

ephemera

theory & politics in organization

© ephemera 2006
ISSN 1473-2866
www.ephemeraweb.org
volume 6(2): 99-223

volume 6, number 2 (may 2006)

editorial

- Organizing between a rock and a hard place* 99
Alf Rehn and Samantha Warren

articles

- The Psychotic Organization* 104
Burkard Sievers

- The Hours: A Gaze, a Kiss and the Lapse between them.
An Eventalisation* 121
Asmund W. Born, Christian Frankel & Niels Thyge Thygesen

- Scripting Masculinity* 141
Valérie Fournier and Warren Smith

- Identity and Subjectivity in Post-Fordism: For an analysis of
resistance in the contemporary workplace* 163
Giuliana Commisso

notes

- Dear editor: A Reply to Basbøll and Graham* 193
Karl Weick

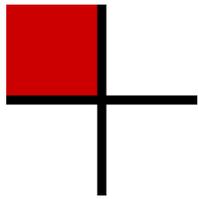
- Substitutes for Strategy Research: Notes on the source of
Karl Weick's anecdote of the young lieutenant and the map* 194
Thomas Basbøll and Henrik Graham

reviews

- Cannabis Britannica: A History of the Present* 205
Beatriz Acevedo

- The Field and The Forge* 215
Peter Fleming

- What is Lived Space?* 219
Zhongyuan Zhang



Organizing between a rock and a hard place

Alf Rehn and Samantha Warren

We are told that postmodern organization theory is all about Otherness (Boje, 1995; Linstead, 2004), the right of Others not be authored by Others and the right of Others to be recognised as Other without being Othered. In Other words we are caught up (in these postmodern times) with the organization of Movement, with the transgression of boundaries between self, Other, us, them, in, out, this side, that side, different and normal, a process which is not aimed at demolishing brick walls, but at *reaffirming* them – painting them pretty colours and putting doorways in them so we can pop from one side to the Other when we feel like it. An Other way of putting this might be that we are engaged in a process of dis-placing things in order to place them. Between a rock and a hard place we might say.

Being between a rock and a hard place is to be in a non-place, a place where all ways out seem to lead to the same (undesirable) end. A parallax of sorts, where regardless of choice, one ends up in the wrong place. What better metaphor for contemporary life, where the notion of the one right way seems more and more mocking as it so obviously only taunts us with an impossibility? Displaced, the contemporary organized subject always finds itself right where it started, between a rock and a hard place. The displacements and transferrals, breaks and rifts, these are no longer optional extras of life, but mundane experience. Think of the attempts to make sense of taxation or the RAE, planning your life according to schizophrenic statements. Or navigating the grocery store, ‘choosing’ between four different kinds of Halen Môn – as if you actually knew enough about Welsh gourmet salts to make an informed judgement.

And isn’t organization theory itself increasingly stuck between a rock and a hard place? Instead of core competencies, functional units and divisional organization we have fractured identities, outsourcing in and insourcing out, virtual viruses messing up our interfaces and insane project managers desperately looking for that one controllable moment. Let’s just accept that we’re all displaced now, lounging in the airport-lounge (Augé, 1995), left at the station, and stuck in the K-hole of our choice (Warren, 2005). Let’s not mind. Fuck, let’s rejoice in this. Whereas classical organization theory was obsessed with boundaries and buffer zones, maybe the organization theory of tomorrow has to be a theory of borderlands and de-militarized zones (O’Doherty *et al.*, 2007)? No longer is organized man necessarily the man in the organization (or the woman for that matter), rather it’s a man (or an Other) who decided to tell the boss to take this job and

shove it, and went walkabout. There, not really anywhere, the gals from the fourth floor have set up a picnic (they're serving their old boss's kidneys, gently braised). A waiter, used to running between the organization of the kitchen and the organization of the dining room, quickly traverses the space, almost knocking over a recently fired but very happy man. And all the while, someone somewhere is torn apart from loving more than one.

Stuck, with nowhere to go. Sounds sweet, don't it? It's Waylon Jennings on the road, the fracture in the wall, the calm of the waiting room, the oblivion of post-coital silence. Limbo, suspension, it's the weightless pause as you bump off the end of the see-saw. It's not caring about the quality of your job, flicking through the channels (and there's nothing on), a match ending 0-0. It's knowing it's not your round yet, waking up to the fact that the boss isn't in today, pawing an arse without realizing it until the deed's done. In organizations, we find this being between a rock and a hard place in a number of places. They are the silences, the misunderstandings, the not-fucking-carings of everyday organizational life. They are, to follow the current vogue in organizational studies of misunderstanding Deleuze (and old Felix), the holes that makes the organization seem like a solid entity. An organization is always caught between a rock and a hard place, just as the people in it are stuck in their lives, controlled by the sloppy communitarianism of the workplace and the subtle fascism of family life. No wonder the highways are crammed with people pulling over, taking a break, reading the paper or furtively masturbating. And with organizations little more than thin, flimsy wrappers over a complex, interwoven set of fractures, break, parallax (Žižek, 2006) and various other displacements, who can blame them?

The collection of articles in this issue of *ephemera* reminded us of this function (?) of organization theory in lots of different ways, some serious and others, quite frankly, flippant – but even here we are playing with the boundary between the proper stuff of serious thought and the childish giggles of the academic playground. And more power to that. The theme of this issue emerged, as such things often do, out of the lack of a theme. There seemed to be very little that connected psychosis, masculinity, post-Fordism, cannabis and the issue of correct quotation practises, until we realized that these were all issues of displacement, cracks and being stuck between a rock and a hard place. They all pointed to a theory of breaks and being stuck, a Taussigian theory of displaced movement and being askew, and they all in their own way pointed to sticking points and cul-de-sacs (Stewart, 1996).

Our first paper, Burkard Sievers on his concept of the 'psychotic organization', is an excellent example. A psychosis can be described as a partial break with reality, being caught in a disjointed relationship between an inside and an outside world. Sievers is fascinated by the madness of the corporation – the psychosis of organizational action, the ridiculous, the utterly illogical and the outrageous *absurdities* perpetrated in and by organizations, and thus fixes the very nature of the organization as being both the rock and the hard place, with all of us caught in between. In his brief piece he introduces *ephemera* readers to the legacy of his thought on the matter, and elegantly conveys an alternative take on the rationality of the organization, one which goes beyond a mere critique and recasts the notion through the introduction of a psychotic break – a displacement at the heart of the organization.

The theme of displacement returns and comes through exceptionally well in our next paper, 'The Hours' by Asmund Born, Christian Frankel & Neils Thyge Thygesen. The paper plays with Foucault's notion of the 'event' to show us how time is fluid and there are no such things as 'best made plans' – both the writers and their subjects gang aft aghly. Discussing the 2002 film *The Hours* (based on Virginia Woolf's novel) the authors remind us that past, present and future are not mutually exclusive and more co-dependent that we might casually observe in our studies of organizational life. We (for the most part) unproblematically conduct 'historical' document analysis, or 'life history' interviews with little regard for such data as necessarily constructed through and constituted by the present moment – with, of course, one eye on the future... what might these data say that we can use to draw conclusions some time hence? How could we possibly conceive of doing any meaningful task *now* without the hope that it will come to fruition in the future (cf. Bataille, 1987)?

From 'Time', we make a Heideggerian leap to 'Being' and perhaps one of the most salient forms of 'Being' of them all – gender. Fournier and Smith argue that masculinity, in particular, is at risk of becoming 'scripted' in the sense that some commentators' emphasis on the fluidity of gender identities is becoming formulaic and actually serves to strengthen an essentialist notion of (in this case) 'maleness' which would constitute its 'proper shape'. For 'masculinity' to be running about all over the place, dripping off ledges and forming in puddles as 'fluidity' implies, suggests to Fournier and Smith that these authors must have a clearer idea of what the solid state of masculinity is, with femininity always stuck between the rock and the hard, phallic place...

Giuliana Commisso's article stays with the concept of identity but this time arguing for a more developed understanding of the organized subject caught between individualisation and subjectification. Analyzing a post-Fordist car factory, she is able to show what actually happens when people, quite literally, get caught between a rock and a hard place. Interestingly, she presents us with a reading which would intimate that this might in fact be a position that creates novel forms of becoming, potentially even enabling an upbeat understanding of the same. Although she does not present us with an overly optimistic view, Commisso shows the complex possibilities inherent in a very common form of displacement, both connecting to and moving beyond the old Marxist hobbyhorse of alienation.

All of which brings us to our Notes section and to an interesting exchange of views between Karl Weick, Thomas Basboll and Henrik Graham. All academics are well aware of the complicated space we get into when we refer to other work. Reference too much, and you seem unoriginal; reference too little and you run the risk of being called a cheat, or worse – truly stuck between a rock and a hard place. As an example of this, we present a case of appropriating the Other – in a tale of academic integrity put in question. A displaced reference, returning in complex ways, and a question of what counts as proper academic conduct. In order to keep things interesting (always the drama queens), we start off with Karl Weick's response, and then delve into the case for the prosecution. The result? We're afraid that's up to you, dear reader.

After this heady debate, we move on to the reviews and continue our theme of rocks and hard places. Firstly, we get stoned with Beatriz Acevedo's review of James Mills (2003) book *Cannabis Britannica: Empire, Trade and Prohibition*. The book traces the history of cannabis: "...from the time that the British learned about the uses of cannabis in India until the establishment of national and international legislation on cannabis and other drugs in the 1920s" and shows how the economic potential of cannabis as a lucrative commodity coupled with the puritanical views of 'experts' dispatched to understand it, have combined to produce an ambivalent political relationship with the drug and its effects. Drawing on Foucault, Acevedo embarks on an interesting interpretation of the book, highlighting how the events of the past can help us to understand the current UK legal and political climate around cannabis and we would argue, drugs more generally (see Warren & Wray-Bliss, *under review*). Staying with the historical perspective, with the rock being a forge and the field the hardest place of all, Peter Fleming reviews John Landers (2003) book *The Field and the Forge: Population, Production and Power in the Pre-industrial West* reminding us organizational post-moderns that our industrial heritage rests very firmly on solid ground – agricultural ground to be exact. Fleming praises the book for its thorough treatment of historical evidence which paints pre-industrial life as a precarious balance between demography and the availability of natural resources to feed the population. Often accused by historians of ignoring the heritage of previous organizational eras, such volumes are a ripe source for critical management scholars seeking to understand how the discipline developed almost entirely from the need to command, control and defend natural resources. Both these reviews echo sentiments we have already encountered in this issue of *ephemera*: that history is read through the present and the present recreates history.

Finally, we end with Zhongyuan Zhang's commentary on Stuart Elden's (2004) text *Understanding Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible*. Zhang's review reminds us of our theme in two ways. He begins with an allusion to the oft felt dilemma in a mish-mash discipline such as organization studies – how much of a writer's oeuvre must one read to avoid doing a disservice to her ideas when we steal them for our own purposes? Either we come up against the simply un-scaleable heights of 72 volumes of rock solid writing from Henri Lefebvre (Zhang, this volume) or we stay in the hard place, scratching our heads as to the meaning of one small part of them – worse still (?), simplistically appropriating a few short words to help our many grand claims. To be sure Zhang does not offer us a solution, but he does offer Elden's book as a zone of calm between the rock and the hard place, a good overview and introduction to understanding the thinker – in particular Lefebvre's conceptualisation of space, currently oh-so-*en-vogue* among organizational scholars.

All of which leaves us, as editors, stuck between this rock of an introduction and the hard place of the actual contents of the journal. And isn't this the usual place for the writing subject, always in a space between the solidity of what has been written and the difficulty of what is yet to come? We might in this vein say that even something as mundane as the end of an introduction becomes an event, a sticking-point in history, an alienated place where psychotic breaks may occur, where one can start questioning one's masculinity (of whichever gender), wonder if one has followed academic protocol... Oh, hell, pass that joint...

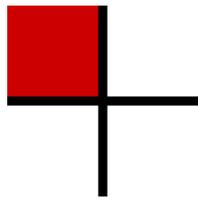
references

- Augé, M. (1995) *Non-places: Introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*. New York: Verso.
- Bataille, G. (1987) *The Accursed Share Part I: An essay on general economy*. New York: Zone.
- Boje, D., R. Gephart & T. Thatchenkery (eds.) (1995) *Postmodern Management and Organization Theory*. London: Sage.
- Linstead, S. (2004) *Organization Theory and Postmodern Thought*. London: Sage.
- O'Doherty, D., H. Knox., T. Vurdubakis & C. Westrup (2007) 'Rites of Passage: Organization as an excess of flows', *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, forthcoming.
- Stewart, K. (1996) *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural politics in an 'other' America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Warren, S. (2005) 'Ketamine', in C. Jones & D. O'Doherty (eds.) *Manifestos for the Business School of Tomorrow*. Åbo: Dvalin.
- Warren, S. & E. Wray-Bliss (under review) 'Workforce Drug Testing: A review, critique and reframing', *Organization*.
- Žižek, S. (2006) *The Parallax View*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

the editors

Alf Rehn is a member of the editorial collective of *ephemera*.
E-mail: alf@kth.se

Samantha Warren is a member of the editorial collective of *ephemera*.
E-mail: sam.warren@port.ac.uk



The Psychotic Organization: A Socio-Analytic Perspective*

Burkard Sievers

abstract

'The Psychotic Organization: A Socio-Analytic Perspective' has somehow become the leitmotiv of my research and writing on organization and management for about a decade. First, I would like to introduce my understanding of organization from a socio-analytic perspective. I will then briefly describe the experience of a Group Relations Conference in which organizational madness predominated. In the third part I will outline my understanding of psychotic organization and indicate some of the thinkers and sources upon which I have built my conceptualization. The fourth part comprises some of the insights that I have gained in 'applying' this perspective to various organizational and societal dynamics. In the conclusion, the assumption is further elaborated that the psychotic organization as a socio-analytic attempt at understanding organizations in depth opens up new thinking and important vistas on the theory and politics of organizations.

At the unconscious level we all know about the normality and ubiquity of psychotic anxieties, but it is quite another matter to be able to reflect upon some of the consequences of the omnipresence of these unconscious phantasies for life, culture, politics and the theory of knowledge. (Robert M. Young, 1994: 50)

Even if managers deny their psychotic anxieties they unconsciously come to bring into being organizations which are designed to keep them at bay. (W. Gordon Lawrence, 1995: 17)

Introduction

This paper is an elaborated version of a presentation at a Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies. I would like to address a broader readership here, those who might not be familiar with the psycho- and socio-analytic approach (and rhetoric), i.e. the 'uninitiated', as one reviewer of this paper put it. Thus, I am following the recommendation of the reviewers to be more explicit about it. I therefore would like to

* Extended version of a presentation at the Centre for Psychoanalytic Studies, University of Essex, October 26, 2005. I am grateful to Heather Höpfl and Robert D. Hinshelwood for having provided this opportunity. I especially would like to thank Rose Mersky for her work in editing this paper to best express my ideas in English.

begin with a brief outline of how I perceive such a perspective in the context of organization and management.

The understanding of psychoanalysis as a science of culture, society and organization is not broadly shared. From a traditional stance, psychoanalysis is mainly seen as a sub-discipline of either medical science or psychology. For the humanities and the context of management and organization in particular, psychoanalysis thus mainly has been reduced to an *applied* science, in the sense that its relevance is restricted to the application of insights gained from clinical research. As the focus of psychoanalysis as an applied science is thus primarily limited to the unconscious of individual organizational members or 'inmates', unconscious phenomena and dynamics on the level of the organization as a whole are extremely difficult – if not impossible – to be thought and conceptualized – and are thus broadly considered to be irrelevant or even non-existent.

In contrast to the mere application of psychoanalysis, the scientific concern for the unconscious in organizational (and societal) contexts meanwhile has become a discipline of its own based on respective theories (e.g. Elieli, 1994; Eisold, 1997; Erlich, 1998; Gabriel, 1999; Lawrence, 1999; Neumann & Hirschhorn, 1999). In comparison to the more common term *organizational psychodynamics*, the concept *socio-analysis*, suggested by Bain (1999), appears to me more appropriate for this field of study and research. Bain describes socio-analysis "as the activity of exploration, consultancy, and action research which combines and synthesizes methodologies and theories derived from psycho-analysis, group relations, social systems thinking,...organisational behaviour" and social dreaming (*ibid.*: 14). Whereas the notion of socio-analysis explicitly refers to its roots in psychoanalysis, it surmounts, on the other hand, the focus of the individual predominant in the therapeutic use of psychoanalysis.

Bain sees the origin of socio-analysis in the work of Bion, Rickman and Foulkes at the Hollymoor Hospital, Northfield, Birmingham in 1943 (Main, 1946; Harrison & Clarke, 1992; Harrison, 2000). The broadening of the psychoanalytic perspective to groups and institutions is mainly attributed to Wilfred Bion and the learnings he derived from his experience of the Northfield Experiments (Bion, 1946, 1948a/b, 1961). Even though the respective theory was not yet available at the time, Bion first contributed a 'systemic' perspective to psychoanalytic thinking. His work with groups was based on the hypothesis that groups are led in general by 'primitive' phantasies of an unconscious nature, which are an expression of psychotic anxieties. This led him to the assumption that the traditional emphasis on the individual or triadic part of the Greek myth of Oedipus, favoured by Freud and most of his successors as the 'Oedipus complex', could be extended to the social and political dimension. Emphasizing the other part of the myth, i.e. the Sphinx and its riddle – "What is the creature that walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon and three in the evening?" – Bion (1961: 8) suggested a 'binocular' vision as indispensable prerequisite for the psychoanalytic study of groups – and thus the social. While the 'project of Oedipus' stands for the classical domain of psychoanalysis in the dyadic setting of analyst and analysand, the 'project of the Sphinx' refers to the social context, which constitutes consciousness and meaning in organizations (Lawrence, 1999: 104; cf. Sievers, 1999b). The Sphinx represents the capacity to illuminate and to question the predominant (unconscious) phantasies and the

psychotic thinking in groups in order to allow reality-testing required for the 'work group'. "The psychoanalytic study of organisations coheres around the centring of Sphinx, with Oedipus as a secondary but linked consideration. In short, Sphinx is 'figure' in the study of organisations and Oedipus is 'ground'" (Lawrence, 1999: 106).

In the present context of the psychotic organization, 'the Sphinx' offers a perspective on organizational dynamics that allows understanding psychotic phenomena and reactions not as those of individuals but – on the contrary – as socially induced. Instead of focusing on specific individuals who might have a critical impact on the unconscious dynamics of organizations, the perspective chosen here is based on the contrary assumption that unconscious emotions and phenomena in organizations are socially induced and thus 'taken in' by organizational role holders. When psychotic defences against anxiety in organizations predominate, organizational members consciously or unconsciously feel bound to mobilize their own personal psychotic parts, thus unconsciously colluding with the 'social psychosis' on the organizational level.

The following example may indicate to what extent the unconscious dynamic in organizational contexts and the thinking of role holders can be understood as induced by the organization (and its relatedness to its environment). For example, Lawrence (1995; cf. Sievers, 1999; Knights & McCabe, 1997; Steingard & Fitzgibbons, 1993; Willmott, 1993) has noted that the implementation of traditional management tools by the British National Health Service has contributed to the tendency of hospital managements to represent and justify totalitarian ways of thinking incompatible with the professional value orientations of physicians and nurses. To the extent that management practices and tools are primarily oriented towards a maximization of profit and economic survival, the original 'spirit of a hospital' is lost. Hospitals thus no longer differ from other production or service enterprises and employee anxiety about losing their jobs predominates. Employees and patients are reduced to economic objects, i.e. human resources and customers. The anxiety of annihilation – both that of losing one's job and one's professional identity – reactivates earlier anxieties of this kind on the side of organizational role holders. They therefore are in danger of losing the capacity to contain¹ the (annihilation) anxieties of patients, which they experience in relation to their illness and/or their impending death (cf. Menzies, 1960).

In addition to the earlier referenced root of socio-analysis, i.e. the work of Bion, my underlying perspective is further influenced by Melanie Klein's contributions to the theory of object relations. Her theory of early childhood development was applied to the organizational context by Jaques (1953, 1955) and Menzies (1960) with their emphasis on social defence mechanisms. This development has had a significant impact on many

1 "Bion's concept of containing is based on the idea that the infant projects into its mother feelings that are distressing, frightening, painful or in some other way unbearable. The mother experiences the feeling herself, and is able not to act on it but to contain it and return it in a modified and contained form to the infant, so that the infant can reclaim it and reintegrate it as its own. It is not the infant that is contained as such. It is the *feeling* that the mother experiences in relation to the infant that she has to contain. The infant may develop an overall sense of containment as a result of a multiplicity of such experiences of having a specific feeling contained and returned. But the mother's focus is not on the containment of the infant, but on the containment of the specific feeling projected into her by the infant at a particular time" (Blackwell, 2006).

researchers in the field. Both the Kleinian concepts of the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position are constituent dimensions of this theory – and the following reflections. As they most likely may be unfamiliar to many of the readers of this journal, I would like to briefly explain them.

In her theory of early childhood development Klein differentiates between the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position. With the notion of ‘position’ Klein emphasizes that although the infant can be understood to develop from the first (paranoid-schizoid) to the latter (depressive), the positions cannot be regarded as phases, in the sense that once the latter has been reached, the former becomes obsolete. Both positions contain a specific set of anxieties and defences. The leading anxiety of the paranoid-schizoid position is of being persecuted and annihilated by the ‘object’. The predominant defences of this position are projection and introjection, splitting into good and bad objects, idealization, and magic omnipotent denial.² “In the depressive position, the object is loved in spite of its bad parts, whereas in the paranoid-schizoid position awareness of the bad parts changes the good object abruptly into a persecutor. Thus, love can be sustained in the depressive position, giving the beginnings of stability” (Hinshelwood, 1991: 141). While the persecutory anxiety of the paranoid-schizoid position “is a fear for the ego”, the anxiety of the depressive position “is a fear for the

2 *Projection*: “Lit. throwing in front of oneself. Hence its use in ... psychoanalysis to mean ‘viewing a mental image as objective reality’. In psychoanalysis two sub-meanings can be distinguished: (a) the general misinterpretation of mental activity as events occurring to one, as in dreams and hallucinations; and (b) the process by which specific impulses, wishes, aspects of the self, or internal objects are imagined to be located in some object external to oneself. Projection of aspects of oneself is preceded by denial, i.e. one denies that one feels such and such a wish, but asserts someone else does.... Projection of internal objects consists in attributing to someone in one’s environment feelings towards oneself which derive historically from some past external object whom one has introjected” (Rycroft, 1968/1995: 139).

Introjection: “The process by which the functions of an external object ... are taken over by its mental representation, by which the relationship with an object ‘out there’ is replaced by one with an imagined object ‘inside’. The resulting mental structure is variously called an *introject*, an *introjected object*, or *internal object*” (Rycroft, 1968/1995: 87).

Splitting: “Process (defence mechanism) by which a mental structure loses its integrity and becomes replaced by two or more part-structures. Splitting of both ego and object is described. After splitting of the ego, typically only one resulting part-ego is experienced as ‘self’, the other constituting a (usually) unconscious ‘split-off part of the ego’. After splitting of an object, the emotional attitude towards the two part-structures is typically antithetical, one object being experienced as ‘good’ (accepting, benevolent, etc.) the other as ‘bad’ (rejecting, malevolent, etc.). Splitting of both ego and object tends to be linked with denial and projection, the trio constituting a schizoid defence by which parts of the self (and of internal objects) are disowned and attributed to objects in the environment” (Rycroft 1968/1995: 173).

Idealization: “Defensive process ... by which an ambivalently regarded ...(internal) object is split into two ..., one resulting object being conceived of as ideally good, the other as wholly bad. The concept includes two notions: the construction of an ideal, perfect object and the reification of an idea. Idealization in its wider and non-technical sense of regarding some person as perfect and wonderful involves projection as well as idealization” (Rycroft, 1968/1995: 75).

“*Omnipotent phantasies* are phantasies that the subject is omnipotent. *Omnipotence of thought* refers to the belief that thoughts can of themselves alter the external world. According to some accounts, all infants believe in the omnipotence of thought and learn by their experience of frustration to accept the reality principle. According to others, it is a symptom of alienation and the dissociation of phantasy from any contact with the external world” (Rycroft, 1968/1995: 119).

survival of the loved object” (*ibid.*: 273). Both positions remain constituent parts of the psyche in the emotional life of adults. Whereas attainment and increased stabilization of the depressive position is understood as maturity, regression to the paranoid-schizoid position and the paranoid defence against depressive anxieties is under certain (objective or subjective) conditions a more or less everyday experience – even for the adult.

In the frame of the socio-analytic context and building on what has been elaborated above, these positions, their anxieties and defences are primarily understood as constituting respective *organizational* dynamics and modes of thinking, which unconsciously may mobilize anxieties and defences from earlier experiences on the side of role holders. In a hospital, for example, as sketched above, where external threats from the economic and political environment may result in totalitarian thinking, the emergence of unconscious phantasies and anxieties amongst its employees – management and ‘workers’ alike – cannot primarily be explained by individual personal or character deficiencies but must be seen as socially induced. To the extent that the psychodynamic of a hospital (or one or several of its subsystems) is tainted by anxieties and defences of a paranoid-schizoid kind, it is most unlikely that role holders can deal with patients from a depressive position, which would provide sufficient care, ‘love’ and the acknowledgement of ambivalences.

Unlike the predominant understanding of organization in psychoanalysis as organization of the individual or the psyche, my conception of the organization focuses on the inner resonances, representations and experiences of organizational role holders with regard to the organization in which they work and of which they are a member. Organization thus is perceived as ‘organization-in-the-mind’ (Hutton *et al.*, 1997), ‘institution-in-the-mind’ (Armstrong, 1997, 2005) or as ‘institution-in-experience’ (Long, 1999: 58). Instead of assuming that organizations – with their structures, tasks, corporate identity, etc. – are ‘objective reality’, my view is based on the assumption that “all organizations ... rely on the thinking of the people who take up roles within them. Without thinking, there would be no organization. Thinking is a defining characteristic of the life and work of the people in an organization. And the same can be said for any other social configuration” (Lawrence, 2000: 3). This thinking can have both conscious and unconscious dimensions.

Organizational Madness

I have been struggling for about a decade now to understand and to conceptualise from a socio-analytic perspective what in everyday language would be referred to as ‘organizational madness’ or the ‘madness of normality’. My quest for what I later termed the ‘psychotic organization’ actually began on the occasion of a particular Group Relations Conference,³ which I directed in Germany more than a decade ago.

3 The approach of Group Relations Conferences “was evolved by Wilfred Bion ... and others and developed at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations under the leadership of A. K. Rice. It involves the intensive study of authority, leadership and autonomy by individuals taking part in a temporary institution. This is achieved by members monitoring their own experience in the process of

The underlying understanding of groups (and social systems) in the group relations tradition is that man is a group animal at war with his 'groupishness' (Bion, 1961: 168). Learning from experience in these conferences always occurs somehow in resonance with 'the psychotic', both as a part of the normal personality and as a fundamental dynamic of groups and systems. This particular conference, however, happened to have a very intensive affinity to 'madness' (Sievers, 1999a).

The fear of going mad and the desire to drive others crazy ran throughout the conference from the opening plenary to the final session eight days later. It first began with some of the participants accusing the staff and the director in particular of taking a careless and irresponsible risk by exposing people to such a maddening event. But the paranoid and persecutory phantasies were soon tainting almost everyone, participants and staff alike. We, as a staff, worked to understand 'madness' as a systemic dimension and dynamic, contrary to personal pathology. We were greatly helped in our explorations by two narrative fictions: Herman Melville's (1855/1969) *Benito Cereno* and Edgar Allan Poe's (1855/1969) *The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether*. In these stories, both authors describe organizations – the first a Spanish slave ship on the coast of Chile in 1799, the second a private asylum for lunatics in the south of France early in the 19th century – where slaves and inmates hide a mutiny or revolt behind the appearance of 'rational madness' (Lawrence, 1995: 2, 11; Jacobson, 1959: 587). Ultimately, towards the end of each story, the 'truth' becomes apparent. Both narratives offered us a metaphoric frame to conceptualize the experience of 'the psychotic' in the conference from a systemic perspective.

These narratives somehow served us – first the staff and later the conference as a whole – as a kind of container or transitional object⁴ for a different kind of thinking from the limited one of a personal psychotic dynamic. The narratives helped us to remobilize our non-psychotic parts (Bion, 1957), enabling us in our roles as management and consultants to better pursue the primary task of the conference, which is to be aware of one's experience and to explore it in order to learn from it. They also helped us to bring to conference participants the awareness of what one experiences in a systemic psychotic dynamic.

In both opening and closing plenaries of working conferences, I, in the role of the director, usually mention that we as staff are working with the assumption that the end of the conference may not necessarily mean the end of the learning. There was ample evidence on this occasion that this was the case for former participants and staff members. It became particularly true for me insofar as the learning it had initiated had a major impact on how I henceforth conceptualized my understanding of organizations and that of 'the psychotic' in particular. I had already for some time – mainly through

taking part in the individual, group and institutional dynamics of the conference itself. That is, it is a particularly intense form of experiential learning which concentrates on interpreting the constantly shifting, dynamic unconscious processes which mediate the relations between the individual and the group in the 'here and now'. The group relations model is an equivalent to the psychoanalytic method as a tool of social and cultural enquiry, and the members of the conference are encouraged to make links to their wider experiences in organisational and social life" (Young, 2006).

4 Transitional object; see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transitional_object (21/05/2006)

conference work – learned that any attempt at understanding organizations from a psychodynamic perspective requires a ‘priority of the social’. What I mean by this is that by focusing on groups and organizations from a systemic perspective, the search for meaning refers to ‘social facts’ and thus falls into the domain of the project of the Sphinx. Until that conference, I had found it most difficult to grasp an adequate *socio-analytic* conceptualization of ‘psychosis’ congruent, for example, with Bion’s (1957) differentiation of the psychotic and non-psychotic parts of the *person*.

To acknowledge psychotic anxieties as a constituent part of the development of infants and of human development – and thus of life in general – doubtless contributes towards a depathologization of psychosis and its respective anxieties (Young, 1994: 73ff.; Tarnopolsky, Chesterman & Parshall, 1995). Though organizations “are quite specifically and exquisitely designed to avoid consciously experiencing psychotic anxiety, ... psychotic processes are in danger of breaking through from moment to moment” (Young, 1994: 156). On the other hand, the acceptance of this normality does not, in any way, diminish the pain and suffering involved in the experience of being persecuted, retaliated against and annihilated. As the analyst works “to become able to be the analyst of psychotic patients”, the manager and/or consultant working with the psychotic in organizations requires that he or she “must have reached down to very primitive things in” him- or herself (Winnicott, 1949).

Psychotic Organization

In my effort to reach a socio-analytic conceptualisation of psychosis, I first looked at how it is framed regarding the individual as a personal system. I began with the *pathological organization*, a term that has been used by various psychoanalytic authors in an attempt to gain a better understanding of severe personality disturbances (Hinshelwood, 1991: 381ff.). It is (among others) based on Klein’s early observation that “if persecutory fears are very strong, and for this reason ... the infant cannot work through the paranoid-schizoid position, the working through of the depressive position is in turn impeded. This failure may lead to a regressive reinforcing of persecutory fears and strengthen the fixation points for severe psychoses” (1952b: 294). O’Shaughnessy’s (1981) concept of the *defensive organization*, emphasizes this pathological fixation among children, who, because of a weak ego and the experience of extreme persecution anxieties, fail to enter the depressive position. Their ego-development stagnates in the defensive mechanisms typical of the paranoid-schizoid position. Such stagnation either leads to an immature psychic equilibrium between the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position or to an extremely narcissistic personality structure organized around omnipotent defensive mechanisms. Based on Bion’s (1957) differentiation of psychotic and non-psychotic parts of the personality and the splitting that goes along with this, Meltzer (1968) and Money-Kyrle (1969) have described the internal quarrel between the healthy and sick parts of the self. More often than not this results in projecting the latter into the outer world of the environment (Segal, 1956). Rather than by a splitting of bad and good parts, Steiner (1979, 1982, 1987, 1990, 1993), on the other hand, writes that pathological organizations are mainly characterized by a kind of

‘liaison of fragments’⁵ under the dominance of an omnipotent narcissistic personality structure which itself is the result of failed splitting.

I have suggested the *psychotic organization* as a metaphoric frame for the further socio-analysis of organizations. Though I feel a certain uneasiness with this concept – particularly in relation to social phenomena – due to the traditional clinical pathological implications of psychosis (Young, 1994: 76ff.), it is, on the other hand, the notion of psychotic anxiety as the in-between-state of the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position which challenges me to use the notion with organizations. I am especially encouraged in this choice by Fornari (1966/1975), an Italian psychoanalyst, who in his *Psychoanalysis of War* anticipated most of the major insights of what some time later was conceptualized as the theory of pathological organization.

Like Bion and the early Jaques (1953, 1955; cf. Menzies, 1960), Fornari describes the important role the defences against psychotic anxieties play in the formation of society and its institutions. Based on the assumption that the psychotic dimension of group life finds its most glamorous realization in the war phenomenon, Fornari emphasizes the inability to mourn, i.e. the paranoid elaboration of mourning, as the critical dynamic (or factor) of war as a psychotic kind of social organization. While the non-psychotic mode of dealing with mourning is based on the capacity to endure pain and suffering and is concomitant with a certain confidence that it ultimately will be overcome (*ibid.*: 224), the paranoid elaboration of mourning is based on one’s own alienation and guilt feelings, which are projected onto the enemy. Contrary to the predominant notion that war is an expression of hate, Fornari suggests the paradoxical view that “war .. seems to be a madness of love rather than a madness of hate” (*ibid.*: 261). Instead of acknowledging the loss and destruction of the ‘loved object’ and the feeling of guilt concomitant with that, the paranoid elaboration of mourning, typical for war, places the blame for loss and guilt on the enemy, who then is considered responsible for the war. The defeat of the enemy is lasting evidence of his guilt and his annihilation is rationalized as a just retribution for his crime.

In comparison, for example, to Steiner (1979: 389, 1990, 1993), whose view is limited to the obstacles to mourning in the pathological organization of the borderline patient, i.e. the individual, Fornari’s analysis of the psychotic dimensions of war takes into account that fundamental relatedness between the individual and the social. Fornari’s theory is implicitly based on a pathological fixation and stagnation in the paranoid-schizoid position and on defences similar to what O’Shaughnessy (1981), some time later, conceptualized as the *defensive organization*.

I refer to the psychotic organization as a *metaphoric* frame mainly because I wish to avoid entering into a broader epistemological argument as to whether or not and, if so, to what extent conceptualizations originating from the psychoanalysis of the individual

5 For Steiner the psychotic organization of the individual is based on the fact that “fragments of self and of internal objects are projected into objects which are, in turn, assembled into a powerful organization. Because of the extent of the fragmentation, the intensity of the violence, and the power of the destructiveness and hatred, the organization is forced to rely in a crude way on omnipotent mechanisms. Thus sane parts of the personality are overwhelmed and forcibly recruited to participation in the psychosis” (1993: 66).

can be transferred or translated to the broader context of social organizations. I would prefer here to take a more pragmatic position in order to find out what insights can be generated if one assumes that social organizations (particularly enterprises) are psychotic organizations (cf. Morgan, 1986).

Similar to the way in which patients with severe personality disturbances often do not appear to be very psychotic, but rather give the impression that they have fixed their disorder on a certain level, social organizations – profit-oriented organizations in particular – often seem to cover their internal anxiety level with a somehow curious, but nevertheless normal appearance. As an external observer or consultant to large corporations, I often have the impression that these organizations are stuck in the predominant attempt to defend against the apparent threat and persecution emanating from the outer world of markets and competitors, which they at the same time tend to dominate and control with a high degree of aggression, sadism and destructiveness. In cases like these, it seems to me that the psychic dynamic of the organization is caught in a behavior and a way of thinking which are typical of the paranoid-schizoid position. In face of the on-going struggle for excellence, growth and survival and the attempt to gain greater market shares, there seems to be almost no capacity for the depressive position and its anxieties. As the concern for good objects of the inner or outer world is missing, the predominant destructiveness and aggression seem to leave no space for the experience of guilt, the desire for love, mourning or reparation typical of the depressive position. The external world and reality thus become shaped and reduced by internal psychotic anxieties and their respective defence mechanisms.

Lawrence describes psychosis in general as “the process whereby humans defend themselves from understanding the meaning and significance of reality, because they regard such knowing as painful. To do this, they use aspects of their mental functioning to destroy, in various degrees, the very process of thinking that would put them in touch with reality” (2000: 4f). The psychotic organization thus can be understood as a social system (or subsystem), which induces psychotic reactions in its role holders either temporarily or permanently. To the extent that role holders in organizations are unconsciously challenged to mobilize their psychotic parts more than they would do in other contexts and lose the capacity for thinking, they tend to reduce organizational reality to what appears to be obvious – the ‘data’ related to their predominant unconscious phantasies.

Psychotic Organization and Social Organizations

In my original paper on the psychotic organization (Sievers, 1999b), I indicated the usefulness of this concept by applying it to various systemic contexts: *intraorganizational*, *interorganizational*, and *global* dynamics. Here I would like to outline some more recent attempts at understanding the world of organizations through the lens of the psychotic organization: (1) an international German automobile company, (2) the Anglo-American pension fund systems, and (3) an Austrian political party. The frame of this paper, however, provides only space for some sketches.

An international German automobile company: Competition as war

The idea that competition within and between enterprises can be perceived as a psychotic dynamic of war became strikingly obvious to me when I was doing Organizational Role Analysis (Newton, Long & Sievers, 2006) with some role holders at Volkswagen a few years ago. A few interesting episodes on the occasion of visiting the main plant at Wolfsburg led me to some deeper research on the socio-history of this company (Sievers, 2000).

When I entered the company's gate as a visitor, I felt I was somehow being treated by the security staff as an unfriendly intruder. My host interceded, making the spontaneous remark that the people at the entrance still represented the spirit of the SS (the '*Schutz-Staffel*', i.e., the 'protective squadron'), who more than half a century before controlled the plant's boundaries with the outer world (Nelson, 1966: 72). Later, in her office, a garden gnome carefully poised on her desk with a dagger in its back brought us back to the company's early history and the obviously still virulent dynamics of warfare. My host told me that installations apparently used for torture were recently found in the basement of an old building not far from where we sat. They had been used to destroy the thoughts and identities of forced labor during World War II (Amati, 1987). On my next visit to the plant, her office had been temporarily moved into one of the huts in which foreign workers employed as forced labor were said to have lived.

These episodes confronted me almost inescapably with the megalomaniac part of the company's founding myth (McWhinney & Batista, 1988), which was itself an expression of the Nazi ideology. The encounter made me deeply aware of what might actually be hidden behind the warfare metaphor so often used in organizational practice and theory. It soon became obvious to me that this particular company is a prominent and probably unique example of the inter-relatedness of competition and war. The company has been heavily involved for decades in a war for dominance of the global automobile market. This corporation provides convincing evidence that its original support for a megalomaniac military mobilization still has an effect on the micro-politics of the corporation and its market activities to this day.

Unlike countless other German corporations, which also cooperated with the Nazi Regime and profited during World War II, Volkswagen was explicitly a 'wanted child' of the Third Reich, and of Hitler himself. The firm, founded in 1938, during the heyday of the Third Reich (Shirer, 1961: 258), explicitly served Hitler's grandiosity. The Volkswagen, 'the beetle' as it came to be known soon after the War, was Hitler's 'best work' and his 'favourite thought'. The project was from its very beginning considered to be unparalleled 'in the history of mankind' and was not only intended to surpass Ford's plants in Michigan (Nelson, 1966: 81, 98, 104), but to soon command leadership in the world's markets (Roth, 1990: 82).

My experience and my subsequent inquiry led me to question the predominant conviction that war is not considered part of the business world, organizations or the world built around them. According to this understanding, the economy of war and warfare exclusively refers to the gains derived from the production of war equipment, the maintenance of military forces (both in times of war and peace), and the repair work and reconstruction necessary after battle is done. The alleged absence of bloodshed or

casualties in business organizations invites us to assume that the frequent reference made to war is merely metaphorical. In organization or management theory it is seldom acknowledged that extreme violence, sadism, pain and loss – experiences and dynamics characteristic of every war – are predominant in the contemporary business world. In theory and practice alike, there does not seem to be too much awareness that organizational role holders often “are brimming with terrible stories, details and images” (Krantz, 2006: 15).

The Volkswagen case led me to hypothesize that similar war dynamics are not only found throughout the automobile industry but in many, if not most, corporations in their desperate longing to gain or maintain a predominant role as global players.

To the extent that organizations – enterprises and non-profit organizations alike – tend to reduce their own gains and losses as well as those of their competitors to mere figures of monetary accounting, they ignore the emotional experience of being a winner or a loser on the world markets. As the experience of loss, in particular, cannot be grasped, it cannot be acknowledged and thus cannot be mourned. Instead, the ignored feelings of failure, dismay or annihilation are psychotically turned into a defeat caused by ‘others’. The inherent aggression and destructiveness via rationalization, downsizing or increased marketing activities are directed ‘outside’ either towards part of the workforce or to competitors.

The Anglo-American pension fund systems

My attempt at understanding the psychotic dynamics of the global economy drew my attention to the impact of the financial services revolution on the pension fund systems (Sievers, 2003). My point of departure for this research has been the present Anglo-American ‘private’ pension funds system, which is based on totally different images of man, society, and social relatedness than are the traditional social security systems and retirement schemes characteristic of welfare states in many European countries.

This led me to the *working hypothesis* that the Anglo-American pension fund system, because of its inherent defences against persecutory and depressive anxieties, is based on psychotic dynamics. For participants in these systems, the expected pension after retirement is seen to protect one from a ‘miserable’ way of life, from deprivation, and annihilation and feelings of dependency, gratitude, love, and guilt. As people increasingly strive for an affluent retirement, commoditized money nurtures the illusion that the more money one accumulates the more certain death will be kept at bay.

The psychotic dynamic inherent in the pension funds system is, however, not limited to those who invest in the funds, but finds further expression in the organizations that manage the funds and their respective role holders. Loaded with their customers’ expectations and anxieties about adequate pensions after retirement, pension fund organizations tend to maintain and spread a globalized collusion of psychotic thinking. Thus, money paid into a pension scheme serves – in addition to its ‘pecuniary’ function – as a ‘conductor’ of psychotic anxieties. As a consequence, pension funds have become the main players in a kind of global marshalling yard, where underlying anxieties are transferred and shifted in various ways.

Initiated by the denial of death and the desperate longing for immortality on the side of future pensioners, the inherent global psychotic dynamic is turned into destructiveness that tends to deny the mortality of those working in enterprises – management and workers alike – by reducing enterprises via shareholder value optimisation into mere monetary entities. The world is thus reduced psychotically to its monetary value. All that counts is money and money makes the world go round.

An Austrian political party

While the two previous examples refer to the world of business and enterprises, this last one is taken from a working experience with a political party. Some time ago, I was working in a Social Dreaming Workshop⁶ with a group of Austrian Social Democrats, who were local council members in one of the federal states (Sievers, 2006b). Many of the dreams shared during the Social Dreaming Matrix (Lawrence, 1998: 2005) referred to the fact that participants felt severely betrayed by their political party.

I was surprised to learn that the party had not only changed its name from *Socialist Party of Austria* to *Social Democratic Party of Austria* a few years before, but it had also given up most of its original rhetoric and language – and, one could assume, part of its original mission. Whereas in 1978 it was stated: “we *Socialists* are *fighting* for man’s freedom and dignity, ... against all suppression and exploitation through political despotism and private economic or state-capitalist power” (Sozialistische Partei Österreichs, 1978: 1; my emphasis), the 1998 document emphasised that *Social Democrats* “are *obliged* to honour the ideal of a humane, democratic and just society. ... This ideal of a humane society is the aim whose realization we gradually hope to accomplish by democratic competition with other political concepts” (SPÖ-Bundesgeschäftsstelle, 1998: 3; my emphasis).

The transition from a party for the workers to one “*for all working people*” (*ibid.*: 4) is consistent with the fact that even though the *Socialists* had been “the leading power of societal change in Austria” for more than a century (Sozialistische Partei Österreichs, 1978: 45), by 1998 the *Social Democrats* took credit for having achieved the great progress of previous years.

In the first Matrix, one participant shared a dream in which he had been at a political event, which included a winning ceremony of a lottery. The first prize had been an inflatable car. The associations related to this dream were largely concerned with the question of whether the results of their political work and election campaigns were

6 *Social Dreaming* “is a discipline for discovering the social meaning and significance of dreams through sharing them with each other’s. This is done by the deliberate and sustained method of free association and amplification through the Social Dreaming Matrix. ... From the inception of Social Dreaming the systemic nature of dreaming was recognized and affirmed. Not only do dreamers dream from their ecological niche but also they dream themes that are systemically related. Social Dreaming is also a uniquely experiential discipline, which frees participants from their personal defences that constrain free-thinking and interaction in ordinary social situations. Social Dreaming can be used in organizational systems, professional communities, and consumer, focus and special interest groups” (Social Dreaming Institute). Social Dreaming was founded by W. Gordon Lawrence in 1982.

ultimately only hot air in a gigantic balloon. Unlike actual lotteries in Austria, the first prize in this dream was not even a *real* car. *'We stay permanently onstage but have forgotten the text'* is the association of another participant. *'Would it not be much more appropriate to stick a needle to the balloon (the first-prize car) or pull out the stopper to let the air out?'* Party events are experienced as overblown and mere cabaret. One of the participants questioned cynically what they represent on the stage. *'Scene shifters, lighting technicians – we are no leading lights, we don't play a role'* was the response of one of his colleagues.

Another dream shared by the same participant takes place in the institute where he is employed. The director has introduced a procedure by which all events are to be evaluated. He presents and vehemently defends this quality control procedure, for which he is made responsible, at a board meeting – despite the fact that he himself cannot identify with it. *'My heart is not in this work, but it has to be done. It is not my dearest wish to accomplish this task'*. Another participant comments that there is not too much difference between the dream and reality.

To what extent these questions about the future of Social Democracy are both subliminal and, at the same time, paralysing for the everyday life of these participants and connected to the party's current identity crisis becomes evident in the following associations during the first Matrix: *'If what we have accomplished with Social Democracy at present actually is a dream, then we have to fight against this dream. That is a gigantic story.'* *'...When we or the generation before us still had a vision that was worth fighting for Today it is only a matter of winning elections!'* Their party's pursuit of a policy of moderation in order to gain the centre and thus the majority of votes made them suspicious and full of anger and rage. As one participant expressed it: *'We should fight against our corrupt party, a system that exists. I have lost the dream, the vision of what Social Democracy embodies. There is nothing more worth fighting for. What is important has already been accomplished; we don't have to fight for it'*. While the disappointment of the participants was at first experienced as betrayal and expressed as an accusation toward their party leaders in a cynical way, they later were able to realize that they were not only the betrayed victims but were also playing an active role in the betrayal of the idea of socialism.

Cynicism can be understood as “an attitude that has already done with the experience of betrayal and is just getting to immunize itself against further injuries of this kind” (Teichert, 1990: 100). As such, cynicism can be seen as a psychotic attempt to protect one against the experience of paranoid-schizoid anxieties related to betrayal. Since before the First World War (if not from its very beginning in the nineteenth century), Social Democracy – at least in Germany and in Austria – has been caught in a vicious circle of cynicism and betrayal (Sievers, 2006a). The contemptuous and often cynical reproach from the far left communists and socialists that Social Democracy has betrayed the workers has often enough been repudiated by Social Democrats in no less a cynical manner. Perhaps there is some truth in what one member of the Social Dreaming Matrix stated, i.e. that *'there is nothing more worth fighting for'*. Perhaps Social Democracy has either fulfilled its mission or its mission is actually unfulfillable due to its inherent idealism and utopia. Be it as it may, it seems that neither position

could be held by Social Democrats from the depressive position in a mature sense because it would force them to confront their own (self-)betrayal and cynicism.

Conclusion

These three examples illustrate that focusing on unconscious psychotic dynamics in organizations throws a fresh light on research and theory and thus extends the frame of what might be regarded as 'reality'. Each of these examples certainly could be read from different theoretical perspectives, thus generating separate interpretations and valuable insights.

My chosen lens emphasizes the way that unconscious dynamics of the individual and the organization are interrelated, which has led me to offer a new understanding of organizational 'madness'. By regarding psychotic organizational dynamics as socially induced – and thus part of 'normal organizations' – the 'madness of normality' can be thought of as a social fact instead of an objective one. The socio-analytic perspective allows organizational role holders access to their own experience and encourages them to take it seriously as a source for new thoughts and thinking. One of the apparent weaknesses of this perspective lies in the 'nature of the beast', so to say, i.e. the quest for reflection and understanding of what is beyond (or underneath) the obvious is limited by the fact that "humankind cannot bear very much reality" (T. S. Eliot, 1974). This is partly due to the fact that role holders in organizations often seem to unconsciously foster a hatred of thinking, which reduces reality to what is consciously known and knowable. Though we tend to deny our psychotic anxieties we "unconsciously come to bring into being organizations which are designed to keep them at bay" (Lawrence, 1995: 17).

Though the notion of the psychotic organization focuses on its psychotic dynamics, it has to be emphasized that the psychotic parts of an organization usually co-exist with its non-psychotic parts. Analogous to Bion's (1957) differentiation of psychotic and non-psychotic parts of the *personality*, organizational dynamics can be of a psychotic and non-psychotic nature. Especially at a time when capitalism and the reification of money predominate, it is most likely for every organization – enterprises, social and educational services alike – that the increasing problem of scarce resources seriously threatens the fundamental values and future prospects of many organizations. Organizational role holders often react by extreme warfare (as in competition) or by retreat and cynicism. More often than not this fosters totalitarian thinking and the tendency to reduce organizational reality to what can easily be held accountable and can thus be legitimized by numbers. Acknowledgment by management of the psychotic dynamic may open up an awareness of and a capacity for mobilizing non-psychotic parts on the side of those role holders who have a critical impact on its fate and future.

In face of the increasingly predominant tendency toward reification of organizations, the concept of the psychotic organization offers important insights into the unconscious construction and one-sidedness of the underlying thinking. A deconstruction of the thinking in organizations, which allows both insight into the social constructiveness of

the underlying psychodynamic and its reflection may extend and enforce possibilities for non-psychotic thinking in organizations and thus a new construction of what is supposed to be regarded as 'organizational reality'.

references

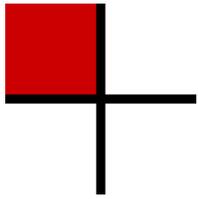
- Amati, S. (1987) 'Some thoughts on torture', *Free Associations*, 8: 94-114.
- Armstrong, D. (1997) 'The Institution-in-the-mind': Reflections on the relation of psychoanalysis to work with institutions', *Free Associations*, 7(41): 1-14.
- Armstrong, D. (2005) *Organization in the mind: Psychoanalysis, group relations and organizational consultancy*. London: Karnac.
- Bain, A. (1999) 'On Socio-Analysis', *Socio-Analysis*, 1(1): 1-17.
- Bion, W. R. (1946) 'Leaderless group project', *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 10: 77-81.
- Bion, W. R. (1948a) 'Psychiatry in a time of crisis', *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 21.
- Bion, W. R. (1948b) 'Experiences in groups', *Human Relations*, 1-4, 1948-1951.
- Bion, W. R. (1957) 'Differentiation of the psychotic from the non-psychotic personalities', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 38: 266-275.
- Bion, W. R. (1961) *Experiences in groups*, London: Tavistock.
- Blackwell, D. (2006) 'Holding, Containing and Bearing Witness: The Problem of Helpfulness in Encounters with Torture Survivors' [http://www.torturecare.org.uk/UserFiles/File/publications/Black_2.rtf], accessed 21/05/2006.
- Eisold, K. (1997) 'Psychoanalysis today: Implications for organizational applications', *Free Associations*, 6(2): 174-191.
- Elieli, R. (1994) 'Psychoanalytic thinking and organizations', *Psychiatry*, 57: 78-91.
- Eliot, T. S. (1974) *Murder in the cathedral*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Erlich, S. (1998) 'The search for the subject and the psychoanalytic study of organizations', Paper presented at the 1998 Symposium, *International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations*, Jerusalem [<http://www.sba.oakland.edu/isps/html/1998/Erlich>].
- Fornari, F. (1966/1975) *The psychoanalysis of war*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Gabriel, Y. (1999) *Organizations in depth: The psychoanalysis of organizations*. London: Sage.
- Harrison, T. (2000) *Bion, Rickman, Foulkes and the Northfield Experiments: Advancing on a different front*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Harrison, T. & D. Clarke (1992) 'The Northfield Experiments', *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 160: 698-708.
- Hinshelwood, R. D. (1991) *A dictionary of Kleinian thought*. London: Free Association Books.
- Hutton, J., J. Bazalgette & B. Reed (1997) 'Organisation-in-the-mind: A tool for leadership and management of institutions', in J. Neumann, K. Kellner & A. Dawson-Shepherd (eds.) *Developing organizational consultancy*. London: Routledge, 113-126.
- Jacobson, E. (1959) 'Depersonalization', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 7: 581-610.
- Jaques, E. (1953) 'On the dynamics of social structure', *Human Relations*, 6: 3-24.
- Jaques, E. (1955) 'Social systems as a defence against persecutory and depressive anxiety', in M. Klein, P. Heimann & R. Money-Kyrle (eds.) *New directions in psycho-analysis: The significance of infant conflicts in the patterns of adult behaviour*. London: Tavistock, 478-498.
- Klein, M. (1952a) 'Some theoretical conclusions regarding the emotional life of the infant', in M. Klein, P. Heimann, S. Isaacs & J. Riviere (eds.) *Developments in psycho-analysis*. London: Hogarth, 198-236.
- Klein, M. (1952b) 'On observing the behaviour of young infants', in M. Klein, P. Heimann, S. Isaacs & J. Riviere (eds.) *Developments in psycho-analysis*. London: Hogarth, 237-270.
- Klein, M. (1959) 'Our adult world and its roots in infancy', *Human Relations*, 12: 291-303.

- Knights, D. & D. McCabe (1997) 'Innovate to subjugate: The self-reconstituting manager and the reconstitution of employees in a motor manufacturing company', in Conference proceedings *Organizing in a multi voiced world*, Leuven, June 4-6.
- Krantz, J. (2006) 'Eric Miller memorial lecture', Unpublished manuscript, 3/16/2006.
- Lawrence, W. G. (1995) 'The seductiveness of totalitarian states-of-mind', *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 7(October): 11-22.
- Lawrence, W. G. (1998) "'Won from the void and formless infinite": Experiences of social dreaming', in *Social Dreaming @ Work*. London: Karnac, 9-41.
- Lawrence, W. G. (1999) 'Centring on the Sphinx for the psychoanalytic study of organizations', *Socio-Analysis*, 1(2): 99-126.
- Lawrence, W. G. (2000) 'Thinking refracted', in *Tongued with fire: Groups in experience*. London: Karnac, 1-30.
- Lawrence, W. G. (2005) *Introduction to Social Dreaming. Transforming Thinking*. London: Karnac.
- Long, S. (1999) 'Who am I at work? An exploration of work identifications and identity', *Socio-Analysis*, 1: 48-64.
- Main, T. (1946) 'The hospital as a therapeutic institution', *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 10: 66-70.
- McWhinney, W. & J. Batista (1988) 'How remythologizing can revitalize organisations', *Organisational Dynamics*, 17(2): 46-58.
- Meltzer, D. (1968) 'Terror, persecution, and dread', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 49: 396-400.
- Melville, H. (1855/1969) 'Benito Cereno', in W. Berthoff (ed.) *Great short works of Herman Melville*. New York: Harper & Row, 238-315.
- Menzies, I. (1960) 'A case-study in the functioning of social systems as a defence against anxiety: A report on a study of the nursing service of a general hospital', *Human Relations*, 13(2): 95-121.
- Money-Kyrle, R. (1969) 'On the fear of insanity' in (1978) *The collected papers of Roger Money-Kyrle*. Perth: Clunie, 434-441.
- Morgan, G. (1986) *Images of organization*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Nelson, W. H. (1966) *Die Volkswagen-Story. Biographie eines Autos*. München: R. Pieper; trans. as (1967) *Small Wonder. The Amazing Story of the Volkswagen*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.
- Neumann, J. & L. Hirschhorn (eds.) (1999) 'Towards the integration of the social sciences', *Human Relations*, 52(6) (Special Issue).
- Newton, J., S. Long & B. Sievers (eds.) (2006) *Coaching-in-depth: The Organizational Role Analysis approach*. London: Karnac.
- O'Shaughnessy, E. (1981) 'A clinical study of a defensive organization', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 62: 359-369.
- O'Shaughnessy, E. (1992) 'Psychosis: Not thinking in a bizarre world', in R. Anderson (ed.) *Clinical lectures on Klein and Bion*, London: Tavistock/Routledge, 89-101.
- Poe, E. A. (1845/1938a) 'The system of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether', in *The complete tales and poems of Edgar Allan Poe*. New York: Modern Library, 307-321.
- Roth, K. H. (1990) 'Nazismus gleich Fordismus? Die deutsche Autoindustrie in den dreißiger Jahren', *Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts*, 5(4): 82-91.
- Rycroft, C. (1968/1995) *A critical dictionary of psychoanalysis*. London: Penguin.
- Segal, H. (1956) 'Depression in the schizophrenic', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 37: 339-343.
- Shirer, W. L. (1961/1981) *Aufstieg und Fall des Dritten Reiches*. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch; trans. as (1981) *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*, New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Sievers, B. (1999a) 'Accounting for the caprices of madness: Narrative fiction as a means of organizational transcendence', in R. Goodman (ed.) *Modern organizations and emerging conundrums: Exploring the postindustrial subculture of the third millennium*, Lanham: Lexington Books, 126-142.

- Sievers, B. (1999b) 'Psychotic organization as a metaphoric frame for the socio-analysis of organizational and interorganizational dynamics', *Administration & Society*, 31(5): 588-615.
- Sievers, B. (2000) 'Competition as war: Towards a socio-analysis of war in and among corporations', *Socio-Analysis*, 2(1): 1-27.
- Sievers, B. (2003) 'Your money or your life? Psychotic implications of the pension fund system: Towards a socio-analysis of the financial services revolution', *Human Relations*, 56(2): 187-210.
- Sievers, B. (2006a): 'It is new, and it has to be done!': Socio-analytic thoughts on betrayal and cynicism in organizational transformation', *Culture & Organization*, (forthcoming).
- Sievers, B. (2006b): "'There's nothing more worth fighting for". Social Dreaming with Social Democrats in Austria', in W. Gordon Lawrence (ed.) *Case studies in Social Dreaming*. London: Karnac (forthcoming).
- Social Dreaming Institute 'What is Social Dreaming?' [<http://www.socialdreaming.org>].
- Sozialistische Partei Österreichs (ed.) (1978) *Das neue Parteiprogramm der SPÖ*. Wien: Zentralsekretariat.
- SPÖ-Bundesgeschäftsstelle (ed.) (1998) *SPÖ – Das Grundsatzprogramm*. Wien.
- Steiner, J. (1979) 'The border between the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position in the borderline patient', *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 52: 385-391.
- Steiner, J. (1982) 'Perverse relationships between parts of the self: A clinical illustration', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 62: 241-252.
- Steiner, J. (1987) 'Interplay between pathological organisation and the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 68: 69-80.
- Steiner, J. (1990) 'Pathological organisations as obstacles to mourning', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 71: 87-94.
- Steiner, J. (1993) *Psychic retreats. Pathological organization in psychotic, neurotic and borderline patients*. London: Routledge.
- Steingard, D. & D. Fitzgibbons (1993) 'A postmodern deconstruction of total quality management (TQM)', *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 6(5): 27-42.
- Tarnopolsky, A., P. Chesterman & A. Parshall (1995) 'What is psychosis?', *Free Associations*, 5(4): 536-566.
- Teichert, W. (1990) *Jeder ist Judas: Der unvermeidliche Verrat*. Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag.
- Willmott, H. (1993) 'Strength is ignorance: Slavery is freedom: Managing culture in modern organizations', *Journal of Management Studies*, 30: 515-553.
- Winnicott, D. (1949) 'Hate in the counter-transference', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 30: 69-74.
- Young, R. (1994) *Mental space*. London: Process Press.
- Young, R. (2006) 'Group Relations: An Introduction' [<http://human-nature.com/group/chap10.html>], accessed 21/05/2006.

the author

Dr. Burkard Sievers is Professor of Organizational Development in the Department of Economics, Management and Social Sciences at Bergische Universität Wuppertal in Germany, where he teaches and writes on management and organization theory from a psychoanalytic perspective and an action research approach. He received his Dr. Soz. Wiss. from the University of Bielefeld in 1972 and has held visiting appointments at various universities abroad. Dr. Sievers is co-editor of *Freie Assoziation – Zeitschrift für das Unbewusste in Organisation und Kultur*. He was awarded the 1995 International Award for Participation from the HBK-Spaarbank in Antwerp (Belgium) for his book *Work, Death, and Life Itself. Essays on Management and Organization* (de Gruyter, 1994). He is President of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations for the period 2005-2007 and co-director of 'Organizations in Depth', an International Professional Development Program held in Coesfeld/Cologne, Germany. Address: Aue 30, 42857 Remscheid, Germany. E-mail: sievers@wiwi.uni-wuppertal.de



The Hours: A Gaze, a Kiss and the Lapse between them. An Eventalization*

Asmund W. Born, Christian Frankel and Niels Thyge Thygesen

abstract

In this article we make an event of a movie. Our ambition is to elaborate on what emerges when we observe, and our purpose is to use a film to reflect upon the practical implications of Foucauldian eventalization. What we offer is an experiment with eventalization. Instead of a philosophical and conceptual debate, we suggest an experiment, where we walk the method and create a singularity, an existence that is neither *the* film nor *us*, but an enriching in-between, from where we may reflect upon eventalization as a method. In this eventalization, we use time as a tool of observation, which grants the freedom of confronting different conceptualizations of time with the same 'epistemic object'. The specific object eventalized is *The Hours* (USA, 2002), but it could have been any movie. However, as the film *The Hours* invites to an observation through the concept of time, the experiment becomes self-referentially entangled from the very outset. Three different time perspectives are applied; the Luhmannian concept of temporal modalities, the Ricoeurian concept of mimesis, and a hybrid version of Bergsonian and Deleuzian notions of intense time. Through time modalities planning is established as the vehicle of our expectations, while the mimetic configurations show how subject positions are folded into a creative, a reflexive, and an actualizing figuration. Finally, 'intensive' time focuses on the folding of expression and content in the orthogonal inclusion of the viewer. Reflecting on eventalization as cognitive practice, we argue that in eventalization the invitation is the point. Not as a superficial gesture, but as a committed offer, at the same time transparent and closing around itself, because only under these conditions will eventalization remain worthy of eventalizations yet to come.

In Medias Res

'Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.' So runs a pivotal sentence in the film *The Hours*,¹ a sentence rife with time, with time ahead, with time now, with time before. With a single sentence we are *in medias res*: in Edwardian England in the 1920s, when the book is written; in optimistic and utopian America in the 1950s, when

* The authors want to thank Steven Sonsino, Jane Sturges and Thomas Basbøll for comments on previous versions of the article. Thomas Basbøll has also helped with our translation of Hermann Hesse's 'Beim Schlafengehen'.

1 *The Hours* (USA 2002), directed by Stephen Daldry, based on a novel by Michael Cunningham. This article is eventalizing the meeting between the film and us, thus there are no intentions involving interpretation neither of Cunningham's novel nor of Virginia Woolf's.

the book is read; and finally in late modern New York in the new millennium, when the book is enacted.

‘Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself,’ is the opening sentence of the book that Virginia Woolf is writing in *The Hours*. It does not open with ‘Call me Ishmael’, which is the first sentence of Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*, where the reader is welcomed and invited directly into the now and the moment of actualisation. Instead, ‘Mrs. Dalloway said she would...’, and the reader is invited to expect and to observe, in past tense and even unseen.

‘Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself,’ Laura Brown reads in Woolf’s book as the film cuts to her suburban home in the fifties, where she lies in bed alone, and we are immediately aware that Laura is an observer who at one and the same time shares our fate and is an element in the film’s narrative. Laura is an observer of a trace from a past, a time before, but also an audience, like us, crossing ages and generations through the book and the sentence.

‘Sally, I think I will buy the flowers myself.’ The sentence finally arrives in the present tense and we know that we have met Mrs. Dalloway herself and in person, here in the person of the publisher Clarissa Vaughan, who utters the sentence in New York in 2001 before she leaves her apartment for the florist, then leaves the florist for the apartment of the writer, Richard Brown. This is the Richard Brown who has given Clarissa Vaughan the nickname ‘Mrs. Dalloway’ as a mark left by a shared past, a passing remark that ‘stuck’, and as a promise of what we can expect in the film’s future, the content of the time to come.

The sentence is symptomatic of a film in which time is *modalized* as planning, is *compressed* into a web of narratives, and yet constructed in moments of *pure intensity*.

The event and the gaze

‘Symptomatic of a film in which time is ...’ as if it is the true essence of the film, as if there is a true essence to be found, when what there is, seems to be a flickering of sound and light, of visions and words in ever-changing figurations of appearing and disappearing, ‘an anonymous murmur’. By stating the essence we have short-circuited the question to be asked before we even ask it through the Cartesian distinction between subject and object. Our ambition, however, is not to state what the film is or is not, but to elaborate on what emerges when we observe. Among the flickering stream of films we want to reflect upon, what happens, when we single a film out as an event and start discussing it, neither in order to make a film review nor to engage with cinema as art form in the Deleuzian sense (Deleuze, 2005a, 2005b).

Our purpose is to use the film to reflect upon the practical implications of Foucauldian eventalization. In the famous interview, ‘Questions of Method’ (2000), Foucault offers a sparse outline of eventalization as an epistemic method, emphasizing its ability to destabilize what seems self-evident while simultaneously opening to new and rich spaces of insight. With eventalization, what is to be observed is created as a singularity, as something distinct from the anonymity of the murmur, something in itself and for itself. The very singularity of the observed is the absolute precondition for its

multiplicity. Only by stating singularity can we sustain a demand of reality in our observation, while simultaneously accepting its heterogeneous and multiple quality.

What we offer here is an experiment with eventalization. Instead of a philosophical and conceptual debate, we suggest an experiment, where we walk the method and create a singularity, an existence that is neither *the* film nor *us*, but an enriching in-between, from where we may reflect upon eventalization as a method. As an experiment it is so self-referentially entangled from the very outset, that it can nothing but implode. This is due to the fact that the film invites an observation through the concept of time, and time is of course the hidden machinery in any *eventalization*.

And that is the real content of the claim that the film is about time. In the interaction between the film and us, time came up as a ‘function of existence’ in a double sense. First, it singularized the film as a film about time, and not only a film full of ‘time-’ and ‘movement-images’. Second, ‘time’ opened to a rich world of conceptualizations, where different concepts of time might interact with the singularity, thereby elucidating its multiplicity. Again our sentence about the film is misleading. It is not a film in which time is modalized, compressed or rendered as pure intensity. They are the three conceptual frames of Luhmann, Ricoeur and Bergson/Deleuze that operates on the one side in our eventalization, while *The Hours* is the other, the object of eventalization, and from there we hope to gain a non-trivial insight. And of course, what eventalization fears most of all is to be trivial. In the scene where Clarissa Vaughan talks about what a specific look from Richard does to her, she says that it makes her feel trivial, and being trivial is what Clarissa is most afraid of. Being trivial means existence without individuality. Something indistinguishable that no one can see. For a creator of plans and life, indistinguishability is death. But even for the non-trivial, nothing exists outside the event, where the gaze is a necessity as well as a possibility, and with choice of necessity and possibility all other compossible worlds die. Thus, there is no eventalization and henceforth new singularity, be it trivial or not, without death.

Leonard: ‘And who will die? Tell me.’

Virginia: ‘The poet will die. The visionary.’

Time as Modality

‘Mrs Dalloway said ...’ and the sentence drags a past of possibilities with it, alluding to agreements previously made. Before the ‘now’ of the sentence these agreements reached out towards a ‘future present’ still ahead. The definite article even reaches out towards a ‘future future’, the time of the purpose. However, taken at face value the sentence imparts what Mrs. Dalloway will do in the near future – she will be buying flowers, and the observer will be one step behind her.

On the surface the film is rife with temporal modalities distinguishing between ‘past’ and ‘future’, in between which the ‘now’ is omnipresent and yet not accessible, as the ‘now’ is nothing but the actualised difference between past and future (Luhmann, 1982a, 1982b; Moe, 2001). Past and future, however, are minimalist semantic figures suffused with complex forms such as ‘future futures’ or ‘past presents’, where the

distinction is folded into highly reflexive forms. The alleged 'past presents' might even be modalized according to how 'before' was distinguished from 'after' at a given time in the past (Luhmann, 1982a: 272). And with slight changes of vocabulary the modalities are connected to causality. 'Before' isn't just 'before' the 'now', but is typically observed as a specific past, which is to say, as a past in a longer chain of causally linked 'past presents' that leads up the past, as it is observed in the present. In the same vein, we can talk of 'present futures', which is to say, of a horizon of futures observed from our actual present, and then 'after' might typically be observed as a 'future present' which is the causal result of present choices. And this future present might even be modalized into future futures, where possible future choices reside (Luhmann, 1982b: 308).

Modalities are what meets the eventalizing eye in *The Hours*, not as a hidden structure, but as living semantics, and observed through the modalities the world appears and makes sense as the result of proactive plans and reactive decisions. Not necessarily in the sense that everything happened as planned or not, but in the sense that they offering horizons of meanings to even minor events as 'coming too late or too early', i.e. life as deviations from a plan.

Plans and futures

'The plan' is fundamentally how time is established in *The Hours*. The book, *Mrs. Dalloway*, unfolds in a single day, from morning to evening, and it is about the planning of a party. This means that the 'present future' of the whole day emerges as plans for 'future present'. This kind of 'present future' is also at work in the film's story about Clarissa Vaughan. Who is planning a party for the poet, Richard Brown? All the day's errands are subsumed under this goal, set by the planner.

The plan, meanwhile, does not just impose itself on the two narratives about Mrs. Dalloway but also in the narrative about Virginia Woolf, who writes. While she is the master planner of her stories, she finds that her own life, too, is controlled by plans. Her husband, Leonard Woolf, has planned a small town life for her in order to stabilize her life and keep her sane and Leonard insists on their obligation towards the plan on every programmed level. Virginia Woolf, despite the fact that she is, it is said, afraid of the servants, also makes plans for them, sending one of them to London to fetch ginger for her guests, who according to the plan will arrive later in the day. Thus, plans are weaved into the very texture of Virginia Woolf's life, organizing her spaces of action as well as reaction.

Plans also serve as the axis of the story of Laura Brown. Here it is Laura Brown's husband who has made the plan. Already as a soldier in the Pacific, he planned to form a family with Laura, the life she now leads. They have one child (Ritchie) and are expecting another. Both are children that one cannot imagine are anything but planned.

What these plans have in common is that the present future installs intentionality, or an objective, in relation to which actions are then seen and assessed. Once the distinction between the 'present future' and the goal in a 'future present' has been established, a metrical time is also established, a temporal space, a lapse to be filled in a particular way in order to arrive at the terminus. When an objective like a party is determined, the

many preparations, for example, are assessed already in terms of the 'future present' that the party will hopefully constitute. In other words, the party comes to constitute an imagined future from which the present is observed and corrected. Planning permeates the film, but Leonard Woolf and Dan Brown's plans for their wives are vague and mainly oriented towards keeping the 'future present' alive as a 'present future'. There are no milestones by which to judge whether the plans have been carried through to their conclusions. The plan becomes all encompassing for Virginia Woolf and Laura Brown because it can reach its conclusion only when death parts them with their planners, or by the negation or termination of the very plan. The modalities create a prison and imbue the eventalization with an air of claustrophobia.

Plans and pasts

The self-referentiality of plans is by no means diminished by the way in which the past is brought into the story. The goal-directedness of the plans implies that the past, both as present past and past present, is of only secondary importance in the film. The past is rendered actual, or present, in the light of planning, i.e., in relation to future goals. By these means the past becomes a 'future past' aligning the present with pasts in a long line, seen from the imagined future. Leonard Woolf, for example, tries to restrain Virginia in her flight from Richmond by saying, 'You have a history'. Here Virginia's past is not primarily interesting in relation to the present (they stand at the platform at the station) but in relation to the planned future. The past becomes an argument against fleeing back to London, against leaving the stability of the suburbs. The past is invoked as a brake.

Laura Brown also has a past, which is described by her husband. He describes how he wanted to bring her 'to a house, to a life, pretty much like this.' Dan Brown says all this with Laura and Ritchie as his audience and along the way he is able to refer to the house they are living in and the life they are leading, as a realisation of his plan. The past appears here as a past in which the plan that is currently being executed was made. In this way the plan is articulated as a success, enhancing the importance of the plan as well as the present, which also becomes past in the light of the future. No matter whether the past appears as a brake or as enhancer, it contributes to the claustrophobic atmosphere, where the past is invoked to keep the plan in place. In this perspective pasts, futures and plans are each others constituents, and even if deviations from the plans might happen, the plan is fundamentally immunized to questions from the past.

In the story about Clarissa Vaughan, the past appears to contain an enormous energy to be released in the planning of the party, so that the party to a great extent marks the end of the past. The present is about a past life that Richard has set down in a book. It contains recognizable nicknames, addresses and remembered events through which the past is solidified into reality, and this past even becomes a question of ownership when Clarissa claims that it was Louis that was the love of Richard's life, not her. An imagined and authored past is actualised and finalized, and that constitutes a living, actualised reality in which new questions are put to the relation between past and present. The florist connects the past to the present when she asks whether Richard's book is about Clarissa, whereas Clarissa's daughter denotes the significance of the past when she calls her mother's friend a ghost.

Plans and ruptures

The plans constitute a web of diverse logics and this is evident in all those episodes that appear as breaks with expectations. These ruptures are possible solely because there are plans to be broken with, and they occur in all three subplots. In the story of Virginia Woolf, the sister arrives early and complicate Virginia's rigorously planned afternoon, which had been intended to give the guests a warm welcome. Virginia Woolf also arrives too early for the train she intends to take to London, and precisely because of that she never makes it onto that train. Her husband catches up with her and prevents the journey. In the story of Virginia Woolf these ruptures have the added dimension of being intricately bound up with her trade. As a writer, she is planning the very space of possible ruptures as a central dramatic construct, and that is copiously shown, when she is considering the question of who will die in the novel. Virginia Woolf is sitting still on a bench, in front of a backdrop of people hurrying past, the event of planning against the movement of plans being executed.

Here as elsewhere the story of Laura Brown frames the issue pointedly. Her husband is always and compulsively anticipating situations. This is not just the case when he, as mentioned, plans out his life with Laura from his cot on some island in the Pacific, but also when he in their shared existence does what she is expected to do. He gets up early on his own birthday and buys flowers for himself, flowers that she should have bought for him. The claustrophobic enclosing is executed in the slightest anticipatory realisation of the planned.

And finally, the ultimate collapse of plans into an irrevocable present. Richard's old friend, Louis, arrives too early at Clarissa's, opening a space for reflections over the past in the middle of her hectic preparations. During their conversation Clarissa suddenly collapses, as the fragile and morbid retrospective justification of the plan surfaces. Shortly after, Clarissa arrives too early in the afternoon to pick up the writer, Richard Brown, in order to take him to his prize ceremony. She thereby interferes with Richard's suicide plan and as a result becomes a witness to his suicide: the total collapse of past and future into the now.

While Laura challenges the planned life in her quiet way by omissions and delays (when she, for example, delays getting into bed with her husband in the evening), Richard challenges Clarissa's plans voicibly. Richard claims that Clarissa's planning of parties is a way of fleeing from silence, from the present. What will she do the day the plans cease to be? Will she then be able to bear the stillness that confronts her? A struggle is thereby sketched out between 'present' as intensity and 'present' as a machine converting future and past through planning.

Modalities are the arena of potentiality, and to observe through temporal modalities is to unveil the performative logic distributing closure or opportunity forming a horizon of expectations in the eventalization. This performative logic is what Deleuze labels the 'machine' (on machine and diagram Deleuze, 1998: 33; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 141-148). Here the modalities of time are a machine operating through the distinction between past and future, and there is no limit to its productivity. On the contrary, it incessantly produces new bifurcations and restless folding offering horizons, yet never encompassing all possibilities (Deleuze, 1998: 94ff; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, ch. 5).

As this 'time' machine is concretized in the 'before' and 'after' of plans three different subjectifications and henceforth, different horizons of agency are brought to the fore: the subject that defines the conditions for planning, the subject who actually make plans, and finally the object, becoming subject by being planned. They are not three different personalities creating their context, but possible subject positions created as crystallizations of modalities, and as such they are prepared for their faces to come. In the flux of time and modalities subjectifications offer a temporary reduction of speed while they at the same time yearn for a corpus.

Leonard Woolf: 'We brought you to Richmond to give you peace'

Narrative Time

The transition from modality to narrative is the move from bifurcating possibilities to the plane of organization, the realm where the concrete dramatic order of the film is played out. For the observer it is the movement from a focus on cool conditionality to the drama of life as it unfolds in the vitality of death and the mortality of life. It is the shift from Richie's dejected gaze from the car window to the compassionate gaze of the niece on her beloved aunt.

Paul Ricoeur discusses the philosophically fundamental relation between outer time and inner time, using *Mrs. Dalloway* as an example of the relation between clock time and internal time (Ricoeur, 1984; 1985: 102ff). It is precisely in the narrative, claims Ricoeur, that different forms of time are connected because the narrative constructs time, takes time, and expresses time. And time becomes, not least, human time when it is experienced and unfolds within the drama. Actions, then, take time and run their course through time, and when the narrative is actualized, time even finds its form as intensity.

At the level of narrative, Ricoeur focuses on the narrative configuration (called mimesis 2) where the narrative components are organized so as to open for a movement between prefiguration, i.e., existing experiences (mimesis 1) and refiguration of experience into new experiences (mimesis 3) (Ricoeur, 1984: 52ff). In the narrative configuration, history and fiction is combined into plots, where frames of reference and possible outcomes are organized into logics of possibilities (Ricoeur, 1984). These plots function as planes, as "[f]orms and their development, and subject and their formations, relate to a plan(e) that operates as a transcendent unity or hidden principle. The plan(e) can always be described, but as a part aside, as ungiven in that to which it gives rise" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 266). The three planes that we subsequently identify are labelled *a historical* plane, which precisely for this reason is universalising; *a fictional* plane, which introduces observation and reflection; and *the authentic* plane, which works on the creative boundary between fiction and history and for precisely this reason seems to make the film part of our own experience.

A historical plane

Virginia Woolf walks into the river and drowns herself. This plane really begins where it ends and has thus condemned itself to the logic of narrative sequentiality, where the end structures the plot right back to the beginning. And there might have been other beginnings, but there is only one end, so that the dramatic question becomes 'why'? The narrative is arranged causally and events as well as agents arise as consequences of and for each other. They act because they react to each other and this system of action and reaction is exactly what Virginia Woolf acts upon and reacts against. When her breakfast arrives at the door it is tantamount to an imposition; when the plans made by the servants have to be altered it is insurmountable; when her sister invited her to London it profoundly disturbed her. Virginia feels the new home outside the city as a prison, and its alternative, the city, appears as the only escape, but it is an escape allegedly endangering her psychic health. Staying is death, as is the city.

The narrative plane is historical. It draws on traces of the real life personage of Virginia Woolf and her actual suicide. This historicity establishes a distance between our time and the time on which the plane is established. We are contemporary, while she is of the past and both sides of the distinction are drawn by us in the present. Yet the external reference provided by history neither produces nearness nor distance. It produces universality. And it is done through our recognition of the universal signs of love: its conflicts and concerns, its longing for understanding and anticipation, not least, the recognition of irresolvable pain that arises at the station when a catastrophic decision becomes love's fateful exit. History becomes ahistorical and appears as a realistic narrative, precisely by evoking the audience's memory and vast store of signs (Ricoeur, 1985: 102ff).

Time is irreversible and historically Edwardian England, a petit bourgeois prison where Virginia Woolf literally is imprisoned in her environment. Pure claustrophobia, and it is overwhelming as it is refolded into Virginia Woolf the narrator. The very longing for fiction and love of signs drives her through life, as her only way out is to write herself into a virtual open space. The pen becomes the medium; out of it grows the novel and with it the flight from reality into fiction, and into suicide. She has to escape, and yet she fears being taken over once more by the voices of her fiction. Death is the answer.

A plane of fiction

Laura Brown lies in bed and reads. This beginning is not the end but the middle of a line of flight. It is an escape, a refuge and an excursion from her husband's planning. The way out of this life is the book *Mrs. Dalloway*, written by Virginia Woolf, and it indicates the twofold fiction of the plane. The fiction thus refers both to her life and to the book she uses as a passage. 'I had an idea of our happiness,' her husband says, sitting at the dinner table, and we are not disappointed. The city is the American dream of Pleasantville: a frictionless society made possible by the joy of consumption, the replacement of toil with technology and the introduction of codes of conduct defining the good marriage – fidelity, community, friendship. It is a candy coated presentation and the characters are bathed in soft light in an attempt to dim all disturbing signs of . . . life. In contrast to the earlier plane of narration, the people here are transformed into

characters that move around in a lifelike cartoon. Teeth: clean. House: clinical. Car: shining. People: smiling. This is the new middle class version of Edwardian England.

This plane condemns itself to another kind of time than the sequential and natural time. Instead, time is a passage leading from fiction into reality. It is a subtle time that so earnestly thrives on Laura Brown's longing for another life, which must remain uncertain and undiscovered. This is why this plane constitutes a thriller. It is at one and the same time both surreal and uncertain, and it enhances our expectations, suggesting a drastic collapse of the carefully constructed, albeit fragile fiction. It is a version of time already bursting with the consequences of acts yet to come; it is a loving salute to the openings of Hitchcock movies, it is so rosy that it must breed expectations of disaster in the observer. Here the opening is known and the end is open, and the logic of their relation emergent.

However, a single detail distinguishes this plane from the ultimate thrill, namely, the overt longing for alterity. For Virginia Woolf it was a longing that reaches out from reality to fiction. For Laura Brown the longing runs from fiction to reality. The book 'Mrs. Dalloway' constitutes the passage in both cases. In this light, the turning point for Laura Brown is her neighbour's visit, where the two women kiss. From here there is no way back. The spectator knows that Laura Brown has confirmed an insight, but where to go from here? Laura Brown only knows of her longing from the book. The boy is placed in the custody of Mrs. Latch, a hotel room is rented, and the suicide is committed . . . almost.

Here it is not the difference between present and past that creates the mimetic passage. Instead, it is the difference between reality and fiction. As such, the plane is brought to an end at the hotel, and it mimes a tragedy until the release with Laura Brown's return to the scene, as it happens on the next plane of narration, fifty years later, when Clarissa Vaughan receives the aging Laura Brown in her New York apartment. This is an arrival in two senses. It is the hug from Clarissa's daughter that recognises Laura Brown as a person, as a life, and not 'a ghost.' And it is not just life, the real and authentic plane of the film that meets Laura Brown. It is Laura Brown's book of passage, *Mrs. Dalloway*, brought to life. The amalgamation is complete, the difference annulled, time has contracted fiction with reality.

We recognise this mime from the narratives that are spun about strange journeys and uncertain returns. It is the mime of the grand tales of the journey, which we also know as that of Odysseus. It is the passage to the beyond, as we know it from Buddhism. It is the idea of suffering and salvation, as we know it in Christianity. But, like these great narratives, it also offers a distance and a space for reflection. A distance embedded in the double fiction, where history is on one side and caricature of the other, both being radically different from the lived presence. As such it is not the plane of universal signs, but the door to shared experience.

The plane of authenticity

'... I think I will buy the flowers myself,' says Clarissa Vaughan and that is how we meet her in the middle of her preparations for the party. The place is New York, 2001, and Clarissa moves at the same pace as the film's hectic metropolitan editing. She has

to arrange the party that is to follow the prize ceremony to honour Richard Brown, the writer, who has composed his magnum opus and, more importantly, who years ago was Clarissa's happiest moment in her own experience of intensity, of happiness, of the now. This narrative plane is the plane of construction. It installs the construction of time – preparation and predictability – through Clarissa's incessant planning. We see time, so to speak, come into being through Clarissa's gaze, running for the future: the party, the party, the party. We are familiarised with the party through Clarissa, but only as an idea of the future. The plot is organized from the end to come, and yet we do not know the end. 'I will buy the flowers myself', is the now and the middle pointing back and forward in the event of the now.

Clarissa sets up the frames, symbols and generations necessary for a successful party yet to come. She runs alongside her hurried attempts to arrange a fiction for others. Clarissa Vaughan is the author of time; the time that others participate in and are determined by. Persons are transformed into characters through Clarissa, who fits them into a plan. 'Do you mind? Is it alright?' asks her cautious friend, when he arrives too early for the party. And this goes for everyone except Richard Brown, whose unpredictability disturbs and interrupts the directedness of time. He imposes himself as a person – is not malleable as a character – and he forces Clarissa into a disquieting presence.

Clarissa takes care of Richard Brown, and this very caring is her existential ground, which Richard Brown continuously challenges. He addresses her as Mrs. Dalloway. He has created the Mrs. Dalloway who takes care of him and they form a zone of indiscernability, a life. The life that reveals itself, when Richard Brown throws himself out of the window and, in an overwhelming instant, interrupts this paragon of effective planners, depositing Clarissa in a painful now, from which there is no way out. The poet is to die, the party is never to come, and Clarissa is forced into the now.

This is the plane of immediate recognition, where authenticity is established as unpredictability, as loss of control, as ambiguous emotions, and as open-ended release. This is the plane where the very distinction between fiction and reality is created, not in categories, but as performance. And this is even taking ironic forms in pure performative self-reference, when the book that Richard Brown has written is discussed as a question of fact or fiction between Clarissa and the florist (of all people). This story is the story of the person in each story that makes the others possible and real and who herself isn't really granted a space of existence. Creating the novel and actualizing universalities, making plans possible and fiction corporeal and finally the spectator, us the absent observer pausing a moment for authentic experience.

It is the modern story of the modern decentred human being, who must take care of herself and of others, who struggles against the clock, and who never dares to let herself be anticipated or deposited in the now, because there is so much to be done. This plane of narration avails itself neither of history nor fiction. It does not universalize experience, as was the case with Virginia Woolf. Nor does it indulge in reflexive caricature, as was the case with Laura Brown. It makes shared signs and unique experience find each other on the 'authentic' plane of existence.

The three planes are not layered and sedimented but planes of possibilities and probabilities transversing the 'emplotment' of *The Hours*. As emplotment, i.e., the overall dramatisation (Ricoeur, 1984), the three planes converge into a narrative about creation and the other side of creation. Narrative time is not just the transversal development of the character Mrs. Dalloway – the person who is written, read and acted forth. It is the contraction of time in the form of creation. It is about life and death, and death becomes an opportunity for life. In all three stories, somebody 'sacrifices' themselves for the others, but it is the others who take death upon themselves. It is life and death all at once: as liberation and prerequisite, as a tension and as a choice that allows no alternatives.

Virginia Woolf: 'You cannot find peace by avoiding life, Leonard'

Intensive Time

The three planes produce a singularity enclosing even the audience in a shared moment, where the difference between creator and spectator dissolves into imperceptibility (on perception, see Deleuze, 1993). This folding in the event has a coexistent existential outside as a necessary precondition of the story told, and no mimetic observation will capture this notion, as it is the very now of pure intensity. The plane of intensity is not the plane of possibilities, nor the plane of life and death, because it is always actual and always life. It is the plane of becoming.

By tying time to consciousness, Bergson can speak of it as a particular kind of intensity that can only be described as its own independent singularity, where the sugar in the tea dissolves quickly when one is engaged with something else, and slowly when one waits for it (Bergson, 1911: 10). Time thereby becomes a qualitative property of the situation of consummation and as such it is inextricably bound up with existence in it. Everybody recognizes the experience of a film ending before one even got comfortably into one's seat, or, the opposite situation, in which a film is experienced as infinitely slow. Sometimes single moments of a film are so saturated with content that they will always last too long, no matter how brief they may be, as the kisses in *The Hours*.

The Hours is beyond doubt a film that operates in time and with time, albeit in a rather complex form, it wants, however, also to describe the boundary of time itself as a question of the boundary between creation and decay, between life and death and between sign and consummation. It even wants to do this directly and ruthlessly, and not by shrouding or by metaphor. The film begins with the picture of a river, and 'river' is precisely one of Ricoeur's favourite time metaphors. And then there is the suicide note, which makes the past irrevocable. And, finally, there is death, as the poet walks into the river and the film can begin from an equally irrevocable future.

Intense moments

The film opens with this clear division of the now in its intertwining of intensity and extensity in the moment of a creator's death (Ricoeur, 1984). Existential time is inevitable time, and for Virginia Woolf inevitable twice over, as any story must

submerge itself in it. *The Hours* even tries to install this outside inside the movie itself through a series of loopholes. But existential time is also ultimately that which evades all description. Whether one takes an Augustinian, Kantian or Ricoeurian view of it, intensity is transcendent, an immanent quality of the event, an immanent outside, only to be depicted as extensive time, and thus it is not to be shown or felt, but shared in the contraction of time and extension of the event (the *durée*) (Deleuze, 1991: 73ff; Pearson, 2002).

The moments ‘where nothing happens and everything changes’, as in Ritchie’s gaze, when he looks out the window of the car after his mother has returned to pick him up, having just abandoned her own suicide in a hotel room. This is an infinite gaze, total immobility, containing all past and future insight in the *durée* of the now. We also find it in the look Virginia Woolf’s niece sends her at their parting, and it is condensed, when Virginia looks upon the dead bird.

This intensity of the event is manifest to an agonizing level in the accompanying music of Philip Glass. Music that both maintains the deferrals and shifts as a minimum (a minimalism of difference) no matter how much they might incline to real transmutations, and at the same time ties the audience to a claustrophobic room of rhythm and repetition. The only time that the musical insistence changes format is in the kitchen scene, where Clarissa breaks down in her meeting with an overwhelmingly present ghost from the past. This breakdown is perhaps the film’s absolute self-reference and intensification of the now. It is here the narrative’s own preconditions as a narrative in the first place breaks down, as that which had been suspended between percept and recollection collapses. The now is undressed and rendered lonely by the loss of recollection as recollection. The recollected richness of the ‘Madeleine cake’ is replaced with an irrevocable ‘hand on the shoulder’, which already in the moment of action was a recollection of the night’s hands. It is the recollection of a recollection that was already a recollection. The ‘beginning of a happy time’ was the moment of happiness itself.

Glass is interrupted by nothing less than Hermann Hesse’s ‘Beim Schlafengehen’, music by Richard Strauss, the last verse of which runs (German text quoted from Strauss, our translation):

Und die Seele, unbewacht,	And the unguarded soul
Will in freien Flügen schweben,	Will hover in free flight
Um im Zauberkreis der Nacht,	To live deep and thousandfold
Tief und tausendfach zu leben,	In the magic circle of the night

This is the very moment of tragedy, where everything is at stake and nonetheless outside the reach of the players, not least because Clarissa is Virginia Woolf’s creation and Laura’s escape route. It is so infinitely fragile a scene. Mrs. Dalloway appears bereft of any plan that might organize her recollections or a recollection that might legitimize the plan. She simply ceases to exist or, more accurately, she becomes a now without a past or future. The moment is there as an extension (extended as a cinematic expression) while it is at the same time wanting intensively, as a qualitative property, because it cannot contain its own continuation. The now presupposes an outside in order to exist in its continuity, and throughout the film we are reminded of this in the little

death and in the greater death. The film deploys the little death as a recursive gesture throughout: the flowers and the kisses, death and resurrection, death and absolute change, always death as the other side of creation. In the flowers we find the infinite repetition of the relation between life and death as the other side of creation and the connection between beauty and decay, the unbounded transformation of the kiss that contains the opening to the absolutely different.

The film also contrasts the greater death with life's creation of nows and their continuity. For Clarissa, who is created by pure expectation, whether Virginia Woolf or Richard Brown's, life is as thin as the paper she lives for and on. That is, she is wholly dependent on the creative power of the creator. We actually see Virginia Woolf playing with life and death when she considers the question of whether or not her heroine will die, and in New York we see the consequences of the writer's death. When Richard Brown commits suicide, he finally releases his work and Clarissa becomes a now that not just lost its past in the kitchen scene but must seek a future. A future, we get a hint of, when Clarissa turns toward her partner and embraces her in a 'final' scene.

The narrative is about the price to be paid for being inside and outside all at once. The stories are an enduring folding of the difference between interior and exterior inside the story, and the energy comes from the very same place that threatens existence. The film's answers to the conditions set by the now and the boundary of times are tangles, tangles of narrative, tangles of form and colour, tangles of form and story, tangles of sight and sound. The impression they leave is claustrophobic, as there is no way to disentangle them, only a space for minimal shifts with awesome effects or radical negation.

Forming intense moments

Following Deleuze and Guattari, we might claim that the film to a great extent expresses time as a variable intensity and as an amalgamation in the now of the extensive and the intensive, or as an amalgamation of the experience and the recollection, and the element and speed in the affect (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 400). Time, then, is no longer an expression that stands for the experience, but the very bridge that connects the conditions of experience with the actualisation of the moment, like in the static gaze Ritchie sends us out the window of the car and the gaze that passes between Virginia and her niece as they part. These are gazes that contain a world of insight in a single moment.

In these moments of the now the event resides in the imperceptibility of form and content. Content has its form and form has its content and they are merging in the singular actualization, never to be repeated. And yet repetition is one of the strongest transversal affects in the film, where content and expression borrow from each other, so that one often doubts where the message resides, even through quite lengthy episodes. With repetition come ruptures, a beginning and an end, a cut enabling location, dislocation and relocation, and with rupture the very possibility of organizing continuity.

Repetitions tie the stories together so that they together appear to be a single narrative, but they also assign the three narrative planes their own life. The film lays out the same

plot three times, deferred in time, but also in such a way that this plot is shifted and becomes something else through the repetition. The flowers serve as editing cues, separating the stories visually. Hands on flowers: Clarissa Vaughan lifts a vase in the spirit of careful planning; Laura Brown's husband sets them on the table in the spirit of caring execution, and the servants tidy the flowers in the vase in the spirit of effective care. This is distribution through the repetition of materiality (Deleuze, 1998: 10). However, these cues do not only distribute intensities and moments on different narrative planes, but also link these narrative planes in sweeping movements transforming the performance of their very materiality. This is also apparent in the scenes from the bedrooms of the three main characters in the early morning. Virginia Woolf wakes up, obviously shifting from one mode of life to another; Laura Brown is lying in bed, her eyes open, obviously indifferent to modes of life; Clarissa Vaughan leaps up as soon as she awakes to model life. The scene is set and we experience, in retrospect, how these interlaces present the morning precisely so as to express the three main characters' vast difference, in their movements, their moods, and their facial expressions as deviations from expected yet never expressed similarities.

The interruptions have as strong an effect as the repetitions. They unite the three narrative planes, but emphasise the differences between them. Narrative time is also established here, but now through compression. This goes especially for the kiss. Here the existential conflict between life and death is compressed into a single, simple expression. The kiss is the anchorage of the narrative, the now of the story, the moment of intensity. It stops time in order to let it continue, but now in a different way. Clarissa's lips meet Richard Brown's lips as a challenge, Laura Brown's lips meet Kitty's as a bond, and Virginia Woolf's lips meet her sister's in destiny. Every kiss signals accumulated tensions and is full of future separations. From these moments on, nothing is the same. The kiss is a release from the past, which allows us to remember, and launches the horizon of the future, which allows us to act.

The material book, *Mrs Dalloway*, is neither distribution nor compression. The book installs narrative time in a third way and this makes it a trace that runs between epochs. This makes it a trace of generations: Virginia Woolf as the woman that struggles against incarceration and the stalling of time; Laura Brown as housewife that struggles against the empty optimism of the post-war dream and the inexorable progress of time; and Clarissa Vaughan who takes up the modern struggle against time itself. It is also a passage between conditions: Virginia Woolf's longing from reality to fiction, Laura Brown's longing from fiction to reality, Clarissa Vaughan's existence on the boundary between fiction and reality itself – our now, the audience's present. Through repetition and rupture continuity is left to the plane of interaction in consummation, and the spectator is an accomplice in the event. Thus, the claustrophobia, and henceforth release does not indicate an 'out there', but an inherent part of the very production of intensity.

Richard Brown: 'I wanted to write about it all – everything that happens in a moment...'

Eventalizing the Event

This final part of the paper is not going to add to the experimental eventalization of *The Hours*. What is said is said, and infinitely much more or something else might have been said, as it is a consequence of eventalization that it is always containing “too many lines of analysis, yet at the same time there is too little necessary unit” (Foucault, 2000: 228). Instead, we will reflect briefly upon the eventalization itself as a cognitive practice, and question our version relative to Foucault’s. Secondly, we consider the implications of using ‘time’ as tool and finally we consider the insight.

In *Questions of Method* Foucault outlines his reasons for eventalization as a research strategy, and his reasons are: “First of all, a breach of self-evidence. It means making visible a singularity at places where there is a temptation to invoke a historical constant, an immediate anthropological constant, or an obviousness that imposes itself uniformly on all” (Foucault, 2000: 226). “Second, eventalization means rediscovering the connections, encounters, supports, blockages, plays of forces, strategies and so on, that at a given moment establish what subsequently counts as being self-evident, universal, and necessary. In this sense, one is indeed effecting a sort of multiplication and pluralization of causes” (Foucault, 2000: 226-227).

However, the singularity is not seen as a self-sufficient reality with its own *raison d’être*, instead “[the] procedure of causal multiplication means analyzing an event according to multiple processes that constitute it” and whatever process need themselves to be broken further down (Foucault, 2000: 227). A side effect of such a method will be infinite multiplication of causality, and ‘eventalization’ therefore sees the singular event as a “‘polyhedron’ of intelligibility, the number of whose faces is not given in advance and can never properly be taken as finite” (Foucault, 2000: 227). This method leads inevitably to polymorphism in several planes and Foucault lists “[a] polymorphism of the elements”, “[a] polymorphism of relations”, and “[a] polymorphism of reference” (Foucault, 2000: 228).

Whenever we ‘enter’ the singularity and start looking for the ‘sufficient reason’, it evaporates into multiple internal and external connectivities, the relation between which is the very hobgoblin that produces finite insight and infinite want. A never-ending affair, which might be brought to temporary halts through new eventalizations, offering new openings and therefore always an experiment (Deleuze, 1993, ch. 4; Sørensen, 2004). And, as there are no essential properties out there to determine the observation, any delimitation of empirical focus and any choice of experimental setting is creative, a moment of determination and activism (Andersen, 2003; Luhmann, 1993).

Two points springs to the fore when this is compared with what we have done. The first concerns the relation between singularity and multiplicity, and the second the relation between observer and event. Both questions are important, for without answers to them eventalization runs the risk of replacing its activist character and critical potential with implicit external foundations, be they critical, traditional, paradigmatic positivistic or interpretative. What the distinction between singularity and multiplicity creates within eventalization is a rich soil for heterogeneous observations and arguments. First, because it organizes the observations into planes (e.g., historical, fictional, and authentic

in our experiment), which on the level of multiplicities always permeate the membrane of the singularity and points towards the context. The singularity, on the other hand, points towards the internal mechanisms sustaining the membrane itself (e.g., as it emerges we maintain that we are talking about the same *The Hours*) (Deleuze, 1993: 110ff). This is the realm of the 'and', not the 'either/or' (Bay, 1998). The simultaneous presence of singularity and multiplicity also sustains the phenomenological experience that it is cognitively possible to oscillate between the singular identity and the fragmented multiplicities, until one more added trait changes the very nature of the singularity, i.e., until quantity on one level transforms into quality at another (Deleuze, 1991: 38ff; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 9). Together these effects create the very productivity and also the restlessness of eventalization.

Thereby the eventalization itself becomes an emergent singularity, in which all elements are co-constituted around the distinction between the observer and the observed, not as two essences, but as functions of the observation itself (Luhmann, 1991). To observe is to make a distinction and indicate a side, and this operation is the foundational ontology of eventalization, the productivity of which lies in its absolute self-reference, i.e., its own emergent character as singularity. It is not the subject before the object or vice versa, it is the in-between, where concepts in use become creators of webs of possible insight (Deleuze, 1993, ch. 6). Not an abstract insight born by discourse or a concrete insight born by intention, but an instant reservoir of possible insights stretching out in all directions, restless and ripe with new events. It is a machine, always producing 'too much and too little'.

On the level of actualization the challenge then becomes the choice of distinction, as every eventalization is and will always remain an experiment, through which all elements emerge in mutual constitution to disappear immediately after in a new deterritorialization, and with each actualization the observer/author as well as the observed/discourse is irreversibly changed (Foucault, 2001: 738). We have here chosen a distinction between time and space and indicated the side of time as our observation tool. This was done for two reasons, one being the intuitive reaction to the film itself and its manifest orientation towards time. The other reason was purely on the observer's side, as it was an attempt to escape perspectives that ontologized this or that trait in this film or films in general. The latter argument furthermore reached into our way of treating the concept of time, i.e. as a tool, and not as an ontological category.

Seeing time as a tool granted us the freedom of confronting three different conceptualizations of time with the same 'epistemic object' in order to let the chosen conceptualization highlight whatever it could. Even if we have attempted to treat each conceptual frame with due respect, it was never our intention to treat their relation on the theoretical and conceptual level in any depth. Yet it is obvious for the afterthought that there is some implicit passage from one to the next. One might claim that modal time is our attempt to approach the film from a universal time-sign regime establishing a regime of possibilities, while narrative time is irreverently used to substantiate our propositions around the concrete film. While these two framings run a parallel course, the third frame is used orthogonally. Bergson/Deleuze time is used for the observation of the bridging from the middle towards the observer as well as the observed,

connecting the actual and the virtual by processing potentialities of kind (Deleuze, 1991: 42ff).

At the same time the folding of approaches is not random, or at least not random with respect to the next actualization. By opening with modalities and ending with intensities we create a flight of steps where each step adds to the previous, as insights and attitudes are brought to the next time-regime whether one agrees or disagrees. The steps are even heterogeneous, so that they are not accumulating more of the same, but transforming what was into something else. From the rather cool and distanced observation of encompassing possibilities, over compassion with the claustrophobic narratives to the passion embedded in one's own identification (be it positive or negative) with whatever phenomenon in the movie. In this light eventalization is a case of prehension, where "an element is the given, the 'datum' of another element that prehends it", so that the event becomes a 'nexus of prehensions.' "[I]t is at once public and private, potential and real, participation in the becoming of another event and the subject of its own becoming" (Deleuze, 1993: 78).

And maybe the emergent mixing of 'plans' and 'planes' in our experiment is more significant for the insight than we imagined when we used it as bridge between modalities and narrative, because *plans* are the modality of potentiality operating between the virtual and the actual, whereas the narrative *plane* as actualization always operates between potential and virtual. And none of these 'planes of organization' would exist without the 'plane of consistency', where "[t]here are only relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness between unformed elements, or at least between elements that are relatively unformed, molecules and particles of all kinds" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 266).

It is on this plane of consistency that the eventalization becomes singular. On this plane of 'imperceptibility' the distinction between author and text disappears to reappear as changed, or as Foucault states at the end of the introduction to the *Archaeology of Knowledge*: "Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same" (Foucault, 1972). During our experiment with *The Hours* we have incessantly had this feeling of amalgamation between epistemic object and subject positions in our discussions, the force of which seems to be that it offers restless connectivity, and connecting does not mean adding one more of the same. It actually transforms the very event and turns it into something new, a difference in kind, and that is a new singularity.

So let us finally give the insight a thought. Actually the term 'eventalizing' is developed by Foucault as a critical tool vis-à-vis the science of history. Foucault would talk about 'the event' as a counterstrategy to the search for 'the truth', 'the underlying continuity', or 'the idea' in order to elucidate that events are not becoming events through some inherent quality. They are made into events through intervention. And eventalization, or as it is put in 'What is critique' 'eventualization' (*événementialisation*) (Foucault, 1997: 49), is used as label for a research strategy focussing on the features of event-making searching for power. As such eventalizing is never interpretation (except in the Nietzschean meaning "There are no facts, only interpretations" (Sontag, 1983: 97). It is in itself an intervention.

As we are not particularly interested in the controversy with history, we have instead departed from 'Questions of Method', in which Foucault reflects on the method, not as antagonistic strategy, but as epistemic endeavour. And here it seems pretty obvious that eventalization is not about universal and generalizable knowledge, as it is critical towards any such claim. On the most basic level one might then ask, what is the relation between the movie *The Hours* and the eventalization as intervention? And the answer is significant for eventalization. On one side the fact that we let intuition direct our choice of conceptual frame brings us in the safe harbour of 'spotlight' research; on the other side it is rather apparent that we attribute a very activist attitude to our conceptualization that at best operates as a tool of observation and reflection, a tool that in this specific case blurred the relation between our 'epistemic object' and the position of the observer as the movie itself already operates with time on a very sophisticated level. And in the wisdom of hindsight any other movie might have served us with less friction as an experimental object, but on the level of reflection that would probably have led to a complacent satisfaction with Bourdieu and Wacquant's answers from reflexive sociology (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) instead of the repulsive lack of theoretical answers from Foucault.

Then one might say that eventalization is not about insight at all, as it is not some second order observation of first order life, but first order life itself. And that might be the core reason behind Foucault's suggestion. If one desperately wants to avoid installing yet another fascist despotic regime, second order regimes are the devil itself. The alternative might be affirmation, but then the question arises of what? Affirming critique, or affirming order, or affirming theories, or norms, or, or, or ...? Instead of affirmation of universals, eventalization might be it. In eventalization the invitation is the point. Not as a superficial gesture, but as a committed offer, at the same time transparent and closing around itself, because only under these conditions will eventalization remain worthy of eventalizations yet to come. Not through shared critique of ideology or shared evaluations of behaviour, but as an invitation to an open-ended problematization. As such one might say that Foucault's eventalization seems more radical than Deleuzian counter-actualization, as it even oversteps the line between actualization and counter-actualization and substitutes it with absolute affirmation of what never was and never will come as the affirmation itself changes it all (Foucault, 1972: 17).

Richard: 'Ah Mrs Dalloway, always giving parties to cover the silence'

references

- Andersen, N. Å. (2003) *Discursive Analytical Strategies: Understanding Foucault, Koselleck, Laclau, Luhmann*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Bay, T. (1998) *And ... And ... And ... Reiterating Financial Derivation*. Stockholm: School of Business, Stockholm University.
- Bergson, H. (1911) *Creative Evolution*, trans. A. Mitchell. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- Bourdieu, P. & L. J. D. Wacquant (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1991) *Bergsonism*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam. New York: Zone Books.
- Deleuze, G. (1993) *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. T. Conley. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Deleuze, G. (1998) *Foucault*, trans. S. Hand. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, G. (2005a) *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam. London: Continuum.
- Deleuze, G. (2005b) *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta. London: Continuum.
- Deleuze, G. & F. Guattari (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism & Schizophrenia*, trans. B. Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Foucault, M. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith. London: Routledge.
- Foucault, Michel (1997) 'What is critique', in S. Lotringer and L. Hochroth (eds.) *The Politics of Truth: Michel Foucault*. New York: Semiotext(e).
- Foucault, M. (2000) 'Questions of Method', in J. D. Faubion (ed.) *Power: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*, Volume III. London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2001) 'Sur l'archéologie des sciences. Réponse au Cercle d'épistémologie', in M. Foucault (ed.) *Dits et écrits*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Luhmann, N. (1982a) 'The Future Cannot Begin – Temporal Structures in Modern Society', in N. Luhmann (ed.) *The Differentiation of Society*, trans. S. Holmes and C. Larmore. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Luhmann, N. (1982b) 'World-Time and System History: Interrelations Between Temporal Horizons and Social Structures', in N. Luhmann (ed.) *The Differentiation of Society*, trans. S. Holmes and C. Larmore. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Luhmann, N. (1991) 'Sthenographie und Euryalistik', in H. U. Gumbrecht & K. L. Pfeiffer (eds.) *Paradoxien, Dissonanzen, Zusammenbrüche: Situationen offener Epistemologie*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Luhmann, N. (1993) 'Deconstruction as Second-Order Observing', *New Literary History*, 24, 763-782.
- Moe, S. (2001) 'Beslutninger, temporalitet og tid', *Nordiske Organisasjonsstudier*, 3(2): 118-124.
- Pearson, K. A. (2002) *Philosophy and the adventure of the virtual. Bergson and the time of life*. London: Routledge.
- Ricoeur, P. (1984) *Time and Narrative*, volume 1, trans. K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (1985) *Time and Narrative*, volume 2, trans. K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sontag, S. (1983) 'Against Interpretation', in E. Hardwick (ed.) *A Susan Sontag Reader*. London: Penguin.
- Strauss, R. 'The four last songs by Richard Strauss', Record Number 411 052-2.
- Sørensen, B. M. (2004) *Making Events Work, Or How to Multiply Your Crisis*. København: Samfundslitteratur.

the authors

Asmund W. Born is Associate Professor at the Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy, Copenhagen Business School. His field is organization theory, HRM and strategy and theoretically the approach is recent French philosophy and German systems theory (Foucault, Deleuze, and Luhmann). His current work is on emotions in organizations and heterophonic organizations and partnerships. Address: Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy, Copenhagen Business School, Porcelænshaven 18A, DK-2000 Frederiksberg. E-mail: awb.lpf@cbs.dk

Christian Frankel is Associate Professor at the Department of Organization and Industrial Sociology, Copenhagen Business School. Theoretically he draws on discourse analysis and systems theory. His current interest is in products as boundary phenomena in order to trace transformations of customers, of markets, of politics, of firms and of careers. Address: Department of Organization and Industrial Sociology, Copenhagen Business School, Kilen, Kilevej 14A, DK-2000 Frederiksberg. E-mail: frankel@cbs.dk

Niels Thyge Thygesen is Associate Professor at the Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy, Copenhagen Business School. He is a well known lecturer in a Danish context and is occupied with the following three thematics in relation to public management: Trust, Technology and Time. The theoretical foundation of his work relies on a communicative approach in general and system theory in particular. The combination between empirical phenomena and the appliance of theoretical perspectives is fundamental for his research. This 'applied science' is both a matter of developing the basics of theories into observational programmes, as was the intention behind the present article, as well as contributing with new insights of relevance to a broader audience than science itself.

Address: Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy, Copenhagen Business School, Porcelænshaven 18A, DK-2000 Frederiksberg.

E-mail: ntt.lpf@cbs.dk

Scripting Masculinity

Valérie Fournier and Warren Smith

abstract

There is an increasingly familiar genre in gender and organization studies, one that draws upon post-structuralism to stress the fluidity, impermanence and multiplicity of gender identities. This genre seeks to move away from an essentialist and dualist analysis of men and women as biological beings, and instead focuses on the performative nature of gender identities, the ways these are produced, maintained, and can be disrupted. In this paper, we offer a critique of this ‘masculinity genre’ by arguing that its compulsory claims about fluidity and multiplicity are undermined by essentialist assumptions. Thus the masculinity genre seems to be ineluctably drawn back into reproducing enduring clichés that articulate femininity around stereotypical images of intimacy, caring for others, bodily engagement, and masculinity around control, competitiveness and instrumental rationality. Whilst we do not wish to undermine the significance of gender inequality, we suggest that the incoherence that plagues writing on masculinity obfuscates the analysis of gender oppression. The scripted language and soft rhetoric that are deployed have little purchase on ‘hard’ gender effects and the strength of feelings that gendered practices may elicit.

Introduction

There is an increasingly familiar form in gender studies, one that takes its inspiration from post-structuralism and that seeks to ‘reflexively’ engage with the production of masculine and feminine identities. This writing shifts the focus of analysis from men and women towards masculinities and femininities with the intention of rejecting the simplistic dualism and essentialism that have plagued gender analysis; it invites us to explore the production of gender identities in terms of “discursively constituted modes of being” (Kerfoot and Knights, 1998: 8).

This movement from ‘men as the perpetrators of the inequality of opportunities for women’, to ‘masculinities’ frees us from essentialism because there is no relationship of equivalence between men and masculinity (or women and femininity). Instead, gender identities are shifting and fragmented. Therefore by rejecting the reliance on gender as essence in producing an account of fluid gender identities, recent writing on masculinity has sought to emphasise the performative nature of gender and the ways it is produced and maintained through everyday practices. This refutation of essentialism and adoption of post-structuralist accounts of identities is intended to help us understand the

pervasive yet contingent nature of gender, as well as the ways in which it could be disrupted.

In the following we will argue that much of this writing rests on unreflexive templates consisting of certain obligatory points of passage. These accounts are found to rely on an almost compulsory usage of terminology that stresses the ‘fragmented’, ‘multiple’, ‘complex’, ‘insecure’, ‘shifting’ nature of identity. We show that the constructivist language that underpins their theoretical groundwork does not allow the analytical work that is proposed, that these conceptual formulations do not have purchase on phenomena that require explanation and, unhappily, are incapable of conveying the real effects of gendered practice. Many writers on gender appear trapped between the seductions of a dominant theoretical orientation and the desire to say something meaningful about the effects of a particular social problem. As a result any attempt to legitimately criticise social and organizational realities are undermined by these inconsistencies. Statements that gender is multiple, unstable, fragmented, fluid and so on, become divorced from the analysis that follows and, as a consequence, are dissolved of meaning. The result is a form of ‘clichéd constructivism’ (Brubaker and Cooper, 2001) relying on standard signifiers and theoretical gestures towards the fluidity of gendered identity.

We recognise that there already have been some critiques of the concept of masculinity that question its usefulness in understanding power relations between men and women. For example, Whitehead (1999) argues that the notion of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ masks the various meanings and practices attached to masculinity in various cultural and historical contexts. However, he seems to want to hold on to a notion of masculinity as produced discursively and open to multiple, fluid, contingent expressions. As we will discuss below, we take issue with such an articulation. We argue that attempts to reconcile the supposed fluidity and multiplicity of masculinities, with some dominant form of masculinity that may explain men domination have proved to be an analytical dead end.

Others have challenged the usefulness of the very concept of masculinity (rather than hegemonic masculinity) by pointing to its loose, slippery, confused usage (e.g. Clatterbaugh, 1998; Hearn, 1996, 2004; McMahon, 1993). For example, Hearn (2004) asks why it is necessary to hold on to the concept of masculinity when it has come to refer to many different things (e.g. cultural images, everyday practices, institutional structures...), and suggests refocusing critical studies of men on ‘men’s practices’ rather than masculinity. MacInnes (1998, 2004) has also criticised the analytical purchase of ‘masculinity’ by suggesting that it is not clear how it becomes attached to men; and that if we accept that it can be practised by men and women, and that it is multiple and changing, it can easily degenerate into a catch all term for all the characteristics that are socially frowned upon, or that “we don’t like” (MacInnes, 2004: 324).

But for all these criticisms, masculinity seems to have retained its appeal in much of the gender and organization literature. Whilst we concur with some of the criticisms that have been made about the loose and incoherent usage of the term, this looseness has served to mask deeper flaws in the theoretical articulation of ‘masculinity’; and as we argue in the paper, these theoretical inconsistencies have damaging consequences for

understanding and addressing unequal power relations between men and women. The looseness of the concept enables authors within the genre to produce work that, on critical scrutiny, appears not only theoretically incoherent but also politically disabling. And we feel that the persistent usage of the concept of masculinity calls for further critical examination.

Therefore we argue that this masculinity 'genre' has acquired such familiarity that its moves have become not only obligatory but also beyond scrutiny as its theoretical incoherence becomes more and more deeply buried under the weight of endless repetition. The consequence is that gender identities appear increasingly scripted; rather than being indicative of multiplicity, fluidity and ambivalence, they actually seem immutable as the analysis to which they are subjected is inexorably drawn back to crude stereotypes. Hence, masculinity seems trapped in its 'hegemonic' form that aligns it with stereotypical images of control, competitiveness and instrumental rationality. Organizations become the expression of masculinity. Femininity is confined to stereotypical images of intimacy, caring for other, bodily engagement and so on. Displays of male bonding can only be an expression of 'simulated intimacy' subjected to masculine instrumental rationality. Women succeed in organizations by suppressing their femininity and displaying masculine behaviour; when organizations call upon 'feminine' characteristics it is only to subject them to the masculine logic of instrumental rationality.

However in the critique that follows we do not wish to reduce the significance of gender inequalities either as felt experiences or as a central part of contemporary organizational life. We are not proposing to undermine the relevance of gendered processes in understanding organization. And certainly we have no desire to mount a defence of men and masculinities from feminist criticism. So, whilst we intend to be critical of much writing on masculinity, we are not against the broad intent of much of this work. In fact, we will argue that this intent is poorly served by the rhetorical strategies that are predominant. The inconsistencies and contradictions present serve only to obscure any connection with the real effects of gendered practices.

Consequently in the first part of the paper, we unpack the arguments deployed in the masculinity genre and seek to highlight their theoretical incoherence by pointing at the various ways in which essentialism surreptitiously creeps back into the picture. Secondly, we discuss the consequences of this theoretical incoherence. Our argument is that the articulation of masculinity is not only incoherent, but also serves to dilute or efface the gendered practices and power relations it claims to illuminate. The scripted language in which it wraps up gender identities underplays the strengths of feelings gendered practices elicit, and eliminates the grounds on which we might formulate a response.

The Denial of Essentialism

We begin therefore by exposing the theoretical inconsistency at the heart of much present writing on gender. Despite gestures towards post-structuralism and a

compulsory anti-essentialism, essentialism seems to relentlessly creep back. This incoherence, as we will show, is played out in different ways: the fluidity of gender identities gives way to enduring clichés of femininity and masculinity; multiple masculinities are all but effaced by a singular focus on a 'hegemonic form'; femininity becomes aligned with intimacy and authenticity; and masculinity, through its attachment to control and rationality, becomes the embodiment of organization. Whilst these points could be discussed with reference to different texts in the masculinity genre, we have chosen to illustrate each of our critiques with one or two particular, and in some cases influential, examples in order to provide some consistency to our arguments.

Enduring clichés

The double movement of, on the one hand, asserting the fluidity of gender identity, and, on the other, resorting to conventional gender clichés can be illustrated with Metcalfe and Linstead's (2003) critique of the (under)theorising of gender in the teamworking literature. The authors claim to undertake a "post-structuralist feminist reading" (*ibid.*: 98) that "stresses plurality rather than unity, and in particular rejects the categorisation of women as a homogenous group, and that femininity and femaleness are unitary conceptions that are associated with the biological sex of women" (*ibid.*: 98).

However, this intended approach can be contrasted with their specific analysis of team theorising. Such theorising is built, it is claimed, "upon masculinist discourses that emphasise managing control and performance, with the 'soft' components of teams, the sensitivities and intimacies of team actors being marginalized and subordinated" (*ibid.*: 96). The authors proceed to attach these 'soft managerial practices' to the 'feminine'; but nevertheless attack the teamwork literature for failing to recognise such sensitivities as 'feminine'. This failure is seen as another mark of team theorising privileging masculinity: "Theoretically effective teamwork rests on the collaborative and supportive work attitudes that we often label as female but team theorising has not explicitly labelled the feminine or female as such nor challenged the way that team theorising is underpinned by masculinist discourses" (*ibid.*: 97).

Despite the alleged fluid, fragmented and shifting nature of gender identities, the authors are not only able to easily pin down particular attributes that are clearly 'feminine' or 'masculine', but also to condemn approaches that do not duly label 'collaborative and supportive work attitudes' as feminine. In doing so, they imply that femininity has thus been robbed of one of its essential qualities. Moreover, when these 'soft' qualities do get attached to the feminine in organizational attempts at cultural change, such moves only reflect 'masculinist ideologies'. Thus, the authors present a piece of case study analysis of an organization where human resource strategies attempt to privilege feminine attributes as part of a development process to support change. The research reveals that, "as part of the process of cultural and structural change, women's feminine capital was consciously exploited to support these restructuring activities. The privileging of the feminine therefore served to endorse stereotypical views about women's characteristics and skills, in essence their collaborative and supportive work attitudes" (*ibid.*: 107).

But these “gendered processes are, however, underpinned and maintained by masculinist ideologies of organization and management” (*ibid.*: 107). Notwithstanding the incoherence of the analysis which at one point attacks team theorising for failing to acknowledge ‘soft qualities’ as feminine (as if these were inherently so), and later criticises organizational attempts defining these same ‘soft qualities’ as feminine for endorsing stereotypical gender images, the analysis presented in the paper seems actually to undermine the proclaimed fluidity of gender. In fact, gender identities seem to provide pretty solid lines of analysis – everything can be inscribed in their terms. Soft qualities are ‘feminine’, teamwork theorising by privileging control and performance is ‘masculine’, denying the femininity of soft qualities is a display of masculinist discourse, whilst explicitly drawing upon ‘feminine’ qualities in organizations is another example of masculinist instrumental strategy.

Indeed there is another way in which essentialism resurfaces in the authors’ analysis of gender identity. This is evident in the case study analysis of a woman, Nia, a site manager in the company. Nia’s femaleness was seen by the company as offering the skills and attributes to challenge the dominant ‘laddish’ working practices and cultures. However, Nia was regarded by colleagues and subordinates to have a leadership style that was masculine and authoritarian. She preferred to use seemingly ungendered language to describe her work like ‘managing to objectives’ and ‘working to the best of my ability’. For the authors, this involves “downplaying the subjectivities of being female” (*ibid.*: 111); “in conforming to the traditional masculinist interpretations of effective management Nia constructs and re-constructs her identity by *suppressing her feminine emotions and sensibilities*” (*ibid.*: 111, emphasis added). Here women, femininity and a particular form of ‘emotions and sensibilities’ appear to be inherently attached to each other.

In sum, it is difficult to sense how this analysis of organizational circumstances is consistent with a ‘post-structuralist reading’. Firstly, femininity and masculinity are unquestioningly associated with stereotypical gender images; masculinity is defined in terms of control, performance, instrumental intentions, whilst femininity is associated with ‘soft qualities’ such as collaborative and supportive work attitudes. Secondly, the analysis provides no escape from gender dualism for everything can be marked as masculine or feminine. Finally, despite the authors’ initial rejection of the association of femininity with the biological sex of women, women displaying masculine behaviour are somehow seen as being untrue to themselves, as having to suppress their feminine sensibilities. Thus, it seems that the feminine has an authentic core, which should be given voice and freed from instrumental appropriation. On the other hand, masculinity, being defined in terms of instrumentality, seems deprived of the possibility of authenticity.

We shall come back to this problematic alignment between femininity, authenticity and the female sex. But first we want to debunk another of the premises of the masculinity genre: that of ‘multiple gender identities’.

Gender identities: Multiplicity and hegemony

Writing on masculinity tends to start from the premise that masculinity is socially constructed, and that what counts as masculine varies according to cultural and historical contexts (e.g. Connell, 1995; Kerfoot and Knights, 1998; Knights and Kerfoot, 2004; Whitehead and Barrett, 2004). Therefore we would expect to find different forms of masculinities in different social and cultural contexts at different times. Indeed, many writers have offered various categorisations of masculinities (Collinson and Hearn, 1994; Mishkind *et al.*, 1986). Yet, after these compulsory gestures towards multiplicity, we are often left with singular forms of femininity and masculinity (Wicks and Mills, 2000). For instance, Kerfoot and Knights (1998) explicitly draw upon, “a selected reading of post-structuralist feminism” (*ibid.*: 8) to stress the fluid and multiple nature of masculinity. Thus,

In making masculinity problematic and exploring masculinity as a social rather than biological concept, we are thus concerned to explore how and in what manner masculinity is constituted at given moments and in certain settings. For part of our concern is to interrogate contemporary designations of masculinity in contrast to those writers and commentators who accept them as given... Nor, despite using the term masculinity in the singular (stylistic license), is any masculine identity identical with another: there are a multiplicity of masculinities and, as some postmodernists might argue, each masculine identity is only as ‘good’ as its next encounter. (*ibid.*: 11-12)

However this multiplicity of masculine identities seems to quickly get reduced to ‘one dominant form’, for whilst “what ‘counts’ as masculine may shift over historical time periods, over the lifetime of individuals and in different spatial, social and cultural contexts” (*ibid.*: 11), it is possible to recognise a “predominant form that is elevated and privileged in everyday life” (*ibid.*: 8). This privileged form is “aggressively competitive, goal driven and instrumental in its pursuit of success” (*ibid.*: 8), it privileges “rational forms of knowledge” informed “by the desire to control the world” (*ibid.*: 13). Femininity also has its predominant mode which unsurprisingly gets aligned with stereotypical images such as ‘the care of others’ and the ‘displays of social and sexual passivity’.

So, for all intents and purposes, and despite the gestures towards multiplicity, fluidity, and impermanence, gender identity emerges as rather fixed, stable and singular. It is hard to see how masculinity can take other forms than its ‘hegemonic expression’ from the analysis presented, or to believe the authors’ claim that “each masculine identity is only as ‘good’ as its next encounter” since only the ‘dominant’ aggressive, instrumental, rational form seems to deserve attention. The ‘hegemonic form of masculinity’ seems to act as a device to enable the authors to speak substantively about gender, whilst preserving the reluctance to speak of gender identities as fixed or tied to sex. Unfortunately, and crucially, the deployment of ‘hegemonic’ masculinity does not allow for clear differentiation from essentialism. Indeed, the behaviours and characteristics it indexes are rather similar to the crude stereotypes the authors warn us against. The vacillation between these two contradictory positions, on the one hand, seeing gender as entirely contingent, and, on the other, representing only a particular ‘dominant’ manifestation requires some reconciliation.

One possible conclusion is that although masculine identities are *potentially* multiple, in practice, they take one hegemonic form that resonates with essentialist accounts of gender. But if these other forms of masculinity are not socially practised (and the authors provide no evidence that they are), and if as the authors suggest masculinities are socially and discursively constituted, we are forced to ask in what sense are these other forms of masculinity ‘masculine’? Where do they acquire their ‘masculinity’ if not in social practices?

Kerfoot and Knights (1998) suggest another way of reconciling potentially multiple forms of masculinity with their ‘hegemonic expression’. They point out that “Despite a diverse range of possibilities and variability through time and context, the difference, it seems to us, between identities grounded in a stereotypical femininity and those grounded in an equivalent masculinity revolves around the issue of control” (*ibid.*: 16). So, it seems, there may be multiple masculinities, but all are defined in terms of their desire to control; multiplicity can only be expressed within the confines of what appears as the fixed, stable, singular essence of ‘masculinity’ centred on control.

Indeed the authors themselves talk about ‘invariability’ in a paragraph worth quoting in full:

Invariably, masculinity as the embodied experience of male gendered identity reflects and reproduces an insecurity about the self that seeks its resolution self-defeatingly by a continuous process of achieving social confirmation through the approbation and approval of others. It is continuous in that each resolution is temporary, and the struggle for a secure sense of self in a masculine identity is compulsive, driven by the competitive conditions in which winning one thing is a mere stimulus to go on and win something larger and more elusive. In contrast to femininity, many men so lack a sense of their own self-esteem as to be forever proving themselves, desperately striving without ever really experiencing fulfilment. (Kerfoot and Knights, 1998: 16)

The use of the word ‘invariably’ is striking. If we take it to mean ‘unchangeable’, ‘always the same’¹, this denotes a rather significant departure from the commitment to a “multiplicity of masculinities” (*ibid.*: 11). Or is it simply the ‘stereotypical’ form of masculinity that ‘invariably’ has the characteristics outlined. But what then is meant by the reference to the “embodied experience of male gendered identity”. Is this intended to suggest that whilst the dominant form of masculinity is embodied, all other forms are disembodied? Or perhaps that *male gendered* embodied experience produces the dominant form of masculinity with the specified invariable characteristics?

But we have yet to consider the contrast indicated with ‘femininity’. Here again, after stressing the “multiplicity and diversity of discourses of femininity” (*ibid.*: 14), the authors tell us that what “is at issue here” is “a predominant mode of femininity” that “finds expression in catering for and nurturing the ‘needs’ of others, be they men, superordinates, or dependent children. Casual conversations readily reveal numerous women come to structure a sense of their own self-esteem and identity through a ritualistic absorption with the minutia of tasks and activities involved in being a wife, girlfriend, mother or daughter” (*ibid.*: 14).

1 The Concise Oxford dictionary.

Later there is a confusing shift to the plural form when we are told that by contrast to masculinity “feminine identities are dominated by attaining an impeccability of physical environment, character and bodily virtue, reflect the indeterminable flux and flow of every day interactions” (*ibid.*: 16). Does the use of the plural here suggest that the multiplicity of femininity is confined to this particular expression? Or is this still referring to the ‘predominant mode’? But even if it is referring to the predominant mode, what remains particularly difficult here is that suddenly the authors draw upon some rather conventional, historically and culturally conservative, clichéd expressions of feminine ‘virtue’ that are usually found in essentialist accounts of the female sex (Merchant, 1983; Longino, 1987). In concluding, the authors’ explain:

Our concern in this paper has been to emphasise precisely a lack of internal coherence, both in terms of the concept of subjectivity per se, and consequently, to recognise the multiplicity of identities, meanings and behaviours that surround any conception of ‘masculinity’ as² ‘femininity’. Masculinity is then characterised by fragmentation at the level of individual subjects at any one time and across their life histories. A project whose purpose is to articulate a singular or constant masculine subjectivity is thereby at once flawed and contradictory. (Kerfoot and Knights, 1998: 21)

But what seems to ‘lack coherence’ here is not femininity and masculinity themselves, but rather the analysis to which they are subjected. The ‘fragmented’ and ‘contradictory’ nature of gender identity does not give rise to ‘multiple identities’, as the authors would have us believe, but rather become the very essence of ‘masculinity’. Femininity emerges as an identity comfortable with fluidity, with the ‘indeterminable flux and flow of everyday interactions’, rather than a fluid identity. These identities are subjected to the caveat that they do not threaten the overall position that gendered identities are ‘multiple’ and ‘variable’ – that being is in ‘perpetual flux and impermanence’. However, the ways these ‘ideals’ are deployed *must* threaten the overall position on gender as ‘multiple’ or ‘in flux’. Repeated assertions of these sentiments lack substance or meaning if they do not connect with the argument as it is developed. If we ignore the disorientating effects of seemingly contradictory statements, what remains *is* an essentialist account.

Intimacy and authenticity

Underpinning much writing on gender identity is a sense that femininity, when it is not ‘suppressed’ or manipulated by masculine instrumental orientation, is more authentic. Masculinity, on the other hand, in its vacuous quest for control, is driven by instrumentality. The very definition of masculinity in terms of instrumentality denies it any possibility of ‘authentic expression’, whilst the very definition of femininity seems to embody authenticity. We saw above that one way in which this (in)authenticity gets aligned with gender identity is by invoking the flux and flow of daily life, which femininity embraces, but which masculinity denies in its self-defeating struggle for control and a secure sense of self.

It is perhaps in relation to intimacy that this granting of authentic status to gender identity is most evident. But we might wonder why we should take intimacy as a

2 We assume that ‘as’ is a typo.

measure of authenticity. Knights and Kerfoot (2004) provide a swift answer: intimacy is “a part of what it is to be human” (*ibid.*: 438). On this count, the inability to display ‘intimacy’ is a failure to be ‘human’. They go on to contrast intimacy to instrumentality and argue that “intimacy reflects and reinforces an engagement in relations, not as means to some external end but as an end in itself” (*ibid.*: 437). Masculinity, being articulated in terms of a ‘self-defeating’ “attachment to an instrumental achievement of identity through the control of self and ‘other’” (Kerfoot and Knight, 1998: 16) is left “disembodied and bereft of emotional content and significance”, “emotionally devoid of intimacy” (*ibid.*: 17).

In another publication, Kerfoot (2004) initially signals some move away from the above essentialist position when she claims that she does not consider “intimacy as a fixed, essential property of individuals and their interactions [...] but as a range of possibilities produced in and facilitated by social encounters” (*ibid.*: 234). However, the somewhat primordial nature of intimacy seems to be later re-asserted: intimacy is said to require ‘authentic response’, intimacy can only be experienced in unscripted, spontaneous encounters that threatens the masculine struggle for control and certainty. Moreover, the connection between intimacy and gender identity seems to be secure enough for Kerfoot (2004) to be able to claim that “in their (frequently unfulfilled) desire for emotional intimacy with the opposite sex, many women sustain an alternative formulation of the possibilities for intimacy as other than concerned with purposive ends” (*ibid.*: 236); on the other end “many men [...] have recourse to conventionally masculine behaviours as a means of evading or avoiding social interaction that is evidently uncomfortable. It is uncomfortable in that, because of the emotional intimacy so desired by many women, such intimacy, by its very nature, requires that the men respond authentically” (*ibid.*: 237).

Intimacy therefore stands in the way of masculine preoccupations with control, success and self-mastery, “Masculinity constitutes a mode of being devoid of intimacy other than in ways that facilitate an expression of self, bound up in purposive rational instrumentality and in a heroic mastery of ‘reality’” (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004: 438). But in denying intimacy, or confining it to “its own private ghetto”, masculine discourses are “repressive both to the self and Other” (*ibid.*: 438). In effect they are suppressing some human essence, or at least impoverishing the range of possibilities for human interactions (Kerfoot, 2004). Not only does masculinity leaves no space for intimacy, but in Kerfoot’s discussion it also appears as a response to, or an escape from, the threat of intimacy. Thus, exposed to the uncertainty of emotional intimacy, many men reach for “stereotypical masculine behaviours” (2004: 237). It is not clear from this account why men more than women feel threatened by the ‘uncertainty’ or spontaneity of intimacy. Moreover, when masculinity finds its expression “in situations of ‘male bonding’ such as sporting events or pub crawls, [...] intimacy is simulated through ribaldry, rivalry and rowdiness” (Kerfoot and Knights, 1998: 11). So, in a circular argument, masculinity is defined in terms of lack of intimacy, and masculine (fake) displays of intimacy can only be simulations, providing further evidence that masculinity is devoid of intimacy. On the other hand, “Many women resist the bureaucratic displacement of intimacy and refuse to allow organizational goals and career aspirations to dominate their lives... elevating personal life and non-work intimacies above the instrumental tasks they are given” (Kerfoot and Knights, 1998:

20). If we assume that the reference to ‘many women’ in the above quote is meant to index a predominant form of femininity, we must conclude that feminine identity is more in touch with her human nature.

To sum up, intimacy is somehow a primordial and essential quality of what it means to be human, and implicitly, by extension, good (although why ‘intimacy’ should be said to form the essence of human nature when, for example, rationality is denied that quality, and essentialism is refuted, is not clear). Masculinity, in its self-defeating desire to control, is reduced to instrumental thinking and incapable of intimacy; therefore any display of intimacy can only be ‘simulated’. So, masculinity is doubly inauthentic: for suppressing or denying an essential characteristic of human nature; and for ‘simulating intimacy’. Femininity, on the other hand, is defined in terms of ‘intimacy’ and is presumably more authentic.

But if masculinity is ‘devoid of intimacy’ or ‘bereft of emotional content and significance’, uncomfortable with intimacy and the flux and flow of daily life, it finds its natural expression in rationality, and by extension organization.

Gendering ‘organization’: Rationality and masculinity

The definition of certain organizational activities, indeed some sense of organization itself, as masculine is central to much writing on gender (e.g. Collinson and Hearn, 1994, 1996; Bruni *et al.*, 2004; Benschop and Dooreward, 1998; Hearn, 1996; Gheradi, 1995; Kerfoot and Knights, 1993, 1998; Kerfoot and Whitehead, 1998, 2000; Hopton, 1999; Knights and Kerfoot, 2004; Knights and McCabe, 2001; Linstead and Metcalfe, 2003; Sinclair, 2000).

This equation between masculinity and organization/management has become so common place that it is often reproduced without the need for further explanation, for cross-referencing provides evidence that this is a well established truth. In fact, the grounds on which such ‘well accepted’ connections are drawn look rather tenuous when examined more closely. There is a commonsensical aspect to these associations drawn from stereotypical masculine behaviour and the empirical reality that men dominate most formal organizations. But theory is neither drawn from stereotype nor necessarily induced from empirical circumstance. How then does organization, and management, acquire its ‘masculinity’?

For Knights and McCabe (2001), it is science that provides the point of connection between masculinity and organization. Science is characterised by (hegemonic) masculine attributes, “science was seen as a cold dry hard aggressive activity that glorified in its own penetrative abilities in the pursuit of a complete mastery over nature” (*ibid.*: 623). This is then equated with the specific *managerial* practice of business process re-engineering (BPR) which is said to be similarly masculine since it is associated with an engineering/science orientation.

The invoking of science to establish the masculinity of organization and management is clearly inscribed within a broader trend that takes rationality as the linking mechanism. For example, Ross-Smith and Kornberger (2004) argue that organization is predicated on rationality, and that from its ‘philosophical beginnings’ rationality has been linked to

masculinity; the concept of rationality that is “elaborated in western society from Descartes to Kant and Weber and enacted in organizational discourse and which informs practices is, at its core, masculine, despite appearing gender neutral. Thus, rationality keeps on gendering organizational discourses and practices” (*ibid.*: 282). Recognising that “the association between rationality and masculinity... tends to be stated rather than argued for” (*ibid.*: 280) in feminist organization theory, they propose to outline how the “two concepts have become genealogically so closely and inseparably intertwined” (*ibid.*: 280). To this end, they develop a history of rationality and its association with masculinity, extending from ancient Greece to Weber.

Drawing upon Lloyd (1984), Ross-Smith and Kornberger (2004) argue that from the beginning of philosophical thought, maleness was symbolically associated with reason and femaleness was associated with what reason left behind. It was the Greek philosophers who initially associated women and femininity with nature. Men were associated with reason and the mind – the opposite of nature and form – thus beginning the association of rationality (the acquisition of reason) with masculinity. Moreover this separation was organized in a hierarchical relation (Ross-Smith and Kornberger, 2004: 283).

These associations were reinforced by Cartesian rationalism and Bacon’s empiricism. Cartesian rationalism is based on clarity, dispassion and detachment and on the dualism associated with the separation of mind and body. Again this distinction assigns dominance to one category; reason in Cartesian philosophy becomes a category that is dominant and assigned to masculine, non-reason is subordinated and assigned to the feminine. Then in the empiricist tradition established by Bacon, “the removal of the pursuit of knowledge from abstract definitions and deductive reasoning and focusing it on the ideas of unbiased analysis of concrete data, inductive reasoning and empirically supported conclusions... in Bacon’s philosophy, nature maintains its femaleness but becomes knowable and controllable” (*ibid.*: 284). The philosophy of Bacon and Descartes was formative in the development of 18th century Enlightenment interpretations of rationality, and attempts to develop objective science, morality and law. These attempts became central to the “human drive towards economic growth and human progress”.

It is here that Ross-Smith and Kornberger connect rationality (and by extension masculinity) with the modern organization. This is particularly due to the influence of Kant on the work of Max Weber (*ibid.*: 285). Their argument centres on the difference between formal or instrumental rationality and substantive rationality; whilst the latter is concerned with means such as formal rules, the former is associated with ends such as human values and ethics. ‘Modernisation’ saw an encroachment of instrumental rationality with ‘important questions’ reduced to problems of instrumental control. Weber felt that substantive rationality inevitably declines as modernisation occurs. Instrumental rationality takes over, bureaucratic rules and the pursuit of wealth and power become ends in themselves.

The authors now reveal the gendered nature of organization; “Rationalizing organization in this instrumental way implicitly leads to a masculinization of organizations, since instrumental rationality and masculinity are inextricably

intertwined” (*ibid.*: 287). Moreover in modern organization, “Value-rational action tends to degenerate into instrumentally rational action that corresponds with the cult of masculinity, Instrumental, calculating rationality brings with it qualities considered masculine: smart and decisive self-determination or free, confident aggressive action” (Bologh cited in Ross-Smith and Kornberger, 2004: 287). Their conclusion is that there is a striking link between the male stereotype and the values underpinning organization; organizations are driven by instrumental rationality. Instrumental rationality is masculine. Hence, organizations are masculine.

But the crucial question how masculinity and instrumental rationality came to be ‘inextricably intertwined’ remains. Whilst Ross-Smith and Kornberger (2004) retrace the connections between ‘men’ and ‘rationality’ from Ancient Greece to modern organizations, and provide an account of the various forms this connection has taken in different historical periods, they still do not provide the linkage with ‘masculinity’, unless they commit the essentialist sin of equating men and masculinity. There is no explicit mention of essentialism, or its rejection, in this article but the authors make gestures towards this position when they talk about rationality being “at its core, masculine” (*ibid.*: 282) or of the “inherent association of masculinity and rationality” (*ibid.*: 288). Of course, such essentialist sentiments would be at odds with current received wisdom about the fluidity of gender.

An alternative explanation is to argue that science, rationality and organizations are all practices that have been dominated by men, and from which women have been structurally excluded. This would lead to an analysis of the material and symbolic practices that have served to mark rationality as the preserve of men. Ross-Smith and Kornberger (2004) may point us towards such explanation when they claim that “much activity that can be described as distinctly human (or rational) in the Kantian sense, has been reserved for men” (*ibid.*: 285). However, such explanation does not require the concept of masculinity, but would instead rely on an empirical examination of the practices that have served to exclude women.

Ross-Smith and Kornberger (2004) fail to provide a convincing explanation for the association between instrumental rationality and masculinity, either they have to rely on essentialism, a position that would be rejected by many of the post-structuralist authors that draw on these connections, or on an analysis of the practices through which rationality becomes the preserve of men, in which case it is not clear what the ‘masculine’ label adds to ‘men’. Therefore we are still left wondering how rationality becomes ‘masculine’ and what it means for a concept to be labelled ‘masculine’.

Maybe a better explanation can be found in Knights and Kerfoot (2004). Here again, we find the association between masculinity and organization:

What we would want to describe as discourses of masculinity are what characterise most business, and indeed non-commercial, organizations. While tacit and non-explicit discourses of masculinity nonetheless prevail to structure and sustain behaviour of certain sorts, it is ordinarily behaviour that is technically rational, performance-oriented. Highly instrumental, devoid of intimacy yet pre-occupied with identity, and driven by rarely reflected upon corporate or bureaucratic goals that are presumed inviolable. These masculine discourses thereby have the effect of constituting both managers and employees as subjects that secure their sense of identity, meaning and reality through the rational, efficient and singularly uncritical pursuit of the goals and objectives handed

down from above. Conditioned by this privileged and pervasive form of masculinity, the modern manager is ritually engaged in co-ordinating and controlling others in pursuit of the instrumental goals of production, productivity and profit. (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004: 436)

If we are to believe Knights and Kerfoot (2004), organization and rationality are a direct expression of, and presumably the product of, masculinity. Indeed, we are later told that instrumental rationalities are “a condition and consequence of masculine preoccupations with success that see no limit to control, competition and conquest” (*ibid.*: 437). But the association between masculinity and instrumental rationality also comes from masculine preoccupation with identity. Masculine discourses are not only preoccupied with success and control, but also with securing a sense of identity, to achieve self-mastery. Here we are told that the human condition is characterised by anxiety and insecurity over potential threats to our survival. In contemporary societies, fear over “biological survival” has been displaced by “preoccupations with ‘social survival’ or concern for identity” (*ibid.*: 438). And “while this anxiety about identity can have positive outcomes in terms of creativity and taking life as a challenge, it can also be negative and self-defeating when we become obsessed with controlling the conditions that are seen to secure the self” (*ibid.*: 438-439). Masculinity seems to be the expression of this negative aspect of anxiety about identity: “Masculine discourses not only invoke a preoccupation with this control but also, and as a necessary accompaniment to these instrumental pursuits, self-mastery. This involves a compulsive preoccupation with identity” (*ibid.*: 439).

How and why masculine discourses, and only masculine discourses, transform this anxiety about identity into a compulsive and instrumental pursuit of self-mastery is not clear. Maybe it is because of its already instrumental preoccupations that masculinity reduces the search for identity to an instrumental pursuit. Hence, Kerfoot and Knights argue, “the confirmation of self and identity is social, and yet masculine instrumentality has already chased out the intimacy through which such confirmations from the ‘Other’ might be plausible, let alone sustained. The preoccupation with identity must then become as instrumental, compulsive and self-defeating as the demands for control, conquest and competitive success that it reflects and reproduces” (2004: 439). But beneath these arguments seems to be the assumption that there is a more productive, positive way of addressing the anxiety about identity, and that this would involve recognising the social nature of the self and immersing oneself in intimate relationships. This presumably would be the feminine response to the problem of identity; however, it is an option that is not available to the ‘masculine’ subject who has already undermined intimacy.

By now the circularity, ambiguity and self-referential nature of the arguments have become quite dizzying. In short, it seems that it is the instrumentality of masculinity that transforms the human anxiety and insecurity over identity into an instrumental pursuit. So, masculine instrumentality in its dealing with the problem of identity is a product of its instrumental orientation! And where does this instrumental orientation come from? We can only assume that it is the product of ‘masculine preoccupations with success’. This is where the chain of explanation seems to stop, for here we are back to the circular argument that “[instrumental] rationalities are a condition and a consequence of masculine preoccupations with success” (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004: 437). Does that mean that instrumental rationality provides the conditions for masculine search for

success, but it is also the product of this search? Can instrumental rationality provide the conditions for anything other than the masculine search for success? Can the masculine search for success be expressed in terms other than through instrumental rationality? And where does this masculine search for success come from?

Seemingly the search for an explanation of the association between rationality (and by extension organization) and masculinity is doomed to endless circularity or deferring of essentialist positions. The association goes on unchallenged but unproven; its endless repetition displacing any need for further examination. In some self-referential manner it acts as evidence that no further proof is required for it is presented as something we all surely agree on. Yet, as we have shown it can only be maintained through some essentialist assumptions about the inherent 'maleness' of rationality. If such essentialist assumptions are rejected, as they often are, then it remains unclear how these associations can be sustained.

In the Knights and Kerfoot's (2004) version, essentialism is deferred from 'rationality' itself to concerns for success and self-mastery. However, we are still left to wonder what makes these preoccupations with success and self-mastery 'masculine'. Secondly, even if we ignore the essentialism of this position, it remains unclear why the search for success or the need to secure identity should be expressed through rationality. Historically, the quest for power, control, success, status that are all supposed to characterise masculinity has taken many forms from reliance on traditional patterns of authority, to the force of armies and the use of other forms of violence. Thirdly, is it not clear how rationality becomes reduced to the masculine expression of control and the pursuit of success.

For example, Martin (2001) suggests that women are often more instrumental in work activities, and frustrated by men's reluctance to engage in these issues. She found that men were often not concerned with formal goals but mainly with each other; furthermore the alliances that men built in organizations and their expressions of camaraderie were rarely about work. The women in her research believed that men used organizational resources in pursuit of activities derived from relationships with each other and not in relation to formal organizational goals.

Perhaps Knights and Kerfoot (1998, 2004) would read such happenings as 'simulated intimacy', men's instrumental expression of camaraderie to serve their compulsive pursuit of success, control and secure identities. But this would get us back to the problem of circularity: masculinity essentially being defined by instrumental rationality, all masculine behaviour can only be a manifestation of such instrumental rationality, however it might be disguised. Martin's study also raises the question about the gendered status of rationality. Here it is women who are practising rationality, and being frustrated by men's lack of concern for rationality. What are the implications of this reversal for our labelling of practices as masculine? Martin (2001) argues that her study confirms the conception of gender as fluid because "the women interpreted men as practising masculinities regardless of what they did. For example, when men supported or protected each other, and visited or expressed fondness for each other, women interpreted them as signifying masculinities not femininities, despite the cultural

stereotypes that frame these behaviours – support, protection, visiting, expressing positive affect – as feminine” (*ibid.*: 609).

This argument has some merit, but it does beg the question as to why we would wish to hold on to concepts of masculinity and femininity at all; we are forced to ask whether concepts and their deployment are so flexible that they lose all analytical purchase (Alvesson, 1998). As Brubaker and Cooper argue, “In their insistence that identities are multiple, malleable, fluid and so on, soft identitarians leave us with a term so infinitely elastic as to be incapable of performing serious analytical work” (2000: 11). If masculinity and femininity are floating labels to refer to whatever behaviour men and women respectively engage in, and these vary according to contexts, then they are at best convenient short-hands, descriptive devices, that only have meaning in particular cultural contexts. But as analytical tools to make sense of gender power relations, they are not only theoretically incoherent, as we have suggested in this section, but also, and more importantly, damaging.

This brings us to our next section, where we argue that the contradictions present in writing on masculinity undermines the capacity to engage with (real) gendered effects. Here we assume that writing on masculinity is concerned with the ‘oppression of women by men’, with gender inequality, and argue that the deployment of masculinity does little to address this concern.

The Consequences of Contradiction

Here we argue that the masculinity writing is not only theoretically incoherent, but is also irrelevant for the analysis of gender inequality. We explore this irrelevance in two areas. Firstly, if we follow the soft rhetoric of gender fluidity and multiplicity, of masculinity as a cultural ideal that need not correspond to men, it becomes difficult to see what relevance it may have to understand and challenge men’s dominance over women. Secondly, the cliché and contradictions that underpin this writing cannot adequately convey the feelings provoked by manifestations of masculinity.

The dilution of gender inequality

Let’s start with gender inequality. There is no doubt that historically science, rationality and organizations have been and continue to be the preserve of men, and that woman, through a combination of moral arguments about their proper place or virtue, and material practices related to the division between public / private spheres, have tended to be excluded. We could, of course, choose to package all the moral and material practices through which men have been privileged and women have been excluded under the umbrella of ‘masculinity’.

However the coupling of men (domination) and masculinity is problematic in several ways. Firstly, ‘masculinity’ may become *the* explanation for men’s domination; its deployment puts closure on an analysis of the practices through which men dominate women, thus men dominate women because they are masculine. Secondly, such explanation in terms of ‘masculinity’ could easily degenerate into essentialism, as we

have seen in the previous section. And, thirdly, attempts to move away from the danger of essentialism by proclaiming the multiplicity and fluidity leave us with a notion of masculinity that is so open and insubstantial that it loses its grip on the realities of gender power relations. In all cases the concept of masculinity disables, rather than enables, the analysis of men's domination.

A sense of this ineffectiveness is illustrated by Alvesson's (1998) study of gender relationships and identities in a Swedish advertising agency. Alvesson suggests that the culture of the advertising agency was dominated by what would be labelled as 'feminine' characteristics. Thus, there was an emphasis on 'personal chemistry', interpersonal relationships, feelings, intuition and so on. The men in the organization did not display 'masculine toughness, rationality, impersonality' but also privilege feelings, intuition and the personal over 'masculine characteristics'. Yet the gender division of labour was particularly marked:

The case shows an interesting paradox. There is an extreme sexual division of labour with the men at the top and the women at the bottom, and a strong appreciation of female sexual attraction combined with a, in many ways, 'soft' atmosphere in the organization and a construction of work and organization in 'feminine' ways. (*ibid.*: 988)

Alvesson's (1998) study suggests that, in this case at least, masculinity is of little relevance to explain men domination, unless, like the women in Martin's (2001) study we chose to define masculinity in terms of whatever men do. But bundling everything that characterises groups of men under a "big masculinity umbrella" (Alvesson, 1998: 987) severely undermines the explanatory and analytical power of masculinity. The mobilisation of 'masculinity', together with its loose coupling with men, serves only to obfuscate the analysis of the material, cultural, social practices that lead some men and (some women) to dominate women. Appealing to masculinity to explain any forms of socially problematic behaviour performed by men (and some women) serves only to short-circuit the analysis of the practices that lead to social division and oppression.

The comfort of 'reflexivity'

We have questioned the power of 'masculinity' to explain gender relationships of domination. We now want to argue that work on masculinity is also irrelevant to our own responses to 'masculine' behaviour; its clichés are incapable of coming close to representing the strength of the feelings that 'masculine displays' elicit. These are very uncomfortable. They are conveyed neither by 'hard' essentialist identities that do not fit or the 'soft' rhetoric of fluidity and multiplicity that simply irritates. The increasingly scripted language in which post-structuralism moves towards 'complex and fragmented identities' are both asserted, and undermined produces a sanitising and deadening effect. The lack of explanatory power produces an anaemic response to 'gendered effects'.

So, what is the nature of the response offered by the masculinity genre? Much appears to revolve around the notion of disruption. For instance, Whitehead (2000: 133) claims that 'critical' gender studies should 'encroach directly upon the personal', threaten our ontological security and expose us as complex, vulnerable, inconsistent gendered beings:

Of course, the point about research into masculinity, and gender per se, is that it encroaches directly onto the personal. The individual cannot escape the epistemological and ontological implications of feminist scholarship. By contrast, sociologists have available to them an array of theories and concepts which, critical as they might be, do not impinge on or threaten one's relative and ontological security. These are concepts and theories which can be locked, left undisturbed until we next confront the PC. Thus the unpleasant and personally menacing is effectively shut out. This is not the case with critical gender studies, for it disrupts, it intrudes and the more one engages in it, so more apparent become the contradictions and ideologies informing our being and which, as women and men, we live out daily – despite any ability we might have to critically reflect on them. All critical gender research, undertaken within a feminist agenda, speaks to both the personal and political. Yet it also confronts our very identities as complex gendered beings, forcing us to face our vulnerability, inconsistency, and, I would argue, our contingent existence as discursive subjects. (Whitehead, 2000: 133)

There seem to be two related responses to masculinity suggested here. One is to 'disrupt' dualistic representations of gender, a strategy also proposed by Knights and Kerfoot (2004). Here the idea is to destabilise gender identities by pointing to the contradictions forming our 'being'. For example, they seek to deconstruct the gender binary and its hierarchical content by disrupting masculine hegemony at work; this for them involves "occupying a space in between representation of gender", creating a "critical space where our accounts are not primarily an occasion for producing an orderly and predictable world in which to secure our sense of self" (*ibid.*: 444). However, in reality it is hard to see how the account of masculinity they provide is anything other than predictable and orderly.

But before developing this point, let's look at the second, related response: to 'confront' our gendered identities, our vulnerability and to face the 'unpleasant and the personally menacing'. This seems to take us towards a confessional mode in which men (and women?) are to bring disruptive practices to 'the personal'. So, presumably men must reflect upon their 'masculine' display of competitiveness, sham intimacy, cold instrumentality and so on. Unfortunately, if these behaviours are driven by some 'compulsive' pursuit of control and self-mastery, as Knights and Kerfoot (2004) for example, would lead us to believe, it is not clear what men can do beyond these reflections, or how this constitutes a response. Men may engage in aggressive or competitive behaviour 'reflexively', but what difference does this make from an unreflexive display of these behaviours to those who feel offended, oppressed by them? This only seems to allow for some indulgent and ineffectual confession of the type, 'I am bad but I can't help it'. Whilst this may provide comfort to those who engage in such moves, it is of little consolation to others.

But more fundamentally, research into masculinity (at least that which we have focused upon here) has little impact in disrupting representations of gender or encroaching directly onto the personal. It is hard to feel a sense of threat, menace, vulnerability, ontological insecurity from the work on masculinity. In fact, the 'masculinity' genre tends to achieve just the opposite. Firstly, as we have shown, there is a sense in much contemporary writing on gender, of a rehearsal of expected language and positions. These recitals can be made thoughtlessly. The presence of such clichés is far from disruptive; the familiarity and convenience of language actually has a settling effect; familiarity produces a form of acceptance. How many times have we sat in seminars

where various episodes of masculine displays and feminine passivity are recounted for our reflexive delectation? Then we wander to the pub.

The appropriation of all forms of gendered practices and effects within this inescapable language leaves no room for formulating our own responses. These have been claimed or packaged as being themselves the products of the ineluctable unrolling of gendered practices. Presumably it is masculinity's incapacity for intimacy and over-reliance on instrumental rationality that we should find problematic. But what if it was precisely the display of 'bonding' (and whether this is 'fake' or 'authentic' is irrelevant), the lack of rationality, that disturbs us? And why should we care whether or not men reflexively engage with their masculinity if such reflexive engagement does not stop them displaying the behaviours we found problematic in the first place? With its soft rhetoric of fluidity, multiplicity, reflexivity and so on, masculinity writing makes no space for harder responses that would be more in tune with the violent strength of feeling that men's behaviour may elicit.

Nevertheless, perhaps there are ways of speaking of gender as fluid that allow the possibility of change/transcendence. However, this possibility must follow the identification of the existence of oppression and subjugation. Therefore the progressive use of gender appears to depend on a different conceptual formulation from the one afforded by 'masculinity', one that starts with gender as a source of oppression, domination, disadvantage, rather than 'identity'. We end with some comments about how this formulation might be produced.

On gender: Dualism and dissolution

Whilst we agree with the masculinity genre insistence on 'disruption', we do not see the 'reflexive' or confessional strategies they offer as fitting this purpose, quite the reverse as we have argued above. So, what would form a more appropriate, 'disruptive' response, one that would be more fitting with the hard effects of gendered practices? As we have alluded to above, progressive gender politics depends on the recognition of relationships of domination between men and women, of inequality between men and women. It must start therefore with dualism.

In their editorial introduction to a Special issue of *Gender, Work and Organization* on 'Beyond Boundaries: Towards Fluidity in Theorizing and Practice', Linstead and Brewis (2004) ask whether it is possible to raise the question of gender inequality without reproducing gender binaries; one of the contributions to the issue, to which we have already referred earlier, echoes this concern: "How can we raise an issue about gender equity unless the binary between men and women is already presupposed?" (Knights and Kerfoot, 2004: 431). However, Knights and Kerfoot (2004) seem to ignore this insight and proceed to provide a critique of the gender binary, seeing it as obstructing the development of equality. But attacking gender binaries on the ground that they are constructed, 'inessential', serves to efface the ways in which dualisms are deployed in social reality, in structuring power relations between men and women.

In this, we agree with one of the contributions of the special issue (Borgerson and Rehn, 2004), and would like to speak for dualism, for "dualisms play a critical role in calling attention to subordination and oppression" (*ibid.*: 458). Re-legitimising dualism as an

analytical and political tool would provide a useful contrast to the fashionable diluting, 'ironising' of difference and making them inessential by proclaiming their fluidity. Privileging the 'fluidity of gender identity' may undermine attempts to speak about inequality and promote equality, and underplay the power of dualisms in structuring power relationships. Whilst we accept that gender dualisms are socially constructed rather than 'essential', it remains that when gender matters, at least to understand and challenge patriarchal relations, it is expressed and played out on dualisms; it is not fluid masculinities oppressing fluid femininities but men dominating women. Denying the power of these dualisms because they are constructed involves pulling the grounds for critiques from under our feet. Therefore, perhaps starting with concrete instances in which this dualism is played out offers more promising grounds for challenging patriarchal relations than starting with some stereotypical abstractions about 'masculinity' that often do not speak to / of the concrete instances of oppression they claim to illuminate. So, at least some of the time, gender differences could be productively be brought into sharp relief rather than dissolved into multiple and fluid identities.

But having insisted on the potential political role of gender dualism, we also recognise that it does not always have a hold on our actions and relationships, it does not hold us in place as 'man' or 'woman' all the time; as Riley (1988) suggests, "we do not live our lives soaked up in gender". At this point, we may want to return to the notion of fluidity; however, we would want to move away from a perspective that sees fluidity as movement between (multiple) feminine and masculine identities towards one that dissolves gender as a holder or marker of identity altogether. As Borgerson and Rehn (2004) note, the articulation of fluidity in much of the masculinity literature is still bounded by dualism, by 'masculinity' and 'femininity', be they in multiple forms.

If we take the fluidity of gender identities to its logical conclusion, it would simply dissolve. Thus, the fluidity of gender identities could be expressed not in terms of adopting positions in between masculinity and femininity, but in terms of dissolving into 'not gender'. Fluidity here would refer to gender moving beyond its frame, disappearing, no longer being contained by additional types of femininities or masculinities; it would open up the possibility for the dissolution of gender categories. Therefore if we retain the notion of fluidity, it would be to express the partial hold that gender exercises on identities and social relations, as well as its partial relevance in understanding social relations. We would need to be able to recognise that sometimes it matters, sometimes not. Here we could follow Riley's (1988: 113) call for feminism to develop 'foxiness, versatility', to be willing, at times to use gender dualism as a political tactic, at other times to "shred women [and men] to bits". With this image, Riley (1988) is inviting feminists to loosen the grip that gender categories have on women (and we could add men).

We could then acknowledge that being woman (or man) is only a part-time occupation, that some of the time our lives, relationships, activities, identities are not experienced in terms of gender but of other social categories, other aspects of the moment or context. Stressing the temporality of gender, of being 'man' or 'woman' does not limit 'disruption' to a play between 'masculine' and 'feminine' identities, or a reflexive engagement with our own gender identities. It affords the possibility to sometimes lose

(our) gender, but sometimes use it as a political weapon. We must be prepared to swing over to recognise that if gender is sometimes so 'fluid' as to be irrelevant, as we have indicated above, then too often it sticks, it holds us in places and positions where we do not want to be, erecting hard boundaries that no amount of fluidity, discursive disruption or confession can overcome.

Conclusion

The masculinity genre seems caught between the desire to say something about gender and the theoretical need to empty gender of substance by proclaiming its shifting, multiple, fluid nature. This dilemma leads it into various theoretical contradictions through which essentialism is refuted, but creeps back in terms of the articulation of rather singular and stereotypical images of femininity and masculinity. These contradictions are hidden under various circular arguments that provide no escape from gender.

The only response that can be formulated involves some disruption of gender identity, but disruption remains enmeshed in some inescapable frame of (multiple) femininities and masculinities. We are left with some rather ineffectual responses that involve a combination of reflexivity and confession, but that do not relate to, speak to or about the hard effects of gendered practices. Immersed in its soft rhetoric of fluidity, impermanence, multiplicity and so on, the masculinity genre is ill-equipped to say anything about the 'hard' gender effects that are played on dualistic lines.

Whilst we agree with the anti-essentialist position that the masculinity writing has adopted, we do not see the move into 'fluidity' (at least as articulated in this writing) as particularly productive in addressing gender inequality; in fact privileging fluidity only serves to efface gender power relationships. Thus, we would want to retain dualism as an analytical and political device for understanding and challenging subordination and oppression. However, we see the deployment of dualism as an intermittent, flexible political tactic, one that could be combined with the also intermittent shredding of gender. This flexible analytical treatment of gender, sometimes bringing its hardness to the fore, sometimes dissolving it, would allow for a different understanding of fluidity, one that referred to the capacity to move in and out of gender, rather than between gender identities.

references

- Alvesson, M. (1998) 'Gender relations and identity at work: A case study of masculinities and femininities in an advertising agency', *Human Relations*, 51(8): 969-1005.
- Benschop, Y and H. Dooreward (1998) 'Covered by equality: The gender subtext of organizations', *Organization Studies*, 19(3): 787-805.
- Borgerson, J. and A. Rehn (2004) 'General economy and productive dualisms', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 11(4): 455-474.
- Brubaker, R. and F. Cooper (2000) 'Beyond Identity', *Theory and Society*, 29: 1-47.
- Bruni, A., S. Gherardi and B. Poggio (2004) 'Doing gender, doing entrepreneurship: An ethnographic account of intertwined practices', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 11(4): 406-429.

- Clatterbaugh, K. (1998) 'What is problematic about masculinities?', *Men and Masculinities*, 1(1): 24-45.
- Collinson, D. and J. Hearn (1994) 'Naming Men as Men: Implications for Work, Organization and Management', *Gender, Work & Organization*, 1 (1): 2-22.
- Collinson, D. and J. Hearn (eds.) (1996) *Men as managers, managers as men*. London: Sage.
- Gheradi, S. (1995) *Gender, symbolism and organizational culture*. London: Sage.
- Hearn, J. (1996a) 'Is masculinity dead? A critical account of the concept of masculinity / masculinities', in M. Mac an Ghaill (ed.) *Understanding masculinities: Social Relations and cultural arenas*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 202-217.
- Hearn, J. (1996b) 'Deconstructing the dominant', *Organization*, 3(4): 611-626.
- Hearn, J. (2004) 'From hegemonic masculinity to the hegemony of men', *Feminist Theory*, 5(1): 49-72.
- Hopton, J. (1999) 'Militarism, masculinism and managerialisation in the British public sector', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 8(1): 71-82.
- Kerfoot, D. (2004) 'The Organization of Intimacy: Managerialism, masculinity and the masculine subject', in S. Whitehead and F. Barrett (eds.) *The Masculinities Reader*. Cambridge: Polity, 231-252.
- Kerfoot, D. and D. Knights (1998) 'Managing masculinity in contemporary organizational life: A 'man'agerial project', *Organization*, 5(1): 7-26.
- Kerfoot, D. and D. Knights (1993) 'Management, masculinity and manipulation: From paternalism to corporate strategy in financial services in Britain', *Journal of Management Studies*, 30(4): 659-679.
- Kerfoot, D. and S. Whitehead (1998) 'Boys own' stuff: Masculinity and the management of further education', *The Sociological Review*, 46(3): 436-457.
- Kerfoot, D. and S. Whitehead (2000) 'Keeping all the Balls in the Air: Further Education and the Masculine / Managerial Subject', *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 24(2): 183-201.
- Knights, D. and D. Kerfoot (2004) 'Between representations and subjectivity: Gender binaries and the politics of organizational transformation', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 11(4): 430-454.
- Knights, D. and D. McCabe (2001) 'A different world: Shifting masculinities in the transition to call centres', *Organization*, 8(4): 619-645.
- Linstead, A. and J. Brewis (2004) 'Editorial: Beyond boundaries: Towards fluidity in theorizing and practice', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 11(4): 355-362.
- Lloyd, G. (1984) *The man of reason: Male and female in western philosophy*. London: Methuen.
- Longino, H. E. (1998) 'Can there be a feminist science?', *Hypatia*, 2(3): 51-64.
- MacInnes, J. (1998) *The End of Masculinity*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- MacInnes, J. (2004) 'The crisis of masculinity and the politics of identity', in S. Whitehead and F. Barrett (eds.) *The Masculinities Reader*. Cambridge: Polity, 311-329.
- Martin, P. Y. (2001) 'Mobilising masculinities: Women's experiences of man at work', *Organization*, 8(4): 587-618.
- McMahon, A. (1993) 'Male readings of feminist theory: The psychologization of sexual politics in the masculinity literature', *Theory and Society*, 22(5): 675-696.
- Merchant, C. (1983) *The death of nature: Women, ecology and the scientific revolution*. Harper and Row: San Francisco.
- Metcalf, B. and A. Linstead (2003) 'Gendering teamwork: re-writing the feminine', *Gender Work and Organization*, 10(1): 94-119.
- Mishkind, M. E., J. Rodin, L. R. Silberstein & R. H. Striegel-Moore (1986) 'The embodiment of masculinity', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 29(5): 545-562.
- Riley, D. (1988) *Am I that name? Feminism and the category of 'Women' in history*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ross-Smith, A. and M. Kornberger (2004) 'Gendered rationality? A genealogical exploration of the philosophical and sociological conceptions of rationality, masculinity and organization', *Gender, Work and Organization*, 11(3): 280-305.

- Sinclair, A. (2000) 'Teaching managers about masculinity: Are you kidding?', *Management Learning*, 31(1): 83-101.
- Wicks, D. and A. Mills (2000) 'Deconstructing Harry: A critical review of men, masculinity and organization', *The Finnish Journal of Business Economics*, 3: 327-349.
- Whitehead, S. (1999) 'Hegemonic masculinity revisited', *Gender, Work & Organization*, 6(1): 58-62.
- Whitehead, S. (2000) 'Masculinity: Shutting out the nasty bits', *Gender, Work & Organization*, 2(2): 133-137.

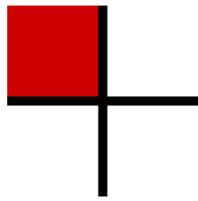
the authors

Valérie Fournier joined Leicester University in 2004 having previously taught at Keele University and St Andrews University. She studied Economics and Management in France and moved to Edinburgh to study for a MBA (1989), then Manchester for a PhD (1992) on the socialisation process of graduate entering employment. Her current research interests centre on alternative organizations and economies and include: rural economies and sustainable development, alternative forms of exchange and markets, co-operative and communal organizational structures, and critical pedagogy.

Address: Valérie Fournier, Management Centre, University of Leicester, University Road, LE1 7RH.
E-mail: vf18@le.ac.uk

Warren Smith has degrees from the University of Warwick, University of Lancaster and a PhD. from Keele University that analysed the relationship between complexity theory and postmodernism. He is a lecturer in Organizational Studies at the Management Centre, University of Leicester. Research interests include the relationship between popular culture and organization. This has involved work on conspiracy theories and science fiction.

Address: Warren Smith, Management Centre, University of Leicester, University Road, LE1 7RH.
E-mail: ws8@le.ac.uk



Identity and Subjectivity in Post-Fordism: For an analysis of resistance in the contemporary workplace^{*}

Giuliana Commisso

abstract

From the second half of the nineties the question of subjectivity has become a crucial subject in the dispute between the Foucauldian and Marxist theorists of Labour Process Theory (LPT). This paper intends to address some of the problematic elements that sprung from this debate and introduce some reference points that can help define the field of analysis of subjectivity. The hypothesis is that there exists neither a methodological nor a logical opposition between Marx and Foucault. I suggest that the convergence of Marx and Foucault allows a more generative theorising of subjectivity by looking at the constituent dimension of resistance. Resistance operates as a process of deconstructing identities; therefore the struggle for subjectivity can be assumed as the field in which the antagonism of social forces is played out, expressed and experimented. Empirically, I provide an illustration of the ways in which individuals respond to the process of production of identity in the social and productive order of post-Fordism. Focusing on the lean factory, I draw from texts generated in interviews with workers to explore the processes of subjectivation and to offer an understanding of resistances. The research was carried out at the Integrated Factory of Fiat in Melfi (Italy) and the Nissan Factory in Sunderland (United Kingdom). The interpretive work unfolds through fragments of diverse narrations by an extensive text analysis based on discourse analytical tools. I use a 'symptomatic reading' to search and recognize the presence of more than one discourse in a text, and to explore the absent conjunctions that divide it into a multiplicity of meanings. In my opinion, this methodology opens up the possibility of thinking new universes of reference for subjectivation.

Introduction

From the second half of the nineties the question of subjectivity has become of increasing relevance to the Labour Process Debate and, above all, a crucial subject in the dispute between the Foucauldian and Marxist theorists of Labour Process Theory (LPT). On one hand, post-structuralist theorists, referring to the theories of Foucault, claim that the tradition of LPT has developed a concept of subjectivity that oscillates between pure 'voluntarism' and 'humanist essentialism', and tends to separate collective resistances dictated by class-consciousness from the daily and individual

* The first version of this paper was translated by Taina Rajanti.

forms of resistance that are undervalued (Jermier *et al.*, 1994: 9). Therefore, LPT is incapable of understanding the dynamics through which the dialectic of power and the subject unfurls in the context of contemporary production processes. They see in the organization of the contemporary labour process and in the management of the workforce the emergence of sophisticated mechanisms of control, which are aimed at producing an alignment of the interests of workers with those of the corporation, and are strengthened by the individual preoccupation of the workers to check and reduce the uncertainty of their own identity; in social isolation, the individual becomes even more vulnerable to external threats (Knights, 1990). According to them, this technology of power, intervening directly on the processes of constitution of subjectivity, places in crisis the Marxist conception of the antagonism between the interests of the workers and those of management, on the basis of which the binary of control and resistance has historically been developed in LPT.

On the other hand, Critical Materialists and Marxists claim that in the Foucauldian approach there is no space for the conceptualisation of worker resistance and misbehaviours (Thompson and Akroyd, 1995; 1999; Thompson, 2001), and that there exists an evident contradiction in the reconstruction of collective identities of the actors (managers and workers) involved in the production process (Stewart and Lucio-Martinez, 1997). According to them, when control is placed outside the context of the relations of production, it loses its specific connotation of exploitation becoming one of the many forms of disciplinary power. Therefore, the attempt of Foucauldians to define subjectivity remains trapped within an individualistic mentality, as their analysis focuses on the individual employee's identity instead of the contradictions connected to the collective worker (Stewart, 2001).

This paper intends to engage in the contemporary debate between Marxists and Foucauldians in LPT analysing the relationship between identity and subjectivity in contemporary capitalist production processes. My hypothesis is that there exists no methodological or logical opposition between Marx and Foucault that should necessarily pose as obstacle when adopting both analytical points of view. It is not so much a question of confronting the two bodies of theory, but rather of going back to the basic issue that generated them, not only in their writings, but in a real context. I suggest that the convergence of Marx and Foucault allows the production of a conceptual space in which to individualize the relations of production, the social forces of production and the dynamic of subjectivity, in order to get out of a fragmented and broken vision of society in which power relationships and resistances are lost in a thousand rivulets of daily micro-relationships.

Theoretically, I propose a more generative theorising of subjectivity by looking at the constituent dimension of resistance which Foucault identifies as a sort of 'chemical catalyser' that brings power relations to light. Resistance operates as a process of destructuring of identities (social and personal, individual and collective), modifying their constitutive presuppositions. The production of subjectivity is not a process closed in on itself (given once and for all), but always open and problematic precisely because of resistance. Therefore the struggle for subjectivity can be assumed as the field in which the antagonism of social forces is played out, expressed and experimented.

Empirically, I provide an illustration of the ways in which individuals respond to the process of the production of identity in the social and productive order of post-Fordism. Focusing on the 'lean factory', I draw on texts generated from interviews with workers to explore the processes of subjectivation and to offer an understanding of resistances, both as antagonistic practices and reflections on what Deleuze calls the realm of 'common sense' that defines the main sphere of our everyday experience.

The paper is structured in two parts. In the first part I address some relevant concepts of Foucault and Deleuze in order to elaborate suitable conceptual tools for understanding the mechanisms of production of subjectivity. Beginning with the problematic elements that spring from the debate between Marxists and Foucauldians, I focus my analysis on two questions: the production of identity through the processes of individualisation and the action of resistance in the process of subjectivation. The second part brings out the results of a research that was carried out at the Integrated Factory of Fiat in Melfi (Italy) and the Nissan Factory in Sunderland (United Kingdom). The workers' stories, their way of representing themselves and their daily life both inside and outside the factory make up the core of the analysis, whose interpretation derive from the earlier theoretical hypotheses.

The Identity/Subjectivity Relationship in the Labour Process Debate

According to the post-modernist/ post-structuralist perspective, Marxist analyses of the power relations in the capitalist labour process are essentialist, totalising and make dualistic distinctions. In their view, the Marxist analysis is essentialist because, focusing on exploitation in the production process, it ignores other equally relevant discourses of domination such as gender, race, etc.; and it is deterministic because it conceptualises power relations in terms of an imperative of control (Braverman) that is based on the need to pump value and surplus value out of labour in the production process; finally, Marxist analysis is fraught with untenable dualisms such as the arbitrary distinctions between structure/agency, subject/object, control/resistance and therefore ignores the existential dimension of worker subjectivity.

Beginning from the crucial necessity to overcome the agency-structure dichotomy or voluntarism/determinism in the construction of a theory of subjectivity, the Foucauldian theorists maintain that power and subjectivity do not represent two dialectical polarities but are mutually constitutive. "Power is exercised in and through specific knowledge of bodies and minds; its effect is to infiltrate the mind or soul so as to constitute us as 'subjects' who discipline ourselves. This is to say, the sense of what we are (that is, social identity) is confirmed and sustained through a positioning of ourselves in practices that reflects and reproduce prevailing power-knowledge relations" (Knights, 1990: 320). Therefore, "subjectivity is understood as a product of disciplinary mechanisms, techniques of surveillance and power-knowledge strategies: human freedom is constituted through their mediation of subjectivity" (Knights and Willmott, 1989: 554).

In the discourses of the post-structuralist stream of the labour process debate the term subject assumes two meanings: subject to someone else through control and dependence (subject to); and subject tied to one's own identity, through conscience and self-knowledge (subject of). The first meaning (subject to) refers directly to the question of control and panoptical surveillance; the second (subject of) indicates the way in which the exercise of power forms individuals through their own identity. Both meanings suggest a form of power that simultaneously causes subjection and moulds 'self-disciplined subjectivities'.

With regard to this interpretation it is possible to identify diverse positions in the Foucauldian stream. At one extreme the concept of Panopticon constitutes the pivot around which the analysis rotates, and the attention is on the reproduction and proliferation of the disciplinary mechanisms and of surveillance devices in all contemporary society (Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992; Townley, 1993; Sewell, 1998; 1999; Deetz, 1998). At the other extreme the power/subject relationship is centred on the existential dimension of the individual in post-modernity (Knights and Willmott, 1990; Willmott, 1990; Collinson, 1994; Jermier *et al.*, 1994; Casey, 1995; Du Gay, 1996; O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001).

The analyses that are inspired by the concept of 'panopticon' regard subjectivation as a direct result of panoptic surveillance, placing the ontology of the 'subject' in the same operation as disciplinary and surveillance mechanisms. The limitation of these studies is that power is so completely taken for granted as to preclude space for resistance. As Knights and McCabe have recently underlined, "those authors who follow an overly deterministic and omnipotent conception of power effectively rule out the active subject and provide much grist to the anti-Foucauldian mill that we are anxious to remedy" (Knights and McCabe, 2000: 427). Power becomes the key-stone of all categories and consequently subjectivation is reduced to subjection. The question of resistance remains untouched, either as escape from control and rejection of a fixed identity, or as an affirmation of difference and singularity. The analysis of power relations is reduced, against the sense of Foucault, into a metaphysics of Power with capital P. The technologies of power-knowledge become a sort of monism consisting of the Power and deaf and mute resistances that are never mentioned.

At the other extreme the analysis of power relations is centred on the process of individualisation which simultaneously causes subjection and moulds 'self-disciplined subjectivities'. Subjectivity is seen as the product of the mechanisms of individualization that transform complex wholes of people in determined categories of individuals (worker, consumer, criminals, citizen, immigrant, experts, the mentally ill, and so on) that are divided off from one another. According to O'Doherty and Willmott, "Identity refers to the socially organized ascription of a status (for example, gender, occupation, etc.) to subjectivity" (2001: 114); and as Knights also notes:

The individuals come to recognise themselves as subjects, with definite identities, through the social practices in which they (we) engage, which are both the medium and the outcome of the exercise of power invested with specific strategies, knowledges and techniques. (1990: 328)

The studies that are concerned with the construction of identity – more exactly, with the competing claims made on the 'self' by society and organizations, on one hand, and the

individuals who occupy these selves, on the other (Kondo, 1990; Kunda, 1992; Casey, 1995; Du Gay, 1996; Knights and McCabe, 2000; O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001) – use a discursive approach in analysing the new strategies of organizational governance and their effects on the processes of creating new identities in the world of work.

The control of the self is seen as the highest form of organizational control. The introduction of mechanisms of personal self-monitoring to reach productive targets, along with the emphasis on individualism that results from the competition to obtain material and symbolic recognition, represent forms of discipline (self-discipline) that end up affecting every aspect of the workers' subjective existence, while intensifying problems connected to self-esteem and self-realization.

In the context of a capitalist mode of production, this self-defeating search for security in a coherent identity is routinely sponsored through such individualising institutions as 'career' as others (for example, the employers or his agent) seek a reproduction of their power and identity through us (the employee or the consumer). (Willmott, 1990: 369-70)

Kunda, for instance, following Etzioni, suggests that

normative control is the attempt to elicit and direct the required efforts of members by controlling the underlying experiences, thoughts and feelings that guide their actions [...] Under normative control membership is founded not only on the behavioural or economic transaction traditionally associated with work organizations, but more crucially, on the experiential transaction on which symbolic rewards are exchanged for a moral orientation to the organization [...] In short, under normative control it is the employee' self – the ineffable source of subjective experience – that is claimed in the name of corporate interest. (Kunda, 1992: 11)

In a similar vein, du Gay (1996) underlines that 'culture' has become an organizing principle with which the worker is redefined as both entrepreneur and consumer. New images and new languages have been created around these themes by managers in an effort to have workers take on more responsibility for their work while binding them closer to objectives of the work organization. The lines of tension and the dispersed sites of struggles within the contemporary organization of work induces these theorists to maintain that "it is becoming more difficult to identify simple lines of division based on capital and labour, or in terms of the perennial opposition cast between 'us' and 'them'. As a consequence it seems to behoove theoretical analysis to knowledge and explore, rather than marginalize or deny, those machinations of 'identity politics' found on the shopfloor and in the office" (O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001).

Some Foucauldian authors point out an ulterior element of complexity in the process of individualisation, that consists in the serial formation of an apparently free and self-determined individual 'identity'. According to them, individualisation has the contradictory effect of producing individuals that apparently are capable of autonomous actions, and, at the same time, deeply vulnerable, since they are made to engage in individually responsible behaviour. The critical state of this condition is strengthened by the fact that 'the subjects of modernity' are carriers of multiple memberships and contradictory identities and this condition provokes a state of anxiety and the consequent desire to reach a single and coherent personal identity. The normative practice of attributing social identity to human beings tends to promote both the desire to confirm these identities and the experience of the tension, when competitive and

contradictory social positions are occupied (Willmott, 1990). Knights and Willmott contend that individuals seek to overcome this ambiguity through attempts to secure a stable identity, either as separate subjects (domination or indifference) or dependant objects (subordination).

Although over recent years some Foucaudian-influenced studies (Kondo, 1990; Knights and McCabe, 2000; Casey, 1995; Du Gay, 1996), that draw attention to the role of identity in the process of subjectivation, have illustrated how workers' understandings of their self-identity often give rise to informal and subtle forms of everyday resistance and of misbehaviour, there are two limitations to these analyses.

Firstly, the production of subjectivity is defined as the constitutive 'process' specific to a 'relation to the self' with respect to the forms of production particular to knowledge and power, but these analyses don't explain sufficiently how the production of subjectivity intersects with the forms of capitalist valorisation. My aim here is to propose an interpretation of Foucault's theory that, rather than refusing or negating a Marxist critique, radicalizes it through expansion and intensification, where it doubts the 'orthodox Marxism' which assumes labour as our 'concrete essence' which is transformed by capitalist relations into surplus value.

Secondly, the dynamic of subjectivity is located in the panorama of the continuous tension which individuals experience during their search for a secure identity, also caused by the discursive power of management. The search for security, faced with individualization, is founded on the 'fetishism of identity'. The more individuals become preoccupied with the search for a stable solid sense of identity, the more subjectivity become a sort of 'psychic prison'. The problem I want to point out is that such a conception belongs to the traditional logics of 'representation', that in their quest for static identity, are constantly threaten by negativity, and therefore dependent on a transcendental principle. Therefore, the analysis of subjectivity risks falling into the domain of the common sense, where we recognise and order objects in relation to ourselves according to the requirements of habits and of an established order of things. In this domain, resistance falls, almost inevitably, into a reactive role as block or friction and therefore seems to lose its generative and creative effectiveness.¹ Thus, we should still heed Deleuze's three questions: "What are the new modes of subjectivation, which tend to have no identity? What powers must we confront and what is our capacity for resistance, today when we can no longer be content to say that the old struggles are no longer worth anything? How can we conceive a 'power of truth' that would release transversal lines of resistance and not integral lines of power?" (Deleuze, 1988: 115). In the next two sections I will focus my analysis on these questions and, more specifically, on the dynamic of the subjectivity in the contemporary capitalist production process, and on the role of resistance in the subjectivation process.

1 A quite similar criticism has been raised by Thomas and Davies in their work on the micro-politics of resistance in the UK public service, where they point out that: "Although, in recent years, there has been sophisticated analysis of shopfloor resistance, appreciating the role of identities as well as more overt actions and behaviours, such studies do not fully illustrate the processes of resistance that draw on a more generative theorising of power and subject" (2005: 686-687).

Subjectivity Field of Analysis in the Era of Bio-power. Marx through Foucault

Analyzing the specific form that the labour force assumes in the panorama of post-Fordist production means understanding the material, political and existential class composition of the general picture of social reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. On the one hand, this means overcoming formal separation between material production and social reproduction, and understanding the Marxian concept of real subsumption of labour under capital as a process that unfolds itself in biological, corporeal and subjective terms and that tends to invest not only the economic or cultural dimension of society, but envelops within itself every element of social life. The capitalist accumulation of value in the era of globalization implicates all social forces and tends to exploit living labour in all the elements that define the social – the form of life – such as relations, affects, intellectual and communicative capabilities. In these new conditions, power reaches down to the guts of social structure and becomes entirely bio-political, investing the production and reproduction of life itself. On the other hand, it means overcoming the traditional distinction between economic and political struggles and bringing back the bio-political field of power to the material ontology of production, thus getting out of a fragmented and broken vision of society in which power relations and resistances are lost in a thousand rivulets of daily micro-relationships.

Foucault's contribution is, in my opinion, especially useful when looking at the connection between production and the social conditions of production, because otherwise any analysis remains imprisoned by the apparent dialectic of how the cycle of capital rebuilds itself. What determines normalization processes in contemporary capitalism is still the reproduction of the labour force, but it is not enough to know that the relation between capital and labour is one of structural antagonism between two 'determinate abstractions'² (Edwards, 1990; Thompson, 1990; Stewart, 2001). What is necessary, instead, is a comprehension, on the one hand, of "the abstraction which seeks the real in the concrete (determinate abstraction) and, on the other hand, *the concrete which seeks in abstraction its determination* (the process of tendency)" (Negri, 1991: 48). It means that the 'determinate abstraction' is a dynamism animated by the historical subjectivity, an historical movement of class relations in the practical arenas where they become 'true'.

The exercise of power that tends towards normalization is a type of power that is embedded in the very heart of capitalist production, whose functioning principle is based on reducing life to the dimension of the work force. "Since life and time for man are not naturally based on work, but rather are: pleasure, irregularity, holiday, rest, needs, instability, appetites, violence, plundering etc. capital must transform all this explosive, instant and discontinuous energy in a continuous work force that can be constantly placed on the market" (Foucault, 1979: 108). Thus, even though capital's

2 In the *Grundrisse* Marx deals with the relationship between the method of presentation and the real movement. He says that "the method of raising from the abstract to the concrete is only the way in which thought appropriates the concrete, reproduces it as the concrete in the mind. But this is by no means the process by which the concrete itself comes into being" (1973: 101).

only interest is time as quantity, it cannot avoid the quality of time as a plurality of subjective practices.

Given that with ‘mode of production’ here it is meant “not only one particular economic configuration, but also a composite unit of forms of life, a social, anthropological, and ethical cluster” (Virno, 2004: 49), it is important, even before defining the ‘subject’, to put it in the historical plot in which it is immersed. As Foucault states in the *Will to Knowledge*,

The adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and the differential allocation of profit, were made possible in part by the exercise of bio-power in its many forms and modes of application. The investment of the body, its valorisation, and the management of its forces were at the time indispensable. (Foucault, 1998: 141)

The anatomo-politics of the human body and the regulatory controls of the population constitute, for Foucault, the two poles around which the organization of power over life has been organized. Bio-power is, therefore, “a bipolar technology – anatomic and biological, individualizing and specifying, directed toward the performances of the body, with attention to the processes of life – (it) characterized a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but invest life through and through” (Foucault, 1991: 139).

At a first level of analysis, it is possible to gather the exercise of bio-power in terms of the anatomic-political discipline of the human body, of the deliberate manipulation of the elements of its gestures and of its behaviour. The body enters a power mechanism that looks through it, disarticulates and recomposes it. If economic exploitation separates labour power from the product of labour, the disciplinary coercion establishes a bond of constraint between a matured attitude and an increased domination of the body.

The disciplines are techniques that intervene on the body to assure the regulation of human multiplicities. On one hand, they transform and check unstable human multiplicity into homogeneous populations – children, workers, the sick, criminals, ‘clandestine’, ‘illegal workers’, etc. – and, on the other, they fix the rank, the place and the behavioural norms of the individuals inside the institutions in which they operate – family, school, factory, the state, hospital, psychiatric hospital, asylums, prisons, detention centres for immigrants etc. The interconnections of this bundle of micro-powers form the ‘body politic’ (Foucault, 1991) as a set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, communication routes and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies. ‘Seriation’ is the product of tactics of division, of mutual adaptation of the bodies, of gestures and of rhythms, of differentiation of abilities, of mutual coordination in relation to apparatuses, to assignments and to roles. It “gives the possibility of characterizing, and therefore, using individuals according to the level in the series that they are moving through; the possibility of accumulating time and activity, of rediscovering them, totalised and usable in a final result, which is the ultimate capacity of an individual” (Foucault, 1991: 160). Seriation operates, therefore, in the same fabric of the multiplicity, aimed at introducing asymmetry and excluding reciprocity, creating a bond of otherness between

the individuals. It is a mode of government of individualisation, that is, a form of power that categorises the individual, that marks him/her in his/her individuality, that fixes people in their identity, that imposes to each individual a law of truth that he/she must recognise in him/herself and that the others must recognize in him/her.

The (ultimate) goal of anatomo-politics is that of distributing what is living under the dominance of value and utility, through the operation of continuous, regulatory and corrective mechanisms with which it qualifies, measures, appreciates and places the individuals and work distributions in hierarchies according to the norm. Its effect is that of causing an existential context in which each individual (individualised body, maximised force) internalizes behavioural codes and rules, considers them as 'normal' and 'natural' values to safeguard and transmit.

At a second level, it is possible to understand the exercise of bio-power in terms of bio-politics of the population, through a series of controls and of regulatory interventions on it: proliferation, birth and mortality, the level of health and so on. Here we have to do with scientific categories of human beings such as species, population, race, gender, sexual practices, etc. and a concern with the biological well-being of the population including disease control and prevention, adequate food and water supply, sanitary shelter, and education.

The birth of bio-politics is the moment in which life and its mechanisms tend to be integrated within a net of techniques and procedures that dominate and manage them. This strategic order of powers and knowledge over life is not a given once for all; on the contrary, it is the product of manifold struggles and clashes. When power has life as its object or aim, resistance to power turns life against power. Resistance becomes the power of life and life itself becomes a set of forces that resist the strategies of bio-power. The reproduction of social relations, where capital is 'the monster that dominates everything' (Marx), is thus assumed to be the battlefield where subjectivity is produced.

The passage from Fordism to post-Fordism is entirely realised as a process of restructuring-reorganization, not simply of the manufacturing process, but of the whole mode of production. In this new order, the bio-powers invest the body in its totality; they intervene on the living body of the worker, not only as a bearer of nerves and muscles, but also of more general social attitudes, intellectual abilities and powers, eg: thought, language, ability of reflection, learning ability. Self-activation, problem solving, continuous formation, flexibility, mobility are the new *mots de pass* of the post-Fordist labour force. No longer nerves and muscles, the meat and the blood of living labour, but the whole life. As Paolo Virno has observed, referring to the words of Marx:

Capitalists are interested in the life of the worker, in the body of the worker, only for an indirect reason: this life, this body, are what contains the faculty, the potential, the *dynamis*. The living body becomes an object to be governed not for its intrinsic value, but because it is the substratum of what really matters: labour-power as the aggregate of the most diverse human faculties (the potential for speaking, for thinking, for remembering, for acting, etc.). (Virno, 2004: 82-83)

Life lies at the centre of politics when labour-power has to be won, and for this reason it is legitimate to talk about bio-politics.

It is in the discrepancy between the power of life in general (the *dynamis* that creates, modifies and forces the power to new battlegrounds) and the need to measure the utility (the transformation of potential in labour in action, the reduction of life to work) that it is possible to see the production of an excess (of knowledge, of subjectivity, of power, of men) that forces capital to structure new mechanisms of government and control of the population.

The Fordist disciplinary matrix that saw in salary and in access to the means to consume the original statute of the citizenship, ceases to expand its own effects. In the ontological mutation of the labour statute that is inherent in post-Fordism, the dynamics for which access to a salary is an indissoluble element of social inclusion ceases to work. In its place, the precariousness of employment, flexibility of performance, capacity of productive performances configure themselves as a new statute. It is at this stage that they produce the effects of bio-powers as practices governing what individuals possess in general and in abstract – the *dynamis*, the life.

In this regard, Knights and Willmott's (1990) criticism of Marx for having reduced individuals to mere personifications of economic categories results only in a sort of paradoxical semantic reversal: for Marx labour, as determined abstraction, is subjectivity only in the measure in which it is *dynamis* (*δυνάμει*). All the effort of power is to reduce 'labour as subjectivity' to a governable object that is quantifiable, measurable and sanctionable. The processes of subjectivation can be considered the core of the critical condition (or inherent contradiction, if one prefers to define it in Althusserian terms) that is at the base of capitalist restructuring processes. To the extent that power tends to unify and enclose in itself all the elements of social life, it nonetheless reveals, despite itself, new environments of constitution of plurality and irreducible singularity.

The tension between identity and subjectivity should be therefore situated in the bio-political field of power. Bio-powers are, as Foucault teaches, the principles of 'governmentality' of multitudes that passing through the disciplined living body directly invest the whole social life. To understand the processes of subjectivity does not mean interrogating resistance to understand the effects of power, but, to the contrary, beginning from the effects of truth of power has, investigating resistance as a "force that enriches itself by seizing hold of other forces and joining itself to them in a new assemblage: a becoming" (Deleuze, 1997: 132).

Subjectivation Process and Resistance

The theme of subjectivity constitutes the problematic base of the theoretical-political pathway of Foucault, and not the hypostatization of a conceptual category from which to move to build a philosophy of history or a 'discourse of truth' on the subject. The subject is not preliminarily and definitely given, but is constituted and changes in the plot of history, in the immanence of power relationships. Due to this, subjectivity is a

permanently problematic and open question, never once and for all given. Subjectivation, according to Foucault, concerns the “way a human being turns him or herself into a subject” (Foucault, 1982: 208); therefore it is a process of self-formation in which the person is active and comes into being through a variety of “operations on own bodies, on their own souls, on their thoughts, on their own conducts” (Foucault, 1980)

The struggle for subjectivity is always open and problematic. It is metamorphosis. Deleuze interpreting Foucault says: “The struggle for a modern subjectivity passes through a resistance to the two present forms of subjection, the one consisting of individualizing ourselves on the basis of constraints of power, the other of attracting each individual to a known and recognized identity, fixed once and for all. The struggle for subjectivity presents itself, therefore, as the right to difference, variation and metamorphosis” (Deleuze, 1988: 106). Foucault interrogates power, its devices and practices not beginning from a theory of obedience and of forms of legitimation but beginning from a theory of ‘liberty’ and of the ability of transformation that each power play implies. “Two elements are essential for having a true relationship of power: that ‘the other’ (that on which it is practiced) is well recognized and maintained until the end of the action; and that there opens, in front of the power relationship, a whole field of answers, reactions, effects, possible inventions” (Foucault, 1982: 206). Liberty is set therefore as a preliminary condition of the exercise of power, “its permanent support, from the moment that without the possibility of resistance, power would be equivalent to a physical determination” (*ibid.*: 208).

‘Power’ is nothing more than the overall effect that emerges from all the clashes, manifold struggles and confrontations that develop within the social body. These are in continuous transformation, and the concatenation that reacts on each of them seeks in turn to arrest their movement. Resistance is not simply a target for power, but it is creation, every possible invention. Foucault suggests we engage the forms of resistance as the point of departure and use them as a chemical catalyst to bring out the power relations, localising the position, identifying the application point and the adopted methods. Instead of analysing power from the point of view of its internal rationality, this means analysing power relationships through the antagonisms of the strategy.

Resistances can be understood as a multiplicity of real practices that are inscribed in the field of power relations, forcing the control devices to an endless struggle trying to recover what, each time, presents itself as extraneous to it, as a break-up of the ‘normal’ practices, as a constituent difference. It is in this clash, in this field of forces, that both the processes of subjectivation and those that aim at constituting serial, fixed and controllable identities, are produced. The daily forms of resistance, struggle, refusal, desire and sociability denounce the concrete subtraction of the individuals to the processes of abstraction, of homogenisation, seriation and of strategic codification operated by the power-knowledge devices. From the point of view of the production of subjectivity, these de-structuring practices can be thought of in terms of a constituent ‘difference’ that cannot be reduced to identity, or be composed through homology, equivalences or fictitious universality.

Power devices and stratifications of knowledge attribute identity, fixing and crystallizing social power to a point in such a way as to make it separate and hostile to the individuals themselves. Subjectivity emerges and is revealed as a right to difference, to variation and to metamorphosis. It operates as a process of destructuring of social and personal, individual and collective identities, modifying the constitutive presuppositions.

The subjectivation, as relation to oneself, continues to create itself, but by transforming itself and changing its nature [...]. Recuperated by power-relations and relations of knowledge, the relation to oneself is continually reborn, elsewhere and otherwise. (Deleuze, 1988: 104)

The place in which the thought of resistance resurfaces and is reaffirmed is language. But it is not the abstract and encoded language of science as a set of abstract signs and codes serving to point out how much of acknowledgement there is in each experience, removing to the unspoken all the details, the excesses, the non-acknowledgeable cast-offs. To the contrary, it is the political language of the body, the language of the constituent difference. The story of singular experiences, the personal discourse admits only one possible reduction, the language of the experience of the body, and that is where its intrinsic political nature resides. From the standpoint of the body, there is only relation and process. The body is living labour, creation, expression and cooperation – and therefore material construction of the world and of history. Implicit in this is the refusal of both methodological individualism that represents the individual as an isolated and autonomous actor (and value), an autonomous source of rights and property; and of the totalising and universalising schemes of modernity founded on the binary logic of the Self and of the Other, and of the static abstractions represented by the One in the form of the labour union, of the party, of the People or of the state.

The analysis of subjectivity cannot remain secluded in the language of therapy, in which the murmurs of subjectivity resolve in the entropy of internal conscience. It is necessary to think about subjectivation as the way in which a social need subjectively presents itself or, in other words, as the particular way in which a collective need is perceived and is articulated in a singular discourse. Also, where subjectivation is expressed as relation to oneself – as ‘government of others through self-government’ (Foucault) or as an ‘affect of self by self’ (Deleuze) – the subjectivation process is social because it is a struggle for the production of subjectivity against imposed social identity.

The production of subjectivity is affirmation of singularity against constraints and fictitious universalisms of capitalism, and contemporarily construction of a common sphere where production of subjectivity becomes constituent power (in the Spinozian sense of *potential* or in Deleuzian one of *puissance*) of the social forces of production. The constituent power enables at once the emergence and consolidation of the various forms of collective subjectivity and the ways in which these forms make possible the means for capitalism to fashion the kinds of subjectivity required for its functioning and reproduction. As Marx pointed out in his analysis of the commodity-form, since capitalist axiomatics can only base themselves on notions of common sense, identity and equivalency, they have always to contain difference within a predictable pattern of unity and identity, and to affirm that time unfolds in one direction only. In the domain of common sense, knowledge is reduced to recognition and each singularity (the difference-in-itself) is defined as ‘accidental’ or ‘contingent’ (in space and in time) and

it has always to be overcome, returned through the processes of abstract exchange, to what is always the same, the utterly fungible. The function of the concept of identity is essentially that of 'managing' the difference.

The ontology of constituent power conceptualises the *puissance* not just in regard to its role in creating and consolidating the capitalist regime of accumulation, but in activating an assembly of forces capable of breaking beyond the limits and divisions that it imposes. The expression of this power virtually permits an infinite number of connections, it opens transversal relations and creates new modes of desire and affect, and those connections cannot be made to conform to a centralized organization. Difference-in-itself express the power of a multiplicity of bodies and the movement of desire. This potential is not transcendental but it is immanent to structure (since structure cannot exist without the event of sense) and grounded in the existential and historical praxis of a real multiplicity of bodies.

In this sense, resistance is not simply merely a dialectic negation of power, but induces reflection that casts in doubt the effects of truth) that power has, such as discourses, *doxa* of representation, norms and values. Resistance as 'reflective practice' refers to real transformative events on the plane of being. It is an 'event' (Deleuze) that provokes the 'thought into action': it intervenes directly into the actions and passions that define the state of bodies, and creates a relay between sense, memory, imagination and thought. This being so, it also develops as a practical critique of the form of power operating in immediate everyday reality, classifying individuals in categories, fixing their identities. It is not just a question of struggles, individual or collective, but strategies of dis-subjection, relational and transversal, modifying life-styles and forms, rules of behaviour, relations with the body and existential choices. When these practices become the constituent power of multiple singularities, they transform the bio-political field of power from within, breaking the common sense, making visible new fields of possible and impose new regimes of truth.

Theoretical practice is, for Foucault, the art of 'voluntary disobedience', reasoned indocility, the dis-subjection from politics of truth. "The essential political problem for the intellectual is not to criticize the ideological contents supposedly linked to science, or to ensure that his own scientific practice is accompanied by a correct ideology, but that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth. The problem is not changing the people's consciousness – or what's in their heads – but the political, economic, institutional regime of truth. It is not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power (which would be a chimera, for truth is already power), but of detaching the power from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural, within which it operates at the present time" (Foucault, 1991: 74).

The criticism must necessarily pass through the work of deconstructing the totalising representation of reality, in such a way that the process of self-valorisation, of the emersion of needs, of the tending to desires, can be possible. But this de-structuring work cannot develop according to metaphysical schemes or through the language of therapy, as sometimes the de-constructionism of Knights (1997; 2001) would have it. Instead, it must proceed from the base of strategies, of schemes, plans, mode of existence and investments of the concrete individuals' bodies and real social forces.

What gives life and meaning to the theoretical practice is its remaining inside reality, the repetition inside of reality of that act of existence and of separation that belongs to all the subjects that move in history.

The archaeological and genealogical analysis of power serves in the measure in which it shows the constitutive dynamics of power and consequently unmask its image. Genealogical analysis is useful in deciphering the historical being of power. It does not analyze power from the point of view of its internal rationality but through the antagonism of the strategy, because reality is transformed by the complex of the strategies that invest it.

Subjectivation Processes in Post-Fordist Factories

The workers' stories, representations and their daily lives inside and outside of the lean factory – in this specific case of the Integrated Factory of Fiat in Melfi (Italy) and the Nissan Factory in Sunderland (United Kingdom) – have constituted the core of my research, and its theoretical basis derives from the preceding critical analysis.

The FIAT-Sata (*Società Automobilistica Tecnologia Avanzata*) factory at Melfi, in the southern Italian region of Basilicata, was built at the beginning of the 1990s. It started to function in September 1993 and currently employs 5,000 people, with 4,000 others working in subcontracting factories. It produces 1,200 cars per day. The FIAT management has devised work schedules and norms intended to guarantee maximum use of the machinery. Thus, the factory functions day and night without interruption, with the sole exception of Sundays, with a shift system based on three shifts each of seven hours and forty-five minutes. The shift workers follow a multi-weekly cycle with the following sequence: six days of work, Sunday rest, another six days of work, Sunday rest, three days of work, four days of compensatory rest including Sunday. The majority of workers had moreover to make long journeys to get to the factory, sometimes as much as 150 km. Recruitment was carried out throughout a 'green field' area which is heavily affected by unemployment. The trade-union organizations accepted the use of 'training contracts' which automatically excluded workers aged more than 32 and caused substantial retreats on wages workers (20% less than other FIAT employees) and precariousness of work. FIAT workers at Melfi were involved in a 21 day industrial struggle in April-May 2004.³

3 The struggle started from a specific event. A sub-contracting company was on strike, the parts did not arrive and the company appealed to the trade-union representatives to sign an agreement for the SATA workers to be sent home without pay. When the trade representative (delegates) left the management office to face the workers, they were told: "This time, it's enough. This time our heads will not be lowered! We will all block the doors!" They decided to block the factory and remain outside so as to avoid the blackmail and pressure the bosses would employ against an internal strike. The workers at Melfi demanded wage parity with other FIAT factories, the modification of the team system and the end to the regime of disciplinary sanctions. They've experienced thousands of disciplinary sanctions: 9,000 in the last three years.

The Nissan plant – best known as Nissan Motor Manufacturing (UK) or NMUK – is located in the Washington area of Sunderland, in the North-East of England. In the 1980s this region had undergone a period of industrial decline, with the closure of most of the shipyards on the Tyne and Wear and of many coal mines on the once prosperous Durham coalfield. The site is close to large ports and major trunk roads, within easy driving distance of the international Newcastle Airport. NMUK started to function in 1986 and it is one of the most productive car plants in Europe. There are 4,000 staff directly employed by NMUK, with 10,000 others working in subcontracting factories. Employees work a standard 39 hour week, alternating morning and evening shifts. Morning shifts run from approximately 7am to 3pm. Evening shifts run from approximately 4pm to midnight. Shift times can vary depending on requirements. When required, overtime is worked, although it balanced out during the year with planned downtime.

The field research was carried out from the Winter 2000 until the Spring 2002. I used semi-structured and narrative interviews that lasted on average 120 minutes and were tape-recorded. As a mode of inquiry, I directed attention to life-long personal experiences and I considered the interview as an ongoing process of construction, which was motivated by my immediate interest in self-exploration and self-presentation at the time of narration. My central methodological questions were focused on the way in which narrators went back into the events of their life: memories, times and places, plans, experiences, strategies and abilities. The interviews were corroborated by on-site observations of work relations and social interactions inside and outside the factory. In addition to these qualitative methods, companies documents have been examined.

The interpretive work unfolds through fragments of diverse narrations by an extensive text analysis based on discourse analytical tools. I used a ‘symptomatic reading’ in order to grasp not only what each respondent said, but what he/she did not and he/she couldn’t say at the moment of the narration. Louis Althusser coined the term ‘symptomatic reading,’ an interpretive strategy that searches not only for the structural dominants in a text but, most importantly, for absences and omissions that are an indication of what the dominant ideology seeks to repress, contain or marginalize. Althusser’s reading is ‘symptomatic’ in the sense that “it divulges the undivulged event in the text it reads, and in the same moment relates it to a different text, present as the necessary absence in the first” (Althusser and Balibar, 1970: 28).

The symptomatic reading makes visible the suppressed discourses, the naturalized power relations, the systems of exclusion which allow the text to make sense in particular ways. Having recognized a symptom, readers should not read it literally, but rather as a sign of something else that is going on. This helps me to search and to recognize the presence of more than one discourse in a text, and to explore the absent conjunctions that divide it into a multiplicity of meanings, if these complement, suppress or displace each other thereby truncating each other’s development. The symptomatic reading will be effective in so far as it divulges the undervalued event in the text it reads. Here, my aim is not to present the substrate of a ‘worker identity’, but using the rhetorical activities and narrative strategies of the informants in order to open up the possibility of thinking the pragmatic application of singularities toward the

construction of new universes of reference for subjectivation. The reader is also an active participant in the meaning of the text in a potentially endless process.

The Irreducibility of Bodies to the Anatomic-political Devices

The disciplining and exploitation of the body (making it worth something) constitute the necessary condition of capitalist exploitation. The space of capitalist production is, today as in the past, the space of disciplining of bodies, a privileged field of the exercise of power, and therefore also the field where resistance is generated. Paraphrasing Marx, we could say that the 'animal spirits', the sexual instincts, the feelings and the creativeness of the workers, the fundamental human ability of collaboration and cooperation must be mobilized and folded up to 'forge' the production processes 'in the fire'. The body is the *topos* of the strategy of capitalist accumulation, the privileged field for the exercise of power, and therefore at the same time, the field where resistance is generated.

The form of capitalist co-operation in post-Fordism, intervening directly on the living body of the worker, has rendered the appearances contained in the concept of work force forever explicit. The living body is not only carrier of nerves and muscles but also of more general social attitudes. An understanding of resistance must necessarily begin from this 'living body'. The first constitutive moment of resistance has its origins in and develops from the training on the body (its dressage, to use a Foucauldian expression): its rhythms, its needs, its necessities constitute the target of power but also its limit: the basis of constitution of every resistance to disciplining and exploitation. The testimonies of line workers furnish the solid image of the operation of power relationships, the instant profile of the battle between power and resistance beginning from the body:

When you do a job, the same job for years, years and years you run like clockwork. Your body becomes like a self-winding watch. In Nissan you are like a precision clock, but, you know, one day this clock cannot go more... One day your body says to you: hello I'm here, I need to sit down, I need to sleep, I need to have a rest, so... When your body clock cannot be fitted, Nissan throws this rubbish out to put a new one on. (Nissan Worker)

We were at the beginning and I was doing my job (...), we didn't really know what our job was; after a while we discovered that the lines had to go at a certain speed (...). We worked on that line that kept going and were not able to keep up, but we thought that that was our job... and nothing else... up to one day... all sweaty... we really couldn't put up with it any more, the people were in pieces, you just couldn't keep that rhythm and then... Bit by bit, I realized that each day a different boss came by and told you to do something extra in more, each day one of them came by and told you: 'lift up the boot too, do that there too'... Then one day the anger slipped from me, the rebellion slipped from me... ... and so one day I just got mad, all of a sudden I got rebellious and so I refused to do other things right in front of the Ute head.⁴ (Fiat Worker)

4 The Unità tecnologica Elementare (Ute; Elementary Technology Unit) is a productive unit (cell) whose job is to manage a single segment of the assembly line in all its aspects. It makes use of heterogeneous skills and roles which are all interconnected in the manufacturing process. The official Ute roles are: the Ute leader, the line technologist, the supplier, the automated machine worker (CIA), the integrated process worker (CPI) and the line workers. During the year 2004, the Utes,

In these narrations it is possible to trace the manifold aspects of the relationship: the dismay of the body-segments in the multi-segmentary machine that is explicit as slavery of the body to the rhythms imposed by the flow, the pressure of the disciplinary power worked by the bosses, the slow evolution of a process of knowledge of the context. But the elements that emerge with stronger words from the narrations belong to the language of the bodies and their rebellion: 'one day your body says you: hello, I'm here' or 'all sweaty, we couldn't put up with it any more, people were in pieces'. From the language of the bodies and their rebellion, the first and most immediate, springs the first reaction against the discipline (the visible one of the assembly line, the invisible one of the inside overseer): 'anger slipped from me, rebellion slipped from me'. The instinctive immediateness of the verb (slipped from me) translates the language of the body in immediate opposing praxis, in refusal. It is the first, elementary moment of transgression uprising in the body that imposes itself as a first and decisive form of resistance. Foucault writes in *Dits et écrits*: "Saying no constitutes the minimal form of resistance. But naturally, in some moments, it is very important. One needs to say no and make of this no a decisive form of resistance" (1994: 741).

Other times, instead, this type of refusal becomes an acknowledgement of a limit that has already been surpassed and thus is the projection of a deep desire to rebel.

Some day the SATA will definitely blow up, yeah, because the people are too, everyone's totally exasperated, both with the shifts and with the work, with everything, the job conditions, everything ... Yeah, yeah, just like that volcano, you know, that volcano that goes uh! Uh! and then it blows. Like Etna, and then it's a massacre. Just like Mirafiori blew up a long time ago. We're not ready yet, that's our problem. If one day I won the lottery, I wouldn't just quit, no, I'd go there and wreck everything: yeah, the first thing I'd do would be to go slap up my UTE boss, the manager, then ... I wouldn't quit, no way! Would I thank them for my job?!? no! no way I'd thank anyone! look, that would be so great! ... so, look, the situation is really too much. (Fiat worker)

Bodies are also desiring bodies. This desire is often realised in a choice that could appear as an escape (exit). Self dismissal (quitting), really, constitutes a concrete episode of escape through which one realises the reaffirmation of one's own difference, the sense of one's own being as an entity distinguishable from all the others: For example, a Fiat worker who resigned said:

I had foreseen, I had always dreamed of my dismissal, how it would be and then at the end it was something different from what I thought... I dreamed of the moment in which I could have said everything just as it was, instead I went there and I resigned, I didn't give any explanation, it seemed still more beautiful. When they asked me why I was going away, I answered that I had found a 'dignified' job. I have seen so many people that have resigned so, even only for a row, because maybe behind that they had accumulated so much anger that at the end they erupted and they resigned...

If it is true that resistance originates in the transitory explosion of needs, it is likewise true that from this there comes the recognition of the context that triggers processes of subjectivation and that can lead to other forms and strategies of resistance. Interpretation of body language requires reflection on one's self and on the context. In other words, if a refusal to do something is a sort of immediate transgression, over time it creates the opening through which a process of reflection on

usually made up of forty workers, were reorganized and subdivided in *domini*, mini teams of ten people managed by a CPI (integrated process worker).

one's sense of self, on one's relation to others and to one's way of being begins taking shape. The breach opened by the refusal constitutes a decisive moment for the recognition of the context, for the appearance of a process of learning that does not have as an object 'the how to work' or 'the how you do this operation', but rather 'the sense of doing', the effects that every doing produces on oneself and the sense of one's own position in the space-time of the production...

You know, they have taught you to work our arses off... you have the little tie, [you are a boss] I will rebel... if not, there you are dead, if you don't rebel, there you are really dead. If you don't have a little bit of character, you are quite dead. There are those unfortunately who are constrained or that have a family, or that are without a signed contract, you don't rebel. Then there is that person that is weaker when faced with blackmail, and doesn't rebel, therefore that one has died there, look there. (Fiat worker)

The expression used more than once in the passage of the preceding interview ('if you don't rebel, you are dead there') becomes the metaphor of a refusal that affirms that it makes the liberty of the subject in the constitution of the relationship with oneself and in the constitution of the relationship with the others worth something. The need to affirm one's own subjective existence through a praxis of rebellion reveals the biopolitical character of the struggle, where at stake is one's own life, understood as an indivisible unity of 'bios' and 'ethos'.

Now, I've learnt to take care for myself! Some lads want to show to be able, to be leaders ...what do I do it for? What for? I haven't lost my dignity, I haven't sold my soul. You are who has to take care for yourself. Cars are more important than men? They don't care if you are tired or disappointed. (Nissan worker)

Proceeding from the body's counterattack, this praxis develops as 'care of oneself'. By making one's own rules of behaviour and by developing personal techniques to manage one's relations with others and also one's relation with oneself, it becomes possible to minimize the domination inherent in power relations.

The Affirmation of Singularity Against the Government of Identity

The question of identity is one of the most recurrent arguments in the analysis of the restructuring process of capitalist enterprises in the post-Fordist regime of production. Both the critical and apologetic arguments about involvement and commitment recognise in identity one of the crucial elements of the new production paradigm. The key terms of the post-Fordist discursive order are: workers as members of the corporate culture, identification of the single worker with the team and the firm. In the post-Fordist mode co-operation, the quality demanded of the labour force is no longer measurable only in terms of compensation of physical effort but consists also of cognitive and relational abilities. Given the intrinsic critical stance to the subsumption of these abilities for productive ends, it therefore becomes necessary to have an investment of direct power to a specific disciplining of minds. This implicates a mutation of the representation of social context within the workplace, so that participation and commitment to the corporate goals appear in the eyes of the workers as the fruit of a free choice. Therefore the team assumes a specific identity connotation, moulded on the criterions of the rationality of production flow. Thus, the general

identity connotation of the worker is defined in terms of the active, involved collaborator who co-operates in the team for a common end.

Teamwork is the point where mechanisms of 'government of individualisation' work through a continuous praxis of division and hierarchisation, and also of classification of the behaviour and of the abilities of each worker on the base of standards set as normal: industrious/lazy; willing/slacker; participative/conflictual; sociable/solitary. At this level, workers' resistances develop as practices of the 'difference', as an affirmation of a singular and not serial individuality, as a refusal of the norm that identifies and classifies. Resistance, assumes the character of an 'event' (*l'événement*, of Foucault). It is an event because, affirming the right to singularity, resistance disarticulates the series and breaks the obviousness of the sense of daily practices. It is an event also because, causing that discontinuity, resistance allows the constitution of a horizontal connection, the making of a meeting, of a rediscovered point for mutual support.

The group is something different from the team as they say. There is cooperation, that is our work... Just to give you an example: I must put the door on, no? However, I am here and the other person is ten meters further down and therefore we work alone. What they mean by team is that if I forget to put the door on the person further down must do it for me, that is there must not be recovery, everyone should try to do what the other has not done. The group instead is another thing. It has happened to me in the past to be part of a beautiful group that began to be aware. However, there as soon as they notice the group, the group is separated, we are separated... and therefore this thing has happened to me so many times that you get to a point in which you don't even have the strength to start again. (Fiat Worker)

It's not like a group. Everybody has his own individual job to do. As long as your job is ok, did not matter what your mate was doing as long as yours was all right. (Nissan Worker)

In the following interview we can see how a group originates, how it grows, how it acts and what the effects these actions have on the disciplinary diagram:

Actually, we didn't know we were doing the work of three people, we didn't know it then. But I held my own when the bosses started threatening me, because I am very proud, even though inside I was also a bit sorry about what I had started, I was probably more scared than anything, but I didn't give up and I refused to do other work. After that the Ute leader came over and told me: 'so you can't handle it, you're a little bit weaker than the other ones, we'll see if we can put you in another position'. The other position was a lighter one, so I should have been thankful for that, I should have been thankful for the rest of my life ... But at that point some girls stood up and said: 'no, it's not just her problem, we have the same problem'. They supported me and so we decided to keep going and we put together this group, because then other things came up, we found out that we were supposed to have punch cards for each position ... we asked for information about this, I kind of became the leader in a certain sense. So I became the one to start doing these things. I started looking for stuff and asking questions, I went to the trade union, I got some information and so ... well, I tried to get information and since that day a real battle started, every day it was really ... the thought of going to work was ... I started getting cramps in my stomach ... there was constant conflict. The Repo, who is responsible for personnel, for a certain time tried to stay out of it, as long as he could, but he knew about what was going on. Then after we organized our first strike in Ute, a really successful strike, the Repo always came for every problem, he tried to fix things up a bit, he gave out little bonuses: a longer break, this and that, until one day he finally separated us. They separated the whole group, they left me by myself, they didn't move me but they moved the others. They sent some to the plate section, they changed shifts for others ... and a whole group of new people came into my Ute, people being trained so they were more easily controllable. As soon as they see a group has formed they separate it, we are separated ... they try to take away our strength to start up again and sometimes they manage to do it. (Fiat worker)

Resistance originates within the intensification of the rhythms in the production's time structure in this case as well. However, resistance also creates immediate solidarity among the other workers when the individual rebels. This type of socialization based on suffering is developed and reinforced through the type of body contact that is part of production: their common body language immediately forces the workers to reflect on context and on the power relations in that particular segment of the diagram.

On a first level, we can see how the pressure to become self-activated and to continually improve one's skills is essentially ineffective. The Ute leader's response to the worker's refusal to do other work immediately interprets the refusal, the subjective and conscious rebellion, as a technical malfunctioning due to individual incapability: 'you can't handle this, I'll move you to another position'. The formation of the group produces a strategic opposition to this solution: 'it's not just her problem, we can't handle it'. The affirmation of 'us' and the power of the collective opposition negates the technical and individual nature of the malfunction and renders this first attempt at team re-composition vain. The intervention of a hierarchical figure that is not part of the team (the Repo, *Responsabile Personale Operativo* – Operative Personnel Manager) represents a last attempt at reproducing the productive harmony of the team, by recognizing the partial legitimacy of the needs that emerged and the partial ineffectiveness of the 'leadership' capacities of the Ute leader. But this attempt at re-composition fails as well: the formation of a group and the production of a collective action is obviously not just a transitory explosion of resistance, but rather unveils a process of awareness acquisition, where the worker becomes the subject of an action aimed at protesting against imposed limitations. This is the first, elementary moment of truth that subjectivity produces in reaction to the power techniques found in team management logic.

A second moment of truth regards the logic behind what in literature is commonly referred to as *peer pressure*. 'Undisciplined' behaviour is stigmatized in the team by the social pressure exercised by one's peers. Peer pressure should create a strict form of informal surveillance that produces horizontal control of individual and group behaviour. In this manner the rules for correct behaviour seem to derive from the group itself as a practice of self-management. However, the *team* can be seen as an elective group only as long as it remains a group. This is only apparently paradoxical. Peer pressure must continuously be encouraged by management, along with the representation of the team as a group. The formation of an elective group within the team is, in itself, a way of denouncing a sham, while it reveals what the disciplinary strategy is behind the team. At the same time, it means that a new subject has been created. In other words, peer pressure represents an analytical process within the disciplinary diagram that precedes all the others and is a symptom of how the diagram works. What is challenged is not so much the partial effectiveness of a particular technique, or the fact that the single mechanical applications of a specific technique no longer work. It is the total effect of the attempt at discipline that is irreparably revealed and compromised. When power fails in this sense, it goes back to being explicitly repressive and punishing: it divides, isolates, separates and breaks the 'grouping' and the horizontal conjunctions, and brings the 'irreducible regions' of subjectivity back to the dimension of the control of the individual.

The subjugating process that is inserted in the weave of power opposing itself to it, gives rise to a fan of practices that do not emerge transforming themselves in open conflict. In the same way they express a potential antagonistic collective that is realised in the unfurling of a force against the imposed constraints. It is the case of the practices of sabotage, that in the context of the Integrated Factory do not manifest a destructive potentiality without further addition, but are reasoned, measured and calibrated to the technical logic of operation flow and to the general logic of discipline:

At times the workers stop the line, this happens most in the areas where the line is stop and go, such as in the paint shop; where you agree that one time I will stop it, one time you, another time another and one stops it a while, just to slow it down, to recover some energy. Above all when the workloads increase. You begin to not be able to do it any more, then things grow from that... It also depends on the shift, people travel and are tired, then as time passes it becomes spontaneous to act in this way. It is also a solidarity thing. They are small things to alleviate the excessive loads.

The practices of new forms of sabotage and the constitution of voluntary groups in the factory constitute examples of a kind of resistance to the government of individualisation. At Melfi, for instance, the practices of sabotage are played out on the horizontal communication and on the joint division of risk: the flow is stopped, the loads are loosened and all this is, as one of the workers said, 'also a thing of solidarity'. Solidarity is the element that also distributes the risk of the practises. The insurgence of voluntary groups within the team is not only a denunciation of the pretence of the team as a group, a revealing of a discipline that erects horizontal separations between individuals, it is also the invention of a new form of sociability that demolishes the walls of horizontal invisibility and is also propagated beyond the experience of the work in the factory.

Sociability and Governmentality

Lean factories, as well as net firms, whose performances are based on information technology, outsourcing and subcontracting, seem to be indissolubly tied with their 'green' character. They do not encumber the urban space itself; they create so little visual impact on the territory that often their presence is removed. At this level, the discontinuity with regard to Fordism is immediately perceivable. There is no longer the urban geography of the city-dormitory, of the city-barracks, in which compact masses and uniform individuals move according to predefined runs, rhythms and times regulated by the time of the factory around which everything swarmed. The new factory designs a different architecture, a different human geography. The compact mass of the Fordist city is replaced by an unstable aggregate of bodies. The spatial separation of the factory from the city determines a kind of 'immaterialisation' of the labour force, here meant in the sense of the social invisibility of the worker's job. For the workers, this means destructuring/restructuring of the daily routines. The work experience, the daily condition of the workers' existence is translated into a condition of continuous subtraction of their bodies from the social context in which they live.

When I come back home, all I want to do is put my feet up. I feel shattered, really depressed. I need to sleep all the day. The changing of shift does sicken me off, especially when I stand down

on Friday. Well, at the moment, I'm on nightshift ... the night shift starts on Monday and finishes on Friday at the eighteen to three in the morning. It often happens that I have to stand up on Saturday from seven o' clock in the morning to twenty-five to one in the afternoon. The overtime is compulsory. We have no choices you know. It is not for us to decide. (Nissan worker)

I don't find free time, because free time is what, for example, if one liked fishing, one day from the morning to the evening one would go fishing, that is a free day...Here you can't speak of free hours,... to see where to put these hours, two hours in the country, once, it's not as if you can go in the country all day long, because it also happens that you must do the shopping, or go to get the children from school, to accompany them, go and collect them from football. Whatever, to go one Sunday to see the football match. Let's say that according to me there really isn't any free time' (Fiat worker)

My social life has changed (...) I say [to myself] you're a vegetable, work and sleep, work and sleep, that's all. (Nissan worker)

At night then, because we have to do two weeks of night shifts ... we become like vampires, when I do the night shift during the winter I never see the sun, because unfortunately I like to sleep, I go to bed at six twenty in the morning, the sun isn't up yet, I get up at four thirty, in the afternoon, and the sun has already set and so I don't even see the sun for two weeks straight. Then the hours of rest during the night, look, I end up just like a vampire, Dracula: I wake up at two in the morning, I walk around the house thinking, 'well, what can I do'. (Fiat worker)

As can be seen, the time/space of work surpasses the borders of the factory, it directly penetrates the time/space of daily existence, reorganizing workers' lives and experience in function of the logic of valorisation and breaking up earlier social rhythms. Work ends up meaning also disappearing, or rather it means inflicting on one's flesh a hard process of cancellation so as to be able to adhere as much as possible to the imposed logic. The vampire allegory is a signal of the growing perception of one's estrangement. It means that one is on the edge, is on the verge of reaching a limit, where personal relationships, existential roots and changes in life conditions are at war with each other. The cancellation of the body from its social fabric is the most disquieting aspect found in this new context.

The fact that it is impossible to decide how to use one's time when not in the factory becomes, in reality, an impossibility to determine one's time in social activities, one's physical and symbolic presence within the context one belongs to. When one feels like a stranger in one's own land, a sort of collapse seems to come about: language crumbles, roots break, identities reveal their fictitious nature. The following story shows how forceful the sensations of invisibility and renunciation really are:

Somebody asks me: 'do you still live here'? At the beginning I am surprised and then I answer: 'perhaps, yes!' Because, rightly, they don't see you, you don't have the material time. At the end it's you who gives up, you too give up... You often realize that the others cannot understand, to not make it seem that you are always looking for an excuse, in the end you give up. You feel like an obstacle. Maybe one evening that they want to do something, some activities, then you put yourself aside, because you understand that it is not worth it, otherwise the others should conform to you. When the family is involved, then it is not a problem, but when... (Fiat worker)

We could say that the more the factory withdraws from the social space the more the workers' daily social relationships 'dematerialise', in the sense of the subtraction of the bodies from their affective and relational nets of reference, and in the sense of the absence of a place in which those bodies could recognize themselves and interact. From

the moment the existence and the reproduction of the knowledge and the cognitive relational abilities of individuals is inseparable from being part of a net of social relationships, the post-Fordist exploitation imposes its logic not only on the way of work, but also on the way of life, on the horizon of existence of the bodies and of knowledge. It also calls for intervention in the environment to deal with the contrasting needs of social relations between those in the factory and those outside it:

... they [friends and acquaintances] hear 'Fiat', they think that you don't work, but instead here you work, here you really work. (Fiat worker)

That is, my uncle, when he sees us, me and my girlfriend, 'ah, double wages, eh, how wonderful' ... but then he never sees me when on Sunday he goes out with his wife and I take the bus like an idiot with my overalls at eight o'clock in the evening, he never sees me. (Fiat worker)

The sense of membership is founded upon more uncertain bases: the more the social fabric of reference becomes evanescent, so much more 'common sense' tends to function as reassurance, setting itself as an ideological base to fill and cure the lacerations caused by the withdrawal. It is beginning from this condition of material and existential uncertainty that it is possible to understand the specificity of the new power-knowledge diagram. This intervenes, with its physical-political techniques, to 'manufacture cellular individuality' and neo-identity attitudes according to a new combining logic. In other words, it produces a material and symbolic 'place' that, acting as a point of identity recognition and a space for communicative action, tries to impose new normative codes of behaviour: thus, the team is set in the form of group, the factory in the form of community, the living context in the form of the local community and so on to ethnic make-up, to the nation, to the West.

This structuring of time and social space constitutes the other emergence front of the workers' resistance. Recovering or creating spaces of autonomy in their own daily life implicates negating the content of those discourses and reaffirming ones own social being: another time and another space to build ones own sociability.

We are a group of friends. We met by accident, one year ago. At that time, we were working together at the same station. Now, we often see each other, we like to spend our days off together. If one of us has problem with money, the others help him, you know. I'm very happy to feel that... that they take care of me. We are very good friends. (Nissan worker)

I had a good friend that I shared a lift with. He still is a very good friend. He was married with four kids like and he went to the tribunal for me – he put his neck out really because if you step out of line at Nissan your cards are marked... yes there were a lot of good lads. I did not know him before I went to Nissan like. (Nissan worker)

Oh yeah, we always help each other. How? For example, when I have my day off I go to the office for him or I go to take his child to school, if his wife is busy. Sometimes, our wives do shopping together. While we are working, they, me wife and his wife, organize the outings. (Nissan worker)

The constitution of voluntary groups and the practise of absenteeism, starting from an individual need of symbolic and material re-appropriation of one's own social time, concretely structured in the terms of a 'releasing' of individuals from the destinies of the enterprise and of the constitution of a new relation to oneself and to others, founded on solidarity and co-operation rather than on functional synergy. These practices have

effects on two different levels: on the outside, in the living context, they re-group the affective and relational bonds and defend a vital dimension and a singular biography, separate from that of the company. On the inside, in the factory, they affirm the right to difference and the separation from a relational context – that of the team – that is perceived as temporary. In the living context, they intervene by de-structuring the common sense that tends to identify a complex multiplicity of people in a homogeneous population (the firm workers, the local community), and doing so vindicates the right to singularity and to difference.

The practices of absenteeism are the recovery of a sociability from which one is materially and violently subtracted. Because of the widespread manner in which absenteeism imposes itself, it forces a reorganization of times and of tasks, this time on the base of the subjective needs of the workers:

In these situations Fiat fails to organize the changes and has to have general breaks., that is has to suffer a loss of production, stop the line for twenty minutes and miss production during that time; formally the break remains within the run of things, but Fiat does not have the personnel to replace. What happened next? At this stage Fiat did this, but that was not enough, they still failed to... because anyway in June absenteeism will increase.. they failed with the persons they took away and said they needed for the changes, to do without general breaks. They had to have general breaks just the same. (Trade Union Representative from SATA)

Identity and Memory

One of the mechanisms of discursive power for producing identity is the production of a space-time discontinuity that opposes the past of struggles and conflicts to a present of participation: the 'brownfield' as a space of industrial conflict to the 'greenfield' as a space of workers' participation and commitment. The greenfield is often metaphorically associated with a '*tabula rasa*', social space free from every form of industrial regulations (routines, habits, traditions) and fundamentally defined by a 'green' work force, which attributes a strategic importance to these sites: in the setting of plants embodying the new production paradigm, it is assumed that the company has no restrictions of previous work routines nor, consequently, of consolidated culture of conflict. All these elements have constituted an integral and fundamental part of the company's formation, producing a discourse that represents the memory of the young 'lean' workers as a fertile field for the production of sense, a malleable and mouldable space, because it is deprived of the coating of the past. The space-time discontinuity of power operates on memory.

I will look at the effects of this process through the account of a female Fiat worker (all quotes in this section are from her, unless otherwise stated). The pieces of the interview that follow are the main points of a story that we have attempted to deconstruct:

They [personnel trainers] were always emphasizing that we were a team and that we should do everything possible for the company because, as they said, we ourselves were the company ... If we had done everything possible for the company, the company would repay us for it ... technical training, however, was inexistent. They tried to plagiarize us, they tried to get people to think like ... to think like them [...]. All the talk about the team in the beginning really affected me, before I realized what it was really all about. In the beginning, yes, it affected me, because this job seemed

like the dream of a lifetime come true, for me and for a lot of people, because in any case there were no alternatives. So we were really enthusiastic, we were full of energy, full of...

This account is obviously the re-elaboration of the recent past and thus the experience clearly comes forth in expressions such as 'before I understood what was really happening'. The practical experience of production, the real life of factory work reveals a present that is very different than the one that was hoped for and promised:

No one in the factory believes anymore that the work they do can somehow elevate them. Outside the factory the Sata workers are considered to be privileged only because they get a steady paycheck, just because they have no matter what a paycheck they can count on, with the high level of unemployment there is they're seen as being privileged. In the beginning we would even go around with our uniform, now no one does that anymore. Maybe because in the beginning we were proud to be a part of the company, with all that brain washing they did to us in the beginning! But then slowly but surely this stopped happening.

This account forcefully underlines how training efforts disintegrate when its symbols are abandoned: 'in the beginning we would even go around with our uniform, now no one does that anymore. Maybe because in the beginning we were proud to be a part of the company...' That 'feeling part of the company' ends up becoming 'brain washing'. The fracture and discontinuity between past and present is recomposed when this discovery is made:

Here we never really had the mentality of the factory, we never really knew ... I don't know, but I imagined that it was more ... I thought the people were stronger, more united. I had an idea of workers that I had seen on the television, of the strikes ... I had an idea more ... when I started working here and I did my training I saw it was all different ..., but then on the job I immediately realized that that training was false!

This is where memory returns and invests the subjectivation process. The recovery of memory, carried out over a period of time, produces another space and another way of thinking, while it opens up the perception of what is otherwise possible. It's only a brief opening because it closes up again, but it offers the possibility that others will open up after it. In this sense subjectivity manifests as a right to being different, to variation and to metamorphosis, that forces power to make its attack on other fronts:

Sometimes I feel as though I am about to fall apart too. You finally get to the point where you say to yourself: 'maybe I am the only one? Maybe it's me that just isn't right?' and is there really a wish to change things in the others? Do the others feel like making their lives complicated? I mean ... [she gets a reflective expression as though she were talking to herself, lowering her voice] Yeah, it's hard for me to do this, it makes me tense ... I have children, a family ... sometimes I think I'm making a mistake ... but I want to change things ... if I think of going to work just for the work itself I couldn't do it ... you think that sooner or later things in there could change, that you could build something ... if I'm really honest, I don't feel like totally giving up, I don't feel completely defeated. If I got to that point...no, no, I already told you, I could never go on like that. If I had completely given up I wouldn't go to work anymore, I wouldn't be able to do it.

The analysis of this personal process simply brings to light the sort of inherent difficulties that are part of every subjectivation process. It is a process that is never only individual or only collective, even though it is an inner process, so much so that Foucault defined it as a self relationship or as a moment in which the self is formed. At the same time, long term memory is never based on solely personal data: it does not begin and end within the subject's private time frame. Long term memory goes beyond

personal memory, by creating connections with history and with others. Long term memory brings one face to face with oblivion; it brings past and present together where they are compared on the basis of one's personal experience:

I'm convinced that the working class that in the 1970s made the trade union strong doesn't exist anymore, what I mean is that the whole attitude has changed, now workers in the factory don't see the union like something you should belong to and that could help us grow, they always think of it as something abstract, that everyone just minds their own business and so they have to just get something out of the union... what I mean is ... they just use it to get something out of it. (Fiat worker)

Management's discourse regarding the union and participation has produced obvious effects: it has given the union itself an identity that is useful for its own purposes. But at the same time it has given it an empty form that is indistinct and cannot be distinguished from the other types of firm government:

The union, especially here, is being run by the company... the union bend the rules to suit the company, not the workers ... I mean they're in their pockets'. (Nissan worker)

Our union is very progressive... and understands what is required... [he smiles] the Union agenda is the same as the company agenda. (Nissan worker)

The destructuralization of the union shows its effects only with regards to disciplinary actions and not on the process of subjectivity formation. If we consider the union a stratified structure of strategic knowledge that is thus known and understood by power, its present crisis (in terms of representation and adherence) means that in some ways there are new gaps opening up. These gaps themselves point out a growing metamorphosis that power is currently incapable of controlling.

Conclusions

In the first part of this paper I examined the contribution of post-structuralism to the 'labour process debate', in order to elaborate suitable conceptual tools for the conceptualization of the processes of subjectivation in the disciplinary diagram of the post-Fordist factory. The problem is that the critical thought handed down from Fordism set us in front of a conceptual picture that separated the operational plan of power and that of resistance by opposing them. This separation is due, on one part, to an original misunderstanding of the way in which Marx has conceptualized the relationship between capital and waged labour; on the other part, to an interpretation of the concept of subjectivity in Foucault that tends to reduce the perspective of analysis.

The first limitation emerges from the difficulties that Marxists and critical materialists, who maintain the continuity with the past, encounter when interpreting the dynamics of class struggle in a new social and productive order of globalisation. The dichotomy of factory and society makes it difficult to differentiate the specific level of immediate production from the general one of production as an organic unit of partial moments, while economic and salary issues tend to integrally absorb the political aspects of resistance. As Foucault suggests, "if we concentrate on the techniques of power and show the economic profit or political utility that can be derived from them, in a certain

context and for certain reasons, then we can understand how these mechanisms actually and eventually became part of the whole” (2004: 33).

The second limitation can be found in how Foucault’s concept of subjectivity has been interpreted within the Labour Process Debate. On one hand, Marxists do not realize that the issue of the subject represents the basic problem outlined in Foucault’s theoretical-political research, rather than a rigid formulation of a conceptual category that can be used to create an historical teleology. For Foucault, the subject is not a pre-determined given. Rather, it grows and is transformed throughout history, within the immanent reality of power relations. For this reason, subjectivity is a continually problematic and open issue that is never completely defined. On the other hand, post-structuralists, who instead see post-Fordism as an absolute innovation, lose sight of the fact that what determines normalization processes in contemporary capitalism is still the reproduction of the workforce, or rather that the production of subjectivity remains the central theme.

The conjugation of Marx and Foucault, I argued, allows the production of a new conceptual space in which to analyse the political dimension of subjectivity, assuming that this is an antagonistic experimentation of the social forces. This means bringing back the bio-political field of power to the material ontology of production and getting out of a fragmented vision of society in which power relationships and resistances are lost in daily micro-relationships.

The Foucauldian conceptual tools allow us to interpret the Marxian concept of real subsumption as a process that invests not only the economic or cultural dimension of society but tends to unfold itself in biological, bodily and subjective terms. This in a phase in which the development of capital has modified its own categories of operation according to a scheme and according to ‘social’ dimensions. In the measure in which the power tends to unify and englobe in itself all the elements of social life, despite itself, reveals new ambits of constitution of plurality and singularity.

Based on my reading of workers’ resistances, both as antagonistic practices and as reflections over the common sense of their everyday existence, I tried to look at the specificity of power relations in two factories through three intermingling levels of analysis, which can also be considered as different moments of the processes of production of subjectivity: the irreducibility of bodies to the anatomic-political devices; the affirmation of singularity against the social identity discursively produced; and, finally, the constitution of new forms of sociability against the mechanisms of governmentality that operates inside and outside the factory.

From my field research it emerged that the processes of subjectivation of workers presents an univocal tendency given by the fact that resistance induces people to re-elaborate the sense of their existence. In this reflexive practice every singularity forges a different meaning for his/her relation with others, with the world and with history, modifying him/herself. The processes of subjectivation, playing on the long-term memory, produce another space, a way of thinking differently, that opens the field of the possible to perception. I will try, in conclusion, to individualise the effects of the truth that resistance causes in the weave of power relations through three images: irreducibility of the body, horizontal conjunctions and memory.

The stories of the workers have represented a picture in which resistance originated and develops starting from the body, from the rising up of its needs and desires. The body is disobedient to the technology of individualisation. The body is other than the 'subject', the consciousness, domesticated, filtered, selected and settled memory. The body in its unrepeatable singularity lives before it is lived, it feels before it is felt. Due to the irreducibility that it expresses in respect to every acquaintance and abstraction, the body can not be the result, but it is the necessary matrix of any practice of conscience.

The language of the body is also the language of life, the place of all possible affections, it is social language. The body, in its symbolic dimension, despite the cancellations and the separation functional to the production of serial identities, is linked, without solutions of continuity to other bodies, implicated and involved in the whole life of humanity. Both in the experience of the separation, the cancellation from the social life, and in that of the organic interconnection to other bodies in the production process, the living body manifests its irreducibility and vindicates its singularity. It is possible that this singularity remains isolated, 'without affection', dumb, and that 'the fold' opened by resistance closes again without leaving trace. Resistance is produced as an 'event', as break of the evidence of the social practices and as support of possible strategies. It is an event if it forces the matrix of the control device to work endlessly; if it imposes new forms of recovery on it that, each time, present themselves as extraneous to it, as a break, as constituent difference. In this sense, resistance is not simply limited to the experience of the power but induces those processes of reflection that put the effects of truth of power in doubt.

Evoking its bond with other bodies, the body vindicates a bond with the past that evades the preset space-time coordinates. The process of subjectivation, operating through time, produces another space, an otherwise thinking, that opens the field of the possible to perception. It is here that the self, evoking its constitutive bond with the body, evokes a bond with the past that evades the serial position that makes the bodies interchangeable and reciprocally replaceable, and that allows the identification of each individual on the base of the series that it occupies and of the discard that separates it from the other. It is here that memory returns and that it invests the subjectivation process. The recovery of the memory, played on the long-term duration, discloses the irreducible difference between the processes of subjectivation and the subjection that the power-knowledge produces. "Memory is the real name of the relation to oneself", says Deleuze (1988: 107). Memory is the affect on self by self and makes up the essential structure of subjectivity: "Time as subject, or rather subjectivation, is called memory. Not that brief memory that comes afterwards and is the opposite of forgetting, but the 'absolute memory', which doubles the present and the outside and is one with forgetting, since it is itself endlessly forgotten and reconstituted" (Deleuze, 1988: 107).

The process of subjectivation is never either only individual or only collective, although it is the principle of internal regulation, so much so as to be defined by Foucault as relation to oneself or as constitutive moment of the self. Equally, the long-term memory is never a register memory: it does not start and finish in the private time of the subject. It surpasses it, reconstituting in space the bonds with history and with the other alone. The long-term memory game reconstitutes the comparison with forgetfulness, compares a past and a present and compares them on the base of one's own experience. The

processes of subjectivation, operating through time, produce another space, an otherwise thinking, that opens to perception the field of the possible. It is a fold because it re-closes, but gives the possibility for other folds to open. And here then it is that the subjectivity is revealed as the right to difference, to variation and to metamorphosis. When these reflexive practices impose themselves as shared sense, the processes of subjectivation become the expression of a common becoming.

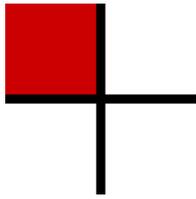
references

- Althusser, L. & E. Balibar (1970) *Reading Capital*. London: New Left Books.
- Casey, C. (1995) *Work, Self and Society After Industrialism*. London: Routledge.
- Collinson, D. (1994) 'Strategies of Resistance. Power, Knowledge and Subjectivity in the Workplace', in J. M. Jermier, D. Knights and W.R. Nord (eds.) *Resistance & Power in Organizations*. London: Routledge.
- Deetz, S. (1998) 'Discursive Formations, Strategized Subordination and Self-surveillance', in A. McKinlay & K. Starkey (eds.) *Foucault, Management and Organization Theory*. London: Sage.
- Deleuze, G. (1988) *Foucault*. London: The Athlon Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1997) *Essays Critical and Clinical*. Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Du Gay, P. (1996) *Consumption and Identity at Work*. London: Sage.
- Edwards, P.K. (1990) 'Understanding Conflict in The Labour Process: The Logic and Autonomy of Struggle' in D. Knights and H. Willmott (eds.) *Labour Process Theory*. London: Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (1979) *Dalle Torture alle Celle*. Cosenza: Lericci.
- Foucault, M. (1980) 'Truth and subjectivity', *Howison Lectures*, Oct. 20 and 21, Berkeley: University of California.
- Foucault, M. (1982) 'The subject and the power. Afterword', in H. L. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow (eds.) *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1991) *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of The Prison*. London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1994) *Dits et écrits IV 1980-1988*. Paris: Editions Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1998) *The Will to Knowledge. The history of Sexuality: volume one*. London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2004) *Society must be defended*. London: Penguin.
- Jermier, J.M., D. Knights & W.R. Nord (1994) 'Resistance and Power in Organizations: Agency, Subjectivity and The Labour Process', in J.M. Jermier, D. Knights & W.R. Nord (eds.) *Resistance & Power in Organizations*. London: Routledge.
- Knights, D. (1990) 'Subjectivity, Power and The Labour Process', in D. Knights & H. Willmott (eds.) *Labour Process Theory*. London: Macmillan.
- Knights, D. (1997) 'Organization theory in the age of deconstruction: dualism, gender and postmodernism revisited', *Organization Studies*, 18(1): 1-19.
- Knights, D. (2001) 'Hanging out The Dirty Washing. Labour process Theory and Its Legacies', *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 30(4): 68-84.
- Knights, D., D. McCabe (2000) "'Ain't Misbehavin'": Opportunities for Resistance under New Forms of "Quality" Management', *Sociology*, 34(3): 421-436.
- Knights, D. & H. Willmott (1989) 'Power and subjectivity at work: from degradation to subjugation in the labour process', *Sociology*, 23(4): 535-558.
- Knights, D. & H. Willmott (eds.) (1990) *Labour Process Theory*. London: Macmillan.
- Kondo, D. K. (1990) *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kunda, G. (1992) *Engineering Culture. Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Corporation*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Martinez Lucio, M.; P. Stewart (1997) 'The paradox of contemporary Labour Process Theory: the rediscovery of labour and the disappearance of collectivism', *Capital & Class*, 62: 49-78.

- Marx, K. (1977) *Capital. Vol. I*, trans. Ben Fowkes. New York: Vintage.
- Marx, K. (1973) *Grundrisse. Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*. New York: Vintage.
- Negri, A. (1991) *Marx beyond Marx. Lessons on the Grundrisse*. London: Pluto Press.
- O'Doherty, D. & H. Willmott (2001) 'The question of Subjectivity and the Labour Process', *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 30(4): 112-132.
- Rabinow, P. (ed.) (1991) *The Foucault Reader. An introduction to Foucault's Thought*. London: Penguin.
- Sewell, G. (1998) 'The discipline of teams: the control of team-based industrial work through electronic and peer surveillance', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43(2): 397-428.
- Sewell, G. (1999) 'On the possibility of a sociology of Workplace surveillance', paper presented to the *American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, Chicago.
- Sewell, G. and B. Wilkinson (1992) "'Someone to watch over me": surveillance, discipline and the just-in-time labour process', *Sociology*, 26(2): 271-289.
- Stewart, P. (2001) 'Individualism and collectivism in the sociology of the collective worker', Paper presented to the International Seminar '*Between the Sociology of Work and Organisation Studies: The State of the Debate in Italy and in the United Kingdom*', Bologna, 16-17 November.
- Thomas, R. and A. Davies (2005) 'Theorizing the Micro-politics of Resistance: New Public Management and Managerial Identities in the UK Public Services', *Organization Studies*, 26(5): 683-706.
- Thompson, P. (1990) 'Crawling From The Wreckage: The Labour Process and The Politics of Production' in D. Knights & H. Willmott (eds.) *Labour Process Theory*. London: Macmillan.
- Thompson, P. (2001) 'Contesting the big picture: class, work and political economy in and beyond the Marxist tradition', Paper presented to the International Seminar '*Between the Sociology of Work and Organization Studies: The State of the Debate in Italy and in the United Kingdom*', Bologna, 16-17 November.
- Thompson, P. & S. Ackroyd (1995) 'All quiet on the workplace front: a critique of recent trends in British industrial sociology', *Sociology*, 29(4): 615-633.
- Thompson, P. & S. Ackroyd (1999) *Organizational misbehaviour*. London: Sage.
- Townley, B. (1993) 'Foucault, power/knowledge, and its relevance for human resource management', *Academy of Management Review*, 18(3): 518-545.
- Virno, P. (2004) *A Grammar of the Multitude. For an analysis of Contemporary forms of life*. New York: Semiotext(e).
- Willmott, H. (1990) 'Subjectivity and the Dialectics of Praxis: Opening Up the Core of Labour Process Analysis', in D. Knights & H. Willmott (eds.) *Labour Process Theory*. London: Macmillan.

the author

Giuliana Commisso is a Research Assistant in Labour Sociology at the Department of Sociology and Political Science at the University of Calabria, Italy. She also teaches at the university's Faculty of Economics. She has carried out research on the theoretical foundations of the capitalist transformation with particular consideration for Marx, Adorno, Horkheimer and Foucault which included field work on labour relations in post-Fordist factories. Her research interests also address the problems of transnational migration and she has published several articles and two books: *Il Conflitto invisibile* (1999) and *Soggettività al lavoro* (2004).
E-mail: g.commisso@unical.it



Dear Editor: A Reply to Basbøll and Graham

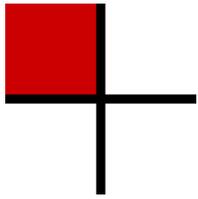
Karl Weick

Dear Editor:

In my judgment it is our ideas, theories, findings, and lines of argument that make or break us as a field, not our examples. The Alps illustration is one of many stories I've found over the years to illustrate complex concepts. As with many illustrations I eventually use, it is only after mulling and incubation that I realize why something is a good story. In the case of the Alps illustration, it was years before I understood that this example was relevant to the concept of enactment that I had been writing about since the mid 60s. By the time I began to see the Alps story as an example of cognition in the path of the action, I had lost the original article containing Holub's poem and I was not even sure where I had read the story. This occurred in the early 1980's which was quite some time before internet search was a common form of inquiry. I reconstructed the story as best I could. I obviously had no idea whether the reconstruction was close to the original or not since I had no original in hand for comparison. Other than to insert a footnote saying 'source unknown', I would not have done anything different were I in the same position today. Later, when I learned the source of this story from a helpful colleague, I used the attribution to Holub from then on in newly developed pieces where I used this illustration. I took no credit for inventing or discovering the story, and instead, used it as one among many examples to illustrate the general idea that minimal structures, when trusted, updated, and acted on attentively, tended to generate data that improved problem solving. While this style of using stories as allegories may displease people who favor other forms of evidence, the stories themselves are available for comparison, refutation, extension, coupling with other illustrations to exemplify a quite different concept, or for being ignored.

the author

Karl E. Weick is Rensis Likert Distinguished University Professor of Organizational Behavior and Psychology at the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan.
E-mail: karlw@umich.edu



Substitutes for Strategy Research: Notes on the source of Karl Weick's anecdote of the young lieutenant and the map of the Pyrenees

Thomas Basbøll and Henrik Graham

abstract

Six instances of Karl Weick's anecdote about the young lieutenant in the Alps are presented along with its source: Miroslav Holub's poem 'Brief Thoughts on Maps'. It is determined that all six instances constitute cases of plagiarism. The fact that the anecdote was written by a poet, not a management scholar, is invoked to explain the tenacity with which it has lodged itself in the imagination of organization theory for better or for worse.

A true philosopher says only one thing in his lifetime because he enjoys but one contact with the real. (Henri Bergson)

Spot the one contact, describe it, and then tell a tale of variations on a theme. (Karl Weick)

Introduction

It is the purpose of these remarks to take a close look at Weick's famous appropriation of Miroslav Holub's poem about the young lieutenant and the reconnaissance unit in the Alps. Our investigations leads us reluctantly to the conclusion that the anecdote, as it appears in the six instances of Weick's published writing that we have looked at, from 1982 to 2001, constitutes an act of plagiarism. Our errand is not to provoke a scandal, however, but rather to try to display some characteristic features of the seemingly permanent problem of the 'academic' relationship between managerial practice and management writing, the experience of managing and the experience of researching. We provide an analysis of the main issues as we see them, and provide an appendix of exhibits to give the reader an opportunity to decide their importance in their own research contexts. We emphasize that whatever judgments we, or our readers, arrive at pertain first and foremost to a collection of *texts*, not to the people who wrote them.

One of the central questions of research methodology is how a piece of scholarship (a research text) can be said to make "contact with the real", as Bergson famously put it

(Weick, 2001: ix; Mezias, 2003), or how the research establishes the ‘conjunction’ of signifier and signified in writing “the prose of the world” (Foucault, 1970: 42). Before being organized into orderly prose sentences, research practice often seems little more than the collection of “tangles, fankles, *impasses*, disjunctions, whirligogs, [or] binds” that R. D. Laing called ‘knots’, and which, owing to a modicum of “formal elegance”, could easily be considered *poems* that “refer back to the very specific experiences from which they derive” (Laing, 1970: i). It is no different in organization studies, where researchers must work on the basis of an infinitude of disjointed impressions in order to discern that ‘order of things’ which is the very theme of their research: the formal principle of the organization of experience. In a very important sense, the successful discernment of ‘organization’ as such is an act or instance of stylistic mastery; it is a formal achievement. Research methodology is to a great extent a question of style – the style of one’s scholarship.

In a feature interview in the October 2003 newsletter of the Managerial and Organizational Cognition Division of the Academy of Management, Karl Weick made this point very succinctly by way of distinguishing his approach to management theory from more ‘mainstream’ scholarship or ‘thick paradigms’, which he described as too ‘heavy handed’ in their discipline of research practices. (We imagine that he means the work of people such as Michael Porter.) He expressed his preference for “the lighter hand of a question, a modest frame (e.g. variation, selection, retention), an anecdote, a single connection, or an intriguing assertion in a piece of literature,” an approach for which he has become rightly famous over the past three decades. “I read. I imagine. I write. I edit. Whatever I read becomes a frame, a ‘discipline’, a gestalt, within which I start associating and connecting. Those are moves of the imagination working within soft constraints” (Mezias, 2003). This aptly describes what might be called the *ethos* of Weick’s organization research or the *style* of his management thinking. For this, Weick was awarded the Academy of Management’s Irwin Award in 1990.

If one was to locate a single immortal contribution made by Weick to the academic study of organizations it is above all the concept of ‘enactment’. Still more specifically, he provided us with the little ‘knot’ or anecdote of the map of the *Pyrenees* that was sufficient to lead a group of soldiers out of the *Alps*. (See exhibit B for the canonical formulation.) The standard moral to be drawn from this story is that “when you are lost, any map will do!” (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 1998: 160; Weick, 1995: 54) Weick’s concepts of enactment and sensemaking are, in a sense, nothing more than detailed elaborations of this central idea, as he himself notes (Weick, 2001; Mezias, 2003)

Today, the story is not just Weick’s own personal favourite (Weick, 1990: 4; 1995: 54): it is an established anecdote in the literature (cf. exhibit I). Michael Rowlinson dwells on this fact in his review of the organization theory literature, where he both laments the lack of historical sources and notes the “deceptive appeal of Weick’s style” (2004: 617). The specific facts of the anecdote, which are de-emphasized as properly *empirical* facts both in the literary way the story is told and the lack of documentation it offers, are not altogether unimportant, as Weick’s own interpretation shows. “Now, that story would have been really neat,” Weick quotes Bob Engel as saying, “if the leader out with the lost troops had known it was the wrong map and still been able to lead them back”

(Weick, 1987: 222; 1995: 55; 2001: 346). That is, something interesting follows from details that are not quite clear in the way Weick tells the story. But even as Weick raises these questions he passes lightly by them as interesting things to think about but not something to be settled by further historical study. Rowlinson, in fact, has come to doubt the anecdote's accuracy (2004: 617) and even supporters like Mintzberg note that "this particular analogy may be unfortunate" since navigation in mountain regions is much more difficult than the story suggests. With the wrong map in hand, the unit must have been very lucky indeed to survive. While Mintzberg *et al.* do not "dispute Weick's basic point", they do draw the factual likelihood of the specific anecdote into question (Mintzberg *et al.*, 1998: n160).

Rowlinson sees the reference to Holub as a rhetorical move intended to impress a particular kind of reader with the intellectual credentials of a poet. He goes on to cite Van Maanen's declaration of Weick's "triumph of style over theory" (2004: 617). As we will see, Weick also scores a victory of style over empirical inquiry (a victory Weick celebrates as one of the lessons of the story itself).

The historical accuracy of this anecdote has, to our knowledge, never been verified and is certainly not among the outstanding empirical questions of organization and management studies. It is so rarely questioned that making it an 'empirical question' would seem odd today; it has the status of a myth. As Weick would eventually note (1990, 1995), its source is an anecdote that was told by Albert Szent-Gyorgyi (1893-1986), probably to Miroslav Holub or to people he knew, sometime before 1977. The incident from which it stems seems to have occurred during the Second World War. Holub recorded it as a poem, which was published in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1977. But because Holub's version is poetry only by virtue of being a carefully selected and lineated prose narrative (see exhibit A), there is some reason to believe that Holub's poem (originally written in Czech) was based on a written or spoken statement made by Szent-Gyorgyi or a member of his audience, i.e., that Holub's poem is already a transcription of someone else's (perhaps exact) words. Holub's main contribution may have been to translate it into Czech and sharpen its imagery. It is the bulk of this contribution, along with that made by Jarmila and Ian Milner, Holub's translators, which Weick appropriates verbatim in and as his own work (see exhibits B through G). In any case, through his 'softly constrained' style of referencing his sources, Weick generates a false sense that the story is available in two or three forms: Holub's version, Szent-Gyorgyi's and perhaps even a historical document (see also exhibit H). Like the map's role in the survival of the Hungarian reconnaissance unit, everything depends both on *believing* the story to be true and *not looking at it too closely*. Failing either of these, as might happen if the poem had been cited *as a poem*, the effect is lost.

The unacknowledged connection between Holub's poem and Weick's prose has led to a number of peculiar errors in its subsequent citation, indicating the difficulties inherent in finding one's bearings when faced with a plagiarized text (we note these in exhibits H and I). It also accounts for a variety of instances in which scholars in other fields are able to make Weick's point in contexts that are wholly unaware of Weick's work but nonetheless employ the exact same words, namely, Holub's (e.g. Barry, 2003; Connolly, 1995). These are unfortunate consequences of what may well be Weick's act of "unintentional plagiarism", as the Modern Language Association describes it, which

“sometimes happens because researchers do not keep precise records of their reading” and so are unable to determine “whether their summaries and paraphrases contain quoted material that is poorly marked or unmarked” (Gibaldi, 2003: 70). The American Historical Association acknowledges the existence of this common defence in specific cases of plagiarism, tersely remarking that it “is plausible only in the context of a wider tolerance of shoddy work.”

Whatever the cause of the original error may have been, we have dated its first appearance to 1982, in a paper co-authored with Robert J. Swieringa, who is currently dean at the Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University (see exhibit G). This case, along with Weick (1983, 1987, 2001) are instances of ordinary plagiarism, where words are used exactly as they appear in a source that is not referenced. One could cite any number of policies to establish this as a transgression of academic standards; the Academy of Management’s Code of Ethical Conduct makes the common stipulation that “whether published or not, ideas or concepts derived from others should be acknowledged.”

But the 1990 and 1995 versions of the story are different in the important sense that Weick now provides Holub 1977 as his source. This, however, is not sufficient to ensure good scholarship. We have already noted that it may even exaggerate the empirical validity of the story to cite a source without indicating the nature of the relation between the text being cited and the text that is doing the citing, the conjunction of signifier and signified, our ‘contact with the real’. In any case, “presenting an author’s exact wording without marking it as a quotation is plagiarism *even if you cite the source*” (Gibaldi, 2003: 70, emphasis added). The guidelines of Weick’s home institution, the University of Michigan, also mentions this form of citation. Even when “the writer use[s] a footnote to indicate the source,” plagiarism occurs when “she does not use quotation marks to indicate that the sentence was lifted in its entirety.” The guidelines add an interesting comment given Rowlinson’s irritation with precisely the *style* of Weick’s writing. “Chances are,” they note, “that an abrupt change in writing style will be noticeable to a critical reader” (University of Michigan Libraries, 1998).

Weick’s work will be remembered in part because of the tenacious insistence with which the anecdote of the map has lodged itself in the imagination of organization theorists. He will continue to be praised for the elegance of the way he makes his “moves of the imagination working within soft constraints” (Mezias, 2003). It may even be his “one contact with the real” (Weick, 2001: 1). Its dominance is something that other theorists (like Rowlinson) worry about and attribute to Weick’s masterful prose style. It is easily explained once we realize that the anecdote was crafted by an accomplished poet, not a management theorist, and so was not Weick’s way of conjoining the signifier with the signified, not Weick’s way of framing or making sense of his associations, but Holub’s. We believe this little detail in the history of scholarship on strategic thinking is a clear indication that, for better or for worse, the strength of organization theory lies not in the rigour of its prose but in the tenacity of its poetry.

Exhibit A

Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, who knew a lot about maps
according to which life is on its way somewhere or other,
told us this story from the war
due to which history is on its way somewhere or other:

The young lieutenant of a small Hungarian detachment in the Alps
sent a reconnaissance unit out into the icy wasteland.
It began to snow
immediately, snowed for two days and the unit
did not return. The lieutenant suffered: he had dispatched
his own people to death.

But the third day the unit came back.
Where had they been? How had they made their way?
Yes, they said, we considered ourselves
lost and waited for the end. And then one of us
found a map in his pocket. That calmed us down.
We pitched camp, lasted out the snowstorm and then with the map
we discovered our bearings.
And here we are.

The lieutenant borrowed this remarkable map
and had a good look at it. It was not a map of the Alps
but of the Pyrenees.

Goodbye now.

This is Miroslav Holub's (1977) poem 'Brief Thoughts on Maps' as it appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Feb. 4, 1977, translated by Jarmila and Ian Milner. It can be found also in the 1977 collection, *Notes of a Clay Pigeon* (cf. Connolly, 1995). Holub (1923-1998) was a Czech poet and scientist. He was "noted for his detached, lyrical reflections on humanist and scientific subjects" and "was at least as well known [in English speaking countries] as in his homeland" (Encyclopaedia Britannica). He published several books of poetry, including *Selected Poems* (1967), *On the Contrary and Other Poems* (1984), *Poems Before & After* (1990), *Intensive Care: Selected and New Poems* (1996), and *The Rampage* (1997) (*ibid.*).

Exhibit B

Definitions notwithstanding, I can best show what I think strategy is by describing an incident that happened during military maneuvers in Switzerland. The young lieutenant of a small Hungarian detachment in the Alps sent a reconnaissance unit out into the icy wilderness. It began to snow immediately, snowed for two days, and the unit did not return. The lieutenant suffered, fearing that he had dispatched his own people to death. But the third day the unit came back. Where had they been? How had they made their way? Yes, they said, we considered ourselves lost and waited for the end. And then one of us found a map in his pocket. That calmed us down. We pitched camp, lasted out the snowstorm, and then with the map we discovered our bearings. And here we are. The lieutenant borrowed this remarkable map and had a good look at it. He discovered to his astonishment that it was not a map of the Alps but of the Pyrenees. (Weick, 2001: 344-5)

This is a full quotation of the fifth paragraph of Weick's 'Substitutes for Strategy' as it appears in his 2001 collection, *Making Sense of the Organization*, which reprints Weick 1987 (exhibit E). It will be easily seen that it is a verbatim reproduction of Holub's poem (exhibit A), a few minor differences notwithstanding. The enjambments (lineation effects) are removed, the first stanza is left out, 'wasteland' is replaced by 'wilderness', "The lieutenant suffered: he had dispatched" is replaced with "The lieutenant suffered, fearing that he had dispatched" and, finally, Weick adds the words "He discovered to his astonishment." There are half a dozen differences in a text of 144 words. Yet Holub's poem is not referenced anywhere in the paper or in the book's acknowledgements. This is a standard case of academic plagiarism, i.e., using another's words as one's own.

Exhibit C

This incident, related by the Hungarian Nobel Laureate Albert Szent-Gyorgyi and preserved in a poem by Holub (1977), happened during military maneuvers in Switzerland. The young lieutenant of a small Hungarian detachment in the Alps sent a reconnaissance unit out into the icy wilderness. It began to snow immediately, snowed for two days, and the unit did not return. The lieutenant suffered, fearing that he had dispatched his own people to death. But the third day the unit came back. Where had they been? How had they made their way? Yes, they said, we considered ourselves lost and waited for the end. And then one of us found a map in his pocket. That calmed us down. We pitched camp, lasted out the snowstorm, and then with the map we discovered our bearings. And here we are. The lieutenant borrowed this remarkable map and had a good look at it. He discovered to his astonishment that it was not a map of the Alps but of the Pyrenees. (Weick, 1995: 54)

The anecdote here appears exactly as above (exhibit B). The most notable difference here is that Weick does credit Holub, and includes the information from the first stanza about Albert Szent-Gyorgyi. It is important to emphasize, however, that this is not ordinarily considered sufficient citation. Weick's home institution, the University of Michigan, for example, deals with this sort of case explicitly in its academic guidelines. Even when "the writer use[s] a footnote to indicate the source," plagiarism occurs when "she does not use quotation marks to indicate that the sentence was lifted in its entirety." Weick should have quoted the poem (by presenting it as in Exhibit A) as he does, e.g., in the case of Pablo Neruda's 'We Are Many' (Weick, 1995: 18-20). Indeed, the first sentence here actually constitutes an unreferenced paraphrase, since he makes it look as though the reference to the Nobel laureate is a result of Weick's own scholarship.

Exhibit D

A small Hungarian detachment was on military manoeuvres in the Alps. Their young lieutenant sent a reconnaissance unit out into the icy wilderness just as it began to snow. It snowed for two days, and the unit did not return. The lieutenant feared that he had dispatched his people to their deaths, but the third day the unit came back. Where had they been? How had they made their way? Yes, they said, we considered ourselves lost and waited for the end. And then one of us found a map in his pocket. That calmed us down. We pitched camp, lasted out the snowstorm, and then with the map we discovered our bearings. And here we are. The lieutenant took a good look at this

map and discovered, to his astonishment, that it was a map of the of the Pyrenees. (This story was related by the Hungarian Nobel Laureate Albert Szent-Gyorgyi and was turned into a poem by Holub, 1977.) (Weick, 1990: 4)

This is an unsuccessful attempt at both paraphrase and citation. Much of the prose is here still lifted directly from Holub's poem. The paraphrased portions at the beginning are arguably only superficially changed and, as in Exhibit C, he gives the impression of having consulted two versions of the story – Szent-Gyorgyi's and Holub's – and does not properly indicate that the poem he refers to is in fact largely here being quoted.

Exhibit E

Definitions notwithstanding, I can best show what I think strategy is by describing an incident that happened during military maneuvers in Switzerland. The young lieutenant of a small Hungarian detachment in the Alps sent a reconnaissance unit into the icy wilderness. It began to snow immediately, snowed for two days, and the unit did not return. The lieutenant suffered, fearing that he had dispatched his own people to death. But the third day the unit came back. Where had they been? How had they made their way? Yes, they said, we considered ourselves lost and waited for the end. And then one of us found a map in his pocket. That calmed us down. We pitched camp, lasted out the snowstorm, and then with the map we discovered our bearings. And here we are. The lieutenant borrowed this remarkable map and had a good look at it. He discovered to his astonishment that it was not a map of the Alps, but a map of the Pyrenees. (Weick, 1987: 222)

This is the anecdote as it appears in the original publication of 'Substitutes for Strategy' in *The Competitive Challenge* (ed. D. J. Teece); see Exhibit B for our analysis.

Exhibit F

Planning isn't nearly as crucial for productive action as people think it is. I can illustrate this point most clearly by recounting an incident that happened to a small Hungarian detachment on military maneuvers in the Alps. Their young lieutenant sent a reconnaissance unit out into the icy wilderness just as it began to snow. It snowed for two days, and the unit did not return. The lieutenant feared that he had dispatched his people to their deaths, but the third day the unit came back. Where had they been? How had they made their way? Yes, they said, we considered ourselves lost and waited for the end, but then one of us found a map in his pocket. That calmed us down. We pitched camp, lasted out the snowstorm, and then with the map we found our bearings. And here we are. The lieutenant took a good look at this map and discovered to his astonishment that it was *not* a map of the Alps, but of the Pyrenees. (Weick, 1983: 48-49)

This is the first time Weick uses the anecdote alone. There are some small differences from Holub's poem at the beginning, but it otherwise follows the form already seen in Exhibit B, adding the lieutenant's 'fear' and 'astonishment' (see also Exhibit G below).

Exhibit G

We can illustrate the basic argument by an incident which happened during military maneuvers in Switzerland. The young lieutenant of a small Hungarian detachment in the Alps sent a reconnaissance unit out into the icy wilderness. It began to snow immediately, snowed for two

days, and the unit did not return. The lieutenant suffered, fearing that he had dispatched his own people to death. But the third day the unit came back. Where had they been? How had they made their way? Yes, they said, we considered ourselves lost and waited for the end. And then one of us found a map in his pocket. That calmed us down. We pitched camp, lasted out the snowstorm, and then with the map we discovered our bearings. And here we are. The lieutenant borrowed this remarkable map and had a good look at it. He discovered to his astonishment that it was *not* a map of the Alps, but a map of the Pyrenees. (Swieringa and Weick, 1982: 71)

This is the first instance of the anecdote we have been able to find in the organization theory literature, appearing in a paper that Weick co-authored with Robert J. Swieringa, who is currently dean at the Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University. Here it already has the form it will take in the most recent appearance, namely, Weick 2001 (see Exhibit B).

Exhibit H

The young lieutenant of a Hungarian detachment in the Alps sent a reconnaissance unit into the icy wilderness. It began to snow immediately, and unexpectedly continued to snow for two days. The unit did not return. The lieutenant feared that he had dispatched his own people to death. However, on the third day the unit came back. Where had they been? How had they made their way? 'Yes,' they said: 'We considered ourselves lost and waited for the end. We did not have any maps, compasses or other equipment with which to ascertain our position or a probable route out. But then one of us found an old tattered map in a seldom used pocket. That calmed us down. The map did not seem to quite fit the terrain but eventually we discovered our bearings. We followed the map down the mountain and after a few wrong turns eventually found our way.' The young lieutenant borrowed the map and had a good look at it. 'This isn't a map of the Alps,' he said. 'It's a map of the Pyrenees.' (Weick, 1987). (Cummings and Wilson, 2003: 1)

This is how the anecdote is quoted as an epigraph in Cummings and Wilson's *Images of Strategy*. They cite Weick (1987), but slightly embellish the text. They add that it 'unexpectedly continued' to snow and omit the lieutenant's suffering. The connective 'however' is added and the unit's response is equipped with quotation marks and expanded with additional information: the unit explicitly makes clear that it had no maps or compasses and no idea how to get out. The map is suddenly 'old and tattered' and the pocket is now 'seldom used'. All this may make the point of the story clearer, but it is now far from a quotation of Weick and no indication is given as to where this part of the story came from. Indeed, with the quotation marks added around the utterance it now appears as though their actual words have been documented verbatim, not just paraphrased in their essence. The parts of Holub's poem, however, that remain, are still identical with the source and constitute plagiarism. We do not know how or why these differences have come about.

Exhibit I

The young lieutenant of a small Hungarian detachment in the Alps
sent a reconnaissance unit out onto the icy wasteland.
It began to snow
immediately,
snowed for two days and the unit

did not return.
The lieutenant suffered:
he had dispatched
his own people to death.

But the third day the unit came back.
Where had they been? How had they made their way?
Yes, they said, we considered ourselves
lost and waited for the end. And then one of us
found a map in his pocket. That calmed us down.
We pitched camp, lasted out the snowstorm and then with the map
we discovered our bearings.
And here we are.

The lieutenant borrowed this remarkable map
and had a good look at it. It was not a map of the Alps
but of the Pyrenees

This is the form the poem often takes when it appears on the Internet, where it is normally correctly credited to Holub. This text can be found by searching the Internet for the exact words “onto the icy wasteland” (which contains a typographical error), suggesting that this transcription has a single source wherefrom it has been cut and pasted. (Google returns five versions with the same error, two of which cite Weick as a source. A search for the correct ‘into the icy wasteland’ returns two instances.) The formatting is slightly different than that used in the *Times Literary Supplement* version (Holub, 1977, exhibit A), no doubt because the precise lineation is difficult to consistently reproduce in an electronic format. It is here presented as quoted in Schwartz (1998), which is the likely source of the subsequent electronic appearances (that include the ‘onto’ error). Oddly, Schwartz (1998) says that Holub’s poem is ‘reprinted’ in Weick (1995) and that he has quoted it from there. Consult our exhibit C to see that this is unlikely. The same peculiarity can be found in Brown and Laurier 2004, who somehow manage to quote Holub (1977) correctly (enjambments and all) from Weick (1995). This can be attributed to Schwartz’s slightly misleading citation, which have allowed Brown and Laurier to cite Weick directly. It also explains how Holub’s ‘wasteland’ is correctly rendered (Weick has ‘wilderness’).

Exhibit J

Karl Weick likes to recount a story about a Hungarian military unit on maneuvers in the Alps that did not return after two days in a snowstorm. On the third day, the soldiers appeared, and explained:

Yes, they said, we considered ourselves lost and waited for the end. And one of us found a map in his pocket. That calmed us down. We pitched camp, lasted out the snowstorm, and through the map we discovered our bearings. And here we are. The lieutenant [who had dispatched the unit] borrowed this remarkable map and had a good look at it. He discovered to his astonishment that it was not a map of the Alps, but a map of the Pyrenees. (1995: 54)
(Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 1998: 159-160)

Cognitive maps apply metaphor to the notion of mental models. Weick (1990) recounted a favourite story about a Hungarian military unit on maneuvers in the Swiss Alps:

Their young lieutenant sent a reconnaissance unit out into the icy wilderness just as it began to snow. It snowed for two days, and the unit did not return. The lieutenant feared that he had dispatched his people to their deaths, but the third day the unit came back. Where had they been? How had they made their way? Yes, they said, we considered ourselves lost and waited for the end. And then one of us found a map in his pocket. That calmed us down. We pitched camp, lasted out the snowstorm, and then with the map we discovered our bearings. And here we are. The lieutenant took a good look at this map and discovered, to his astonishment, that it was a map of the of the Pyrenees. (Weick, 1990, p. 4)

(Chermack 2003: 412)

Weick tells the story of a reconnaissance group of soldiers lost in the Alps on a training mission. It was winter, they had no maps, and they seemed hopelessly lost. They were preparing to die, when one soldier found a map crushed down at the bottom of his pack. With the map in hand, they regained their courage, bivouacked for the night, and proceeded out of the mountains the next day to rescue. Only when they were recuperating in the main camp did someone notice that the map they had been using wasn't a map of the Alps at all; it was a map of the Pyrenees. (Berwick, 2002: 18)

It is also evident in the example recounted by Weick (1987) of the Hungarian soldiers lost in a snowstorm in the Alps who eventually found their way back to camp by discovering a map of the Pyrenees. Before they found the map, the soldiers could not be said to 'know how' to get out of the Alps. As they themselves reported: "we considered ourselves lost and waited for the end" (Weick 1987, p. 222). Yet, once they had found the map, the soldiers were able to enact a collective competence that got them out of the Alps. As an officer described: "And then one of us found a map in his pocket. That calmed us down. We pitched camp, lasted out the snowstorm, and then with the map we discovered our bearings. And here we are" (1987, p. 222). The "knowing how" to find their way back to camp which the soldiers displayed after their discovery of the map was a situationally enacted capability – constituted through reading the map, using it to calm themselves and make sense of their surroundings, and then beginning to take purposive action towards finding a way out of the mountains. (Orlikowski, 2002: 253)

This is a collection of instances where the anecdote is quoted or paraphrased or both. It is interesting in all cases that Holub is not mentioned. Here the canonical status of the story as a formulation of Weick's writing *not Holub's* is made quite clear. One might compare Peter Barry's use of the poem in a field outside of organization studies where the obligatory reference to Weick is, of course, not obligatory. He correctly quotes the poem and its moral as Holub's (Barry, 2003: 6).

references

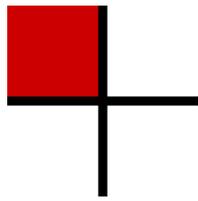
- American Historical Association (2003) 'Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct' [<http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/professionalstandards.cfm>].
- Barry, P. (2003) *English in Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bartlett, T. and S. Smallwood (2004) 'Four Academic Plagiarists You've Never Heard Of: How Many More Are Out There?', *Chronicle of Higher Education's*, 51(17).
- Berwick, D.M. (2002) *Escape Fire: Lessons for the future of health care*. New York: The Commonwealth Fund [http://www.cmwf.org/usr_doc/berwick_escapefire_563.pdf].
- Blackwell Publishing 'Permissions Clearance Advice for Authors and Editors' [<http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/authors/permission.asp>].
- Brown, B. and E. Laurier. (2004) 'Maps & Journey, an ethnomethodological investigation,' Department of Geography & Geomatics, University of Glasgow [http://web.geog.gla.ac.uk/online_papers/elaurier005.pdf]

- Chermack, T. J. (2003) 'Mental models in decision making and implications for human resource development', *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 5(4): 408.
- Connolly, P. (1995) 'Hypnotic Dimensions of Religious Worldviews', *Diskus*, 3(1): 19-34.
- Cummings, S. & D. Wilson (2003) 'Images of strategy', in S. Cummings & D. Wilson (eds.) *Images of Strategy*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1-40.
- Encyclopædia Britannica (2005) 'Holub, Miroslav,' *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, [<http://search.eb.com/eb/article?tocId=9097000>], accessed 19 July 2005.
- Foucault, M. (1970) *The Order of Things*. London: Tavistock.
- Holub, M. (1977) 'Brief Thoughts on Maps', *Times Literary Supplement*, 4 February 4, p. 118.
- Mezias, S. (2003) 'Feature Interview with Karl Weick', in the MOC Division Newsletter (Academy of Management), October [http://aomweb.pace.edu/moc/MOCNews_Oct2003.htm].
- Mintzberg, H., B. W. Ahlstrand & J. Lampel (1998) *Strategy Safari: a guided tour through the wilds of strategic management*. New York: Free Press.
- Orlikowski, W. J. (2002) 'Knowing in Practice: Enacting a Collective Capability in Distributed Organizing', *Organization Science: A Journal of the Institute of Management Sciences*, 13(3): 249.
- Rowlinson, M. (2004) 'Challenging the Foundations of Organization Theory', *Work, Employment & Society*, 18(3): 607-620.
- Schwartz, C.A. (1998) 'Between Two Ages', guest editorial in *College and Research Libraries*, 59(2).
- Swieringa, R. J. & K. E. Weick. (1982) 'An Assessment of Laboratory Experiments in Accounting', *Journal of Accounting Research Supplement: Studies on Current Research Methodologies in Accounting: A Critical Evaluation*, 20: 56-101.
- University of Michigan Libraries (1998) 'Plagiarism' [<http://www.lib.umich.edu/handouts/plagiar.pdf>].
- Weick, K. E. (1983) 'Misconceptions about managerial productivity', *Business Horizons*, 26(4): 47-52.
- Weick, K. E. (1990) 'Introduction: Cartographic myths in organizations,' in *Mapping strategic thought*. Chichester: Wiley, 1-10.
- Weick, K. E. (1987) 'Substitutes for strategy,' in D. J. Teece (ed.) *The Competitive challenge: strategies for industrial innovation and renewal*. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 222-233.
- Weick, K. E. (1995) *Sensemaking in organizations*. London: Sage.
- Weick, K. E. (2001) *Making sense of the organization*. Oxford: Blackwell.

the authors

Thomas Basbøll is assistant professor at the Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy at the Copenhagen Business Business School. He works mainly with the problem of academic writing, especially as this arises for researchers who have English as a second language.
E-mail: tb.lpf@cbs.dk

Henrik Graham is a PhD student at the Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy at the Copenhagen Business Business School. He is presently writing his dissertation on the management of knowledge and innovation in medium-sized high-technology firms.
E-mail: hg.lpf@cbs.dk



Cannabis Britannica: A History of the Present

Beatriz Acevedo

review of: J. Mills (2003) *Cannabis Britannica: Empire, Trade and Prohibition*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (PB, pp. 252, £18, ISBN 0-19-927881-4)

Introduction

When in 2003 James Mills launched his book *Cannabis Britannica*, the issue of the policy regarding cannabis was being discussed at the political and social levels. Just one year earlier, in 2002, the British government had announced that cannabis would be reclassified, after almost thirty years of social pressure calling for a review of this piece of legislation. It was expected that the book would shed some light on the historical origins of British legislation on cannabis, and in this way challenge or confirm many of the 'facts' or 'myths' that are still a matter of debate. History, as the author rightly observes, is at the heart of policy.

Mills in this book begins the task of examining the historical origins of the laws and policies regarding cannabis in the United Kingdom. The book covers the period between 1800 and 1928: from the time that the British learned about the uses of cannabis in India until the establishment of national and international legislation on cannabis and other drugs in the 1920s. Through addressing history, the author aims to reveal the origins and development of the legislation, attitudes and discussions in relation to cannabis, in the United Kingdom.

The interest in studying different drugs seems to change according to the political and social context. Indeed, the interest in cannabis is related to changes in the legislation of many European countries. The last thirty years have seen the publication of a number of titles related specifically to cannabis. The nature of these titles is quite diverse: illustrated guides, pharmacology, literature, 'pot art', industrial uses, conspiracy theories, cookery books, psychology, anthropological studies, shamanism and healing,

medicine and pharmacy, or general history, in relation to one of the most infamous illicit substances in the Western world. In this context it is thus hardly surprising that cannabis legislation has come under review in the United Kingdom. Therefore, a renewed interest in this substance has encouraged not only publications but also different cultural expressions. In films, TV programmes, comedy, or music, the reference to cannabis seems to reflect a more tolerant approach to the substance.

Although there is the impression of a surfeit of information on cannabis, there are few studies rigorously to have approached the task of examining the historical aspects and circumstances that have constituted the sources to British attitudes towards, and legislation on, cannabis. Moreover, much of the available literature is based on the repetition of anecdotes lacking sufficient verification of the historical facts. *Cannabis Britannica* aims to fill that gap.

Research about illicit drugs in the United Kingdom has seen a number of important publications, mainly from an historical perspective. Due to the particular characteristics of what is known as the British system of drug control, many of these texts have focused on the way in which this system has developed. In particular, these studies have focused on opium and heroin (Berridge and Edwards, 1981; Stimson and Oppenheimer, 1982; Strang and Gossop, 2005). However, as Mills observes, a similar exercise had not been undertaken specifically about the politics of cannabis. While other books about cannabis have tackled the history of cannabis as a single entity in particular approaches to the substance, i.e., pharmacological, psychological, cultural, economic, etc., Mills addresses history as a subject in itself. His extensive research into files, archives, official documents, old manuscripts and, particularly, his work in recovering documents in Indian Archives, represents a substantial effort in the recompilation of first-hand material.

The debate on cannabis policy in the United Kingdom has evolved during the past three years, thus a reading of the book suggests many more coincidences and similarities than one might expect with events that have occurred in the past. In some way, as the title of this review suggests, many of the ideas supporting political and agendas on the topic of cannabis produced in the past and are still reproduced in the present. The irony is that many of these conceptions and attitudes, produced as they were in the context of colonialism and in the moral environment of the nineteenth century, have generated our current policy on cannabis. Nevertheless, the same arguments are used today to defend or to oppose changes in a long overdue review of the legislation. Some examples can illustrate these similarities.

Medicine, Poison, Vice, Badness, Illness... a Vicious Circle

The first aspect in Mills' historical review is related to the diversity of opinions about cannabis and its effects. Similar divergences are found in the political discussion on cannabis reclassification. In particular, it is interesting to see how the reiterative ambiguity between those who consider cannabis a poison, on the one hand, and those who regard it as a remedy, on the other, tends to be replicated in the existing debate.

The origin of this ambiguity can be found in the way in which cannabis has been defined by medical doctors, temperance campaigners, politicians, or entrepreneurs. As Mills argues, the manner in which current considerations of cannabis are constructed finds an echo in the way those officials and scientists have defined cannabis. In other words: that the interests and personal opinions of those who have had the task of informing others about cannabis throughout history have determined the evaluation (positive or negative) of the substance.

For example, in Chapter Two, the different ways cannabis was described by travellers and traders prior to 1842 are presented. Mills describes how the first account about the use of ‘bhang’¹ was part of ‘lurid tales of exotic vices’, when its use was associated with inebriation and aphrodisia. Here, he suggests that in the context of colonialism, and with stricter behavioural codes, the moral superiority of the Europeans was reinforced by comparison with the ‘exotic’ traditions of the natives of other continents.

One of the first reports on cannabis published by the British government, aside from the accounts written by Spanish and Portuguese doctors, was issued by Whitelaw Ainslei. His *Materia Indica* (1826) became the first attempt by the British at compiling a list of the drugs and medicines used in India. Ainslei took on the task, yet when writing about the uses of cannabis or Indian hemp, he preferred to emphasise its inebriating effects rather than its ritual and medical uses. As suggested by Mills, Ainslei’s views could have been influenced by the fact that he was a committed Christian and a teetotaler who, besides his view on cannabis, was also the author of a range of publications with moral and religious content.

In contrast, the medical properties of cannabis have also been praised. Later on at mid-century, Dr. William O’Shaughnessy (O’Shaughnessy, 1842) published the *Bengal Dispensatory and Companion to the Pharmacopoeia*. The section on cannabis was extensive and was based on his experiments with the substance. O’Shaughnessy’s work “was the most comprehensive assessment of the properties of cannabis preparations and of their effects as drugs and as medicines to appear by the hand of a British scientist in India during the entire period of colonial rule” (p.41). Here, again, Mills adds his interpretation of the enthusiastic tone of this account on cannabis. He suggests that the perception of cannabis as a ‘wonder drug’ advocated by O’Shaughnessy can be related to the fact that this was a “period when fortunes could be made from medical innovation”. O’Shaughnessy, as Mills explains, was “casting around for the means to establish a reputation and some degree of financial security” (p.45) .

The second aspect refers to the way in which ‘the cannabis problem’ emerged as a political issue in British government. Mills dedicates Chapter Five to an analysis of the discussion of the issue of cannabis in Parliament. In 1891 MP Mark Stewart denounced that “the lunatic asylums of India are filled with ganja smokers”. Mills suggests that in Stewart’s doing so, his purpose was also to attack the opium politics in the Far East, which at that time were increasingly under scrutiny as being morally questionable. Following Stewart’s allegation, the issue of cannabis was again adopted by another MP, William S. Caine, who proposed the formation of a Commission of Experts to inquire

1 Beverage made of Indian hemp flowers.

into and report on the cultivation, trade, and consumption of cannabis in the colonies. Thus, the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission (IHDC) was established in 1892. As Mills describes, the IHDC gathered information throughout the subcontinent; it compiled eight volumes of statements and conclusions over a period of seven months covering 1893-1894. Their investigations brought together evidence about the extension of cannabis use; the ritual, religious and medical uses, and the variety of appreciations of the substance. Finally, the IHDC stipulated that cannabis use was harmless if it was taken in moderation. Rather than recommending its prohibition, the IHDC opted for suggesting the government to encourage moderate use.

These recommendations are frequently cited in publications and contemporary reports; however, Mills encourages us to view their assertions with a “healthy dose of suspicion”. He refers to the fact that the members of IHDC were officers in the service of the Government of India, and they were quite aware of the economic revenue represented by the cannabis trade. On the other hand, he also points out that MPs Stewart and Caine were temperance campaigners who might have seen the issue of cannabis as a strategy towards pursuing the discussion on the use of opium in the colonies, and thus express their opposition to the Government of India.

In general, with these and more examples, Mills shows how there are different views on cannabis, depending on the personal appreciation of those experts, officers or doctors who reported on it. Despite the diverse opinions on cannabis, provided by scientists, officials or temperance campaigners, the prevalent view has associated cannabis with insanity, criminality, and with those “other suspicious substances, cocaine and opium”. As a conclusion, Mills states that “the development of this distrust of the drug was due to political, moral, and cultural factors that often resulted in exaggerated, ill-founded, and downright mistaken perceptions” (p.218).

Evidently, this is a sufficiently logical explanation about *why* cannabis has become a problem. Nevertheless, this argument is not strong enough to providing an understanding of the extent to which the same factors may be influencing the present discussion on cannabis: in other words, *how* the ‘problem’ of cannabis is constructed. Moreover, Mills fails directly to tackle contemporary discussion of drug research, related to the ‘problematization’ of cannabis use; the emergence of the concept of ‘drug addiction’; or the dynamics of power and knowledge in the construction of those social problems such as ‘insanity’ and ‘criminality’ that are associated with cannabis.

In the examples cited, it is possible to see how knowledge of cannabis is inseparable from the dynamics of power amongst different perspectives on the uses and effects of cannabis. For instance, when Ainslei decided to portray cannabis as a ‘moral poison’, or when O’Shaughnessy advocated for a definition of cannabis as a ‘miraculous remedy’, the underlying question is how those ideas, still prevalent in current debates about cannabis, become formed.

Taking into account contemporary discussion about drug research, it would be expected from a history of cannabis – as of any other similar substance – for it to be framed in the context of ‘problematization’; in other words, the task of the researcher should include an analysis of the historical and cultural conditions under which the perception of

cannabis as a problem was constructed, the specific actors and institutions that promulgated this view, and the discursive procedures through which it has been reproduced.

In *Cannabis Britannica*, the analysis of the discursive formations and the actors behind those statements are explained following what can be called the ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’. Nevertheless, the aim of revealing the origin of the current attitudes towards and policies about cannabis remains unsolved. If the purpose of *Cannabis Britannica* is for it to make a diagnosis of the present, solely the interpretation of historical facts is insufficient.

A possible alternative for answering the questions is by reframing Mills’ history of cannabis within the wider discussions concerning contemporary drug research. In particular, it is proposed that the work of Michel Foucault be used as one possible avenue, among many others, of addressing the past, towards understanding the present. In order to develop this idea certain concepts from the work of Michel Foucault will briefly be presented.

A Post-Structuralist Approach to the History of Cannabis

Many of the topics in contemporary drugs research are similar to those studied by Foucault; for example, the issues of ‘madness’ or the ‘criminalisation’ of drug use are topics central to Foucault’s work. However, given that there are exceptions in some works, such as those of Levine (1978), Bourgois (2000), Duff (2004), Zibbell (2004), Acevedo and Valero-Silva (2005), it is possible to say that Foucault’s ideas concerning drugs research have remained relatively unexplored.

Foucault was interested in understanding the origin and definition of problematic situations in Western culture, by focusing on the process or normalisation of particular aspects of human experience. His objective “has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects” (Foucault, 1983: 283). He approached history as the source for his material, yet he was neither interested in the sequence of facts, nor had he tried to demonstrate the veracity of those facts. Instead, he addresses history in order to understand processes of normalisation in Western societies.

In his earliest books, Foucault analysed historical facts in order to disentangle systems of institutions and discursive practices (Dreyfuss and Rabinow, 1983: xiv). For example, in *Madness and Civilization* (1973), Foucault analysed the origin of madness by revealing a number of discourses from different disciplines that define and categorise insanity. When studying the ‘problematization’ of madness, he focused on the development of the asylum. He shows how within the asylum, various discourses about mental illness/health, multiple identities (such as the medical staff, politicians, managers, clergy, the public, and the insane), and the individuals who assume those identities, interact and how this interaction changes over time. The same can be said for his studies on illness, punishment, and sexuality (Acevedo and Valero-Silva, 2005).

Foucault called our attention to examining the historical context as the realm within which to understand how some ‘problems’ emerge. As mentioned before, he was interested not only in the sequential facts, but he also considered the environment in which political, social, economic, and cultural dimensions determines ‘*who*’ (actors and institutions) talks about problems, and ‘*how*’ those problems are defined (discursive formation). Moreover, it is possible to say that his interest in history was not necessarily in the collection of historical events, but what is between those events. It must be noted that Foucault was not concerned with a period-based problem (i.e., the classic era), but as a ‘problem-based’ approach (i.e., the emergence of madness). His purpose was neither to validate one or other form of defining madness, nor to prove that those definitions are biased or reliable; he attempted to analyse how these discourses or statements emerge in the context of a particular period.

From this brief summary it is possible to see how Foucault analysed different institutions in order to further his quest into explicatioin of the emergence of problems in Western societies. Foucault’s general method is called by Dreyfuss and Rabinow (1993) ‘interpretive analytics’. The method combines both ‘archaeological’ and ‘genealogical’ stages. Let me describe those concepts briefly. The aim is to introduce discussion of how to develop the rich material collected by Mills in the creation of a ‘history of the present’.

The first stage is referred to by Foucault as ‘archaeology’. ‘Archaeology’ signifies the work of collecting facts, in the form of statements, representations or expressions, about a particular situation (or problem) during a given period of time. The idea is to collect those statements without offering any judgement on their veracity or whether they make sense. Instead, Foucault proposed to treat what is said in the human sciences as a ‘discourse-object’ (Dreyfuss and Rabinow, 1983: xiv).

Archaeology is not necessarily history, in the sense that:

The archaeologist is not interested in the empirical succession of events, nor is he interested in transcendental historical rules, which would state the conditions of the possibility of all change. Rather, the archaeologist is interested in the way one discursive formation comes to be substituted for another, that is, in how to reveal the relations that characterise the temporality of discursive. (Foucault, 1972: 167)

In summary, archaeology allows the identification of discursive formations about a particular problem in a certain historical period. This must be complemented with a second stage: genealogy. Genealogy aims to reveal the hidden origin of discourses, the material context in which they emerge, and the ways in which they may favour particular interests. Nevertheless, Foucault warns us of the temptation to ‘interpret’ those collected facts, in the sense, of trying to find a ‘deeper’ truth. On the contrary: genealogy avoids the search for depth. Instead, “it seeks the surfaces of events, small details, minor shifts, and subtle contours”. Foucault’s genealogy focuses on the duality power/knowledge as the driving force in the conformation of discourses, normalisation of practices, and definition of subjects. In fact, genealogy and archaeology are complementary.

From this brief reference to Foucault's 'method', it is possible to say that 'archaeology' represents a way of collecting information, in which there is neither interpretation of the facts nor a linear organisation of those facts. In this archaeology, the aim is merely to collect facts, not even in a chronological fashion, but indicating the nature of discourses exposed in a determined period of time regarding a particular situation. As a result, the information collected in the form of statements or discourses is part of a configuration of the problem.

Now the question for this review is whether or not Mills' *Cannabis Britannica* can be considered a form of 'archaeology' of the cannabis problem. His attention to detail, his rigorous method of presenting historical documents, and his effort in going further beyond events represents a very important effort in collecting historical material of a high quality. However, his concern regarding interpretation of the circumstances and the intentions of 'discourses' and their 'authors' may differ from the 'purely archaeological' approach in Foucault's view. Nevertheless, Mills' account of history actually informs us of current perceptions of cannabis. For example, he describes how the practices of 'inebriation' were evaluated by the 'moral standards' of British officers and travellers influenced by the Temperance ideas of their time. In addition, he reveals how the 'criminalisation' of cannabis issues could have been produced by the resistance tactics of local entrepreneurs when the British tried to impose a taxation system onto the production and thus sale of cannabis.

These attitudes have prevailed throughout the twentieth century, and are still unquestionable. In particular, I would like to emphasise Mills' analysis of the Indian asylum as an interesting case to understand the origin of the link between cannabis and madness. By comparing some ideas between Mills' analysis and Foucault's study of problems such as madness and criminality, it is possible to open up certain avenues to further exploration.

'Cannabis Psychosis' or the 'Indian Asylums are filled with ganja²-smokers'

In Chapter Five Mills argues that the Indian asylums, alongside other colonial institutions such as prisons and schools, served as instruments of domination in the colonies. In the case of the asylum he states:

Throughout the nineteenth century the British had set up a network of lunatic asylums across colonial India. At first these had been established to separate out Indian soldiers that had gone mad from the rest of the regiment and later on the British found that they were useful places in which to place those that they found dangerous and disruptive in the local population. (p.85)

This idea was developed in a previous book by Mills, '*Madness, Cannabis and Colonialism*' (2000). In it Mills argued that institutions such as clinics, prisons, schools, and reformatories were used as means of disciplining the colonies. In *Cannabis Britannica*, Mills re-examines the issue and demonstrates how "cannabis use and

2 Common name for cannabis.

cannabis users became categorized as a social problem in the asylums of colonial India". Mills explains the process. Firstly, the asylums had established a process for registering their patients, which involved completing a form. One section of this form described the possible cause of dementia. This was often difficult to determine at an initial examination. Nevertheless, the form needed to be completed. In addition, police officers were normally responsible for completing this form and they could have thought that '*ganja*-smoking' was a convenient and believable cause of dementia to use in completing the form. In this way, cannabis became part of the process of marginalisation of this part of Indian population.

The next step came when the superintendents decided that those individuals in their care were in fact representative of cannabis users as a whole across the country (p.87). In Foucault's terms, it can be said that this 'dividing practice' of confining part of the population in the asylum allowed the development of a 'scientific discourse' on dementia, in which cannabis was associated with this condition.

The third step was to delimit, both within the walls of the institution and the body of the cannabis users, the 'typical signs' of the disease. Recalling Foucault's ideas, the asylum and similarly the clinic became the spaces where signs, symptoms and marks can be observed (Foucault, 1975). In Mills' words:

The asylum was the place where the British medical officer created an image to be attached to a human type or category and it was where the hemp user of the colonial imagination was 'given flesh'. (p.89)

The final step in this process of creating a social problem out of cannabis use and cannabis users was to translate this issue into a statistic. Mills argues that the asylum statistics convinced many of the link between cannabis use and mental illness. In fact, the register of this and other types of information by the British can be understood as part of the changing role of the State in administrating people and goods.

Based on the monopoly of violence and the presence of the British army in India, colonial domination was possible. From there, the administration of Indian resources was part of the economic interest of British officials. This process of administration and register was carried out by British officers and doctors, which could explain their interpretation of what was a normal practice in India:

The asylum statistics ...were compiled by British doctors in India who were driven by a need to fill in the forms and who were mystified by much of the behaviour of the locals because of their profound ignorance of the societies they govern. (p.216)

As mentioned by Foucault, statistics constitute the science of the State. In his approach to the notion of governmentality, Foucault pointed out the increasing role of the State in administrating social issues:

[T]he art of government ... is concerned with answering the question of how to introduce economy – that is to say, the correct manner of managing individuals, goods and wealth within the family, ... how to introduce this meticulous attention of the father towards his family, into the management of the state. (Foucault, 1991b: 92)

In this process, described by Mills and enhanced by Foucault's ideas, it is possible to understand the way cannabis became a problem of mental health. Interestingly enough, a similar discussion is being highlighted as a dominant argument against the re-classification of cannabis in the United Kingdom. When examining the current debate, the issue of cannabis and madness is at the centre of the controversy on cannabis re-classification. Redefined under the term 'cannabis psychosis', and without attempting to verify the scientific authority of those studies, it is interesting to note how the connection cannabis/madness *suddenly* has attracted the attention of the government and media.

However, as analysed in previous paragraphs, the association is not at all new, and it has been given different names. It is interesting to note how the notions 'cannabis and madness' in the nineteenth century, the 'reefer madness' of the 1920s in America, and the current 'cannabis psychosis' are similar terms for an old association. Ironically, this association, developed more than one hundred years ago in the context of colonialism, seems to take prevalence in contemporary political debate. In synthesis, a careful reading of *Cannabis Britannica* can tell us more of the history of the present.

A History of the Present

The examples provided by Mills in his rigorous approach to the history of cannabis reveal a number of coincidences with and resemblances to the present discussion. In *Cannabis Britannica*, the author pays special attention to the historical detail. He goes further and deeper in trying to discover more about what was said, and why it was said. By describing the facts and the circumstances in which cannabis was made a 'problem', the author attempts to present an objective view of many subjective accounts on cannabis. As suggested in this review, a reading of *Cannabis Britannica* can provide valuable material for diagnosing the present. This diagnosis can be enhanced by using Foucault's ideas regarding the emergence of problems, and the way in which people are rendered subjects. The discussions about cannabis re-classification in the last three years represent a privileged moment to see how many of the arguments that have remained covered by history or restricted to certain institutions emerge in the context of the political debate. In this context, different discourses about cannabis have emerged, and they have defined not only the problem to be tackled but also the type of subjects that must be addressed by the policy.

Many more similarities can be drawn from reading *Cannabis Britannica*. Although Mills recommends that politicians and policy-makers take advantage of the historical lessons, the scope of the book goes beyond specialists and experts. The level of detail, the rigour of the investigation, and the richness of the historical sources represent a work of compulsory reference for those who wish to go beyond the anecdotes and popular belief. The second volume of this saga is eagerly anticipated.

references

- Acevedo, B. and N. Valero-Silva (2005) 'A Post-Structuralist Analysis of the Discourses and Practices Regarding the Reclassification of Cannabis in the UK', 49th Conference for the *International Society for the Systems Sciences*, Cancun, Mexico.
- Berridge, V. and G. Edwards (1981) *Opium and the People: Opiate use in Nineteenth-Century England*. London: Allen Lane.
- Bourgois, P. (2000) 'Disciplining addictions: the bio-politics of methadone and heroin in the United States', *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 24(2): 165-195.
- Dreyfuss, H. and Rabinow, P. (1983) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Duff, C. (2004) 'Drug use as a "practice of the self": is there any place for an "ethics of moderation" in contemporary drug policy?', *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 15: 5-6: 385-393.
- Foucault, M. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. New York: Vintage.
- Foucault, M. (1973) *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. New York: Vintage.
- Foucault, M. (1975) *The Birth of the Clinic: An archaeology of medical perception*. New York: Vintage.
- Foucault, M. (1983) 'Afterword: The Subject and Power', in H. Dreyfuss and P. Rabinow (eds.) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1991) 'On Governmentality', in G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller (eds.) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Levine, H. G. (1978) 'The Discovery of Addiction: Changing conceptions of habitual drunkenness in America,' *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 15: 493-506.
- Mills, J. (2000) *Madness, Cannabis and Colonialism*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- O'Shaughnessy, W. (1842) *The Bengal Dispensatory and Companion to the Pharmacopoeia*. London: Allen.
- Stimson, G. V. and E. Oppenheimer (1982) *Heroin Addiction: Treatment and control in Britain*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Strang, J. and M. Gossop (eds.) (2005) *Heroin addiction and the British System Volume 1. Origins and Evolution*. Abingdon: Routledge
- Zibbell, J. E. (2004). 'Can the lunatics actually take over the asylum?: Reconfiguring subjectivity and neo-liberal governance in contemporary British drug treatment policy', *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 15(1): 56-65.

the author

Beatriz Acevedo is completing her PhD in Management at the University of Hull. Her dissertation concerns the Reclassification of Cannabis in the United Kingdom (2002-2005), applying certain ideas from the fields of systems thinking and post-structuralism. She has worked in the field of drug research during the last eight years in Colombia, the Netherlands, and now in the United Kingdom.
E-mail: beatrixace@yahoo.com

The Field and The Forge

Peter Fleming

review of: **J. Landers (2003) *The Field and the Forge: Population, Production, and Power in the Pre-Industrial West*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (PB, pp. 454, £25, ISBN 0 19 924916 4)**

This is a book about the natural constraints on human achievement. It is in many ways extremely ambitious, taking as its subject the economies and politics of Europe and the Mediterranean from ancient times to the 'Industrial Revolution' of the late eighteenth century. The author's main work previous to this volume has been in demographic history, with particular reference to London in the 'long eighteenth century', and demographics provides one of the two foundations of the present work, the other being agriculture, for at the heart of this is the balance between the land's productive capacity and population size, a balance always delicate, and often precarious. What characterizes this period, argues Landers, is its reliance on muscle power – of both humans and other animals – and on crop yields. In an 'organic economy' (a concept Landers borrows from fellow demographic historian E A Wrigley) where the extractive industries and the means of production based on them are in their infancy, and where chemical power is largely limited to military applications – gunpowder – human achievement is dependent on the ability to grow sufficient food to feed a given population. Just about everything else follows from this. The rise and fall of empires, the success or otherwise of states, can be explained, ultimately, by the organizational success in managing this brutally simple equation, and harnessing it for the purposes of the state.

Landers lays out his model systematically and with great clarity. He begins by examining such economies' constraints on productivity, distribution and spatial organization. Relative to the modern world, per capita low productivity, low levels of socio-economic specialization and high transport costs resulted in low levels of geographical concentration of economic functions, so that settlement was dispersed and cities were generally few in number. The central sections are then devoted to the practice and effects of warfare over this period. The justification for this focus is obvious: pre-modern states were organized to fight wars; warfare was the clearest expression of a state's ability to harness what potential productive power it had available; war was the political activity that made the greatest impression on society and

the economy; and a state's ability to fight wars was the crucial determinant of its success. Also, war was – and remains – the most important driver of technological advance. The organizational aspects of war – strategy, logistics, military commissariats and resourcing through taxation and recruitment – presented the greatest challenge to pre-modern political systems, and have provided modern writers on business and organizations with a happy hunting ground for historical paradigms and parallels (with not universally happy results, at least from the point of view of professional historians). The inescapable constraints imposed by organic economies set a natural limit to political ambitions. Landers makes much of the classic case of the Roman Empire, a uniquely successful political organization based on the effective exploitation of human and natural resources until imperial overstretch made empire first unprofitable and then an unsustainable drain on resources, but there are plenty of other examples of ambition tempered by economic reality. Early-modern states, such as Louis XIV's France, were able to support the increasingly large armies through the ruthless exploitation of their peasantry, but this was only possible through the threat and use of military violence against the recalcitrant, thereby stoking a vicious cycle of taxation and growth in military spending.

At some levels military spending stimulates economic growth, but the diversion of resources to unproductive activity, and the destruction wrought by ever-more effective means of killing, have in themselves acted as serious constraints on economic development. The decisive stage in the long dance between resources and military ambition came with the widespread adoption of gunpowder weaponry. Landers neatly summarizes the historical debate over the 'military revolution' (basically one between proponents of a short sharp paradigm shift and of punctuated equilibrium in military tactics, strategy and organization) and traces some of the implications of a shift from muscle to chemical power in the arts of killing. When tactical success depended on individual strength and skill with the sword, spear or bow, there was a clear limit on the number of effective combatants a state could field. At particular moments particular regions produced specialized troop types which could have major local impacts on war-fighting, classic examples being the later medieval Anglo-Welsh longbowman and the Swiss pikeman, but the peculiar demands of these 'ethnic' fighting styles precluded their widespread adoption, so military revolution was repeatedly postponed. With the arrival of firearms, which with a minimum of training and the right tactics could be used effectively by less impressive physical specimens, mass recruitment – or conscription – made military sense. From this followed the spectacular expansion in the size of armies and navies, the prolongation of campaigns, the increasing sophistication of logistical systems and the massive growth of the bureaucracies of command, supply and appropriation. For the first time, the West achieved tactical and strategic superiority over the East, and the European 'Age of Empires' laid the foundations – at the muzzles of many guns – of what has now come to be known as the Global Economy. In short, it was Bellona who gave birth to the modern state.

The modern state, bureaucratic and skilled in the appropriation of surpluses of production for its own defence and expansion, thus predated the modern economy, based on chemical power fuelled by the extractive industries. It was probably no coincidence that the state most adept at the former was the first to develop the latter. Great Britain, having carved out a trans-Atlantic empire through domination of the seas,

gave birth to the modern economy, based on coal and iron. Here, Landers' story comes to its natural end, for it was with the 'Industrial Revolution' (and once again, historians argue over the nature – and sometimes the very existence – of this concept) that the dialectic of production and power experienced an unprecedented paradigm shift. The old tyrannies of time and space were broken by coal. Steam-powered transportation solved the problems of spatial integration, allowing for the concentration of functions and resources in big cities; coal allowed the new urban populations to keep warm without complete deforestation. Steam-powered production provided plentiful supplies of iron and, later, steel, stimulated demand and created a consumer society. Why this should have happened first in the British Isles is of course down to many factors, and abundant supplies of easily accessible coal is of course of great importance among them, but when it comes to explaining why the breakthrough occurred in north-west Europe rather than anywhere else Landers turns back to demography. The North-West European marriage pattern was characterized by relatively late marriage and small families. It was expected that married couples would live in separate households from their parents, and to fulfill this meant waiting until sufficient resources had been accumulated before marrying. This provided a work force of both young men and women, and the reduced period of fertility meant that surpluses were not entirely consumed by large numbers of children. Agricultural regimes also contributed: grain-based economies were less labour-intensive than those based on rice, thereby freeing up cultivators for other economic activities.

It is a sobering thought, that however hard life was for the average pre-modern European cultivator, and however dreadful the recurrent famines, things were worse in many other areas of the world. Britain – and particularly England – it can be argued, diverted less of its surplus agricultural production into aristocratic conspicuous consumption than other parts of Europe, thereby allowing for greater agricultural investment. Capitalised agriculture, and the capitalist mentality of accumulation and investment, was apparent in England by the later Middle Ages, and this region's 'agricultural revolution' was of course a necessary precursor to the 'industrial revolution'.

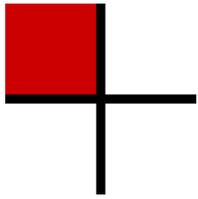
Landers' model, based on the synthesis of a wide range of secondary work, is persuasive, and provides a useful conceptual framework within which to locate smaller-scale studies based on empirical, archival-based research. Historians will find little here that's new in their own areas of specialism, but will value the clear overarching framework. Some might feel disquiet at what they may see as Landers' determinism. There seems little scope in his world for the influence of individual action, or indeed, for ideologies and abstract ideas. Renaissance and Enlightenment find no place in his story. Political acts are successful if they abide by the inescapable imperatives set by demography and technology; if they don't, they are bound to fail. No one man or woman, from Nero to Napoleon, can do anything to buck the system. This demographic and economic 'double predestination' may stick in the throat of the more 'humanist' historian, and can smack of reductionism, but seen in the large perspective of this book it seems inescapable.

And, of course, while we may have broken free of the particular set of constraints which Landers associates with the 'organic economy', it would be naïve in the extreme to read

his book as a celebration of our own success. Pre-modern states and economies were faced with the problems of sustainability in terms of maintaining a balance between resources, population and political ambition. Today the elements in the balance are different, but the problem of sustainability has moved from local and regional to global, and the stakes are higher. Landers' notion of history driven by underlying forces over which individuals have little or no control does not make comfortable reading. Pre-modern economies were forever bumping up against the constraints of muscle power and unsophisticated agriculture. Modern economies long ago removed most of those constraints, only to find that the promised unrestrained expansion has met with immovable ecological boundaries, and the grim balance between agricultural productivity and population is as tragically apparent in the developing world as at any period in history. So, this book, dealing with sometimes distant historical periods, encourages informed reflection on the dilemma at the heart of modern existence. Pre-modern political and economic elites may have occasionally been able to convince themselves that they controlled their own destinies, but this was a delusion; it may be that the evolution of the chemical and electronic economies has allowed us to control ours, but, as this book shows, if so this would be for the first time in human history.

the author

Dr Peter Fleming is Principal Lecturer in Medieval History at the University of the West of England, Bristol. His research focuses on later medieval urban history, politics and culture. He is the author of *Family and Household in Medieval England* (Palgrave, 2000) and is currently engaged in a Heritage Lottery funded project on immigrants and minorities in Bristol from 1000 to 2001.
Email: peter.fleming@uwe.ac.uk



What Is Lived Space?

Zhongyuan Zhang

review of: S. Elden (2004) *Understanding Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible*. London: Continuum. (PB, pp. 288, £19.99, ISBN: 0-8264-7003-3)

Introduction

In his lifetime, Henri Lefebvre wrote 72 books, yet were it not for one of these books, his influence in organisational studies would not be the same as what it is today. *The Production of Space* (1974/1991), generally considered to be his *magnum opus*, has exerted a strong fascination on organisational researchers with its critical tenet that space should be seen as the site of ongoing interactions of social relations rather than the mere result of such interactions – a process of production, in Lefebvre’s words, rather than a product. Consequently, Lefebvre’s triad spatial model – the perceived, conceived space and lived space (1991: 33, 38-9) – which he proposes as an analytical tool for the process, has been an important source of inspiration for recent discussions on, or related to, organisational space (Dobers and Strannegard, 2004; Hernes, 2004; Spicer and Taylor, 2004; Dale, 2005; Surman, 2005; Watkins, 2005).

This academic enthusiasm, however, is not unblended with a modicum of unease. On the one hand, Lefebvre’s book, with many little elaborated nuances and references, is by no means a self-evident reading, as some researchers confess (Hernes, 2004; Dale, 2005). On the other hand, there seems to be a serious danger of reduction if one approaches *The Production of Space* in isolation from the rest of Lefebvre’s corpus. We do not have to know the whole world in order to know that “John is the father of James”, says Russell (1961: 714); true, but Lefebvre’s work requires understanding, not mere knowing.

Understanding Lefebvre traces up the development of Lefebvre’s scholarly career on the basis of all his published works in association with the writer’s life events, and the book thus provides researchers of organisational studies with a rare access to a panoramic view of the extended landscape of Lefebvre’s thoughts, an access made more precious due to the fact that few of Lefebvre’s books are now available in English

translations. In the introduction of the book, Elden states that his aim is to widen the 'narrowness' of the reading of Lefebvre in the English-speaking world in order to show that Lefebvre's work can be "conceptualized as a whole" (2004: 6-7). This he has achieved with great success.

The book begins with an exploration of Lefebvre's reading of Marx, presenting Lefebvre as a loyal yet radical Marxist thinker who defends dialectic materialism as an open-ended way of social investigations, distinguished from, for instance, Althusser's structuralistic reading of Marx, on the one hand, and Sartre's naive subjectivism, on the other. The book then associates Lefebvre's thinking with other philosophers with whom Lefebvre professes heritage, in particular Hegel's dialectic method, Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world, and Nietzsche's insights on rhythm, space and body. These two opening chapters consists the backbones of the rest of the book. Chapters three to six summarize Lefebvre's major contributions to sociological studies in four areas of enquiry: everyday life, rural and urban studies, time and space, and politics and the state. These chapters are arranged in a chronological order so as to demonstrate the course of development in Lefebvre's mature thinking, but Elden also makes great effort to highlight the recurrence of certain themes throughout Lefebvre's entire body of work – such as the non-linearity of time, the everyday life, the politicality of space, the time/space affinity – all of which are then related back to Lefebvre's political engagement and philosophical complexity elaborated in the first two chapters. The conclusion is very short, but by then, the book has clearly fulfilled what it sets out to promise in the title: an *understanding* of Henri Lefebvre.

In the following paragraphs, I would like to demonstrate through an example how Elden's book might benefit organisational studies. The example I choose to discuss is 'lived space', the central and perhaps the most ambiguous element of Lefebvre's often quoted spatial model (1991: 33, 38-9). Elden's book provides important clarifications to the idea of 'lived space' on two levels.

Space and Dialectics

The first ambiguity arises concerning the relationship between lived space (or, 'representational spaces'), on the one hand, and conceived space ('representations of space') and perceived space (spatial practices), on the other. Shields (1999: 161), for instance, notices that lived space is easily confused with perceived space. Similarly, Hernes (2004) suggests that the triad model itself is not tidily drawn. Such confusion could readily be solved if we perform a two-step reduction of Lefebvre's thinking, by first tracing back to the original starting point of his spatial critique, and secondly, linking the spatial model to Lefebvre's favourite method of dialectics. In the first step, Elden directs our attention to an early critique of Lefebvre on Descartes, published in 1947. Here, Elden suggests, Lefebvre may have first formulated the notions of conceived space and perceived space as direct correspondences of Descartes' *res cogitans* and *res extensa* (2004: 186-8). Just as the Cartesian dualism, conceived and perceived spaces seem to be engaged in a deadlock of opposition without the slightest possibility of reconciliation. It is not until many years later, when Lefebvre has

accumulated abundant knowledge of rural and urban everyday life, does he begin to see lived space as a bridging concept capable of solving the conflict. Lefebvre's analysis here is backed up by his dialectic method – the second step of our reduction. The third term of lived space is balanced carefully between the two poles of conceived space (purely idealism) and perceived space (pure materialism). It embodies both elements without being reducible to either. It is the space of *connaissance* – here Elden reminds us of the nuance of the French word – “less formal or more *local* forms of knowledge” (2004: 190, my emphasis).

Following Elden's interpretation, let me try to concretize the triad model within an organisational scenario. On the one hand, we have an abstract space of pure mathematical figures and verbal messages – manifested in the design of offices, organisational rules and symbols, and so on (Spicer and Taylor, 2004); and, on the other, an all-too-material, and therefore *indifferent* space, consisting of the flows of labour, money, information (Harvey, 1990) and every physical movement of employees: their opening doors, sipping coffee, and etc. In between of these two poles, there is the lived space, a space of pure subjectivity, of human experiences (Watkins, 2005), of people's sense-making, imagination, and feeling – that is, their local knowledge – of the organisational space as they encounter it. In so far that our experiences always take place in pre-fabricated physical spaces, and that what we think may not coincide with what we do, the lived space embodies both conceived and perceived spaces without being reducible to either.

Elden's clarification on the concept of lived space, therefore, corroborates Watkins' (2005) call for multi-dimensional enquiries on organisational space, but in particular, it paves way for further attentions into the subjective experiences – the *lived* life, as Lefebvre's magic word suggests – of organisational members' spatial engagements

Space and Perspectives

A second ambiguity concerns the position of lived space in terms of its relation with space as a totality. Most current literatures (Harvey, 1990; Hernes, 2004; Spicer and Taylor, 2004; Watkins, 2005) remind me of the slicing of a pie: the socially produced space is divided into three parts, with conceived, perceived and lived spaces each occupying a piece. This conceptualization, while effective in explaining the interactions among the three elements, seems to be a bit positivist: it quantifies space. If we take a specific spatial event, say a man walks into his office as such-and-such a time, with such-and-such a gesture and in such-and-such a mood, can we easily settle it within any of the three pieces of jigsaw puzzle? Furthermore, the method may carry a deterministic overtone, as Watkins concludes in his article: “it is necessary for the interactions between the triadic elements to be appropriate and in balance if an [spatial] event was to be persuasive and effective” (2005: 220). What he tries to say, it seems to me, is “the understanding of an event” rather than an event by itself.

Again, Elden's reading of Lefebvre sheds insights. Elden notices Lefebvre's interest in the cubist artist, Pignon, whose work Lefebvre has commented, in a 1956 book, as “a

means of challenging the geometric representation of space". Space, as Lefebvre writes in that book, may not change, but "our perceptions of [it] does – they become more fine, more subtle, more profound, more differentiated" (2004: 182). The important thing to notice here is that Lefebvre has always associated the diversity of space – which he later develops into his triad model – with the changing of perspectives of onlookers. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre specifically defines the triad as "the three *moments* of social space" (1991: 40, my emphasis). And if we relates this back to Lefebvre's habitual use of 'moment', noticed by Elden, as "the attempt to achieve the *total* realization of a possibility" (2004: 172, my emphasis), it is quite clear that Lefebvre does not understand the three elements of the triad model in the sense of spatial fragmentation, as in the slicing of a pie.

It could thus be suggested that the existing way of understanding Lefebvre's model can be supplemented with the notion of 'shifting perspectives'. We might compare conceived space, perceived space and lived space as three cameras projecting simultaneously onto any organisational event. Coming back to the previous example, through the first camera we read mathematical data, the height of the man, the length of a corridor, and so on; through the second we see the body movement of the man, his walking about, his gestures; and through the third, we reach into his inner subjectivity, his feeling about the stupid doorknob which wouldn't turn, for instance. Each camera generates different data – that much in agreement with existing literatures – yet each, at the same time, refers to, *as a whole*, the organisational space that they come to represent. In other words, conceived, perceived and lived spaces overlap, not juxtapose, one another.

With this notion in mind, the task of researchers, in their efforts to understand organisational space, is to hop constantly from one camera to another. This hopping will not be easy, and its successful execution requires exactly what Mills (1959) calls almost half a century ago 'the sociological imagination'.

To sum up briefly, I have tried to show that Elden's reading of Lefebvre has helped to clarify the concept of lived space as, first, a balanced and balancing element of Lefebvre's triad model, consisting of subjective spatial experiences, and second, an integrated moment of social space, derived through a particular spatial perspective. This, I believe, is only one example of many possible benefits that Elden's book may bring to organisational studies – for instance, Lefebvre's treatment of the politicality of space and the rupturing moments in cyclical time, two themes repeatedly integrated throughout Elden's book, may prove applicable in the study of organisational resistance – but these are without the scope of this short review. In short, as long as organisational studies continue to draw inspirations from Lefebvre, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre* will be an indispensable commentary as well as general guide to the ideas of the French thinker.

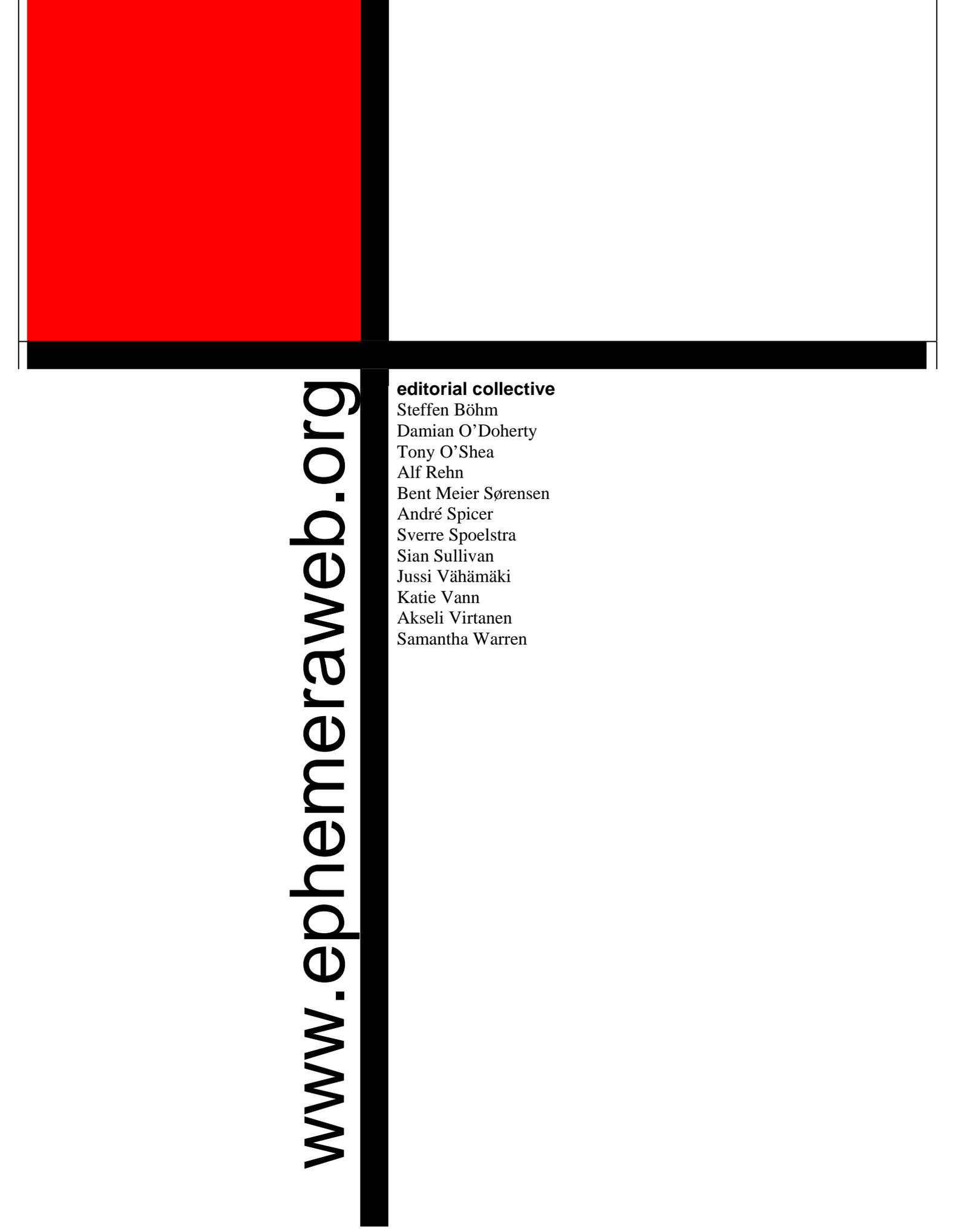
references

- Dale, K. (2005) 'Building a Social Materiality: Spatial and Embodied Politics in Organizational Control', *Organization*, 12: 649-78.
- Dobers, P. & L. Strannegard (2004) 'The Cocoon – A Traveling Space', *Organization*, 11: 825-48.
- Elden, S. (2004) *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible*. London: Continuum.

- Harvey, D. (1990) *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hernes, T. (2004) *The Spatial Construction of Organization*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Mills, C. W. (1967) *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Russell, B. (1961) *History of Western Philosophy*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Shields, R. (1999) *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle*. London: Routledge.
- Spicer, A. & S. Taylor (2004) 'Jumping off the Head of a Pin: Analysing Organisational Spaces', Paper presented at the *European Academy of Management Conference*, St. Andrews.
- Surman, E. (2005) 'Out of Sight and Beyond Control? A Spatial Analysis of Supervisory Responses to a Remote Workforce', Paper presented at *Where Organization Dwells: A One Day Symposium on Organization, Space and Architecture*, University of Warwick.
- Watkins, C. (2005) 'Representations of Space, Spatial Practices and Spaces of Representation: An Application of Lefebvre's Spatial Triad', *Culture and Organization*, 11: 209-220.

the author

Zhongyuan Zhang is a Ph.d student at Warwick Business School. He has just completed his field research on space and power at a Chinese organization.
E-mail: zhongyuan.zhang@gmail.com



www.ephemeraweb.org

editorial collective

Steffen Böhm

Damian O'Doherty

Tony O'Shea

Alf Rehn

Bent Meier Sørensen

André Spicer

Sverre Spoelstra

Sian Sullivan

Jussi Vähämäki

Katie Vann

Akseli Virtanen

Samantha Warren