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**SPACED,  
ART OUT OF PLACE**

**The experiences of the Free University of Liverpool and the CyberMohalla project as examples of alternative education**

*Don't think they prefer the drudgery of the desk and the slavery to their circulation and to the business manager to the joy of writing. They have tried to write, and they have failed. And right there is the cursed paradox of it.<sup>1</sup> (Jack London, 1909)*

**Preamble**

In the modern social philosophical thought, Hegel has developed the first real theory of alienation. The category of alienation is in fact central to both the Hegelian system overall as logical-metaphysical category, and in the dialectic representation, which Hegel gave to modern history. *The Phenomenology of Spirit<sup>2</sup>* is the work of Hegel, which contains the largest theorization of the concept of alienation, and it will exert a fundamental influence on the thinking of Marx and the social-philosophical reflection of our times.

For Hegel, alienation is the time of the demerger, the becoming other of the spirit, a position later detectable in Jung's concept of self-consciousness (self-awareness). Addressing questions on 'who we are', and identifying the crime of modernity with the de-spiritualization of the world, Jung argued that anything is a matter of pure understanding, and consequently of a choice and decision to operate and live according to one's nature and spirit.

In the philosophical landscape of the 1960s and 1970s, the Hegelian and Marxist concept of alienation was then used to define the harnessing of subjectivity, "not as the loss of human authenticity, but as estrangement from capitalistic interest, and therefore as a necessary condition for the construction – in a space estranged from and hostile to labor relations – of an ultimately human relationship."<sup>3</sup>

In the decades of the 1980s and the 1990s, alienation was described as a cognitive space overcharged with nervous and conditioning incentives to act, frequently deriving from external forces to select and exclude individuals who fail to meet often badly regulated specific requirements. The dramatic economical crisis of the recent years has contributed to making individual and household debt a post post-modern form of slavery, due to the toxic effects of unscrupulous financial policies.

Within this context, higher education has also become an issue linked almost exclusively to the economic status of the student and his/her family, or his/her possibility of contracting a considerable loan at a certain interest to be able to complete his/her studies. This has created a form of non-meritocratic selection and unjust exclusion, evidencing another discrepancy in the idea of globalization, whose great promise now lies in ruins. The relentless pressure of production aimed at satisfying the constrictive logic of the capitalistic markets and their financial oligarchies, weakening the individual's will and his/her decision-making capacity to act differently, paints the picture of a dystopian future. As a result, the conditions for the growth of new communities are stranded. To begin to reverse this situation, new philosophical categories are needed, and with them, new ways of praxis.<sup>4</sup>

### **The deception of the artist statement**

In today's global contemporary art scene, a large part of research results/public presentations seem too much encircled in the manifestation of artist statements, oftentimes seditious, redundant, pretentious, and discussed only to embellish a certain type of work. Does an artwork need a statement to be understood, or explained as such to the fruiter/receiver?

From my point of view, I see a 'quid' (almost a habit, a tendency) forced and compulsory in all this, probably deriving from an a priori intentional attempt of hoped/ presumed self-affirmation at any cost, also due to the fact that more and more colleges and universities insist on requiring artist statements as a means to be able to compete in the art world, to gain visibility and be recognized. Sometimes an artist can obtain the desired effects of having the artwork accepted, but only when his/her statement luckily matches with the criteria and procedures of the cultural structure to which the statement is addressed.

This common routine of encasing one's own art in well-compiled artist statements clashes with

the needs for changes in contemporary society and it hinders innovative transformation of cultural production. There is not much difference between the words 'submitted' and 'submissive': to submit implies a form of implicit obedience to the existing system (and an overall acceptance of it), which, given the current situation, seems really hard to avoid for a multitude of artists, often even for the ones that through their art try to criticize openly that same system.

Almost anyone who has to submit an artwork or a project is subjected to fulfil artist statement procedures of a certain kind. By doing so, the risks are multiple: an excess of self-serving and presumption of the artist towards him/herself and his/her artwork; the progressive impoverishment of the artwork to the level of a mere 'artist statement outcome' albeit frequently not matching the reality of the artwork itself; the withering of the artist's creative process because of forced frustration, feeling obliged to attempt and satisfy those requirements and then, in most cases, being rejected; the loss of the experiential benefits that a creative path pursued with constant dedication and by adhering to it completely with no compromise can bring.

Paradoxically, by over-producing artist statements and often assuming them as a best way to emerge from a condition of anonymity, artists also undergo a form of external surveillance, nourishing that "watch-over you" system that rules, and that artists simultaneously criticize and strive to change. It is like labelling oneself as a Beckettian flesh for the grind, a mouse for the pied piper, presenting artworks, which seem to be just surrogate evidences of well-adjusted written words.

Since the last decade I have observed in art schools in general the increasing trend is to brainwash students by telling them that an artist statement is prior to anything. It is like saying that what counts the most is the etiquette, not the artwork, not the thorough study of history of art, nor the history of thought. In some MA classes where I've given lectures and seminars (that one must pay \$ 25.000 per year or more to attend), I sadly witnessed the low level of students' knowledge about art. This lack of knowledge was to the detriment of the quality of their work and ability to develop interesting questions on art issues. On the other hand, they all shared the same ability to formulate elaborate artist statements of their artworks, which in general lacked the very poetics and concepts flaunted in those statements.

The fault is not with the students at all; rather I think it is due to the lack of concern and carelessness of the institutional educational structures. It is much easier and expeditious to teach how to compile a statement than to deepen the comprehension of art making. Art today is often

taught in univocal ways. However, I argue that a capillary approach to it should be facilitated, according to the talent that each student has and shows, and that should be nourished with care, commitment and patience, offering a wide spectrum of different creative processes. More than anything, students should first and foremost be taught 'how to learn' to make art, through effortlessly open dialogues, and in a climax of liberated situations, which educational/formative 'enclaves' (also often elitist) don't seem to provide.

Theoretical studies are fundamental of course, for they can also indicate choices and possibilities on the many ways of how to practice art. Yet today the excess of theory, rather than its convergence in artistic praxis, has led to an over-production of empty abstractions, as this is what the system demands.

On lieu of such approaches, the duty of an art school should be to increase understanding on what it means to express someone's most profound urges through art. In short: it's elusive and misleading to believe that by producing artist statements, an artist will actually be fairly rewarded by having given the chance to "whoso pulleth out this sword from this stone and anvil"<sup>5</sup>. Yet, there is also a more delicate question to take into account that involves the sphere of personal ethics: to prefix artist statements to research and practice makes precarious one's own intellectual honesty.

### **Some examples of alternative forms of education**

In terms of free educational/formative experiments, the three years adventure of the Free University of Liverpool, which was born as a protest and founded in November 2010 "during the hiatus of the students and the public sector worker marches against the ConDem government's plans to privatize public sectors of higher education,"<sup>6</sup> deserves attention, for the courage of openly contrasting that institutional trend and its consolidated structure. With a program of radical, creative self-education and viral interventions to dis-establish, disseminate, propagate, radiate and grow cultural praxis in terms of active cooperation, the FUL was open to anyone who wished to engage in a critical exploration.

FUL closed in October 2013, but its effects still resonate, having become an example of a lively community of creative resistance, where people learned to work together, work with others, deal with difference, determining freely when art and activism can work together and when they

don't. It is an example of a pro-active gathering reunion, living, learning, participating, and giving birth to new modes of knowledge.<sup>7</sup>

Of course there are many other interesting experiences of alternative formative educational art praxis. Some of them can be found in the cultural programs of foundations and artist-in-residencies around the globe, which promote and support artist-run-initiatives, free formative courses and internships for students: Sarai CSDS (New Delhi), Taipei Artist Village, Alumnos47 Foundation with its Moving Library (Mexico City), C32 Performing Arts Space (Venice), to cite just a few.

These structures are born not just to host, but to collaborate actively with artists and other cultural institutions to create opportunities for art students to develop research, raise and increase awareness on art issues, share ideas, implement audience interests, thereby producing art projects and opening such practices to national and international partners on the basis of fruitful cultural/cooperative exchange.

It is worthwhile to describe the literary case of the Delhi based collective of young researcher-practitioners and writers CyberMohalla Ensemble, that has emerged in working-class and quasi-legal settlements of the city. They gathered together within the project called Cybermohalla ("mohalla" means "neighbourhood" in Hindi), a network of dispersed labs for experimentation and exploration among young people in different neighbourhoods of the city.

The CyberMohalla project was founded in May, 2001 by a collaborative initiative of The Sarai Programme at CSDS<sup>8</sup> and Ankur Society for Alternatives in Education<sup>9</sup>, a Delhi based NGO for the creation of nodes of popular digital culture in Delhi, through the settlement of generative cultural spaces and creative hubs. It addresses the intersection between information technology and creativity in the lives of young people who live in a highly unequal society. It is a community of young practitioners with difficult access to proper education, some of them living in the poorest districts of the city. "Sarai CSDS organized for them spaces and provide the structure where these young people can now share each other thoughts, ideas and creative energies in media labs located in the working class areas of Delhi. The young people who come to these media labs are between the ages of 15 to 23. At the lab, they work with media forms (photography, animation, sound recordings, online discussion lists and text) to create cross media works, texts, collages, posters and wall magazines. Their writings and images can be seen as a rich database of narrative, comment, observation, imaginative play and reflection on the contested circumstances of life in the sprawling urban metropolis of Delhi. The labs are self-

regulated spaces. That is, the daily routine of the lab is decided upon by them, they are in charge of the maintenance of the lab and the responsibility to imagine and realise the future of the lab is theirs.”<sup>10</sup>

These examples represent cultural structures addressed to people who are interested in learning and exploring knowledge in an unconventional way in order to collaborate with a wider community and generate critical research insights and knowledge in the public domain.

Here, the shifting of the emotions, the actualization of the critical thinking, the relationship with the other, the effectiveness of group dynamics, the contact and conflict are the cornerstones of the learning and creative process. When a community sharing, albeit temporary, takes shape, it becomes possible to investigate one’s expressive necessities through the eyes of the other, triggering a willingness for change and transformation on a cooperative basis.

Designed to structure a meta-dialogue between self and the other, between the world of one’s vision and the vision of the world of the other, CyberMohalla has become also a place that functions on the symbolic and material level at the same time: a contextualized place, where one can freely explore the endless possibilities that art making, creative writings and the use of technological media involve, as well as other ways of living, as time based discovery.

Specifically, Cybermohalla is a project, which aims also to propose alternative criteria of cultural production in terms of social and civil intervention through forward- thinking, to disarm crystallized socio-cultural patterns and norms and try to plan for the future.

To encounter and work creatively with other people implies also the convergence of different expressive behavioural manifestations (besides difference in languages) that lead to an integration of several instances: bodily, cognitive, emotional, intuitive, creative, and in terms of time (past, present, future), relation (I-Thou, I-world), and body (listening and interaction).

For instance, to explore different modes of relationship, or to analyze the meaning inherent to the variety of daily rituals that each one has,, respecting the imagination, the world of emotions and the variegated ways of expression of the other, means also to transform a place of cultural production into a protected space of free access and gathering open reunions, where it becomes possible to share experiences and ideas dialectically, without feeling too much subdued by external pressure and conventional censorship.

A space conceived to be as an experiential ‘lieux de rencontre’ to research the potential of creative human resources and discuss limitations less critically and more purposefully, is also a place of mutual understanding in which the differences are enhanced and respectfully

highlighted, and hence where the possibilities of listening, realize and creatively making are made possible and implement.

The usefulness of establishing new and reinforce already existing professional art laboratorial activities serves also to reduce the boundaries between theory and practice, privileging open communication and confrontation between facilitators and participants to explore the limits of creativity and its extendibility.

The investigation is always a crucial moment of any creative process and should be principally conducted throughout an active participation and continuously tested. Hence, ways of expression, interactions with the others, within reality, with auxiliary tools, and/or technological and digital media, should not be left to the a mere theoretical realm.

For instance, what should normally happen during the preparation of an intensive art workshop is at first an explanation of activities and overall delivery, in order to introduce and offer the participants the various ways of how they can transform their own ideas and concepts into practice, which in turn can be changed and developed both on an individual and collective scale, acknowledging the cutting-edge existing between 'what I want to do, and what someone wants to do with what I want to do'.

In our workshop activity experiences (which combine different performing arts and social/experimental theatre praxis, and that we organize annually in synergy and co- operation with cultural institutions worldwide), we freely analyze the many human existential conflicts (at the core of our research), as well as the often hidden relationships between people and their discomforts/diseases (social-psychic-spiritual). We always ask our participants to keep in mind that more than a technical one, it is an aesthetic control of the surrounding space/environment through their own body language and signs (holy but empty space at the same time) that can lead them to produce an original creative, meaningful imagery, and set him/her into a positive open confrontation with him/herself and the others.

Looking at the actual discourses, which recall the convergence of aesthetics with ethics, it must be said that the contemporary artist ethical core developed through history is very influential in his/her later ethical choices. How and where can one evade an uncomfortable truth without doing wrong, is not only a question to seek for a common sense, or to determine social issues and values; it is more a matter of personal decision and stance.

On the other hand, it is also evident the necessity to give to specific art themes some

priorities/questions which require an answer, and consider them carefully before starting to work: what is the ethics of the artist; which values should s/he determine (normative); how an outcome can be achieved in specific situations (possibility); how his/her capacity develops in different situation; how his/her nature transforms (spirit/psyche); what indications the artist as individual (and people in general) actually abide by (re-presentation); the issue of ego, by working on the inner Self as instrument of Self-knowledge.

Here, it is not a matter of interpreting something a priori assumed, but to operate practically in accordance with one's own human nature, to realize its full potential, as stated by Socrates, "a self-aware person must act completely within its capabilities to their pinnacle, to become aware of every fact (and its context) relevant to his existence, if s/he wishes to attain self-knowledge".<sup>11</sup> This means to indicate new possible meanings, render tangibly a concept, or even stir up and provoke emotions (inside us, inside the others) to externalize what is hidden inside someone's own heart, and ultimately valorizing life experience.

A major problem is that many art schools founded on the ashes of post-structural-ism and postmodernism are both heavily theoretical and followed a fragmented, almost anti-authoritarian course, ending up being absorbed in narcissistic and near nihilistic manifestations.

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Thus, even though contemporary art issues are increasingly multifaceted and address many different areas simultaneously, in terms of art practice I often see that still persists a critical habit "of 'yes or no', 'right or wrong' statement, as if – in general - we still feel more comfortable with dichotomies: to opposites".<sup>12</sup> Therefore, rather than observing the actual choices made by agents in practice, contemporary art continues instead to be examined from a top-down point of view, almost forgetting that in art anything is a matter of giving and delivering through the specificity of a 'poiesis', an instrument of creative freedom to explore and discover unknown territories, which expand and change continuously.

On the other hand, in laboratorial activities as the ones described above, the facilitators stimulate each participant to adopt and form their own methodology (both individual and collective), as anything new that will be discovered along the laboratorial creative process is to express and realize new ideas.

For instance, in performing arts, to set a string of different dynamics exercises aimed to confront

each participant's own story with the ones of others, are also useful to create a non-casual synthesis between the many different self-biographies, by working solo and then in a group, to develop quality of presence and enforce state of mind.

On this regard, few practical examples could be outlined as so: creating intimate solo action/ritual material by looking at one's own experience and daily life; devising new rules and then contradict them; improvising chances to transform obsolete techniques; relating objects and actions in a given space; transforming the space by assuming more confidence in using the physical self as a vehicle to produce meaning; bringing in the space personal objects of affection, and trying new ways of possible relation decontextualizing them from their original function; analyzing different levels and modes of interaction, to investigate a possible multiplicity of audience-performer relationships; exploring the role of time patterns: duration, speed, repetition. All this in order to produce a proper art action. Yet here the work result shouldn't be a mere staging (*mise en scène*) narrative or self-celebrative, rather a revelation, from which a number of different experiences can be organize. It is like to say that one should know then the grammar of the performance, but in the end not respect it too much.

The use of irregular forms and the making of mistakes are necessary for artists in order not operate slavishly according to pre-determined rules and norms, to exercise a free choice (consciously and responsibly), to get completely involved (directly and personally), to get off the ground, to put themselves over the barrel, to bring into focus and undermine their own beliefs and prejudices, to arrange, to tune, to compare, to confront, to offer, to sharpen, to bare, to uncover physically and emotionally, to arrange, to put away, to tweak, to put at risk, to hazard, to lay it on the line, to hit for, to strike down, to ground, to dump, to put on, to banish their own credos, to try out, to tax to the limit, to meet, to collect, to edge and hive, to drop down their own arms, to hammer away at something, to get started, to break into, to sleuth and get forth, to enjoy whatever state of being, and to also rely on weakness.

What in art schools is hardly taught is the nature of the psychic actions within their process of art making: what an artist expresses through his/her artwork is not just a well-rendered representation/outcome of a concept/idea. It is also what emerges from the full concordance of his/her own inner imagination with the context around him/her, a sign of a profound experience, and of his/her inner life.

## Conclusion

The example of the CyberMohalla project is noteworthy because it has been clearly conceived to offer a dynamic space of learning and subsequent cultural production, where is actually the process and the practice of the creative writings (in the case of the Ensemble) that contribute to develop a fruitful critical thinking and a propositive dialogue between all the participants. Here the direct encounters on a daily basis are fundamental, the confrontation of ideas is crucial, and the collection of personal life-stories are essential to stimulate and implement participatory collective commitment, and which in turn become sources of inspiration.

As there are many different languages spoken around the world, so in art there are many different poetics. To bring at least just a few together into a laboratorial situation, crossing and combining them, means to provide an open space where a temporary community can freely live and work.

These kinds of operations offer the possibility of breaking out of the idea of the cocooned global village, and to explore inquires deepening reflection, flexibility, sincerity, both individually and collectively. In art, on a social level, we shouldn't forget that everyone is a legitimate subject.

Given the short time allocated between conception, subsequent corruption and production of artworks, a laboratorial situation today should strongly consider and hold the focus on the value of spontaneous creativity, as this is what is sought most intimately, and also what might attract a new possible audience that more and more calls for genuineness and authenticity.

In the case of the CyberMohalla Ensemble, each of the members had several stories to tell, equally valid, interesting and moving. These young writers have been welcomed to gather, live and confront their differences of analysis, and were then motivated to meet again to give birth to a mutual creative process of productive exchange of information and expressions about their personal and private lives, which then were re-experienced collectively. The CyberMohalla Ensemble, interlacing different individualities together, has been able to transform all those stories into a compact literary art form, which is the artistic manifestation of the young storytellers themselves, delivered with to an increasing public of readers.

Over the years, the collective has produced a very wide range of materials, practices, works, texts, and installations. Their work has been circulated and shown internationally in online journals, on radio broadcasts, in publications, as well as being featured in contemporary and new media art

exhibitions. Their most significant publications include “Bahurupiya Shehr” (Rajkamal, Delhi 2007), “Trickster City” (Penguin India, 2010), a best seller collection of vibrant short real stories of 20 young writers of the Ensemble, “No Apologies for the Interruption” (Sarai, Delhi, 2011), an image-text exploration of post-piracy media encounters.<sup>13</sup>

Their last main project “Cybermohalla Hub”, in collaboration with Frankfurt-based architects Nikolaus Hirsch and Michel Muller, is an installation that represents a consolidation of the conversations, designs and efforts from over the last few years to carve out a language and a practice for imagining and animating structures of cultural spaces in contemporary cities. Sternberg Press (Berlin) has published their book “Cybermohalla Hub” in 2012.<sup>14</sup>

To establish a space as an open source of free cultural production as constant work in progress and extending personal knowledge and reciprocity are key factors.

When the investigation focuses on a common ground, the usefulness of a shared territory of multiple experimentations is continuously tested. Constant feedback is necessary to increase mutual trust and collective achievements. Shared remembrances, ideas, actions, interventions and expressions, when they flow together become fermented material at the same time being civil, social, and poetical, resulting from an aesthetic course, which carries within clearness and significance of a broader creative process.

The success of a formative/educational laboratorial activity, such as the case of the CyberMohalla project, is founded on pinpointing solutions in terms of praxis and applied research, by fostering technical knowledge (pedagogy) and functioning as a cultural engine within the local community to stimulate cooperation and integration. The effects of promoting intercultural and intergenerational dialogue and social exchange concretely enlivens the relationship also between culturally distant individuals, which process-led practices of art conceived in such a way may reunite.

Aiming at exchange and social interference, those kind of laboratorial practices become means to activate a potential cultural energy, displaying anomalous and exceptional experiences, where art and life coincide. Putting into relation and giving visibility to the many differences, and making them visible to benefit the growth of a community, allows for the communication between its members to be founded on empathy and reciprocity.

In general, academic discussions tend to dismiss independent cultural activities by saying that they often belong to an amateur sphere that doesn't demand rigor and discipline, detectable in cultural products of poor quality, sometimes also presumptuously accompanied by the excuse of

a political, social or didactic message. There is some truth to this of course, but also something vicious is detectable, probably because the established cultural institutions, which hold the power of professing an idea of education, refuse to accept the validity of these cases, instead of opening and evaluating new possible fruitful and productive models of learning, as the ones promoted by the mentioned realities above.

The CyberMohalla Ensemble functions because it consists of a well-coordinated, non-hierarchical group. Knowledge is shared and learned reciprocally, because of their continuous encounters on the basis of given tasks that must be fulfilled almost always together. Their approach to creative writings and art speaks of social engagement, individual and community dynamics in relation to their urban settling, personal identity and its contamination and transformation by living in specific environments, tracking stories, experiences, ideas, expectations, local issues, past and present situations, living and working conditions directly on site.

Dialogues among the members represent always a crucial moment in the various phases of the their working processes, specifically functioning to understand in depth the collected materials about people's stories and what they see as alternatives to their present condition. This stimulates a mutual, cooperative exchange on a re-cognitive level, where the evidences and witnesses of each social and individual experience in this very context could be then transformed into art.<sup>15</sup>

Here the idea is that all should become a collective shaped outcome, a "real people" project, which finally transforms into pure poetic/artistic matter (the final product). This 'modus operandi' is hardly detectable in academies and universities. If human and social practical aspects are not seen as crucial in art schools, art schools might become even useless, as the Free University of Liverpool already indicated.

Indeed, the activism that animated the constitution of the FUL has increased awareness on the vulnerability of the consolidated educational system. It showed alternative places where giving context to the complexity of social relations, and the ways people are willing to risk crossing visible and invisible lines drawn by norms no longer acceptable, are possible.

I have taken into account Cybermohalla project and FUL as examples of alternative education because for them the priority is to engage their members, participants and students in the adventure of knowledge, cultural intervention and activism, instead of instructing them on how to use words to write well compiled artist statements, as a necessary way to try to promote and

consolidate their art, a habit which I personally see somehow elusive, even seditious in most cases.

On the contrary, engaging in the adventure of knowledge is a constant process where is possible to realise hopes, desires and dreams that will push it forward.<sup>16</sup> Participating, contributing, facilitating, learning and teaching are fluid and inter- changeable, as well as the continuous feedback given and received from one each other. Therefore, it is fundamental not ‘to state’ anything presumable, but rather to settle “a community in the making, and the making of a new forum for leaving and learning, as giving birth to knowledge is ultimately humanising.”<sup>17</sup>

Finally not ‘statement’, but cultural ‘praxis’ is the watchword<sup>18</sup>, that is the process by which a theory, lesson, or skill is enacted, practiced, embodied, to realised and determine something else, vital, open, different, and unconventional.

## Endnotes

1. London, Jack. 1909. *Martin Eden*. New York: Macmillan Publisher, p.219. *“The chief qualification of ninety-nine per cent of all editors is failure. They have failed as writers. Don’t think they prefer the drudgery of the desk and the slavery to their circulation and to the business manager to the joy of writing. They have tried to write, and they have failed. And right there is the cursed paradox of it. Those watchdogs, the failures in literature, guard every portal to success in literature. The editors, sub-editors, associate editors, most of them, and the manuscript-readers for the magazines and book-publishers, most of them, nearly all of them, are men who wanted to write and who have failed. And yet they, of all creatures under the sun the most unfit, are*

*the very creatures who decide what shall and what shall not find its way into print – they, who have proved themselves not original, who have demonstrated that they lack the divine fire, sit in judgment upon originality and genius.”*

2. Hegel, Friedrich. 1807. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. Bamberg and Würzburg: J.A. Goebhardt.

3. Berardi, Franco Bifo. 2009. *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy*. Los Angeles, CA: Semioexte, p.23.

4. Ibidem. From the book introduction of Jason Smith, pp.9-21.

5. Malory, Sir Thomas. 1470. *La Morte d’Arthur*, Book 1, Chapter V.

6. The Free University of Liverpool. 2012. *Foundations*. Liverpool: FUL Press. From FUL Archive: “THIS IS A PROTEST! Higher Education is a right for all not a privilege for the few. It is on this basis the Free University of Liverpool is committed to FREE education for any student who wants to study with us. At the Free University of Liverpool we believe that critical thought and action are at the heart of changing the world we live in. With this in mind we support, teach about and practice cultural activism. We believe in the strength of intervention, in the necessity of interruption and the efficacy of interference in the powers that seek to privatize and instrumentalise education. The current cuts the ConDems announced are promising to ruin civil society in the UK. This is the last straw!

We will not sit here and take it any more. We will rise up and educate each other and ourselves to FIGHT BACK! We are interested in those who wish the world were otherwise and are willing to take steps to make it otherwise. Students wishing to learn with us will take a Foundation Degree: a six month introduction course to changing the world or Bachelor of Arts in Cultural Praxis: a three-year course, taught on the ground in Liverpool by a dedicated team of cultural activists, educationalists and cultural workers with experience and formal qualifications. The Foundation Course starts in October 2011 and the BA in Cultural Praxis starts in October 2012. Lectures, seminars and workshops will form the core activities of the university with equal weight given to the power of words and the power of action. Praxis is our watchword. These courses are validated by the blessing of leading thinkers, writers, artists and educationalists, all of who have contributed to the course by way of interviews and lectures. They believe, like we do, that higher education is a right for all not a privilege for the few. The Free University of Liverpool is run cooperatively by the Committee.”

7. See: <http://thefreeuniversityofliverpool.wordpress.com/>

8. Sarai is a programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, one of India’s leading research institutes, and one with a commitment to critical and dissenting thought and a focus on critically expanding the horizons of the discourse on development, particularly with reference to South Asia. Sarai is a coalition of researchers and practitioners with a commitment towards developing a model of research-practice that is public and creative, in which multiple voices express and render themselves in a variety of forms. See: <http://www.sarai.net/>

9. Ankur has been working on developing educational resources and pedagogic tools for children and young adults for the last 25 years. It has evolved educational spaces in many neighbourhoods all over Delhi. See: <http://ankureducation.net/index.html>

10. “Each practitioner spends five days a week at the lab, and many are at the lab for close to eight hours every day. The day begins with listening to what their peers have written the day before, and brought to the lab to share. The challenge here is not only to be able to write a text, but to be able to read it out in front of fifteen people, and to be able to listen with them, and among them. While Mondays are reserved exclusively for listening to each other’s texts (reflections, descriptions, conversations, logs of a street, anecdotes from daily encounters, etc.), afternoons and evenings on the other days are devoted to creating projects from these texts, their narration and the discussions that follow every narration. These projects could be animations, HTML, typed texts and formatted texts, sound scape, photo stories, written word, audio and visual juxtapositions or narratives, storyboards, etc. Every day is a day for practice and creation realized through engaging associational free ways of thinking with each other’s experiences. Our thoughts and energies are spent to understand the tentacular complexity of Delhi urban settlements: in fact, tapping into the media environment is not limited to the locality alone, but also extends to the media practices of the city. Repetition and duration are central to building the density of each node, and therefore, of the network; and every practitioner coming to the lab knows there will be new encounters and engagements every day.”

Retrieved April 4, 2011, from: <http://www.sarai.net/community/saraincomm.htm>.

11. Sahakian, William S., and Sahakian, Mabel Lewis. 1993. *Ideas of the Great Philosophers*. pp.32-33. New York: Barnes & Nobles Books. For a thorough investigation, see also: Baird, Forrest E., and Kaufmann Walter. 2008. *From Plato to Derrida*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice.

12. Levinas, Emmanuel. 1969. *Totality and Infinity, An Essay On Exteriority*. Try. Exterity, An Essay, 1969. Jersey: Pearson Prentice. For thorough investigation, see also: Baird, Forrest E., and Kaufmann Walter. 2008. Media

environment is not limited to the locality alone, but also; Ref. by: Darwall, Stephen.

L. 2003. *Theories of Ethics*. In: Frey, R.G. and Wellman, C.H. (Eds.). *A Companion to Applied Ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell. pp. 171-7rd

13. Shveta Sarda editor and translator at Sarai CSDS (as the young Cybermohalla Ensemble writers all write in Hindi, the language they know better) outlines that in this book the focus of the research is “on practices of auto-didacticism and their radical alterations within the post piracy digital environment, along with the difficulties posed to writing and thinking the layered conflicts produced by the accelerated growth and violent renewals of urban landscapes and imaginations.”

Retrieved March 12, 2012, from: [http://p2pfoundation.net/Shveta\\_Sarda](http://p2pfoundation.net/Shveta_Sarda)

14. In 2006, one of these neighbourhoods was demolished, and its residents were relocated to the barren landscape of Ghevra. Their practice of eight years, their dialogues with people around them, and the shrinkage of their spaces of intellectual/creative life propelled them to propose the Cybermohalla Hub in Ghevra in collaboration with architects Nikolaus Hirsch and Dr Michel Müller (Frankfurt). The design takes the multiplicity of voices in Cybermohalla practices as its starting point, translating them into dynamic architectural elements. Constructed on a 6x3 m plot (the size of houses in Ghevra), Cybermohalla Hub will be a space that creates a body of work around the making of the neighbourhood. Linking the cultural practice and the architectural project, the proposed book represents a crucial part of the process. The book not only documents the architecture of the project, which functions as an attempt to “build knowledge,” but also publishes insights that have emerged from the project as a whole. Retrieved May 14, 2014, from: <http://www.grahamfoundation.org/grantees/3673-cybermohalla-hub>.

15. Cybermohalla on themselves (2007): “The city wears many masks. With each mask it dawns on a different guise, each guise creating countless images: like restless shadows that travel together without ever becoming known to one another. In living in it, the city seems close; but it seems far when one begins to narrate what it is to live in a city. This distance provokes practice; through our practices we seek ways to cover this distance. We seek our ways of expression from those around us, from those near us. To us, our different practices are not a means of falling into someone’s life; that we have entered someone’s life is not the important thing – no entry pass or card records or marks it. What matters is, what are the terms with which we let someone step into our life. Our practice is our engagement with the time, questions and tussles that have been narrated to us, and which form the scaffolding in which we start collecting the scraps of desire to express. Practice! Need, habit, entertainment and hobby are not what we desire. In needing, we are alone. In habit we are chased by boredom. It is not entertainment, because that makes us dependent on the new. It is not a hobby, because hobby seeks futile gatherings. To us, to be in practice is to follow our insane desire over huge distances. This desire gives us a force to tussle with ourselves. And the tussle makes us vulnerable not only to our own thoughts but also leaves on us a special imprint of the images of many others.” Retrieved April 10, 2011, from: <http://www.cookplex.com/mystreet/delhi/sarai/index.html>

16. The Free University of Liverpool. 2012. Foundations. Liverpool: FUL Press, p.12.

17. Ibidem p.9

18. Ibid. p.13