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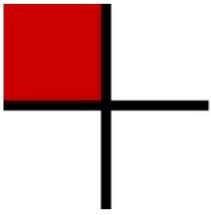
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Vorsprung durch Technik?

Chris Land and Steffen Böhm

Modern times: half a century after Columbus' four journeys, the orbited, uncovered, represented, occupied and used earth presents itself as a body that is combined into a dense weave of traffic movements and telecommunication routines. Virtual shells have replaced the once-imagined ether sky. Through radio-electronic systems the forgetting of distance is technically implemented in literally all centres of power and consumption. In aeronautical terms the earth is reduced to a aeroplane route of no more than fifty hours; satellite orbiting and *Mir*-circulation time units of ninety minutes and less are now standard practice; radio and light messages have pulled the earth together almost to a standing point – it rotates as a time-compacted globe in an electronic web that surrounds it like a second atmosphere. (Sloterdijk, *Sphären II: Globen*)

According to Heidegger the modern world is an image, a *Gebild*, a structured perception, which is put and held in place by the *Gestell* – TV and computer screens, stock-exchanges, business schools and automobiles, which enframe or emplace the world for us. The goings-on, the hustle, of this emplacement as well as its perception is *technology*, or maybe better, *technics*, as Heidegger suggests in his essay '*Die Frage nach der Technik*' ('The Question Concerning Technology', or, 'Questing After Technics'). Now, for Heidegger technics is not just technology: Tamagochi is never just an electronic toy, the Internet is not just an information and communication tool, a cookbook is more than a guide to preparing meals, skyscrapers are not just buildings to house people. The power plant does not just generate electricity, but is the concrete (em)place(ment) where modernity reveals itself as technics, not just in the form of power-generating technology, but also as a specific cultural, economic and political network effect. In other words, the power plant (*Kraftwerk*) brings forward a world, like a work of art (*Kunstwerk*), which puts its actors into a specific place: seeing a 'natural' landscape is to go for a drive through the country; buying goods is to go for a Sunday shopping trip to a Super-Mall at a motorway junction; relaxing the body and mind is to go on a holiday trip to Mallorca or Nepal, gazing at the other through tourist eyes, organised by a now global industry.

Hence, following Heidegger's terminology, perhaps we should understand technology in an expanded sense. Not just as a technical artefact or tool, but as a component of our sense perceptions. As Oswald Spengler put in writing in the early part of the twentieth century:

We think only in horse-power now; we cannot look at a waterfall without mentally turning it into electric power; we cannot survey a countryside full of posturing cattle without thinking of its exploitation as a source of meat-supply...

An animal-becoming-McDonalds? But further:

...we cannot look at the beautiful old handwork of an unspoilt primitive people without wishing to replace it by a modern technical process. (Spengler, *Man and Technics*)

A Greek vase or the heat between pre-modern faces: both André Spicer and René ten Bos & Ruud Kaulingfreks open their discussions on the question of technology (or should we say the questing after technics?) with a somewhat romantic return to a pre-divisional pre-technological ideal. Spicer's looks, with Heidegger, to the ancient Greek vase as an example of a *poiēsis* that is both art and technics. Ten Bos and Kaulingfreks look, with Sloterdijk, to the middle ages for a model of the relationship between faces that is still full of a human passion, embodied desire and sweating brows. But now we moderns have split the world. For Heidegger, like Spengler, modernity invites us to see the world as objective resource – tools and technical rationality dominating our understanding of life itself. Ten Bos and Kaulingfreks turn attention to the cool, even cold, technological interfaces of the Internet generation. No more the heat and passion between faces, now just the cold, objective and objectifying glare of the screen as mirror. But neither writer is satisfied with reporting on this modern state of separation. Nor are they suggesting a return to a pre-modern world of vases and hot-flushes. Instead both seek a reformulation of the question of technology by also considering the human – the other side of the object/subject dyad – as a cyborg who knows nothing of this dualism. We cannot return to an idealised past that never existed. Nor can we continue to live as we do. Escape is not only imperative. It is the only option. Ultimately, even the face is inhuman: "In truth there are only inhumanities, but very different ones, of very different natures and speeds" (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*). Not one humanity, but a multiplicity of inhumanities. The only illusion was the belief in one face of man – Jesus Christ on the Turin Shroud. But where does this leave the question of human rights? Perhaps we are better to leave that one to the police, or the 'international community'.

In a strange sense, the question of technology is raised in a more general sense by the events of September 11th, 2001, when terrorists, apparently members of the Al Qaeda network, flew passenger planes into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. Gary Gemmill's paper on the question of 'Leadership in the Shadow of '9/11'' takes the consequences of these events head on, by examining the psychodynamic forces driving responses to these events, and particularly the role of 'leadership' in these responses. On a somewhat different tack, Spicer's review of Paul Virilio's *The Information Bomb*, in his 'Technical Questions', also considers the role of terrorism in a way that is particularly relevant for the events of 9/11. In choosing the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre as their targets, those responsible for these events struck at the heart of the symbolic order of US global dominance and the New World Order: the combination of military might and an increasingly global network of commerce, working in coordination with the interests of a single national government. Indeed, rumour has it that a third plane was planned to crash into the Capitol Building, but it is interesting that this is the one attack that failed,

a coincidence that nevertheless points toward the ultimate redundancy of national governments in a new world order that some have dubbed 'Empire'. While Goliath W. Bush makes plans for the new, super-fast, high-tech, son of star-wars missile defence system, David loads his sling-shot. The super-power, with the most sophisticated weaponry, explosive powers and defence systems was attacked not by another superpower with even more powerful technology, despite the paranoid fantasies of *Independence Day*. Instead it was a decidedly low-tech solution that dealt the blow. Rather than pulling ahead in an ultimately self-defeating arms race, Al Qaeda used the equivalent of a really big rock. The planes were not designed as weapons. They were not bombs or missiles but simply very large objects that were literally thrown at their targets. That the most primitive of weapons, the knife, was used to gain control of them, similarly points to the paradoxes of high technology, a point that was well realised by Frank Herbert. In *Dune* the most advanced body shielding armour can protect a warrior against any number of laser and projectile based weapons, but a knife – so long as it moves *slowly* enough – can still kill with relative ease. When faced with an enemy much faster, and more powerful, the race of war cannot be won. But competitive advantage is not a matter of absolute speed. It is a question of relative rates of deterritorialization. The sling-shot/plane-as-missile was not just a perfect example of lateral or creative thinking, it was also a relative slowing: a becoming-imperceptible that simply slipped below the threshold of digital, high-speed-high-tech-defence-system.

But what was 9/11 anyway? Repeated *ad nauseam* on our television screens the images of planes impacting the Twin Towers meant that tragedy and death were first and foremost passively consumed as spectacle. Certainly that spectacle might have served to bring some people together with a sense of community in the face of adversity, but it also served to help people to forget. Indeed, according to Frederick Jameson, this forgetting is one of the primary functions of the postmodern mass media. Disconnected on the screen, viewed time and time again from every conceivable angle and viewpoint, the image took on a schizophrenic clarity, dissociated from any framework of meaning or narrative, no less shocking for its apparent lack of reality. If there was a narrative to frame this tragedy, it was the recollection of so many similar events, simulated by the Hollywood culture industry. That we should look for a hero at such times – a strong leader – is hardly surprising. In his discussion of this turn to leadership in the shadow of 9/11, Gary Gemmill suggests that perhaps we should reflect a little more on our selves and our responses to violence, than seeking out an external enemy and demanding that a leader rise to take revenge. Rather than seeing the horror of meaningless spectacle stare back at us from the screen as a reflection of our own shadow-side, perhaps there is a way of finding a different interface. Like ten Bos and Kaulingfreks, the suggestion is of a face-to-face relationship of group learning and therapy, of emotional exchange and interchange rather than repressed anger and self-loathing bursting through as retribution.

But perhaps there are darker forces at work here. Projecting Baudrillard we could suggest that the point of 9/11 was that it *did* happen. It was a massive media event, a machine-reproduced image as if in a frenzy of overproduction. In his paper on Bataille and the general economy of information systems, Alexander Styhre suggests that just as the Incan economy was characterised by an excess that was disposed of through ritual sacrifice or potlatch, so the surplus of information produced by management information systems presents the organization with a similar problem: an unusable

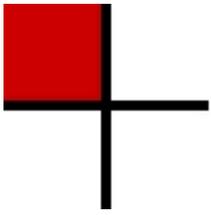
excess that must, in some way, be disposed of. The question of excess is inseparable from the question of method, or to stick with our earlier theme: technique. Similarly, each of Rehn, Gemmill and Wilson's contributions to this issue raise questions about the methods and techniques of the social scientists, of critique. In 'Pretty Ugly: Notes on the Moral Economy of Method' Alf Rehn shows that scientific methods are often dichotomised along the now well-known formula 'you are either with us or...'; that is, they are based on clear divisions of inside/outside, do-rights/do-wrongs, true/false, "divisions between orthodoxy and the great unwashed. Those who have the method-capital, the correct tools of knowledge, and those who wander, poor, in the world." Social scientific methods do not exist in a vacuum, but are embedded in the economic, cultural and political goings-on of modern technics, Heidegger's *Gestell*. In short, methods are both economic and moral. It is this moral economy of Alvesson and Deetz's methods that Elisabeth Wilson questions in her review of *Doing Critical Management Research*. Besides pointing to important omissions of this book – class, race, gender and postcolonialism – she questions the 'cookbook' style of their version of critical enquiry into management and organization. Can critique be reduced to a set of methods, however 'postmodern' these might be? Perhaps there is only a fine line between critique and method as a technology of exploitation; the appropriation of other's work and capital.

In his attempt to formulate the rules of engagement for an etiological version of the war against terrorism, Gary Gemmill raises the question of method in a pedagogic and therapeutic context. Are there tools and techniques with which the organizational psychologist can help groups to confront their shadow and develop a mature autonomy, rather than constantly seeking to avoid responsibility by displacing their insecurities onto the perceived need for a leader? Or does even this role lead to a deskilling, as the therapist takes centre stage, distracting from the need for a self-analysis?

As we contemplate the question of empowerment and autonomy, it is difficult not to be reminded of the new managerialism that has 'liberated' us all from the stifling old rigidity of bureaucracy. It is the rejection of bureaucracy, both by management gurus and respectable academics, that Paul du Gay takes issue with in his *In Praise of Bureaucracy*, reviewed here by Thomas Armbrüster. In a critique that has a particular relevance for the new managerialism sweeping the universities and the European public sector more generally, du Gay and Armbrüster overturn Bauman's now virtually canonical Holocaust thesis to suggest that the bureaucratic ethos of legitimacy was actually opposed to these events, rather than enabling them. Du Gay's claim is effectively that the methods and techniques of the bureau have a moral economy that in many ways is superior to the performance driven ethic of the new managerialism, excellence and public/private partnership.

The final question of technique or method, which deserves the last word here, is raised in Søren Buhl Pedersen's obituary for Pierre Bourdieu. In losing Bourdieu the academic world has lost one of its greatest thinkers, someone who never shirked the responsibility of the critic and intellectual by falling back upon stale, tried and tested methods, techniques and formulae. His approach to method was always rigorous but flexible to adapt to the question at hand, and reflexive enough to prevent his absorption by the totalising machineries of academic knowledge production that figure prominently

amongst his studies. Nevertheless, with this note of farewell we should not lament Bourdieu's passing, but be grateful that he tarried so long.



Life Between Faces*

René ten Bos and Ruud Kaulingfreks

abstract

In this article, we explore the space between faces, also known as interfaces. We argue that this space can only be properly understood if we are willing to abandon an isolationist logic. Metaphors of contagion, infection, radiation and heat are employed to counteract this logic and to describe what we think interfaces are all about. Many of these metaphors can be found in the work of Peter Sloterdijk, a German philosopher who is relatively unknown in the Anglophone world. The article may also serve as a short introduction to some of his ideas. We relate them to those of Deleuze, Guattari and Žižek and conclude that humanist ideas about subjectivity undermine a proper understanding of interfaces.

Introduction

Our intention in this article is to elaborate on the popular concept of ‘interfaces’. We want to argue that this concept can only be properly understood if we are willing to abandon the isolationist logic that traditionally underlies much theorising in sociology and philosophy. That is, we claim that the idea of an interface can only be meaningfully explored if we are using metaphors of contagion and infection. Following Peter Sloterdijk, a German philosopher whose work has been largely ignored in the Anglophone world, we hope to make clear that these metaphors have a long standing in western thinking and can be traced back to the Renaissance. We use Sloterdijk’s interpretation of Dante’s *Inferno* and of Marsilio Ficino to make clear what might be at stake in the debates on interfaces. Later in the article, we relate these ideas to those expressed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari as well as Slavoj Žižek. We do not intend to provide a neat discussion of the basic arguments contained in the works of the philosophers mentioned here, but we utilise some of their ideas to express our concerns about human and perhaps not-so-human forms of togetherness in a world that seems to be entangled in a paradox of isolation (individualism, self-management, hedonism, etc.) and connection (communication, togetherness, network, etc.).

* We would like to thank Steffen Böhm, Martin Parker and two anonymous reviewers of this journal for their useful comments.

The sun in your chest

For a long time people believed that quasi-mystical experiences such as falling in love were in fact cases of poisoning or contagion. This belief assumed that the interior space of the human body was a kind of forge containing liquid substances that were able to melt and mix with other, possibly alien, substances, a process with often unforeseen and hence dangerous consequences. For people living in a Cartesian world, with all its logic of purity, it is difficult to understand how literally the physiology of intermingling liquids was taken. However, for many writers in the Middle Ages togetherness in the amorous sense of the word was not only something that belonged to a spiritual realm, but also something which implied a “subtly physiological conditioning with remote effects” (Sloterdijk, 1998: 37). What does it mean when we, post-Cartesians, are expected to take this idea in a literal sense?

Sloterdijk provides us with the example of Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) who argues that the passion between a particular man and a particular woman is caused by mutual eye-contact. This implies that two persons looking at each other are not at all engaged in an innocent process. Ficino conceives of it as a radiological event during which both partners cast rays towards each other. These rays are, he believes, poisonous, basically because they contain “subtle and nebulous blood” which is left behind in the heart region of the beloved partner. Once arrived there, it is quickly transubstantiated in less subtle blood with normal thickness. Lovers looking at each other are hence quite literally engaged in a process of contamination. This becomes particularly evident when one realises that blood left behind in the heart region of a partner longs to go back to the vessels it came from. Consequently, this partner develops an unstoppable desire to be with the other, a desire we know as love.

Note, however, that there is more than the intermingling of substances. The imagery invoked by Ficino is also *permeated* by radiology. The heart is an organ of radiation and emanation, or, as Sloterdijk puts it, it is the sun of all organs. Since the heart is where the soul resides, it is not foolish to argue that the soul also displays certain radiological and emanating properties. Renaissance psychology indeed seems to assume that the soul is a sort of “radio room for transactions with inspiring others” (1998: 125). Togetherness, Sloterdijk points out, has distinctive radiological aspects.

In a post-Cartesian world, the charm of Ficino’s psychology has become somewhat elusive. Where togetherness was once understood as invoking a circulation of high temperatures, that is, where suns, high-energy fusion, and bubbling and boiling liquids were once the dominant metaphors to describe what could be going on between people, somewhere in the 16th or 17th century a massive disenchantment and cooling down of the heart is beginning to impose itself on the minds of people. The rise of anatomic science was crucial for this process. Cutting and opening bodies taught people that they were, if not mentally then at least physically, utterly alone in the cosmos. In the new paradigm, the body came to be understood as an entity in its own right, or, to be more precise, as a functional unit incapable of smoothly entering into relationships with other units. Anatomy, it was believed, provided evidence that the human body was, if anything, an autonomous laboratory. Importantly, this cooling procedure implied a complete redesign of the cardiac function: Once a Sun King amidst other organs, it now

became a machine, a pump, or, to paraphrase Sloterdijk, the chief clerk in the blood circulation. Subtle physiology was replaced by bureaucratic mechanics. Contagion and poison became illegal and were substituted by organisation and system. But let us return to Ficino's world for a moment in order to come to a closer understanding of what it is that we seem to have lost.

Interfacial tenderness and terror

In Ficino's view of the world, human togetherness equals *concordia*: the unanimous togetherness of hearts. The ability to affect the heart with eye-rays assumes the presence of a space where four eyes can meet. This space, however, conditions not only the kind of erotic or rather exceptional eye-contacts described by Ficino but also more innocent and less radical kinds of intersubjectivity than the amorous one. But even in such scenarios there is an understanding that faces can do something to each other, or put differently, that faces engage in infectious relationships. The space between four eyes is never an empty field or a vacuum but permeated by turbulent radiation.

Sloterdijk shows us how this should be understood by an extended discussion of two of the finest frescoes painted by Giotto: *The Meeting at the Golden Gate* and *The Betrayal of Christ*. In both pieces of art, the principal persons look each other straight in the eye, but the differences between what is going on between Joachim and Anna on the one hand and Jesus and Judas on the other are striking. The first fresco depicts a happy meeting where both partners, Joachim and Anna, perfectly know what to expect of each other. Each, writes Bruce Cole (1976: 76), "has been told of the miracle that is to take place, and they are overjoyed. This old and barren couple will soon have a child, a fact they both know and share in this great meeting." Cole points out that there is an atmosphere of solidity and stability in their embrace which is symbolised by the halo that "unites them as they tenderly hold each other."

The second fresco depicts a meeting where tenderness is fully absent and togetherness takes an entirely different, more horrifying form. Amidst a crowd of agitated and violent people, Christ, who is fully aware of what has happened, looks down at Judas whose "distorted features resemble the face of some mean animal." (Cole, 1976: 86). In contrast with the first meeting, there is no halo that unites Jesus and Judas. There is only one that circles around Jesus (and also one around Peter who is to the far left end of the painting), indicating that he is always willing to build spheres of togetherness. Judas, on the other hand, clearly remains a lonely and inner-directed subject. Both look each other in the eye but understand that togetherness between them is, if anything, an illusion. It is, we submit, the eye-contact which makes the fresco so dramatic. As Cole (1976: 87) points out, "[t]his is one of the most horrible confrontations, not only for Jesus but [also] for Judas, who hanged himself afterward." Cole adds: "How much more dramatic is this split second than that before the kiss, or the kiss itself." It is only by virtue of an eye-contact that Judas comes to realise the magnitude of his crime and that Christ begins to resign to his fate.

The interfacial space can thus be seen as a site of tenderness or terror. No matter which of both poles dominate the space, it is also haunted by mystery. In both of Giotto's frescoes, one can observe that the interfacial space is filled with enigmatic and contorted facial parts (which belong to other, mostly anonymous bystanders). In the case of the terrifying encounter, the facial parts between Jesus and Judas denote, according to Sloterdijk, the illusory nature of their togetherness. In the case of the happy encounter, the facial parts between Joachim and Anna indicate that even if togetherness is successful and people are willing to come to mutual understanding and inspiration, enigma is inevitable. Note, however, that the encounter of Jesus with Judas is all but enigmatic: the eye contact indicates that both men know exactly what they have in store for each other. In the case of Joachim and Anna, there is an understanding that they can trust each other, but this is not tantamount to saying that their relationship is not puzzling.

Sloterdijk points out that on these frescoes even Jesus is bestowed with a unique human face, something for which Giotto was severely criticised, most notably in East-Europe where orthodox scholars pointed out that the idea of Jesus having a human face was no less than heretic. For Giotto, however, Jesus is not only the son of God but also a unique person with certain psychological traits, that is, a *uomo singulare* who wants to be recognised as such. From Giotto onwards, faces have become the site of psychological richness. Most notably, Giotto's work in the Arena Chapel in Padua challenges visitors to develop the heretofore unknown skill of 'reading' human faces. Giotto made the idea that faces are the condition *sine qua non* of humanity imaginable. To put it in words used much later by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the genesis of a human being is inconceivable without *visagéité* or 'faciality'. It is the face that makes us human. Human encounters are typically taking place in an interfacial space. Giotto has shown us what this might entail.

As we shall soon elaborate in somewhat more detail, Sloterdijk criticises Deleuze and Guattari for the particular way they use the idea of faciality. He himself introduces the notion of 'protraction' (*pro-trahere*, portray), which is to be understood as the biologically and culturally evolutionary process by means of which beaks, snouts, and muzzles are slowly transmogrified into faces. Whatever the evolution may be, Sloterdijk is convinced that it is also a "facial-genetic process ultimately leading to the threshold of 'portrayability'". The process of protraction is what arouses an environmental awareness in people: it is what enables them to understand that there are other creatures with faces around them. As instruments of evolution, Sloterdijk contends, faces are more important than brains or hands. To sustain this claim he points to the biological importance of the face when it comes to the selection of partners and argues that their faces and eyes radiate certain "welcome qualities". Faces call each other into being. They flourish in an interfacial circle of mutual openness. To summarise, Giotto was among the first to understand that faces are "sculptures of attentiveness" (Sloterdijk, 1998: 168).

We will now set ourselves to the task of finding out whether we are still able to see faces in this way.

Icy seductiveness

Sloterdijk disagrees with Deleuze and Guattari in that he, like Wyschogrod (1990), believes in the universality of protraction, something which is emphatically denied in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In so doing, Sloterdijk takes the sting out of the social criticism on which Deleuze and Guattari base their understanding of faciality. Yet, we will see below that he is also in agreement with at least some of Deleuze and Guattari's contentions. In order to understand his somewhat ambivalent attitude towards Deleuze and Guattari, we have to look more closely at the role of the face in their social criticism.

They start by observing that the face represents a sort of anomaly in the sense that it is both something material and something ideal. More straightforwardly, the face is a part of a human body that begot a certain culturally determined pretence of ideality. We should notice here right away that this facial ideality might be seen as a major effect of the process of protraction: the face of another person makes us aware of her alterity and vulnerability, a point also made by Wyschogrod (who in turn follows Levinas, 1990: 229). For Deleuze and Guattari, however, the pretences of facial ideality should be deconstructed and they start this exercise with typical aggression:

The face is not a universal. It is not even that of the *white man*; it is white man himself, with his broad white cheeks and the black hole of his eyes. The face is Christ. The face is the typical European, what Ezra Pound called the average sensual man, in short, the ordinary everyday Erotomaniac. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 176, emphasis added)

We submit that these remarks on the face are intended to undo the idealistic lessons about interfaces that people from Giotto to Sloterdijk or Wyschogrod have in mind. Rather than being an instrument for the creation of tender or terrifying forms of togetherness, the face is an instrument, Deleuze and Guattari argue, that seeks to undermine togetherness. The invocation of the *white man* in the quotation above points to the excluding rather than including effects of the face. For Deleuze and Guattari the face is a rather terrifying idea which allows one part of the body to dominate the rest of it. The face dominates the body, it dictates who is human and who is not, and, most importantly, it allows us to construct the world in binary oppositions. As such it can be compared with the Central Processing Unit of a computer which helps us to organise the world in terms of oppositions. Rather than being the hallmark of humanity, the face stands for inhumanity and merely points to the zombie-like emptiness of the white man's interior. In a sense, this emptiness, or more accurately, this 'black hole' ceaselessly scans a white surface on the opposite side, its task being to organize this surface in cool structures and dichotomies which allow us to distort phenomena in such a way that the intelligence of the white man is able to cope with them. The face takes care that human beings are men *or* women, adults *or* children, leaders *or* followers, enemies *or* friends.

Such a deconstruction of the face shows us that interfaces are not so much spaces of radiating heat as spaces where a cool selection mechanism is in operation that tells subjects who is and who is not to be excluded. The face allows for a politics of contradiction: it tells people who are entitled to togetherness and who are not. "The face", Deleuze and Guattari claim, "is a politics". Rather than arguing that the face

allows for a space where morality (Levinas) or togetherness (Sloterdijk) can become possible, the face also allows for domination and exclusion.

Before entering into Sloterdijk's response to Deleuze and Guattari's challenge we wish to re-emphasise the absence of heat in the interfacial space described by the two French philosophers. We suggest that they talk about three sorts of interfaces: (a) the black machine against the white wall; (b) a phenomenon inscribed on the white wall against a second phenomenon inscribed on it; (c) 'yes' against 'no' as possibilities of choice. No contagion or radiation takes places in the interfacial space described here. The atmosphere is icy. Not that the perspectives offered here are unattractive, on the contrary, the virginity of the white wall is breathtaking and offers a plethora of possibilities for binary inscription. The impenetrability of the black hole is stunning because it allows for an unprecedented and amoral decisiveness. The seductiveness of these icy atmospheres lies in the idea of seeing the world as a place where decision-making is relatively easy: All you need to do is to say yes or no. Indeed, the seduction of these binary possibilities is so powerful as to make it quite difficult to imagine that the world can also be approached in a different way. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari extensively try to deconstruct the binary oppositions generated by cool interfaces. They are not interested in happily bringing the opposite pairs to a synthesis as in Hegel's dialectics. Rather, they show respect for the distance between these pairs but do not wish to entail that they are mutually exclusive. Indeed, we have to conceive these pairs as opposites that can do something to each other. At this point Sloterdijk and Deleuze and Guattari have something important in common. Their stress on the possibility of contagion also evidences that, objectively speaking, there need not be a black hole scanning a white wall in the first place.

Yet, the idea of such an icy interface is introduced by Deleuze and Guattari to make clear that faces have a proclivity towards domination. Faciality is hence a fiction which in the name of face either renders the face faceless or excludes other faces from the interfacial space. This can only be achieved by a machine that has been designed to prevent the development of a four-eyes interface. Simply put, it thus prevents us from engaging in high-energy relationships.

Interfacial nightmares

Although there is no doubt, as we will see in this section, that Sloterdijk is in sympathy with much of the social criticism that can be found in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, he refuses to solely identify the face with power. His descriptions of the face are not primarily related to cool interfaces where the possibility of contagion has to be excluded. On the contrary, he takes issue with Deleuze and Guattari on this point and argues that there are and have been interfacial spaces where faces can infect each other. He writes, in sum, about interfacial hothouses rather than about icy machines of faciality.

But in spite of this difference in focus, Sloterdijk is much more sympathetic to Deleuze and Guattari than Wyschogrod who starts with the (Levinasian) observation that ...

the despotic face masks what is common to faces: the manifestation of mortality that, irrespective of race, gender, and class, is expressed in every face, a mortality that the attitudinal specificity of each face either allows to become transparent or conceals. Even when faces express types - the artist, the soldier, the schoolgirl - there is always already a primordial signification attributable to them, the mortality of the existent. (Wyschogrod, 1990: 226)

For Wyschogrod, it is clear that the human face expresses vulnerability and mortality and she quite rightly relates the refusal of Deleuze and Guattari to accept this to their bio-philosophy in which death is redefined as an event in life during which intensities, energies, and flows are redistributed in multiple ways. In other words, for Deleuze and Guattari the face cannot bespeak death, simply because there is no death in the universe they describe. Consequently, the facial claim to vulnerability, finitude, or mortality cannot but be ideological and political.

Against this claim Wyschogrod holds that each attempt to further deconstruct the face amounts to acting upon it with violence. Her criticism of Deleuze and Guattari is emotional and angry. She does not understand why they want to deconstruct perhaps the only reminder we have of the other's essential vulnerability and mortality. "The guillotine", she writes, "is so often regarded with horror not only because it kills but because in concentrating upon the head, it violates the source of the proscription against murder" (1990: 227). The face, she adds, may indeed have many meanings, but it always "exhibits the possibility of its own negation" (1990: 229) and therefore renders superfluous each attempt at further deconstruction. Generosity and compassion are far better, indeed, saintly candidates for responding to this vulnerability of face than philosophical deconstruction.

As we hope to show, Sloterdijk's criticism of Deleuze and Guattari differs from Wyschogrod's in that he concedes that they may have provided a rather astute description of what might turn out to be an interfacial nightmare of truly horrifying proportions. His criticism starts, as we have seen, with questioning Deleuze and Guattari's claim that the face is not universal. Sloterdijk points out that interfacial hothouses have come into being everywhere in this world. The facial genesis or, as Sloterdijk prefers to call it, protraction has allured people from all over the world and can be seen as omnipresent plastic surgery. Admittedly, there are local differences but they are to be understood as regional descriptions of something universal.

Sloterdijk thus prefers to start with interfacial hothouses rather than with icy machinery. He notes that such hothouses are entwined with trust and gaiety, because facial radiation or resonance is often a happy contact: think here of a mother and child beaming at each other. However, there are many exceptions where happiness is painfully absent. Interfacial hothouses are also places where faces are able to spell trouble: the angry look of the same mother who is about to punish her child. These hothouses are, as Sloterdijk points out, also places where punishment, tasks assignment, or obedience are able to flourish. From this it should be clear that Sloterdijk does not extol the interfacial hothouse, something which brings him quite close to Deleuze and Guattari: he understands that the interfacial promises may turn out to be very disappointing indeed. Living between faces can become nightmarish.

Sloterdijk also hints, in line with Deleuze and Guattari, at the exclusive effects of face. He points out that there is a long tradition in Western and other societies in which women were simply denied a face and in which the non-facial aspects of women were regarded to be more important: in ancient art, pelvis, bosom, or vulva were the dominant physical attributes in masculine representations of women. The very idea that women could master the art of participating in interfacial happiness simply did not occur to male artists. Where the masculine face slowly began to emerge as a theme for sculptors or painters, the feminine face was destined to remain much more obscure than, say, the face of a masculine God. Sloterdijk goes so far as to suggest that the obscurity of the feminine face is the reason why the beaming interface of mother-child has been so painfully absent in the arts and that this may indeed provide us with an explanation of why interfaces could become sites of social catastrophe (see Giotto's representation of Jesus and Judas). Much earlier than Giotto people knew that interfacial hothouses could become sites of terror. Masks and mask painting were ways to evade such sites: interfacial catastrophe could be avoided if one was able to ban the face from a sphere of intimacy.

In other words, interfacial hothouses are places of risk that can only be avoided by stopping the process of protraction. This is exactly, Sloterdijk suggests, a task carried out with perfection by monitors, cameras, assessment forms, and internet. By means of technology we are able to replace protraction by distraction and abstraction. What we now commonly accept as the meaning of the word 'interface' is no longer the space between two faces but the space between face and non-face, perhaps even between non-face and non-face (1998: 193). What we now witness with the rise of new media is a massive de-portrayal of the world. Whatever is left of the face will be reduced to the facial machine whose major task it is to relentlessly carry on the further de-portrayal of the world. This comes, we submit, quite close to Deleuze and Guattari's nightmare: the face has become nothing but an idea that paradoxically serves to efface itself. Rather than being a possible source of happiness, the face has become rather uncanny in Western civilization. How could it have come so far?

Lost gaiety

Lurking behind these discussions are intuitions about the possibility or impossibility of happiness. Giotto's sculptures of attentiveness create spaces of radiating happiness; Deleuze and Guattari's icy interfaces, on the other hand, seem to rule out happiness. We suggest that this difference represents a substantial and epochal shift in the way philosophers and artists have come to think about the possibility of happiness. For the Greeks, happiness was always closely related to the gaze that people can share with each other. 'Our original idea of happiness', writes the Italian philosopher Massimo Cacciari, "is dependent on a culture of seeing, on a culture of the gaze; our happiness is originally a happiness of seeing, a happiness of having the ability to see. The perfectly clear gaze stands for happiness and joy" (1981: 24). In passing we may note that for the old Greeks happiness and theorising (*theorein* = gazing at) go hand in hand. One cannot gaze without feeling happy and one cannot be happy without a gaze. Joy and happiness are, Cacciari suggests, ways of seeing festivities and this is ultimately what *theorein* and

being a theoretician are all about: feasting one's eyes on the Gods and the marvels of the world.

The Romans already started to tinker with these jubilant ideas about communities of happy theoreticians. For them, *contemplatio* is not so much related with seeing as with cutting (*temnoo*) or isolating. From now on theorising is no longer what happens in a public space but what goes on in a well-demarcated area (*templum*) and the happiness of the theoretician is now closely linked to the availability of isolated spaces. The inward gaze slowly becomes more important than the outward gaze the Greeks were so jubilant about. From the Romans onward, happiness can now be achieved in isolation or by wilfully shutting one's eyes for the marvels of the world. In the Roman age, the kind of happiness linked with *theorein* is no longer able to arouse astronomers, augurs and philosophers. Now the theoretician becomes able to see a transcendent god who no longer laughs and partakes in worldly and godly festivities but who has risen above the world and can only be seen in special and privileged places. The happy gaze disappears and is replaced by a most serious, aesthetic and even melancholic gaze that knows only too well that it will no longer be able to fulfil its unrelenting desire for that lost Greek gaiety.

Nonetheless, Ficino's theory of intermingling liquids and Giotto's frescos still bespeak the intuition that happiness is not to be found in isolation but between faces. In this sense, they can be said to maintain the old Greek understanding that gazes, theorising, and happiness are interrelated. Nebulous blood and auras are thus theoretical in the old Greeks sense of the word. Nowadays, it has become extremely difficult for artists to paint faces and interfacial atmospheres that are rife with happiness. Where we see faces, we almost automatically sense despair, melancholy, or aestheticism. Take, for example, Giacometti's portraits and we may get a closer idea of the icy seductiveness we wrote about in relation to Deleuze and Guattari. In Giacometti's portraits, we look at faces but these faces are strangely detached from life as if they were frozen in an uncanny void. Giacometti's world is one of withdrawal and remoteness and forces the spectator not to engage with the faces she sees but rather to look inward. This world induces *contemplatio*. As Maurice Blanchot (1971: 247) argued, "Giacometti demands of the spectator a relationship of distance, of absolute distance." In this distance, we merely see a presence that hints at the indelible strangeness of the other, of the world, even of ourselves. Rather than inviting us to engage in a radiating relationship, we see that the faces have become instruments of distance, alienation and detachment. "The longer I look to a face", says Giacometti (1958: 12), "the more unknown it becomes to me. It retracts in the rungs of an unknown ladder."

Giacometti's principal subject seems to be the loss of communication and in embroidering on it he is full of melancholia as to what might have been lost in the interfaces that have become so icy. In his faces we see, if anything, our own desolate selves rather than the rejoicing of Anna and Joachim. His paintings show the kind of interfaces that are contemplated upon by Deleuze and Guattari even though the latter's anti-melancholic stance is entirely alien to Giacometti. Gazing at each other has become elusive for us, post-Cartesians. Our eyes don't see anymore. They have slowly begun to eat. While *Mona Lisa* gazes at us in a benign yet enigmatic way, the space between her and us has been taken over by security guards, bulletproof glass and

cameras scanning our behaviour. Feeling that any interaction with her is excluded, we have no choice but to cannibalise on her and to eat more famous highlights before returning to Wyoming, Sapporo or Groningen. Our eyes have become instruments of consumption and marketers, advertisers, and media persuade us that this is what happiness is all about in times that do not want to lay a wager on interfacial hothouses anymore (De Caeter, 1995). This brings us back to Sloterdijk's philosophy.

Life with(out) mirrors

Sloterdijk points out that, historically, the disappearance of interfacial hothouses set in as soon as people forgot about a basic law, still held in honour by antiquity, saying that they have faces for others and not for themselves. The antique face is, if anything, a face for somebody else: my ability to look back at you always assumes that you were the one who looked at me. Apart from some rather exceptional narcissistic water experiments, there is nothing in antiquity that warrants a self-reflexive turn. It would take a long time before mirrors were finally able to make their entry in interfacial reality, but the consequences were enormous. Only a culture that would become fascinated with mirrors could develop the idea that the face is also something that might be related to the self rather than to the other. In a culture of mirror owners people not only have a face for others but also for themselves, something which was absolutely impossible, if we are to believe Sloterdijk, in antiquity. It is important to realise that Narcissus did not so much fall in love with his own face but with a face of which he had to think it belonged to another person simply because he was only familiar, at least until the famous moment at the water pool, with other faces. The beautiful face he saw in the water was not even recognised as his own for in a world without mirrors the ability to have a face implied the presence of other people.

It would take until the sixteenth century before mirrors would make it possible, in words of Lewis Mumford, "to find an image that corresponded accurately to what others saw" (1963: 129). Mumford adds:

Self-consciousness, introspection, mirror-conversation developed with the new object itself ... and the sense of the separate personality, a perception of the objective attributes of one's identity, grows out of this communion. The use of the mirror signalled the beginning of introspective biography in the modern style: that is, not as a means of edification but as a picture of the self, its depths, its mysteries, its inner dimensions. The self in the mirror ... was the self *in abstracto*, only part of the real self, the part that one can divorce from the background of nature and the influential presence of other men. (Mumford, 1963: 129)

Sloterdijk puts it in terms of an intersubjective space that is substituted by a subjective one where a stoic individual resides. In other words, the dyadic personality who depends on and always looks for interfacial hothouses disappears and is replaced by a point-subject who lives out the fantasy of his or her own intimacy to which others have no access. The price to be paid for the new ability to see your own self was solitude: lonesome point-subjects constitute the masses who live under the terror of mirrors. Ego-technical media like mirrors ensured that the subject was no longer accessible for others. From now on, affection and infection are by definition self-inflicted.

To sum up, mirrors, nihilistic black-hole cameras or ideas such as faciality function, we suggest, as tools of immunity that reduce the risk of contamination as far as possible. Not only is it not allowed that the poles of binary opposites infect each other, but humankind also invented techniques that allow the fundamental de-portrayal of the world. These developments should, we suggest, be thought of as processes of catharsis and hygiene. The self that is absorbed by its own face and that cannot be affected by other faces understands that in the real world decisions are not based on faces but on hard facts.

Subjects

The question we wish to pursue now is whether virtual reality experiments constitute a possibility for the creation of interfaces that allow us to escape from the facial machines discussed so far. Virtual reality, after all, assumes that the relationship between human beings and machines can only become convincing if both are willing to engage in a process of mutual infection. This, however, is only possible if we are able to render the interface as unobtrusive as possible: virtual realities are merely convincing when the user forgets that he or she works with a computer. So, the thing in front of us should no longer be exclusively regarded as an object observed by us. It also observes us. Note, however, that the distance between it and the human being is not somehow suspended; rather, it has become unclear where the object ends and the human being begins. This is tantamount to saying that the object should be allowed to affect you in such a way as to make it impossible to look upon it as an object.

According to Sloterdijk, the computer should become a *nobject*, an expression coined by the German philosopher Thomas Macho to express entities or phenomena that are not in front of us but that surround us. Objects can only become objects when a subject places itself in front of it. Nobjects, on the other hands, are 'objects' that are denied the status of object essentially because a subject is absent. Sloterdijk goes on to suggest that forms of togetherness and senses of belonging are fundamentally nobjective rather than objective and notes, in passing, that the facial machine described by Deleuze and Guattari is an engine designed to nip each form of nobjectivity in the bud. All of this assumes that intimacy or togetherness can never be objectively grasped. Both are incomprehensible when looked upon from the outside, that is, from a distance that annihilates any chance of absorption and affection. Because nobjects rule out distance, language as a distancing medium is ruled out as a way of expressing what is going on in a person who is surrounded by nobjects. Two lovers who are looking at each other see nobjects rather than objects and can therefore hardly express this in a language that is satisfactory to them.

Nowadays, in the new millennium, it is often suggested by many thinkers that technology, which has often been accused of rendering our world objective, has now reached a level which allows human beings to experiment with new forms of selfhood and intimacy or, to put it in more fashionable terms, interactivity. New computer technologies seem to be based on what Sloterdijk refers to as nobjectivation. To capture

what this nobjectivation is all about, the following quote, which is about a somewhat older technology, seems to be illuminating:

I recognized right away why Cinerama and 3D were important. When you watch TV or a movie in a theater, you are sitting in one reality, at the same time you are looking at another reality through an imaginary transparent wall. However, when you enlarge your window enough, you get a visceral sense of personal involvement. You feel the experience, you don't just see it. I felt if I had stepped through that window and was riding the roller coaster myself instead of watching somebody else. I felt vertigo. That, to me, was significant. I thought about where the technology might go in the future, and I was convinced on the spot, sitting in that Cinerama theater on Broadway, that the future of cinema would mean the creation of films that create the total illusion of reality. (Heilig, quoted in Taylor, 1998: 279)

Technology, we may infer from this, makes possible what goes without saying in the uterus: the cinema appears as substitute for the uterus in which the difference between subject and object vanishes because it can no longer be thought of as a difference. What we have here is the description of a new type of interface, one which is no longer based on an opposition of mutually exclusive 'entities' but rather on their interpenetration.

Discussions about computer technology often seem to be permeated by similar ideas. It is assumed that the programme responds to a particular action of the user, thus creating an interactive medium. Believers argue that the borderline between man and machine is blurred in this medium. We will return to this issue later; for the moment, however, we wish to discuss the notion of interactivity and see how it is related to our concern with togetherness.

How passive is interactivity?

Sceptics have asked the question of how interactivity should be conceived of in relation to the fact that the machine seems to be much more active than the person who, after all, merely pushes some buttons, keys in a few words or commands, and waits for what the machine is going to deliver. They point out, in other words, that much of what is taking place in interactive spaces is largely passive, at least from the standpoint of the individual who is engaging with the machine. In these interactive spaces, passivity seems to engender activity. The individual achieves a truly miraculous goal: by doing near to nothing he or she can perform quite a lot. In interactive places, passivity veils and engenders activity.

Now imagine what it would be like to do the exact opposite. Is it possible to think of a situation where people are incredibly active but achieve or perform near to nothing? Žižek (1998) uses the notion of 'interpassivity' to describe such a situation. Interpassive situations occur, for example, when people are carrying out many ritual tasks without actually believing in God or without a desire to truly engage with Him. Another example of such interpassivity occurs when people are performing rituals of mourning just to evade the sort of real sadness that might come up after the death of beloved person. These instances make clear that rituals are often carried out to prevent something 'real' from happening. Other examples of interpassive behaviour are the psychiatric patient whose endless chatter and babble are merely intended to avoid some

cold truth about his or her personality popping up, the person who, while telling a joke, notes that nobody in the audience laughs and then starts to laugh him- or herself just in order not to lose face, or, finally, the employee who delivers and works out plan after plan without even the slightest chance of implementation. In interpassive places, in sum, activity veils and engenders passivity.

Žižek's point, of course, is that the difference between activity and passivity becomes senseless in interactive and interpassive spaces. Put differently, in the world of interfaces, gulfs between the passive and active can become very small indeed. To illustrate this, Žižek goes on to extensively discuss *Tamagochi*, a once fashionable toy that lives in the narrow space between activity and passivity. Tamagochi is an egg-like object, more precisely, an electronic egg, provided with control buttons and a screen which allegedly behaves like a baby, a puppy, or a duckling - you name it. It is a virtual pet animal that starts to scream when it needs attention. The screen displays instructions that indicate what should happen in order to stop the screaming. The user, oftentimes but not always an infant, pushes a few buttons so that peace will be restored quickly. The screen might, for example, indicate that the electronic egg wants to play with its owner in order to prevent its misery and play can then be initiated by pushing the adequate buttons. The screen also indicates the degree of Tamagochi's happiness: Two hearts indicate happiness and no heart equals misery. If a heartless situation extends for too long a period, Tamagochi dies out of grief and misery. Although it is possible to resuscitate the animal, this miracle will become unavailable after death occurred twice, in case of which the infant's nagging conscience can only be appeased if its parents are willing to provide a new interactive toy. (At this stage Žižek notes that the cruelty of Tamagochi's death constitutes a perverse attraction for *some* children: killing ladybirds or butterflies is replaced by neglecting the electronic egg, a process which renders killing virtual. Other children, however, turned out to be traumatised by the death of Tamagochi, which actually led the Japanese producer to launch immortal Tamagochis into the market. We submit that this is a fine example of what business ethics might amount to.)

In the grip of an egg

The electronic egg is a machine inscribed with coded desires and thus offering opportunities for their fulfilment. Surfing on the net made clear the extent to which children are in the grip of Tamagochi. Jennifer keys in the following:

I like tomagochi's because it is reall teaching me responsibility and i like how when you go to school you can pause it.

Connie provides us with a lecture on Tamagochi-care:

Select Cleaning icon to clean up the baby ... If you leave your baby unattended, he/she will get sik and SICK indicator will show on the upper corner of the display. Select MEDICAL TREATMENT icon ...

Love is important in these interfacial spheres, but be reminded that it is tough love:

If sometimes your baby is naughty, you should discipline your baby.

Let us not put in doubt the sincerity of what children feel when they write down such stuff. Indeed, for grown-up people like us, this sincerity seems rather enigmatic: emotions typical for what we hardly dare to describe as 'real care', can also come into play when we are talking about a soulless screen that substitutes a real pet or a real baby. What we have here, in other words, is an interface that can hardly count as a radiating hothouse and yet causes all sorts of emotions. It is an interface in which the activity of the object - Žižek rightly points out that the machine is always in the lead due to the irritating noises it makes - is followed by a minimum of activity on behalf of the child who is merely pushing a few buttons in order to change the baby's nappy. Yet, this minimal activity is somehow able to achieve a degree of emotional satisfaction we think many real-life mothers would perhaps only dream of. The feelings of intimacy that (should) accompany care can quite easily be incited by a machine which does not even resemble a baby or a young animal. Note that such feelings would be much less puzzling and mind-boggling if the child takes care of anthropomorphised toys like dolls or cuddly toys. But empathy with a child who preserves such feelings for a digital object that emits commands and represents nothing at all seems to be much less comprehensible.

Needless to say that there have been people who see Tamagochi as a harbinger of evil, simply because it blurs the taken for granted boundary between altruism and egoism. Jessica, we might argue, claims that she learns to cope with real responsibilities by engaging with machine that merely offers her delusions. Hence, it is conceivable that children learn to cope with such responsibilities without actually engaging with other people. Jessica can manage without 'interpersonal' togetherness. She even does not have to work very hard for it: pushing a button or two will suffice. In this sense, Tamagochi is the embodiment of indolent solipsism, which is tantamount to saying that Tamagochi is nothing less than the devil himself. This, once more, takes us back to Sloterdijk's discussion in *Spheres* about the devil. This discussion might give us an idea of what Žižek is hinting at.

The devil's minimal world

In Dante's *Inferno*, Sloterdijk argues, the devil is portrayed as a symbol of the inability to actively engage in relationships with others. He is an entity that fundamentally believes in its self-sufficiency and that is prepared to stubbornly defend this belief in the iciest and deepest regions of hell. Satan is the first intelligence that exclusively refers to its own self. Dante's exploration of hell is in Sloterdijk's view (1999: 622) not only a tour showing the poet the horrors of solitude, but also a therapy that tells him an awful lot about group therapy and the management of culture.

In Dante's poem, God should be thought of as hyperimmunity. His very existence proves to people that the forms of protection, security, and immunity they have created themselves are hopelessly inadequate. Security is only to be had in God's womb and the way to get there is a to develop a fundamental distrust with respect to systems of

immunity created by men. Dante's edifying purpose here is to make clear that the only road to some final security is to put into question the ordinary solutions for this problem. In other words, the certainties of daily life should be crushed in order to attain a new and better form of certainty or security. Weakness in the immunity system will eventually bring forth superior immunity, "for a God who is able to stand surety for the most superior insurance premium we know, that is, eternal salvation, should be capable of destroying all human certainties and replace them by a politics of the absolute." (Sloterdijk, 1999: 595-597). Hence it becomes essential to balance this positive premium with a negative one: hell teaches people what might happen if they refuse to properly insure themselves. It is only the threat of hell that makes the promise of heaven somewhat plausible. Dante makes clear how we are to appreciate this threat.

Like heaven, hell has a spherical shape which indicates that hell is an invention of God who has, as Sloterdijk points out, specialised in the creation of spherical or round forms. Hell is thus made in heaven. However, the spherical shape of hell is somewhat peculiar and is developed by a logic of its own. Dante's hell should be conceived of as a funnel-shaped megaphone reaching towards the centre of the earth. From the narrowest and deepest regions of this funnel a miserable groaning resounds which is only to become more penetrating the closer it gets to the surface of the earth. As Dante and his guide Vergil are roaming the outer spaces of hell, they feel this groaning as an icy wind in their back. This merely serves to prove that the truth of hell is not to be found in the outer spaces just below the earth's surface but deep down where the funnel becomes so narrow as to make it increasingly intolerable for its residents to have other souls around. Yet it is only in the point of the funnel that togetherness, neighbourliness or friendship becomes utterly impossible. It is in the point of the funnel where Satan resides. His dwelling is the extreme opposite of heaven which has to be thought of as an extended place. What makes hell so hellish is that the total absence of space makes solitude inevitable. The devil is, if anything, a point subject.

So, to invoke Wittgenstein's famous image, for the damned and miserable the limits of the world are increasingly narrowing down. Unhappiness always resides in an ontologically impoverished or, perhaps better, in a minimal world. Dante teaches people what will happen to them if they are banned from the community or if they have to fend for themselves. He shows how frightening individuality might become if it is thought of as something isolated. Indeed, hell is self-referring or self-inflecting individualism that refuses to have itself infected by others and indulges, like Satan, in self-pity.

As Sloterdijk points out, Dante is one of the first authors to describe what we now generally refer to as depression the core of which is the inability to open oneself to the world, to create space around the self and to inspire and have oneself inspired by others (Kaulingfreks and ten Bos, 2001). A person who is depressed seems to be bound for the point of the funnel and the only way to alter his or her course is expanding the room around his or her self as much as possible. Might this cure also work in different settings?

Hell, purgatory, and organisation

We suggest that territorial expansion, gluttony, extravagance, company takeovers and so on can all be understood as imperialistic anti-depressives. If you are not engaging in this kind of activities, imperialist ideology holds, you will sooner or later get bored with yourself and go round in satanic circles. However, these sorts of anti-depressives fail to deliver what they promise simply because they are in service of the ego. They do not expand the world, they expand the ego and this is why they are so devilish. That is, in Dante we find important cues for a *satanic organisational theory*: the extent to which organisations are occupied with self and survival of this self can be seen as a satanic trait. To paraphrase Sloterdijk (1999: 623-624), the choice between dragging rocks with the misers and spenders in the fourth circle of Dante's inferno or painstakingly negotiating with industrial partners or managers is not at all of a metaphysical nature and is merely a matter of taste.

However, if one discovers depression, one also discovers ways to evade the narrowness of a point-world. Even though Dante himself believed that the inhabitants of hell were lost cases, he profoundly believes that their misery serves as a dull reminder for those who feel the attractions of the ego. Dante of course did not invent psychotherapy, group therapy or cultural management but his invention of purgatory can certainly be seen as a first step towards them. The essence of purgatory is that it purges and chastens: the cleansing fire of purgatory is not to be found in hell, which is indeed a much chillier place than we have grown to think of, but on the Mountain of Purification (Dante, 1999: 56). If there is fire in hell it is of the punishing and not of the cleansing kind.

The idea behind Dante's invention of purgatory is to provide an alternative for the agonising determinism of eternal damnation or salvation and hence to allow for a conceptualisation of life as a path that people have to go. Dante, in other words, showed us the importance of a purpose in life, of error tolerance and forgiveness, of self-improvement and intentions, in short, of hope. Purgatory is a symbol of hope without which people would not have acquired the understanding that slaving away one's days might be useful or have a deeper meaning. An absolute dichotomy between hell and heaven, Dante came to see, merely offered stagnation and determination, so that something had to be invented in order to escape the inevitable. Purgatory allows for the possibility of progress, repayment, and redemption. It is, in some sense, the precursor of the modern-capitalist banking organisation: you owe something to someone, but eventually you will become free of all debts. The fundamental organisational principle of capitalist society is debt, as has been pointed out by Nietzsche (most notably in his *Genealogy*) and Deleuze (in collaboration with Guattari). But we should bear in mind that the corollary of debt is always hope. Purgatory and modern banking institutions deliver hope in a hopeless world and we would like to submit that contemporary managerial concepts such as learning organisations or cultural management can be related to Dante's concept of purgatory.

We argued earlier, following Sloterdijk, that hell is made in heaven, but Dante's point is also that hell is man-made. You, the reader of Dante's poem, only have to look around to see how people create their very own versions of hell and loneliness. It is the willingness to engage with these problems, hopeless and desperate as they may be, that

creates hope and all hope, Dante believes, begins with healing, purification, and self-criticism. A most important aspect of purgatory is not only that it offers such hope but also that it allows people to suffer in togetherness. Unlike hell, purgatory is a place where people do not suffer alone. On the contrary, they develop forms of solidarity because they tell each other what they live through and who they are and thus engage in self-critical practices. In hell, people's suffering is worsened because they have to bear the pain all alone. Indeed, the form of togetherness to be found in hell is merely antagonistic: sufferers endlessly fight other sufferers. This is indeed why consolation and hope are not the ingredients to be found in hell.

Faceless morality

Insofar as the devil embodies our inability to actively engage in meaningful relationships with other people, it might indeed be argued that Tamagochi, the pet-toy-automaton discussed earlier, is nothing less than the devil himself. The devil scorns intimacy and togetherness and stubbornly defends his own isolation in the icy and remotest corners of hell. At this point Žižek asks some painful questions:

is *tamagochi* not the virtual entity, non-existent in itself, with whom we exchange signals and comply to its demands? Does not the non-imaginary character of *tamagochi* (which no longer endeavours to resemble the pet it stands for) hold especially for the Judaic tradition, with its prohibition on producing images of God? Again, no wonder that for some theologians *tamagochi* is Satan incarnate: it, as it were, lays bare the mechanism of the believer's dialogue with God, since it demonstrates how an intense, caring exchange of symbols is possible with an entity which is purely virtual - that is, which exists only as an interface simulacrum... In other words, *tamagochi* is a machine which allows you to satisfy your need to love your neighbour. (Žižek, 1998: 108-109)

What Žižek describes as the highest expression of our humanity, that is, "the compassionate need to take care of another human being", is transformed into a "dirty idiosyncratic pathology" (1998: 109) that can easily be cured in the faceless interface with Tamagochi. Hence, it becomes possible to satisfy the need to show compassion without actually becoming obtrusive or pushy towards other persons.

Bauman (1993: 91) has argued, thereby following Levinas, that the impulse to act morally - an impulse that originates in the face of the other - is always liable to turn itself into a form of power or violence of its own, simply because in wanting to act on the other's behalf I am willing to undermine his or her autonomy: "Because I am responsible, and because I do not shirk my responsibility, I must force the Other to submit to what I, in my best conscience, interpret as 'her own good'" (1993: 91).

We would like to suggest that the virtual reality that comes into being during interactions with Tamagochi allows individuals to develop a moral posture that both satisfies the deeply felt desires to behave morally and yet remains faceless enough to not deteriorate in obtrusiveness and violence. What Bauman describes as the "genuine aporia of moral proximity" (1993: 91), that is the "thin line between care and oppression" (1993: 92), can be easily ignored by all those who engage with Tamagochi. To summarise, virtual reality offers us an ethics that allows the individual to keep his or her hands clean. But would this not be the sort of faceless morality that characterises the

chilly life of desolated souls in hell? And is the contemporary version of this hell not the world of information technology? In what follows, we hope to show that easy answers to this question are not available.

The idea of contagion

What we wanted to show in the previous section is that for Žižek the idea of contagion is just as crucial as it was for Marsilio Ficino. Žižek muses about a rather primitive interface that allows the subject to remain largely uninfected by others. Such an interface allows for a clean morality that is very far away from Ficino's world of infectious hothouses. However, the very idea of morality, as Bauman sees it, seems to be based on the impossibility not to be infected by others as well as on the acceptance that in moral action one cannot keep one's hands clean (ten Bos and Willmott, 2001). For Bauman, morality assumes an interface hot enough to produce uncontrollable forms of infection. Žižek hints at the possibility of an interface that is not infectious at all: there are machines that allows us to keep other persons at a safe distance.

Most debates on the recent developments in the world of information technology, however, do not enter into the idea that machines might help the individual to develop an immunity system that keeps other human beings at a distance. On the contrary, they generally enter into how the individual can be secured from being infected by machines rather than by humans. This perspective considers it downgrading for human beings when they are linked to machines. In the remaining parts of this article, we argue that both perspectives assume a Cartesian ego for whom an infectious interface with either a person or a machine is simply out of the question. In other words, they assume an ego that refuses to have its immunity system undermined by either human being or machine. Our point is that this purist concept of the human subject is what frightens us most.

Prosthesis or cyborg?

For the Cartesian ego, the all-important question in relation to computer technology is whether we can prevent the sovereign free will of human beings from being infected by machines. Two answers might be provided. First, it might be argued that there is no problem whatsoever, because a machine will never become as sophisticated as the human brain. We don't even have or will have machines that are nearly as complex as the human body. So, the Cartesian ego need not be worried by the developments in computer technology. At best, the machine functions as a prosthesis which allows the individual to either perform actions that would be impossible without it or to perform actions that would not have been executed otherwise. In the latter case, we may think of an automatic pilot which allows the real person, at least if we are to believe popular literature on the subject, to feel, to think, and to create. Other more prosaic suggestions, however, would be drinking a cup of coffee, going to the toilet or fighting hijackers. In the first case, we think of an apparatus that is connected to the body in order to increase its level of performance in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, or power. For the

Cartesian ego there is nothing to worry about in relation to prostheses. Indeed, it will argue that the sovereign ego is happy to have itself supported by various forms of sophisticated technology. Under normal conditions, prostheses do not jeopardise the free will of human beings.

However, there are those who would argue that the machine is more than an addition and it is here that the Cartesian ego starts to shudder with fear. Donna Haraway (1991: 164), for example, has claimed that the machine should not be treated as an object that needs to be animated, adored or dominated. She goes as far as to claim that the distinction between us and a machine is delusory in the sense that we are already machines or, more accurately, that the machine is already an aspect of our embodiment. Haraway's *cyborgs* are much more creepy than the prostheses discussed above because they seem to endanger free will and free decision making. Why would this be the case? The cyborg is a "hybrid of human being and machine" (1991: 171). This is to say that it is impossible to indicate where the machine stops and the human being begins and *vice versa*. This is to imply that age-old distinctions between the artificial and the natural or between life and death are blurred. Territories that should be clearly distinguished from each other start to overlap.

Kantian puppets

Against this we would argue that as far as cyborgs are concerned the relationship between man and machine is never stable, but always changing within a continuum of extreme polarities. Under particular circumstances the cyborg is more man than machine and sometimes it is more machine than man. In other words, the cyborg is not a fixed entity, but a process which can best be understood as a ceaseless struggle. It is unlikely, however, that this insight will be seen by the Cartesian ego as a satisfying answer to the painful question about free will. But is this free will, its sovereignty and invulnerability, not what should make us shudder? The answer to this question is of course very dependent upon what we understand by 'free will', but we submit that the noumenal, decontextualised, and disembedded subject which refuses to have itself infected (or: inspired, enthused, or contaminated) by men or machines is what gives us the creeps. This subject is, we suggest, symbolised by Robert Siodmak's black and impenetrable eye as we know it from his 1949 movie *The Spiral Staircase*, that is, an eye residing in damp caverns and cellars where it always looks for victims who are to be done in without hate and passion. It is, in short, the eye of the devil who, deep down in hell, reluctantly fights off even the faintest sentiments of belonging. To think of the sovereign free will is, we suggest, thinking of the icy wind we feel in our back, a wind whispering loneliness, invulnerability and purity, a wind whispering the inability to form coalitions, a wind whispering about a world without inspiration, love, and intimacy.

As Žižek (1998: 118-119) points out, Kant must have felt the horrific nature of the so-called 'noumenal' subject. Face to face with this subject, one understands that it is Satan and God simultaneously and that it is not bothered by small-scale human conflicts, nagging doubts or forms of compassion that might eventually enable one to develop

some kind of moral fortitude. This subject knows no doubts and enigmas. It simply reminisces us of the God/Satan who has provided us with rules such as the categorical imperative. We all have to obey such rules basically because that is the most rational thing to do. When pondering the consequences of this unconditional obedience to ethics, Kant writes in *Critique of Practical Reason*:

Thus most actions conforming to the law would be done from fear, few would be done from hope, none from duty. The moral worth of actions, on which alone the worth of the person and even the world depends in the eyes of supreme wisdom, would not exist at all. The conduct of man, so long as his nature remains as it is now, would be changed into mere mechanism, where, as in a puppet show, everything would gesticulate well but no life would be found in the figures. (quoted in: Žižek, 1998: 119)

Kant understood very well that the sovereign and rational subject is nothing but a lifeless puppet in the hands of a perverse deity. As Žižek points out, behind all actions of this puppet lurks a fundamental and perverse passivity. Like Frankenstein who came to fear his own creation, Kant fears the quasi-sovereign puppets playing in his own puppet theatre.

So, Haraway's bastards are not necessarily more creepy than Kant's free and noumenal subject for this subject seems to us essentially *mechanic*: the parts of which it is composed are related to each other and are expected to smoothly carry out their tasks. This is the mechanism which characterises bureaucratic organisations and departments. God and CEO are pulling the strings. As Deleuze and Guattari (1983: 288) have pointed out, these machines operate under a regimen of stability, uniformity, harmony, structure, function, and isolation.

Mechanic and machinic

Cyborgs are not at all like this. The bastard is not mechanical at all but, to use a phrase coined by Deleuze and Guattari, machinic (*machinique* rather than *mécanique*). The cyborg is, in other words, a non-mechanic machine and in discussing interfaces and virtual reality we should make a distinction between non-mechanic and mechanic machines. The refusal to take this distinction seriously is what causes the anxiety many people seem to feel when confronted with the idea of a man-machine unity. A machinic machine, however, is never stable at all: it incessantly creates and recreates itself. It also accepts that the relationship between self and non-self is quite vague: it works, as Massumi (1992: 192) points out, by dint of contamination rather than by dint of isolation. Even more importantly, it is not subordinated to a master pulling the strings but rather loses itself in a continuous play with its environment. The machinic machine is an open ended process.

Where mechanic machines focus on organisation and harmony, machinic machines focus on disorganisation and disharmony. The mechanic machine acknowledges the boundaries with the environment: inside is doomed to be inside and in this inside the menacing shadow of the puppet master is always present. The machinic machine, on the other hand, plays with boundaries and is not a tool in the hands of what is deemed to be 'higher', say, a human being, a puppet master, or God (Ansell Pearson, 1999: 141).

Indeed, precisely by serving its own functionality, it is able to be permeated by desire. Cells in our bodies are examples of machinic machines who are constantly contaminated by their environment. These machines are continually engaged in boundary games: the distinction between 'inside' and 'outside' loses its significance in the endless experiments they carry out. Moreover, machinic machines work all by themselves and are not playthings in hands of a supervisor (God, CEO, politician, repairman, and so on). Yet they are, like the cells in our body, constantly contaminated by the environment in which they find themselves. This is what makes them profoundly hybrid.

To recapitulate, the fear for Haraway's cyborgs might vanish if we bear in mind the all-important distinction between mechanic and machinic and learn to understand cyborgs as machinic machines. All other distinctions - natural/artificial, living/dead, organic/mechanic - cause us to treat the man-machine interface in a too rigid and spine-chilling fashion. If we are able to abandon the logic of isolation that underlies those distinctions, we may find more nuanced ways of understanding such interfaces. The history of ideas clearly shows where more nuanced views can be found: Dante and Ficino's efforts to understand and play with notions like community, isolation, togetherness, immunity, contagion, and so on are important intellectual precursors for our apprehension of a life between faces that are not necessarily always faces.

Epilogue: a bumble bee

Would this satisfy the Cartesian ego or humanist? Perhaps he or she might retort that machines are unlike people in the sense that they can only reproduce by dint of human intervention. Deleuze and Guattari quote Samuel Butler in order to rebut this objection:

[D]oes anyone say that the red clover has no reproductive system because the bumble bee (and the bumble bee only) must aid and abet it before it can reproduce? No one. The bumble bee is a part of the reproductive system of the clover. Each one of ourselves has sprung from minute animalcules whose entity was entirely distinct from our own ... These creatures are part of our reproductive system; then why not we part of that of the machines? We are misled by considering any complicated machine as a single thing ... (Samuel Butler quoted in: Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 285)

Deleuze and Guattari conclude from this that we should not only put into question the Cartesian or humanist idea that the individual is an organic entity but also the mechanic idea that the machine is a structural entity. We should apprehend that both ideas are spine-chilling if we are to enhance our understanding of interfaces.

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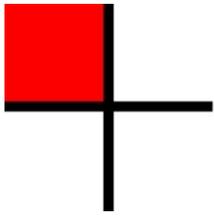
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Information and Communication Technology and the Excess(es) of Information: An Introduction to Georges Bataille's General Economy

Alexander Styhre

abstract

Information and communication technologies constitute the backbone of many management control systems. Still, the nature of these new technologies is somewhat under-theorized. This paper aims at conceiving information and communication technologies as being based on what the French social theorist and philosopher Georges Bataille calls the *general economy*, an economic system based on consumption and expenditure rather than accumulation and scarcity. Contemporary information and communication technologies always already produce too much information, that is, amounts of information that exceed all human needs in terms of practical use or cognitive capacities. Therefore, there is always excess data or information that radically breaks with neo-classic economic assumptions such as the law of diminishing returns and scarcity. Bataille's *general economy* opens up alternative perspectives on contemporary information and communication technologies.

Introduction

Managerial activities have always, to some extent, been focused on the safeguarding of output from organizational efforts. From the early pioneers of management thinking such as Charles Babbage, Frederick W. Taylor and Henri Fayol, management is a practice of arranging, structuring, controlling and evaluating complex social organizational activities. At the bottom line, management deals with various forms of control; calculation of costs, accounting, discipline of workers. The last, say, 25 years, organizational activities have been extensively affected by the use of new technologies such as information and communication technologies (Bogard, 1996; Kallinikos, 1996a; Sotto, 1996; Valentine, 2000). Today, management control is mediated by technical-administrative systems that monitor, control and evaluate organizational activities (Zuboff, 1988). On-line reporting of productivity figures in manufacturing, sales support systems, monitoring of Internet use among employees are only a few applications in use today. Everyday organizational life is increasingly embedded in various technological systems. As opposed to earlier forms of managerial control, the new information technology-based management control systems are not subject to the same economic principles. For instance, the principle of diminishing economic returns

and scarcity does not apply in the same manner as during previous forms of control. Once the information technology systems are implemented, they enable a continuous supply of various organizational activities at low costs. The costs for analysis and storage of information are substantially lower than in other forms of management control systems. Today, organizational activities are essentially formulated in the binary code, in the 1/0 structure of computer languages. As the principles of diminishing returns and scarcity are no longer fully applicable in information technology mediated management control systems, the premises for managerial control need to be critically examined.

This paper argues that the writings of Georges Bataille (1988a, b) on what he calls the *general economy* enables a reconceptualization and a critique of contemporary management control practices and technologies. In general, the writings of Georges Bataille have received only limited attention in organization theory while Bataille is a highly influential and prominent thinker in continental, post-World War II French philosophy (Habermas, 1985; Hegarty, 2000; Noys, 2000; Richardson, 1994). Bataille's writings on transgression, eroticism and sacrifice have served as a major influence to a number of writers such as Foucault, Derrida, Barthes and Kristeva. This paper discusses the use of management control systems as being based on the principles of Bataille's general economy. It argues that information technology management control systems always produce an excess of information that is never interpreted and examined *in toto*; there is always too much information provided, that in itself creates problems in terms of analysis or storage. At the bottom line, information technology enables an excessive waste of information.

The paper is structured as follows: First, management control in organizations is discussed as being the totality of practices, techniques, technologies and standard operating procedures aiming at safeguarding output. Second, the notion of general economy formulated by Georges Bataille is examined. Next, the use of information and communication technologies is discussed as being the conspicuous overproduction of data and information. This overproduction implies that concepts developed in neo-classic economics such as scarcity and the law of diminishing returns are not applicable when aiming at understanding information and communication technologies. Finally some implications are discussed.

Management Control in Organizations

Management has always been a matter of control of organizational resources (Reed, 2001; Grey and Garsten, 2001; Jermier, 1998; Perrow, 1986). In contemporary organizations, in various ways departing from the ideal type Weberian bureaucratic model and becoming virtual, networked, 'postmodern' and so forth (Clegg, 1990; Heckscher and Donnellon, 1994; Jackson, 1999; Gulati, 1999; Schultze and Orlikowski, 2001), control is maintained in a number of ways. There are numerous apparatuses, practices and technologies of control implemented in contemporary organization. Some of them are overt and immediate while others are concealed and, to use Perrow's (1986) formulation, 'unobtrusive.' One form of control is based on accounting, auditing and

monitoring practices (Miller and O'Leary, 1987; Hoskin and Maeve, 1994; Power, 1994; Hopper and Macintosh, 1998; Pentland, 2000; Mouritsen, Larsen and Bukh, 2001). In control based on accounting techniques, a continuous polyvocal organizational reality is translated into mathematical figures, into productivity statistics, ratios and indicators that serves as a legitimate basis for decisions and performance evaluations (Kallinikos, 1996b: 22). Accounting is the most institutionalized and technical form of control and is primarily used to communicate organizational performance for the external environment (cf. Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Internal control of organizational activities is established through a variety of architectural, self-disciplinary and technological approaches as well as a number of accounting practices. Architectural control consists of the ordering and control of the organization's physical resources. Access to different departments or buildings may be restricted in order to enhance security and control and departments of an organization may be functionally organized. Self-discipline operates to establish shared goals among different organizational stakeholders such as shareholders, top management and employees (Rose, 1990; Sturdy, 1998, Fournier, 1998). Rather than imposing strict control on the employees, an entrepreneurial ethos is nourished wherein organizational participants are subject to what Du Gay (1996), with a concept coined by Deleuze (1992), calls *auto-surveillance*. Employees are integrated into a network of controlling and monitoring practices and activities that guide the day-to-day behaviour and nurtures an entrepreneurial mind-set emphasizing the individual's potentials for goal-oriented action. In addition, control is achieved through the use of information and control technology. Information and communication technology enables a radical reduction of transaction costs in the sharing of data, information and knowledge. But information and communication technologies also enable a detailed control of the users' day-to-day routines. To Zuboff (1988), computers can be used as panopticons that provide an online access to the employees' activities. Employees look into the computer but the computer also looks into the employees. Thus, information and communication technology enables more efficient use of resources while at the same time it can constitute a source of detailed control of organizational activities. A number of studies suggest that the use of computer-based monitoring and control of employees is used, at least with the intention, to enhance organizational performance (Cooper, 1992; Kidwell and Bennett, 1994; Sewell, 1998; Jackson, 1999; Ball and Wilson, 2000). But at the same time as computer-based systems are successful in some respects, they may fail in others. In short, computer-based management control systems have latent and manifest functions (Merton, 1957), intended and unintended consequences (Prasad, 1993). The computer increasingly becomes the interface between the employees' activities and top management and therefore the access to and control over computer-mediated data, information and knowledge becomes a contested area. Management control in post-bureaucratic, virtual, postmodern, networked, organizations is less obtrusive than say fifty years ago but is increasingly becoming conclusive and coherent as the information and communication technologies enables for more detailed monitoring of the individual's use of the technology. One such capacity for monitoring organizational practices is the surveillance of the information technology-based systems in use in organizations. For instance, individual e-mail accounts have been subject to managerial control and numerous organizations regularly control the employees' use of e-mails. Derrida writes:

[E]lectronic mail . . . even more than the fax, is on the way of transforming the entire public and private space of humanity, and first of all the limits between the private, the secret (private or public) and the public and phenomenal. It is not only a technique, in the ordinary and limited sense of the term: at an unprecedented rhythm, in a quasi-instantaneous fashion, this instrumental possibility of production, of printing, of conversation, and of distraction of the archive must inevitably be accompanied by juridical and thus political transformations. (1996: 17)

To Derrida, the monitoring of e-mail accounts implies that the dichotomy private and public is decomposed. The managerial control over information and communication technologies leads to the dissolution of the dichotomies private-public and inside-outside. In a society characterized by what Vattimo (1992) calls *transparency*, the possibility of direct inspection, there are no longer any privileged sites of privacy removed from a shared public sphere (cf. Hochschild, 1997). The private and the public coalesce. Thus, control of e-mail and Internet practices is not only the control of the employee *qua* organization member but of the individual as such. As e-mail software may be used for personal as well as professional purposes, the monitoring of e-mail accounts entails a number of political-juridical concerns that need to be addressed.

Management control is a multiplicity of activities and resources; it includes a wide variety of practices, techniques, technologies and routines and standard operation procedures. The unprecedented growth in use of advanced computer-based technologies does, however, demand a reformulation of some of the assumptions regarding management control. In the age of the smart machine, new practical, juridical, political and ethical problems are being formulated. Among other things, the nature of information and communication technologies needs to be further explored and theorized.

Georges Bataille and the General Economy

Georges Bataille is one of the most influential philosophers and cultural theorists in French twentieth century thinking (see e.g. Derrida, 1998; Habermas, 1985; Foucault, 1998) whose writings have been referred to by amongst others Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, and Kristeva. Throughout his life, Bataille worked as a librarian at the National Library in Paris but he also wrote extensively on a number of topics. The scope of Bataille's writings makes him a complex figure complicated to pin down in ready-made categories; Bataille is by no means a systematic philosopher and it is notoriously hard, some writers like Noys (2000) would say, to find coherent theories in his texts. Barthes writes: "How do you classify a writer like Georges Bataille? Novelist, poet, essayist, economist, philosopher, mystic? The answer is difficult that the literary manuals generally prefer to forget about Bataille who, in fact, wrote texts, perhaps continuously one single text" (Barthes, 1977: 153). Notions such as transgression, sacrifice, eroticism and expenditure are all marked by Bataille's thinking and what his writings represent is an original treatment of a number of themes. Rather than being a 'philosopher of systems,' such as the great German idealist philosophers Kant and Hegel, Bataille acknowledges the ambiguities, fissures and inconsistencies of the human experience. Bataille (1989a: 11) writes: "A philosophy is never a house; it is a construction site". To Bataille, loss of meaning and loss of identity, ecstasy,

transgression and waste are 'inner experiences' wherein human beings experience and face the limits of subjectivity. "Being is in the world so *uncertain* that I can project it where I wish — outside of me" (Bataille, 1988c: 82). Among other things, Bataille can be seen as a philosopher of the excluded, of eroticism and transgression, of deeply embedded human needs for excess and ecstasy, of experiences of being outside of oneself, of the abject and the disgusting (see for instance, Bataille, 1985, 1987, 1988c, 1989b; Grosz, 2001: 153). In addition, Bataille's fiction, his erotic novels and short stories often seek to experiment with the limits and possibilities of human experience. However, Bataille can also be seen as a social theorist in the Durkheimian tradition (cf. Habermas, 1985: 215; Hancock, 1999) emphasizing reciprocity and mutual social interdependencies, but as being a Durkheimian that seeks to 'overcome' Durkheim and extend the views on human experience beyond the dichotomy of the sacred and the profane and functional social arrangements. Bataille's post-Hegelian and post-Durkheimian thinking of negativity has thus destructive effects on society as the very idea of reciprocity and exchange is being subject to criticism (cf. Derrida, 1992); gifts and exchanges presuppose a restricted economy, an economy of scarcity that Bataille is substituting for a general economy of abundance and expenditure (Bataille, 1988a,b). Bataille's writing on the general economy, his generic economic theory based on expenditure, solar energy, waste, consumption, and loss, instead of economic accumulation and regimes of distribution and allocation, represents a theory of society and human experience that completes, and extends beyond, the utilitarian and functionalist framework offered by Durkheim and his followers.

Bataille's texts are only rarely cited or referenced in organization theory. This is somewhat surprising considering the substantial interest in postmodern and poststructuralist theory in organization studies since at least the latter half of the 1980s (triggered by the publication of Cooper and Burrell's series of papers on postmodern writers, see e.g. Cooper and Burrell, 1988). Writers such as Baudrillard, Lyotard, Deleuze, Derrida, and — perhaps the most widely used so-called postmodern theorist — Foucault have increasingly been adopted in organization theory (e.g. Hassard and Parker, 1993; Boje, Gephart and Thatchenkery, 1996; Kilduff, 1993; McKinlay and Starkey, 1998; Chia, 1999). Still, there is an absence of Bataille in organization theory. The organization theory texts that make reference to Bataille have for instance examined the notion of transgression (Styhre, 2000; O'Shea, 2001), eroticism (Brewis and Linstead, 2000), or discussed Bataille's general economy (Nodoushani, 1999). Notwithstanding the limited impact of Bataille in organization theory to date, there are a number of topics addressed in Bataille's writing that deserves attention in the field. For instance, the principles of what Bataille calls the general economy raise a few interesting questions regarding utilitarian theories underlying most contemporary economic theory. Organization theory, being heavily indebted to (albeit not always explicitly recognizing) influences from economics and rational choice theory and making use of the image of *homo oeconomicus* as a generic model for agency, may benefit from reflecting upon its own assumptions. What is interesting about Bataille's notion of the general economy is that it seeks to depart from an economic model that assumes scarcity as one of its axioms. Thus, Bataille enables alternative views on economic activities such as managerial practice.

The principles of the general economy are developed in Bataille's three volume work *The accursed share* [*La part maudite*] (Bataille, 1988a,b). Bataille aims at developing an economic theory that is not solely focused on production, accumulation and distribution, i.e., assumes scarcity, but emphasizes expenditure, solar energy, waste, loss, and consumption (in various forms) as its driving force. Best and Kellner write:

Bataille . . . championed the realm of heterogeneity, the ecstatic and explosive forces of religious fervour, sexuality, and intoxicated experience that subvert and transgress the instrumental rationality and normalcy of bourgeois culture. Against the rationalist outlook of political economy and philosophy, Bataille sought a transcendence of utilitarian production and needs, while celebrating a 'general economy' of consumption, waste, and expenditure as liberatory. (1991: 35)

To Bataille, economists underrate the importance of expenditure and waste in the economy. The primus motor of economic activities is not production and accumulation but the use of and the movement of economic resources. Therefore, Bataille attempts an 'overturning' of dominant economic principles. Bataille writes:

I will simply state, without waiting further, that the extension of economic growth itself requires the overturning of economic principles — the overturning of the ethics that grounds them. Changing from the perspectives of *restrictive* economy to those of *general* economy actually accomplishes a Copernican transformation: a reversal of thinking — and of ethics. (1988a: 25)

By turning the focus from the realm of production, work and accumulation to the practices of expenditure, consumption, loss, and waste, Bataille hopes to overcome the ethics and practices of the restricted economy in order to open up for new thinking and activities. Derrida writes: "General economy folds those horizons and figures ["of knowledge and its figures of meaning"] so that they will be related not to a basis, but to the non-basis of expenditure, not to the *telos* of meaning, but to *indefinite* destruction of value" (Derrida, 1998: 123). The general economy, as opposed to the restricted economy, postulates that there is an abundance of resources with extended potential for expenditure. Bennington writes on Bataille's principles of the general economy:

[A]ny circumscribed system receives more 'energy' from its surrounding milieu than it can profitably use up in simply maintaining its existence. Part of the excess (the 'luxury' with respect to what is strictly necessary) can be used in the growth of that system, but then the growth reaches its limits . . . then the excess must be lost or destroyed or consumed without profit. (1995: 48)

In his argument, Bataille makes numerous references to anthropology, for instance the Aztec's practices of sacrifice and the various forms of reciprocal economic transactions that take place in tribal societies. To Bataille, the general economy represents an alternative economic regime departing from the economic system dominating capitalist societies at present. The general economy acknowledges the excesses and expenditure present in all societies. Thus, the 'Copernican transformation.' Hegarty writes:

The realm beyond this ["work, religion, utility (party) politics, laws, taboos, reproductive sex, truth, knowledge"] is that of excess: eroticism, death, festivals, transgression, drunkenness, laughter, the dissolution of truth and knowledge. This realm of excess is the general economy, but the general economy is also the process whereby the homogeneous realm interacts with excessive phenomena. (2000: 33)

The general economy can thus be conceptualized as a Dionysian economic model; "Dionysos is the god of the feast, the god of religious transgression", Bataille (1989b:

71) writes. Bataille's Nietzschean influences (see Bataille, 1962; Nietzsche, 1967) are here manifested in the belief in excesses and transgression as being important components in any economic model. The dominant neoclassic economic principles are fundamentally based on a protestant ethic of accumulation, law, order and taboos (cf. Weber, 1992; Whyte, 1956); Today's capitalism, Goux (1998: 199) writes, "has come a long way from the Calvinist ethic that presided at its beginning". He continues:

Productive expenditure now entirely dominates social life. In a desacralized world, where human labor is guided in the short and long term by the imperative of utility, the surplus has lost its meaning of glorious consumption and becomes capital to be reinvested productively, or constantly multiplying surplus-value. (1998: 198)

In conclusion, Goux (1998) puts forth an argument against Bataille and claims that "no society has 'wasted' as much as contemporary capitalism" (Goux, 1998: 199). The Dionysian image of the economy as being based on forms of expenditure uproots the very principles of our utilitarian economic thinking. Thus, "loss, waste, expenditure, sacrifice etc." are "more important, more meaningful than accumulation." (Hegarty, 2000: 39). "Bataille's target is utility, in its root", Baudrillard (1998a: 192) remarks. Bataille's 'reversal of thinking' against utility was later formulated in new terms by Baudrillard (1998b) in *The Consumer Society*. Baudrillard argues, in accordance with Bataille's idea, that consumption is far more important than production in the contemporary consumer society. In a most Durkheimian argument, Baudrillard even claims that consumption is not a free choice in the consumer society but that it is an instituted practice. Consumption is thus an imperative, a duty rather than an act of liberation of desire or a fulfilment of needs. Consumption is therefore expanding outside any conceivable 'practical' human need. In a similar manner, the anthropologist Marshall Sahlins (2000) argues that the contemporary consumer society is by no means an 'affluent society' — a phrase popularized by the economist John Kenneth Galbraith in 1958 — since an affluent society, at least in one useful definition, is a society where all needs and expectations are fulfilled or met. In a pre-modern society expectations and needs are rather modest, while in the consumer society there is no rest from desires and expectations. In the consumer society, Baudrillard argues, consumption is continuous and never-ending. Bataille's theory of the general economy is, in Noys' (2000: 111) sceptical view, a rather 'weird' combination of anthropology, scientific knowledge and other ideas that attracted his interest. Needless to say, the 'theory' (to follow Noys, 2000) did not achieve much attention from scholars and certainly not among economists. The principles of the general economy remain to a large extent an unfinished grand intellectual project whose axioms and theorems were never fully developed, nor accepted as an adequate basis for a new economic theory. The vision of the general economy appears as an outcome from a number of different interests that Bataille wants to combine into a coherent model. But one of the weaknesses (or strengths, depending on one's preferences) is that his thinking is never expressed in terms of 'theories' or 'models,' but are formulated as loosely coupled and highly disparate elements of thoughts. This makes Bataille a challenge to read and to make use of in empirical research. There is very little, almost nothing, in his writings on how Bataille's ideas are to be employed in empirical research.

Nevertheless, the basic idea of the general economy, the shift in focus from production and accumulation to expenditure and consumption is a most important contribution to a

reconceptualization or '*détournement*' of technical-instrumental or utilitarian rationality. The principles of the general economy are applicable when examining a number of social phenomena. In this case, information technology mediated management control can be examined from the view of the general economy.

Information Technology and the General Economy

During the last 20 years of the twentieth century Western society underwent a change from a disciplinary society to what Bogard (1996) calls a *telematic society* (see also Lyon, 1994). The disciplinary society is based on architectural discipline — its ideal type model is the Benthamian panopticon that enables a visual inspection and control (Foucault, 1977) — while the telematic society is based on complementary forms of information technology-based forms of surveillance. The disciplinary society is based on certain principles of order and architectural structure in factories, schools, hospitals, while the telematic society of surveillance is based on the use of various forms of technological apparatuses. The disciplinary society manifests its disciplinary outline — it is often possible to see and be aware of the disciplinary practices — while in the telematic society the mechanisms for control are always continuous and partly concealed. Information technology produces enormous amounts of information that could be used to control the individual. For instance, think about the number of e-mails sent every day in major companies such as General Motors. The continuous production of information (or rather 'data' that could be turned into information) is both a strength and a weakness of information technology. It enables a considerable amount of information, but it does not really provide any answers on how this information is to be interpreted (cf. Luhmann's, 2000, analysis of media).

In his analysis of the Internet, one of the most celebrated 'embodiments' of contemporary information technology, Poster (2001) argues that the Internet is, as opposed to other forms of artifacts and markets, based on the principle of sharing. Poster (2001: 58) writes that "uploading a file or posting a message on a Usenet group in a answer to a query is best understood as a contribution to all users for no direct reward. The act of sharing is little recognized in economies characterized by commodity exchange but is unique to the Internet." Another example of the sharing ethos of information technology is the emergence of the Linux system, developed and thereafter freely shared by the Finnish 'computer genius' (to use the commonplace tabloid formulation) Linus Thorvalds. Linux, which today is depicted as a substantial threat to the Microsoft market dominance, is acclaimed for being developed by Thorvalds and others without any incentive of personal financial gain in mind. The realm of information technology thus appears, in some cases — it may be that they are only marginal and insignificant — as being guided by different economic principles. The *homo oeconomicus*' strict emphasis on utility and personal benefits detached from the social community appears as a somewhat inadequate model to explain this behaviour (cf. Granovetter, 1985). Information technology also has the capacity to produce, store and give access to considerable amounts of information. In the case of production of e-mails, various categories of stakeholders such as policy makers, managers and, say, historians are puzzled about the use and significance of e-mails. To policy makers, e-

mails may be of juridical or political interest and thus it may be that they should be stored in case they eventually prove to contain useful information. Senior managers are trying to determine whether e-mail correspondence should be controlled, and finally historians have not decided whether e-mails should be placed in the archives for the benefit of future researchers. In summary, information technology opens up a domain wherein there is an excess production of information and where information is shared. The principle of sharing and the principle of excess cannot be fully conceptualized through the dominant economic principles of scarcity of resources and utilitarian models.

Bataille's general economy privileges expenditure, consumption, loss, waste and transgression at the expense of production, accumulation and scarcity. Wherever there is information technology in use – the distinguishing mark of the telematic society – there is always already an overproduction of information. Enormous amounts of productivity figures, e-mails, statistics, bits and pixels are produced on an everyday basis. As there is no significant increasing costs per new information unit in the use of information technology, there is a continuous production of more information. Therefore, there are always excesses of information whenever advanced information technology appears; the information provided extends any conceivable need and certainly the cognitive capacities of human beings (Simon, 1957). The technological-administrative apparatuses continuously monitoring and controlling organizational activities are, to use Virilio's (1994) concept, *vision machines* whose gaze reaches beyond the capacities of the human body. These instruments for a smooth logistics of perception provide us with considerable amounts of information that we cannot decide how to handle. Knorr Cetina (1999) reports from her studies of micro-biology and experimental physics that the laboratory equipment provided much more information than the researchers were able to decode. The residual label for this information was *noise*, that is “[r]andom, unpredictable, and undesirable signals in a detector and in the electronics of the apparatus that masks the *desired* information” (Knorr Cetina, 1999: 51, emphasis added). Physicists had to deal with this ‘undesirable’ information in order to construct the knowledge aimed for. The machinery is always too blunt; it cannot simply provide only what is desirable to us but gives us all information — ‘undesirable’ noise, noise that does not carry any informational content itself but still serve as the framework in which information is being formed (see Serres, 1982, 1995) — that is being registered. The same situation faced by the physicists studied by Knorr Cetina (1999), the presence of undesirable information, appear to most users of advanced information technologies. How can a manager *ex ante* know what e-mails or productivity reports are valuable sources for investigation and what are insignificant noise? The Bataillean thinking on excess, non-knowledge, and transgression may help us rephrase such questions in terms of the general economy. The bifurcations between knowledge and non-knowledge, sense and non-sense are of great managerial as well as theoretical interest. From the perspective of Bataille, technology does not advance society as much as promised because knowledge and communication can never be pure and fully structured but is always made up of incommensurable components and fragments, bits and pieces (cf. Luhmann, 1995). Information and communication technology enables excesses of information but it can not safeguard meaning and sense.

Discussion

In the general economy outlined by Bataille there is always expenditure, waste and loss. In the use of information technology as a means for managerial control, there is likewise waste of time and energy when monitoring and analyzing the continuous production of information and data provided. As a consequence, management control is not a matter of use of scarce resources in terms of collecting and storing information but rather in terms of making this information meaningful, in turning information into knowledge, to code continuous information into categories (Boisot, 1998). Thus, the concepts of information and management control need to be critically examined. What are really the consequences and rationales for information technology mediated management control? Is it implemented to actually control and monitor the activities of an organization or is it subject to mimetic and normative isomorphisms (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991) where management control is a fashionable mode (Abrahamson and Fairchild, 1999) to demonstrate rational applications and practices? What are the objectives of management control? Is it the outside world, the organizational practices, or is management control autopoietic (Maturana and Varela, 1980; Luhmann, 1995) in terms of being based on assumptions and outcomes that derive from the control system itself (Macintosh, Shearer, Thornton and Welker, 2000)? What is, in short, the relation between organizational activities and the information provided by the various management control systems that are in use in organizations. In the perspective of the general economy, management control systems are based on expenditure, waste and excess; Management control is beyond — in the meaning of ‘extending outside of’, ‘overcoming’— any practical utility, any day-to-day routines and practices, any rational model of organization. Management control systems offer a conspicuous overproduction of information (bits, pixels, files, and other information units expressed in the binary code) that is never rendered any utility or meaningful significance; the expenditure and waste of resources produces a loss of meaning. Only a fraction of the information provided by the managerial control systems, the vision machines of management, is employed when making decisions or when solving practical problems (Brunsson, 1982). The superfluous information is stored for later (unlikely) use or is simply eradicated (the ‘delete’ function of the e-mail programme and other software applications). The principle of abundance, expenditure and waste is applicable when making sense out of the ubiquitous use of management control systems. These systems extend beyond both human capacities for cognition and practical use. They are embedded in the general economy rather than the restricted economy of the dominating economic doctrine. As a consequence, management control systems are never wholly embedded in an utilitarian, technical-instrumental economic rationality based on scarcity, but need to be conceptualized as being machineries of expenditure, waste and loss. Overproduction of meaning leads to the loss of meaning; knowledge is dwelling in the neighbourhood of non-knowledge, sense and non-sense are continuously unfolding (Bataille, 1988c: 101). The transgressions and bifurcations enabling excess are inherent to management control systems. Management control systems are devices for continuous production of meaning but their consequences are stretching beyond the technical-instrumental rationality that serves as their fundament and guiding principle. Thus the general economy can be used as an analytical framework for the examination of such an overcoming of the rationality of the restricted economy. In Bataille’s thinking, reciprocity, exchange and the system of the restricted economy are stretched

beyond its instituted practices in order to theorize the inner experiences of human being. Bataille acknowledges the negativity inherent to human experience: "Man does not live on bread alone, but also on poison" (Bataille, 1988c: 200).

Conclusion

The writings of Georges Bataille have had only a limited impact on organization theory. Taking into account the considerable interest for postmodern and poststructuralist theory in the field, the modest interest in Bataille's thinking to date is noteworthy. Bataille is, along with philosophers and theorists of his generation such as Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Blanchot, among the most influential thinkers in French and continental twentieth century philosophy (Habermas, 1985). Nevertheless, in an Anglo-American intellectual context, Bataille still appears to be somewhat obscure. An explanation for this may be that Bataille's writings are not easily accessible; his texts are not characterized by stringent, systematic reasoning, and there is a lack of coherent, clearly articulated and fully developed theories in the conventional meaning of theory. In this paper, the use of information and communication technologies in terms of management control systems has been examined from the view of what Bataille calls the general economy, a set of economic principles based on abundance, expenditure, waste, and loss rather than scarcity and accumulation and distribution of resources. Information and communication technologies always produce excess data and information in the binary code as bits, pixels and documents. The data and information provided by the technological-administrative apparatus in contemporary organizations significantly exceeds all cognitive and practical human needs. In that respect, information and communication technology is in harmony with the mechanisms of the consumer society wherein consumption is by no means solely based on needs but is rather embedded in the circulation of capital and the consumption of signs and inscribed artifacts. In contemporary consumer society, the notion of utility may become an empty signifier. Thus, the loss of meaning of the concept of utility is directly related to the excess of utility; meaning is what is at stake when there is too much meaning produced. Consumption as well as the production of computer-mediated data and information is always, in terms of utility, *excessive*. It extends far beyond what we may refer to as need.

The encounter with information and communication technologies is a human experience of fairly recent date (Poster, 2001; Bogard, 1996; Featherstone and Burrows, 1995). There is a need to develop a broader and deeper practical and theoretical understanding on how these advanced technologies affect social formations and how human cognition, perception and emotionality are shaped and determined by such artifacts. As writers such as Derrida (1996) and Poster (2001) argue, advanced information and communication technologies eliminate taken for granted dichotomies such as public-private, consumer-producer and inside-outside. Thus, these newly developed technologies may offer opportunities for an epistemological break with the technical-instrumental reason that serves as the basis for most economic and administrative theories. In organization theory, information and communication technology is approached as if these technologies were of the same nature as previous artifacts. It may

be that information and communication technologies have opportunities to interact with human beings in ways that render the taken for granted views on technology as being artifacts subject to control obsolete. Hence the importance of writers such as Georges Bataille that offer new conceptual frameworks for analyses of new emergent technologies that seeks to overturn and reach beyond the functionalist and technical-instrumental rationality instituted by classic social theory. The managerial and organizational implications of information and communication technologies have a great potential and we are only seeing its first consequences in terms of the emergence of virtual organization (see e.g. Jackson, 1999; Schultze and Orlikowski, 2001). In the future, the very ideas of management and organization may be radically altered as a consequence of the new possibilities derived from information and communication technologies, the Internet, and virtual reality.

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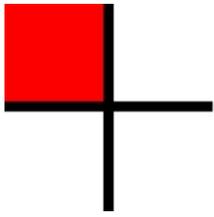
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Pretty Ugly: Notes On the Moral Economy of Method*

Alf Rehn

abstract

The prevailing belief in the redeeming qualities of method has in the social sciences created a value-system which I like to call the moral economy of method, but which could also be called Methodism. Characterized by an exaggerated interest in debates concerning methodology and critique of the same, such a system seems to thrive on moral condemnations and the view of method as the production function of research, and is fundamentally an ethical dogma. This paper could be read as a inquiry into the ways in which method could be thought of outside such totalizing discourses. Born out of a uneasiness towards the way in which bestsellers in methodology are uncritically adopted and accepted as valid inputs in the academic debate, the paper wonders if method is such a great idea, after all.

The thinking that is to come is no longer philosophy, because it thinks more originally than metaphysics – a name identical to philosophy. However, the thinking that is to come can no longer, as Hegel demanded, set aside the name “love of wisdom” and become wisdom itself in the form of absolute knowledge. Thinking is on the descent to the poverty of its provisional essence. Thinking gathers language into simple saying. In this way language is the language of Being, as clouds are the clouds of the sky. With its saying, thinking lays inconspicuous furrows in language. They are still more inconspicuous than the furrows that the farmer, slow of step, draws through the field. (Heidegger, ‘Letter on Humanism’)

The only non-localizable “common name” of pure difference in all eras is that of the poor. The poor is destitute, excluded, repressed, exploited – and yet living! It is the common denominator of life, the foundation of the multitude. It is strange, but also illuminating, that postmodernist authors seldom adopt this figure in their theorizing. It is strange because the poor is in a certain respect an eternal postmodern figure: the figure of a transversal, omnipresent, different, mobile subject; the testament to the irrepressible aleatory character of existence. (Hardt & Negri, *Empire*)

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I Hate Methodology

Marcel Mauss (1924/1990), whose contribution to the development of organizations studies is rarely acknowledged, famously described the tradition of the *potlatch* as ‘the monster child’ of an indigenous economy perverted by the introduction of the Western concept of the market. The natural meeting the artificial, the intellect meeting the body, the classic Cartesian dichotomy. We’ve learnt to avoid that, right? We’re smarter now, aren’t we? Still, sitting pretty in the field of organization and management (by any other name), things do get weird sometimes. It’s supposed to be an empirical field, but much of what one reads sounds like scholastic philosophy (How many alternate-reality organisations can you fit on the tip of Nike’s rhetorical swoosh?). And the methodology... This is supposed to be a paper on methodology, but I don’t really know. You see, methodology frightens me. The mere idea of methodology frightens me. Conferences are the worst. There people you hardly trust enough to watch your coat seem perfectly at ease with asking personal questions such as ‘What’s your methodological standpoint then?’ without feeling the least bit intrusive. And when I answer ‘Don’t really have one. I don’t like methodology!’ they laugh nervously and say something about the coffee. I really don’t like methodology. The fact that I’ve been forced to teach it for the last few years has heightened this aversion into something pretty close to a pathological state. This paper, then, discusses it all from a somewhat different standpoint. In part it will be an attempt for me to find a way to think about method that does not scare me witless. In a more general sense it will try to address some issues regarding how methodology is viewed. Simply put, by provisionally introducing aesthetics into a discussion on methodology I would like to find other ways of thinking about method and thus, research. Why? Well, because a lot of the time it seems like methodology stands in the way of research, as a roadblock ‘On the Way to Language’ (Heidegger, 1959).

Repeating myself, when reading what is normally written on the question of method, I’m struck by an immense sense of dread. A never-ending list of problems, faults, inaccuracies and mistakes are presented to the reader as a condemnation of her impudence in thinking that she is capable of conducting research (e.g. Alvesson and Sköldbreg, 2000; Bryman, 1992; Silverman, 1985; 1993). A series of mutually exclusive recipes are laid out and argued for and against scolding the reader for her inability to choose. After a careful reading of any standard textbook on methodology one comes away feeling as if one were to try to lose one’s virginity immediately after reading Henry Miller. Let’s face it, methodology is scary. Scary not only because it is presented as an hermetic mystery, as the winding path of the epistemological sage, but because of it being fundamentally anti-inquiry. The ‘physics envy’ that led the social sciences in general into operations analysis, functionalism and an absurd dependence on quantitative methods, has led qualitative studies into a cul-de-sac of condemnation and confusion. Searching for coherence, completeness, and rigor, writers on qualitative methodology have habitually propagated a view on method which resembles (one might even say is) a moral discourse on the conduct of research and researchers. Although most ‘reflective’ scholars share some notion of cultural and social relativism, this has not had much of an impact on meta-methodology, leading to a state where different schools mostly resemble papal states.

And I think this is a question of language. Taking a cue from Elias (1978), it would seem that we as academics have gone through a lengthy civilization process, and are now socialized into a mode of talking about method that equates propriety in method with a more general morality. You're either right or, metaphorically, dead wrong. What I here would wish to put forth is the argument that methodology could be thought outside of this dominating discourse of a moral science and instead be discussed as a path towards aesthetically pleasing, and thus better, research. Talking about methodologies as aesthetic practices is here presented as a way to enliven the discussion about research and make methodology meaningful. And, so as not to be misunderstood before I have had the chance to explain myself, I have to stress the following: I do not believe researchers to be akin to artists. Such a claim would to my mind not only be trite but disdainful to research. In arguing that aesthetics could be incorporated in the methodological discourse I do not wish to present any pseudo-psychological statement *à la* 'we are artists all', but merely to discuss methodology as more of a path and less of a toolbox. Still, research is to some extent a creative process, one which produces artifacts that can be aesthetically appreciated. Curiously, just these end-products of our scholarly endeavors are quite routinely ignored (cf. Becker, 1986; Czarniawska, 1999), as if our texts were mere coincidental effects of the 'real deal' of scientific inquiry. But I'm not talking about art, not at all. Aesthetics here simply denotes a way of talking about human expression that is tied neither to calculative logic or an ethics (although such divisions are dangerous, but you'll just have to bear with me). Being somewhat naive, I happen to believe that appreciation ('Nice, innit?') rather than approval ('That's a well done bit of discourse analysis, that is.') might allow for a more diverse discussion.

To further confuse the issue, the question of method particularly in the field of organization theory raises specific questions. As method is a practice that by its very nature organizes data, organizes research, organizes disciplinary boundaries, organizes schools of practice, increasing attention to its ordering qualities would seem important. And whereas the importance of a research ethics is routinely brought forth, the possibility of a more fundamental set of moralizations already present in the very fabric of research is seldom expressly discussed. The following should thus not be read as a finished argument, but as a slightly bewildered look at the idea of 'method' in research, the notion of a known and communicable way of conducting research, as if the path was already decided. The following will also consequently by its very nature be a blunt instrument taken to a fine weave, an organizational theorist taking on the organizing of that which makes him one.

The Origin of the Work of Art

When it comes to aesthetics Heidegger is at his most lucid in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' (Heidegger, 1936/1993), which in many ways is his easiest work. This said, the work deals with nothing less hard than finding the source where art springs from. Recapitulating his argument, he first approaches the thingness of art, the way in which a work of art is a 'mere' thing. By incorporating his earlier analysis of the ontological position of things, Heidegger shows how different types of things show us their being in different ways. Mere things are here the basest elements, "a stone, a clod of earth, a

piece of wood” (Heidegger, 1993: 147). All that is more than this are *Zeug*, which could be translated into tool or equipment, and is that of which we acquire knowledge (of its being) through using it, like a pair of peasant shoes that “is half thing ... [and] ... at the same time it is half artwork” (Heidegger, 1993: 155). The *Zeug* is that which contains a necessity of purpose, as it is imbued with the world in which it is to exist. The artwork no longer contains the thingness of what it depicts, but instead “is the disclosure of what the equipment [*Zeug*]...is in truth” (Heidegger, 1993: 161). The artwork works through the unconcealment of the Being that served as the inspiration for it. Heidegger’s own example (later criticized by Derrida, 1987), van Gogh’s painting of a pair of peasant shoes, for him not only shows the shoes themselves but the world in which they are, the smell of the earth, the sun on the peasants back, blisters. All this should be well known.

Now, contrast this with the way descriptions of e.g. organizational life can be attempted. We can tell of the things that are immediately at hand, the mere matter of the organization, such as official reports or returned questionnaires (the latter being a wonderful example of the reduction of organization, and simultaneously the very organizing of organizations). We can also attempt a *Zeug*-like description, telling of organizational praxis and the like. But if we are to go beyond this (albeit one can wonder if we should), we must create ways in which our description of the organization and its behaviour(s) not only show that which has been at hand, but the world in which this Being exists. This would be, lacking a more elegant name, aesthetic research. Problematically enough, this would also entail a reduction of the praxis of research, the way of the intellect. Now, ever since Marx scribbled down his thoughts on Feuerbach, famously (and, to my mind, correctly and particularly poignant in the fields of organization and economy) dismissing scholarly thinking that is not tied to praxis as ‘a purely scholastic question’, the scholar’s Cartesian split between doing and thinking about doing has been difficult to uphold. Problem is, intellectuals, be they researchers, demagogues or ideo-logicians, are constantly at risk of falling into their own closed practice, the praxis of doing research becoming self-contained and the scripture of methodology working as the researcher’s handmaiden. Heidegger in his ‘Letter on Humanism’ (1947/1993) tries to think this question, particularly turning to the possibility of thought prior to a distinction between theory and practice, thinking that is its use, tool-like, instead of the rational path towards available answers (the way of method). Returning in his writings again and again to the non-thought, the poverty of over-intellectualizing – and we are always there, perilously – pointing out the need for less philosophy, less metaphysics, Heidegger becomes a paradox, or as Derrida (1997: 93) reframes him: “Thinking is what we already know we have not yet begun; measured against the shape of writing, it is broached only in the *epistémè*.”

The path then, the stroll through the thickets of metaphysics towards the *Lichtung* of thinking, goes from the thing-ness of the world towards praxis and further. The later Heidegger was consequently occupied with battling an attitude towards the world he called ‘technological’ (Heidegger, 1954/1993). Technology in the sense used here is not a question of engineering, but of the tendency to rationalize, improve upon, order, instrumentalize and structure the world. This tendency is of course inherently present in the modern view of science (Toulmin, 1992), and has been criticized by a fair amount of scholars. For Heidegger the path to escape this totalizing and reductionism is art (specifically poetry, in his case) and the revealing of the true nature of Being that an

aesthetication of the world can bring. It is this reductionism and strive towards totalization that also continuously endangers the researcher, making the aesthetication of research an important question. But is the path from *technè* to *poiésis* tenable, in anything except a metaphoric way? Are we merely romanticizing research, believing that we could approach the communicative powers of the artwork? And even if we could, what is it we are attempting?

All claims from below have been scurrilously disguised as claims from above: and the surrealists, having become the laughing-stock of those who have seen close up a sorry and shabby failure, obstinately hold on to their magnificent Icarian pose. (Bataille, 1985: 39)

The difficulty, then, here, is that the invocation of the word 'aesthetics' often makes people go into conniptions of a particularly ugly sort, imagining that the mere aura of art is sufficient to carry or stand in for argumentation and/or analysis. The process of aesthetication then becomes just another instrumentalization, another moral goal to be attained. And Heidegger doesn't argue for art, he argues for *thinking*. The analysis of the artwork that Heidegger presents can be read as dealing with how a human artefact is connected to that from which it sprung, as a phenomenological naturalism. In such a reading, the artwork referred to ceases to be a specific cultural form of expression, and stands for expression more generally, namely the expression of thinking. The engagement with the world that is present in the use of equipment, be this a hammer or the sun, shows us the tool, but *thinking reveals it* and the world within which it exists.

The Economy of Method and its Ironies

To complement his pragmatic and anti-foundationalist view on epistemological questions, Richard Rorty (see e.g. Rorty, 1989; 1998) has called for a new approach to research, an approach he calls ironic. To quickly reiterate, this builds upon the researcher being able to balance two opposing forces in her thinking, namely both believing in the validity of her 'final vocabulary' and being able to constantly question and doubt the same. It is important to realize that these two forces here should have equal weight with the ironist (Note that this is an *ironic* reading of Rorty, based in part on Hall 1994, and that it in fact stands partly at odds with Rorty's vocabulary, that tends to downplay the dialectic dynamic of thinking). The postmodernist's continuing scepticism is as much a mistake as the positivist's incorrigible trust in final truths. In some instances one can even find the two forces at work in a symmetric but unattached manner, as Rorty seems to see in critical theory in general and in Jürgen Habermas in particular. Then the lack of irony has become pathological, for neither trust nor doubt longer holds an edifying position towards the other. Ironic thinking is fluid but with a certain rigor, sort of like properly chilled vodka. Stated otherwise, an ironist could be seen as a thinker that does not take herself wholly seriously, but instead revels in the possibility of someone destroying her argumentation. In this sense the ironic attitude could be seen as complementary to the post-empiricist school in the philosophy of science (Bohman, 1991). By allowing a certain amount of holes in her defences, the ironist makes her science a little more interesting, a little more dangerous.

So, maybe methodology lacks irony. Why? Because even the most strident proponent of reflective and critical research proposes reflection and critique as remedies for ailments present in other forms of methodology, thereby taking a moral standpoint. Methodology, as it is presented in learned books on the subject, seemingly cannot exist without positing itself in relation to others, establishing hegemony, claiming victory – however tentatively. Reading texts on methodology one is in awe of the seemingly unending amount of evil that other researchers partake in. Mostly these Others are merely buffoons, clumsy, insufficiently subtle. Bad researchers. In extreme cases these other researchers turn out to be homicidal maniacs, killing and maiming (textually, of course) with their evil ways of bad methodological conduct. Textbooks and articles on methodology almost always show that until now, until the publication of this text, some of us have been doing things plain wrong. Not that they don't accept that there are many ways to skin a cat, they just seem insistent on that some of these ways are more or less right and some others more or less wrong. A method, as it is usually talked about, is a technological concept, an application. It places the world as available and free to be manipulated, it frames the world. Just as Heidegger (yes, him again) showed that the essence of technology would in its totality leave the world as standing reserve that can be roused for the technological apparatus (Heidegger, 1954/1993), methodology usually posits the world as a surface to be penetrated, mined, with nuggets of knowledge to be had as long as the tools are kept sharpened. Use the wrong tool, and nothing is to be had. Use the right tool, and the world is yours. This is the path of technology, where everything becomes-for something else. If method is viewed as a technology, a set of tools, it makes that-which-is-studied a subject, a reserve. Method, as a technique and a tool, frames the world and makes it a commodity for the academic potlatch, a ground suitable for divvying up into easily digestible chunks of 'studies' presented to a voracious band of research junkies eagerly awaiting their next fix. Is your junk pure enough?

And this is where my argument, as it is, naked, despairing, turns to economy and organization theory. For what is method if not the organizing of the world? Even without turning to the machinic theories of Deleuze/Guattari, the way in which the notion of a separated constituent of inquiry which functions as a device for turning the input of the world into the output of science is fundamentally technological. Method is in such a view a productive function, and posits the world as a supply of data, some of which can efficiently be turned into scientific value. This economic unconscious of research enables us to talk intelligibly about 'good' or 'bad' methods, as we by this seem to mean more or less efficient way of producing the aforementioned science-values. Method produces results and contributions, improves data, cleans your desk and enables elderly professors to make a bit of spare change by writing offensively bad cookbooks of research that they can force graduate students to buy. It organizes research into the do-rights and do-wrongs, creating efficient divisions between orthodoxy and the great unwashed. Those who have the method-capital, the correct tools of knowledge, and those who wander, poor, in the world.

The revealing that rules throughout modern technology has the character of a setting-upon, in the sense of a challenging-forth. Such challenging happens in that the energy concealed in nature is unlocked, what is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is stored up, what is stored up is in return distributed, and what is distributed is switched about ever anew. [...] Everywhere everything is order to stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may

be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it the standing-reserve [*Bestand*]. [...] It designates nothing less than the way in which everything presences that is wrought upon by the revealing that challenges. Whatever stands by in the sense of standing-reserve no longer stands over us as object. (Heidegger, 1993: 321-322)

The specific modes of organizing that method conceived of as a tool creates are not neutral or natural ones, and this observation has been made repeatedly. We know that research has a political side, and that this should be acknowledged. But method also has its economic side, an inherent quantification of value that might pervert the interpretative project. Conceived of in the way it is usually done, method *does things*, and is through this fundamentally economic. And this has made the discussion regarding method moral insofar as it discusses how such production can be optimized and made more efficient, with less efficiency in the generation of research immediately perceived as a undesired state. The way in which such teleological argumentation is used renders any statement regarding the way to conduct research ethical to the core. What is more, it makes method an economy (and thereby ethical *to the core*), a discourse where accumulation and the efficient use of resources reigns supreme.

Right now I'm thus expected to say that this is not how methodology should be done, and that I have a brilliant idea that will solve this problem forever. I won't and I haven't. I'm not going to butt heads with big boys like Morgan (1983) and Bryman (1992). I'll route around them, tentatively, as in any strategic movement. Heh. Much as the ironist can route around the metaphysician, I could now refer to another one of Rorty's weapons, namely recontextualization. By playing with concepts, Rorty encourages the circumvention of those discussions that one no longer feels to be fruitful. This is similar to the use of metaphor, but instead of trying to enhance our understanding of a phenomenon by looking at it in a different manner, recontextualization (in Rorty's sense) aims at changing the phenomenon itself by altering the language game. Kind of like a form of 'Wittgensteinian reengineering' (a term I'm fond of and wish to copyright, by the way). By presenting a new way to talk about things one introduces a vocabulary that can either be adopted or rejected by a community, but either way one forces people to think about their language. In a sense this makes Rorty a hacker of epistemology, rerouting around what he does not feel like attacking head-on. My small, personal hack in this vein tries to bring in aesthetic concepts to a place where moral ones have reigned supreme. I have no interest in discussing whether e.g. grounded theory is a good way to study motivation, but I think that a lot of the research I see is pretty ugly. Not bad, I do not claim to have the requisite knowledge to say that, but ugly as in overblown, pretentious, piddling, boring, unoriginal, et cetera. Maybe I do mean bad. But not bad in the sense that I can point to any distinct flaw in reasoning or conduct, rather bad in the sense as displeasing, repugnant, grotesque. By recontextualizing in this way we can try to bring in both irony (as aesthetic concepts might not function in the same totalizing manner as moral ones do) into the discussion and enable other forms of the same. A discussion of method that would work in the manner of e.g. art criticism instead of ontological criticism might, to me, be both more interesting and more edifying.

But am I not then inviting that final ogre of research, absolute relativism? Rorty has by his critics (see e.g. Brandom, 2000) been accused of never standing still long enough for anyone to get off a decent shot. Recontextualization seems like the perfect dodge, a way

of dismissing any criticism by calling it uninteresting, making Rorty (and, I guess, me – gosh!) a dandy, waving off any substantive critiques by a witty remark or snide put-down. Such critique is quite understandable, but misses the mark somewhat. Rorty never claims that a recontextualization can take place instantaneously, far less so that it could take place in a total fashion. Rather, different contexts can and do exist simultaneously, in an intellectual version of the evolutionary primal soup. Playing with language in such a way is not a ‘quick fix’ for anything at all, but a move in the game of competing discourses, tentative and incomplete. Take the foolish notion of discussing research through aesthetics. It is not that this isn’t already done to some extent through notions with certain resemblances: creativity, elegance, style, intuition, sophistication, *et cetera*. (The problem with aesthetics within the research field of management and organizations might actually be that it is perilously close to becoming an industry. One should always be wary about a perspective that’s in fashion. And there has been a *lot* of attention on aesthetics recently, with several conferences (Bolton in 1999, Siena in 2000) and journal special issues as visible manifestations. In addition to this we’ve seen several books that in some way approach the question (e.g. Wiesmann, 1989; Czarniawska-Joerges and Guillet de Monthoux, 1994; Strati, 1998; Linstead and Höpfl, 1999) and it seems to be increasingly difficult to organize a conference without some smart-alec wanting to incorporate aesthetics in at least a sub-theme. (Waves to friends in the industry.)) Making claims strictly about aesthetics and trying to create a niche for this is fundamentally futile, just another little circle of friends. The point lies in the *juxtaposition* of arguments. The heresy of non-rational (i.e. aesthetic) method has no strength at all until it is posited as a perspective on method as fundamentally a moral economy (a trade in values and the attaining hereof). Words such as shock-value, cute, forcefulness, etc. could all be utilized in the discussion of methodology, and their difference to the logical analysis of data-gathering could infuse the field with a certain dynamic. Much as the existence of the poor can serve as a perspective on bloodless economic theory and the neo-liberals’ Panglossian idea of ours as the best world possible. We might need a poverty of method, more aleatory scholars.

Now the truth can be told. This article shouldn’t be read as forming an argument. It is born out of the poverty of my thinking, pained, battling. I just don’t understand what people are talking about when they discuss method. They have stuff, obviously, cherished methods with which they get into journals (My Precious!). I have none, or at least I don’t think I do. So what do I have? I know when I like what I’ve written (though I’m unsure of this text). I know when I like what others have written. I just don’t always know why. Kant’s third critique names it *Urteilkraft*, clumsily translated as ‘judgement’ in English. It could be called *Erziehung*. Stephen Toulmin refers to a lecture given by Isaiah Berlin:

We mean nothing occult or metaphysical; we do not mean a magic eye able to penetrate into something that ordinary minds cannot apprehend; we mean something perfectly ordinary, empirical, and quasi-aesthetical in the way it works. (2001: 181-182)

We need less discussions on method, and more discussions on thinking. Less highfalutin theory (and we are all sinners), and more ‘perfectly ordinary’ writing. We do not need method, we need reason.

Postscript

...as both a devoted student and aggressive critic of Immanuel Kant, Schiller holds a special place in the history of aesthetics. By distilling some of Kant's theories of aesthetics and spicing them up with some of his own he wrote 27 letters on the need for aesthetics, later publishing these as *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen* (Schiller, 1995). This work stands as one of the most important popularizations of aesthetics ever. Here Schiller tries to show the importance of aesthetics in the life of a balanced individual, and the ways in which an aesthetic sensibility is a necessity for freedom and the possibility to create (see e.g. Savile, 1987).

Schiller is prone to discuss things by invoking opposites, positioning spirit against matter, chaos against form et cetera. His argument is then that in between these pairs of opposites there exists a field that functions as a crossroads, a meeting point, an exchange. Of particular interest to Schiller are the two opposites of form and matter and the two forces that steer man, namely the propensity towards either form ('*Formtrieb*') or matter ('*Stofftrieb*'). *Stofftrieb* draws us towards the material in the world, towards our basest instincts and the immersion in the world of things. This is the world of the barbarian, the one who is disassociated from all that would make his surroundings meaningful. *Formtrieb* draws us towards the pure abstractions of the mind, towards 'dogmas and empty formalism' (Guillet de Monthoux, 1993). This is the world of the bureaucrat, the one who has no connection to the world he lives in but only to the meaningless logic of his thinking. These two forces are the frame of human being, the sterile endpoints of letting either one of the forces take over. They are not necessarily moral categories, but extremes that have to be lived with in some way. And the way Schiller says that we can live with these two extremes is through Art (capital A). For in between the two there exists a space where something fecund can happen, a place created by the '*Spieltrieb*', the drive to play. By utilizing this drive, the artist can overcome the hindrances present in staying fixed at either of the poles, form or matter. In the space of *Spieltrieb* the two are in harmony with neither taking a dominant position. Here we can find the pure aesthetics and it is here that beauty can come into being. What is further, here one cannot talk of progress in the systemic sense, but only of development (*Erziehung*), or even the state of becoming learned (*Bildung*). The Hegelian space that is formed in battling both barbaric matter and soulless form is not a given method, it is a lived process, the task of thinking...

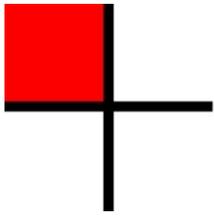
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Leadership in the Shadow of '9/11'

Gary Gemmill

abstract

This note examines how the social myth of the leader relates to the September 11th terrorist attacks on the twin towers in New York City and the pentagon in Washington, DC. The attacks are commonly referred to as 9/11 in the American news media. In exploring the relationship of the leader myth to the attacks, a conceptual distinction is made between the palliative war and the etiological war. The distinction is, then, applied to an analysis of leadership issues embedded in the events of 9/11 and its aftermath. Using a psychodynamic perspective, the thesis is advanced that intergroup shadow dynamics underlie the etiological war while the palliative war addresses only symptoms created by the shadow dynamics. Suggestions regarding the etiological war are offered for managing the leadership issues hidden in the shadow dynamics of 9/11.

If only a world-wide consciousness could arise that all division and all fission are due to the splitting of opposites in the psyche, then we would know where to begin. (Carl Jung)

My enemy said to me, 'Love your enemy' and I obeyed him and loved myself. (Kahlil Gibran)

In early January I received the following email from Christopher Land: "I was recently re-reading the paper on "Leadership: An Alienating Social Myth?" that you wrote with Judith Oakley and I couldn't help but be reminded of the volume of press coverage that has been devoted to leadership in recent months (Gemmill and Oakley, 1992). A recent news feature: from a narrow, contested election victory in the US, George Bush has apparently risen admirably to the challenge of 'world leader'. In the UK, Tony Blair has taken on the mission of becoming the free-West's emissary to the rest of the world, thereby demonstrating his leadership abilities. Both of these events have tended to be reported, in the UK at least, in an unconditionally positive light. Of course not a day goes by when we are not reminded of the insidious, and strangely elusive, charismatic leadership of Osama Bin Laden. The point of this email is to see whether you would be interested in reflecting upon these post 9/11 developments in light of your thesis on leadership put forward in the 1992 paper?" This is the context from which I reflect here on the relevance of the early thesis to the leadership issues surrounding 9/11 (the September 11th terrorist attack on America) and its aftermath. As I hope to show the thesis seems alive and well in the wake of the 9/11 disaster.

The Leader Myth

The basic thesis of the earlier article was derived in part from experiences in consulting with self-analytical groups directly involved in studying their own leadership processes. The quickness with which incipient panic, fear, paralysis, terror and confusion pushed group members into almost immediately attempting to appoint a leader seemed astonishing. Many group members believed that such action would eliminate all the strong emotional turbulence that was pushing into their awareness. What was particularly revealing was that there was rarely any discussion at all about why they needed a leader, what the needs were that were propelling them to have a leader, and what the leader would really do for the group. The rapid regression to a familiar social form seemed almost like a social instinct or deeply embedded culturally induced program. It became clearer in further work with such groups that the invention of a leader was a learned social defense for preventing and warding off unfamiliar feelings of chaos, panic, uncertainty, helplessness, ambivalence, and instability that were beginning to unravel and unfold. The ritualistic invention of a leader seemed to provide a social illusion that everything in one's immediate world was stable and under control. It was an illusion that masked the feelings of overwhelmingness, falling apart, unsureness, awkwardness, and powerlessness about not being able to control powerful forces both outside and inside themselves. The creation of the leader role allowed members to narrow the uncertainty and the terror to one place instead of diffusing it throughout a seemingly diabolic and random social environment where one is powerless to intentionally effect events. Placing the 'cause' of them in a 'leader' or the leader role who is imagined to have the power to change events considerably reduces feelings of anxiety, terror, helplessness, and chaos.

Attribution theory and research on the 'cause' of outcomes strongly suggests that positive outcomes are likely to be attributed to a 'leader' while negative outcomes are more likely to be attributed to some form of a 'scapegoat'. The importance of attribution theory is that it examines human attempts to assign 'causation' to events happening in their daily lives. Freud seemed to understand quite well how such social illusions operate in groups when he indicated that groups "demand illusions and cannot do without them" and "constantly give what is unreal precedence over what is real" (Freud, 1960: 16).

The leader myth as a social defense results in a ritualistic structure where group members deskill themselves in terms of emotions and mindfulness in their collective work (Gemmill, 1986). They seem mentally and emotionally sluggish resulting in a flawed process of reality construction. Moreover, in just going through the motions they are not able to develop either their intellectual or emotional competencies in learning from the underlying issues that seemingly gave rise to the need for a 'leader' or leadership. When there is a rapid regression to a familiar box there is no learning or opportunity to develop emotional and mindfulness skills (Elmes and Gemmill, 1990). Since the myth is undiscussable by group members, self-sealing non-learning about the dynamics of the myth is outside scrutiny and constantly reinforced. Paradoxically, since no learning or skill development takes place there is a stronger pull towards magical or

charismatic leaders. One of the pivotal functions of the myth seems to be an ideological one of preserving the existing social system by attributing dysfunctions and difficulties within the system to personal deficiencies or the absence of leadership. The destructive and dysfunctional aspects of the social system itself go unexamined, as does the collusion among members in creating and sustaining the myth. As long as faults and imperfections can be attributed to personal flaws or failings or the absence of leadership, contributing forces in the social system remains unexamined and unchanged.

The Palliative Versus the Etiological War

My thesis in this note is that in the aftermath of 9/11 potentially the leader myth can operate to prevent significant social learning about the social events and conditions that create terrorists and terrorism. I argue that while Bush, Blair, and Bin Laden are central figures in the current world drama the operation of the leader myth can result in a failure to learn how as a world community we can prevent and manage the difficult social factors that give rise to terrorism and terrorists. Just like all world wars with the destruction or imprisonment of the 'evil ones' or the 'axis of evil' we will have failed to have learned anything useful about the actual social and psychological factors that produced them. To clarify this thesis I want to make a distinction between what I call the 'palliative war' and the 'etiological war'. The palliative war is one of eliminating or imprisoning as many perceived enemies as possible. From the viewpoint of Bush and Blair it refers to the intentional ongoing 'search and destroy' mission for 'known terrorists' or the 'evil ones'. From the standpoint of Osama Bin Laden it refers to identifying and eliminating 'the great Satan' which is interpreted to mean using random and suicidal acts of violence to kill as many Americans as possible. The palliative war in essence treats the symptoms without ascertaining the 'causes' that underlie the symptoms. Ascertaining the causes is a much deeper struggle and battle that I call the 'etiological war'. It is directed at discovering social factors that lead to the development of terrorism and terrorists, and ways of preventing and containing their development.

Viewing 9/11 as only a leadership issue would blur or cover up the underlying dysfunctional world social system dynamics that are more difficult to examine and reflect upon. The shadow of 9/11 is not about magical leaders who are either heroes or evil seeds who hypnotize or mesmerize people to obediently carry out their plans. Such a focus seems misplaced since it neglects the more compelling and frightening issue of the psychological and social factors that create groups who are willing to obediently, mindlessly, heartlessly, and blindly carry out destructive acts towards others as well as themselves. At the risk of being labeled a reductionist, I offer the hypothesis that much of the 'etiological world war' has to do with the Jungian shadow casted by dysfunctional group relations; a shadow similar to the one forged in previous world wars from which there has been no significant personal and social learning (Gemmill, 1987). In terms of wars, history seems to repeat itself largely because there is no substantive learning about the precipitating causes that could act as a preventative in the world social system.

Shadows of the Enemy Within

In an earlier article Michael Elmes and I presented an emerging psychodynamic theory of intergroup relationships which I think has great bearing on what I am calling 'the shadow of 9/11' (Gemmill and Elmes, 1992). The central postulate of the theory is that the creation and maintenance of an external enemy out-group serves both a cathartic and conflict avoidance function for an in-group by providing a scapegoat toward which internally generated, emotionally laden issues and tension contained in the emergent group shadow can be externally focused. Like a person, a group collectively uses psychological splitting of experience into 'good' objects and 'bad' objects as a social defense to manage the ambivalence toward one's self and other members of the group (Gemmill and Kraus, 1988). Based upon the splitting a group tends to collectively perceive itself as having only positive attributes ('We are...') while simultaneously attributing its own negative attributes to an enemy out-group ('They are...'). In essence, the group's own shadow is foisted unto the perceived enemy group. The enemy group ('Them') becomes the focus and container for all the unacknowledged qualities, impulses, feelings, and thoughts within the group itself ('Us'). The enemy group is perceived as embodying all the group negates within itself. The concept of splitting along with the shadowing of the negative split provides a psychodynamic explanation for the undercurrent of ethnocentrism and xenophobia that various researchers have detected in intergroup relations. Much of the relationship between 'warring' groups can best be understood as a mirror reflecting back to each group its own unfolding shadow which it has difficulty perceiving, acknowledging, and constructively managing. Dysfunctional intergroup relations are manifestations of dysfunctional relationships within the groups themselves. Until each of the 'warring' groups is able to perceive, acknowledge, and reparate within itself the shadow attributes reflected off the other group, the conflictual tension and mutual hostility remains unresolved.

Fighting the Etiological War

This brings me to what I consider a challenging, perplexing and complex issue in the etiological war. The issue is how to make available on a world-wide basis the knowledge and skills involved in addressing the etiological war. I believe this is a most important and worthy area of study for scholars and students of organization and management. At the risk of being considered naïve and impractical, I wish to briefly outline initial steps and offer some ideas that might be considered in attempting to firmly grasp the shadow of 9/11 in an effort to win the etiological war and prevent further palliative wars.

I think that a pivotal key to any preventive program involves a collective acknowledgement of the role of unconscious emotional forces in our daily lives. It is only with such an acknowledgement that it becomes possible to learn the personal and group dynamics contained in the shadow and develop skills in identifying and constructively managing it in a creative way. To acknowledge that our own behavior is significantly influenced or determined by forces either inside us or outside us in our social environment is not always an easy thing to do. Doing so threatens the widespread

cultural illusion that as individuals our own behavior is autonomous and independent of influence from unconscious or out-of-awareness personal forces inside us and social forces outside of us (Gemmill and Kraus, 1988). The illusory quality of this belief is confirmed by research on social conformity in small groups and obedience to authority. The difficulty in challenging this belief has been primarily one of not systematically providing people with the knowledge and tools they could use to discover and learn about these hidden, driving forces in their daily live. There are learning tools currently available for learning how to surface and identify emerging shadow issues both within and between groups (Gemmill and Costello, 1990).

The use of the word 'unconscious' behavior may not be the best label to use in learning programs since it conveys the sense that the behavior is inaccessible to anyone without highly specialized knowledge and tools. It may be time to redefine the construct in words that evoke a less negative reaction and more readily identify where to focus attention to bring the behavior into immediate awareness or consciousness. The words used would communicate the basic notion that the emotional forces are present but not obvious, lying just below the threshold of awareness. Although certainly not exhaustive but for purposes of providing examples the following possibilities come to mind; emerging consciousness, outside immediate awareness, emerging shadow, or background of awareness. This is an important issue which I only want to underscore here, not resolve. From my experience I do think it is necessary and possible to work on eliminating or greatly reducing professional jargon nestled in psychological and sociological constructs so that a large audience can understand and use them. Finding creative ways to clearly communicate what is seen like overly abstract and esoteric concepts and tools (group shadow, projection, etc.), so that even fairly young children can grasp and use them, is an important frontier. I have been quite struck by how well my youngest daughter learned how to make practical use of the concept of projection in her relationships when she was eight years old. Additionally, designing learning experiences and simulations that provide situations where individuals can experience and experiment with crossing group boundaries in the context of exploring emergent shadow dynamics could be of real value in fighting the etiological war. Individuals would have compelling experiences focused on developing and using their emotional intelligence (Gemmill and Wynkoop, 1991).

Overcoming Intellectual Terrorism

The acknowledgement of unconscious factors in our lives would also require that emotions be considered to be as important as cognition in understanding crucial relationship problems especially between groups. Current research on the development of emotional intelligence is a step in this direction (George, 2000). In light of it, I wonder if it might be worthwhile to seriously explore revising educational systems at all levels so that they become more effective at developing both intellectual skills and emotional skills. There is not an inherent conflict between reason and emotions; they are not mutually exclusive opposites. It is when we refuse to acknowledge our emotions that they go underground in destructive ways. Combining intellect with emotion and acknowledging the full spectrum of our emotions could do much to depopulate from our

world shadowlike enemies. It seems sheer folly and madness to continue to neglect the development of emotional intelligence in our educational systems.

There is much fear and negativity surrounding the expression and open discussion of emotions some of which is gender based (Gemmill and Schaible, 1991). 'Psychobabble', 'touchy feely', 'charm school', and 'psychoanalyzing each other without a license' are common hostile defensive reactions found in groups of executives toward expressing feelings engendered during their work together. The defensive reaction is in itself a strong emotional response not an intellectual evaluation of the relative advantages and disadvantages of identifying, expressing, and learning from emotions that under grid the work process. There is also a common fear that experiencing and expressing emotions especially ones like fear, anger, sadness, or hurt indicate a personal psychological deficiency that requires seeing a psychiatry or psychotherapist (Gemmill, 2000). Having scant experience in identifying, expressing, and discussing emotions tends to unrealistically magnify the act of doing so as well as the negative consequence of doing so. Much of psychotherapy is neither medicine or science but rather an educational process directed at helping individuals learn how to identify, express, and integrate their emotions as well as to discover how events from their past that are below their immediate level of awareness are influencing present day behavior. While identifying and learning to constructively express emotions may be difficult work it is not a sign of 'mental illness' or an indicator that one need to see a psychiatrist or psychotherapist. Deskillling ourselves emotionally by attributing esoteric knowledge and skills to a small group of professional psychotherapists would only be another manifestation of the leader myth in operation. Part of the human condition is that we experience difficulties in living our lives with our own emotions and the emotions of others who are in our lives (Szasz, 1961). Making our emotions undiscussable and pretending they don't exist does not bode well since the most likely scenario is that they will voice themselves in destructive ways.

Creating the New World Order

I think there is a grave danger that the war on terrorism may only be treated as a palliative war ensnared and encapsulated by the leader myth. As long as the shadow dynamics between groups are ignored there will continue to be such wars since killing off or imprisoning another groups only shifts the shadow to yet another group. Fighting the etiological war involves developing on a world-wide basis emotional intelligence skills for bringing the shadow dynamics into the light. These skills are identifiable and learnable. Is it at all possible to find a way to provide at least a critical mass of world citizens with the practical knowledge of the workings of the shadow dynamics between groups as well as the emotional intelligent skills necessary to constructively manage them? Is it possible to develop a New World Order reflecting a total system perspective in which everyone would consider themselves first and foremost world citizens? The current enthonationalism creates seams and artificial boundaries that can easily become containers for each nation's collective shadow. The very existence of national boundaries can easily contribute to divisiveness and the populating of the world social system with enemy groups. Is it possible to infuse a critical mass of world citizens with

such emotional intelligent skills? I don't know. Looking at our history of experiences with wars and murderous relationships between groups does not favor an optimistic or encouraging view. Many civilizations in the past have declined or disappeared sometimes without a clue as to the causes. We are perhaps on the verge of such a decline but faced with one notable difference. For the first time in the history of the human race the nuclear destructive powers are so great that everyone in the human race can be vaporized and vanish without a trace. We stand at a critical juncture where we can choose to either remain prisoners of our previous experience or choose to evolve our consciousness and group skills by becoming pioneers of social evolution.

Deskilling around issues of leadership is of no help in fighting the etiological war. It is easy to distance ourselves from these issues by falling into the false comfort of the leader myth. Seriously facing these issues surfaces feelings of being overwhelmed, drowned by chaotic complexity, helplessness, and hopelessness. By clinging to the leader myth we might dull these feelings so we are not emotionally upset but only at the cost of deskilling ourselves from understanding and learning how to constructively manage the chimerical shadow dynamics between groups. With emotional and intellectual deskilling there can be no exploration of the group shadows or other causal factors in the world social system itself that precipitate the development of terrorists or other war-like behavior between groups.

Rather than deskilling ourselves and removing ourselves from the etiological war we need to fully embrace our mindfulness to learn the skills necessary to harness the murderous shadow dynamics that continue to haunt the world order. The issue of the shadow is a total system issue that requires leadership. From a system perspective leadership is a collective social paradigm reflecting how constructive a social system manages on a day to day basis the work and relationships in the collectivity. Rather than being viewed as centered in a person leadership can be viewed as a dynamic, evolutionary social process where people collectively collaborate to define and achieve meaningful goals for the collectivity (Barker, 2001). Subduing and taming the shadow casted by 9/11 requires such leadership.

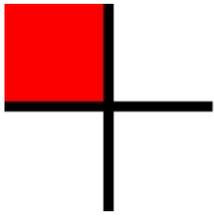
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How to do Fieldwork with Ample Philosophical Headroom. An Obituary for Pierre Bourdieu

Søren Buhl Pedersen

The French social analyst and intellectual Pierre Bourdieu died on January 24th, 71 years of age. His successful academic career forms a counterexample to his own theory about the difficulties of upward social movement and the stasis of the social hierarchy, which also simultaneously fueled and was fueled by his own attitude towards academia. Bourdieu never lived up to our prejudice about well-established academics as sedate, secure, and often more conservative than their younger peers. He was, as he writes in the introduction to the late philosophical work *Pascalian Meditations*¹, never quite at ease with the intellectual elite in France. He made it a point to counter the social norms and the *episteme* of the apex of academia. Thus his life was, in terms of both his theoretical work and his biography, his own *praxis*, characterized by the paradox of being inside and outside at the same time.

Bourdieu found a major part of his productive drive in his social indignation. Nevertheless, he never became a member of the communist party – contrary to many of his contemporaries – but remained a politically autonomous, though distinctly *gauche* or left wing, critic. Rather than taking up the analysis of social stratification through the Marxist understanding of infrastructure and superstructure he turned his critical gaze to the less intensively mapped relations of symbolic, rather than material, capital. In doing so he drew on the French heritage of Durkheim and Mauss, namely the interest in symbolic regimes and systems of representation, and the critical theory in the tradition of Gramsci and Althusser, the latter an explicit reference. His autonomy and urge to combine disciplines and perspectives rather than deepen the gorges of theory led him – in a way similar to how he avoided the dominant understanding of Marxism – to repel the kind of structuralism, which was in fashion in the sixties and seventies. Lévi-Strauss was, for his liking, far too mechanical and not sufficiently sensitive to the importance of particular, social space as opposed to language.

1 Pierre Bourdieu, 2000, *Pascalian Meditations*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

All in all, rather than joining the dominant trenches of French academia, Bourdieu turned his attention to the dispositional structures of the habitus, and the question of how the dialectics of society and individual can be analyzed through this concept. The concept of habitus offered a way to capture, with a quote from *The Logic of Practice*, “the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product.”² In describing the complex relations of individual, society, and history in practice, he combined hitherto segregated strands of social theory. The implications of his theoretical work were far-reaching, namely the breaking of the deadlock of subjectivism and objectivism in social theory.

The work of Bourdieu is characterized by an interest in relationalist thinking. Fueled by the knowledge that epistemic cultures are governed by dichotomic thinking, Bourdieu developed a social analytic based on the ambition to surpass the limitations of these inherent polarities by looking at them as contingent products of power-relations. Bourdieu believed that naturalized ways of thinking in a field, in his theory labeled *doxa*, cripple the ability to see and criticize unjust power structures. These naturalized mental categories become accessible for the analyst in fields as theoretical polarities such as objectivism versus subjectivism, materialism versus symbolism or metaphysics and determinism versus freedom. The point of relationalism is to avoid choosing either pole of a dominant dichotomy, and rather to analyze the way the dichotomy structures the field.

Bourdieu remained a fierce critic of the understanding of action and choice as rationally guided phenomena. Rather, inspired by phenomenology and the late Wittgenstein, Bourdieu kept the complexity of social action present through his career. He believed that the moment we begin to describe action rather than acting in a given event we distance ourselves from the event. We run the risk of what Bourdieu labels ‘theoreticism’ and hence the risk of reproducing flawed discourses on action. Here, the unconventional character of Bourdieu’s position becomes obvious in that he openly breaks with the powerful rationalist tradition within social theory.

The resistance to ‘scholasticism’ or non-critical reproduction of theoretical dogmas is reflected in the method of Bourdieuan analysis. But Bourdieu does not shun classical concepts. On the contrary, he juggles Greek concepts like any other ‘man of letters’, but with a rather different objective: he uses concepts like *doxa*, *hexis*, *praxis* and *skhole* as prisms or mirrors to access his empirical data in a new way. And in doing so, he develops and extends the significance of these concepts to the point where they become empirically instructive.

In a way, Bourdieu stood out as a late-modern representative of the autonomous yet politically engaged intellectual. He played an important role as critical intellectual, opposed to the development of socialism into a kind of disguised liberalism in both France and Britain. Bourdieu’s ways of achieving attention were often innovative and downright humorous, as in 1981, when he supported the comedian Colouche as

2 Pierre Bourdieu, 1990, *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, p.56.

candidate for the French presidency. Outside the arena, which we traditionally label ‘the political’, he criticized academic and scientific authorities – either for their censorship and what he called “the imposition of form”³ or for their non-involvement in the important political and social issues of our time. He pointed out that the traditional distinction between politics and science cannot be upheld, and that academics and scientists should engage in political struggles. He was an outstanding example of that himself. The concept of globalization was central to this political concern of Bourdieu. He believed that the discourse of the global can be understood as the legitimization of dismantling the welfare state and the ideals of equality, and that intellectuals and academics should break with and criticize this discourse rather than reproducing it or – for which he often criticized his peers – simply meeting the demands of the dominant elite for persuasive academic rhetoric to justify the development of neo-liberalism.

It is customary in an obituary to list the most important and esteemed, canonical works from the author’s *oeuvre*. But since I am certain that Bourdieu himself would frown at the thought of such a canonization of himself as of others, I will restrict myself to the recommendation of only one, less well known, yet highly representative work. In the article ‘Identity and representation: Elements for a Critical Reflection on the Idea of Region’⁴ the reader will find a number of salient Bourdieuan features represented: the political indignation, the analytical skill and the incessant theoretical criticism.

In a word, the legacy of Bourdieu may be captured by the title of a recent documentary on his political engagement: *Sociology is a contact sport*.⁵ For him, it was obviously pointless to be a ‘desk-sociologist’. But as his work shows, the idea of entering the ring without proper critical theory and reflexivity should be considered equally futile.

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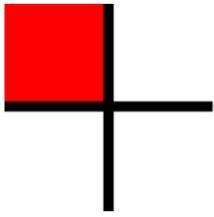
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3 e.g. Pierre Bourdieu, 1991, *Language and Symbolic Power*. Oxford: Polity Press. p.137.

4 In: Pierre Bourdieu, 1991, *Language and Symbolic Power*. Oxford: Polity Press, p.220ff.

5 Pierre Carles, 2001, ‘Pierre Bourdieu: La Sociologie est un sport de combat’, Buena Vista Home Entertainment (video, French).



Technical Questions: A Review of Key Works on the Question Of Technology

André Spicer

review of:

Martin Heidegger (1977) *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt. New York: Harper Torchbooks. (PB: pp.182, \$14.00 US, ISBN: 0-06-131969-4)

Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno (1972) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming. New York: Continuum. (PB: pp.258, \$17.96 US, ISBN: 0-8264-0093-0)

Paul Virilio (2000) *The Information Bomb*, trans. Chris Turner. London and New York: Verso. (HB: pp.145, £16.00, ISBN:1-85984-745-5)

Donna J. Haraway (1997) *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan©_Meets_Onco_Mouse™*. New York and London: Routledge. (PB: pp.361, £15.99, ISBN: 0-415-91245-8)

Introduction

The rise of post industrialism, the replacement of excellence by innovation as a core corporate mantra, the boom in bio-technology and the recent furore around the ‘digital economy’ all put the question of technology once again at the centre of organisation studies. How then are we to question technology? What might a questioning of technology entail? These questions are not particularly unusual to today, they have been asked throughout modernity. In order to inquire into technology it would therefore seem sensible to examine classic texts. To begin to sketch out what it might mean to pose the question of technology in an altogether adequate way, I shall turn to Martin Heidegger’s classic essay ‘The question concerning technology’. I will then use particular themes within Heidegger’s essay in order to open a review of three central works that investigate (post) modern technology – Horkheimer and Adorno’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Virilio’s *The Information Bomb*, and Haraway’s *Modest_Witness*.

Looking at a Rhine power station and considering a Greek vase

Throughout the writing of Martin Heidegger, the reader will find attempts to reformulate the question of being. *Being and Time* (Heidegger, 1962) contains many attacks on modern scientific approaches to knowing and existing within the world. Heidegger takes the positivist approaches that usually characterise science and technology to task for reinforcing the split between the subject and the world, and its abject failure to discuss the question of being (*ibid*: 11). Heidegger deploys a complex vocabulary in order to begin to talk about being-in-the-world in a way that is founded on, and in direct relation to, the question of being. Heidegger uses these concepts to craft a way of being in the world that does not rely on the Cartesian inheritance of modern positivism.

If we read *Being and Time* as an attempt to craft a vocabulary and ‘clear a way’ (using Heidegger’s phrase) for introducing the question of being, then Heidegger’s essay ‘The question concerning technology’ (QCT) is an attempt to use aspects of this vocabulary in order to ask about the technological apparatuses we moderns have become so utterly dependent on. By doing so he aims to ‘bring man into a free relation with technology’. In this essay, Heidegger assumes when we talk of technology, we are not simply talking about the particular apparatuses that confront us from our morning alarm clock to our evening sleeping pill, from the sonography before birth to gas furnace that dis-integrates our dead body into ash. First it should be noted that the German term *Technik* that Heidegger uses is possibly broader than the English technology, and may include the English technique, technics, engineering, and the execution of art. Technology for Heidegger is fundamentally bound up with modern scientific ways of knowing. Throughout this inquiry, Heidegger suggests that this modern scientific manner of knowing and acting on the world is “no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing” (QCT: 12). Technology establishes an apparatus that questions nature, making it reveal itself in very particular ways. Heidegger’s analysis of a hydro-electric power station give us some idea of how the complex network of technologies, which establish and run the hydroelectric power stations, reveal the Rhine in a very specific manner:

The Hydroelectric plant is set into the current of the Rhine. It sets the Rhine to supplying its hydraulic pressure, which sets the turbines turning. This turning sets those machines in motion whose thrust sets going the electric current for which the long-distance power station and its network of cables are set up to dispatch electricity. In the context of the interlocking processes pertaining to the orderly disposition of electrical energy, even the Rhine itself appears as something at our command. The hydroelectric plant is not built into the Rhine as was the old wooden bridge that joined bank with bank for hundreds of years. Rather the river is dammed up into the power plant. What the river is now, namely, a water power supplier, derives from out of the essence of the power station. In order that we may even remotely consider this monstrousness that reigns here, let us ponder for a moment the contrast that speaks here, let us ponder for a moment the contrast that speaks out of the two titles, ‘The Rhine’ as damned up into the *power* works, and ‘The Rhine’ as uttered out of the *art* work, in Hölderlin’s hymn by that name, But, it will be replied, the Rhine is still a river in the landscape is it not? Perhaps. But how? In no other way than as an object on call for inspection by a tour group ordered there by the vacation industry. (QCT: 16)

This illustration by Heidegger shows how technology does not simply achieve an proscribed end, but actively ‘enframes’ or ‘emplaces’ (*Gestell*) an aspect of the world (in this case the Rhine) through its very apparatus.

The problem with the damming of the Rhine, and other modern technologies' enframing of the world is two fold. First, the dam's mode of revealing the world destroys other possible ways of revealing (such as Hölderlin's hymn) and condemns us to a world we only see in terms of technology. The only other perspective we might have on the Rhine is a nostalgic inscription of Hölderlin on a plaque above the Rhine courtesy of the corporation that owns the dam. The second problem with this mode of enframing is that it "not only conceals former ways of revealing, bringing-forth, but it conceals revealing itself and with it that wherein unconcealment, i.e. truth, comes to pass" (QCT: 27). The concealment of 'revealing itself' occurs when 'enframing' (which is one particular mode of revealing) comes to 'regulate and secure' all aspects of the world as the kind of cause-effect relationships associated with positivist science and its technologies. Under this mode of revealing the world becomes enframed as a gigantic web of cause-effect relations:

Thus where everything that presences exhibits itself in the light of a cause-effect coherence, even God can, for representational thinking, lose all that is exalted and holy, the mysteriousness of his distance. In the light of causality, God can sink to the level of cause. (QCT: 26)

Even as 'Man' takes the place of God as a 'central causal factor', so too 'man' is imputed within this vast web of cause and effect relations and becomes just like the dammed Rhine, becomes part of the 'standing reserve'. One, of course, is reminded of the plethora of technologies which exist in management which enframe people as 'human resources', and go about asking how these resources can be best put to work in a given environment. As 'man' becomes part of this great casual web "he does not apprehend enframing as a claim, that he fails to see himself as the one spoken to, and hence also fails in every way to hear in what respects he ek-sists, from out of his essence, in the realm of an exhortation or address, and thus *can never* encounter only himself" (QCT: 27). Therefore the broader category of revealing comes to be eclipsed by the more recent, more specific category of Enframing. This therefore "blocks the shining-forth and holding-sway of the truth" (QCT: 28).

Towards the end of this essay, Heidegger attempts to "bringing a saving power into (revealing's) shining forth in the midst of the danger" (QCT: 34). This 'saving power' for Heidegger involves considering that *technē* (the Greek word from which technology is derived) did not only include technology. Rather, *technē* included other forms of revealing which often had little to do with the 'enframing' technology such as a dam or a human resource management text. Forms of craft such as Greek vases, and art such as poetry were considered *technē*:

In Greece, at the outset of the destining of the West, the arts soared to the supreme height of the revealing granted them. They brought the presence of the gods, brought the dialogue of divine and human destinings, to radiance. And art was simply called *technē*. It was a single, manifold revealing. It was pious, *promos*, i.e. yielding to the holding-sway and the safe-keeping of truth.

The arts were not derived from the artistic. Art works were not enjoyed aesthetically. Art was not a sector of cultural activity.

What, then, was art – perhaps only for that brief and magnificent time? Why did art not bear the modest name *technē*? Because it was a revealing that brought forth and hither, and therefore belonged with *poiēsis*. It was finally that revealing which holds complete sway in all the fine art, in poetry, and in everything poetical that obtained *poiēsis* as its proper name. (QCT: 34)

To reflect on this let us briefly take one instance of advanced ancient Greek technology – the vase. Greek vases were major technological advances in terms of both strategies of decoration and materials used. They were made by nameless artisans. On these vases we find the illustration of heroic battles, gods, and other myths. The vases do not simply seek to provide a handy and attractive place to store flowers or wine. Rather they illustrate particular aspects of human behaviour, they serve as a kind of guide to ‘right’ or ‘ethical living’, a kind of *poiēsis*.

The question this poses to us is how we can resist restricting our understanding of technology to ‘enframing’, and broaden its modes of revealing. To put the question differently: how can we develop an understanding of our modern *technē* akin, but obviously not the same as, the Greeks; how can we broaden the question of technology?

In what follows, I shall look at three works that have attempted to approach the kinds of questions that Heidegger puts forward in his essay on technology. The writers I shall examine are Horkheimer and Adorno’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Paul Virillio’s *The Information Bomb*, and Donna Haraway’s *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™*. Each of these texts directly encounters modern and post modern technology. Each encounter with technology is driven by the overall ethical guide of attempting to ‘prepare a free relationship to it’ (to use Heidegger’s phrase). In order to prepare this relationship, each text attempts to approach technology in relation to a broader social, cultural, economic and political milieu. It is by approaching technology in this broader sense that each of these texts are able to tease out what it may look like as a kind of broader revealing, and ask just what it reveals.

Reading Homer and Sade while watching television

Within the theoretical tragedy that is Adorno and Horkheimer’s classic, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (DE), many soliloquies and swipes at modern technology and its uses bubble up. The broad argument that has served as an inspiration for critical theorists from Habermas (1991) to Sloterdijk (1988) is that modern technology enframes (to use Heidegger’s term) humans and the world so they become objects to be manipulated, exploited and even destroyed. This is seen in the regime of Nazi Germany which both Adorno and Horkheimer escaped. What is more interesting in Adorno and Horkheimer’s argument is that the country and culture they fled to – the United States of America – also shares exactly the same tendencies. The technological apparatus continues to make objects out of people. Instead of being in the name of the Fatherland, objectification is in the name of capital and industry. What they go on to argue is that this technological objectification of the world is no mere aberration from the history of western civilization. Rather, it is the history of western civilisation that has actually produced this horror. One is reminded of Walter Benjamin’s pithy phrase “There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism” (Benjamin, 1972: 248).

Instead of opting for a swift rejection of the tradition of Enlightenment, Horkheimer and Adorno argue that this tradition of Enlightenment is dialectical, which has produced such horrors and enables both forms of domination, and critiques these very forms:

Today, when Bacon's utopian vision that we should 'command nature by action' – that is, in practice – has been realized on a tellurian scale, the nature of the thralldom that he ascribed to unsubjected nature is clear. It was domination itself. And knowledge, in which Bacon was certain the 'sovereignty of man lieth hid', can now become the dissolution of domination. But in the face of such a possibility, and in the service of the present age, enlightenment becomes wholesale deception of the masses. (DE:42)

Aside from foreshadowing post-colonial and post-structural critiques of enlightenment, Adorno and Horkheimer's framework confronts modern technology in a wider socio-cultural milieu. If this book does one thing for studies of technology, it disabuses us of the typical narrative found in discourse of technology and in particular corporate innovation. For Adorno, modern technology does not simply appear from the mind of a gifted and eccentric inventor, get funded by this or that venture capitalist, shared among networks of innovation, produced and make the lives of those who use it easier. Instead, modern technology exists firmly within the context of western culture, and it has manifold political, social and cultural effects. This means in order to ask the question of modern technology, one needs to examine not just scientific means of inquiring into and ordering the world, but also the broad attitudes and subjectivities which make possible the 'technologies of mass deception' that Adorno and Horkheimer encountered in Nazi Germany and capitalist America.

An inquiry into modern technology does not lead Adorno and Horkheimer to share the kind of happy conclusion found in narratives of corporate innovation or the knowledge society. Instead technology "does not work by concepts or images, by the fortunate insight, but refers to method, the exploitation of others' work, and capital" (DE: 4). The aim of this technology is "to learn from nature...how to use it in order wholly to dominate it and other men" (ibid). In order to fulfil this kind of domination, modern technology and its culture of enlightenment places every cause on the side of man:

Oedipus' answer to the Sphinx's riddle: 'It is man!' is the Enlightenment stereotype repeatedly offered as information, irrespective of whether it is faced with a piece of objective intelligence, a bare schematisation, fear of evil powers, or hope of redemption. (DE: 7)

The language used to assess this web of cause and effects is not the subtle pleasures and shifting meaning offered by words. Rather "to the Enlightenment, that which does not reduce to numbers, and ultimately to the one, becomes illusion; modern positivism writes it off as literature" (DE: 7). These universal numbers, schemes of cause and effect, and the technology that they give rise to come to disregard the context into which they are applied. To illustrate this, Horkheimer and Adorno take the instance of the medicine man in so-called primitive society. In order for the medicine man's magic to work, they must draw a circle in which they would 'operate'. It was only in this specific circle, this context, in which their magic would work. Instead, with scientific medicine we find "the replacement of the milieu-bound practices of the medicine man by all-inclusive industrial technology (which) required first of all the autonomy of ideas in regard to objects that was achieved in the reality-adjusted ego." (DE: 11). This abstraction of ideas from their specific circle or context leads to all objects in the world

(be they a waterfall, an animal, a human) being liquidated in abstraction. In a similar vein to Weber, Adorno and Horkheimer see this as having devastating consequences for the modern subject:

Abstraction, the tool of enlightenment, treats objects as did fate, the notion of which it rejects: it liquidates them. Under the levelling domination of abstraction (which makes everything in nature repeatable), and of industry (for which abstraction ordains repetition), the freedom themselves finally comes to form that ‘herd’ which Hegel has declared to be the result of the Enlightenment. (DE: 13)

The thinking involved in this process of abstraction for Adorno and Horkheimer “objectifies itself to become an automatic, self-activating process; an impersonation of the machine that it produces itself so that ultimately the machine can replace it” (DE: 25). The world becomes a ‘gigantic analytic judgement’. This sorry situation that modern technology and its analytic approach to thinking present the modern subject, leads to a situation where “machinery disables men even as it nurtures them” (DE: 37).

Adorno and Horkheimer contextualise the unhappy situation of modern subjects in a broader history of western culture. In order to examine this broader context of western culture which leads through the dialectic of Enlightenment, Adorno and Horkheimer take a number of key cultural moments.

The first cultural moment of Enlightenment Horkheimer and Adorno focus on is Homer’s *Odyssey*, and in particular its hero Odysseus. They argue that within the figure of Odysseus we find a passage from the world of myth towards the wily bourgeois individual. We find Adorno and Horkheimer arguing that Odysseus uses rational tactics akin to the modern subject to negotiate his way out of tight situations. An excellent instance is found in the description of Odysseus and his crew’s encounter with the Sirens. Odysseus knows that no man can hear the Siren’s without being fatally attracted to them, and subsequently onto the rocks. However, Odysseus and his crew must pass through a passage where they will be in ear-shot of the Sirens. In order to keep rowing without being attracted onto the rocks, Odysseus develops the plan of stopping the ears of his rowers with wax. Like a good tourist or anthropologist of today, Odysseus also desires to hear this mythical song while remaining at an appropriate distance. In order to hear the Sirens without diving off the boat to certain death, he lashes himself to the vessel’s mast. The song of the Sirens for Adorno and Horkheimer is a classic instance of myth, and Odysseus’ wily plan is the first instance of using rationality in order to stare into the face of myth, yet pass by unharmed. In this sense Odysseus is the forerunner for the scientists who lash themselves to the mast of scientific objectivity in order to stare into the face of life (DNA experiments), and death (Nuclear technologies) itself. The rowers of this modern scientific enterprise – lab assistants, doctoral students and the like, have their ears plugged to the horrifically beautiful songs of life and death, the cries of vivisection, that they row past in the odyssey of research. Therefore Odysseus:

is already Homo economicus, for whom all reasonable things are alike: hence Odysseus is already a Robinson-ade. Both Odysseus and Crusoe, the two shipwrecked mariners, make their weakness (that of the individual who parts from the collective) their strength. Delivered up to the mercy of the waves, helplessly isolated, their very isolation forces them recklessly to peruse an atomistic interest. (DE: 61)

A second tale that reveals Odysseus' kinship to the modern economist or other purveyor of technology is his encounter with the Cyclops. The Cyclops does not share Odysseus' *ratio* and is declared:

“a lawless minded creature” this does not mean merely that in his mind he does not respect the laws of civilization, but also that his mind itself, his thinking, is lawless, unsystematic, and rhapsodical, for he cannot solve the bourgeois mental problem of the way an uninvited guest can escape from the cave (by clinging to the ram's bellies instead of riding on its back) and does not see through the sophisticated *double entendre* of Odysseus' false name.¹ (DE: 65)

For Adorno and Horkheimer, Odysseus provides the initial co-ordinates for the subject in the passage out of myth into a kind of pre-modernity. The second cultural moment where the enlightened subject appears is *Juliette* by the Marquis de Sade. Juliette and her circle of erotic bandits take the ethos of ruthless use of *ratio* seriously. Unlike Odysseus or his modern progeny like Immanuel Kant, Juliette puts the ethos and approach of the Enlightenment in the ruthless service of pleasure. Adorno and Horkheimer point out that it is a mistake to presume Juliette and her perverse pleasures to be a symptom of depravity and hence outside the bounds of rationality. Rather, it is through this very technological system she organises and obtains her pleasures:

Juliette embodies (in psychological terms) neither unsublimated nor regressive libido, but intellectual pleasure in regression – *amor intellectualis diaboli*, the pleasure of attacking civilization with its own weapons. She favours systems and consequences. She is a proficient manipulator of the organ of rational thought. (DE: 95)

Like Lacan (1989), Adorno and Horkheimer go on to draw direct parallels between Sade's characters and the system of rationality found in the work of Kant. Juliette puts into practice a perfect Kantian freedom of individual reason, bringing all “abilities and inclinations under its control (i.e. of reason), and therefore under self control, which prevails over the negative commandment not only to be ruled by one's emotions and inclinations (the duty of apathy); because, unless reason takes the reins of government into its hand, emotion and inclinations will be in control” (p.95, quoting Kant, *Metaphysische Anfänge der Tugendlehre*, vol VI p.408). Therefore the clockwork philosopher (whose system of thought remains a foundation in the development of scientific methods of inquiry, technology and the new world order) provides the tools for a figure who is supposed to represent the disillusion of this civilization. This realisation leads Adorno and Horkheimer to argue that enlightenment accommodates even the most perverse and mythical goals. Adorno and Horkheimer use Juliette and her philosophical double, Friedrich Nietzsche, to argue that Enlightenment has within its own terms the ability to destroy its own very maxims:

Kant's principal that ‘everything is to be done on the basic maxim of one's will as one which, while legislating universally, can act with itself as an object’ is also the secret of the superman. Both principals aim at independence from external powers, at the unconditional maturity defined

1 When asked by the Cyclops his name, Odysseus tells him that it is ‘no body’. When the Cyclops asks who is passing, Odysseus answers ‘no body’. The Cyclops takes Odysseus at his word that no body is passing.

as the essence of enlightenment. But, of course, inasmuch as dread of lies (which even in the best moments Nietzsche still describes as ‘Don-Quixotery’) abrogates the Law through self-legislation and everything becomes as transparent as if it were but one great unveiled superstition, enlightenment itself – and indeed, truth in any form – becomes an idol; then we see “that even we enlightened of this modern age, we godless antimetaphysicians, still take *our* fire from the torch lit by a faith that has lived for thousands of years –the Christian belief (which was also the belief of Plato) that God is truth and that truth is divine.” (DE: 114-5)

The flame of enlightened thinking that fires modern technology therefore does not constitute a break from religious or mythical forms. Rather for Juliette, Nietzsche, and Adorno and Horkheimer, myth remains firmly at the foundation of our apparent enlightened times. After all, what appears more like a myth or theological doctrine than a cyber-utopia of citizens who effortlessly, freely communicate creating a ‘consciousness that spans the globe’ pedalled by *Wired* magazine and computer multinationals:

It’s finally time to embrace the future with optimism again in the realisation that this peaceful, inevitable revolution isn’t a problem but an opportunity to build a better civilization for ourselves and our children. Our first instruction to writers: amaze us. Our second: Report back from the future about what’s coming – about work outside the workplace, markets without masters, entertainment beyond mass media, civic mindedness beyond government, community beyond neighborhood, consciousness that spans the globe. (*Wired*, 1/1, 1995:13)

In sum, Adorno and Horkheimer’s reading of Juliette reveals the emptiness at the heart of enlightenment, and how this comes to be either filled with pre-enlightenment myth or can be taken over ruthless pursuit of one’s goals such as bloody pleasure. If this latter point is the case, then:

in Sade as in Mandeville, private vice constitutes a predictive chronicle of the public virtues of the totalitarian era. Not having glossed over or suppressed but to have trumpeted far and wide the impossibility of deriving from reason any fundamental argument against murder fired the hatred which progressives (and they precisely) still direct against Sade and Nietzsche. They were significantly unlike the logical positivists in taking science at its word. The fact that Sade and Nietzsche insist on the *ratio* more decisively than logical positivism, implicitly liberates from its hiding-place the utopia contained in the Kantian notion of reason as in every great philosophy: the utopia of a humanity which, itself no longer distorted, has no further need to distort.” (DE: 118-9)

If “the *chronique scandaleuse* of Justine and Juliette, with its production-line methods, and its forshadow(ed) in an eighteenth-century style of the nineteenth century style of the nineteenth-century shockers and twentieth-century mass literature” (DE: 117), then the culture industries were a material manifestation of a culture where technological domination of man and nature becomes part of everyday course. Adorno and Horkheimer saw a clear link between these culture industries of America and fascist propaganda techniques. Each system ruthlessly used technology in order to ensure the continued domination of its subjects, “the decorative industrial management buildings and exhibition centres in authoritarian countries are much the same as anywhere else” (DE: 120), “consumers appear as statistics on research organization charts, and are divided by income group into red, green, and blue areas; the technique that is used for any type of propaganda” (DE: 123). Under the relentless drive of the culture industries people are reduced to mere objects to be manipulated and tabulated. These figures are either called the employees, or in their precious hours outside the labour process, consumers:

Industry is interested in people merely as customers and employees, and has in fact reduced mankind as a whole and each of its elements to this all-embracing formulae. According to the ruling aspect at the time, ideology emphasizes plan or chance, technology or life, civilization or nature. As employees, men are reminded of the rational organization and urged to fit in like sensible people. As customers, the freedom of choice, the charm of novelty, is demonstrated to them on the screen or in the press by means of the human and the personal anecdote. In either case they remain objects. (DE: 147)

The culture industries for Adorno and Horkheimer represent the spread of the technological rationale (“the rationale of domination itself”, DE: 121) into nearly every aspect of society, even aesthetic experience:

Real life is becoming indistinguishable from the movies. The sound film, far from surpassing the theatre of illusion, leaves no room for imagination or reflection on the part of the audience, who is unable to respond within the structure of the film, yet deviate from its precise detail without losing the thread of the story; hence the film forces its victims to equate it directly with reality. (DE: 126)²

What Adorno and Horkheimer prophetically offer here is a foreshadowing of Baudrillard’s (1981) suggestion that media images become more real than the real events themselves. Indeed this objectification and manipulation of everything in the modern subjects world through the technological apparatus of the culture industries (which have now blossomed into multimedia global corporations) lead to a bitter state of affairs where “the most intimate reactions of human beings have been so thoroughly reified that the idea of anything specific to themselves now persists only as an utterly abstract notion: personality scarcely signifies anything more than shining white teeth and freedom from body odour and emotion” (DE: 167).

The text therefore moves from the unhappy diagnosis of enlightenment through the emergence of ratio out of myth in Odysseus, the subversion of ratio, to the perverse demands of Juliette, and finally the spread of this ratio with its perverse goals in the modern culture industries. Throughout this movement it is possible to locate how an enlightened attitude so central to the production of modern technology emerges, is subverted, and comes to dominate all aspects of the modern subjects life. By contextualising technology in this broader cultural context, Adorno and Horkheimer aim to broaden the question of technology to include other *technē* including literature in order to let a kind of *poiēsis* emerge. The *poiēsis* which emerges for Adorno and Horkheimer however is a bleak one.

2 This has served as an important point of contention, with a history of cultural studies research focusing on the active negotiation of meaning in films by their audiences (e.g. Fiske, 1989; Walkerdine, 1997).

Knowledge Nations Engaged in Information War

The work of Paul Virilio has received very limited attention in organisation studies (cf. Armitage, 2001). It offers a sustained investigation of ‘post-modern’ technologies which we might call techno-science. Of particular interest to Virilio is how the (post)modern techno-scientific apparatus is related to the changing politics of space and warfare. In *The Information Bomb* Virilio investigates this question through a series of pithy interconnected essays that draw on particular events including the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre, performance art, and Bill Clinton’s sexual escapades. This style puts Virilio firmly in the tradition of Roland Barthes (1972) and the work of Jean Baudrillard (1981).

In *The Information Bomb* (IB), Paul Virilio suggests that the new technological apparatus exemplified in the computer network or the human genome project takes a radically new form. For Virilio techno-science represents a break with the conventional scientific attitude that both Heidegger and Adorno and Horkheimer suggest characterise modern technology. With the growing linkages between the military and science through the military-industrial-university complex, Virilio argues that science has “slipped it’s philosophical moorings” (IB: 1) through the relentless “pursuit of *limit-performance*, to the detriments of any effort to discover a coherent truth useful to humanity” (IB: 1). The relentless pursuit of ‘limit-performance’ results in a kind of ‘extreme science’ that is in some ways similar to ‘extreme sports’. Instead of “deliberately risk[ing] one’s life on the pretext of achieving a record performance” (IB: 3), techno-science “runs the incalculable risk of the disappearance of all science. As the tragic phenomena of a knowledge which has suddenly become cybernetic, this techno-science becomes, then, as mass techno-culture, the agent not, as in the past, of the acceleration of history, but of the dizzying whirl of *the acceleration of reality* – and that to the detriment of all verisimilitude” (IB: 3). Virilio here suggests that techno-science involves a move away from the organising principal of knowledge being the encyclopaedia towards the organising principal being cybernetic whereby science becomes committed to the development of “heightened virtual reality” (IB: 4). One symptom of this, Virilio argues, is that the truth value of any given scientific discovery begins to lose its value, and hence becomes replaced with the shock value of new techno-scientific adventures:

That science is now concerned less with truth than with the effect created by the announcement of a new discovery – though not, as used to be the case, a genuine discovery serving the common good... In illustration of these disenchanting remarks, we may usefully criticize the carefully sustained confusion between the *sporting hero* and the *scientist*, between the adventurer who pushes himself violently to his *physical limits* and the white-coated adventurer who pushes himself to the *ethical* limits, the adventurer who experiences the elation of risking not just his own death, but that of the human race. (IB: 4)

These comments risk making historical mistakes about the apparent newness of this scientific adventurer. Many historians and philosophers of science have highlighted how conception of ‘adventure’ and ‘charting uncharted territories’ underpin the process of scientific accumulation. This adventurous character of science takes on an extremely physical manifestation in the scientific expeditions that were a feature of colonialism. In these expeditions we find the then advanced technologies of marine engineering and

navigation being used in order to propel scientists to the 'ends of the earth' where they would go about accumulating knowledge in the field of botany, ethnology, and geography. The physical 'adventures' such of Cook's voyages in the Pacific and Magellan's voyage to the Americas were both scientific and military adventures. They were scientific insofar as 'men of science' were aboard whose sole purpose it was to record information of interest to science. For instance the botanist Joseph Banks accompanied James Cook on his voyages of the Pacific. They were also scientific insofar as their often explicit aim was to discover, observe and classify the unknown. Collected specimens of the previously unknown were then returned to Europe. Some were incorporated into museum collections, forming exhibits to inform and above all shock the public. The discovered Australian specimens included watercolours of strange antipodean plants, live specimens of fauna such as wombats (which became popular in French menageries), and even 'natives' such as Bennalong, a member of an aboriginal clan around Sydney who lived around what is now known as Bennalong point (where the Sydney Opera House now stands), who was returned to England for inspection.

Infamous expeditions to the interior of Australia such as Burke and Willis' were driven by the desire to discover this inland, chart it, and in some cases prove the theory correct of a fabled 'inland sea'. In *The Road to Botany Bay*, Paul Carter (1987) points out how it is that these expeditions, driven by western scientific curiosity bought about a particular construction of the Australian land. One of the first steps to the colonisation of the Pacific was mapping its land, peoples, and flora and fauna. Similarly the expeditions of explorers in the centre of the Australian continent were carefully aligned to attempts to colonise the land of aboriginal peoples. Indeed the theodolite provided to be one of the most vicious weapons of western colonialism. By understanding previous adventures in science that operated in a different technological complex in the service of different military objectives, it is possible to see that scientific endeavour has been linked to adventurism, the shock of the new, and military goals throughout its history. There is no radical fall from the grace of truth with techno-science. Rather, science has proved to be a worldly activity bound up in military adventurism and popular exhibition values. What Paul Virilio *doesn't* offers us is an investigation which contextualises techno-science in a broader history of science.³ What he does offer us are some astute observations of the current technological apparatuses and their links to military and the media.

In order to briefly explore these links, I will focus on Virilio's analysis of the issue of globalisation. If we were to construct a historical narrative into which Virilio's suggestions around the issue of globalisation fit, it would be with colonial attempts to map the distant lands discussed above. Virilio argues that many of the theses advanced

3 There may be stylistic reasons for this. Virilio is quite clear that the 'shock of the new' characterises every aspect of our everyday lives. In the introduction to *Landscape of Events* Virilio (2000a) suggests that he is attempting to give an account of a situation of a kind of eternal *angelus novus* we experience everyday in this hypermodern world. His style of writing short, pithy pieces often focusing on specific moments with dates attached that may reflect his over-riding concern for understanding the characteristics of this hyper-modern or post-modern culture in its own terms.

in relation to globalisation are not correct – globalisation does not represent the termination of the historical dialectic in a state of global liberal capitalism (Fukuyama, 1992). Rather globalisation for Virilio is linked to the new forms of technology which appear in the military-industrial complex:

To claim, as is now the case, that globalism illustrates the victory of free enterprise over totalitarian collectivism is to understand nothing of the current loss of time intervals, the endless feedback, the telescoping of industrial or post-industrial activity. (IB: 8)

For Virilio, globalisation involved the establishment of what Virilio calls a ‘meta-geophysis’ through continued ‘tele-presence’. That is the geophysis of the world, and communities that are distributed and located in space come to be increasingly deterritorialised (to use Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) term), and then simultaneously reterritorialised in the global ‘meta-geophysis’. Communities who once understood their culture, economic activities, society, politics and religion in terms of their immediate surrounds or perhaps nation state (geophysis) suddenly find that global patterns of culture, politics, and economic activities (the meta-geophysis) have more sway. To illustrate this thesis consider the process which occurs when an isolated valley in Papua New Guinea is ‘discovered’ by an anthropologist, its land surveyed by a geologists, and then mined by a multinational corporation all in the life-time of some members of the tribe. The economic activity in the village can no longer be understood exclusively in terms of the immediate valley and a few neighbouring tribes. Rather it must be considered in the context of a global market. If the price of the mineral being mined drops in London, then economic ruin for this village could follow. A second example of the deterritorialisation of our more immediate economic activities and the subsequent reterritorialisation of them in the ‘meta geophysis’ was seen during the 1997 Asian economic crisis. During this, nation states which we have previously understood as being more or less co-determinous of economies, attempted to buoy flagging currencies through buying. The repeated result was that the billions of dollars injected by national reserve banks simply disappeared with little or no change in currency rates. This seemed to indicate to many that nation states could no longer influence the economy. The geophysis of the nation state had been replaced by the meta geophysis of global economic markets.

On the deterritorialization of localised geo-physis into global ‘meta-physis’, Virilio is in agreement with many major accounts of globalisation (eg. Appadurai, 1996; Dicken, 1998; Burawoy *et al.*, 2000; Harvey, 1989, 2000; Held, 1995; Held et al, 1999; Hardt and Negri, 2000). Where there is disagreement however is in the diagnosis of what drives this globalising process. Virilio argues it is digital technologies (which allow a quantum leap in speed) that are central in the construction of this global meta-physis through their ability to present and link in real time most spaces in the world:

The coming of the ‘live’, of ‘direct transmission’, bought about by turning the limit-speed of waves to effects, transforms the old ‘tele-vision’ into a planetary grand-scaled optics. With CNN and its various offshoots, domestic television has given way to tele-surveillance. This sudden focusing – a security-orientated phenomena of the media monitoring of the life of nations – heralds the dawn of a particular form of day, which totally escapes the diurnal-nocturnal alternation that previously structured history. With this false day, produced by the illumination of telecommunications, an artificial sunrise, an emergency lighting system which ushers in a new

time: world time, in which the simultaneity of actions should soon gain precedence over their successive character. (IB: 13)

An aspect that lies at the heart of this telecommunications system is a shift in our experience of time and space. Going further than Giddens' (1990) thesis that globalisation leads to time-space compression, Virilio suggests globalisation is a radical ripping away of time from its natural reference of the 'diurnal-nocturnal' alternation. This occurs first through illumination in cities (see also Virilio, 2000a, 'the big night'), and then through the creation of a globally present cyber-time. This cyber-time is far from an eccentric syndrome experienced by 'cyber-naughts' in selected countries who spend hours in Internet chat rooms. Rather it has profound implications for societies. Virilio talks about the "current general spread of tele-surveillance. A new vision of a world that is constantly 'tele-present' twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, thanks to the artifice of this 'trans-horizon optics' which puts what was previously out of sight on display" (IB:13). It is this role of making the globe visual through networks of technology, and making this vision ever present which is at the heart of the global project. For Virilio this making ever present through a global tele-visual network includes advertising, news networks, satellite surveillance, global computer databases. Virilio points out that this tele-surveillance also extends to make observable the most intimate aspects of human life. Examples include an American woman who believes she is being assailed by ghosts and has installed web-cams in her home so internet users can warn her (IB: 58-68), the unborn foetus that is made visual through the sonography, and our DNA which is there for all to see thanks to genetic mapping technology. For Virilio this is all oriented around the creation of "a new global optic, capable of helping a panoptical vision to appear, a vision which is indispensable if the 'market of the visual' is to be established. The much vaunted globalization requires that we all observe each other and compare ourselves with one another on a continual basis" (IB: 61). This continual technological surveillance leads to what Gilles Deleuze (1992) called societies of control whereby mechanisms of control become present. This results in a situation where technologies of control become continual in lives of prisoners and employees alike:

Have they not in France just authorized the use of electronic tagging devices on prisoners released on parole, transponders which enable them to be located at any point, thus avoiding further pressures on already overcrowded prisons? . . . And what are we to say of the enthusiasm of post-industrial companies for the cellphone which enables them to abolish the distinction between working hours and private life for their employees? Or the introduction in Britain not simply of 'part-time' but of 'zero-hour' contracts, accompanied by a mobile phone. When the company needs you, it calls and you come running. The reinvention of domestic servility ultimately on par with the electronic incarceration of offenders in the closed circuit of a police station. (IB: 67)

Virilio doesn't shy away from perusing the darker implications of this new technology and points out that a new military principal, associated with this society of control, also emerges:

After the first bomb, the atom bomb, which was capable of using the energy of radioactivity to smash matter, the spectre of a second bomb is looming at the end of this millennium. This is the information bomb, capable of using interactivity of information to wreck the peace between nations. (IB: 63)

The result of these tele-visual technologies is a situation where citizens are constantly linked into an ever-present technological network, where all is rendered visible. The terrain in which the military operates has been fundamentally transformed. Borders are no longer the key point of war (they are only to be defended against so-called illegal immigrants). Rather there has been a fundamental re-ordering of global geopolitical space:

Since the early 1990s, the pentagon has taken the view that *geo-strategy is turning the globe inside out like a glove*. For American military leaders, the global is the *interior* of a finite world whose finitude poses many logistical problems. And the local is the *exterior*, the periphery, if not indeed the 'outer suburbs' of the world. (IB:10)

The post-cold war geo-political space is one where there are no fissures in the global space, but a kind of global consensus, an order dominated by the global Empire (Hardt and Negri, 2000). Those outside of this global space or Empire are cast as rogue states. Military strategies then focus on policing the information network in order to ensure that 'information bombs' and 'visual crashes' such as the death of Princess Diana or the stock market crash are effectively managed. They also focus on ensuring the boundaries between the exterior and the local do not spill over into global spaces. This can be seen in cases such as the mobilisation of NATO forces in Kosovo for a so-called 'just war' (see Virilio, 2000b). The most recent and extreme example of this new military principal is the current 'war against terrorism' which has been declared by leaders of the global Empire (CNN, Bush, Blair etc). Many have argued that the problem is years of US foreign policy, aimed at ensuring localised issues (the Palestine conflict, particular regimes in some Middle Eastern countries, bombings of American consulates) do not spill over and affect the global space (oil production, international geo-political arrangements), have alienated particular groups to the point where they feel a need to engage in acts of war labelled as terrorism. The most obvious point in which the relatively localised issue of tension in the Middle East bustled to the dead centre of the global world order was with the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Centre. Using Virilio's framework, these hijacked aircrafts hurtling into the World Trade Centre towers should be considered as information bombs. These attacks were not attacks on apparatuses of war (tanks, airfields, soldiers), but on symbols of the new world order. The images of the planes careering into the twin towers exploded across the global information network "using interactivity of information to wreck the peace between nations" (IB: 63). For Virilio, technologies of tele-surveillance are deployed in the domestic sphere to watch over 'suspected terrorists' and 'threats to security'. These categories remain free-floating signifiers that may be applied to nearly any relatively organised group that challenges the Empire in any meaningful way. Technologies of tele-surveillance may then be deployed to watch over anyone from trade union groups, environmental activists, or any others deemed to be suspicious by the military-bureaucratic-corporate complex.

The work of Paul Virilio provides us with an initial bold step into the theorisation of techno-science, and its linkages with changing cultural, political, and military implications. The analytical framework places particular emphasis on the changing role of techno-science, and its darker implications for control and war. Virilio's style is brash, tending to over emphasise the historical fissures and apparent newness of the techno-science and shying away from the exploration of any particular site with the

careful depth and singularity required of empiricism. A writer who does examine similar themes, but with more care for historical continuities and empirical sites is Donna Haraway.

Of Mice and FeMale Men

Of the writers we have explored so far Donna Haraway provides the most detailed analysis of the vicissitudes and intertwining issues of current techno-science. Her work is contextualised strongly in the field of science studies, particularly with its extended attempts to examine and understand how technology and science is a process of active labour within a given economic and social context. Haraway extends approaches such as Bruno Latour's (1987) work on actor network theory, which points out how science is less a search for an eternal truth than an active bringing together of networks of human and non-human actors. It is often those with the most extensive and skilfully composed network who are able to compose their particular theories as truer than others. Haraway draws out the implications of an actor network theory model of knowledge for our conceptions of the subject. In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women* Haraway (1989) proposed her now celebrated cyborg thesis by asking where the boundaries of the subject are. Are they at the skin? If not, does the subject include the various technical apparatuses we attach to our bodies ranging from various prostheses to genetic technology to language? If so, how does this relate to the animals who we rely on testing these new technologies on? This series of questions leads Haraway to suggest that the network of technology in which we modern citizens conduct our life fundamentally re-orient the scientific assumption of an objective world which rational subjects investigate. For Haraway the theoretical apparatus of deconstruction is not required to dissolve the Cartesian subject at the centre of the scientific enterprise. Rather, the tightly interwoven network of technologies, humans, and animals that the scientific enterprise relies on put the human subject into doubt. Instead of talking about the human subject, Haraway proposes the concept of cyborg, a "cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as fiction" (Haraway, 2000: 50). The cyborg therefore crosses boundaries between human, animal and technology due to the changing networks involved in technology:

The implosion of the technical, organic, political, economic, oneiric, and textual that is evident in the material-semiotic practices and entities in late-twentieth century techno-science informs my practice of figuration. Cyborg figures—such as the end-of-the-millennium seed, chip, gene, database, bomb, foetus, race, brain, eco-system – are the offspring of implosions of subjects and objects and of the natural and artificial. (MW: 12)

It is with this conception of the cyborg that Haraway begins her investigation of techno-science in *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™* (MW). She selects two particular cyborgs who guide us through our investigation of the complexities of contemporary technoscience. The first is FemaleMan, a kind of Herculine Barbin (1980) figure for the genetic era. Haraway borrows FemaleMan from the science fiction novel *The Female Man* by Joanne Russ. This cloned figure aims to represent a number of cyborgs – the issue of their genetic heritage and indeed own self being put under copy-write, and hence owned by a multinational corporation. In this

way the FemaleMan is a kind of hyper-alienated subject who prefigures current conflicts around techno-science corporations owning the genetic maps to populations of entire islands and tribes. The second cyborg introduced is OncoMouse. Like FemaleMan, OncoMouse is the product of genetic engineering. However unlike FemaleMan, OncoMouse is an already existing reality. OncoMouse was the first living entity to be put under copyright. It is a mouse with genes that are designed to automatically trigger the onset of breast cancer. This of course enables scientists engaged in developing treatments for breast cancer to do so more effectively and efficiently. OncoMouse is both the product of joint venturing between large corporations and universities, a piece of intellectual property as well as critical node in the techno-scientific network of human and non-human actors. For Haraway there is a degree of 'kinship' between OncoMouse (the present social reality of techno-science) and FemaleMan (a possible future for techno-science whose doubles consistently appear in science fiction). These lines of kinship include having spliced identities which are central to their everyday lives, being the products of writing technologies and hence being able to be put under copy-write, their 'queered' unstable identity being their everyday reality, both have 'gestated in the womb' of enlightenment and modernity, both are the product of trans-national scientific studies, and both are the facts of changing production of bodies (MW: 119-121).

The next aspect of Haraway's argument is to approach the 'modest witness' who observes and creates these cyborgs. Like the writers we have encountered earlier, Haraway draws direct lines between today's technologists and scientists and the Enlightenment. She does this by drawing on the story of Robert Boyle's experiments with oxygen recounted in Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer's (1985) *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life*. In this work they point out how Boyle's public demonstration of his particular theories which utilised a mechanical apparatus in order to portray theories as truth beyond human intervention. What Shapin and Schaffer point out is that the experiments took place in a particular public space (The Royal society) which excluded many (most notably women) and that the apparatus was powered by working men who were hidden under the stage. Boyle's experimental claims to Truth relied on the erasure of the entire actor network which these very experiments rely upon. This 'modesty' displayed by Boyle continues to colour the present day experimental ways of life, whereby the entire network of funding institutions, human actors such as laboratory technicians and research assistants, non human actors, and users of techno-science get erased. Instead of this approach, Haraway argues that scientific knowledge should accept a principal of 'strong objectivity' (Harding, 1986) whereby these broader networks that are so critical to the functioning of scientific networks are taken into account.

In order to begin to demonstrate what an analysis of the current situation where techno-science replaces the air-pump using the principal of 'strong objectivity' would look like, Haraway sketches out a context of 'the new world order' in which techno-science operates. The first important aspect is the role in which multinational corporations play in scientific investigation. The profits of many sectors of the economy rely on the continued development of 'bio-technology'. With OncoMouse, we have seen how life forms can become the next arena that is commodified by capital in the search to increase profit. The problems with this Haraway is quick to point out:

The objections include increasing capital concentration and monopolization of the means of life, reproduction, and labour; appropriation of the commons of biological inheritance as the private preserve of corporations; the global deepening of inequality by region, nation, race, gender, and class; the erosion of indigenous peoples' self determination and sovereignty in regions designated as biodiverse while indigenous lands and bodies become the object of intense gene prospecting and propriety development; inadequately assessed and potentially dire environmental and health consequences; misplaced priorities for technoscientific investment funds; propagation of distorted and simplistic scientific explanations, such as genetic determinism; intensified cruelty to and domination over animals; depletion of biodiversity; and the undermining of established practices of human and non human life, culture and production without engaging those most effected in democratic decision making. (MW: 60-61)

Haraway also highlights the labour process involved within this network of capital and universities and other research institutions. Through the analysis of a series of adverts for biotechnology products, she points out how genes are actively worked upon by humans and how, like most labour processes, this may involve relations of exploitation. Like Virilio's analysis, she pushes her conclusions into investigating the realm of military technologies. Haraway suggests as there was a significant relationship between atomic technology and the military order associated with the cold war, so too there is a significant relationship between genetic technologies and the new world order. A clue to this linkage for Haraway is the redirection of the Los Alamos laboratory's focus from nuclear technology towards genetics and information technology. One is left to draw the conclusion that biological, information, and possibly genetic weapons may be the focus of future engagements.

In order to further develop this 'strong objectivity', Haraway turns from the economic and military frameworks towards the cultural framework that current techno-science rests upon. In order to sketch out the complex cultural framework in which techno-science operates she focuses on computer games like SimLife, where the player is able to genetically manipulate entire populations. She also points out the continuity of older Christian notions into writers like Richard Dawkins and post modern techno-science:

Mere living flesh is derivative; the gene is the alpha and omega of the secular salvation drama of life itself. This is barely secular Christian Platonism. (MW: 133)

Indeed Haraway identifies a whole cultural apparatus around the creation of what she call 'gene fetishism' (see also Haraway, 2000: 89-95). Textbooks and pedagogical projects focusing on genetics play an important role. Finally she points out that Renaissance conceptions of mapping and visualisation also continue to underpin the mapping of the human gene. It is this broad knot of various practices she later compares with other historical practices around the issue of biology during the 20th century in a marathon tabulation of connections between things as apparently distant as museum exhibitions, evolutionary paradigms, the family, diseases of the blood, legal documents, instructions of how to act around aliens and popular images of apes (MW: 219-229).

Unlike Virilio, Haraway is careful to chart already existing alternatives to the dominant knot of techno-science. These 'sciences of liberation' she describes attempt to introduce a broader understanding of the networks of actors in which science operates, the political implications of these, and the ability to organise networks otherwise. One instance is the statistics of freedom project where statistical measures of public health are used as a lobbying tool to change the set up of the United States' highly

discriminatory health care system. A second instance is Nancy Scheper-Hughes' work focusing on public health in *favelas* in Brazil which points out the links between infant deaths, multinational corporate practice (the infamous Nestlé baby formula) and international agencies like the United Nations.

What Haraway offers the reader is both a widened understanding of technological and scientific practices away from simple *ratio* to include the whole knot of various economic, cultural, military and intellectual practices that are involved in apparently technical scientific producers of the day – such as the human genome project. She also offers the reader a sense of the broad framework in which the cyborgs such as OncoMouse are produced. What she finally offers is an awareness that these knots are actively reconstructed everyday, and that it is possible to re-craft them with greater liberatory potential.

Conclusion

In order to conclude this extended review of four works, let me return to a question posed in Heidegger's essay on technology – how can we craft a questioning of technology that frames it in terms of a broader *technē*? Adorno and Horkheimer do this by suggesting that modern technology (such as the culture industries) is a direct relative of enlightenment and particularly the adoption of *ratio* to be found in the Odyssey, and Juliette. Virilio does this through pointing out the intricate relations that exist between techno-science and the emergence of new geographies (globalisation), societies (societies of control), and military strategies (the information bomb). Finally, the work of Donna Haraway explores the complex knot of social, economic, cultural, military, and gendered practices that are involved in contemporary techno-science such as genetics. For each of these writers to ask the question of technology entails asking far more than technical questions.

As soon as the question of technology passes our lips it attaches itself to the points of good and evil. The works here enable a questioning of technology that moves beyond asserting technology is in and of itself good or bad. Each of these writers shows that ethico-political questions should not be targeted just at technology itself, but at the process of thought (enframing), histories of thought (enlightenment) that lie around it, and the military structures that are thoroughly knotted through technology. Indeed it is a mistake to consider a tool in isolation. Haraway has radicalised each of these claims by arguing technology is a complex knot of thought, histories, military uses, and many other strands as well. To ask ethico-political question about technology is to ask questions about each of these strands which are knotted together, and how they may be re-crafted.

Although the writers covered here allow our questioning of technology to be more complex, it is easy to read them as casting a moral judgement of kinds on technology and the knots which make it. Bitterness and lost hope is palpable as Heidegger looks at the dammed Rhine. The sad disgust of Adorno and Horkheimer as they watch the crowds flocking to the Los Angeles movie theatre flavours the prose of *Dialectic of*

Enlightenment. Paul Virilio is surely penning an analysis of Bush's package of legislation to 'counter terrorism'. While each of these writers remain relatively pessimistic Haraway takes on a somewhat more optimistic tone. Technology for her is something that may be re-crafted to deliver liberatory potential. What she fails to mention when talking about technologies of liberation is that these attempts at re-crafting techno-scientific networks through active intervention have changed little, with Nestlé continuing as one of the world largest food multinationals, and the American healthcare system continuing to be incredibly discriminatory.

Technology and modernity were supposed to move us beyond good and evil, giving us only the category of efficiency with which to pass judgement on the world. Religious ecstasies were supposed to be chastened by the cold icy night of reason. What we see in these four writers is a removal job that hasn't quite been completed. When we question technology, we can't help arranging the questioning in exactly the same way as good and evil. Ecstasy is still on offer in the icy night, evil technologies still fall from the sky, and good technologies grow from the grass roots up. So be warned, when the question of technology is asked the old anxieties of good and evil are not too far away. Perhaps questioning our tools tells us more about ourselves, our society and our desire for moral quandaries than even post-humanists like Haraway suspect.

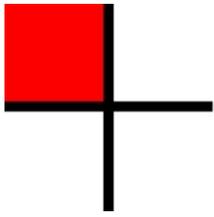
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Critical Recipes

Elisabeth M. Wilson

review of:

Mats Alvesson and Stanley Deetz (2000) *Doing Critical Management Research*. London: Sage. (PB: pp. 232, £18.99, ISBN 0 7619 5333 7)

I think it will help the reader, if I contextualise the background to this review, as a relative newcomer to critical studies. Coming from an interpretive and feminist background, I have been moving towards a more critical stance, with a particular interest in postcolonialism. I therefore found an early discussion (chapter two), which concerned alternative social science research perspectives, helpful in situating my own approach to research. Whilst acknowledging the usefulness of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) schemata, Alvesson and Deetz suggest that for future research the dimensions of consensus - dissensus and elite/a priori - local/emergent are more helpful (with the usual reservations about using bipolar constructs). The first dimension concerns the presentation of unity or difference. Using the metaphor of a mirror to reality for a consensus approach, they propose that dissensus replaces this with a lens. Dissensus looks for the contradictions, subtle resistances and the alternative voices that have been suppressed. In relation to their second set of dimensions, elite/a priori approaches apply pre-selected concepts to organisational members, as opposed to local/emergent, where insight rather than truth is offered. Alvesson and Deetz suggest that this latter dimension acknowledges the social construction of research activities, and also that it leads to 'practical' rather than 'book' knowledge, a claim which is surely contestable and privileges the former over the latter. Thus they propose four perspectives: normative, interpretive, critical, and dialogic (which others might term postmodern). They suggest that critical management research draws upon critical and postmodern perspectives, as well as qualitative and interpretive approaches.

I think that this chapter perhaps typifies a tension in this work. Is this primarily an intellectual or practical endeavour? The covers states:

Many researchers know quite a lot about qualitative research methods and about critical management theory; few, however, have carefully integrated these understandings, and critical research methods have not been carefully developed. In practice, most researchers with a critical

bent conduct a qualitative study and add critical concerns ... *Doing Critical Management Research* provides an authoritative and insightful framework for navigating critical theories and methods across the social sciences, but in particular in relation to the study of corporate organisations.

Alvesson and Deetz are at pains to assert that this is not a 'cookbook', and that the reader should look elsewhere for basic texts on qualitative research. It is to some extent puzzling that chapter 3 therefore contains a critique of conventional quantitative and qualitative methodology; this may be unnecessary for the readers of this volume. Chapter 4 is an explication of critical theory and postmodernism as applied to organisational research, and although both are quite helpfully set out, of necessity discussions are somewhat truncated. Thus Alvesson and Deetz select and explore two main intellectual strands to critical theory: ideology critique, and communicative theory. They make the following useful statement about the complementarity of critical and postmodern approaches:

Without considering postmodern themes, critical theory easily becomes unreflective with regard to cultural elitism and modern conditions of power; without incorporating some measure of critical theory of thought - or something similar to provide direction and social relevance - postmodernism simply becomes esoteric. (p. 108)

Chapter 5, which is headed 'new rules for research', is still largely theoretical. They spurn the term 'data collection' in favour of 'empirical material', as this acknowledges the role of the researcher in shaping the information collected. There are also some helpful observations on interviews and interviewees, particularly in relation to impression management and political intent. Nevertheless, the reader has to wait until chapter 6 for substantial practical advice. This has an interesting discussion on the interlocking but distinct roles of insight, critique and transformative redefinition, and they mount a convincing criticism of those researchers who merely offer insight and critique, without making any suggestions for organisational transformation. This chapter seems much more clearly structured, in that theoretical discussion on these three points precedes practical advice on how to implement each, followed by a well discussed illustration. Despite the critical orientation of the book, I found comments about the necessity of grounding any transformative suggestions in the beliefs and discourse of organisational members both sensible and practical.

Chapter 7 has further practical advice, on the use of defamiliarisation and the application of dissensus. They warn against hypercritique and a prejudiced disregard of the principal preoccupations of organisations, and also suggest that the researcher should draw upon an interpretive repertoire of different theories, which they list. In this respect, there seemed to be some ambivalence about gender. On one hand earlier in the book they apologise for the lack of specific focus on gender issues, stating that feminist issues will be 'blended into' the discussion (p.81), and dismiss gender as formulaic, along with class and race. On the other hand they later suggest the use of gender as an analytical framework. This tokenism is curious given Alvesson's record on writing on gender topics (e.g. Alvesson and Billing, 1997), and belies previous advocacy of gender awareness.

Alvesson and Deetz's equivocation in relation to gender is exceeded by a complete absence of specific reference to postcolonialism. The book comments on the lack of

historical consciousness in the social and behavioural sciences, and refers to differences in meaning patterns between sites. However it never tackles the growing field within critical management studies of postcolonialism. Warnings are given against cultural blindness, and the comment made that efficiency, management and so on are primarily concerns of Western culture and business organisations. There is also a sweeping generalisation (worthy of Hofstede, 1991) that individualist people, and societies concerned with control, organise differently to people concerned with fate and community. Thus they appear to position 'non-Western' culture as the Other without acknowledging it, obliteration by omission, and without differentiating between the cultural variety that is found both between and within societies, thus falling prey to the ethnocentrism of which they warn. More fundamentally, they fail to acknowledge how patterns of colonisation radically altered the economies of the colonisers (Loomba, 1998), influenced incipient notions of management (Cooke, 2002) and reconfigured human knowledge (Loomba, 1998). As with class, race, and gender, postcolonialism is an important category for the analysis of power relations, but the book uses the terms 'colonisation' and 'emancipation' in a metaphorical sense only. It might be argued that they cannot cover everything. I would suggest that more extensive treatment of gender, postcolonialism, race and ethnicity could have replaced other discussions that are likely to be familiar to the reader.

Strangely, in the very last chapter, Alvesson and Deetz suddenly launch into more practical issues concerning qualitative research, starting with the ethical and practical issue of access for critically orientated researchers. Some of their advice appears to be quite basic and obvious for a qualitative researcher; this includes their description of 'drilling' in interviews, a procedure where the topic is pursued with repeated interviews and different interviewees, going deeper each time. Surely any competent and experienced researcher would do this without having to articulate it as a technique? This chapter comes very close to the 'cookbook' which Alvesson and Deetz earlier eschewed.

The proof of the pudding is perhaps in the eating. Whilst reading this book, I was in the middle of an organisational case study, and it provided some useful reference points for organising and interpreting what I must now call my empirical material. However I feel I could have gained as much insight from a shorter work, and I would have preferred a longer, more inclusive work, incorporating a wider range of perspectives as indicated above. Would I recommend this book to other readers? I have already recommended selected chapters to research students. I think however it would also have benefited from a clearer structure linking theoretical and practical discussions, preferably chapter by chapter.

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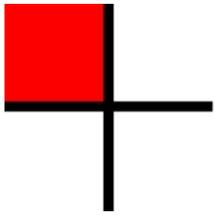
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On Anti-modernism and Managerial Pseudo-liberalism*

Thomas Armbrüster

review of:

Paul du Gay (2000) *In Praise of Bureaucracy – Weber, Organization, Ethics*. London: Sage. (PB: pp.159, £15.99, ISBN 0-7619-5504-6)

For some decades now, bureaucracy and bureaucrats have been under severe critique and denigration from a variety of strands. To some, a bureaucracy is the epitome of the encrusted, traditional organisation unable to change, and the bureaucrat is the carrier of resistance to change, devoted to securing his/her turf and keeping his/her pension with a minimum of commitment to work. To others, a bureaucracy is the archetype of the anonymous organisation in which faceless individuals make entirely intransparent and thus arbitrary decisions, and the bureaucrat is the epitome of the authoritarian heeler who slavishly obeys to the commands of his/her superiors no matter of the moral implications. Bureaucracy, therefore, is supposed to be the opposite not only of innovativeness, freshness, and change, but also of democracy and morality.

Paul du Gay's *In Praise of Bureaucracy* is a remarkably brave pleading against these allegations and a forceful defence of the bureaucratic ethos. His endeavour is indeed bold, for not only is he going against the severe attacks that have been levelled against bureaucracy from various sides, and not only is he targeting at the currently prevalent enthusiasm for entrepreneurial reforms of public services, but he is also, to stick to military terms here, shooting with all intellectual canons at two scholars that have had considerably influence within the social-scientific landscape over the last ten to twenty years. And, to say it from the beginning, du Gay does so in a largely convincing manner.

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Du Gay's objective is to defend bureaucracy and the legitimacy of state-administrative procedures against charges from mainly two strands – a philosophical-ethical and a neoliberal-entrepreneurial. In order to outline the bureaucratic ethos, du Gay is drawing on an aspect of Max Weber's work that has rarely been recognised. Within standard Weberianism, du Gay argues, Weber's notions are typically presented such that bureaucratisation corresponds to the development of formal and instrumental rationalization, ultimately leading to the notorious 'iron cage' of bureaucracy. What is often disregarded is the positive connotation that Weber assigns to the bureaucratic ethos, namely the commitment to equal treatment of citizens, dissociation from value-laden aspects of human life, and impartial conduct free from status, social background, or party-political considerations.

On this basis, du Gay sets out to present the ethos of bureaucracy as a necessary feature of liberal-democratic states and explores the allegations of MacIntyre (1981) and Bauman (1989) against bureaucracy.¹ He argues that MacIntyre's image of the bureaucratic manager is based on both a misunderstanding of Weber and an idealization of the integrated, virtuous, moral person. Du Gay's arguments amount to the charge that MacIntyre's treatise is based on the assumption that there are more virtuous and less virtuous persons, and that the best will be achieved if the 'most developed', most moral and virtuous persons – rather than institutions, rules, and their bureaucratic administrators – are in managerial positions. It is fascinating to read how du Gay, by critically discussing the telos of human life on which MacIntyre's insists, carves out and illustrates an idealist, theologically essentialist, and ultimately anti-pluralist element of MacIntyre's arguments.

Du Gay's review of Bauman's take on bureaucracy is in no way milder. As in the case of MacIntyre, du Gay argues that Bauman's representation of bureaucracy is one-sided, as Bauman only refers to the potentially de-responsibilising character of bureaucratic procedures and not to the bureaucratic ethos of justice. According to du Gay, the Holocaust is based on reasons that are the very antithesis of Bauman's, namely on the overcoming of the legitimacy of bureaucratic procedures by the enthusiasm for and illegitimate coercion of the National Socialist movement. The decisions that led to the Holocaust were ultimately based on racist and party-political convictions, and thus on normative and moral sentiments rather than on the application of rules.

With respect to the enthusiasm of the excellence movement and the anti-bureaucratic character of new public management, du Gay has another axe to grind. He takes the writings of management gurus as representing the current managerial mood and

1 MacIntyre's book *After Virtue* (1981) is a moral-philosophical critique of management and the manager. His point is that the conduct of management has corroded to a purely instrumental function of employing means without considering the ends, which represents a more general moral decay of modernity. Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989) views bureaucracies as representing modernity in that they account for a functional division of labor and a separation of technical from moral responsibility. He argues that bureaucratic organizations have a fundamentally dehumanizing aspect in that they, among others, distance the conduct of decisions from the final product of decisions, and thus contribute to the possibility and execution of the Holocaust.

convincingly shows the distorted view of bureaucracy inherent in the quasi-religious culture of entrepreneurialism, especially the pseudo-liberal character of the excellence movement (the supposed liberation from constraining rules, alienation at work, lack of emotion, lack of belonging, etc.). In the second part of the book, du Gay then applies the insights gained in the first part to the reforms of public management, which are closely related to the excellence movement and intellectually supported by the moral-philosophical anti-bureaucratism discussed above. Du Gay reminds us that the administrative responsibility for public interest and constitutional legitimacy is more complex than an often oversimplifying managerial view holds, and that the excesses of the entrepreneurial excellence movement need to be closely observed and, if necessary, tamed in order to secure the achievements of procedural justice and legality.

Previous publications of du Gay on which he draws in *In Praise of Bureaucracy* have been criticized for mainly two points: that he relies on a flawed dualism between bureaucracy and enterprise culture, and that he overstates the dominance of the enterprise discourse and presents a too deterministic view of the excellence movement (Fournier and Grey, 1999). As far as the book reviewed here is concerned, neither point holds. First, the dualism between bureaucracy and enterprise is not the creation of du Gay but of his opponents. Du Gay clarifies and exposes the assumptions of their arguments and shows that their demonisation of bureaucracy creates a dualism between good and evil that is based on a gross lack of understanding of the bureaucratic ethos. In a response to Fournier and Grey (du Gay 2000b), he also outlines in greater detail that the theoretical and empirical distinction between entrepreneurial and bureaucratic forms of government is less problematic than Fournier and Grey claim. Second, the reproach of inflating the dominance of the excellence movement as too deterministic is largely based on minor examples (Fournier and Grey, 1999: 118, 121) which simply do not suffice to put forward an argument along the lines of 'it all is not quite as bad as du Gay thinks'. While Fournier and Grey may have a point that TQM and contractualisation are not the best examples of anti-bureaucratic entrepreneurialism, their point that resistance to excellence-based reforms, for example by medical doctors in an NHS district or within a small family business, should have been taken into account seems to me an overestimation of the influence of resistance and a gross underestimation of the significance of the overall movement (for a recent review and more thoughts on resistance see Fleming, 2001). In fact, what Fournier and Grey stigmatise as 'deterministic' is exactly one of the main strengths of du Gay's arguments: the clarity with which he carves out and exposes the inherent assumptions and the unconsciously anti-liberal character of influential management ideas and concepts. Throughout the book, du Gay shows his awareness that the defects of bureaucracies are clear and manifold. His point is that both bureaucratic and entrepreneurial forms of government have their benefits and drawbacks, and that the drawbacks of bureaucratic procedures cannot be eliminated without simultaneously abolishing their benefits for a liberal-democratic order.

One point of Fournier and Grey (1999) deserves more attention: the observation that the practices of bureaucracy never realized the positive conception du Gay assigns to them, for example that there is a lot of patronage within bureaucracies (Fournier and Grey, 1999: 119). While this does not contradict to du Gay's argument, because he continuously states throughout the book that he is aware of the insufficient conduct and

exercise of an otherwise valid principle, he could have elaborated more on the question of why this link between ethos and practice is often severed and whether the ethos can in fact be put into practice. This is a very central point. An implicit or explicit claim that the ethos of bureaucracy is good, only the practice is bad, is reminiscent of similar statements on Marxism: the idea was good, but unfortunately the practice of real socialism was bad. Essentially, and paradoxically, this is an idealist position. As soon as good ideas assume organisational forms, the 'crooked timber of humanity' (Isaiah Berlin) accounts for a practice that inevitably leads to a distortion or deformation of the idea, and this cannot be disregarded in the assessment of the idea.

There is another point at which some more elaboration would have strengthened du Gay's arguments. In his treatise of Bauman (1989), du Gay mainly points at the amoral character mistakenly ascribed to bureaucracy. What he does not fully develop is the point that once the bureaucratic ethos of legitimacy has been abolished, for example by coercion as in the case of National Socialism, then administrative rules may indeed have the fatal effect of de-responsibilisation. This argument can be derived from a juxtaposition of du Gay's points with a recent German-language publication (Balcke, 2001) that is based on historical research on the *Inspektion der Konzentrationslager* (the public authority in charge of the administration of the concentration camps in Germany and its occupied territory until 1945). Du Gay is right to argue that the National Socialist movement had to overthrow the legitimacy of legal-administrative bureaucracies through politicising the institutional organs of the state by forced appointments of party members to leading institutional positions. However, once the Nazis were in power in all institutions and the bureaucratic ethos of legitimacy had successfully been thrown over board, the administrative procedures functioned in favour of the lethal goals in that rules provided the necessary de-responsibilisation for the normal-citizen culprits (Balcke, 2001). This way, du Gay could have given more credits to MacIntyre and Bauman, which would have led to a confinement of their arguments rather than a total rejection of their place in organisation studies and social theory. Bureaucracy thus remains a two-edged issue, and thanks to du Gay we now know that it indeed is two-edged, and not only one-edged as many would have it.

In summary, most parts of *In Praise of Bureaucracy* are compellingly argued, even if the totality with which du Gay rejects the arguments of MacIntyre and Bauman may be exaggerated. It is a relatively short book and would have benefited from more attention to the two above points (the relation of ethos and practice, and the fatal effect of rules once the bureaucratic ethos has been abolished), but nevertheless it markedly enhances our comprehension of bureaucracy. Moreover, it has considerable implications for two continuing debates in social theory: the discourse on Weber and the disputes on modernism versus postmodernism. With regard to Weber, du Gay succeeds in providing an alternative account of the rationalization and iron-cage views that are mostly read in Weber's treatise of bureaucracy. Weber does not lend himself to the normative dualism between rationality and morality that has been the basis for much of the bureaucracy critique, because his notion of impersonality is closely connected with the humanitarian ethos of disregard to status, origin, ascription, party-political or personal preferences, and religious or normative morality. While this insight in the connection between bureaucracy and democracy is not entirely new (Mouzelis, 1968; Perrow, 1972; Beetham, 1996), the vividness with which du Gay elaborates this point clarifies a facet

of Weber with which many earlier interpreters had not fully come to terms with. Second, du Gay's contribution to the discourse on modernism versus post-modernism should not be underestimated, despite the sometimes drastic character of his arguments. Taking Bauman (1993) as an example, du Gay (2000a: 55-59) is alerting the scientific community that postmodern allegations towards modernity must beware of misrepresenting modernity and falsely juxtaposing it toward postmodernity, for example by presenting reason as 'madness of rationality'. In addition, he alerts us that anti-modernist positions need to beware of sentiments that may carry the label of postmodernity, but whose moral or transcendental basis may resemble the beliefs of pre-modernity.

Beyond these contributions to social theory, du Gay's book has another offer to make: to view management and organisation theory through a political-liberal (in stark contrast to the economic neo-liberal) lens. He shows that the supposedly libertarian character of the neo-'liberal' excellence movement is ultimately anti-libertarian, and thus provides a cornerstone for an alternative, no less critical position to management and organisation than Foucauldian, Frankfurt-school or labour-process approaches. Although the term liberalism is rarely mentioned throughout the book, du Gay's treatise is a defence of and call for political liberalism, properly understood. It dissects the enthusiastic management language of 'opportunities' and 'challenges' and convincingly shows the irrefutably metaphysical basis of the enterprise culture. Thus *In Praise of Bureaucracy* clarifies that the neo-'liberal' plea and enthusiasm for privatisation, de-bureaucratisation and anti-interventionism has certainly to do with economic liberalism, but next to nothing with political liberalism. There has always been a gulf between these two sets of ideas, but to my mind this important boundary has often been collapsed in labour-process or poststructuralist theorizing by putting 'liberalism' in general into the corner of neo-conservatism. *In Praise of Bureaucracy* clarifies this distinction second to none, and it should alert us that the neo-'liberal' mainstream may well be capable of eroding the sense of legitimacy not only in the arena of management but in the public in general. The fact that the erosion of legitimacy and legality, based on religion, morality and the enterprise culture, has taken hold of governments of superpowers indicates how far we have travelled. Du Gay's book could not be more timely.

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