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Abstract:

*This paper considers concepts of expectation and responsibility, and how these drive dialogic interactions between tutor and student in an age of marketised Higher Education. In thinking about such interactions in terms of different forms of exchange, the paper considers the philosophy of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas on dialogic intersubjectivity, and an ethics of responsibility. This enables a richer understanding of the tutorial dialogue in particular, as both teaching and encounter. This has significant implications for education and for the idea of the tutorial as a space for encounter with the other through language. The paper argues that the university tutorial, rather than being considered a place only for the meeting of expectations, might be envisioned as a space for encounter with the unexpected. In considering the nature of the educational encounter in relation to an example from the film adaptation of Alan Bennett's *The History Boys*, the paper concludes that the tutorial opens up the possibility for a mutual encounter with otherness. This positions the tutorial as a space of educational otherness - a Foucauldian heterotopia which rejects the expectation-bound economy of exchange, and which offers instead the possibility of an education marked instead by an economy of excess.*

Keywords: Expectation; unexpected; Buber; Levinas; relationship; responsibility.

A student recently wrote some details in his thesis proposal about what he wanted from his supervisor. He wrote: 'I expect respect, confidence, faith, honesty, encouragement, solidarity, and love'. There is much talk in contemporary education of 'expectation', specifically in Higher Education. Young people thinking of embarking on a university education will clearly be interested in what this experience will be like, and what will be expected of them academically. Both potential students and parents will want to know if such an education will be good value for money. They will have expectations in terms of contact teaching hours, resources and campus facilities, and of course, that gaining the degree will increase employability and salary income potential. Universities will expect applicants to demonstrate a capacity to benefit from a university education, to have a genuine interest in the subject, and to possess certain skills and qualities on entry. This is with the expectation that attention to such matters will increase retention and achievement, and reduce drop-out rates on courses. Students who have already gained a place and are studying on a course have expectations in terms of the quality of teaching, of access to academic and support staff, of resources, feedback and assessment.

An argument often heard is that increased student expectation is directly related to what has been called the marketisation of the university sector (Douglas *et al.* 2015). The introduction of league tables, world rankings of universities, and national student satisfaction surveys, have all changed the level and nature of student expectation, and, in turn the expectation that universities have of their staff in meeting increasing student demands (Rolfe 2002; Longden 2006). These changes are illustrative of the shifting boundaries of education. First, there is a move towards a kind of consumerism as suggested by new discourses and talk of market share, cost benefit analyses, loyalty behaviour, and even 'staying in business' (Mason 2003). Second, there is shift towards an increasing emphasis and value placed on collecting and analysing the opinions of the consumer – or in this case, the students (Schultz and Szekeres 2008). This creeping pressure of the 'consumerised relationship' is not restricted to Higher Education contexts alone; schools also are subject to this idea of a quasi-contractual relationship as illustrated in the use of learning and behaviour contracts (Greenwood and McCabe 2008). At the level of national policy, there has been a further blurring the educational and the commercial, as seen in the sharp rise in the number of academy schools in the UK,¹ some of whom are sponsored by large companies.²

¹ Academy schools are state-funded schools in England that are directly funded by central government and are independent of direct control by local government.

² The Manchester Enterprise Academy, for example, sponsored by Manchester Airport, promises to enrich its curriculum by including the study of business, travel and tourism, and the Academy's teachers have attended the airport's management development programme. See [ONLINE], Available at:

There is a certain uneasiness about relationships in education that are articulated and understood by means of contractual mechanisms such as charters of rights. We must be aware that, however useful a trope 'consumerisation' more broadly might be in drawing attention to aspects of expectation in Higher Education, we should heed Stephen Ball's warning against using it 'promiscuously' (2004: 23). It is not the case that student expectation is a taboo subject for discussion in the university. Nor is it the case that having, and communicating, appropriate expectations is not a right and proper approach. It is rather to draw attention to where the extent of this, and the incessant drive to meet student expectation, get in the way of other kinds of thinking. Paul Standish, in writing about Higher Education, describes the way in which the kinds of practice to which I have been drawing attention, can be thought of in terms of economies of exchange (2005: 53). He writes that tutors, students and administrators are caught up in 'forms of exchange in what we might think of as a closed economy, an economy that totalises the field of concern' (p. 53). This is not a critique of the need to discharge our obligations on a daily basis as part of our everyday work, but it is to draw attention to where the effects of this encroach onto other ways of thinking and acting. This paper attempts to move beyond the tyranny of expectation seen solely in contractual terms - or as a closed economy of exchange - and to consider instead how we might think of expectation in our everyday meetings with one another.

Whilst the context for this paper is Higher Education, the critique offered also applies to the many ways in which non-dialogic, expectation-driven interactions proliferate in education. There are many different ways in which individuals meet in educational contexts, each characterised by different expectations and responsibilities. Here, I focus in particular on the relationship between the university tutor and her student. This relationship might be initiated and developed in a variety of ways: though discussions in the lecture hall or the seminar room; as a result of casual conversations in the corridor, or in the tutorial. Each of these is an iteration of, and an opportunity for, an educational encounter. This paper addresses specifically how 'responsibility' and 'expectation' might be understood in the context of the educational encounters between the tutor and the student, particularly in the encounter of what we might loosely call the tutorial.³

Setting, Managing and Meeting Expectations: Roles and Responsibilities

A student's formal lectures, workshops, seminars, and tutorials are a significant part of university life. A number of expectations tend to surround such educational encounters. The tutor expects the student to read, research, and come prepared with ideas and questions that will enable her participation, and foster learning. The student expects the tutor to provide quality input through lectures, to set up and facilitate seminars and tutorials, to answer her questions, explain things that are unclear, and to provide specific feedback on her work. Such expectations might be set out in university documentation or in an induction programme, but they are also managed. A student, for example, should not expect more than her allocated time with her tutor, nor should a tutor demand excessive preparation for such meetings. The effective operation of a range of educational encounters is predicated on certain responsibilities, but these are mutually exclusive. The student must undertake the necessary preparation, but the tutor is not responsible for monitoring or ensuring this. Equally, the tutor must take responsibility for preparing her feedback for the student, without the latter's need to enquire on this before the date on which it is due. What these particular educational encounters show, and is also likely to be true of educational encounters more widely, is that while there are expectations of the other, there seems only to be responsibility for the self.

So, whilst recent research on policy and management in Higher Education has addressed different aspects of responsibility and expectation, this tends towards a focus on the university's responsibilities and accountability (Meyer 2012), students' views on entitlement and expectation (Chowning and Campbell 2009), or on culture and change management in Higher Education

<http://www.manchesterairport.co.uk/manweb.nsf/Content/manchesterenterpriseacademy>, Accessed January 3rd 2014.

³ Understood very broadly as the 1:1 discussions between tutor and student. For other understandings of the 'tutorial', see Ashwin (2005).

(Radice 2013). Much of this work has a particular, narrow conception of expectation and responsibility. Expectations and responsibilities in education are seen to be little different from those in those in other legal, contractual, or business and retail scenarios. This paper attempts to look beyond this conception to the work of two Jewish philosophers, Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, in whose work ideas of relationship, responsibility and the other are more richly conceived. Buber's ontology foregrounds an idea of dialogue that insists on a mutuality or reciprocity that marks our relations with each other. His philosophy emphasises the relational in which the 'Thou' calls forth the 'I' in a reciprocal act of responsibility to the other. If Buber can be thought of as a scholar whose writings focus on the phenomenology of dialogue, then Levinas might be described as a phenomenological scholar of ethics (Arnett 2004). For Levinas, the I has a prior obligation to the Other. Levinas' ethics assume asymmetry, not reciprocity. Levinas writes: 'I am responsible for the Other without waiting for reciprocity...Reciprocity is *his* affair' (1985: 98). These ideas seem important for trying to reconceive reductive notions of expectation and responsibility. In teasing out the differences between the views of Buber and Levinas, this paper will consider how their work can inform contemporary thinking about meeting expectations in Higher Education. In particular, it will consider the possibilities of the *unexpected* in educational encounters between tutor and student, and what such educative encounters might open up.

Martin Buber: I and Others

I – It and I – Thou

Martin Buber (1958, 1961) writes about how our human relationships are played out by way of our encounters with one other and with language through a 'life of dialogue' (1961: 37). His most influential philosophical work (1958) contrasts two modes of existence: dialogic intersubjectivity, characterised by an *I – Thou* relationship, and the 'monological' *I – It* mode, in which the other is an object that exists only as part of one's own experience. Put succinctly, Annette Holba writes: '*I-It* moments are functional encounters that can help one to negotiate from point A to point B' (2008: 491). To illustrate the objective nature of such a relationship, Buber provides this example:

I consider a tree.

I can look on it as a picture: stiff column in a shock of light, or splash of green shot with the delicate blue and silver of the background. I can perceive it as movement: flowing veins on clinging, pressing pith, suck of the roots, breathing of the leaves, ceaseless commerce with earth and air – and the obscure growth itself.

I can classify it in a species and study it as a type in its structure and mode of life.

I can subdue its actual presence and form so sternly that I recognize it only as an expression of law...

I can dissipate it and perpetuate it in number, in pure numerical relation. In all this the tree remains my object, occupies space and time, and has its nature and constitution (1958: 14).

To experience the other monologically is a turning back on oneself (*Rückbiegung*). *I – It* is, as Buber explains, 'technical dialogue prompted solely by the need of objective understanding' (1961: 37) and constructs individuals as objects to be used to serve particular interests. If monologue is a turning back on oneself, it must be a turning away from the other. The *I* of *I – It* knows itself as subject and the other only as object and exists as a self without any need of reference to the other. Any conversation - and here I am thinking in particular of the tutorial conversation - in which the other is merely objectified (by my expectation but for whom I have no responsibility), is, as Buber defines it, technical dialogue only. What I am suggesting here is that some conversations with students are driven by such specific and often narrow expectations. Where this happens, the richer educative possibilities that can come from an encounter with, and a responsibility for, the other, are lost in the service of meeting those expectations. Moreover, this very narrow understanding of 'expectation' fails to take sufficient account of the meaning of the word itself as suggested by its etymology. The roots of 'expectation' in the Latin *ex-spectare*, (to look outside or beyond), suggests in this context a looking beyond ourselves to the other, a kind of

reaching out. I will say more of this later in relation to the work of Emmanuel Levinas, but for now, I consider further Buber's life of dialogue as expressed in the *I – Thou* mode of existence.

In contrasting the life of dialogue with one of monologue, Buber claims that the 'basic movement – or essential action of the former is the act of "turning to the other"' (1961: 40). Indeed, it is only in relationship to the other through the life of dialogue that the *I* can be truly *I*. In writing about this difference in Buber between the *I - It* and the *I – Thou*, and the modes of existence and knowing, Levinas writes:

The statement that others do not appear to me as objects does not just mean that I do not take the other persons as a thing under my power, a "something". It also asserts that the very relation originally established between myself and others, between myself and someone, cannot properly be said to reside in an act of knowledge, that, as such, is seizure and comprehension, the besiegement of objects... The dialogical relation, its fitness to constitute a meaningful order that is autonomous and as legitimate as the traditional and privileged subject-object correlation... remains the unforgettable contribution of Martin Buber's philosophical labors (Levinas 1993: 40-41).

Mutuality and Reciprocity

For Buber, the relation between the *I* and the *Thou* is one of mutuality; as Buber puts it: 'Relation is mutual. My *Thou* affects me, as I affect it' (1958: 17). Buber is indicating here how our relationships with each other are mutual and reciprocal. Whilst these two terms tend to be used interchangeably in some literature, they have distinct emphases in Buber's writings. The way of mutuality is one of dialogue. Mutuality is possible only because of the human desire for communion.⁴ Degrees, or kinds of mutuality, are evident in our relation to other human beings, to nature and to aesthetic forms (Berry 1985). Mutuality requires first a 'distancing' from the other, or we might say a confirming of the rights of the other to *her* existence. Second, mutuality entails a form of 'inclusion' or 'embracing'; Berry puts it like this, 'experiencing the relationship from the other side' (1985: 43). Mutuality, then, is inextricably linked with Buber's notion of reciprocity. For Levinas, Buber's life of dialogue can be summarised as 'relation with the other in reciprocity' (1993: 45). But this is not reciprocity understood crudely; rather he is signalling what is at stake in our living well together. It is in our living with each other, and our being in a reciprocal relationship that we encounter each other through dialogue. The etymology of 'reciprocity' in the Latin *reciprocus* – 'returning the same way', clarifies our everyday understanding of the term. In Buber, reciprocity implies something more than simply 'tit-for-tat' in our relationships and in our dialogue.

'Reciprocity cannot necessarily involve the equal presence of one to the other, both participants interacting with each other in identical, reversible ways' (Mumford 2013: 54). Rather, reciprocity demands a turning to the other, and a reaching out that is rooted in our responsibility to the other. Reciprocity calls forth responsibility.

These notions of mutuality and reciprocity show what is at stake in our relationships with each other. They illustrate the possibilities for our living with each other that go beyond the kind of expectation in which the other is merely objectified. They call attention instead to ways of our meeting with the other of which Buber writes: 'If I face a human being as my *Thou*, and say the primary word *I-Thou* to him, he is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things' (1958: 15). Reciprocity and mutuality do not merely imply contentment, or the satisfaction that comes from having your expectations met. They rather draw attention to what it is to encounter the other in dialogue, and to acknowledge the responsibility that such reaching out brings.

From Buber to Levinas

⁴ In his postscript to the 1957 edition of *I and Thou*, Buber wrote of the 'normative limitation' of mutuality in human relations in the presence of a specific task or role, and conversely, the possibility of the fullness of mutuality in the absence of such tasks and roles. His postscript considers, amongst others, the learning relation between teacher and student, and how the relation between student and teacher might be conceived.

Levinas, in acknowledging the ‘admirable analyses of *I and Thou*’ (1993: 42), writes: ‘Nothing could limit the homage due to him [Buber]. Any reflection on the alterity of the other in his or her irreducibility to the objectivity of objects and the being of beings must recognise the new perspective Buber opened up’ (p. 42). However, Levinas does indicate some points of divergence in his own thinking from that of Buber. Levinas’ understanding of our relation to the Other⁵ is one characterised by asymmetry. Laura Barnett contrasts Levinas’ position with that of Buber, as follows:

Levinas’ ‘asymmetric’ I-You relation, in which the Other stands above me and commands me, crystallizes a fundamentally different position from Buber’s *I-Thou*. It stresses a view of otherness as radically other, transcendent; it expresses the contrast between Levinas’ vertical ethics, starting from the other and Buber’s horizontal ethics, starting from oneself (2009:215).

Levinas does not deny that our human relationships are often of the more contractual kind (such as those in which there is a mutual expectation between tutor and student), or indeed that they are sometimes necessary for our everyday lives with others. Indeed, these kind of quasi-contractual relations only make sense in the light of the infinite relation to the other in which they are in contrast.

In describing the asymmetry of the relationship, Levinas writes that the other comes to me from a dimension of height – ‘from on high’ (1969: 174). It is in the other’s approach, in his proximity, that my response is demanded. But this proximity is not just physical closeness or intimacy; it is rather a sense of immediacy or weight that compels me, such that it is like the self is hostage to the other.⁶ Levinas therefore proposes a new subjectivity, one rooted in the self’s primary projection *to* the other through responsibility *for* the other. Levinas writes: ‘The tie with the other is knotted only as responsibility’ (1969: 97). So Levinasian ethics disrupts the notion of reciprocal expectation. I do not expect of the other, because my relationship to the other is one only of responsibility through proximity and substitution. This marks a key difference between Buber and Levinas, as Ronald Arnett notes:

The argument between Buber and Levinas pivots on where the site of responsibility has its origins. For Buber, this site of responsibility is in the I-Thou relation, but for Levinas it is from the call of illeity, which pulls a person called out in opposition to the self-sameness of ipseity (2012: 144).

For Buber, the *I* reaching out to the *Thou* in dialogue, is already heard by the *Thou* who appeals to the *I*. In Levinas, the idea of ‘a reciprocity, an equality or equity’ (1993: 43) is the wrong starting point. Levinas points to this difference when he writes: ‘The approach to others is not originally in my speaking out to the other, but in my responsibility for him or her. That is the original ethical relation’ (pp. 43-44).

This raises two important questions: first, how are we to understand the nature of this responsibility to the other, specifically in the context of the tutor-student relationship in Higher Education? Clearly it would be wrong to see it in quasi-contractual terms, as if my responsibility to the other were limited to the performance of particular tasks to fulfil my part of the bargain. That would diminish responsibility to the level of mere expectation. Rather, it is in the other’s facing me that makes me responsible. We might also ask a second question: if I have a responsibility in the face of the other, what are the limits of such responsibility, how far does it extend? In attempting to answer this, we turn again to Levinas who writes of the:

unlimited nature of the responsibility for the neighbour: I am never absolved with respect to others. Responsibility for the other person, a responsibility neither conditioned nor

⁵ Levinas often uses the capitalised ‘Other’ to translate the French *l’autrui*, indicating an absolute relationship to another person; he uses ‘other’ for *l’autre*, though both usages are not entirely consistent.

⁶ Levinas used the term ‘substitution’ to describe how the self is hostage to the other (1981: 127).

measured by any free acts of which it would be the consequence. Gratuitous responsibility resembling that of a hostage, and going as far as taking the other's place, without requiring reciprocity (1993: 44).

For Levinas, my responsibility to the other is infinite; it deepens the more I answer (*réponse* in French) to it. To illustrate Levinas' claim, Paul Standish considers these two examples: the parent who fulfils all his obligations in rearing his child or the citizen who abides by the law, pays her taxes, votes and contributes to her community (Standish 2005). These are the things of everyday life, but how would it be to think of these kinds of relationships in terms of the closed economy of exchange? He imagines that these might become 'moral grotesques, whose characteristic vice is perhaps hubris?' And he goes on to ask: 'is there not something virtuous about the parent (the parent, the citizen, the teacher, the lover ...) who feels that she had never done enough, who has some sense of the infinite possibilities of her relation to the other' (2005: 59).

Teaching as Speech: Encounter with the Other

While the direct links to educational practice may not be immediately evident in the richly articulated vision of our human relationships in Buber and Levinas, their interest in education, and how this has influenced their thinking and writing, should not be underestimated. In 1949 Buber founded the Beth Midrash l'Morei Am (the School for the Education of Teachers of the People) to train teachers, and he directed this until 1953 (Friedman 1981). Levinas also spent a significant amount of his professional life as a school administrator and teacher. After earning his doctorate, Levinas taught at a Jewish high school in Paris (the École Normale Israélite Orientale) which he also went on to direct from 1945 until 1979 (Strhan 2012). But it is not simply the fact that they have links with formal education through their past professional backgrounds and responsibilities that makes Buber and Levinas relevant for investigations into contemporary educational practice. It is rather that how they conceive of our human relationships, and the place of dialogue within them, that is of interest.

Dialogue and Beyond Dialogue

As has been outlined above, Buber's dialogic relations are characterised by reciprocity. Levinas, on the other hand, emphasises a relationship of asymmetry with the other. It is not as if these are in some way options that we choose for how we deal with one other on a day-to-day basis, but rather that they emphasise differently a number of aspects. These include the understanding of our ethical responsibility or intersubjectivity; the place of dialogue in such relations, and how this is both the context for education, *and* is educational in itself. Buber, writing in *Between Man and Man* (1961), states: 'The relation in education is one of pure dialogue' (p. 98). But this is much more than 'speaking-as-communication' (to convey curricular content, for example). Buber's 'life of dialogue' cannot be reduced to the kind of speaking that illustrates closed economies of exchange. Buber writes concerning dialogue: 'In its highest moments, [communication] reaches out beyond even this boundary. It is completed outside contents... which are communicated' (1961: 20-21). This notion of reaching out or reaching beyond is then developed into an idea of turning to the other: 'Two men bound together in dialogue must obviously be turned to one another' (p. 25). In Buber there is a mutuality in our turning to the other in dialogue. Moreover, dialogue itself is seen as a space for the founding of our experience of the world - as a kind of 'teaching'.

Levinas, however, understands the place of dialogue in a radically differently way. In one sense, he deprivileges dialogue: 'The important issue for Levinas is that ethics and attentiveness... to the unseen, trumps the notion of dialogue. In dialogue, we lean towards to Other, but in ethics, the Other leans towards us in demand' (Arnett 2012: 150). Levinasian ethics require an impersonal engagement with the face of the Other rather than the intimacy and personal attentiveness evident in Buber's notion of dialogue. Levinas, to use the title of one of his essays, is in some ways 'beyond dialogue' (Levinas 1999). His ethics emphasises instead the notion of sensibility - a 'sense-ability' that allows space for the Other to speak. Sensibility is not concerned with active dialogue with the Other, but is rather described as 'a sentient vulnerability or passivity towards to Other' (Critchely and Bernasconi 2002: 21).

Despite the different trajectories of their thought in relation to dialogue, there are lines of connection between Buber and Levinas on language, speech and address that merit attention. For Levinas, I am addressed or called by the Other in discourse such that I must respond. In Buber, the mere fact of living means that I am addressed, and in each instance of that address, 'a word demanding an answer has happened to me' (p. 27). In *Totality and Infinity* (1969: 39), Levinas writes: 'The relation between the same and the other – upon which we seem to impose such extraordinary conditions – is language', and later: 'Speech is teaching' (p. 98). What these quotations all seem to point to is a kind of triadic relationship between teaching, speaking and our relation to another. But this is not simply the learning of curricular content, or the learning of a subject that is at stake here. Levinas in particular is indicating how we are taught through a specific orientation to the Other; to be taught is to encounter the Other. So speaking in this sense does not merely operate to communicate ideas - or as Levinas puts it, 'to simply transmit an abstract and general content already common to me and the other... The "communication" of ideas, the reciprocity of language, already hide the profound essence of language' (1969: 98). If we accept Levinas' idea of teaching as a space for encounter with the Other through language, then we must understand the practices of teaching other than in terms of closed economies of exchange, that is, in terms merely of content communicated and received, of questions asked and answered. Language understood as communication in Higher Education, particularly in the context of the talk between the tutor and her student in the tutorial, risks failing to acknowledge the alterity of the Other whose foundation is language. To encounter the Other is to be addressed by, or called by the Other in discourse, such that I respond – I am taught. Levinas writes: 'To approach the Other in conversation is to welcome his expression... it is therefore to receive from the Other beyond the capacity of the I, which means exactly: to have the idea of infinity. But this also means: to be taught. The relation with the Other, or Conversation... is a teaching' (1969: 51).

Spaces for Encounter with the Unexpected

To dispense with the idea of meeting expectations in education would be unworkable, and frankly absurd. The student who articulated his expectations of his supervisor was not doing so out some misguided pomposity, he was simply being honest in communicating his heartfelt expectation. Higher Education would not operate without mutual expectation from institutions, staff and students alike. That such expectations are often codified in quasi-contractual terms in charters and agreements is perhaps to be expected in the regime of the neo-liberal university. But this also raises the question of whether expectation (mutual or otherwise) is the end of the story. We might ask what kind of education is on offer under a system so driven by expectation. Moreover, what is missing within such a culture that has become so obsessed by measures of student satisfaction, by websites worldwide that allow you to 'rate your lecturer',⁷ and by league tables of universities and review sites that claim to give potential 'customers' the details of what they can expect from their campus and their course? Is to experience only the expected in our education, an impoverishing of it?

What would seem to be missing from this discussion is the place not of expectation, but of the *unexpected*. I am not thinking here of abandoning the university prospectus, and having freshers arrive at university unprepared either practically or academically for their university education; far from it. I am however proposing that within a university education (but also within other sectors, in our schooling for example), the moments of the unexpected are ones especially where learning takes place. What I want to suggest here is a re-thinking of the way that tutorials have increasingly been used in the university, and to consider them instead as pedagogical spaces for an encounter with the unexpected. The term 'encounter' merits further attention here. To encounter something is suggestive of our coming upon it unexpectedly; but the word's origins in the Old French also hint at an adversarial relation, one of confrontation or opposition (*en-counter*).

In suggesting this, I am also drawing attention to the significance for this idea of the work of Levinas and Buber. To encounter the Other through dialogue is, for both writers, a moment of interruption, of the unexpected, and it is unsettling. The other is a stranger to me and comes to me from beyond or on high. The 'Other' here may be interpreted as another person, and so it is in that

⁷ A development of the now common review sites for products and services is found (for education) on internet sites such as '<http://rateyourlecturer.co.uk/>'.

meeting, in the address of the one by the Other, that the unexpected is experienced. But the Other addresses us in different ways and not only as straightforwardly through another person. The address of the Other might come from an encounter with ideas, which unsettle the traditional ways of conducting the tutorial and meeting expectations. And such ideas might come from texts, films, poems, or even art that are not on the indicative reading list for the course.

This has very practical implications for the way in which tutorials tend to operate, in particular the starting point. In my experience, the focus of the tutorial dialogue tends to be on matters of assessment, and in particular the work that students are presenting for assessment. This tends to narrow and to settle the conversation in a way that blocks a richer experience of discussion.⁸ In opening up a space for encounter with the Other, what if the starting point for the tutorial were not constrained by the focus on assessment? Such an approach is richly illustrated in the film adaptation of Alan Bennett's *The History Boys*⁹ where Hector, the teacher of General Studies, defies the Headmaster's insistence on a curriculum and an approach tied ineluctably to the objective of ensuring passes for the boys in the Oxbridge entrance exams. Take, for example, Hector's approach of teaching poetry. Rather than seeing this as a closed object of study, he is providing a space for encounter with the Other (with the poem). The students seem not to understand the significance of the poetry to which they have been introduced, and in that moment they question its 'usefulness' (to the passing of the exam *and* to life). Their expectations are disrupted. In discussing this scene from the film, Ian Munday points to the significance of such encounters: 'Consternation and anxiety can be important features of rich educational experiences; such journeys create the space for students to make their own uncomfortable journeys' (2012: 56).

But it is not the students alone who are called by the Other in examples such as this. Mutuality is at the heart of Buber's life of dialogue. In Hector's discussions with the boys, and with Irwin (the history teacher brought in by the school to give the boys, in the Headmaster's words 'polish, class'), there are moments where he himself also encounters the call of the Other. Is not then the university tutorial a similar space: one where there are rich possibilities for a mutual encounter with the Other that go far beyond the expectations of a closed economy of exchange. This would make the tutorial into a space of educational otherness - a Foucauldian *heterotopia*¹⁰ which rejects the expectation-bound economy of exchange, and which offers instead the possibility of an education marked by an economy of excess.

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⁸ There is a distinction here between 'con-versation' and 'dis-cussion' that the etymology highlights. The Latin roots indicate that in 'con-versation', we 'turn' (*vertere*) 'with' (*cum*) others. There is a sense of accord - and settlement - here that is entirely absent from conversation's common synonym, 'discussion' with its roots in the Latin *discutere* meaning 'to strike asunder' and from *dis* (apart) and *quarere* (to shake).

⁹ The film's action is set in the fictional Cutlers' Grammar School in Sheffield in the early 1980s. A group of high achieving boys are completing an additional year to prepare for the Oxford or Cambridge entrance examinations and interview. Under the supervision of the ambitious Headmaster, the boys are taught by Hector for General Studies and Irwin, a contract teacher, who works alongside Dorothy Linott, the Deputy Head, to prepare them in History.

¹⁰ From the Greek *heteros* (other/different), and *topos* (place). See Foucault, M., (1986), 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics* 16, pp., 22 – 27.

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