can be interrupted in and through educational processes. Arrhythmic education experiences can disrupt debt dressage. Emancipatory education in the debt economy involves the invention of rhythms that render the rhythmic formative force of debt inoperative.

Before preceding any further, I want to clear up a point on the agential power I ascribe to debt. In Lefebvrian terms, I am treating debt as an *entity*, one which produces and destroys individual and collective realities. This move is common, though often worded differently, in critical theory on debt.

Lefebvre writes that the majority of readers of Marx read "Capital" as "The Capitalists" (Lefebvre, 2013: 64). But the proper reading of "capital," he contends, is to treat it as an entity, "a weird being which has a terrible, monstrous, existence, both very concrete and very abstract, very efficient and very effective-but which exists through the heads and hands that incarnate it" (Lefebvre, 2013: 64). It is some *thing*, a "monster," which "functions implacably and produces its effects" (Lefebvre, 2013: 64). Effects which Lefebvre describes in great metaphorical detail: "But do you see what the monstrous efficiency of the monster reveals: the situation of the human race, threatened with disappearance, to a large extent unconscious and marching light-heartedly, in quick time to military music along the road of death?" (Lefebvre, 2013: 65).

Capital, according to this reading, should not be represented as a human, recall it is a "weird being," a "monster," some thing, or being, that reifies, and that destroys. This entity has the force, at least in part, that Lefebvre grants to it because it has rhythms proper to it that enables it to produce, as well as destroy, people, wars, and things (Lefebvre, 2013: 65).

What is particularly important to note here is that to personalize capital, that is, to equate it to specific individuals, is to make a theoretical mistake that has political and practical consequences, according to Lefebvre (2013: 64). If capital is personalized, then “it would suffice to change the *established* people for society to change,” and there would be the risk of “passing over the essential and leaving the functioning of the *thing* to persist” (Lefebvre, 2013: 64, emphasis in original).

Like capital, debt has a force. It drastically effects individual and collective actions, individual and collective ways of being. Debt is an entity, or if you like, an apparatus, that produces effects. For this reason, my analysis below is more concerned with debt as an entity, rather than focusing on people, or something like a contemporary neoliberal power bloc (banks, hedge funds, states, etc.) that produces and uses debt to create and destroy individual and collective subjectivities.

Notes on the temporality of debt

Key to understanding debt’s ability to shape subjectivity is comprehension of the temporality of debt. Both Lazzarato (2012) and George Caffentzis (2016) are highly attuned to the relations between debt and time, even if in the end they do not attempt to fully grasp the rhythms of indebted life. Before introducing, via Lefebvre, a rhythm analysis of everyday life in the debt economy, I want to spend a few moments reconstituting some of the important elements of Lazzarato and Caffentzis’s temporal debt analysis.

Lazzarato demonstrates that the “substance of money as capital,” and here Lazzarato is discussing financial capital, “is time” (Lazzarato, 2012: 85). Capital controls time, “time,” conceived here by Lazzarato, as the possibility of choice and decision. Controlling time, capital has “the power to destroy/create social forms of exploitation and subjection” (Lazzarato, 2012: 85). More specific to debt, Lazzarato argues that the debt economy “appropriates and exploits both chronological labor time and action, non-chronological time, time as choice, decision, a wager on what will happen and on the forces (trust, desire, courage, etc.) that make choice, decision, and action possible” (Lazzarato, 2012: 55). He also states at other moments that debt “neutralizes” time, the risk inherent in it, by delimiting choice, and directing action to service it. Or if one prefers, debt neutralizes “open temporality” (Lazzarato, 2012: 70), in that it closes off choice (one must serve debt, there are no other present or future options), and directs the styles of life present, and to come (deviations of style that impede debt repayment are punished).

Of particular interest for the discussion to follow is the way that Lazzarato describes debt as a time-disciplining apparatus that *trains* an indebted subject. Here relying on Nietzsche (1967), Lazzarato contends that it is debt’s temporality that grants it effective force in the formation of what Nietzsche designates as the calculating animal, synonymous here with the indebted subject. In Lazzarato’s words, “By *training* the governed to ‘promise’ (to honor their debt), capitalism exercises ‘control over the future’, since debt obligations allow one to foresee, calculate, measure, and establish equivalences between current and future behavior” (Lazzarato, 2012: 46, emphasis added).

Caffentzis’s (2016) analysis directly augments Lazzarato’s debt temporality critique in at least two important ways. Regarding debt’s appropriation of waged labor, Caffentzis notes that debt to capital is an appropriation of future waged labor that is connected with use-value debt, “debt incurred to buy commodities to enjoy their use-values” (Caffentzis, 2016: 182). As Caffentzis points out, it becomes more apparent every day that within the contexts

of shrinking social services and stagnating wages, the modern-day worker has little choice but to take on greater levels of use-value debt to meet basic needs. The ability (of some, not all) workers to take on use-value debt from creditors does indeed allow for the immediate satisfaction of a need, and/or desire, but this immediate satisfaction comes at the price of increased labor in the future. Or as Caffentzis observes, there is a reversal of the relation between (need)/pleasure and labor. Taking on use-value debt, one is able to meet a need before having to labor for a wage that would satisfy it, but in doing so, a person must sell off their future free-time in order to satisfy debt payments in the present and foreseeable future. It need be pointed out, and Caffentzis does, that in the precarious labor market of the debt economy there is absolutely no guarantee that future labor time will even be an option, leaving the indebted person in a near constant state of anxiety in the present.

Moreover, Caffentzis makes clear that time controlled by debt is estranged time. If the indebted person is indeed, as Caffentzis argues, alienated from herself, this is in part a result of the fact that her existential time is colonized, and severally delimited as we saw above. Again, returning to the relation between needs–debt–labor, Caffentzis notes that debt guarantees future labor to capital, while at the same time producing uncertainty in the present and future of the indebted worker. He writes, “estrangement arises from the exchange of *present* satisfaction of use-value needs and desires for *future* work and wages. This makes the comfortable certainty of the immediate satisfaction of needs and desires illusory, because the satisfaction is poisoned by the recognition that it is attached to the uncertainty of the future” (Caffentzis, 2016: 185, emphasis in original).

Lefebvre on rhythm

Though one can find throughout Henri Lefebvre’s more well-known work a concern with, and acknowledgement of, the importance of studying rhythm—take for example his comment in *The Critique of Everyday Life, Volume II* (2002), “Critique of everyday life studies the persistence of rhythmic time scales within the linear time of modern industrial society” (Lefebvre, 2002: 49) – Lefebvre’s most rigorous exploration of rhythm can be found in *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (2013). This work, compiled late in Lefebvre’s life, undertakes a study of rhythm(s) that seeks to found a science, “a new field of knowledge (*savoir*): the analysis of rhythms; with practical consequences” (Lefebvre, 2013: 13).

In *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (2013) Lefebvre first seeks to develop a conceptual apparatus that will supplement his analysis and descriptions of the rhythm(s) of everyday life. To do this he proceeds from a general abstract concept of rhythm, to particular descriptions of concrete rhythms of the body, the street, and daily life. But in actuality, he contends, everywhere there is interaction of place, time, and energy, there is rhythm to be perceived and capable of description (Lefebvre, 2013: 25). A repertoire of fundamental rhythmic concepts which taken together make up the conceptual apparatus that enables rhythmanalysis of everyday life can be found scattered throughout Lefebvre’s oeuvre. In *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, however, Lefebvre collects previous ruminations on rhythm and generously expands upon them.

The first point to emphasize is one that Lefebvre makes in a variety of ways throughout *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. Rhythm, he demonstrates, is both produced, and produces. It gives form to daily life, but also, in daily life it is created. To put this differently by way of analogy, Derek R Ford has noted that for Lefebvre,

“space serves as a product, a form of production, and a means through which realization takes place” (Ford, 2016: 4). The same can be said of the rhythmic couplet that Lefebvre consistently returns to: rhythm is formed, and it is a means through which form is produced.

Of no less importance, Lefebvre insists that there is “no rhythm without **repetition** in time and in space, without *reprises*, without returns, in short without **measure**” (Lefebvre, 2013: 16, emphasis in original). In other words, rhythm involves repetition, pauses and returns of movements in time and space. But importantly, the repetition that in part constitutes rhythm is a repetition of difference. Rhythmic repetition never repeats itself in an identical way. Lefebvre maintains that, “there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference” (Lefebvre, 2013: 16). Coming close to a precise definition of rhythm, he writes, “rhythms imply repetitions and can be defined as movements and differences within repetition” (Lefebvre, 2013: 96).

Lefebvre places an analytical emphasis on two types of repetition: cyclical and linear (Lefebvre, 2013: 96), which correspond to two types of rhythms. While the two rhythms have different qualities and produce different results, they intersect each other and often are indissociable (Lefebvre, 2013: 96). According to Lefebvre, “cyclical repetition is easily understood if one considers days and nights – hours and months – the seasons and years” (Lefebvre, 2013: 96). It is “generally of cosmic origin,” and is not measured in linear fashion (Lefebvre, 2013: 96). Moreover, cyclical rhythms have a determined period or frequency that repeats itself differentially. As such, cyclical rhythms are rhythms “of beginning again: of the ‘returning’ which does not oppose itself to the ‘becoming’” (Lefebvre, 2013: 97). Modifying a phrase of René Crevel to drive his point home, Lefebvre writes, “The dawn is always new” (Lefebvre, 2013: 97).

By contrast, linear repetition, which is constituted by consecution and reproduction of nearly identical phenomenon, at roughly similar intervals– think for example of a series of hammer blows (Lefebvre, 2013: 97)– is produced from social practices that impose a monotony of actions and movements (Lefebvre, 2013: 18). In short, linear rhythm, which is often imposed by entities like the state, originates from human and social activities, especially those of work, and is the “point of departure for all that is mechanical” (Lefebvre, 2013: 97). Unlike cyclical rhythms which are open to eternal becoming, the practices that produce mechanical linear rhythms delimit becoming by imposing programmed rhythms. This is because they tend to aim at specific ends, particularly those of capitalist production and accumulation.

The notions of cyclical and linear rhythms make possible a markedly pertinent critique of everyday life. For example, in *Critique of Everyday Life, Volume II* (2002), Lefebvre makes some pivotal comments on the relations between cyclical and linear rhythms, and processes of accumulation. Here he writes that, “repetition of cycles and cyclic rhythms differ from repetition of mechanical gestures: the first of these types belongs to the non-accumulative processes, which have their own time scales, while the second belongs to the processes of accumulation, with their linear times scales, which are now continuous, now discontinuous” (Lefebvre, 2002: 340). Furthermore, linear time scales correlate with rationalization and the processes of economic and technological growth (Lefebvre, 2002: 232), and they unfold according to the logic of a program.

Cyclic time scales, by contrast, correlate with vital rhythms and processes that cannot be reduced to economic production/reproduction, they are often irrational and resist programing. Lefebvre acknowledges that linear time and mechanical rhythms are absolutely essential to everyday life, and again, they intersect, as much as they contradict,

with cyclical rhythms, but they are also insufficient both for producing, and for explaining the plenitude that often runs beneath the surface, and through, the everyday. Stated simply, everyday life cannot be reduced to mechanical rhythms, linear time. To do so is to strip the everyday of its bountifulness.

Lefebvre's concern is that increasingly, and largely due to alienated work, cyclical rhythms are eliminated by, or subsumed within, mechanical linear rhythms. The subjection of rhythm to exchange-value production and to processes of accumulation threatens to delimit the possibilities of human creativity and freedom. And thus, the increased flattening of cyclical time by linear time, or as Lefebvre puts it elsewhere, "the dominance of one aspect of rhythms over another," is, he writes, highly problematic and "unsettling" (Lefebvre, 1991a: 206).

As important as it is to be able to grasp and analytically differentiate between cyclical and linear rhythms in processes of rhythmanalysis, rhythmanalysis of everyday indebted life would be incomplete, however, if we fail to acknowledge that to conduct rhythmanalysis it is necessary to be able to grasp four fundamental concepts of rhythm. The first, polyrhythm, is loosely described by Lefebvre as a diversity of rhythms that co-exist within time and space. The body, for example, is made up of polyrhythms. Each organ, each body part has a unique rhythm. These rhythms co-exist in the body; the body is thus polyrhythmic. Social spaces, and nature also exhibit polyrhythms to those who know how to listen and look for them, that is, the rhythmanalyst. Lefebvre's (2013) poetic language brings to light the polyrhythmic nature of the world and of being, and deserves to be quoted at length:

Each plant, each tree, has its rhythm, made up of several: the trees, the flowers, the seeds and fruits, each have their time. The plum tree? The flowers were born in the spring, before the leaves, the tree was white before turning green. But on this cherry tree, on the other hand, there are flowers that opened before the leaves, which will survive the fruits and fall late in the autumn and not all at once. Continue and you will see this garden and the objects (which are in no way things) **polyrhythmically**, or if you prefer *symphonically*. In place of a collection of fixed things, you will follow each *being*, each *body*, as having its own time above the whole. Each one therefore having its place, its rhythm, with its recent past, a foreseeable and distant future" (Lefebvre, 2013: 41, emphases in original)

When the polyrhythms of the body function in a so-called "normal" state there exists an association of different rhythms (Lefebvre, 2013: 77). The polyrhythms do not just co-exist with each other, they unite with each other and produce a state of health in the body, an ensemble in social settings or in nature (Lefebvre, 2013: 30). This equilibrium of diverse rhythms Lefebvre calls eurhythmia, the second rhythmic concept highlighted in *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*.

If synchronization of rhythms constitutes eurhythmia, then it is de-synchronization that constitutes the third rhythmic concept discussed by Lefebvre: arrhythmia. Here he writes that, "in arrhythmia, rhythms break apart, alter and bypass synchronization" (Lefebvre, 2013: 77). Arrhythmia is a discordance of rhythms that disrupts previously eurhythmic configurations. This often manifests, according to Lefebvre (2013), as sickness, or "pathological situations" (Lefebvre, 2013: 77). At first glance, arrhythmia might be understood solely as a cause or symptom of disease and disorder. But as we will see below, arrhythmia might best be conceived of as a type of *pharmakon*. This is to say that it can either be a poison, or a remedy. It can cause sickness and disorder, but it can also be curative, inventive, and perhaps, even revolutionary.

Finally, Lefebvre devotes little space to it, but the fourth concept, isorhythmia, deserves mention. Though rarely encountered, knowledge of it sharpens rhythmanalysis. Isorhythmia is according to Lefebvre, “the equality of rhythms” (Lefebvre, 2013: 77).

Taken together the concepts above make rhythmanalysis possible. Or as Lefebvre writes, “rhythmanalysis therefore essentially consists in the forming of these concepts into a work” (Lefebvre, 2013: 78). Below I put these concepts to work in an attempt to outline a rhythmanalysis of indebted life.

On the identity and work of the rhythmanalyst

Generally speaking, rhythmanalysis takes an account of the rhythmic aspects of the everyday. It is a practice of attuning to the rhythmmed organization of everyday life. The art of rhythmanalysis involves being grasped by, and grasping, rhythms. Conducting rhythmanalysis one enters the sway between letting oneself go, abandoning oneself to rhythms, and the creation of a certain exteriority that enables the analytic intellect to function (Lefebvre, 2013:37).

It might be easiest to understand what rhythmanalysis is by tracing an outline of the identity of the rhythmanalyst, what she does, and how she educates herself to perform her work. Regarding this identity, Lefebvre unequivocally claims that she is neither mystic nor positivist, “someone who observes: an empiricist,” because “(s)he changes that which (s)he observes: (s)he sets it in motion, (s)he recognizes its power” (Lefebvre, 2013: 35). Instead, the rhythmanalyst more closely resembles the poet. Not satisfied with merely reflecting on the everyday, the rhythmanalyst, like the poet, brings something to the everyday (Lefebvre, 2013: 35). Reading Lefebvre, it is difficult to discern what exactly the rhythmanalyst brings, but he does suggest that the rhythmanalyst’s attunement to rhythm allows her to reinstate the sensible in consciousness and in thought, and in doing so she accomplishes a “revolutionary transformation of this world and this society in decline” (Lefebvre, 2013: 35). That is, like a poet, the rhythmanalyst both grasps and introduces rhythms into the world. In doing so, she transforms it.

The rhythmanalyst is educated in a particular way to do the work that she does. Her education begins with her own body. Because “the body,” Lefebvre writes, “consists of a bundle of rhythms, different but in tune” (Lefebvre, 2013: 30). Learning to read the polyrhythms of her body, able to note the rhythmic harmony that produces states of health, and the arrhythmia of sickness, the rhythmanalyst becomes more capable of grasping the rhythms of the world around her. But rhythmic pedagogy cannot be based on subjective experience alone, and so the rhythmanalyst in formation branches outside of herself for interdisciplinary education in rhythm. She thus learns to perceive rhythms not only from the arts, but also the sciences “psychology, sociology, ethnology, biology, and even physics and mathematics” (Lefebvre, 2013: 32).

Over time, and through rhythmic education, the rhythmanalyst experiences a modification of her conception of the world, and particularly of time. She comes to be “more sensitive to time than to places” (Lefebvre, 2013: 32). She learns to “think with (her) body, not in the abstract, but in lived temporality” (Lefebvre, 2013: 31). The rhythmanalyst also becomes more sensitive to moods rather than to images (Lefebvre, 2013: 94). Almost supersensible in fact, the rhythmanalyst has the ability to “listen” to a house, a street, a town, “as an audience listens to a symphony” (Lefebvre, 2013: 32). Everything is perceived as mobile– the rhythms of the wind, rain, storms, the “slowness”

of stones, a wall, a tree trunk – and even scents: the odors of dawn and evening, sunlight and darkness, leave traces of rhythms which are grasped by the rhythm analyst (Lefebvre, 2013: 30–31). In short, the rhythm analyst learns how to surrender to rhythms, how to step outside their duration, and how to identify them, as she moves in and out of the rhythmic sway of being grasped by, and grasping, her own rhythms and those of the world around her.

Towards a rhythm analysis of everyday life in the debt economy

Though the rhythm of daily life in the neoliberal debt economy is not the stated focus of his book, read through a rhythmic lens, Lester K Spence's *Knocking the Hustle: Against the Neoliberal Turn in Black Politics* (2015) exposes debt's ability to rhythmically (re)structure daily life. Spence, a self-identified indebted professor of Political Science at a well-respected university begins his book with a painful, and I would argue tremendously courageous, anecdote about his own life of hustling to make ends meet in the contemporary debt economy. Like many indebted people, Spence feels in particularly powerful rhythmic ways, the force of debt on his everyday existence as he tries to earn tenure, guarantee a stable income source, and provide for his family. He writes:

I would wake up at 4:30am, then write for hours. Then to go work. Then try to write some more. Then come home around 6:30pm. Eat, talk to my wife and kids for about an hour, then go to bed. When I woke up I would repeat the process. Write. Work. Come home for a bit. Eat. Sleep. Wake up. Write. Work. Come home. Eat. Sleep. Write. Work. Always feeling as if I were behind, as if there were more work to do, as if I didn't have enough hours in the day, in the week, in the month. (Spence, 2015: xxii)

What Spence details above is the rhythm of the hustle. Hustling, which Spence contends is today synonymous with "the grind" (Spence, 2015: 2), is an all too common rhythmic state of being in the world today, one which lends itself to rhythm analysis. The first rhythmic observation about the hustle, hustling, is that it is constituted by difference within a framework of repetition. Notice how Spence may have been involved in a variety of different activities (his work, writing, and conversations were undoubtedly not identical day after day), but these activities took place within the framework of a process, one prefigured in part by debt, that repeated itself day in and day out. Secondly, though it may appear at first glance to be chaotic and haphazard, to lack rationality, hustling, in particular to serve debt, is a highly rationalized way of life. Decisions to hustle or not are based on complex calculative thinking. Such calculated decisions arrange the movements of hustling into well-coordinated configurations in time.

Observe also, and Spence's use of punctuation and sentence structure drives this point home, how mechanical Spence's daily existence appears to be. He repeatedly goes through the motions: Eat; Work; Talk to wife; Sleep; Wake up; and Do it all again. Not surprisingly, Spence's everyday rhythm is unsustainable over time. Eventually he breaks down. "All of it came crashing down," he writes, "and I collapsed. And I didn't get out of bed for three days straight" (Spence, 2015: xxii–xxiii). With any semblance of eurhythmia completely shattered, he collapses and spends days in bed. A broken-in human and broken-down hustler suffers from the arrhythmia of neoliberal indebted life.

Extrapolating from Spence's anecdote above it is possible to make some broad claims about debt's rhythmic force on the patterns of everyday life and subjectivity in the contemporary debt economy. The first is that debt prefigures the daily arrangements of

movements in time. Linear rhythms that aim in the direction of compliance with the programs of debt service become the norm. Secondly, indebted life demands a prioritization of the production of exchange-value over use-value rhythms. Repetitive mechanical activities committed to processes of accumulation come to govern everyday activity. The indebted person, like Spence, has little choice but to adopt and produce rhythms which will allow them to accumulate exchange-value resources. This includes money, but also knowledge and skills that will enable debt repayment.

The tragedy of course is that the state of debt-induced precarity is one which over time we become habituated to. What once was experienced as abnormal is normalized. And over time, we develop coping mechanisms to deal with that which once seemed pathological or unhealthy. Debt breaks us in by first breaking us down. It imposes rhythms that often shatter our rhythmic well-being. But it also rhythmically reconstitutes us into a form that facilitates efficient service of it. This process of shaping is best defined as a type of training, or what Lefebvre describes as *dressage*.

Dressage, which translated from French means “to train,” garners a very short but consequential chapter in *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. Lefebvre discloses that it is both made up of, and produces, rhythms. “Dressage therefore has its rhythms; breeders know them. Learning has its own, which educators know. Training also has its rhythms, which accompany those of dancers and *tamers (dresseurs)*” (Lefebvre, 2013: 49, emphasis in original). Emphasizing the point that dressage “**determines the majority of rhythms**” (Lefebvre, 2013: 49, emphasis in original) of daily life, Lefebvre notes that by putting into place an automatism of repetition, dressage functions as a way of “breaking-in humans,” to correspond to amongst other things, military regulations, rites of politeness, and business activities. And just as one breaks in a horse, “one breaks-in another human living being by making them repeat a certain act, a certain gesture or movement,” and over time this mechanical repetition is ritualized in humans (Lefebvre, 2013: 48).

Though his own analysis is muddled on this point, and from time to time he conflates dressage–education–learning, Lefebvre does at one point make an emphatic claim regarding the need to distinguish education from dressage. He writes that, “One can and one must distinguish between education, learning, and dressage or training” (Lefebvre, 2013: 48). Lefebvre skips over this point rather hastily in *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. But reading him carefully here it is possible to uphold the distinction he wants to maintain. Since it seems that for Lefebvre, dressage aims at readying humans for very specific tasks or projects, and thus it delimits the activity of daily life and the shape of subjectivity. Dressage consists of linear rhythms that correspond with the logic of set programs. Negatively speaking, it makes use of rhythm to delimit spontaneity, invention, and creativity. Education, on the other hand, appears to hold out for Lefebvre the promise and possibility of invention, and cannot be reduced to mechanical linear rhythms. Stated simply, to reduce education to mechanical linear rhythms that delimit spontaneity and creativity would in Lefebvre’s view, transform it into dressage/training.

What is important in the context of this article is that the distinction that Lefebvre wishes to make between dressage and education be upheld and extended. Doing so allows us to not only analytically distinguish education from dressage, but also situate the former as a process that can disrupt the latter. Most importantly, conceptualized rhythmically, education is a process which has the potential to suspend and render debt dressage inoperable.

Education as rhythmic resistance to debt dressage

Lefebvre makes it a point throughout his work to stress that although cyclic time scales are more and more “increasingly subordinated to linear time, broken into pieces and scattered, they live on” (Lefebvre, 2002: 48). Moreover, he notes that “social praxis cannot be confined to supporting, maintaining and reproducing,” the everyday is never strictly “confined to a mechanical and unlimited recommencement of the same gestures and operations. Repetitive practice is necessary, but it is not enough” (Lefebvre, 2002: 239).

Perhaps more important than pointing to the fact that a variety of cyclical rhythms continue to persist in everyday life, Lefebvre helps us realize that counter-hegemonic struggles must take rhythm into consideration. That is, not only must these struggles be able to identify rhythmic forces to resist and disrupt, but also, they must produce rhythms that give shape to new forms of living everyday life. Because just as rhythm can be used to impose ways of life on individuals and societies, it can also be used to resist said impositions. And one of Lefebvre’s most significant contributions to theories of rhythm is his recognition of the fact that resistance to hegemonic rhythms is composed of, and produces, counter-rhythms. Resistance itself is often an arrhythmic intervention that causes ruptures in normalized rhythmic flows of power.

As alluded to above, in much of *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* Lefebvre spells out the negative effects of arrhythmia. For instance, he writes that arrhythmia produces “deregulations” of rhythms and irregularities that produce antagonistic effects that lead to illness. Such disruptions, or “all becoming irregular throws out of order and disrupts; it is symptomatic of a disruption that is generally profound, lesional and no longer functional” (Lefebvre, 2013: 52–53). In the chapter on dressage, however, he expands his analysis to include arrhythmia’s emancipatory possibilities.

More to the point, Lefebvre ends his chapter on dressage with a short rumination on the ways in which rhythm is a component of resistance to dressage, or imposed ways of being in the world. Referring to male dominated efforts to train girls and women, “The dressage of girls and women was always harsh” (Lefebvre, 2013: 50), as well as colonial efforts to “break-in” the peoples of Asia and Africa, Lefebvre remarks that “through rhythms women would have resisted the virile model, the veritable code of existence promoted and propagated by force” (Lefebvre, 2013: 50–51), and decolonial movements of the mid-20th century caused an utter “failure of this occidental dressage” (Lefebvre, 2013: 51). For Lefebvre, the resistance to dressage is always “equal to its pressure” (Lefebvre, 2013: 50), and this resistance takes the form of, and produces, rhythms that counter dressage.

Conceived of as an act of resistance, arrhythmic interventions in dressage are inventive disruptions for Lefebvre. They create lacunae or holes in hegemonic temporalities that are potentially “filled by invention, a creation” (Lefebvre, 2013: 53). More specifically, in Lefebvre’s view arrhythmic interventions in capitalist economies play a vital role in disrupting the reduction of everyday life to processes of exchange-value production and accumulation. They bring into being openings for “creative activity as distinct from productive activity” (Lefebvre, 2013: 53) by suspending processes of exchange-value production. Disrupting dressage, arrhythmic interventions open up possibilities for something new to come into being, something spontaneous, something which has not been programmed, or that can be planned for.

The above considered, the argument I would like to end this article with is that an arrhythmic disruption of the dressage of debt can produce a “hole in time,” or a rupture of debt’s temporality that might allow for the creation of styles of life and the invention of

ways of being liberated from the subjectification force of debt. Or stated differently, if debt dressage gives shape to a particular type of subjectivity, that of the indebted person, then the disruption of debt's dressage opens up the possibility for subjectivities to take a variety of forms. And in this respect, education conceived as arrhythmic experience is of great interest. This is because education experience can be/is often made up of rhythms that run counter to debt's dressage. Educational experiences can/often do produce arrhythmia that disrupts the training of the indebted subject. For Lefebvre, "liberty is born in a reserved space and time" (Lefebvre, 2013: 51). This space and time, I want to argue, can be the space and time of education.

There is precedence for this type of re-imagining of education temporality. Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons remind us that there exists not only an etymological, but also historical and philosophical conceptualization of school-as-*scholé*. For these two authors, the school can be thought of not principally as a place of preparation, but of separation, as *scholé* (Masschelein and Simons, 2011: 156). The Greek *scholé*, Masschelein and Simons note, has traditionally resisted one definitive definition. Instead it has been simultaneously and separately defined as: free time; rest; delay; study; discussion; lecture; school; or school building (Masschelein and Simons, 2011: 156). Regardless of the variance in definition, what all of these descriptions of *scholé* have in common is a relation with time; they all mark a break in one way or another, or suspension, with dominant time economies at work in whichever society *scholé* is produced.

According to Masschelein and Simons in ancient Greece *scholé* was not "a place and time organized to reproduce social order, or way of life. Separated from both *oikos* and *polis*, and hence free from daily occupations, the school was a real space with a real inner place and time where people were exposed to real matter" (Masschelein and Simons, 2011: 158). It was, the authors go on to state, a time and place, (though Masschelein and Simons most often place *scholé* in the school, they admit that it can occur anywhere), where those in it were separated from their daily lives, the labor associated with the production of goods for everyday needs, the norms of civil society, and their normal identities. Or in other words, while in *scholé* who students were, ought to be, and become according to their place in society was suspended. Masschelein and Simons argue that in *scholé*, "economic, social, cultural, political, or private time is suspended, as are tasks and roles connected to specific places. Suspension here could be regarded as an act of de-privatization, de-socialization, de-appropriation; it sets something free" (Masschelein and Simons, 2011: 158). What is set free is time. Within a suspension the future is opened up because as Masschelein argues in a separate article, "what appears, happens or is done within *scholé*" is not determined by a defined result, outcome or product. In this sense, it is time which is freed from a defined end and therefore from the usual economy of time" (Masschelein, 2011: 531).

This suspension of dominant time economies is the essential characteristic of *scholé*. Masschelein describes the suspension in the following manner: "Free time as un-destined time is time where the act of appropriating or intending for a purpose or end is delayed or suspended. It therefore is also the time of rest (of being inoperative or not taking the regular effect) but also the time which rests or remains when purpose or end is delayed" (Masschelein, 2011: 531). Drawing on the work of Giorgio Agamben, Masschelein and Simons link this suspension of dominant time economies to emancipation and to the production of "profane time," which is a condition in which time, space and things are disconnected from their regular use (in family, society, etc. . .)" (Masschelein and Simons, 2011: 158).

But importantly for Masschelein and Simons (2011), the invention of *scholé* does not just produce a negative freedom (freedom from something), but also a positive freedom (freedom to be able to do something) because it is an offering of egalitarian and democratic time-space. Concurring with Jacques Rancière that “school is the “place of equality pre-eminently” (Rancière, 1988: 82, cited in Masschelein and Simons, 2011: 150), and augmenting his work, Masschelein and Simons describe *scholé*, “as an invention of a site of equality and as primordially a public space, which therefore has to be defended as a mark of democracy in itself” (Masschelein and Simons, 2011: 151). For Masschelein and Simons “the school is the democratization of free time” (Masschelein and Simons, 2011: 156). Within *scholé* all students are given equal access to free time. But just as decisively, students are not only given, and have equal access to free time, but free time is communally created and shared in *scholé*.

A rhythmic understanding of *scholé* strengthens the theorization of the concept. Strengthened through rhythmanalysis, theories of *scholé* become vital features of education efforts dedicated to the desubjectification of indebted subjectivity.

Lazzarato has written that, “The need to discover, produce, and reconstitute temporalities, heterogeneous subjectivities and their institutions, requires that we continually seek to elude the techniques of subjection and enslavement deployed by governmentality” (Lazzarato, 2015: 255). What we need, he argues, is “a time of rupture, a time that arrests the ‘general mobilization’ (of capital), a time that suspends apparatuses of exploitation and domination – an ‘idle time’” (Lazzarato, 2015: 246). My contention is that these temporalities can either be discovered in education, and/or invented through education praxis. This is especially possible when education is conceptualized as *scholé*.

Scholé is rhythmically created. The delay, suspension, or experience of free-time as described above, is produced rhythmically. The rhythmic invention of *scholé* creates a lacuna in time, one which opens up the possibilities for a plethora of rhythms (polyrhythms) to emerge. Or if one prefers, *scholé* is not necessarily “free-time,” but rather a puncture in dominant time economies produced by rhythmic interventions that permit the creation of new rhythms of education and consequentially new ways of becoming in the world.

Lefebvre helps us extend this analysis even further. At the end of the dressage chapter in *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, he writes, “Disruptions and crises always have origins in and effects on rhythms: those of institutions, of growth, of the population, of exchanges, of work . . .” (Lefebvre, 2013: 53). *Scholé* originates through rhythm, and it effects rhythms in everyday life and education. It is both a rhythmic disruption, an arrhythmia of dominant time economies, and an event that inaugurates a crisis in time-disciplining regimes. One which has the effect of opening up rhythmic possibilities of living and being otherwise.

More specific to debt, *scholé* is an educative disruption of debt dressage (training). Suspending debt dressage rhythmically, it throws said dressage into crisis. If debt demands constant work to service it; in *scholé* this *telos* is suspended. Debt does not wait; *scholé* is characterized by delay. Debt produces the hustler; *scholé* provides rest from debt’s force. In short, *scholé* renders debt dressage inoperable. In doing so, it creates the possibilities of invention characterized by the coming of the other; a being other than an indebted subject.

Masschelein and Simons are purposefully imprecise in regards to how *scholé* is created. For these authors, the art of education is, as Masschelein pronounces, the art of making *scholé* happen: “Starting from the articulation of the event and experience of *scholé*, we could start to think of education as the art (the doing) and technology that (help) make it happen, i.e. spatializes, materializes and temporalizes this *scholé*” (Masschelein, 2011: 534). Masschelein can tell us that, “Education as practice, then, entails the tracing of spaces, the arranging and addressing of matter and the editing of time that make *scholé*’ (study, exercise, thought) happen” (Masschelein, 2011: 534), but both he and Simons leave it to educators to come up with the ways in which *scholé* is brought into being. Masschelein, for his own part, admits that forms and practices of producing *scholé* which “would include particular architectures, particular pedagogic disciplines (intellectual and material technologies of mind and body, gestures) and pedagogical figures (persona characterized by a particular ethos, i.e. an attitude, disposition or ‘stance’ e.g. the figure of the teacher, professor, student), that constitute the happening of ‘free time’” (Masschelein, 2011: 534), remain to be researched and elaborated upon.

There is a plethora of ways to rhythmically produce *scholé*, and with it, the autonomy from debt of which I speak above. Collective philosophizing, the reading of poetry, the creation of art, deep engagement with the study of math, science, and other disciplines can all potentially create the conditions for the emergence of *scholé* and its associated autonomy. The listing of a taxonomy of practices that might do this is not as important, however, as stressing the point that the education exercises that might invent *scholé* should be collectively negotiated. Moreover, what must be resisted in said negotiation is the imposition of any formulaic program to follow in order to bring *scholé* into being. That said, if *scholé* is to be considered as a rhythmic invention in education that suspends debt dressage, and renders the force of debt inoperable, certain rhythmic elements must constitute it and should be kept in mind. These would include, turning once again to Lefebvre, the creation of non-linear or mechanical rhythmic education practices, those which would prioritize the cultivation of use over exchange-value rhythms of study, as well as an emphasis on nurturing practices that run counter to the logic of education for the sake of capitalist accumulation.

The time that education as arrhythmic resistance re-appropriates from debt dressage comes to resemble a gift which antagonistically opposes obligation. Lefebvre offers us some salient remarks on (re) appropriated gifts of time:

It (appropriated time) arrives or emerges when an activity brings plentitude, whether this activity be banal (an occupation, a piece of work), subtle (meditation, contemplation), spontaneous (a child’s game, or even one for adults) or sophisticated. This activity is in harmony with itself and with the world. It has several traits of self-creation or of **a gift rather than of an obligation** or an imposition come from without.” (Lefebvre, 2013: 85, bold emphasis added, italics emphasis in original).

Education conceived as an arrhythmic disruption of debt dressage involves, as Lefebvre might put it, “an original search – whether clumsy or skillful is unimportant – for a style of living” (Lefebvre, 1991b: 42). Conceptualized rhythmically, education can provide a break in the temporality of debt dressage and in doing so, create moments in time that allow us to cultivate “an art of living” and a “kind of happiness” (Lefebvre, 1991b: 42), that is made possible when we reclaim and own our own time, rather than owing it to debt.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Research funding for this article was generously provided by San Jose State University's Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity (RSCA) Grant.

References

- Caffentzis G (2016) Everyday life in the shadow of the debt economy. In: Schraube E and Højholt C (eds) *Psychology and the Conduct of Everyday Life*. London, UK: Routledge, pp.176–192.
- Ford DR (2016) A pedagogy for space: Teaching, learning and studying in the Baltimore rebellion. *Policy Futures in Education* 14(2): 176–193.
- Lazzarato M (2012) *The Making of the Indebted Man: Essay on the Neoliberal Condition*. (Jordan DA, trans.). Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e).
- Lazzarato M (2015) *Governing by Debt*. (Jordan DA, trans.). Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e).
- Lefebvre H (1991a) *The Production of Space*. (Nicholson-Smith D, trans.). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Lefebvre H (1991b) *Critique of Everyday Life*. (Moore J, trans.). London, UK: Verso.
- Lefebvre H (2002) *Critique of Everyday Life, Volume II: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday*. (Moore J, trans.). London, UK: Verso.
- Lefebvre H (2013) *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. (Elden S and Moore G, trans.). London, UK: Bloomsbury.
- Masschelein J (2011) *Experimentum scholae: The world once more...but not (yet) finished*. *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 30(5): 529–535.
- Masschelein J and Simons M (2011) The hatred of public schooling: The school as the mark of democracy. In: Masschelein J and Simons M (eds) *Rancière, Public Education and the Taming of Democracy*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, pp.150–165.
- Neill M (2001) Rethinking class composition analysis in light of the Zapatistas. In: Midnight Notes Collective (ed.) *Auroras of The Zapatistas: Local & Global Struggles of the Fourth World War*. Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, pp.119–143.
- Nietzsche F (1967) *On the Genealogy of Morals*. (Kaufmann W and Hollingdale RJ, trans.). New York, NY: Random House.
- Spence LK (2015) *Knocking the Hustle: Against the Neoliberal Turn in Black Politics*. Brooklyn, NY: punctum books.

Jason Thomas Wozniak, PhD, is a lecturer in the Humanities Department at San Jose State University. He also co-directs The Latin American Philosophy of Education Society (LAPES).