Time, Fear and Suffering in Post-dualist Modes of Being

Peter McInnes and Nic Beech

abstract

This article seeks to contribute to debates on the nature and implications of post-dualist modes of being by drawing upon the 'process philosopher'/'guru' Krishnamurti, whose refusal to be categorised we read as an overtly political move. Advocates of post-dualism have argued for the possibility of a new form of subjectivity that can transcend the problematics of current forms of life, particularly the relationship between individual and social structure. Critics on the other hand have called for an account of the approach one might take to achieve and sustain such a state. This paper seeks to respond to both of these positions. Firstly, in response to critics, it argues that the cumulative and directional assumptions of the journey metaphor embedded in their call are a central obstacle to post-dualist experience. That is, the dualistic separation of self through time as a current, relatively stable, self moving to a future desired self prevents our experience of transcendence in the here and now. However, we argue that a sustained post-dualist experience is a rarity and that practices required to experience post-dualism will involve dealing with the fear and suffering usually diverted by the separation of self through time. We employ illustrations drawn from research into workplace identity to highlight the potential dysfunction in removing the journey from people's narratives of self.

Introduction

In an article examining the role of the structure-agency dualism in organisational analysis, Willmott (1994) draws a distinction between the notions of 'postmodernity' and 'hypermodernity'. The latter is used to describe contemporary conditions that others, such as Giddens (1991), might term late modernity. Under these conditions the individual is said to be subject to "the continuing nihilistic fragmentation of self-identity" (Willmott, 1994: 112). This militates against a sense of identity in which people can choose to follow paths of thought and action through their own volition. In contrast, Willmott sees in 'postmodernity' the possibility of establishing "a *radically different* form of life" (Willmott, 1994: 113, emphasis in original) that will transcend the limitations of the structure-agency dualism. In this situation, agency of the individual is not denied, but neither are the restrictions of social structure. In the postmodern mode of being, Willmott envisages the possibility that people could be neither fully determined, nor fully agential, but rather their intentionality falls away and action arises in response to the uniqueness of the moment. To illustrate this Willmott

identifies such "glimpses of nonduality" (1994: 119) within an account of a musician's experience of playing improvisational jazz, and in the practice of Zen Buddhism. Common to both is the suspension of the reflexive monitoring of action and the dissolution of the dualistic relationships between the subject/individual and object/society. Willmott argues that non-dualistic 'emancipatory experiences' indicate the possibility of a new form of existence that "paradoxically may serve to *reconstruct* the (humanist) vision of the Enlightenment rather than act to snuff it out" (1994: 90, emphasis in the original).

In engaging with Willmott's argument, Knights (2001) sees the desirability of such a post-dualistic existence, but critiques the examples provided by Willmott as being distinctly cognitive accounts of disembodied, masculine, experiences. Knights argues that these deficiencies are compounded by the absence of an account of how the post-dualistic state is initiated and perpetuated. In this paper we will argue that Knights' challenge is based upon an understanding of temporality as sequential (from initiation to perpetuation) that brings with it cumulative, directional assumptions of knowledge acquisition that are common in modernist discourses where there are assumptions of starting from a known (fixed) place, intending to cover a discrete distance to a clearly defined destination (Marshak, 1993). We will argue that the assumptions of sequential time and progress in journeys are problematic because they constitute a barrier to achieving a 'post-dualistic' state. The argument will be based on the theology/philosophy of Krishnamurti (1954, 1968, 1972, 1991, 1995) that may be seen to be analogous to the reading of process philosophy that has gained currency in organisation studies, particularly through the work of Chia (1998, 1999, 2003). However, even though this argument may be used against Knights' challenge, we would argue that there are other pressing difficulties with Willmott's position. For example, we argue that a sustained post-dualist experience is a rarity and that the practices required to experience post-dualism will involve dealing with the fear and suffering usually diverted by the dualistic separation of self through time. We will question this appearance and will use two stories from organisational life to illustrate the problems we perceive with this position.

Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895-1986) was identified at an early age by one of the leaders of the theosophical society the 'Order of the Star in the East' as the future 'World Teacher' that their movement awaited. At the age of twenty-six Krishnamurti underwent a transformative experience that purportedly led to a higher level of consciousness (Bradford and Hayne, 1995). Whatever the status of this event, Krishnamurti spent the remainder of his life describing the obstacles that may prevent others having a similar experience. These insights were not communicated as part of a belief system, nor within the confines of a religious organisation. Indeed, Krishnamurti dissolved the Order of the Star and resisted all attempts to categorise him as a leader or guru. For Krishnamurti 'truth' could not be taught or systematised, people could not be led there but must reach it themselves. Consequently, and in opposition to the journey metaphor, Krishnamurti argues that 'truth is a pathless land'. While this challenge to the journey metaphor is the main contribution Krishnamurti makes to this article, we are also interested in the political statement Krishnamurti made in consistently rejecting comparison and categorisation of his thought relative to other theoretical, philosophical and religious systems. We feel that this insistence to avoid becoming tied to a particular discipline, or

school, provides a counterpoint to readings of process philosophy in contemporary organisation studies literature. Although authors in this area have made strenuous efforts to distance process philosophy from 'Western' modes of knowledge, there has been a tendency to narrow readings of process towards a narrow range of 'Western' *philosophers* while drawing selectively upon elements of 'Eastern' traditions to the exclusion of others. In other words we would suggest that, contrary to the nature of process as flux and change, there has been a disciplinary narrowing of this field that Krishnamurti's personal approach, and contrasting position on process, might address.

In this paper we draw upon elements of Krishnamurti's thought to respond to Knights' criticism of Willmott. The article begins with an examination of the relationship of time to our present mode of being and the problematics of maintaining a separation between self and world. Following this, consider the centrality of the journey metaphor to this way of being, in particular the dualistic separation of current from future self along life's journey. We then introduce two narratives, drawn from research on identity, to illustrate that removal of this dualistic separation would remove the distraction of the journey, but necessitate a painful and frustrating engagement with what *is* in the here and now.

Post-dualistic Experience and Clock Time

Any discussion of Krishnamurti's teachings must address not only the constitution and dissolution of the self, but also a reconceptualisation of ontology, particularly the concept of time. Krishnamurti's conceptualization of reality is of a 'creative reality' which is populated by the 'transcendent spontaneity of life' (Krishnamurti, 1954). Krishnamurti is critical of attempts to accurately capture reality in language. His concern is with the use of language as the mediator of experience, "if we don't dissociate the word, which is memory, and all its reactions, from the feeling, then the word destroys the feeling; and then the word, or memory, is the ash without the fire" (Krishnamurti, 1968: 214). This is not to say that Krishnamurti is opposed to representation, but rather that he is opposed to the reification of representation, or the assumption that it can be anything more than partial. In applying this approach to the concept of time, Krishnamurti contends that we are guilty of the "misuse of time by extending it inwardly" (Krishnamurti and Bohm, 1985: 15). By this he means that we over-reify what is a metaphor of time as linear and by applying this to ourselves, form an impression of self as an entity that is, to an extent, stable and consistent over time. Thus, we conceive ourselves as having an identity in the present that is built upon a sense of a psychological past and a projected impression of how we might be at some point in the future. Not only does a temporally durable self imply self-knowledge, it relies on continuity and ordering of a world experienced as separate from the self for reinforcement of identity.

Although never explicitly framed as process ontology, the language and tenor of Krishnamutri's thought is congruent with those of his contemporary Bergson (1913) to the extent that Bergson also emphasises experience and critiques the misuse of clock time. Within organisational theorising, theorists such as Linstead (2002) and Chia

(1998, 1999, 2003) have been doing much to popularise a Bergsonian understanding of the world grounded in the ontology of becoming. Robert Chia in particular has continually promoted process as characteristic of 'Eastern' thought, with his recent work directly considering the experience of process in Taoism and Zen Buddhism (Chia, 2003).

In contrast to a world conceived as fixed and discrete objects, a process ontology would see these as, at most, 'temporary resting points' Chia (1999) in a world typified by change and flux. The former view is inherent in much of organisational knowledge with widespread implications for both practice and theorising (Wood, 2002). For example, much of the discourse concerning organisational change and learning either explicitly, or implicitly, draws on the journey metaphor in moving from a state of being lesser to a state of being greater. The emphasis in these accounts is often placed upon the 'states' and the ordered 'journey' rather than movement and disorganisation. Another example that Chia (1998) critically examines is the assumptions of complexity science, contrasting the taxonomic complexity of representational knowledge, normally assumed in complexity science, with the dynamic complexity of living systems. Where taxonomic complexity is generated by the plethora of possible combinations of elements of knowledge to differentiate and create stabilised self-identities, processual complexity is inherent in the "*absolutely indivisible movement*" (Chia, 1998: 349, emphases in original) of a constantly fluxing reality. Unlike taxonomic complexity, the dynamic complexity of living reality emanates from the "immanent *in-one-anotherness* of moments of experience" (Chia, 1998: 349, emphasis in original).

Like Krishnamurti, Chia (1998) maintains that representational knowledge has a tenuous relationship with reality and yet it is what constitutes human intelligence. Consequently "the intellect is incapable of establishing a sympathy with fluid living nature. It awkwardly brutalizes the moment it touches the fluid and the living and thus is characterized by a natural inability to comprehend the dynamic complexities of life" (Chia, 1998: 346). Given that there is an inability to cope with these complexities, there is a tendency to attempt to narrow this down through spatial ordering of events through a linear notion of time. In a direct parallel to Krishnamurti, Chia argues that this brings a false impression of ourselves and our relation to the world. For Chia, clock time is responsible for "the smuggling of spatial metaphors onto the plane of consciousness" (Chia, 1998: 351) leading us to conceive of time as passing from past to present whilst always facing the future to which we advance.

For Chia (2003) 'pure experience' is not situated within linear clock time, but rather exists outside that notion which has been commonly used as a way of avoiding the enormity of the dynamic complexities of life. His own formulation of the 'approach' to pure experience emphasises the necessity of apprenticeship and knowledge acquisition to attain wisdom and insight. This contrasts with Krishnamurti's rejection of knowledge accumulation as 'the path', a rejection that is founded upon his formulation and understanding of the relationship between knowledge and desire.

Desire/Fear and the Future

The relationship between knowledge, belief, fear and desire is one of the key concepts in Krishnamurti's thought. Physical danger aside, Krishnamurti (1995) sees fear as an anxiety about losing something in the future. At the root of this is a fear of nothingness, "that we might, at the end of the day, not be something or be in the process of becoming something" (Krishnumurti, 1995: 73). Krishnamurti argues that in order to escape this fear we cover it up by falling back on practices that maintain psychological security by reassuring us of our 'somethingness'. This flight from fear generates desire in the sense of trying to ensure continuity of this security. Belief and knowledge are key ways in which we achieve this (Krishnamurti, 1954). Belief in any system be it economic, political, social, (or indeed academic) covers over fear by substituting the frustrated desire for completeness in the present, with the promise of coherence and security in the future (Krishnamurti, 1954). Equally the accumulation of knowledge, encompassing the experiences and information of the past, is similarly motivated by the desire to master the present and render the future predictable (Krishnamurti and Bohm, 1980). Hence, knowledge and belief are, for Krishnamurti, intrinsically related to time, and although the modernist treatment of time as a given and as ordered (Chia, 1998) may be superficially functional in allaying our fearful emotions, this functionality is not a reason to reify the modernist conception of time, nor to believe that this is the only possible solution.

Fear that the future might *not* involve the pleasures experienced in the past, or may involve suffering, generates a response such that the memory of past experience is imposed upon the actions of the present in order to recreate (or avoid recreating) the past and/or move towards a secure and hence desire-able future. Memory is, however, not a reflection of a living reality; rather it must be re-presented through language as thought which is the past (Krishnamurti and Bohm, 1985). Similarly, rather than the idea of tomorrow, and specifically the self in tomorrow, being a free reflection of a fluxing and indeterminate world, it is a fragmentary projection of thought and intentions onto this world.

Echoes of Krishnamurti's thought can be seen in what might be regarded as surprising places. For example, in existential thought there is a concern with the embeddedness of self in the experience of reality. In Sartre's (1957) terms the separation of the self from the present is a 'distraction' that is an act by which consciousness 'flees anguish' by construing both past and future through 'nihilation'. Nihilation enables consciousness to exist by making a 'nothingness' between it and the object of which it is conscious. So, for example, the Cartesian (Descartes, 1986) self is not simply an establishment of the self, but is an establishment of the separation from self. It is not reflectively conscious of itself per se, but of the original consciousness of doubting. In other words, the cogito is not Descartes doubting, but is Descartes reflecting on the doubting. "'I doubt; therefore I am' is really 'I am aware that I doubt; therefore I am'" (Sartre, 1957: ix). Krishnamurti goes further, the entity doubting, the observer, is itself a reflection of the memories and experiences of past flights from anguish that are projected onto the future in order to ensure continuity of existence. Hence the self is itself constructed from fear and functions to maintain itself, as entity, separate from the indeterminate, fluxing, living present. Krishnamurti's conception of reality is one in which fear and suffering

are co-present and undeniable. For example, in addressing an individual seeking solace from the grief caused by the death of his brother, Krishnamurti responded by pointing not to the past memories of the brother, nor to a future in which suffering would pass, but to the grief in the present which should be acknowledged and experienced (Krishnamurti, 1972). In summary, the role of the separation of self through time is an attempt to avoid fear and order both self and world. We now turn to the manner in which this ordering is embedded in our language and thought through the journey metaphor.

The Journey Metaphor

> A *picture* held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably. (Wittgenstein, 1953: No. 115)

Not withstanding the concepts expressed above, in common life self-narratives play a constitutive role in maintaining the continuity of self over time linking the current self to a desired (differentiated) future version of the self. Many, if not all, self-narratives portray journeys of the self involving the accumulation of knowledge and experience leading towards a goal. Lackoff and Johnson (1980) draw our attention to the constitutive effect of the metaphors contained within everyday speech. The journey metaphor is amongst those that provides us with a chronological and directional sense of existence. Such metaphors are embedded in organisational life projects such as careers (Gray, 1994) and the institutional processes that support them (Townley, 1995). Baumann (1996) argues that Modernity changed the nature of the life journey by insisting upon a destination for both physical and life journeys. Early Christian pilgrims, saw the streets of the city not as a protective haven but as a restriction to their wanderings. Thus the pilgrims escaped the city turning to the desert for solace. Drawing on Sennett (1993), Bauman elaborates how modernity modelled the desert by rendering the environment as impersonal, empty and lacking in value. Pilgrimage became not a matter of choice, but of necessity "for pilgrims through time, the truth is elsewhere; the true place is always some distance, some time away. Wherever the pilgrim may be now, it is not where he ought to be, and not where he dreams of being" (Bauman, 1996: 20). This idea of a journey with purpose and destination was equally applied to the journey of life. The aim en route was accumulation, in both material and experiential terms, contributing in turn to the next step and to pay-off in the future.

Krishnamurti, in contrast, favours the pre-modern understanding "truth has no fixed abode; it's a living thing, more alive, more dynamic than anything the mind can think of, so there's no path to it" (Krishnamurti, 1968: 205). The pilgrims of modernity, whose conviction in a destination brought meaning and identity to both pilgrim and the world through which they travelled (through the distance and time remaining to achieve the goal) missed the point of their predecessor's pilgrimage. The early pilgrims went to the desert to lose their identities, not to gain them. "What made the mediaeval hermits feel so close to God in the desert was the feeling of being themselves god-like: unbound by habit and convention, by the needs of their own bodies and other people's souls, by their past deeds and present actions" (Bauman, 1996: 20-1).

As discussed in the introduction to this paper, in engaging with Willmott (1994), Knights (2001) calls for an account of the 'genesis and reproduction' of the post-dualist existence. For Krishnamurti, this is a non-question, there is no journey that can be taken to this state, for in embarking on a 'journey' one introduces intentionality and linear time. In other words, there is a conscious agential decision to move from a current, to an espoused position. However, for Krishnamurti, the 'journey' may be spurious, if not self-defeating "the truth is near, you do not have to seek it; and a man who seeks it will never find it. Truth is in what *is*" (Krishnamurti, 1954: 24). In other words, the restless search for knowledge is potentially distracting from Knowing.

The pathless nature of the jazz musician's glimpse of post-dualism (Willmott, 1994) is achieved not through undertaking a 'journey', rather "you have to go into it immediately" (Krishnamurti and Bohm, 1985: 22) staying fully in the moment. This calls for a quiet mind hence, just as the Zen practitioner engages with Koans, not to solve these riddles, but to exhaust the mind (Preston, 1988), Krishnamurti calls for an attentive form of meditation in which the processes of knowledge are observed and dissolved (Krishnamurti and Bohm, 1985). Krishnamurti contends that only by removing these barriers can one stay fully engaged with what *is*. Situated within an ever-changing reality "what *is* is constantly moving, constantly undergoing a transformation, and if the mind is tethered to belief, to knowledge, it ceases to pursue, it ceases to follow the swift movement of what *is*" (Krishnamurti, 1954: 21). Dissolving the divisions is not simply a denial of attachments, but a process from which striving (becoming) is absent as "when the self makes an effort to be absent, the self is present" (Krishnamurti, 1968: 70). Instead of striving to attain a post-dualist state, the individual requires to maintain a 'choiceless awareness' (Krishnamurti, 1954: 134) that remains in the moment without recourse to reflection, analysis or thought. This requires the type of engagement at least analogous with that described by Simone Weil as 'attention' (Miles, 1986). In 'attention' the individual steps back from all roles, interpreting thought and accumulated knowledge is suspended and an openness to the world arises while 'all that is 'I' disappears' (Weil, 1952). At first sight this could appear paradoxical, in that awareness and attention are often thought of as active and purposeful. Here, however, it is not that they are purposeless, but that there is almost a falling-away of the self into the moment, or process, of being.

For Krishnamurti, openness to the world is the originatory state. In the transformational moment described by Krishnamurti, a state of psychological timelessness is experienced in which the reflecting self (the observer) is completely absent. As existence outside time is inconceivable, in the sense that if something exists for no time it constitutes nothingness (the void), the dissolution of the self brings the realisation that the source of 'me' is nothingness. Yet "because it is nothing, it is everything" (Krishnamurti and Bohm, 1980: 26). When the gap between observer and observed is closed there is no boundary between self and other, the post-dualist becomes an undifferentiated part of the world. Thus the post-dualist experiences a radical relationality combined with the creative energy of infinite possibilities (Krishnamurti, 1954). This is an experience that O'Shea otherwise describes as the sacred, an experience of "an excess that is more than us, ruptures us, beyond our understanding and ability to communicate but forces us to communicate" (O'Shea, 2001: 57). For O'Shea, contact with the sacred is intolerable as its immensity exhausts us and we seek to exclude it through the profane activity of the

social. Indeed it is doubtful Krishnamurti enjoyed a sustained experience of post-dualism (Bradford and Hayne, 1995), rather he appeared, to observers, to struggle between the conditioning of his upbringing and the energy of his transformational experience (Ravindra, 1995).

In contrast to the examples offered by Willmott (1994), Krishnamurti's account of post-dualism does not suggest a sustained euphoric state in which the constraints of our current way of being are removed. There may well be emancipatory moments in which nihilation is absent and the 'distraction' of the journey metaphor is removed. Sustained post-dualist experience would, however, appear to be the exception rather than the rule. Consequently our attention here is directed towards the consequences of the removing the 'distraction' of self-becoming. While Krishnamurti promotes the removal of self-becoming to bring the individual fully into contact with what *is*, Sartre sees it as essential that this ordering be both controlled and progressive in order to avoid pain, uncertainty and fear of loss. Consequently, the process of dissolving the divisions that form the self does not necessarily result in a sustained state of emotional happiness and psychological wholeness implied by Willmott's 'glimpses of nonduality'. Rather, the pain and suffering that create the dualistic separation of self and world must be experienced and faced without analysis (Krishnamurti, 1972). This is a task that Krishnamurti acknowledges requires "an extraordinarily astute mind, an extraordinarily pliable heart" (Krishnamurti, 1954: 21).

In summary, thus far in the paper we have examined the relationship of knowledge to the maintenance of the self and critiqued the directional and cumulative assumptions implicit in this notion of self. We have suggested that the journey metaphor is dualistic in presenting a separation of times into past/present and future, but that the sense of ordering and security provided by this is functional in maintaining a separation between self and the pain and suffering of the world. Hence, removal of the distraction of the journey metaphor of self, such as might be expected in a post-dualistic state, might also be expected to remove the protection it provides from pain and frustration. We now turn to illustrate the role of this separation in two narratives of organisational life.

Post-Dualistic Being and Organisation

In this section we explore the role of personal journeys in the narratives of two research participants and the implications of dissolving the dualistic division between present and future self. Both were selected from an array of material from ongoing research into workplace identity by researchers with an interest in narrative and identity processes. The study employed multiple methods to examine identity dynamics during a period of change in the organization associated with the acquisition of the company's major competitor. Data sources included individual interviews, from which all of the data presented here is drawn, observation of meetings and the numerous informal conversations held with research participants over a period of six months. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and meetings were observed and/or recorded and transcribed. Field notes were kept of observations and informal conversations. Feedback

of the summary research findings were shared with the research participants as a reflexive process of mutual sense-making.

Although in traditional research the researcher is regarded as somehow separate from the research setting, we recognise that there is a reflexive process at work in both the provision of accounts by the research participants and in the interpretation of the data provided (Alvesson, 2003). Indeed, in many ways we, as authors, have more power in perceiving and editing in restricted ways to construct the paper in line with our thinking. Whilst we would, to an extent, acknowledge that the stories are selected for their resonance with our arguments, we would emphasise that the personal struggles of the two research participants emerged as a phenomenon of interest, or rather concern, for the researchers as we participated in their work lives. Thus our theorising emerged from our research engagement in a process of co-creation between the data and our own 'journey' as researchers interested in identity processes.

There are potential dualisms between observed/observer and between interviewee/interviewer and we acknowledge this. Although critical of dualisms, the theory laid out above is that our post-dualist states might only be reached fleetingly and we would not see research as any exception to this. The narratives presented below are co-created through our stimulation and selection of data but also through the words of the research participants. We therefore present them as 'a story of…' rather than 'the definitive version of…'.

A Story of Ben's Career Journey

Ben, a member of the IT department who was seen by his peers as a senior member of the department who was 'in-with-bricks' had become dissatisfied with his place in the organization over the past year. During the period of research Ben became visibly more withdrawn and sarcastic in his dealings with IT users and colleagues. This led us to examine his narrative account for possible reasons behind this. The movement to his current employment revealed much about his expectations of the work world.

> Previous one to this… I was basically the only IT person on site… did everything… But… wanted to move to a bigger company and… a bit more involvement in higher decision making… and move more into management, and this job became available and I moved here as part of a small team. However… its been a different role… than I perhaps would have played in maybe a larger maybe blue chip company with... a proper sort of management structure and career advancement etcetera.

The perception that the job should lead somewhere (upwards) was exacerbated by the current structure of the department. When asked about whether there was a suitable position within the company to develop he replied:

> …there's nowhere really for me to go. There's no…OK perhaps if [manager] moved on then. But I've got no like major aspirations to try and oust [manager] and take his position, I've not, that's not what I want to do… besides I think if I was in [manager's] position I would be pretty much doing the same thing anyway

In addition to the perceived lack of career advancement and development there is the impression that even with a move upwards within the firm, the same problems and tasks

would remain. Indeed many of tasks and projects tackled by Ben in his current post were beginning to repeat themselves.

> we've outsourced [the property department] to a third party but they're only doing sections of it and I feel I've got extra work to do to deal with this third party who are not IT literate and don't know how to run the database… and its just extra work for me, and its just been, well, irritating to say the least. And there's been lots of things like that ... I fully believe that if the IT market wasn't so dead I wouldn't be here any more.

Although Ben sees himself as stalled or repetitively going round in circles, he sees the organisation itself as progressing albeit in a haphazard fashion at odds with his impression of a professional organisation.

> The organisation is going forward. I think they'll get there, I think they will. But it will just be through making many, many, many mistakes before finally stumbling on the answer as opposed to proactively going out and actively seeking the answer… and I think there has been lot of hard work and a lot of headaches and still headaches to come.

For Ben, the organisation is 'getting there', even though 'the answer' would be found through trial and error rather than 'proactively going out and actually seeking the answer'. This contrasts with Ben's career narrative in which he is 'going nowhere'. The two different journeys, that of the organisation and that of career, are for Ben incompatible. He responds by invoking the dualism between self and organisation that appears, at least on the surface, to have divergent paths. This split is manifest in the comparison between the current reality, in what is perceived to be an ineffective organisation, with that of a, presumably effective, blue chip company. Where the former offers 'headaches' and 'irritations' from repetitive tasks and is bereft of the opportunity to advance, a blue chip would be able to offer a path through career development, in a managerial position, free from the aggravations of his current situation. Ben's path to fulfilment is clear, but another force, the 'job market', blocks this route.

We read this situation not as a description of two contrasting realities, but as an expression of the gap between an ideal 'me as a manager, in a 'proper' organisation, free from frustrations' and the current situation 'me as non-manager, in an ineffective organisation, faced with endless repetitive problems'. A source of the frustration felt by Ben lies in being unable to fulfil this becoming. Indeed, the desire for unfettered agency would appear to underlie the dualisms between managerial and non-managerial work, between blue-chip and current organisation, and between self and organisation. Such dualistic divisions are themselves 'distractions' in Sartre's terms.

For us, Ben has a fantasy of escape into a managerial position (vs. non managerial) in a blue chip (vs. current) organisation. However, when we examined Ben's role we thought it could easily be regarded as managerial. He leads a team, takes decisions, has the ear of the directors, operates with a degree of autonomy and has responsibility for making changes in his area. His irritations appear to originate in what he views as low-level technical problems that service users bring to him and an absence of the opportunity to operate a really proactive IT strategy. It would not be unreasonable to expect many of these same problems to persist in a blue-chip setting. Therefore it is not clear that the self, transported through the journey, would be the fulfilled fantasy self.

If Ben were to reframe the world as process, the 'certainty of knowledge' that moving to the manager's job would be 'the solution' might be transformed. Resolving the division between an ideal future-self position compared with the imperfect present-self would necessitate acceptance of 'here' as the nature of being. This would entail recognition of what he is doing as management (as much as anything else is) and that changing circumstances will not necessarily remove frustrations. Relinquishing 'the journey' and the 'destination' as ideal/better would be a painful event. If he were to seriously accept that this is as good as it gets, he would lose his coping mechanism for dealing with his current dissatisfaction. The imposition of separation of current-self and journey's-end-self over psychological time, although questionable from the perspectives of Willmott and Krishnamurti, may be a functional delusion for the current-self of Ben in deflecting the pain of loss-of–(imagined)-future.

In this analysis we recognise our co-construction of Ben and our own struggles with the journey metaphor. Earlier, we stated that Ben expressed a tension between personal and organisational narratives, between disenchantment and achieving a journey's destination. We share (and produce) these tensions. For example, in writing 'Ben' we are co-authors with him, but there is an organizational imperative towards separation of researcher and researched. We also feel an imperative towards achieving the 'destination' of research worthy of publication. For us, this challenges the traditional researcher/research subject separation. Hence, we both re-represent 'Ben' as an illustration of these tensions and acknowledge that these tensions are also present for us in the context and text of what we write.

A Story of Lucy's form-designing journey

Our next example concerns Lucy, a junior member of the department, who had been in her position for eighteen months and was experiencing difficulty in dealing with her supervisor, Jim. Lucy recounted a story exemplifying this problematic relationship. Jim had asked her to design a form for a process familiar to her 'It was just a simple form, nothing complicated or anything'. So Lucy had designed a form quickly and submitted it to Jim for review. He suggested numerous alterations to the order of boxes and layout of the form. Having made this set of changes Lucy returned with the form, and process of alteration was repeated. Boxes moved, added, deleted and changed. By the fourth iteration Lucy was becoming terse: 'I mean what does he think? I can't design a form or something?' and was glad to see the back of the task as Jim took the form (on his own) to have it approved by the department manager, Fiona.

An hour later Jim returned with the form, on which numerous alterations had been scribbled in red pen. 'Fiona's looked at it and thinks this way will work better', said Jim who, according to Lucy, was clearly agitated. It was clear to Lucy, and to her mind Jim, that the form closely resembled Lucy's original version. Lucy was silent but angry about the perceived pointlessness of the reviews made by her supervisor on such a menial task. Jim explained some of the changes adding 'yes I know that's how it was originally… but then I'm the supervisor and that's just what you're here to do'.

Running through this story are assumptions about the nature of relative knowledge as it relates to the development of a 'good' form. Both adopt self-positions based upon their

knowledge of a fixed organisational world. Jim's presumes legitimacy in possessing 'superior' knowledge of 'how things work around here' and allows him to view himself as having authority on both the form design and the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Lucy, on the other hand, is enraged, as she believes she possesses more contextual knowledge than her supervisor. This is doubly frustrating considering how lowly the task of preparing the form is in Lucy's estimation. This leads, for Lucy at least, to comparative positioning of the self relative to Jim and frustration with being treated unfairly. The return of Jim from the manager's office changes the dynamic significantly. Lucy's perception is that the process Jim has perpetrated on Lucy, has been repeated on Jim by Fiona. The revisions clearly return the form to its original format leading to an uncomfortable situation (for Jim at least) in which the unspoken interpretation is that Lucy is able to design a form and Jim's inputs merely constitute power-centred interference. Lucy's silence irritates Jim to the extent that he feels the need to both apologise and simultaneously reassert his superior position in the hierarchy. For Lucy, this final point reaffirms her characterisation of the supervisor as an unreasonable incompetent who relies on overt power to maintain his position. For Lucy, our role as interviewer/researchers is challenged as she seeks to draw us into her interpretation of events. The way she tells the story invites empathy from us and our apparent acceptance of the story was probably taken as support for its validity by Lucy.

For Lucy, there appears to be a separation of current-self from real-self. Her 'real self' is an intelligent person, capable of knowledge-based tasks and sophistication. Her current-self is an underling to supervisors who are not her equal. Indeed Lucy has had a series of jobs that conform to this general pattern and it seems to her that the organisational world has been incapable of perceiving her abilities, and hence, changing jobs has not resulted in getting any closer to self-actualisation. Where Ben's narrative has an epic structure in that Ben, as hero, has been temporarily held back, but will reach a transformed state in the future. By contrast, Lucy's narrative has a tragic style. Despite several attempts, and for no obvious reason, circumstances beyond her control conspire to keep her in unsatisfactory and frustrating power relationships. In this setting, the episode with the form is not part of an epic journey from current-self to future-self, but of a tragic journey from the potential of real-self to current-self, and this is one instance of many that 'confirm' the direction of travel.

If Lucy were to recognise the world as process, some of her claims to superiority and the associated frustration may well be reduced. However, an attempt to remove the dualisms from the situation would entail relinquishing her fantasies of 'real self' and the supervisor as the 'unreasonable other' who symbolises the system that perpetuates Lucy's current-self. It may be that some of Jim's changes to the form were important and were retained by Fiona. It may be that Fiona really did change the form back to 'almost entirely' Lucy's version. However, it may equally be that Lucy's continual assumption of rightness was a frustration for Jim that led him to behave in power-centric ways. Such possibilities are ruled out by Lucy's dualist perception of the situation. If she were to accept such possibilities they could constitute an attack on her 'real-self' fantasy. If real-self were to be regarded as intrinsically part of current-self, and hence at least partly responsible for the currently undesirable experience of self/other, the function of the 'distraction' from the possibility of such a reality would be lost. Lucy would be left with a position of realising that not only this relationship,

but the similar situations experienced in the past, are, at least partly, a result of her own shortcomings.

Concluding Remarks

This article considers the relevance of Krishnamurti to the critique by Knights (2001) of Willmott's (1994) account of a post-dualist state. Through an examination of the epistemological and chronological assumptions that underpin this call, we have not only critiqued the modernist conception of the journey, but have argued that it is one of the obstacles that stands between ourselves and the post-dualist experience. Through the writings of Krishnamurti, we examined the barrier to experiencing process presented by our use of time to order the world and secure self and that the cumulative assumptions of knowledge acquisition were a part of this process. We have argued that this may be used to answer, at least part of, the criticism that Knights raises of Willmott's view of post-dualist experience of being. However, we argue that far from being the sustained euphoric state of emancipation suggested by Willmott's 'glimpses of nonduality', sustaining a post-dualistic experience involves the loss of distractions through which nihilism may be avoided and facing the fears that constitute one's self. Through illustrative narratives we have identified two forms of dualistic self; current/future self and current/real self. We have argued that, for different reasons, our research participant's assumed journey towards the desired future self may be delusory. The epic journey from 'current' to 'future' self, in which the hero attributes agency to the self to make things 'better', and the tragic journey from 'real' to 'current' self, in which the 'real' self is constrained by circumstances, are both functional for the people involved. Even though both characters are dissatisfied, the narratives serve to protect the self. For example, in the epic narrative there is a belief in a better future, while, in the tragic narrative, there is a belief that the self is blameless in the current circumstances. Hence, the journey-based narratives of dualistic-self function as 'distractions' from the pain of being. Removing these dualistic narratives in search of a post-dualistic state may be advantageous from the perspective of those advocating post-dualism, but achieving and sustaining a state of post-dualism necessitates facing existential fears and negative assessments of the self.

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the authors   Peter McInnes is a lecturer at Strathclyde University. He is currently engaged on the arduous journey towards a PhD studying identity dynamics for which he suspects there is no destination, even if his colleagues assure him otherwise. Along the way he has found enduring interest and distraction researching the relation of technology to individual identity and the emotional, embodied, experience of people at work.

Address: University of Strathclyde, Graduate School of Business, 199 Cathedral Street, Glasgow, G4 0QU

E-mail: peter@gsb.strath.ac.uk

Nic Beech works at Strathclyde University studying the dynamics and dissolution of identity. He has a particular interest in free range chicken farming in Scotland and by way of contrast has recently been spending time researching in the health service and financial services.
Address: University of Strathclyde, Graduate School of Business, 199 Cathedral Street, Glasgow, G4 0QU
E-mail: beech@gsb.strath.ac.uk