

volume 2, number 3 (august 2002)

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Campbell Jones and Emma Surman

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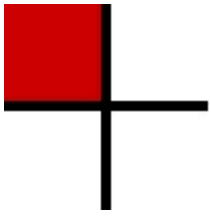
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After Organization Studies

Campbell Jones and Emma Surman

Eradicate: 'to root out, destroy completely, get rid of' (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

Fascinations

One sometimes wonders if there is something pathological in the mind of the child who, on finding a small dead animal by the side of the road cannot resist turning the corpse over (with a stick usually – children do know their limits) in order that they can better 'pick over' the remains. They uncover the rancid carcass, prod at the bits that are not totally decomposed, peer with intrigue at the maggots that wriggle through the dead body, eating out every last scrap of stinking meat and imagine what might have happened and what is still to come.

But then, a fascination with morbidity is not always a morbid fascination.

Here, as there, various authors walk along a trail and are fascinated by what they see and are tempted to 'pick over' the various parts of the corpus/corpse of organization studies. Figuring a possible death (if it hasn't already happened, that is) they toy with what has been organization studies. Not knowing if it is dead yet, or if anybody knows of this actual or immanent death, we have all the conditions of a perfect crime.¹

Such childish 'toyings' with organization studies and what might come 'after' were where the idea for this volume began. The before of this particular after was a workshop 'after organization studies' held at Keele University in September 2001. Some of the papers in this edition were revised directly after this workshop, while others have come after the thoughts and discussions that it inspired. One of our starting points was the plurality of this word 'after'.²

1 Jean Baudrillard (1996) *The Perfect Crime*, trans. Chris Turner. London: Verso.

2 On this, see Nicholas Royle (1995) *After Derrida*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, and Samuel Weber (1996) 'After deconstruction' and 'Upsetting the setup', in *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

First After

In the first, and most obvious sense, each of the papers in this issue is after organization studies in time, temporally ‘later than’, the classical region of what was known as ‘organization studies’. In this sense, ‘after’ means later than, later in time, that is. Such a concept suggests something more modern, newer, (a post-OrganizationStudies?), which is such a painfully easy notion that it might even catch on. There is something ludicrously up-to-date about this kind of positioning. It’s almost like reinforcing the cult of the new that was parodied in the editorial to issue 1(2). Almost.

But as with all that is fashionable (something in fashion is *à la mode*, as they say in Paris), there is always another mode (connected with, working alongside, or in the future). The idea that there might be something ‘after’ does speak of a fashionable newness, a keeping up with fashion. But it also speaks of a freshness, and it is perhaps more urgent than ever to encourage imaginative and creative talk of something that might come after today. And this is not for the simple and obvious reason that a slip of the button in a Texan ranch might mean that tomorrow won’t come, but equally because of the almost complete impossibility, today, of even imagining a world that is radically different to the one that we currently inhabit.

A colleague of ours teaches a course on ‘alternative forms of organization’, and recently expressed her dismay at the inability of management students to recognise even the possibility that there might be different political and organizational arrangements than the ones that are with us at present. This is a lack of imagination, of course, but then we shouldn’t think that imagination is something that happens only in our heads, and doesn’t happen in our practices. These are the students who know, even before they arrive in Management 101, that it is good to be critical, to ‘think outside the box’. But as is noted in a recent compendium of managerial wisdom, the best way to get into the habit of thinking outside the box is to make sure your box is very, very small.³

Second After

If things are not going to change without our help, developing ‘spontaneously’, we clearly have in mind some kind of *active* relation to organization studies. In this sense ‘after’ also refers to a critical gesture, one of ‘going after’ organization studies, of looking what has taken place so far and threatening to take it apart, to shake its foundations. This is the grand project of more than a few today. We don’t need to codify things here. We all know; we are sure. The future will not come without criticism.

(Probably.)

3 Alistair Beaton (2001) *The Little Book of Management Bollocks: Why be Human when you could be a Manager?* London: Pocket Books.

Third After

Still, and this is where things get tricky, we need to be careful and clear about the kind of criticism of organization studies we have in mind, and of what kind of space we are marking with the word ‘criticism’. Only in the most infantile utopian fantasies would we think that a criticism of organization studies would be achievable in the space of an issue of a journal, a volume of papers, the odd conference, or any combination of these.

Besides this we have the question of the stance that we wish to take in relation to organization studies. The ‘overall position’ of these papers (if it is possible to still talk like this) is one of *affirmation* of the possibilities of organization studies. In this sense our goal will not be to ‘end’ organization studies, even if we try to put ourselves in a position from which we might perceive the possibility of its closure.

This is one of the lessons that we can learn from the way that Heidegger, Derrida, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy, amongst others, approach the philosophical tradition. They set out to think philosophy differently, to enable a different philosophical practice, but are aware that this cannot begin nor end from a position of exteriority to that tradition. So their effort is not to ‘end philosophy’ or to ‘abandon metaphysics’, but to rigorously re-examine the philosophical and metaphysical traditions, from a position that negotiates the space between inside and outside.

In this sense, a space ‘after organization studies’ would not destroy tradition in the name of an absolute break, but would embark on a project of persistently reconsidering (picking over) its past. This is not to uncritically repeat the past, or to accept what is currently known as organization studies. It is to stress that, in an era in which everyone wants to be a critical critic, we should not forget the project of continuation and development, one which ‘comes after’ and ‘follows on from’, even in the aftermath of organization studies.

Intervening, Overturning, Displacing, Liberating, Resisting (Binaries, Dualisms, Dichotomies...)

All of this might seem a bit too abstract, too ‘theoretical’. So let’s try to illustrate what we’re saying by working with an example that is more concrete, more ‘empirical’. It would only be fair that we work with someone who has *already* gone after organization studies, someone with whom we would like to express a certain sympathy. In this going after, we take another step (does radicalisation involve anything more than taking one more step?) than is taken by this figure. Going after those who have gone after organization studies.

All examples are arbitrary, but let’s work with David Knights. So that we remain specific, we will focus on his comments on dualisms and binaries, in part because it is the issue of dualisms and dualistic thought that is the focus of the contributions of this issue, but also because of Knights’ work on dualisms.

Now, Knights doesn't like binaries. His position is clear – dualisms are a problem. Let us cite his work, in case we are mistaken, or in case we are accused of making assertions without evidence (such is a crime in some circles – but maybe not enough). Let Knights speak then: “organization studies would still appear to subscribe predominantly to a representational epistemology that reflects and reproduces dualistic forms of analysis”.⁴ Further: “There are many reasons why dualistic forms of analysis in general be rejected”.⁵ Or: “...a concern of this paper is to eradicate dualisms”.⁶ So, Knights having set out his stall embarks on a project of “deconstructing dualistic discourse”.⁷ Fair enough, perhaps, but what is meant by ‘deconstructing’? Let's be pedantic and cite once again. Knights writes, in the conclusion to one of his papers:

Recently, the absurdity of hierarchical or present/absent dichotomies has been recognized, but instead of dismantling the dualistic edifice, attempts have been made to reconcile the terms of the polarity by generating some kind of balance between them...Deconstruction theory, however, does not simply mean an overturning or a reconciliation of the presence/absence dichotomy, but their complete eradication.⁸

At the end of this sentence, after the word ‘eradication’, Knights adds a parenthesis, enclosing a citation to ‘(Derrida, 1982: 329)’. Let us look carefully at this citation, and what it implies. Let us pick it over. Knights cites a text by Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, in order to emphasise that deconstruction (and presumably Derrida) seeks the ‘eradication’ of binaries. Do we accept this? Do we have enough evidence? Our first problem is that the word ‘eradication’ does not appear on the page that is referred to (p. 329) by Knights’ citation. On that page we find many other words, including words such as: intervene, overturning, displacement, liberated and resisted. But not the word ‘eradication’ nor ‘eradicate’, nor much that looks to be similar to a logics of eradication.

Are we going after Knights too violently here? We certainly don't want to eradicate him, or all people. Going after, we go with him. But still, and here is the double bind, we need to work at this question of what it means to intervene, overturn, displace, liberate and resist (organization studies, for example).

To set it in stark terms, we just don't believe it when deconstruction is enrolled to do the kinds of things that Knights wants it to do. We are amazed, almost incredulous, if that word weren't now impossible to us. Surely, deconstruction will help Knights, but it will not be a handmaiden to the kind of death that he wants it to inflict. Too much violence, for example, when he concludes that “Derrida (1982) has declared that metaphysics is

4 David Knights (1997) ‘Organization theory in the age of deconstruction: Dualism, gender and postmodernism revisited’, *Organization Studies*, 18(1): 1-19, citation from pp. 1-2.

5 *Ibid.* p. 3.

6 *Ibid.* p. 4.

7 David Knights (2001) ‘Hanging out the dirty washing: Labour process theory and its dualistic legacies’, *International Studies of Management and Organization*, 30(4): 68-84.

8 David Knights (1997), p. 16.

dead”.⁹ But is this a fair citation? Note that he once again fails to mention the page of the *Margins of Philosophy* in which Derrida is alleged to this declaration. A simple mistake, or for the simple reason that we will not find it?

Violence of the end, then. How do we end something? If only we knew, our struggle would have come to completion some time ago. But of this we can be certain: if deconstruction is our ally, then it is not by providing another Hammer, but by fine-tuning our tools (lots of little hammers?). Perhaps it is something more to do with a re-imagining of the past and of our relation to the past, and in so doing, reconfiguring the possibilities of a practice today. This means that we are not in the space of eradication, but of remembrance. We are not out to destroy dualisms, but reconfiguring our relation to the parts of the past. A ‘doing dualism’, to be sure, but differently.

Strategies of the After

This, then, and you will have to excuse us if we have taken a roundabout way of saying it, is what holds all of the papers in this issue together. Each paper represents an effort to pry open organization studies by posing the problem of one or more binary. In the process of prying, it takes a critical relation to the tradition that we have known as organization studies. Not to disband organization studies, and not with a morbid fascination. But with a promise that something different emerges, from refiguring the past. And each radical step that is taken, every effort that promises something ‘after’ is also put to the test. So the gains of Foucault, or of aesthetics as a clue to organizational life, to offer something new, are put to the test.

In the first paper in the issue, Peter Fleming delves into the issue of resistance, one of the key analytic, if not political, (re-)discoveries of contemporary organization studies. Focusing on Foucault, this outlines a historical sketch that positions Foucault’s framing of resistance in relation to recent continental thought. In doing so, Fleming stresses the traces of the past that are often ‘between the lines’ in Foucauldian accounts of resistance, whether this comes in the form of recourse to motifs of transgression, or to the themes of ethics, death and animality that were central to early formulations in this tradition, but largely silent in contemporary organization studies. Setting the scene for what might come after Foucauldian accounts of workplace resistance, he argues the importance of acknowledging the past by tracing the history of the study of resistance in the workplace, and in so doing demonstrates that contrary to the popular impression, intellectual stimulus of resistance studies should neither begin nor end with Foucault. Elaborating the historical traces that run through contemporary possibilities, Fleming’s paper is also dialectical in the way that it stresses the potential of what could be done with other thinkers of transgression, he indicates the risks of such an endeavour, and hence actively tries to neither simply embrace nor dismiss these thinkers. As such,

9 David Knights (1997), p. 6; see also David Knights (2000) ‘Autonomy retentiveness! Problems and prospects for a post-humanist feminism’, *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 9(2): 173-185, in particular p. 182.

Fleming performs a subtle resistance in relation to intellectual fashions, a resistance that steps between established convention and the space after it.

While Fleming's concerns are largely 'theoretical', Emma Surman's paper is more directly 'empirical' (now there is a terrible binary, if ever there was one!). Drawing on empirical rather than historico-critical experience, Surman makes explicit the need for a dialectic view of dualisms. After researching the experiences of a group of teleworkers, Surman describes how a situation which is experienced as ambiguous leads to the conscious *reproduction* of a dualism. In order to cope with the loss of the geographical divide between home and work, the teleworkers consciously seek to symbolically maintain this division within their own homes. In order to engage with the experiences of these teleworkers, Surman argues that we need to work with the dualism, a position that flies in the face of suggestions that dualisms should be eradicated. By drawing attention to the mobilisation of this dualism for the purposes of resistance and subjective security, she suggests that we need to see both sides of the picture that is being painted 'for' and 'against' dualisms.

In the third paper in this issue, Samantha Warren discusses a set of methodological and epistemological difficulties presented with using photography to research the aesthetics of organizational life. She describes her own experience of researching the aesthetic experience of people within the web-site design department of a global IT firm, and offers a number of insights into adopting 'alternative' research methodologies. Most importantly, she cautions of the dangers and difficulties of this method, for example, identifying the risk that photographs invite positivistic treatment, having the appearance that they can provide a mirror to the outside world. Further, and relatedly, Warren indicates the temptation to set photographs outside and in opposition to the textual field of other inscriptions, and in inviting such a dualism fail to see the mutual inter-relations of photographs and inscription in general. Hence we have another movement that looks forward and out, but insists on a continual methodological and epistemological reflection and on a recognition of past debates in order to imagine the future.

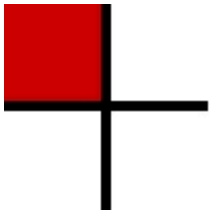
In a note from the field that threatens the boundaries between simple divisions between theoretical, empirical and methodological writing, Bevan Catley, Shayne Grice and Sara Walton discuss community and national reaction to the planned closure of a 'local' brewery in New Zealand. They highlight the complexities of a situation in which the battle lines can not simply be drawn between the global and the local, and in which resistance cannot be thought of in terms of distance. At one level they outline a simple case, but at another level stress the risks (and the benefits) of thinking historically. Hence their analysis of the complexities and ambiguities of the 'Monteith's Affair', while clearly grounded in a tradition of critical thought, also poses problems to the melancholia of those who would seek simple solutions or strategies in the struggle with globalisation.

In the first of the two book reviews Ferguson looks at *Marketing and Social Construction: Exploring the Rhetorics of Managed Consumption* by Chris Hackley. In her review, Ferguson performs all of the senses of 'after' that we spoke of above. She embraces the possibility that social construction may move marketing theory beyond its current impoverished state, and therefore works with Hackley's movement. But she

shows the way that, at the same time that he calls these disciplinary divides into question, he is unable to move beyond their reproduction and perpetuation. In a combination of measured and polemical vitriol, she tests this after, explores its politics, and offers some other headings we might go after.

Paul du Gay and Michael Pryke's edited collection *Cultural Economy*, which is reviewed here by Gavin Jack, explicitly sets out to move beyond a dualism of culture and economy. The goal of this book continues in the spirit that we here both extend and call into question – moving beyond the dualism of culture and economy. While praising the many positives of the book, Jack highlights a methodological shortcoming. The concern of many of the authors in this edited collection to move beyond the binary results, he notes, is in a focus on intellectual inquiry and a neglect of empirical material. Without the voice of human subjects he is left feeling that the usefulness of dualism is not fully explored. Jack ends with a suggestion which reinforces the stance taken by many other contributors to this issue, that a more fruitful way to go 'after' this field would be to revisit seminal texts.

So, there they are. We've said enough, and at this rate we might invite the impression that what follows is a coherent project, or that these authors are simply following the machinery of a new dogmatism. This is probably the risk that critical thought always runs. But perhaps we might better equip ourselves for the future when we are informed by the past. So our project 'after organization studies' bears the mark of a strange form of traditionalism. We want more evidence, more careful theory, more empirics, better histories, better method. But strangely, maybe, none of this is sought in the name of melancholy, but in the name of an alternative future. Who us? Radicals? No, just children who came across a dead animal by the side of the road. Perhaps a project of 'after organisation studies' has to keep with the tradition of remembering the dead animals, in order to become a different animality.



'Lines Of Flight': A History of Resistance and the Thematic of Ethics, Death and Animality*

Peter Fleming

abstract

Critical organization studies and broader social theory has recently refocused on how subjects of control and power often engage in acts of resistance. The conception of resistance increasingly deployed is one derived from the post-structuralist turn in social theory and in particular the work of Michel Foucault. This paper will demonstrate the very specific philosophical history that quietly informs this approach to resistance, a history that does not begin nor end with Foucault. This tradition of scholarship involves a turn to ethics (especially the ethics of death and animality) and in theorising an 'after organization studies' it will be argued that this emphasis can both enrich contemporary analysis and create some poignant limitations.

Introduction

In much recent critical organization studies it has become almost obligatory to point out the varied and often subtle ways those subjected to domination in the employment situation may resist, challenge and change relations of power. The realisation that workers can resist the techniques that solidify managerial control is by no means new or novel. Indeed, even a cursory glance at both the Marxist and Weberian traditions of research, for example, is telling of how prominent the theme has been, especially in relation to industrial struggle and conflict. For many years critical scholars have stressed not only the unequal and uneven distribution of power that so often characterises contemporary work but also the diverse and sometimes creative ways workers subvert the order of things (e.g. Hyman, 1972; Beynon, 1973; Friedman, 1977; Edwards, 1979). Given this rich history of industrial research it was surprising to see subsequent interest in worker resistance 'dry up' and all but disappear in many radical investigations. As a number of accounts have argued, critical studies of work tended to present an over-totalising vision of new management controls (corporate culture, surveillance, self-managing teams, etc.) that were seen to be so pervasive and normalizing that it erased

* The author would like to thank André Spicer, the editors of *ephemera* and two anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

not only the means of resistance but also the desire (Collinson, 1994; Thompson and Ackroyd, 1995; Fournier and Grey, 1999). Indeed, the 'worker-as-docile-automaton' portrayal of organizations has been so seductive in some research that even negativity, dissent and opposition were deemed functional to managerial hegemony (for an analysis of this literature see Fleming and Spicer, 2002 and forthcoming).

Over the last few years the concept of resistance has begun to reappear in critical research. Even though it is probably fair to say that the reason for the initial hiatus was due to a particular reading of Foucault, as many have argued, it is also true that the renewed emphasis on resistance has a definite Foucauldian flavour. Indeed, traditional approaches to resistance predominantly treated it as a synonym for 'industrial struggle' whereby opposition only took the form of overt, organized and confrontational practices (Kondo, 1990; Bennett, 1998). There are some exceptions to this generalisation (see Roy, 1952, 1958; Burawoy, 1979) but it has been the evocation of Foucauldian motifs that has allowed us to think about resistance in new and broader ways that do not rest solely upon the nomenclature of dialectics, true interests and overt antagonism. For Foucault, because power is increasingly mobilised at the often imperceptible level of subjectivity, self and the ethical body in non-absolutist states, it is also here that an ambiguous site of various practices of subversion and escape attempts appears. He argued, for example, why transgressive acts "against the submission of subjectivity – is becoming more and more important, even though the struggle against forms of domination and exploitation have not disappeared. Quite the contrary" (Foucault, 1982: 213). So although industrial struggle, for example, is still a notable modality of dissent, the spread of 'high commitment' organizations and hyper-surveillance has seen the development of an investigative framework more attuned to identity, subjectivity and everyday ethical practices to register resistant activities. This Foucauldian sensibility seems to have shifted our attention away from class politics to those subtle micro-practices that do not necessarily aim for 'revolution' but nevertheless allow subordinates to construct counter-spheres within forms of domination, change the trajectory of controls and quietly challenge power relations without necessarily leaving them (de Certeau, 1984).

This approach to employee resistance has become increasingly popular in critical organization studies with identity, alternative discourses and quotidian subversions (especially in organizations that aim to colonize the subjectivities of workers) coming to the fore in many accounts of recalcitrance (e.g. McKinlay and Taylor, 1996; Knights and McCabe, 1998, 2000; Ezzamel, *et al.*, 2001). In accordance with the theme of this special issue I want to demonstrate how this approach to resistance does not begin nor end with Foucault, an impression one may have when reading the literature. In theorising an 'after organization studies' it will be argued that currently popular conceptions of employee resistance must be positioned in a highly specific tradition of thought that has already jumped ahead of what has been referred to as a Foucauldian analytic of workplace transgression (for example see Jermier *et al.*, 1994). I maintain that it is crucial to understand this moving intellectual history if one is to have a more complete knowledge of the tools we are employing to explain resistance in contemporary organizations. It has been argued elsewhere that Foucault is often extracted from his contextual tradition (Jones, 2002) and similarly there is a danger of this happening with many fashionable approaches to resistance that appeal to his *oeuvre*

for legitimacy. It is not just a case of arguing that as opposed to Marxist analysis, for example, the Foucauldian perspective concentrates on identity formation, subjective enactments and everyday practices because without implying historical depth to this take on resistance the differences inevitably remain superficial and forced. So if we have histories of a non-Leviathan conception of power then surely we should also attend to a similar history, however modest and sketchy, of the recalcitrant subject of control? And more importantly, if we reflect on some of the intellectual roots that inform and underpin this presently in-vogue conception of dissent then could we not become more sensitised to the problems that invariably trouble it?

Although this philosophical history is obviously complex, fluid and occasionally contradictory, I will simplify matters by concentrating on the key figures of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Bataille, Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari as in some way representative of a particular stream of thought (with many tributaries) but that is by no means completely allied in axioms or influences. Notwithstanding this heterogeneity, from Nietzsche onward, *ethics* (as in *ēthos*, conduct of self, minuscule semiotics, style etc.) is established as a domain of paramount importance for resistance. Here, the object of resistance is not only capitalism but also certain processes associated with modernity and the self-structuring flows of force that characterises the moral and technical milieu of modernism. And rather than resistance obeying a mechanistic or Newtonian image whereby every force constitutes an equal and opposite force (the dialectic of domination and resistance), we instead envision power (the Law) as a line or threshold that is crossed in the transgressive act. The quintessential lines being *death* and *animality*, significant pre-occupations with this mode of thought. The investigation proceeds in a rather linear fashion and is by no means comprehensive, beginning with a discussion of Nietzsche and Heidegger on the question of ethics, then onto Bataille and Foucault and finally Deleuze and Guattari. I will conclude with some provocations about the limitations that this tradition of scholarship may have for contemporary social theory and organizational studies.

A Question of Ethics

In conducting a conceptual history of what has commonly been referred to as a Foucauldian analytic of resistance our first stop must inevitably be the extremely influential works of Friedrich Nietzsche. It is customary to posit the now classic Foucault article 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History' (1971/1977) as the most substantial connection between a Foucauldian power/resistance matrix and the general works of Nietzsche. Indeed, the ritual of genealogy as the source of resistant knowledge and the corollary admonition to 'historize, historize!' would seem the most natural influence on how we appreciate oppositional practices. But I would argue that this runs the risk of missing Nietzsche's fervent turn to ethics as probably of more consequential import to understanding current approaches to resistance. Nietzsche generally found the mechanisms of politics in the formal sense at best suspicious and at worst vile. Politics as an overpowering organization of bodies was something to be superseded and carefully cleaved from the organism through an emphasis on *ēthos*, conduct of self and style as a line of escape from the asceticism and moral nihilism that he saw engulfing

the modern polity. Such a distinction is, of course, entirely arbitrary, and, if taken to extremes, comes to look more like the apolitical privatism of bourgeois liberalism than radical praxis (see for example Rorty, 1989). But if we go to the other extreme and collapse ethics into politics then other problems arise whereby conduct of self is merely another political territory no different from the state or civil society (see for example Sartre [1976] in relation to political philosophy and Wray-Bliss [2002] in organization studies). The rough distinction alludes to the idea that we can be organized by others (politics) but cannot be ontologically *lived* by others (ethics). For Nietzsche, self is intimately linked to *ēthos* or what each of us make of those small freedoms of everyday life and limited capacities to invent a gesture that constitutes a style of self and *poiēsis* (a skilled bringing forth) of conduct. This angle on sociality takes us beyond the levelling banality of 'everything is political' and allows us to tease out the different plateaus interconnecting the personal and political in any given form of life.

It is undoubtedly this privileging of ethics as a space of agency and self-transmogrification that forms a key antecedent for current Foucauldian conceptions of resistance. For Nietzsche the perennial ethical question of 'how should I (we) live?' must be supplemented with a judgement regarding the context in which the question is borne and asked. In *The Twilight of the Idols* this judgment takes on a forlorn, menacing tone: "In every age the wisest have passed the identical judgement on life: it is worthless" (1888/1974: 9). Nietzsche's own repetition of this judgement serves as an indictment about the impending nihilism that only the lone madman in the street presages and the crowd laughs off as impossible. Only when there is no longer any up and down nor day and night, when the strictures of Christian morality have run their course and have become but empty shells that the herd nevertheless worship as a timeless right, does Nietzsche ask his question: 'how should I live?' In his masterpiece, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-5/1974), we see the question posed not as a political quandary but an ethical incitement, an integral precursor to some of Foucault's concerns with minor knowledges and sexuality. This somewhat rabid book argues that it is *Geist* achieved as *ēthos*, as the art of bricolage and manipulation that should become the pre-eminent location of struggle. If the weight of all man's errors and follies (how else could our histories be represented?) hangs over us like a nightmare then is it not the immured soul that needs to be passed through if one is to live anterior to subjugation? If it is true that us moderns are *our own* burden, having instituted self as Law, then for this burden to be repealed is it not at the very expense of ourselves? And what exactly would this Joycean 'waking up' from the nightmare of self look like when we are the very presence we are trying to escape?

In the character of Zarathustra, Nietzsche maps a line of flight with the concept of *overcoming* (*Überwindung* or *Verwindung*) when he argues that the 'polluted stream' of man (or what is constructed as 'man' in a given historical and cultural location) is something to be superseded through the ethical transvaluation of self: "man is a rope, tied between beast and overman – a rope over an abyss... what is great in man is that he is a bridge and not an end" (Nietzsche, 1883-5/1974: 9). In this trope, modern humanity is both the rope and the lowly beast. The analogy of the beast should therefore never be confused with animality or Nature. Indeed, the sublime figure of the non-human animal is the joyous presentiment of what humans could signify because they can *forget* (*selbstvergessen*). Why else would Zarathustra prefer the company of animals to

people? In order to overcome the normalized self (the abnegating Christian subjectivity in this case), Zarathustra teaches us how to become a non-(hu)man or what we are not. This concept is very close to Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-animal because the animal (the majestic eagle or the crafty serpent) does not languish under the spellbinding curse of self-consciousness and so listens to its body and not its soul (Deleuze, 1983). Zarathustra teaches us how to listen and see with our ears. According to Nietzsche, physiognomy is the surfaced loci of *phrónēsis* (or practical wisdom) and the way one departs oneself forms the ground of an ethical practice, whereby a visceral expressive knowledge of small but brutal truths (the dog-like Diogenes, for example, pissing and masturbating in the marketplace) can potentially short-circuit an over-cumbersome morality. What makes Zarathustra particularly interesting is how he never stipulates what kind of animal-self one is to ultimately become. He was no *zoon politikon* in the modern sense because he did not want to organize nor be organized. When his small band of followers requested a political doctrine, he refused and told them that, in order to follow his example, they must paradoxically forsake him (making infraction the *sine qua non* of ethical freedom). Self-overcoming (or forgetting) is apparently an aleatory affair and not easily reduced to a programme.

For Heidegger, Nietzsche's seductive herd is transformed into *das Man* or 'the They' that is always there before us and this is the point of departure for a line of flight. In *Being and Time* (1927/1996) *Dasein's* temporal sequencing comprises of *Existenz* (the futural running ahead of ourselves, being as expectation), thrownness (we are always already here, the past we cannot get behind) and falling (prey to habits, entanglement in tradition, objects and *das Man* – the present). This third element of *Dasein* is extremely important, according to Heidegger, because we are always falling away from ourselves in the endless labyrinth of objects and language. The desire for *Eigentlichkeit* or authenticity (*ownness* not of a 'true self' but a non-self), according to Heidegger, is not to be explained in terms of fidelity versus mendacity (the theological cogito) but a becoming-onto-ourselves as an uninterchangeable ontological Being anchored only as potential or possibility. Selfhood is first and foremost a processual openness and for *Dasein* to come to itself (as non-self) it must embrace its utmost possibility of not-being-here-any-more: *death*. With time comes change, passing and disintegration, and it is the radical singularity of our death (it is truly our own, no one can encounter our own death for us) that attunes us to the indissociable actuality and presence of Being within the noisy hustle and bustle of contemporary life.¹ Only within the passing middle ground of non-being is it apparent that 'we are not what we are' precisely because *Dasein* never 'is' in the first place.

We see people dying around us and we have medical science to explain death but it is still not our own – it is distant, in the future and often forgotten about. In order to overcome our modern selves and ironically become truly modern, according to

1 This argument has been challenged by Levinas (1998, 2000) because it privileges *Dasein's* own death and ignores the death of others and acts of sacrifice. For Levinas, even *Dasein's* ontic field is imbued with otherness. But as Derrida (1995) points out, giving our life *for* another does not constitute a 'gifting' of death because that death is always still our own. The ontology of death cannot be gifted to another, only to *Dasein* itself in that "[by] means of the passage to death the soul attains its own freedom" (Derrida, 1995: 40).

Heidegger, we must live life as an anticipation of the immense and expansive NOT that is our fate, our ownmost and ultimate possibility that underlies all possibilities. This being free-unto-death is the most seditious form of praxis according to Heidegger, especially in a climate of bourgeois denial and fear of nothingness, because in death we behave otherwise in relation to *das Man* and the Law. This could be one reason for Heidegger's (1959/1978) fascination with Sophocles' *Antigone* (1974). In this eerie play, Antigone, the daughter of Oedipus, is ethically constituted not only through her flouting of the patriarchal command issued by Creon (who orders the carrion of her brother be left unburied), but also by her impending demise as punishment for her disobedience. What Creon and the Chorus find so unsettling and intractable about Antigone is how the prospect of non-living does not generate acquiescence. She does not conceive her death as a gift of external darkness bequeathed by another because, as she puts it, 'I am already dead' – she is already herself in nothingness. Rather than choosing life as a lone positivity (as her sister did) she violates the decree and buries her dead brother because death is both her life and freedom. Such an overcoming of self and Law through the call and reception of Thanatos is something exemplary because it renders power ineffectual by embracing punishment as a deep-seated and perplexing freedom.

Sex and Death

The turn to ethics in the works of Nietzsche and Heidegger established a horizon in which typically political concepts such as conflict, opposition and resistance could be transmuted into concerns relating to gesture, conduct and *phrónêsis*. Here we see a sort of tarrying between the two spheres creating a sometimes tenuous aporia within which the *transgressive self* comes to the fore in analysis. In Bataille's *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality* (1962) the ethical act *par excellence* is the sexual encounter or more precisely the erotic experience that Bataille argues may not even be linked to the act of sex in any nominal sense. Given its contiguous proximity to *ēthos*, it is not surprising, he argues, that the erotic nexus can potentially press subjectivity closer to its limit than almost any other experience. This is why sex and death are so intimately connected because, as Heidegger pointed out, death is the ultimate limit that structures Being. And, of course, to complete the theorem, traversing and joining both the erotic limit-experience and death is the transgressive act. There is a lot happening here so let's unpack some of it.

Eroticism can only be constituted within the context of Law, prohibition and punishment. Bataille frames erotic pleasure not in the realm of bio-reproduction but as an indeterminate and deeply alluring *fascination* with a forbidden act that the prohibition itself has helped create. The desire to breach the Law of pleasure is in itself a source of pleasure that does not originate *a priori* to the Law. Indeed, it is the taboo that augments the prohibition and the transgressive fascination glows as an under-current of desire upon the founding of the 'thou shalt not'. The strict rules for libidinous expression accompanying Catholicism and Protestantism, for example, are important Law-making discourses in which the erotic act finds sustenance – but Bataille also mentions mysticism, pre-Christian sects and other regulative orders. However, it is with

the appearance of de Sade in the climate of Christian morality, Bataille suspects, that we truly discover the contradictory attraction between the rule-making process regarding sexual conduct (taboo, obscenity) and the will to transgress (erotic pleasure). In the introduction to the *120 Days of Sodom*, de Sade makes the disturbing remark that "there is nothing that can set the bounds to licentiousness ... the best way of enlarging and multiplying one's desires is to try and limit them" (1966: 208).

Given this symbiosis between taboo and its crossing, why is death so important for understanding the erotic act of transgression? In Bataille, Nietzsche's herd and Heidegger's *das Man* becomes *l'homme normal* or the normal man, those sexual mores and habits dulled by the rhythms of the Christian Law machine. The normal man as 'decent sexual self' relies upon a sealed centre that may be fractured by a line of flight called erotic pleasures, the consummate act of transgression. Perhaps echoing Freud's (1920/1961) concept of the death instinct, Bataille maintains that the erotic event violently ruptures the stable (bourgeois individual) sense of self at the very moment the spectre of carnality jolts the fragile mirage of reason. The ensuing dissolution of self resembles a limit like that of death because "what does physical eroticism signify if not a violation of the very being of its practitioners? – a violation bordering on death, bordering on murder?" (Bataille, 1962: 17). The edging violation of the erotic moment – remember Freud said that if a child witnesses his or her parents making love it always appears as an act of brutal violence – thus abets the Nietzschean 'rope' for an overcoming of self:

The whole business of eroticism is to destroy the self-contained characters of the participators as they are in their normal lives...Obscenity is our name for the uneasiness which upsets the physical state associated with self-possession, with the possession of a recognised and stable individuality. (Bataille, 1962: 17-18)

This overcoded individuality is transmitted to us by *l'homme normal* as a regulated and self-contained role, which paradoxically provides the conditions for its own subversion through eroticism. And herein lies an important feature of Bataille's thought. Because of our deep anticipation of oblivion, the erotic 'practitioner' finds the audacity to grasp the proscribed pleasure that is as fleeting (we will never be here again) as the charge that forbids it. Death compels rather than repels and in the lonely orb of lust the scent of nothingness is palpable. It is important, of course, not to mindlessly celebrate erotic transgression, especially given the nefarious horrors it may entail. Although a profound weakness of Bataille's philosophy is its phallogocentricity (see Surkis, 1996), he is still able to tread a cautious path between irresponsible jubilation and reactionary indignation. One does not always side with those who resist and the challenge of a science of transgression is to understand without polarities (Bataille, 1957/1995).

It is here that Foucault makes his earliest foray into the question of transgression and resistance that prefigures some of the key contributions he was to make about the topic in later works. In his essay on Bataille, 'A Preface to Transgression' (1963/1977), Foucault took an important step in drawing out some of the political elements of Bataille's ethics and established an *aesthetic-political* conception of transgression that challenged the dialectical imaginary of Western Marxism (represented primarily in Sartre). It is safe to say that the political content was still nascent and he is by no means treating sexuality, for example, as a *dispositif* like he does in latter works on the history

of sexuality and administration of life and death (Foucault, 1978). According to Foucault, the 'death of God' or what Blanchot called an "unheard-of-caving-in of scrap iron and human organs" (1949/1995: 10) transformed the modern sexual *ēthos* into a contested terrain proper, because boundaries could no longer be presumed to be determined by a radically exterior force but instead by mortal hands and a transient language. In this respect, de Sade permanently enervated the 'thou shalt not' structure of sexuality with scandalous insolence (de Sade's godless hyper-reason was the backbone of his cruel language) and thus inaugurated the province of selfhood as the ultimate threshold to be crossed and re-crossed (Foucault, 1963/1977).

When we frame transgression conducted at the ethical level (such as sexuality) in dialectical terms, the motifs of binary and dualism immediately appear to help us reason through the complex relationships and connections between those who infringe and the force that is being resisted. This dialectical understanding implicitly pits dissent and power against each other as dualistic entities, with divided origins that collide, clash and sublimate. The problem is that dialectics explains the power/resistance matrix from an outside *telos* whereas transgression is an endogenous experience that signifies *nothing* from without: "No form of dialectical movement, no analysis of constitutions and of their transcendental ground can serve as support for thinking about such an experience or even as access to this experience" (Foucault, 1963/1977: 37). The idea of transgression instead imagines a line that belongs to both dissent and power and is crossed and recrossed simultaneously. Foucault argues that power and transgression (as resistance) do not originate from separate worlds that necessarily antagonise each other in a contradictory fashion but are of the same family, pieced together by desire and the limit. That is to say, opposition relies upon, appropriates and absorbs the very power that it attempts to escape and this also means that power creates (in complicated and often unpredictable ways) the unstable conditions for its own resistance.

In these interstices of sex and death we witness the birth of subjectivity as an ethico-political engagement, those acts of transgression that attempt to construct an alternative praxis of self from the building blocks of subjection (Aronowitz, 1992). Transgressive resistance at the level of subjectivity is not a form of identity 'protection' or 'defence', as it is so often referred to in critical organization studies. As we have seen, transgression involves *crossing* a line and not the reinforcement of an already established one. So rather than transgression consisting of the defence of a boundary between a treasured forenamed self and a foreign imposed one (by the company, patriarchy, empire etc.), it is more a traversing of the boundary to create a new and different ethical praxis. Transgression exerts a *forward* motion as a non-teleological becoming and the making of something new and not a *backward* motion or the protection of something old or pre-given. Even if employee identities, for example, have been established in the past it is still troublesome to claim that they are being 'protected' from, say, corporate culture management practices because even the past must be retro-activated in the present and projected into the future. The analogy of resistance therefore changes from a military one (defence, guarding, patrolling – the language of a policed fortress) to a nomadic one (traversing, permeating, crossing the uncharted, establishing a new space – the language of flight).

Probably the most obvious extensions of this approach to transgressive resistance are Butler's (1990, 1993, 1997) theory of *performativity* in relation to gendering, queer politics and sexuality and de Certeau's (1984) concept of *tactics* (in the sphere of consumption, walking, writing). For Butler gender cannot be traced back to a cherished stasis but is performed in an ongoing manner through word-deeds issuing from the signifying body. Subversion is a practice of appropriating gendering domination in order to make ourselves into 'what we are not'. Similarly, de Certeau's tactics are an ensemble of 'ruses and devices' that use the dominant cultural logic (or strategy) in a manner that opens up a sphere of relative autonomy. Tactics are borne within power and feed off the spatial complex of an assemblage of domination that provides 'some time' (tactics unfold in time through processes of 'making do') to establish a modestly subversive enclave. As he famously states, one can, in this way, evade a hegemonic power relationship without actually leaving it. In some of his most cogent analyses, de Certeau argues that strategic power involves a kind of 'writing the body' (especially the legal and medical machines which are compared to Kafka's body-writing-apparatus in *In the Penal Colony*). And here it is again, death and dying that announces an excess or trace that cannot be completely subsumed in the writing machine and thus resides on the fringe as something enigmatic and dangerous. Because *everyday dying* is one of our most institutionalised rituals in which the subject is virtually wordless, it can become a social text of much transgressive weight in light of the taboo's that cut it off from *phrónésis*, in Western societies at least:

As a dead man on reprieve, the dying man *falls* outside the thinkable, which is identified with what one can *do*. In leaving the field circumscribed by the possibilities of treatment, it enters a region of meaninglessness. Nothing can be said in a place where nothing can be done...[the dying] are intolerable in a society in which the disappearance of subjects is everywhere compensated for and camouflaged by the multiplication of tasks to be preformed. (de Certeau, 1984: 190-191, emphases in original)

For sure, this is morbid stuff, but germane given that an *ēthos* of dying-unto-death can counter the de-voicing power that attempts to render such a basic and 'everyday practice' obscene and 'unnameable'.

Lines of Flight, or Losing Face

We now seem to be a long way from organizations, but in many ways we are closer than we think. In evoking a theory of resistance 'in the name of Foucault' to explain employee dissent and subversion, for better or for worse, this is the kind of history we stir up. But such a tradition of analysing resistance did not begin nor end with Foucault, although his work has become indicative of this mode of thought. The themes have mutated and crossed over in complicated ways. One interesting manifestation can be found in the writings of Deleuze and Guattari, especially *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), who developed the concept of 'lines of flight' as a metaphor for everyday resistance. In this book modern capitalist societies consist of roughly three spheres. On one side is the *abstract machine* that acts as a rationalising network, a symptom of modernity that has in true Frankensteinian fashion gained an impetus of its own. This machine manifests as *strata*, levels of organization that encompasses significance (what and how we speak),

subjectivity (who we are), the organism (the constitution of bodies) and faciality (the domination of expression that becomes the axes for speech and the unconscious). And on the opposite side is the *plane of consistency*, a latent surface of non-organization, non-significance, non-subjectivity that does not recognise any differences or hierarchies and upon which everything is made the same as a kind of Absolute nothingness. The power of the capitalist and modernist machine works through organizing our politico-ethico space in a manner that articulates what we say, who we are, our bodily practices, our desiring unconscious and facial arrangements. In some ways this is their version of normalization. They write:

You will be organized, you will be an organism, you will articulate your body – otherwise you're just deprived. You will be a signifier and signified, interpreter and interpreted – otherwise you're just a deviant. You will be a subject, nailed down as one, a subject of enunciation recoiled into a subject of the statement – otherwise you're just a tramp. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 159)

Thus the aim of schizo-analysis is to coax these strata of domination into revealing themselves and illustrate the different ways in which they can be escaped, pointing to the various periphery experiences of the schizophrenic, the drug user (as failed lines of flight) and the artist who all fly from the machine without leaving it. Resistance for Deleuze and Guattari is captured by the pithy phrase 'line of flight' (the Jews leaving Babylon, Hegira, "a narrow overpass above the dark abyss" [*ibid.*: 202]) and is intended to represent the tangential catapulting that flings us out of the spiral of domination, which a sedimentation of strata has legislated as centre. A line of flight is an opportunity made on a particular stratum that affords a partial undoing of our hyper-organized *Lebenswelt*. One way in which this is done is to make yourself into a body without organs (BwO), not a body with no organs but with no organization as it has been constructed by the abstract machine. Thus, "the organism is not at all the body, the BwO; rather, it is a stratum on the BwO, in other words, a phenomenon of accumulation, coagulation, and sedimentation that, in order to extract useful labour from the BwO, imposes upon it forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organizations, organized transcendences" (*ibid.*: 159). The bodily stratum (see Artaud, 1947/1976) organizes our bodies through a number of institutional forces that dominate the corporeal experience (the medical gaze, sexualisation, work discipline etc). To become a BwO is to draw a line of flight towards the plane of consistency that breaks the organism (a small death) and dissolve our inherited and policed subjectivity imbricated into the body by other strata. The BwO is a strange creature. With the aid of the plane of consistency it entails the appropriation of the mangled stratum in order to sense the self as a stream of unorganized impressions:

Is it really so sad and dangerous to be fed up with seeing with your eyes, breathing with your lungs, swallowing with your mouth, talking with your tongue, thinking with your brain... why not walk on your head, sing with your sinuses, see through your skin, breath with your belly: the simple Thing, the Entity, the full Body, the stationary Voyage, Anorexia, cutaneous Vision, Yoga, Krishna, Love, Experimentation. Where psychoanalysis says, 'Stop, find your self again,' we should say instead, 'let's go further still, we still haven't found our BwO yet, we haven't sufficiently dismantled our self'. (*ibid.*: 151)

Deleuze and Guattari are not advocating the abolition of subjectivity and the organism *in toto*. Such a process would precipitate the annihilation of the person, something that is often sadly the outcome for those suffering schizophrenia as groups like the *Hearing*

Voices Network would attest. Instead, "if in dismantling the organism there are times one courts death, in slipping away from significance and subjection one courts falsehood, illusion and hallucination and psychic death" (*ibid.*: 160). Courting a more symbolic death is suggested, rather than ending life completely, because the BwO is not a death drive. Thanatos has not yet conquered the heliotropic life instinct. The dismantling of self should be a line of flight that dodges subjectification but in a way that still lets us 'get by' as subjects of domination without wildly destroying the body or bringing the weight of power down even harder via the mental health, police or capitalist apparatuses. Although some aspects of subjugation are inimitable, they suggest one must employ a mimetic cunningness and hold onto at least a small part of the stratum in order to fool the abstract machine:

You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn; and you have to keep small supplies of significance and subjectification, if only to turn them against their own system when the circumstances demand it, when things, persons, even situations, force you to; and you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantity to enable you to respond to the dominant reality. Mimic the strata. (*ibid.*: 160)

But what does the BwO look like exactly? How do we know it when we see it in ourselves and others? According to Deleuze and Guattari it looks something like becoming-animal. One should recall here the high esteem Zarathustra had for animals as complete projects opposed to humans as grossly postponed. A line of flight resembles a becoming non-human and an overcoming of the anti-animality that modernity has injected into us. A great example of this line of flight can be found in Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* where the travelling salesman, Gregor, turns his back on his father, family and company by becoming a non-man insect. A typical interpretation of the story posits the insect as metaphor. The insect is small, irrelevant, dirty and something to be exterminated by copious amounts of bug-powder and this represents the spiritual imprisonment of Gregor by an exploitative company and family. But a line of flight is unfolding here that defies the dualistic image of an external power and internal resistance. Gregor is not distancing himself from power but assimilating it. Gregor lodges himself on the organism stratum and literally becomes what the abstract machines of family and capitalism have until now treated him as: an insect. He resists by embracing their judgement a little too much ('Yes, I am insignificant, I am nothing, I am imperceptible, I am no-one, grey upon grey') and thus finds himself installed on the vector of the non-human. Humanity taken too far always begins to look very inhuman. The insect is harmless if it remains a mere self-reflecting metaphor but is dangerous when it assumes a material presence and this is why his family and boss are so shocked. Gregor repeats the Law over and over in his tiny bedroom and amidst the piecing insect-shrill of this whirling repetition he witnesses his transgressive *ēthos* emerge (he did not rationally choose to become an insect but woke up as one) in a rather harrowing transformation. This becoming-animal-insect is Deleuze and Guattari's way of explaining a post-linguistic line of flight, a mechanism for overcoming the strata and a partial supersession of the kinds of subjectivity it engenders.

Discussion

In many of the studies that evoke subjectivity and identity as both a site of control (corporate culture, ideology, teamwork) and resistance by appealing to a Foucauldian vocabulary, a precise history is affirmed. From the limited material presented, it is apparent that this history marks a strong ethical turn to frame questions of power and transgression, with modes of self-constitution and care considered important features of resistance under the weight of modern social conditions. On the barren edge of politics is the *Existenz* that no one else can ontologically live (or die) in our place, and it is this ethical space which presents possibilities for various 'devices and ruses' that allow us to escape hegemony without leaving it or bringing its repression down harder. According to this tradition of thought, at the level of the ethical self, small and modest manipulations can be achieved even under the harshest regimes. The overriding concern has therefore been the problem of how one escapes the 'poison river' of selfhood when it is so phenomenologically close. Subjectivity cannot be just taken off and put aside like a jacket. We cannot stand entirely outside of ourselves, or get behind identity. As Terry Eagleton (1991) has succinctly put it, this ethical conundrum "thus involves that most difficult of all forms of liberation, freeing ourselves from ourselves" (Eagleton, 1991: xiii-xiv). The various lines of flight discussed above have addressed this problem in different ways but all have referred to the tactical *ēthos* of the subject of domination and a non-dialectical understanding of the transgressive act as beginning points for thinking through the problem.

If we are not at least partially attendant to this tradition of thought and its concerns a number of problems and dangers may appear. If we treat resistance through a Foucauldian lens as a historyless concept, then it comes to be seen as a set of phenomena existing 'out there' independent of any network of past or dead labour. As a result we fall into a kind of bland empiricism that posits resistant and transgressive practices as positive 'things in themselves', a misleading and analytically impoverished reading of the social field. This is not to say that we must now place sex, death and ethics at the heart of our research of resistance but to simply acknowledge a tradition that will invariably change emphasis, nuance and, to a certain extent, explanations. A more controversial problem that emanates from forgetting this history concerns the substitution of a purely political framework to explain ethical practices. The turn to ethics in this tradition of scholarship means that it is perhaps erroneous to ask whether ethical practices such as irony, cynicism or 'making out' truly challenge the power structure of late capitalism in any transformative manner. In asking this we run the risk of expecting too much from ethical lines of flight and fetishizing subjectivity, which is not to say that ethical practice can not play a role in collective action, strikes and revolutionary praxis. It is common to see scholarship refer to various tactical ruses deployed by workers as 'safety valves' that allow subordinates to 'let off' steam without really making a difference to the status quo of late capitalism (see Fleming and Spicer, forthcoming). According to this interpretation, resistance either overthrows dominant power relations or reproduces them, an unnecessary double bind that collapses all dissent into its open, confrontational and collective variant. This does not mean, however, that we cannot query the reproductive-political effects of ethical resistance (for example see Wilson, 1993) but we should definitely remember that this is not the only register or criterion by which we render resistance intelligible to the scholarly gaze

(Fleming and Sewell, 2002). Moreover, this circumspection avoids the problem of pitting collective and organized forms of resistance against informal, subtle and modest lines of flight, a division that increasingly casts the former type of action as 'grandiose', 'modernist', and 'outdated,' an evidently troublesome assertion (see for example Alvesson and Willmott, 1992).

Embedding current conceptions of resistance in a specific tradition that reaches back into the murky recesses of philosophical thought also gives us a better feeling for some of the limitations with this approach to power and transgression. The most obvious one is that the attention on ethics can quickly lead to an unhelpful celebration and fetishization of the most banal of social practices. In her polemically charged essay 'Banality in Cultural Studies' (1996), Meaghan Morris plays with the notion of banality as both the object of analysis and outcome of research in contemporary cultural studies. The obsession with the prosaic has ushered in a new kind of cultural criticism that envisions anything and everything as 'subversive'. Morris quotes Judith Williamson's criticisms of British Cultural Studies, which, she contends, consists of "left-wing academics...picking out strands of 'subversion' in every piece of pop culture from Street Style to Soap Opera" (Williamson, 1986: 14-15). This is not a necessary consequence of studying the transgressive elements of everyday practices, but it still stands as a cautious reminder about how and why we interpret things as we do. In relating these concerns to critical organization studies we could ask some provocative questions. For example, might not some of the activities we label 'transgressive' more plausibly be termed 'discretion', 'autonomy,' 'initiative' or whatever? What exactly makes the tactical social enactments we discover in organizations specifically practices of resistance and what are the criteria we use to judge? Brushing these troubling questions under the carpet, especially if it is also at the expense of traditional areas of analysis such as exploitation, class struggle and other so-called 'bad objects,' may run "the risk of lapsing intermittingly into an unqualified apologetics for ordinary practices" (Ahearne, 1995: 151, quoted in Bennett, 1998: 174).

Related to this tendency is the urge to aestheticize or even poeticize everyday transgressive ethics so that it becomes a deeply mysterious sphere of subversive activity. In Bennett's (1998) measured critique of de Certeau (1984), he argues that the concepts of tactics and ruses are menacingly devoid of any analytical crispness. In transforming the pedestrian and doxical habitus into an enigmatic and arcane scene that is impervious to scientificity, we are no longer able to document or categorise the logistics of particular practices in any sociological manner. It is as if the dense greyness of common-day subversions is so opaque that any judicious investigation is futile. Thus it is left to intuitive inferences that merge fiction with documental observation to tease out what may and may not count as resistance. Romanticism can be both blinding and misleading. Although a 'poetics of the oppressed,' as Bennet calls it, has a seductive ring about it, the spectre of romanticising ordinary activities is a real dilemma for any analysis of resistance that draws upon the ethical emphasis outlined above. Overplaying the significance and meaningfulness of quotidian behaviours, gestures and discourses may create a self-referential system whereby we simply see what we desire to see.

Positing an 'after organization studies' in relation to resistance studies invites a sensibility for both past and future traditions that constitute the field of research. An

active acknowledgment of the 'passing past' can only enrich our understandings of what dissent entails empirically, conceptually and passionately according to this framework. I have traced a rather sketchy history that underpins a currently popular approach to resistance in the workplace with the hope of shedding light on some important antecedent sources and the problems that are raised by contemporary applications.

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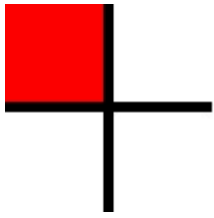
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Dialectics of Dualism: The Symbolic Importance of the Home/Work Divide*

Emma Surman

abstract

Teleworking has been widely celebrated as a way to overcome the constructed division between home and work. I explore this concept through the stories of a number of teleworkers employed at a large UK bank. Far from celebrating the predicted blurring of this division, these teleworkers felt vulnerable and uneasy at the loss of this familiar point of reference. Without the divide they lacked a way to account for their behaviour both to themselves and others. They sought to cope with the loss of this boundary and the difference it creates by reproducing the divide within their own homes. Rather than going beyond the division, the teleworkers actively maintained it as a useful way to make sense of and order their lives. The experience of the teleworkers at Bedlam Bank indicates that working at home neither challenges the basis of the division or overcomes the division itself. The boundary between home and work may be weakened structurally, but the teleworkers willingly and actively seek to strengthen it symbolically.

Introduction

That was a worry, that was a real issue with me. I said to them at work, ‘Now, do I wear my shoes or my slippers at home?’ ...I know it’s really weird, but I really found it a strange thing at first, to know whether to wear shoes or slippers. I know it’s really pathetic ...Because, I mean I’ve been working since I left school at 16 and I’m 50 next year, so I’ve worked for 34 years and I’ve always gone to work in my shoes haven’t I? Then suddenly I’m going to work with my slippers on. I don’t know why but it was a really strange feeling. When I first started I wore shoes in here. It took me a while to actually let myself put my slippers on. (Barbara, teleworker, Bedlam Bank)¹

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1 The organization in which I conducted the research was a large UK bank. They requested that the organization’s anonymity and those of its employees should be protected. I have therefore used the pseudonym Bedlam Bank to refer to the organisation and the names of the teleworkers and their partners quoted throughout the paper have been changed.

Traditionally, a daily commute to a centralised workplace created a clear geographical separation between two areas of activity. This spatial distinction between work and home also served to reinforce and perpetuate the different meanings that have been attached to each sphere. I will show that the difference is both socially constructed and widely shared, with the workplace seen to be rational, efficient and productive and the home as a source of emotional replenishment and reproduction.

For Barbara (above), bringing the workplace into the home has removed the spatial boundary between the two spheres, a boundary that for 34 years has provided a way for her to identify appropriate behaviour. Her colleagues, family and the wider society in which she participates made a similar distinction. By separating 'home' and 'work' she appeared to follow the social norms. In this paper I use empirical data to demonstrate that this dualistic notion of home and work is a reference point which individuals use to order and make sense of their lives. In accounting for their behaviour both to themselves and to others, people draw on both the difference that is created by the division, and the boundary that keeps them apart.

In both the popular and academic literature, the liberty promised by teleworking and enabled by modern technologies has been widely celebrated. In the absence of both the spatial and temporal boundaries, being able to work away from the office is predicted to lead to the blurring of the home/work divide and to end the synchronised and standardised pattern of living that has characterised industrialised societies.

However, for the teleworkers that I spoke to in the course of my research, the loss of the distinction between home and work was not necessarily a cause for celebration. The removal of this familiar boundary served to obscure the difference between home and work, and the blurring became a source of anxiety as the teleworkers sought to cope with what they perceived as an irregular working arrangement. Without the geographical distinction, Barbara and her colleagues had lost a division that had informed their social practices. This brought into question their everyday activities and was something that they found both unsettling and disconcerting. The method of coping relied on by the teleworkers at Bedlam Bank required the reproduction of the home/work divide *within* their own homes. Stripped of the usual spatial distinctions that had been a significant marker of the difference between these two spheres, the teleworkers willingly invested in the symbolic maintenance of the boundary. Through the use of props or other means available to them, they sought to replace the more usual geographic distinction. This symbolic reproduction of the home/work divide played an important role, helping to separate and define the various situations in which the teleworkers found themselves operating. It is through such distinctions that the expectations of a particular situation were clarified both to the teleworkers themselves but also their families, friends and work colleagues. As such, the divide continued to serve as a common reference point, a 'working consensus' that facilitated interaction (Goffman, 1959). Retaining the divide, albeit through symbolic means, was seen as a vital way for the teleworkers to legitimise their unusual working activity which they felt to be at odds with the dominant discourses of modern working life. The belief in the home/work divide remained a meaningful distinction to the teleworkers at Bedlam Bank and continued as a significant axis, around which they talked about their lives, defined themselves and constructed their identities.

Constructing Difference

Barbara's predicament over choice of footwear highlights the importance of difference in helping her make sense of her life. Shoes and slippers are different types of footwear appropriate for different physical settings and occasions. By recognising those differences, Barbara was able to decide what to do and how she was to behave. In other words she was able to make the situations in which she participated meaningful. The defining nature of difference is noted by Godfrey, Jack and Jones (2002), who argue that it is only through the identification of differences and distinctions that people can experience the unfolding of time. I suggest that this argument also applies to the meaning that people extract from their lives; without difference, not only is there no time but there is also no meaning. It is through the identification and maintenance of significant differences that they are able to structure, prioritise, make decisions and map out the world in which they operate (Cooper, 1993; Massey, 1996).

Distinctions between hot and cold, wet and dry or home and work are widely shared and serve to provide a common framework for our actions and thus facilitate our social interactions. They also prescribe to us the appropriate clothing, behaviour and attitude that are required in a particular situation. Hence, distinctions that are consistently and widely recognised within a society provide reference points that enable us to account for our own actions and those of others. The clearer and more obvious the differences, the simpler it is to define meaning and behave in an appropriate way. Difference is created through a process of separation and the construction of boundaries, and it is through reference to these constructions that a situation is transformed from one that is unclear and ambiguous into one in which a familiar order prevails (Cooper, 1993). The maintenance of boundaries is, therefore, a crucial social activity necessary to ensure that differences, meanings and order are retained.

The division between home and work is an example of a constructed difference that has provided a source of meaning to the working population. Within modern industrialised society the boundaries which have supported this distinction have been largely spatial and temporal. For those like the teleworkers at Bedlam Bank, who work from their own homes, the spatial distinction between these two activities has been removed. In the absence of this boundary the possibility of blurring the distinction between home and work exists. Whilst the possibility of this blurring is celebrated in much of the teleworking literature and seen as aspirational by government departments encouraging flexible work practices (Filipczak, 1992; Toffler, 1980; DTI-Work Life Balance, 2002; Flexibility, 2002), for the teleworkers at Bedlam Bank it meant the loss of a significant source of order and meaning. Without the geographical boundary between home and work the resulting ambiguity caused anxiety and concern. In short, they found themselves in a situation that they felt they had to find a way to 'cope' with.

I have split this paper into three parts. I will begin by tracing the origins of the division between home and work and argue that the division can be seen to have arisen as an 'effect' of the process of industrialisation. I acknowledge that this is a socially constructed distinction rather than an objective and naturally occurring division. However, I argue that despite its constructed nature, the division between home and work plays an important role in structuring lives. Its influence within modern life is

evident at many levels and, therefore, I argue that the division should not be dismissed. In the second section, I will introduce the concept of teleworking. This form of working utilises modern information and telecommunications technologies to enable people to work away from the traditional centralised office. Since the 1980s teleworking has been promoted as a tool to enable the better balancing and improved management of home and work. More radically, it has also been suggested that teleworking could challenge and ultimately destroy the division between home and work. I then introduce the stories collected from my research, considering the experiences of a number of teleworkers who work from their own homes as part of a call centre operation for Bedlam Bank. It will become apparent that, rather than dissolving the division, the teleworkers chose to actively reproduce this distinction within their own homes. I conclude by considering the implications of my findings for the treatment of dualisms within organization studies.

The Myth of the Home/Work Divide

The distinction between home and work as a principle for social organisation emerged as an 'effect' of the processes of industrialisation which took place during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Cott, 1977; Hall, 1995). The change in patterns of behaviour required by the new forms of organisation led to very different conceptions of time and space that have persisted throughout the modern industrial period. Under the feudal system of production the home was the main productive unit within a community; little distinction was made between the activities necessary to ensure the running and maintenance of the domestic residence (the home) and those which led to the production of items which could be exchanged or traded (Hall, 1995). Although living conditions were often meagre, they were the focus around which an individual's activities took place and activities within the household would often be interrupted by agricultural demands which in turn were determined by the weather or changes in the season (Sack, 1986). But apart from adjusting their tasks to the vagaries of the climate, people were free to determine how and when they carried out their productive activities.

This close interweaving of work, home and community (Baruch, 1997; Hall, 1995) was disrupted as the burgeoning factory system increasingly meant that production was centralised under the watchful eye of the capitalist (Marglin, 1976; Rosen and Baroudi, 1992)². As workers exchanged their labour for wages in a centralised work place, time became firmly equated with money (Littler, 1985a; 1985b). These changes meant that temporal discipline increased in importance as the labour force was required to adopt a more synchronised approach to their lives. In the mornings they left their homes, spent their days working collectively in factories or offices and then, at the appointed time, were free to return to their individual residences (Thompson, 1967).

2 Given that it allows people to work away from their employer's direct supervision, fear by managers of losing control is often cited as a reason why the practice of teleworking has not spread as quickly as had been predicted. For a detailed discussion of this issue see Surman (2002).

A different attitude to the use of space also emerged and led to the clear segregation of activity. Whereas one physical space had previously hosted multiple activities, distinct functions would now each take place within a specifically allocated area (Sack, 1986). Factories were built for the sole purpose of productive activity and would be inhabited only during set time periods. This spatial distinction occurred not only between but also within places with each part of the labour process being allocated a specific location within the factory. This compartmentalisation of space was also mirrored in the home (Sack, 1986). Residences that contained separate rooms for eating, sleeping, cooking, bathing and relaxation gradually replaced large communal rooms that had contained all domestic activity.

The newly centralised working environment was portrayed as rational, efficient and alienating (Braverman, 1974; Hatch, 1997), but the home, having become spatially and temporally separated was seen as something distinct. The wholesome values with which it was associated stood in direct contrast to the activities and values of the modern workplace. But although presenting these as questionable and undesirable, the domestic sphere did not directly challenge the modern organisation of work (Cott, 1977). Instead it was increasingly portrayed by the bourgeois middle classes as a place to accommodate and temper the vagaries of the modern world, a 'haven in a heartless world' (Cott, 1977; Lasch, 1977; Saraceno, 1987).

Far from being separate and distinct as these descriptions of 'home' and 'work' suggest, the two remained highly interlinked during the industrial period, flowing into and reinforcing each other (Du Gay, 1996). The exclusivity and distinctions implicit in the division have never been fully realised; although the home is often portrayed as a private sanctuary, it has never been a complete escape, free from the intrusions of work or the public sphere. In the eighteenth century, legislation was passed permitting entrance to workers houses to ascertain whether they were pilfering cloth from merchants (Sack, 1986). In the nineteenth century neither working class homes, which suffered from overcrowding, or middle and upper class homes, which employed maids, gardeners and other servants, offered the individual any privacy (Gilman, 1904). In more recent times the proliferation of e-mail and mobile phones make it difficult to find complete privacy within your own four walls. Such interconnections between the two spheres have been further highlighted in studies of family-run businesses and farming communities (Lightfoot and Fournier, 1999; Newby, 1985). Contrary to the popular portrayal of the differing character of these two spheres, Hochschild's study of females working the 'double shift' of home *and* work found that it was the workplace that was seen as both the place to escape to and the source of beneficial and satisfying relationships (Hochschild, 1997). However, despite these interconnections, the construction of home and work as separate and the differing meanings attributed to each have persisted throughout modernity.

Given the constructed, arbitrary and incomplete nature of this division many have sought to reveal the associated distinctions as false, as lies, or as a myth (Kobayashi *et al.*, 1994; Seron and Ferris, 1995). As with all binary oppositions, one side of this division has inevitably been privileged at the expense of the other (Knights, 1997). Thus, the public world of economics, politics and work has assumed precedence over the domestic sphere and provided the platform for the dominant groups in society to

maintain and enhance their position through the exclusion of and to the detriment of others (Kerber, 1988; McCulloch, 1997). The effect of this has been particularly significant for women, whose association to the home has restricted their influence within the public sphere and devalued their contribution to society (Hall, 1995; Mirchandani, 1998b). This has led some, including feminist sociologists (Pateman, 1983), to call into question the usefulness of focusing on the division as way of exploring human behaviour. While recognising the constructed and contested nature of the distinction between home and work and the way this can be used as a source of abuse, I would argue that it is important to recognise that its impact is not solely negative. In this paper I suggest that it is necessary to work with the division and to focus on the meanings derived from the construction in order to fully engage with the stories told by the teleworkers at Bedlam Bank. Therefore, instead of dwelling on the constructed nature of the divide, I will focus on the myth of the division between home and work as a persistent reference point which has structured social practice (Bradley *et al.*, 2000; De Cock, Fitchett and Farr, 2001; Law, 1992). I argue that it is *because* of the mythical nature of the division between home/work that the division has endured as a source of meaning, of prioritising activities and structuring lives.

So, although acknowledging the constructed and contested nature of the home/work divide, it is the *belief* in the division as real and the impact of this belief that is of interest to me here. The significance of this point was highlighted during my research whilst in conversation with Jenny, a teleworker at Bedlam Bank and her husband John. They maintained a strict segregation between work activity and their home and social lives. Neither of them socialised with work colleagues or attended social events or Christmas parties that were organised by their employers:

Well, I've always felt that work and social things don't mix well. I mean I see people at work, I've worked at the same place for 27 years and I've known everybody for at least 15 of that, and they have a Christmas do and they pay for them to go out for a drink and stuff, ... but I wouldn't, I don't have anything to do with it. They're always saying 'Come for a drink', No thanks! If I'm on my fortnights holiday, if I see anybody from work, if I bump into them on the street, I get really annoyed because I don't wanna see them, I'm on holiday. (John, teleworker's husband)

The distinction between home and work feels both real and important to John and Jenny and as a consequence this difference has assumed a permanent presence in their lives. For John, the distinction is made easier by the spatial and temporal separation between his place of work and his home. He is a cabinetmaker and each day goes to a central workshop for a set number of hours to work alongside his colleagues. But although the teleworkers are without the geographical distinction, their stories reveal a belief in the same division.

...when I'm working, I'm working, you know that is my work. I can't have my family interrupting my work, it's not a job where you can just move away [from the work station], or the children can come in and have a chat with you. So when I'm working my mind is 100% on work...I've made it really clear to people that when I'm working, I'm working, I can't do anything else, so they don't bother me at all [but] once I close those doors I don't think I'm at work at all. I forget about it. (Dalveen, teleworker)

Once I've taken the last call that's it. I don't think about it again, just shut the door and that's it, full stop. It's the same with starting up for the day... I don't think about it before I actually start, you just shut yourself off from it. (Eileen, teleworker)

Because they maintained the distinction and adopted a different approach to each sphere, the teleworkers reinforced the divide and built the distinction into their daily activities (Benn and Gaus, 1983; Elshtain, 1981; Massey, 1996). For John, Barbara and their colleagues at Bedlam Bank the division between home and work was a useful point of reference and a welcome source of meaning and structure. Working from home and becoming teleworkers had the potential to disrupt this status quo.

Teleworking and the Home/Work Divide

The concept of teleworking is, paradoxically, both reliant on and at the same time claimed to challenge the home/work divide. While teleworking is often promoted as a route to aid the management of two distinct spheres, others (e.g. Toffler, 1980) claim that working free of temporal and geographical constraints can overcome the division altogether. The consequences are predicted to be the replacement of synchronised and standardised social patterns with distinctive and diverse ways of living. The division between home and work will, according to Toffler, be replaced with new points of social reference and lead to profound change in “the ground rules that once governed us” (Toffler, 1980: 264).

Any predictions of the erosion of the home/work divide were not evident from my discussions with the teleworkers at Bedlam Bank, for whom the ‘balancing’ of two separate spheres was seen as an aspirational goal. This reflects the findings of other research, particularly amongst women who saw teleworking as a way to manage their double day (Mirchandani, 1998a; Sullivan and Lewis, 2001). All of this discussion and rhetoric regarding the ‘better management’ or ‘balancing’ of two areas of peoples lives has only served to further cement the popular image that the two are separate (Mirchandani, 1998b). As a result, when voluntarily choosing to commence teleworking, those that do so are firmly committed to the notion that there is a clear difference between home and work.

For the management at Bedlam Bank, the attractiveness of teleworking lay in the possibility of expanding the call centre without incurring the cost of extra accommodation.³ However, for the teleworkers themselves, the ease of being able to deal with the conflicting demands of home and work was a major motivating factor. During my discussions with the teleworkers I encouraged them to talk about the issues and events that were of significance of them. As a result the discussions did not follow a standard format and, therefore, no generalisations are possible either amongst the group of teleworkers at Bedlam Bank, or to the wider teleworking population. Instead I have

3 At the Bank pilot teleworking projects had been introduced in two separate UK locations. Each employed 12 people who worked a combination of full and part time hours. All of the participants were female and the majority of these worked accepting incoming calls from customers as part of the bank’s call centre operations. The teleworkers were recruited through a selection procedure and were required to have been working in the call centre for a minimum of 12 months prior to the start of the project. However, many of those selected had been working there for periods far in excess of this, in one case for 14 years.

simply sought to engage (Gabriel, 1995) with the stories told by the teleworkers and explore these stories in reference to the division between home and work.⁴

Emerging from many of the discussions was an ambivalent attitude by the teleworkers towards working from home. Teleworking had been given a high profile in both offices and the teleworkers felt they were incredibly lucky and privileged to have been selected to take part. When they reflected on the change in their working practice, they expressed a sense of disbelief and amazement that it was possible for them to do their jobs away from the office with one teleworker stating that had always been her 'dream' to be able to work from home. However, at the same time there was recognition that working from home broke a number of the conventions normally associated with work. This made it difficult for them to account for their behaviour both to themselves and to others. As a result the teleworkers also found that working from home was something uncomfortable and difficult, something that they had to learn to cope with.

The passage below, from my discussion with Lucy, highlights themes that were evident in a number of other teleworkers stories.

Lucy: I think I've took it easier than I thought I would, I just sort of got on with it really, and just take it for granted now that I work from home, I don't really stop and think. You know, if I stopped and thought about it, and thought 'God am I really doing this?' [laughs], you know, when I started there a few years ago, I'd have never have dreamt I'd be working from home.

Emma: Why, if you stopped and thought about it, would it be..?

Lucy: I don't know, I think, I'd think 'God', you know, 'am I really taking calls for Bedlam Bank, talking to these customers from home?', you know, and if other people are, we've had a lot of work done [to decorate the house] and stuff and there's a chap come the other week and he's talking to my husband saying that, he said 'Ohh, my wife will be working, she'll be upstairs', and he said 'Ohh, my daughter-in-law works for Bedlam Bank from home', and it turned out [that it was] one of the girl homemaker's father-in-law that was doing our plastering for us, and I thought 'God, what a small world', and they were chatting saying 'you know, God, you can't believe it really can you, you know, a big company like that got people working from their own homes and', I think if you stop and think about it, you think 'blimey, it is real' [laughs], you know, you're a massive company like that and you've got 12 people, well, obviously you've got the new project [another 12 people based from a different office], but 12 people sitting at home working. And I think, one of my son's friend's mum works at Bedlam Park [the company headquarters], she's quite high up there, one of the senior managers, and she didn't know I worked from home, she said, I'd got my uniform on one day going in, she went 'Oh, I didn't realise you worked for Bedlam Bank', I said 'Oh yeah, I work from home', and she went 'Ohhhh, you lucky thing', she said 'Ohh, you're one of the homeworkers, Ohhh, I've heard all about you lot sort of thing', and I think people think we're so privileged to be working from home, you know and I think 'yeah I do', and you stop and you think 'God, I do work from home' and take it for granted really. And there's all these hundreds of people who think they'd like to be doing it.

This account reveals an element of wonder at the situation that the teleworker finds herself in, that from her own bedroom she is able to talk to and service the accounts of

4 Stories were collected from all the teleworkers participating in the project through unstructured qualitative interviews, which lasted between one and one and a half hours. Twenty-two of the interviews were conducted in the homes of the teleworkers with the remaining two taking place in the office. In five cases the husband or partner of the teleworker was available at the time of the visit and also participated in the interview.

the bank's customers. This sense of amazement and disbelief is reinforced in her interaction with others, who highlight that what she is doing is seen as both unusual and desirable. Other teleworkers reinforced this point saying 'People can't believe that I work from home'. In both the eyes of the teleworkers and of those with whom they come into contact, the fact that they were still able to do their job despite being away from the office represented something special. It was something different to what they had previously known and something that was definitely unusual "It's so *different* to what going to work is all about" (my emphasis). This difference comes to particular prominence during interactions with others. On a day to day basis Lucy and the others don't dwell on the change that have taken place in their working life, they just 'take it for granted'. It is only when presented with the reactions of those who still work in traditional places that they consider the enormity of the changes that they have undertaken and when they do the magnitude of the change is almost too great for them to take in. These exchanges simultaneously highlight the attractiveness of working at home but also single out the teleworkers as odd and unusual.

This breaking of conventions is seen by the teleworkers as an undesirable side effect that they have to learn to cope with. One of them told how she only felt less 'abnormal' when she discovered someone who lived on the same road also worked from home. In the conversation above, Lucy described how she 'took it (teleworking)' better than she expected. Other teleworkers talked about the project 'coming at the right time' for them, at a time when they felt in a position to be able to deal with the consequences, at a time when they could cope. Although all the teleworkers volunteered to take part in the project in the hope that it would improve their quality of life, taking this step is not always seen as easy or necessarily pleasurable. The coping response to these changes have largely been behavioural; Jenny describes how she has come through the difficulties that her change in work activity has created by adapting her routine.

It's just such a general change in routine to start with, it was quite a shock though wasn't it (directed at her husband)? ... Now, when we're five months into, we're quite settled, we feel old hands at it now, and you don't remember quite how, I thought it was quite abrasive to start with ... I think routine is more a part of your life than you realised, and you only find that out when it changes and then you realise how much of a routine you were in before.

The interest and envy that is elicited when the teleworkers discuss their working arrangements with others is likely to stem from the romantic ideas of temporal and spatial liberation portrayed by those promoting the whole scale social changes that have been linked to teleworking. Whilst removing the tie to a central workplace seems highly attractive to those who remain firmly in the 'system', the experiences of the teleworkers at Bedlam Bank would suggest that, whilst the improved management of two separate spheres is possible, a fundamental change in social practice and a challenge to the dualistic construction of home and work is not possible. The change in work location may have led to a change in geography and a change in routine, but they have not changed the way that the teleworkers think about home and work. In Barbara's words:

I go to work, it's really weird. If I talk to anyone I go 'I'm going to work' and they go 'but you work from home'. I know but I have to say in my mind, I go to work ... it's no different to me, coming in here to go to work, than to go into the office, in my mind. It's a discipline thing for me.

In the absence of the stark geographical divide that previously placed boundaries on their working day, the teleworkers sought to reproduce these boundaries with the resources available to them. For some, place was able to retain an important role in this, having a specific location such as a spare room or office into which they would only go when they were working, and on which they could close the door at the end of their shift. For others who worked in their living room, dining room or frequently their own bedroom, this was not possible. In these cases the actual workstations became symbolic in the boundary definition. The computer, phone and chair were contained in a cabinet, which when closed resembled a wardrobe or cupboard. A number of the teleworkers reported that the closing and opening of the cupboard was how they marked the beginning and end of their working day.

In addition to the spatial factors, temporal factors assumed a high importance in structuring the teleworkers days. The quote above indicates the importance to Barbara of splitting her time between work and other, presumably non-work activities. A similar position was evident in the stories told by others taking part in the pilot project. Despite expressing the idea that teleworking offered an alternative and 'totally different' way to work, they chose to enact the same practices as if they still worked in the office; in fact Barbara thought of it as 'no different' to going into the office. Time discipline was seen as crucial in order to be able to work from home, and as factor that would make the difference a poor and a competent teleworker.

You've got to be very disciplined and it's very easy to think, 'oh, I'll just nip downstairs for 5 minutes and get a drink' and something like that. I think it's got to be the right type of person really. Somebody who can be trusted and will work and not think because they're at home and nobodies listening, looking over their shoulder, that they can do what they want. (Shirley, teleworker)

This temporal discipline which was previously assisted by the spatial separation was perceived to be important not only for the teleworkers but also for their families. A number talked of the change being hardest for their families and about having to 'educate them' into how to behave. The important distinction that families had to learn was between when their mum was at work and when she was not. Whilst working they had to make sure they were quiet, did not enter the room where she was working and did not otherwise disturb her. When she was not working she could be their mum again. During one interview I was shown a sign which one teleworker's daughter had made and hung on the door where her mum worked. On the one side was a happy smiling face that said 'not working'. On the other was a somewhat more miserable looking face that said 'working'. The sign was switched to the appropriate side as the mother entered and then left the room.

These spatial and temporal disciplines were employed to protect the division between home and work. Both Jenny *and* John were quite clear that the only reason that it was possible for Jenny to telework was that they had a spare fourth bedroom, which meant that it was 'self contained' and therefore, her work 'did not encroach on the rest of the house'.

To symbolise this division both to themselves and others the teleworkers developed rituals that symbolised the transition from one sphere to another. Despite working in her

own home and it being feasible for Shirley to come downstairs and boil the kettle when she felt like a hot drink, she does not allow herself to do this. When she goes into her bedroom to work, she is indicating to herself and others that she is not at liberty to behave as she would when she is at home but not working. The use of a teapot and tea cosy become symbolic of this self imposed restrictions.

I never come down here [to the kitchen] and make a drink [when she is working]. I take my tea pot upstairs on a tray, I've got a tea cosy so it keeps it quite warm, so if I do want a drink in between [her breaks], even if I've made the tea half an hour or an hour ago it's still warmish.

Despite recognising the opportunity that teleworking presented to challenge the social practices associated with the modern workplace, those participating in the pilot project at Bedlam Bank chose to reproduce the distinctions with which they were familiar. Rather than blurring the boundaries between home and work, the physical proximity of the two resulted in an increased emphasis on temporal and symbolic factors in order to ensure clear and distinct boundaries were maintained between what were considered two very distinct activities. For these teleworkers the home/work divide remained a significant and meaningful device with which they could order their lives. In fact for some the distinctiveness of home and work was now greater than it had previously been. The ritual of going to work that entailed getting dressed, deciding what to wear generally making yourself presentable plus the time taken to travel to and from the office was considered an intrusion into what was seen as private time. However, when working at home this was no longer necessary, you didn't have to think about work until your shift began and you could stop when you signed off. As a result far from blurring the distinction between home and work, the dividing line between the two was much clearer and sharper than before:

Rather than your whole life being taken over by your job, it does only occupy seven hours of your day. You can put it away and forget it. (Sally, teleworker)

The paradox of the above is clear. For teleworkers at Bedlam Bank one of the major factors influencing their decision to take part in the project was the opportunity to better integrate their work and home lives. However, once working at home they felt that in order to operate successfully, it was necessary to keep the two spheres highly separate.

Within a society in which time and space have become highly compartmentalised, I set out to explore the division between home and work and its relevance amongst a group of workers for whom the physical boundary between the workplace and home has been removed. Although the divide was identified as a social construction or a myth, I acknowledged its relevance as reference point in people's lives. The distinction between home and work and the boundary between the two is a widely recognised symbol that enabled individuals to derive meaning from their existence and account for their own behaviour both to themselves and others (Cohen, 1989).

While spatial changes have taken place in the lives of the teleworkers, such changes are not reflected in the lives of their colleagues, employers, families, neighbours or friends. The teleworkers at Bedlam Bank remain part of a social network in which home and work is seen as a clear and meaningful difference. The expectations and points of reference of others in their social network has not changed (Mirchandani, 2000), and as

a way of coping and feeling less 'abnormal' the teleworkers chose to use the dominant social values to create difference in their own lives. Although the structural bases of the boundary may have been reduced by bringing home and work together geographically in one place, the teleworkers sought to use other means to strengthen the boundaries symbolically (Cohen, 1989).

After the Politics of Dualism

In this paper I did not explore what home or work meant to the teleworkers who participated in this research. This may have highlighted differences amongst the group, however what was revealed was the common assertion by all of them that regardless of what the concepts of home and work meant to them, the two spheres were separate and distinct. The retention of this common reference point was important and it is the uniformity of the distinction rather than the uniformity of the meaning that was important in enabling them to both interact with others and account for their actions.

In a paper critical of those questioning the extent of the division between the public and the private (and therefore implicitly between home and work) McCulloch argues that if we view dualisms as a fiction then they lose any real analytical purpose. While I have acknowledged in this paper that the construction of the home/work divide is indeed a fiction, or myth, I argue that based on my research it is the *belief* in the dualism that is significant. The destruction of the dualism predicted by Toffler and others did not occur amongst this group of teleworkers. At Bedlam Bank teleworking has not served to challenge the mechanisms on which the dualism is based nor overcome the dualism itself.

Within the discipline of organisation studies, there has been an ongoing debate over the way scholars should treat dualisms. In a paper arguing for their 'eradication' David Knights (1997: 16), while recognising the importance of distinctions in facilitating communication, claims that the undesirable result of division is that "what is distinguished as 'this' or 'that' is reified as an ontological reality rather than merely a provisional, subjectively significant and hence contestable, ordering of 'things'", this, he states, will result in 'mis-placed concreteness' (*ibid.*: 4). While his discussion is restricted to the academy in this article, I assume that his desire to remove dualistic modes of thought also extends to life beyond the confines of academic debate. For if this were not the case, would he not be guilty of recreating the very dualistic thinking (academy/real world) he is arguing should be abolished?

In setting out this position Knights' views are directly (dualistically?) opposed to the position of Reed (1997) who defends the value of dualistic thought in organizational analysis. Reed's contention is that ontological positions, such as that held by Knights, which focus on the 'immediate' and the 'everyday', prevent both the explanation and understanding of the broader context in which activity is located. Reed emphasises the need to look beyond the 'local' because "this need to contextualize and explain social interaction by locating it within the broader social structures of which it is a part is vital

to rekindling the persistent exercise of a sociological imagination that always connects 'the personal troubles of Milieu' with the 'public issues of social structure'⁵ (1997: 38).

The exploration within this paper of the division between home and work reveals sympathy with both sides of this argument. My presentation of the divide has revealed it to be, in Knights' words, a 'contestable, ordering of 'things'' and it also recognises his claim that in accepting binary oppositions we "elevate one side at the cost of suppression or marginalization of the other" (1997: 15). However, on the basis of the material I have presented in this paper, I also recognise the position taken by Reed. The dualism of home and work has been of value in understanding the experiences of the teleworkers at Bedlam Bank and in identifying the broader framework from which their accounts are drawn. It was also necessary for me to both accept and to work with this division in order to engage with and understand the stories told to me during the course of my research. Knights may see the belief in the home/work divide by the teleworkers as 'mis-placed' but to concur with this would prevent us from seeing that the symbolic reassertion of this divide is a useful way to retain meaning and order. It is my view that, as scholars of organisation, it is important that we maintain an open mind in respect of dualism, that we neither treat them as something to celebrate nor call for their elimination.

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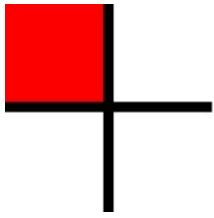
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'Show Me How it Feels to Work Here': Using Photography to Research Organizational Aesthetics

Samantha Warren

abstract

In this paper I discuss the potential role and utility of photographs in exploring the aesthetic dimension of processes of organizing. Beginning with a review of the growing significance within organization and management studies literature of the so-called 'non-rational' elements of human-being at work, I question why these issues appear to have become subjects worthy of specific scholarly attention at the turn of the century (Williams, 2001). Within this discussion, I recognise the embodied nature of organization and make links between some of the characteristics of contemporary (Western) consumer culture, and aesthetics – with particular emphasis on the context of work and organizations. Following from this, I move to consider how it might be possible to gather data about these phenomena in an organizational setting. The limitations of language as a medium of articulating aesthetic experience due to the sensory nature of these phenomena are examined as a condition which undermines the efficacy of traditional text-based research methods and I argue that these issues necessitate the employment of a more 'sensually complete' methodology – introducing the idea of photography as one step towards this end. In order to discuss the epistemological and methodological implications of this approach, I reflect on my experiences during an ethnographic study of the web-site design department of a global IT firm to suggest that photographs taken by the respondents of their work environment helped them to express the largely ineffable aesthetic experiences that resulted from the relationships they had with their physical surroundings. The photographs were used by the respondents in this research as a means of communicating their aesthetic experience during semi-structured interviews where the images served both as an 'aesthetic lens' through which to explore my research questions and as foci for discussion and reflection about those questions. Some of these photographs are displayed in this paper, juxtaposed with my narrative accounts to create what Mitchell (1994) has called an image-text. This rests on the assumption that written texts and images have relative merits as modes of dissemination in their own right, with neither taking precedence over the other in terms of authority, or claim to 'truth'.

Preface

This paper contributes to the themes of this issue in three ways. Firstly, its presentation in an earlier version at the conference at Keele University (from which the idea for this collection arose) enabled me to substantially revise and rethink some of my key arguments, and so for the comments and critical advice offered by other workshop

participants (including those whose work is featured in this volume) I am extremely grateful. I am also indebted to the anonymous referees whose supportive and constructive comments helped me to refine the final version of the paper.

Second, the theme of 'After Organization Studies' is one which unites the contributions here – and as is outlined in the editorial introduction to this issue, each paper represents this idea of 'After...' in one of many ways. In the case of this paper, I am on the one hand 'coming after' Organization Studies in the sense of contributing to the still nascent project of attending to aesthetic dimensions in processes of organizing, but on the other I am in a way 'going after' the discipline in calling for alternative methodological approaches that are perhaps better suited to researching these phenomena.

Lastly, the common thread by which these papers are pulled together seems to be a concern with rejecting or at least diminishing the dominance of dualistic modes of thinking. Correspondingly, implicit within this paper is an anti-reductionist desire, and throughout my discussions I recognise the artifice of dividing image from text or separating organizational realities from wider cultural milieu and from personal, embodied – and importantly – aesthetic lived experiences. I therefore write in the spirit of contributing to this volume's wish to deconstruct dualisms and also its commitment to what is coming 'After' what has gone before in organization studies in terms of examples of contemporary research.

Aesthetics, Society And Organization Studies¹

Lamenting the absence of emotion, the body, aesthetic and sensory experience within organizational arenas seems a standard way to begin writing about these 'non-rational' dimensions in organizations. "Writers on organizations have successfully 'written out' emotions, to the extent that it is often impossible to detect their existence" writes Stephen Fineman in the introductory section of the first edition of his landmark text on *Emotion in Organizations* (1993: 1). Similarly, Antonio Strati, writing on aesthetics in organizations, concludes that "In short, one finds in organization theory and

1 Although I make many references throughout this paper to what I consider to be the nature of aesthetic experiences (as far as there might be such a thing), for the sake of clarity I feel it would be useful to state some kind of definition from the outset. I am taking as my basis, the assumption that aesthetic experience begins with sensory perception of the material (or imagined) world and that the corresponding emotional and visceral response – mediated by what Burgin (1986) calls the 'popular pre-consciousness' of the social and cultural milieu the individual is embedded within – results in some kind of value judgement being made about that stimulus. The whole process represents an 'aesthetic experience' and although similar, is nonetheless quite distinct from either emotion, or perception, or indeed art (see Strati, 2000 for an expansion of this differentiation). Furthermore, to my mind, the act of having an aesthetic experience arises in the interplay between subject and object – and cannot be reduced to either formal properties of the object regarded aesthetically, nor to some peculiar mode of contemplation enacted by the subject. Thus 'the aesthetic' resides in the experience of apprehending as a flow between subject and object. These issues are dealt with extensively in the philosophical literature on aesthetics, for a good introduction, see Feagin and Maynard, 1997; Lyas 1997; and with regard to organization studies Linstead and Höpfl, 2000; Strati, 1999; *Organization*, 1996; *Human Relations*, 2002.

management studies the conviction that aesthetics as a discipline has nothing to do with organizational life" (1999: 4).

Whilst these statements, and others like them, undoubtedly reflect the lack of attention to the 'non-rational' within mainstream organization studies, they belie the fact that these aesthetic, emotional and visceral dimensions of human-being at work have always been part of the equation in writing about management, work and organizations. It is perhaps more accurate to suggest that they have been disregarded or ignored rather than undetected, by virtue of the fact that these facets of human existence are not conducive to study by means of scientific method, something traditionally associated with the early establishment of sociological disciplines as valid (scientific) ways of producing knowledge about the world (Gagliardi, 1996; Latour, 1986; Strati, 2001). As Williams tells us: "Emotions... together with their associated bodily themes, have their own secret history within sociology itself" (2001: 3). Classical writers such as Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and, specifically within organization studies, Weber and Taylor have noted the importance of the emotional and somatic realm in human organization, although admittedly in a way which paints them as "the scandal of reason" (Williams, 2001: 1). Weber's ideal-type bureaucracy (1974) centred on the principle that roles should be divorced from those who perform them in order to minimise as far as possible the intrusion of individual personalities and emotion, in order to ensure equality and fairness within the organizational structure. Similarly, Frederick Taylor's (1911) method of scientific management designed out all facets of human behaviour from the execution of a task – apart from those that could be observed, classified and combined in such a way as to maximise productivity, effectively turning a human being into a passive, rational and programmable machine. Thus 'non-rationality' has always been part of thinking about organizations (using these examples at least), just that 'it' has been regarded as the undesirable or 'dark' side of working life, rather than something to be celebrated, or at the very least embraced.

It is only relatively recently, however, that organizational scholars have begun to turn attention explicitly towards these 'non-rational' aspects of organization in a way which recognises the *value* of exploring such issues in understanding contemporary work organizations (Fineman, 1993, 2000; Hochschild, 1983; Strati, 1999; Linstead and Höpfl, 2000; Hassard *et al.*, 2000). This has coincided with a similar renaissance in the social disciplines as a whole (see for example Williams, 2001; Shilling, 1993) stemming from the recognition that people at work are still human beings, with the same capacity for emotional and aesthetic experience inside the organization as they have outside it. In the context of work and organizations, as in other areas of life, we are continually surrounded by aesthetic stimuli or cues (Wasserman *et al.*, 2000) that elicit feelings, emotional responses and value judgements about our work, workplaces, colleagues and the organizations we perform. From the hermetically controlled and ergonomically designed workspaces we physically inhabit, to the logos and symbols of corporate identity and the 'branding' of corporate architecture, we are immersed in a world which bombards us with physical and ideological stimuli – stimuli which, moreover, operate on an aesthetic level. One only has to think about the branding of consumer goods and the use of symbols in wider society such as national anthems and flags to realise the emotive power that these stimuli have.

In other words, organization is an inherently embodied practice, since it is people and their bodies who *organize*. As Antonio Strati tells us of aesthetic approaches to organizations:

The underlying assumption of the aesthetic approach to the study of organizations is that, although an organization is indeed a social and collective construct... it is not an exclusively cognitive one but derives from the knowledge creating faculties of all the senses. (2000: 13)

This shift away from the notion of organizing as a rational, cognitive and entirely 'cool-headed' process has lifted the lid on a whole host of organizational phenomena traditionally not seen as the stuff of 'proper research'. In the past few years there has been an explosion of interest in issues within organizations such as sex and eroticism (Brewis and Linstead, 2000); spirituality (Bell and Taylor, 2002) and humour and fun (Collinson, 1998; Grugulis, 2002; Linstead, 1985; Warren, 2001) as well as research centring on the body, emotions and aesthetics as mentioned above. This literature is a welcome recognition of the embodied and experiential 'holistic' practice of organization, which throws into relief the incomplete assumption that organizing as a human activity is solely under the jurisdiction of the mind.

However as Williams (2001) asks, what is really interesting is the question 'why now?' Why has the 'non-rational' become a subject worthy of specific and celebratory scholarly attention at the end of the twentieth century? Williams suggests several contributory reasons for this. He describes what he sees as the dissolution of a once private emotional sphere into the public domain, in which the public display of emotion, such as that seen by the media portrayal of images of the casualties of war and famine, images of mass grieving at the death of Princess Diana in the United Kingdom and, most recently, in the aftermath of the terrorists attacks in America, become more commonplace and more acceptable. Williams also documents the rise in popularity of psychotherapy, 'new-age' beliefs and the spectacularization of emotional turmoil by soap operas and 'reality' television programmes like *Big Brother*, *The Jerry Springer show* and so on, as evidence of this 'emotionalization' of every-day life. Similarly, Bell and Taylor (2002) note that these phenomena might represent a 'quest for meaning' in a secular society where religiosity and spirituality have taken on different, more publicly expressive forms.

An alternative explanation for the contemporary interest in 'non-rational' elements of life – and in particular aesthetics – is put forward by writers on consumer culture (see for example, Baudrillard, 1998; Bauman, 1998; Campbell, 1989; Featherstone, 1991; Ritzer, 1999; Welsch, 1997). As Mike Featherstone (1991) argues, we are increasingly seeing an 'aestheticization' of everyday life as a result of the so-called post-modern turn and the centrality of consumption to contemporary Western culture. This desire to consume is perpetuated and reinforced by the manipulation of aesthetic preferences and affective responses predominantly through images – television and outdoor advertising being good examples. Moreover, this process of aestheticization has become such a taken for granted mode of being-in-the-world that all areas of life can be seen to be affected by the desire to consume, and the corresponding excitement and entertainment that consumption – and importantly the *desire* to consume – brings. As Ritzer notes:

Consumption has less and less to do with obtaining goods and services and more to do with entertainment. In fact, the means of consumption are increasingly learning from, and becoming part of, show business. (1999: 194- 95)

Ritzer argues that in all spheres of life our value judgements, preferences, tastes, choices and decisions are heavily influenced by aesthetic considerations. The value placed on the aesthetic appeal of commodities and of their commensurability with 'life-style' choices and sub-cultures in making decisions seemingly unrelated to the act of consumption itself is leading ultimately to Featherstone's "aestheticization of everyday life" (1991: 65). Ritzer cites examples of the attention paid to the design and physical appearance of not just shopping malls and leisure complexes, but of sports stadia, hospitals and schools, of municipal buildings and the increasing proliferation of sculpture and artworks in public spaces, as evidence of this process. An example from my own personal experience is the refurbishment of university buildings, superficially 'made-over' not for utilitarian reasons of maintenance but solely for the purpose of making them look more attractive to potential students in order to attract applicants to university courses. I suspect my institution is not unusual in this respect.

Importantly for my purposes here, Bauman extends these ideas to speak of an 'aestheticization of work'. His thesis is best illustrated in his own words:

Like life's other activities, work now comes first and foremost under aesthetic scrutiny. Its value is judged by its capacity to generate pleasurable experience. Work devoid of such capacity - that does not offer 'intrinsic satisfaction' - is also work devoid of value....Like everything else which may reasonably hope to become the target of desire and an object of free consumer choice, jobs must be 'interesting' - varied, exciting, allowing for adventure, contain certain (though not excessive) measures of risk, and giving occasion to ever new sensations. Jobs that are monotonous, repetitive, routine, unadventurous, allowing no initiative and promising no challenge to wits nor a chance for self-testing and self-assertion, are 'boring'. No fully fledged consumer would conceivably agree to undertake them on her or his own will, unless cast in a situation of no choice... Such jobs are devoid of aesthetic value and for that reason stand little chance of becoming vocations in a society of experience-collectors. (1998: 32-34)

Consequently, coupled with the recognition that organization is a 'fully human' process - bodies, senses, feelings and all - if we accept that aesthetic experiences are also increasing in importance in everyday life and work, the value of researching aesthetics in organizations can be seen. The issue of concern then becomes - how do we go about generating and gathering data about aesthetic experience - in the present case - in organizational research?

Researching The Aesthetic Dimension In Organizations

...the aesthetic approach...*shifts the focus of organizational analysis* from dynamics for which explanations can be given - or at least for which actor rationales can be reconstructed *a posteriori* - to dynamics more closely bound up with forms of tacit knowledge... The network of the sensory perceptive faculties of both organizational actors and organization scholars produces knowledge that is not entirely verbal, nor entirely sayable. Other languages intervene, from visual to gestural, and other knowledge-creating processes, from intuitive to evocative. (Strati, 2000: 13-14, emphases in original)

One of the ways in which Strati advocates this shift of focus is through attention to “the corporeal nature of the organizational action of persons operating in organizational settings based on the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch” (2001: 14). However, as a cursory glance through most methodological texts will show, there is little written about *how* we might go about this ‘sensory’ research – Antonio Strati being a notable exception. Strati goes on to call for a ‘new’ approach to studying organizations which is “based on the evocation of knowledge, on mythical thinking, and on the criterion of plausibility” (2001: 9) in order to “make it possible to conduct empathic-aesthetic analysis of organizations as social contexts, as opposed to the logico-rational and almost exclusively cognitive study of them” (*ibid.*). Research approaches he has suggested include ‘imaginary participant observation’ (1999) which involves an empathetic and imaginative engagement with the observed activities and recounted stories of the respondents as they go about and describe their organizational roles and experiences. Likewise, Pasquale Gagliardi (1996), writing on both the collection of ‘aesthetic data’ and the dissemination of findings from it, advocates the use of “allusive, poetic language” (1996: 576) to convey the richly nuanced nature of aesthetic experience. Whilst these ideas are a welcome recognition of the researcher as a source of data in their own right, and a celebration of research as an aesthetic activity in itself²: “Researchers who analyze organizational life using the aesthetic approach... must begin by arousing and refining their own sensory and perspective faculties” (Strati, 2000: 17), thus relying heavily on the intuitive and aesthetically responsive skill of the researcher in this regard, and, moreover, on the expressive capabilities of both respondents and researcher alike. Moreover, language is largely an inadequate medium through which to articulate aesthetic experiences, save for the gifted poets and novelists among us. As Suzanne Langer – speaking here about emotion – reminds us:

Everybody knows that language is a very poor medium for expressing our emotional nature. It merely names certain vaguely and crudely conceived states, but fails miserably in any attempt to convey the ever-moving patterns, the ambivalences and intricacies of inner experience, the interplay of feelings with thoughts and impressions, memories and echoes of memories, all turned into nameless, emotional stuff. (1957: 100-101)

The very fact that we have so many vague and often metaphoric words to describe states of ‘inner experience’ adds to the difficulty faced when trying to operationalize these concepts in an academic context. As scholars, we dwell in a world of words (Prosser, 1998) and are engaged (primarily) in the business of listening and talking to other human beings in order to generate written texts about the world around us – in the present case the world of human organization. Thus, to my mind, as researchers we

2 For two different but related accounts of research as an aesthetic activity see Alf Rehn (2002) and David Silverman (1997). Rehn argues for a de-emphasis on the ‘recipe book’ approach to method, that is to say the fixation on the process of thinking rather than the activity of thinking itself, thus casting research as an activity carried out according to the aesthetic preferences and sensibilities of the researcher, independently of any pre-given or post-rationalised ‘method’. Silverman on the other hand, talks of the aesthetic beauty of ordered and organized research - of clearly defined method - and calls for a ‘Wittgensteinian’ attention to the mundane in everyday life and the beauty of truth in research. Whilst he recognises that one of the drivers for undertaking particular research projects in particular ways is the aesthetic preference of the researcher, he advocates investigations be carried out by rigorous means which clearly distinguish social research from literary genres and mass-media journalism.

have quite an understandable bias towards language and texts as modes of understanding and dissemination. This is not a view I have formulated in an empirical vacuum, but one whose consequences I was faced with myself when attempting to research aesthetics in a specific organizational context. For these reasons, I was convinced that, in order to explore the relationship between the feel, sights, smells, and even the tastes of the organizational setting and the people who work there, surely a more 'sensually complete' methodology than a narrow and limiting focus on those aspects of organization which can be spoken or written down is demanded.

I feel that it is important to make the point here that I am not attempting to prescribe some kind of 'methodological recipe' for researching aesthetics in organizations. As I imagine most researchers come to realise at some point in the early stages of their careers, research methods emerge from what Vicky Singleton (2000) once called the 'methodological conversation' between theory, data and research questions, in advocating a relational approach to method which does not ignore the contingent and emergent nature of generating data. Informed by a feminist actor-network approach, she suggests that the methods by which we gather data are continually formed and re-formed depending on events within the research arena – particularly within the ethnographic tradition (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Pink, 2001; Coffey, 1999). 'Finished' methods, she notes, are those that appear as reified, having deleted the precarious process by which they were created – if indeed they ever stayed 'still' long enough for them to be recognised as *a* method. As Sarah Pink (2001) discusses in the introduction to her text on visual ethnography, no-one can provide a detailed 'blueprint' of how to do research, since method depends on the spatial, temporal and cultural context that the research takes place within and through. Indeed, as Alf Rehn (2002) has recently noted, a preoccupation with rigorous 'efficient' methods by which to gather data and conduct research leads to a 'moral economy of method' which "organizes research into the do-rights and do-wrongs, creating efficient divisions between orthodoxy and the great unwashed. Those who have the method-capital, the correct tools of knowledge, and those who wander, poor, in the world" (Rehn, 2002: 48). With this in mind, I write in the spirit not of unveiling yet another prescription to cure data-gathering ills, but to share some of the practices and ideas I found useful in my own 'methodological conversations' in the field.

It became apparent as soon as I began talking to my research respondents about their organizational environment that words were not enough to answer my questions. Using an ethno-methodological approach, I spent three months with the people of 'Department



X' – a web-site design department of a global IT company. The site that this research was carried out at was located in a rural location in the South of England, and the members of the Department had recently undergone an office move to new 'aesthetically designed' premises which the management hoped would communicate the creative talent of the team to potential customers, and provide a creative environment for the staff to work within – thus increasing innovative output and



ultimately productivity. I selected Department X as a research site in order to carry out a project to explore the interplays between consumption, aesthetics and organization, because I see it as an example of the 'aestheticization of work' that I describe above. The company itself is one with a reputation for corporate professionalism, sincerity and seriousness – values symbolically projected through their corporate architecture and image. Thus Department X seemed to be a radical departure from the company's normal strategic behaviour and perhaps indicated an interesting shift in corporate values – potentially lending support for Bauman's (1998) thesis that work is increasingly being judged on aesthetic criteria. Whilst I was intrigued with what I saw as a strong contrast between Department X and the rest of the company (in particular the site it was located at), my empirical research interests lay in the experiences and feelings of

people working in such an environment. How did they feel about working in such an aesthetically appealing environment – if indeed it did appeal to them? Was it enjoyable? Did they feel more creative? Was their attachment to their organization enhanced, unchanged, or diminished? These were some of the many exploratory questions I began my research armed with.

During the first few days and weeks at Department X, I engaged in many informal conversations during which the respondents wanted to show me the objects, places and spaces they were talking about. Even during the more formal interviews I was often invited to come and 'see for myself' because it was easier than explaining. It was at about this time that I decided to use photography as a research method – at this stage as a way of capturing 'visual fieldnotes' in a documentary sense about the material things that were of such importance (both positively and negatively) to the respondents. I began by taking these photographs myself, but became increasingly aware that it was largely my own judgement and aesthetic preferences which were quite literally framing these images. Although a realistic understanding of research recognises that methods are often chosen and research carried out according to the agenda and preferences of the researcher (Robson, 1993), I questioned the usefulness of imposing my interpretation on the data I was generating in terms of selecting what was and was not significant in the physical environment of Department X myself. I also discounted the so-called 'objective' approach to photography in the field in which random co-ordinates are generated from which to take photographs in order to generate a 'visually representative sample' of the subject matter (Wagner, 1979). I wasn't concerned with trying to represent the department in any objective sense, rather to gain an insight into the subjective, aesthetically experienced understandings of the environment from the respondents' perspective. It was then when I hit upon the idea of handing the camera to

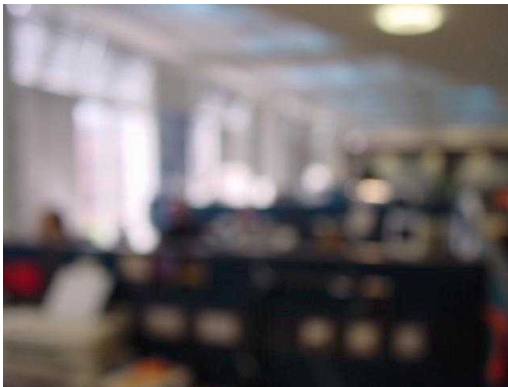
the respondents themselves as a method of capturing this data. This proved to be wonderfully successful. The respondents themselves enjoyed using the camera and I enjoyed the novelty of researching in this way. The brief I gave them was to take a set of photographs (with the digital camera I provided) that the respondents felt represented their work environment to them – hence the title of this paper and the following section – ‘Show Me How it Feels to Work Here’. These photographs were later viewed and discussed in the context of an interview conversation between the respondent and me. The photographs make an interesting data set in their own right regarding the ways in which the respondents chose to define their work environment, what they felt to be worthy (and not worthy) of photographing, and the individual and sometimes innovative ways they framed their subjects. These issues were discussed with the respondents during the interviews and many people did recognise personal ‘aesthetic’ influences on the composition of their photographs – for instance a concern for symmetry within the frame, or preference for particular colours – but rather than being problematic, this served to facilitate the respondents’ reflections on their aesthetic experiences of the environment they photographed and added to the richness of the data gathered, since what was of concern to me was the valuable dimension that the camera added to the respondents’ expression of their aesthetic experiences. This came about in two main ways. Firstly, the photographs added to the verbal data through their imagery (I am deliberately avoiding describing this imagery as purely visual, for reasons I explain below), and secondly, the photographs served as a ‘focus’ for the interview conversations, meaning that it was to some extent the respondent’s agenda that was structuring the interview since they had chosen which photographs to take and show me. I will deal with each of these themes in turn.

Show Me How it Feels to Work Here



The above photographs were taken to represent to me the sense of community that these particular people felt. The concept of community for these respondents was a largely intangible but nonetheless very significant element of their working life. Respondents spoke with obvious pride, pleasure and even love about their colleagues, their shared history and the work they produced – descriptions which were saturated with aesthetic experiences and emotionally laden. The photograph of the cookie bags (above left), and

other similar images were captured to represent social rituals – something important in the maintenance of group cohesiveness and friendship amongst this particular group of respondents. And yet, many respondents felt that the community spirit of the team was diminished compared to when they had been located in what most people would consider to be a really unpleasant office with no windows in the basement of the building, despite the apparent beauty of the office they now inhabited. Similarly, the photograph below was taken by another respondent to convey his aesthetic experience of community life at work. His explanation of its significance I have included alongside.



“...what I’m trying to capture here is colour and busy-ness without detail. I’m both interested in detail and I think I’ve got some detailed shots in here of things but I’m also fascinated by the big picture and the big impression and that’s the more emotional level sort of thing for me. That when I arrive in the morning, that’s almost the view I see but I don’t particularly look at any details, its just the busy-ness and the colour and its kind of an atmospheric thing”.

I mentioned above that I was keen to avoid over-emphasising the role of the visual (or more accurately, the *visible*) in the usefulness of photographs in this sort of research process. The above photograph, I hope, demonstrates that despite having no obvious representational value or meaning apart from its verbal explanation, it conveys an emotional sense of what the respondent is trying to tell me. Photographs, as I discuss later in the paper, are commonly taken at face-value. Their iconography is assumed to be a statement of proof about that which is pictured within the frame. Although nothing more (in a material sense) than an amalgamation of chemicals and light sensitive paper, (or, in the present case, millions of bits of digital data systematically organized into pixels to recreate an image) photographs are routinely presented as if they were themselves the object or subject photographed – for example, photographs are almost always accompanied by a verbal description in the present tense such as, “this is me on holiday” or “these are my children”. This illusion of reality is generated by photographs in a way that other forms of visual art such as painting do not. As Victor Burgin (1986) notes, when apprehended with a painting, one can see the brush-strokes and the thickness and texture of the paint. Its materiality reminds us that it is not real, but an artistic interpretation of what the artist saw and felt. A photograph is created by exposing the ‘canvas’ to reflected light, in some sense similar to the physiology of the human eye (although, as I note below, it is vital to recognise that this is where this similarity firmly ends). Indeed photography literally means ‘drawing with light’ (*ibid.*: 67) and its flat surface and striking resemblance to our own visual capabilities adds to this illusory capacity. Furthermore, so strong is the presumed relationship between the photograph and reality, that what results is an over-emphasis on the *visible*, observable features of photographs rather than their capacity to help *visualise* the *invisible*. With particular regard to the present discussion – the intangible and largely ineffable experiences of the photographer.

The following photographs are perhaps a better example of this since they were taken to communicate overtly sensory stimuli, namely smell and sound:



They were taken by two different respondents who had physically gone outside with the camera to represent to me how much they valued the fresh air and (with reference to the photograph on the left) the sound of birdsong as freedom from the confines of the office. As I have noted, the organization was located in a rural area and this was something greatly appreciated by the respondents in an aesthetic sense. Indeed, although the intention of this paper is not to discuss the findings that are emerging from the project from which these images are drawn, it is of note here that the 'pictorial representation' of freedom was a recurrent theme in the photographs the respondents

took. This photograph (to the left of this text) was taken to symbolise the pleasure that its photographer felt at being outside in 'nature' with all its unpredictability and chaos which was in stark contrast to the order and structure she saw within her organization.



Not all the photographs taken were to represent 'positive' aesthetic experiences. The photographs below were taken and used by two respondents to talk about 'oppression' and 'control' by the management of the department and its stark contrast to the freedom that the aestheticized work environment had been expected to provide:



Seeing is Believing? Images, Texts and Image-Texts

It is perhaps reasonable to argue that intangible concepts such as ‘freedom’ ‘community’ and ‘oppression’ could be more or less successfully communicated without the need to use photographs. Indeed I agree that the photographs I have chosen to display here certainly do not represent a mode of communication that opens directly onto the richness of aesthetic experience in all its ‘authenticity’, neither do I wish to suggest that aesthetics can be entirely ‘captured’ in a visible form. To do this would merely affirm the dichotomy between language and image and assume a rather essentialist notion of both images and aesthetic experience. However, I do believe that these images (and the many others like them) *help* in the communication of these aesthetic experiences. I have already mentioned the ideas of Suzanne Langer (1957) on the inadequacy of language to communicate emotional and aesthetic experiences, and she goes further to call for an alternative language of aesthetic articulation, a language which is not reductionist, but inclusive – one which tries to capture the ‘gestalt’ of aesthetic experience, the simultaneity of sensory, visceral *and* cognitive experience – what she calls the ‘presentational symbolism’ of aesthetic experience. To separate out each of these feelings, thoughts and sensations in order to fit them within the syntactical confines of written or spoken language “requires us to string out our ideas even though their objects rest one within another; as pieces of clothing that are actually worn one over the other have to be strung side by side on a clothesline” (Langer, 1957: 81). Thus surely the more senses that are employed in the communication of aesthetic experience the better, hence my decision to overtly involve what the respondents could see in and around their workplace. Moreover, it is not just the eyes that ‘see’ the image pictured in the photograph. As I stress above, imagery is as much about *image*-ination and *visualisation* as it is about visible representation. When we look at something we do not just experience it with our eyes, rather its apprehension conjures up a whole host of thoughts and feelings based on our own experiences of what that image means to us within our own personal, social and cultural worlds. As Victor Burgin explains:

Regardless of how much we strain to maintain a ‘disinterested’ aesthetic mode of apprehension, an appreciation of the ‘purely visual’, when we look at an image it is instantly and irreversibly integrated and collated with the intricate psychic network of our knowledge. (1986: 64)

This network of knowledge he calls the 'popular pre-conscious', the shared, inter-subjective, and taken for granted assumptions that enable society to function. Following Horowitz, he describes how thought and knowledge are evoked by physical and visceral action, imagery and lexicography, and stresses the homogeneity of these elements. In particular, he draws our attention to the point that photography can never be a purely visual medium. Apart from the fact that photographs are rarely seen uncaptioned or completely isolated from words, the linguistic means by which thought (and memory) is formed is inextricably entwined with the act of seeing, as he eloquently reminds us:

...in memory, in association, snatches of words and images continually intermingle and exchange one for the other... what I "have in mind" is better expressed in the image of transparent coloured inks which have been poured onto the surface of the water in a glass container: as the inks spread and sink their boundaries and relations are in constant alternation, and areas which at one moment are distinct from one another may, at the next, overlap. (Burgin, 1986: 51-52)

Thus, seeing is much more than a physiological retinal imprint – not least because of the compensation the human brain makes for the inverted, double image that light reflected onto the retina provides. We also make adjustments for the 'known' distances, perspectives and relevances between things – necessarily involving language as the medium of thought, retrieval from memory and attribution of knowledge. Thus language (text) and image (photograph) are not separate in the lived experience of seeing – or I would argue of reading or thinking or speaking – or indeed any 'textual' activity which uses language as its organizing principle.

Here I also need to be clear that I am not suggesting that images have some kind of claim to be evidence or 'proof' to back up the claims made in texts. Indeed the debate over the authority of images is a central theme in the visual research literature, (see for example Chaplin, 1994; Harper, 1998; Pink, 2001; Wagner, 1979) stemming, in part at least, from the use of photographs in early anthropological studies such as the oft-quoted example of Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead's (1942) photographic study of Balinese culture. In this, and similar studies it was assumed that photographs could document and provide 'realist proof' of what life was like in other cultures in a way that words could not (Pink, 2001). As Douglas Harper explains: "In the realist tale, the anthropologist observes objectively and interprets according to anthropological theory. The points of view of the subjects are offered in quotes separated from the rest of the text, maintaining the control of the voice of the author" (1998: 26-27). The role of images in the 'realist tale' then is to continue this project of authority by claiming to show a reality 'untainted' by the researcher's interpretation. The photograph stands as proof. However, as I have already noted, photographs are only a partial, fragmented and contextually bound version of reality. The choice of what to photograph and how to place it within the frame are inextricably bound up with the visual culture of the photographer and his or her intentions and motives. Therefore, as Sarah Pink (2001: 50) stresses, it is important to take account of the "visual culture of the field" when using photography in research. In the present case, many of the respondents in this study were either graphic designers or described themselves as 'creatives' in some way and so it is perhaps unsurprising that they should use the medium of photography in a creative and expressive way, since this is how they have been trained to 'use' images. Moreover, one could argue that their artistic predispositions have determined how they framed and

chose their subjects to photograph.³ Following Burgin's ideas that I have already outlined, Clive Scott (1999) further alerts us to this point in the introduction to his text on photography and language by reminding us that photography and the human eye are completely different despite the cultural pervasiveness (in the developed West at least) of the belief in photographs as realist proof: "the eye/camera analogy – which proposes that the retina is exactly like a photographic plate – is flawed because the retinal image is no more than the raw material of human perception; human perception is an active, ocular engagement in an environment over time" (Scott, 1999: 9). In other words, the photograph probably reveals more about the life-world of the photographer than those of the subjects he or she photographs. Of course, this is an advantage when asking respondents to make their own photographs since the photographs may quite literally act as a lens through which to explore these life-worlds. But my point here remains: that photographs cannot tell a realist tale of 'how it was' since 'how it was' will differ depending on who is using the camera, where, when and for what purpose. Their use as narrative or descriptive method therefore, needs to be carefully and explicitly informed by recognising this. However, photographs do "hold a visual trace of a reality the camera was pointed at" (Harper, 1998: 29), and so, in my opinion, they are potentially valuable in the descriptive process both during research and in the dissemination of that research. Elizabeth Edwards (1997) has suggested one way that it might be possible to reduce the authority of photographs as 'truth', namely to juxtapose so-called 'representational' images with others that are more 'expressive' in nature – such as the blurred image of the office I have pictured above. Edwards (1997) argues that there are essentially two main types of photography – that which is artistically motivated and



intended to express the aesthetic emotions of the photographer, and that which is representationally motivated and intended to bear some relation to the reality of its subject matter. By displaying the two types of image in relation to one another in some way, Edwards suggests that the 'authority' of the realist image is diminished, or destabilised (Emmison and Smith, 2000) through the representation of the same subject matter from a different perspective and the more realist image at the same time provides a more 'factual' context for its expressive counterpart, as in the images of the pool table at Department X I have displayed here.

3 It is interesting to note that although the photographs taken by the graphic designers were indeed more 'aesthetically appealing' and 'creative' in terms of their composition, this was not exclusively so. Staff with less creative jobs, such as technical and clerical support staff also used the camera in expressive ways and some of the 'creative' staff took photographs much more akin to casual snapshots. Whilst it is no doubt important to recognise these influences on the subjects, composition and framing of the photographs for reasons of contextualization, I do not believe that it is worthwhile to look for causal relationships between personal characteristics and the way the respondents chose to take their photographs. No doubt one could look at the set of photographs generated by this project and find correlations between gender, age, social and cultural background and any number of other variables and 'types' of photograph. To do so would only be fruitful if one were intending to generalise these findings to a wider population, and even then the classification of photographs and respondents into the afore-mentioned categories is, in my opinion, problematic given the arbitrary nature of drawing boundaries.

The question then, is how best to combine different kinds of images and text to achieve a symbiotic effect without unduly privileging one over the other. In the anthropologist's 'realist tale' images are assumed to have greater authority than the words of the anthropologist in the text. However, images are also extensively used as 'mere illustrations' of the written word, (such as in the case of children's story books) placing them as subordinate and arguably superfluous to text. Mitchell (1994) has attempted to theorise the issues connected with the authority of images and text in an interesting debate, which suggests that, rather than placing image and text in a hierarchical relationship (of whichever order), pictures and text should be seen as being beyond comparison – each offering a valuable contribution to the creation and communication of meaning, which is different from, but no better or worse, than the other. He conceptualises three different kinds of relationships between images and texts: the first being 'image/text' where *either* images *or* text are used as the narrative mode, a dualistic conceptualisation that privileges one over the other. At the other end of the scale is Mitchell's 'imagetext' within which images and text are synthesised into a whole, as Sarah Pink notes (2001: 127) "to emphasise the ambiguity of visual meanings, giving viewers/readers greater scope self-consciously to develop their own interpretations of photographs" (and, I would add, of text). Whilst this may be a worthwhile academic exercise in bringing the ambiguity of meaning to the fore of both image and text, as a method of communicating an intended meaning, I would argue that such 'imagetexts' are often confusing and frustrating for the reader/viewer. However, Mitchell goes on to suggest a third way of thinking about images and texts, that of the 'image-text' where words and pictures are juxtaposed without either being reduced to or being placed as superior over the other. These kinds of narratives are perhaps better known as 'montages' which Marcus (1995) has described as photographs which are juxtaposed with text about the context, the researcher's chosen theoretical framework, the intentions of and stories about the photographer and his or her subjects and so on, to "[create] printed ethnographic representations that do not privilege the 'truth' of written academic text over other representations of knowledge. Such text would imply no hierarchy of ethnographic value between photographs and words, nor hierarchies within these categories" (Pink, 2001: 130).

Following these ideas, I have constructed this paper as an image-text – neither my words or the images would be adequate alone, and yet together they create a synergy which perhaps might be seen as a move toward Langer's (1957) goal of presentational symbolism. This idea of image-text is not only relevant to a discussion of dissemination however. During the research process it became immediately obvious that the photographs the respondents took needed explanation to me – to a greater or lesser degree – before I could understand the significance of what they represented to the respondents. By way of a further visual explanation, below are some of the more 'obscure' images that were captured:



Thus during the research process itself, the images were *contextualized* through conversation centring on them, while at the same time they helped with the *image-ination* of the respondents' verbal descriptions of their organizational experiences. The ambiguity of the images in isolation brings me to my discussion of the second way in which I found photography so useful in my research, as I mention earlier in the paper – their role in stimulating social interaction in an interview context.

Talking Pictures

Interviewing using photographs is most commonly referred to as a technique of 'photo-elicitation' (Collier and Collier, 1986; Wagner, 1979) in which a respondent and researcher sit down together to talk about the photograph – discuss its content, what it means to the respondent, what it might remind them of, and so on. However, as both Dona Schwartz (1994) and Sarah Pink (2001) have pointed out, this description of interviewing with images assumes either that the meaning is wholly contained within the image, with the respondent being required to extract it; or that the photograph is only a prompt, eliciting comment 'contained within' the respondent. Neither of these conceptualisations is in my opinion, adequate to explain the dynamics that occurred during the conversations I had with my respondents about the photographs they had taken. As I note above, both images and words were inextricably linked in communicating to me the sensory and aesthetic nature of the experiences that were recounted during the interviews and moreover, the meanings and understandings that my conversations with the respondents generated were 'joint efforts'. Douglas Harper (1998: 35) has re-named the technique of interviewing with images, calling it a visual "model of collaboration in research" and in so doing, he recasts the situation as one where meaning is actively created in the interaction between the researcher, respondent and the image, rather than passively residing in either one or the others. Rob Walker and Janine Weidel (1985) use the term 'the can-opener effect' to further describe the dynamics at work here. They explain how images can prompt the respondent to view and reflect on what is pictured in the photograph from a variety of perspectives in discussion with the researcher. As they note: "photographs can speed rapport, involve people in the research and release anecdotes and recollections, so accelerating the sometimes lengthy process of building fieldwork relationships" (Walker and Wiedel, 1985: 213). In this present case, involvement and collaboration was enhanced by the

respondent having taken the photographs themselves. It was also interesting that almost all the respondents chose to operate the laptop computer that we viewed the digital images on, further reinforcing my view that they felt more of a sense of ownership of the interview agenda than would otherwise have been the case and, moreover, that they felt that the images were theirs to control. Perhaps one of the most lucid accounts of the practice of interviewing with images is recounted by Dona Schwartz, reflecting here on her use of photography to research social change in a once prosperous and now declining US legion-post:

Taking an attributional approach to the viewing process, informants respond with extended narratives and supply interpretations of the images, drawing from and reflecting their experiences in the community. The photographs themselves provide concrete points of reference as interviews proceed. Depictions of specific locales, events, and activities function as prompts which elicit detailed discussions of the significances of things represented. Because photographs trigger multiple meanings dependent on the experiences of viewers, what is considered significant may take the ethnographer by surprise, leading to unexpected revelations. (1994: 143)

Furthermore, using the respondents' photographs as a starting point for discussing their feelings toward their organization, and in particular their aesthetic experiences, felt like a very natural process. I have already noted that making a distinction between language and image in lived experience is to some extent artificial – indeed, as Sarah Pink notes, “conversation is filled with verbal references to images and icons. People use verbal description to visualise particular moralities, activities and versions of social order (and disorder)” (2001: 71). Introducing photographic depictions of objects, events, places and people into the interview situation from this stance becomes nothing more than making this process of visualisation more explicit.

However, there are issues thrown up by such a collaborative approach to research which are perhaps less apparent when using traditional qualitative research methods such as interviewing, or observation. One of the most significant of these is undoubtedly the question of ethics, for the very act of holding a camera up to one's eye and pointing it at someone is an obvious and potentially intrusive activity which cannot be 'disguised' in the same way as making field-notes in a journal or even tape-recording an interview. I am not suggesting that these research methods are without ethical dimensions, nor that researchers who use them (as indeed I do) do so in any way unethically – far from it! – but what I am saying is that using a camera and making photographic representations of people, things, places and events makes ethical issues of anonymity, privacy, ownership and even copyright far more 'visible' than is often the case with 'word-based' research (Prosser n.d.). From a moral perspective, permission has to be granted by a person before you can take their photograph in a way that jotting down their comments in a notebook may not. Furthermore, as Sarah Pink (2001) tells us, who actually owns a photographic image is open to question, meaning that issues of copyright and permission become even more complex. Photography, when considered to be an artistic medium, generally comes under copyright law as this explanation from the Design and Artists Copyright Society tells us:

Copyright is a right granted to creators under law. Copyright in all artistic works is established from the moment of creation – the only qualification required is that the work must be original. There is no registration system in the UK; copyright comes into operation automatically and lasts for the lifetime of the creator plus a period of 70 years from the end of the year in which he or she

died. After the death of the artist, copyright in his or her works is usually transferred to the artist's "heirs" or beneficiaries, who then become the copyright owners. When the 70-year period has expired, the work enters what is called the "public domain" and no longer benefits from copyright protection. (DACS n.d.)

However, if a photograph of a person is taken for commercial gain it becomes an 'effigy' and the copyright may transfer to the subject of the photograph. These issues are by no means clear, but in the case of this particular piece of research, since the respondents took the photographs themselves, technically the copyright of the images they created remains with them. With this in mind, I asked each respondent for permission to use their images in academic work, including journal articles and my PhD thesis. However, should these images be used in the publication of a book or in non-academic literature I would wish to confirm (where possible) that this permission still holds.

This preoccupation with privacy issues and the ownership of photographic 'effigies' of oneself almost certainly reflects a further aspect of the visual culture of contemporary Western society. Indeed, images are seen by many as *the* defining feature of postmodernism fuelling the obsession with aesthetics in everyday life I discuss earlier in this paper (see Mirzoeff, 1998 and Emmison and Smith, 2000 for examples specific to visual culture and research methods respectively). Just as the early anthropologists had to explain to indigenous tribes-people that the camera would not harm them, and was not a handmaiden of the devil, so I, as a modern-day organizational researcher, had to reassure my respondents and the organization to which they belonged that I would not use any photographs which would reveal distinguishing organizational features (such as logos or other trade-marks that would be instantly recognised by most people), commercially sensitive material, or the faces of the respondents. So far I have not found any of these promises hard to keep. Unless you have visited Department X, you are unlikely to be able to guess the identity of the company by looking at the photographs I have included here. Similarly, I have protected the anonymity of the (few) people that are in my photographic data-set by either blurring their faces using digital image-manipulation software, or cropping the image to obscure facial features (as in the case of the picture of people playing pool reproduced in this paper). Nonetheless, these issues remain important practical *provisos* when using photographs in research.

Other practical issues connected with image-based research are quite simply the difficulties inherent in storing and sending large volumes of digital data on the largely non-specialist computer equipment owned by most universities. Digital images (whether generated on a digital camera or 'scanned to disk' from traditional photographs) make large data-files if they are to be stored as reasonably high quality pictures. For example, the original version of this paper was approximately 6MB (almost five floppy-disks full) of data. This then makes articles and research papers almost impossible to send via e-mail and even harder to publish in printed journals (and almost never in colour). Even printing good quality hard-copies requires a high-quality expensive printer. It has (rather ironically) crossed my mind that the real reluctance to use images in organizational research comes not from theoretical or methodological uncertainty but from practical constraints such as these! As Colin Robson has pragmatically noted, research projects are often more heavily influenced by what is practical rather than what is

epistemologically desirable, referring to the process of developing a method or set of methods that is governed by the 'art of the possible' (Robson, 1993: 188).

Conclusion

As I've argued throughout this paper, researching the aesthetic experiences of people in organizations requires a different methodological approach to research which centres on more traditional subjects of organizational analysis. This is largely due to the tacit, intangible and largely ineffable nature of aesthetic experiences as elements of the so-called 'non-rational' facets of human being, as well as representing a shift away from cognitively biased 'logico-scientific' (Gagliardi, 1996) or 'objective' accounts of organization and towards empathetic and situated modes of understanding and exploration. Moreover, as research into work and aesthetics becomes more commonplace (in the same way as issues of embodiment and emotion have become), the need to develop a range of techniques with which to gather this richly nuanced and subjective data also grows in importance. As I have discussed in this paper, I do not wish to be overly prescriptive in this regard, but suggest that photography and the analysis of photographic images might be one way in which to explore research questions concerned with the aesthetic side of life in organizations. Within this suggestion, I have problematized some of the assumptions and beliefs that are commonly held about the role of images and their relative status *vis-à-vis* texts. Whilst I have not explicitly discussed the authority of text *per se* (for the sake of brevity and the reason that these issues are well documented elsewhere – see for example Czarniawska, 1999; Derrida, 1991; Foucault, 1991; Linstead, 1994) it is nevertheless important to note that epistemological issues surrounding the status of images as truth and the usefulness of their 'voices' in communicating aesthetic data are to some extent similar to those debates that continue with regard to texts and truth, particularly from the perspective of post-modern/post-structural theorists, including some of those writing within the discipline of organization studies. Finally, I have mentioned some ethical and practical implications of using photography in research – and in particular digital photography – problems which I have been faced with myself during my own research project. Notwithstanding these difficulties, as Antonio Strati notes:

The methodological issues raised by the analysis of the visual... [are] both subtle and important to the aesthetic approach. They highlight that understanding organizational life on the basis of aesthetically produced documents [eg: photographs] is a delicate and complex matter, whether they are produced by the organizational actors or whether they are an artefact created by the researcher. (2000: 27)

Therefore photography as well as other forms of visual research such as investigations of the symbolic/aesthetic power of visible spaces, places and objects in organizational settings (Gagliardi, 1990; Nathan and Doyle, 2002; Warren, 2002) either through the camera's lens or by observation *in situ* represent potentially valuable methodological approaches in the context of research into work, organizations and aesthetics. This assertion, as we have seen, is grounded in theoretical and methodological considerations, but additionally, using a camera in a research project I would argue adds

fun and novelty to the activity of 'doing research', enhancing the aesthetic dimension of research itself for all concerned.

The future of photography as a research tool however, depends in part at least on overcoming or circumventing the practical problems that come with storing and using images in electronic form. However, the growing sophistication and availability of hypermedia such as CD-ROMS and the Internet can only serve to help in this respect. Relatedly, the growing number of on-line journals such as *ephemera*, *EJROT*, and *Tamara*, as well as subscription titles that are increasingly making the transition to web-based formats as well as hard copy availability increases the publication potential of papers which contain images – given the complex and costly process of submitting such articles to solely print based journals. Perhaps these technological factors will combine to make photographic and indeed visual research more generally, an attractive option for a wider variety of organizational research projects – giving photography the exposure it deserves.

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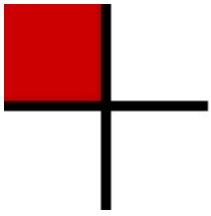
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Bitter to the Loyal End: Notes on Resisting Left Melancholy, After Globalisation

Bevan Catley, Shayne Grice and Sara Walton

abstract

Drawing upon a series of events centred upon an isolated region of New Zealand, this paper explores the (im)possibilities of resisting left melancholy after the protests against globalisation. In the face of what seems to be symbolised by the protests as a return to traditional binaries of the oppressed and the oppressors, the local and global, and of economics and culture, we offer a reading that suggests that these binaries must continue to be kept in abeyance, at least essentially. Despite the obvious mobilising potential of the globalisation narrative, we suggest that there is much cause to resist the temptation to simply conjure up the spirits of the past to our service.

Introduction

There is a sense in which the recent public protests against globalisation have enabled critical scholars and activists everywhere to heave somewhat of a collective sigh of relief. After decades of fragmentation and division, we can once again see passionate collective action on our streets. Globalisation seems to signal a return to that which a collective left can once again be mobilised. And yet, perhaps the scene is a little too familiar. The protests against globalisation seem too readily to have conjured up the spirits of the past to their service. While it is encouraging, after such a long hiatus, to see a critique of political-economy once again placed on centre stage, it appears to have come at the cost of erasing the last few decades of struggle to negotiate a balance between a politics of redistribution and recognition.

One wonders if, perhaps, the protests against globalisation reflect what Wendy Brown (after Walter Benjamin) has called left melancholy. As Brown relays it, this left melancholy involves “a mournful, conservative, backward-looking attachment to a feeling, analysis, or relationship that has been rendered thing like and frozen”.¹ In this vein, globalisation has become an object, not so much of analysis, but simply collective

1 Brown, W. (2000) ‘Resisting Left Melancholia’, in P. Gilroy, L. Grossberg and A. McRobbie (eds.) *Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall*. London: Verso, p. 23.

opposition. As such, it does not represent the resolution of the political and intellectual difficulties that have so immobilised the left, but signals an emotional and intellectual return to a time when things were much simpler. A time when one could clearly identify one's foe and could work, in good conscience, towards its downfall. While the focus on multinationals and their concerted attempts to de-democratise institutions and processes across the globe affords much needed clarity to struggles against globalisation, there is a danger that the linkages with the ambiguous terrain in which people live their daily lives are not being made. As such, insights that might give others hope of resisting the predations of Empire are instead relegated to the status of merely local moments in local histories.

This note from the field offers a reading of a series of events centred upon the West Coast province in the South Island of New Zealand. In terms of a globalisation narrative, the events are entirely familiar. They involve a small community struggling against subjection from the will of a multinational that has the force of law behind its efforts to control not only the community's livelihood, but its history and identity as well. What is perhaps less familiar is that this multinational did not have it entirely its own way. In many ways, as employee Peter Low comments, this was "a victory for small town New Zealand".² And yet, in just as many other ways, the victory resided someplace else. The resistance that could so easily be articulated in terms of a win for the people against globalisation, could just as easily be articulated as a loss.

We focus upon these issues as a contribution to resisting left melancholy. This resistance, we hope, will emerge from a growing recognition that complexity and action are not mutually incompatible. If the public demonstrations against globalisation are to have wider effects, it seems to us that they must evidence an ability to grapple with the many ambiguities inherent in resisting globalisation. The bitter story we explore here does not revolve around a(n often much desired) simple centre, but a complex interplay of factors quite particular to the location in which they play out. This location cannot simply be reduced to the 'other' of globalisation. As a complex site within an overdetermined history, this location is neither local nor global, neither simply for nor against globalisation. We offer this reading as part of an effort, after the globalisation protests, to reconsider the limits of 'location' and 'resistance' in our tales from the global field.

Total Despair?

Our account begins with a local lad, Daniel O'Regan, who wrote to his local newspaper declaring: "I feel shattered. My soul aches. My stomach is queasy. My heart is in tatters. Yours in total despair".³ For Daniel, and many others, a visceral sense of loss and mourning was experienced upon hearing the news. For Daniel, and many others, their sense of where they had come from, and where they would be going, lay shattered. They

2 Quoted in *The Greymouth Evening Star* (28th March, 2001) 'DB's position remains unclear', p.1.

3 Letter to the Editor, *The Press* (27th March, 2001), p.4.

had, after all, stared into the abyss that naturally follows upon hearing of the closing of one's local brewery. The despair, however, was far from total.

In no time at all, what would normally have been a silent operational business decision – involving the 'rationalising' of brewery operations – was soon catapulted to the forefront of the New Zealand public's imagination and attention. Closing the Monteith's plant on the West Coast was quickly characterised as "the latest in a string of stupid decisions by greedy, arrogant overseas-owned corporations putting profit ahead of their staff and local communities".⁴ With characteristic West Coast candour, DB (Dominion Breweries) was transformed from purveyors of "the working man's brew," to simply a bunch of "Dumb Bastards".⁵

It soon became clear that there was more at stake than the closing of a factory. With everyone seemingly aware that Monteith's selling point "was the history, culture, and mystique of the Coast,"⁶ closing the plant seemed to strike at the heart of much more than just local jobs and community. The success that DB had in building the Monteith's brand through exploiting the mythology of the West Coast, and its centrality to idealised New Zealand identity, meant that conventional relations of commodification did not entirely apply. As the editorial in *The Press* made clear, while the rationale for closing the Greymouth brewery made sense if you were "an accountant", it did not "if you have half an ear for the heartbeat of New Zealanders".⁷

All across the country an extended debate quickly ensued over various aspects of the Monteith's case. Readers were informed that DB was not even a New Zealand company. As with breweries across the globe, DB had long since slipped from local ownership. It was, in fact, now owned by a large regional brewer called Asia Pacific Breweries (APB) based in Singapore, which in turn, was partly owned by brewing giant Heineken.⁸ The local quickly became global. We were soon reading about

4 Quoted in *The Greymouth Evening Star* (23rd March, 2001) 'DB - dumb bastards...', p.1.

5 Damien O'Connor's play on the acronym DB was picked up and widely reported in the various New Zealand newspapers. "They clearly have rebranded themselves 'DB – Dumb Bastards'." See, for example *The Greymouth Evening Star* (23rd March, 2001) 'DB - dumb bastards...', p.1; *The New Zealand Herald* (23rd March, 2001) 'DB drops bombshell on the Coast', p.3; *The Evening Post* (27th March, 2001) 'DB fronts up to bitter backlash', p.1; *The Dominion* (28th March, 2001) 'Monteith's still toast of the Coast', p.3; *The Press* (28th March, 2001) 'A toast to the Coast', p.1. Damien O'Connor is the Labour Government's member of parliament for the West Coast-Tasman electorate whose comments deriding DB's decision seemed to put him at odds with his government's policy of encouraging foreign investment and free trade.

6 Quoted in *The Press* (28th March, 2001) 'Consumer Power', p.8.

7 Quoted in *The Press* (26th March, 2001) 'DB brews up a storm', p.4.

8 DB's annual report for 2000 states that, following a successful takeover, APB had increased its shareholding in DB from 58.39% to 76.63% (DB Group Limited (2000) Annual Report to Shareholders). In 2001 this holding had increased to 76.93%. APB was originally established as a joint venture between Fraser & Neave Limited and Heineken N.V. in 1931. Today APB operates 14 breweries in eight countries. In addition to DB's portfolio of brands, APB's brands include, Tiger Beer, Heineken and Amstel amongst many others. APB is recognised as "one of Asia's leading multinational corporations." Fraser & Neave and Heineken N.V have retained control of APB with 37.9% and 42.5% respective, share of equity (Asia Pacific Breweries Limited (2000) Annual Report).

“multinational brewer DB,”⁹ and claims that parent company APB was reconsidering the future of their three remaining breweries in New Zealand.

Politicians from across the political spectrum made various contributions to the debate. Local Labour Member of Parliament (MP), Damien O’Connor used DB’s foreign ownerships links to mobilise and justify his call for a boycott of DB products as a way for the public to express their opposition to the “multinational consumption of minor players”.¹⁰ Conservative National MP, Nick Smith, declared that “DB have exploited the heritage and character of the West Coast to market Monteith’s and have made a serious error in now turning their back on the Coast”.¹¹ The Green Party’s co-leader, Rod Donald, highlighted the Monteith’s Affair as an example of the “fallacy promoted by the government that an open investment regime will have a net benefit for New Zealand”.¹² In his press release, Donald suggested that incidents like the Monteith’s Affair served as a double blow to New Zealand in terms of contributing to the Balance of Payments deficit and the loss of local jobs as multinationals once again “put profits ahead of local staff and the community”.¹³ New Zealand First leader Winston Peters argued that the Monteith’s Affair was symptomatic of the Government’s “lack of ideas on regional development”. According to Peters, the efforts of successive Ministers amounted to “weasel words” as industry still “drifts to Auckland while heartland New Zealand is left to atrophy”.¹⁴

DB’s decision was widely seen as another example of Auckland’s development coming at a direct cost to the West Coast and other regions.¹⁵ It was this sense of depredation of the regions, argued *The Press*, that was fuelling the anger of so many people.¹⁶ It was soon clear that this was not simply going to be one more factory closure in a long line; something was different. A raw nerve had been exposed. Publican Rosemarie Toal

9 For this description of DB and for variations see, for example, *The Dominion* (23rd March, 2001) ‘Brewery closure has West Coast MP foaming’, p.6; *The Greymouth Evening Star* (24th March, 2001) ‘Monteith’s boycott calls grow off Coast’, p.1; *The New Zealand Herald* (24th March, 2001) ‘Brewery’s end sparks call for a beer boycott’, p.13; *The Press* (24th March, 2001) ‘DB faces consumer fury over Monteith’s closure’, p.1; *The Evening Post* (28th March, 2001) ‘Bitter to the loyal end’, p.1.

10 Quoted in *The New Zealand Herald* (24th March, 2001) ‘Brewery’s end sparks call for a beer boycott’, p.13.

11 Quoted in *The Otago Daily Times* (24th March, 2001) ‘Green MP urges Coast to start brewery after Monteith’s move’, p.29.

12 *The Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand* (26th March, 2001) ‘Foreign ownership makes BoP deficit worse’, Press release.

13 *The Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand* (26th March, 2001) ‘Foreign ownership makes BoP deficit worse’, Press release.

14 *New Zealand First Party* (23rd March, 2001) ‘Spot the difference. Govt lacks regional policy’, Press release.

15 For a particularly vitriolic discussion of these issues see *The Press* (28th March, 2001) ‘Consumer Power’, p.8. For a more circumspect discussion see *The Press* (28th March, 2001) ‘Coast deserves its Brewery’, p.9.

16 See *The Press* (26th March, 2001) ‘DB brews up a storm’, p.4.

seemed to sum up how many felt: “We’ve been kicked in the guts too often and I don’t think we should stand for this ...I think the whole thing is very, very selfish”.¹⁷ From the very first days the public response was geared towards more than simply passive regional animosity. While there were those who suggested the move was “just another case of Auckland – A for abyss – sucking up this country’s resources,”¹⁸ there was a growing commitment to actually do something about it.

Bitter Retractions?

In the wake of extensive public pressure, DB was forced to re-evaluate what they largely considered a matter of management prerogative. Having made a press release on the 22nd of March advising of the closure of the plant, by the 27th they were advising that the decision had substantially been reversed. There was now to be a “significant volume of Monteith’s” that would continue to be brewed on the Coast. Mobilising the sort of PR speak that George Orwell would have had a field day with, DB explained their change of heart on the basis of a

...huge outpouring of support for us to retain the origins of Monteith’s beer on the West Coast. We have listened to people’s concerns and despite the fact the 150 year-old brewery is in major need of an upgrade, and has been struggling to keep up with demand for product for the past two years, we have decided to keep it open.¹⁹

The Press commented, rather laconically, that “DB’s change of heart also followed a 20cents fall in the company’s share price”.²⁰ Celebrations were short-lived, however, as concerns mounted for the fate of the 15 brewery workers made redundant the previous week. Reports that DB was “obviously” not going to revert to the brewery’s original staffing levels did little to allay fears that the plant would be turned into a museum-type brewery.²¹ Despite reassurance, less than 24 hours after the initial announcement, DB was served ‘union papers’ calling for “the immediate reinstatement of staff” and the ending of “an unlawful lockout”.²²

‘Talks’ over DB’s plans for the brewery’s staffing numbers and production levels soon stalemated. A meeting scheduled for the 29th was postponed with both parties heading for their lawyers as the risk of industrial action escalated. The following morning DB appeared to back down once again, announcing the withdrawal of the redundancy notices and a return to full production starting the following week while management

17 Quoted in *The Greymouth Evening Star* (26th March, 2001) ‘Shutters go up against DB products’, p.1.

18 Letter to the Editor, *The Press* (26th March, 2001), p.4.

19 Both of these quotations are taken from the *Dominion Breweries Media Release* (27th March, 2001) ‘DB Breweries Responds to Calls to Keep West Coast Brewery Open’, Press release.

20 Quoted in *The Press* (28th March, 2001) ‘A toast to the Coast’, p.1.

21 Quoted in *The Nelson Mail* (28th March, 2001) ‘DB reassures Coasters’, p.6.

22 Quoted in *The Greymouth Evening Star* (28th March, 2001) ‘Union goes into bat for workers’, p.1.

reviewed production and staffing levels.²³ The news quickly had the Food Service Workers Union claiming victory, while commenting that the solidarity shown by the West Coast community in particular was one of the many positive outcomes.²⁴

It wasn't until almost four months later that the turmoil and uncertainty over the brewery's future was in some sense settled. It took until the 16th of May for DB to reveal its plans publicly. Both Auckland and Greymouth would brew all five beers in the Monteith's range with the production split being determined by "ongoing market demand, brand growth, export opportunities and production scheduling".²⁵ Ten of the fifteen full-time workers were to be retained, while the other five were to be offered jobs at DB's Waitemata Brewery in Auckland, or redundancy.

With none of the staff taking up the transfer offer or accepting voluntary redundancy, it took until the 13th of July before it was known who the five redundant workers would be. When the announcement came, it was no surprise that those who had "campaigning hardest" to save the brewery had lost their jobs.²⁶ The five marked for redundancy were identified by *The Press* as "the public face of the campaign". Peter Low, union delegate, and one of those made redundant, commented: "I feel that they got rid of the people that actually worked extremely hard to reopen the brewery... Obviously they want to run the business with people who they think they'll have on their side..."²⁷

Resisting Left Melancholy?

Exactly what turned the normally effective rhetoric of being forced to make 'difficult decisions' in order to fully utilise existing capacity, into a nationwide debate over identity, history, and the obligations of companies to their community, is of course hard to say. What seems clear is that the central issues were not simply economic,²⁸ and that the processes at play were neither simply alien nor alienating. While one could certainly

23 The *Greymouth Evening Star* (30th March, 2001) 'All workers told to front up for work on Monday', p.1.

24 *Services and Food Workers Union Press Release* (30th March, 2001) 'Union claims victory as DB buckles', Press release.

25 Quoted in DB Group Limited (2001) 'Annual report to shareholders', p.9.

26 According to the headline in *The Press* (13th July, 2001) 'DB lays off staff who campaigned hardest for plant', p.3.

27 Both of these quotations appeared in *The Press* (13th July, 2001) 'DB lays off staff who campaigned hardest for plant', p.3.

28 It is important to note that DB's decision to close the brewery was not made on the basis of poor performance on the part of the brand. Rather, as many commentators dryly noted, Monteith's was a victim of its own success. DB's decision was justified because "[w]ith the increasing popularity of premium craft beers the West Coast brewery has been running at maximum capacity. Volume has grown by 250% since 1995 and to meet continued levels of production the brewery would have to undergo a significant and costly upgrade." *New Zealand Brewer's Network* (22nd March, 2001) 'Closure of West Coast brewery and transfer of production', retrieved from <http://www.brewing.co.nz>

construct the story in terms of resistance to globalisation, one could just as easily construct it in terms of community acceptance. This was especially the case in terms of the community's relationship with the brand. How we make sense of such seeming contradictions can perhaps lead us up the path to resisting left melancholy. Here the focus is not so much on the emotional retrieval of binaries that worked in the past and that provide consolation in the present, as it is on developing critique that attempts to grapple with the contradictions at play.

Questioning Location

Arif Dirlik argues that “global capitalism represents an unprecedented penetration of local society globally by the economy and culture of capital, so that the local understood in a ‘traditional’ sense may be less relevant than ever”.²⁹ What was increasingly obvious in the Monteith's Affair was that traditional conceptualisations of the local (and the global) in terms of a topographic imaginary were inadequate, and often obstructed our ability to account for the processes at play. The local and the global were not objects but discursive effects with a currency that was anything but essential. Making sense of location is not simply a matter of knowing a place on a map, as it is of articulating a relation within an overdetermined history. As such, we are drawn to exercise considerable caution over moving too quickly to accept any particular logic as the key to making sense of the issues at hand. Quite simply, neither topography, economics, culture, or class, can be turned to as an escape from complexity.

What we have seen in the Monteith's Affair is that location is intimately tied into the complex history of the region, the country, and indeed post-colonial relations more generally. In many ways, despite the affair ostensibly revolving around the quite precise material location of a factory, very little of the discussion and debate was actually centred on the material relations of the factory and the plight of the workers. As such, we can see that the location that mattered was in fact what might ordinarily be understood to be quite imaginary. And yet it was, perhaps, precisely this imaginativeness that facilitated the widespread mobilisation of support. The ideal and the material were not so much poles apart, as intimately interrelated. Born and bred Coaster Selwyn (Sel) Thomas put it this way: “they [non-Coasters and Aucklanders in particular] may not know where Greymouth is, or want to come here, but they love the way it's made in some quaint town in the South Island and that's what they are paying for”.³⁰ While location may be a key part of the brand's integrity and appeal, it was widely recognised that this location did not exist in any simple one (or three, for that matter) dimensional way.

The Monteith's Affair reminds us that the truth of location is very much a socio-political and historical product. As such, we need to be focused not so much on what is

29 Dirlik, A. (1996) ‘The Global in the Local. Global /Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary’, in R. Wilson and W. Dissanayake (eds.) *Asia-Pacific: Culture, Politics and Society*. Durham: Duke University, p.28.

30 Quoted in *The New Zealand Herald* (31st March, 2001) ‘Beer's secret is Coaster's pride’, p.21.

true in some essential sense, but what traffics as truth, and the processes that facilitate that traffic. Furthermore, we come to see that what comes to be accepted as true, to be *real-is-ed*, depends in no small part upon the active participation or consent of the actors involved. The logic of the truth that comes to matter is not the logic of calculation, but of history and politics.

Establishing concrete historical ties to the West Coast has been an essential ingredient in the make-up of the Monteith's brand, with each bottle boldly declaring "proud brewer to the West Coast since 1858".³¹ Yet as *The Evening Post* points out, "this was either a wild exaggeration or a simple error because the Coast was still an unsettled wilderness then, and the Reefton brewer where William Monteith made the first brew was not around until the 1880s".³² Consequently, the years in which the Monteith's legend was supposedly established, were years in which Monteith's never actually existed.

Indeed, if historical accuracy is as essential as the marketing suggests, then there are other breweries that have a greater claim to the "authentic West Coast" label than Monteith's. Miner's Brewery, for example, a 100% Westport owned and operated brewery, positions itself on the strength of "good beer and West Coast loyalty". Yet, Miner's Brewery remains a minnow outside of the West Coast region of Buller, supplying only a handful of outlets in other parts of the Coast. What we see here is that what counts as true has little to do with the authentic history but is instead largely a function of what is widely known as 'new paint and perks'. That is to say, as *The Press* reported, Miner's Brewery's modest success has largely been a function of having been squeezed out by "financial incentives offered to publicans by the brewery giants, such as new paint jobs, recarpeting, loans, and overseas trips".³³

To many of those involved in this affair, calling a beer 'Monteith's' implies, by definition, that the beer has come from the West Coast. The Monteith's Affair, in this sense, involves a violation of what seems to be fundamental truths concerning the relationship between production and place.³⁴ In a letter to the editor of *The Greymouth Evening Star*, Taryn Bell, Andrew Palmer and Allison Sullivan demonstrate this keen sense of kinship between production and place: "Speight's signifies the South. Lion Red is Auckland. CD from Canterbury. Monteith's is the Coast. Don't take it away – it is part of us and we are sure the brew, and sales, will suffer as a result".³⁵

And yet, when we look at the example of Speight's, a beer that is intimately tied to the uniqueness of the southern city of Dunedin and the Otago region in which it resides, we see a quite different structure of authenticity. For Speight's, there is little challenge to their claim to be the 'Pride of the South,' despite the fact that the closest most of their

31 Quoted in *The Evening Post* (28th March, 2001) 'Home is where the Monteith's (still) is', p.1.

32 Quoted in *The Evening Post* (28th March, 2001) 'Home is where the Monteith's (still) is', p.1.

33 All the quotes in this paragraph are taken from *The Press* (26th March, 2001) 'Angry Coasters boycott DB', p.7.

34 As Gerry Morris put it: "You wouldn't move Guinness out of Dublin." Quoted in *The Greymouth Evening Star* (24th March, 2001) 'Monteith's boycott calls grow off Coast', p.1.

35 Letter to the Editor, *The Greymouth Evening Star* (26th March, 2001), p.5.

beer gets to the Dunedin brewery is when it is driven past on the back of a truck on its 400km journey from Christchurch. Curiously, being the 'Pride of the South' does not demand that the contents of Speight's cans and bottles be, in fact, brewed in the South. For Speights' owners, Lion Breweries, such details are inconsequential. According to Lion Corporate affairs director, Graham Seatter, just because Speights' beer had traditionally been brewed in Dunedin since 1876, one should not infer "that anybody takes from that statement the meaning that the beer in that bottle is brewed in Dunedin".³⁶ This contradiction seems to be magnified when we note that part of the protest against Monteith's involved switching to Speight's. However we come to understand location, it cannot simply be reduced to an expression of the local and the global. The location that matters is more than a matter of empirical facts.

Questioning Resistance

In this case we have seen the calling into question of the hegemony that has maintained divisions between the interests of workers and consumers; that has enabled the commodification of tradition in the name of brand building and ownership, and that has installed performativity as the legitimate mediating logic between the community and its resources. And yet this frontline in the battle for democracy hardly signalled wholesale resistance. What makes this case so interesting is the complex interplay between complicity and resistance. And as numerous writers across the social sciences and humanities have recently come to realise, resistance is a far more complex process than the dominant image of a challenge to sovereign authority would have us believe. Questioning resistance is an important element in being able to resist left melancholy.

While some may wish to view this case as a moment of pure resistance to globalisation there is very much a sense that this resistance came by way of, and lent support to, that which is integral to globalisation. While it may, or may not, be the case that the West Coasters' are honest, blunt, and upfront, as Damien O'Connor suggests, it is certainly the case that they sought to exercise those traditional values by way of seeking to protect the very modern virtues of the "West Coast brand that we have promoted so proudly."³⁷ While *de jure*, the scene was one where corporate ownership and control of the brand was unquestioned, *de facto* this ownership and control was far more ambiguous. As one letter to the editor made clear, "DB may own the brewery and the Monteith's name. They do not own the people who keep the brand alive and built it into one of the company's most successful labels".³⁸

36 Quoted in *The Otago Daily Times* (3rd September, 2001) 'Trouble brews on label', p.3. Unfortunately for Graham Seatter at least one person did, lodging a complaint with the Commerce Commission that resulted in the phrase "traditionally brewed at Speight's Brewery, Dunedin, since 1876" being removed from the labels and replaced with "traditional brewers of fine ales since 1876."

37 Damien O'Connor quoted in *The New Zealand Herald* (24th March, 2001) 'Brewery's end sparks call for a beer boycott', p.13. Note the inherent contradiction here between truth and brands.

38 Letter to the Editor, *The Greymouth Evening Star* (26th March, 2001), p.5.

Here we see how brands have become inextricably tied to how people make sense of themselves and their communities. The public interest in this issue has been reflected in the popularity of Naomi Klein's book *No Logo*.³⁹ This book, as with many others, not only identifies how brands have come to dominate, but characteristically offers suggestions for how people might resist such domination. As the name suggests, this resistance typically takes the form of a denial of the meaning system mobilised by the brands. What is of particular note in the Monteith's Affair is that the meaning system was, if anything, over-identified with rather than resisted.

In the Monteith's Affair, people did not protest at the meaning being mobilised by the brand, but protested by way of that meaning. The corporate 'free-loading' upon the place of the West Coast within the local national imaginary, carried with it a cost that they had not accounted for. DB's ability to mobilise media and use its economic scale as a platform for building a proprietary brand was exactly what made them most vulnerable. This was a point not lost on the locals: "The big corporates only understand one thing, money. If you want to hurt them, hit them in the pocket. Don't drink at DB-owned pubs, don't drink DB products. And don't drink Monteith's until it returns to the Coast".⁴⁰

While authenticity was one of the central bases of the resistance – principally the possibility that the brew would no longer be true to its claim of being a West Coast beer and of valuing tradition and history – in many ways resistance depended upon, and recognised, the value of a certain kind of inauthenticity. The public support for the beer could well be characterised in terms of a melancholic response itself. The West Coast representing both that which has been lost, and that which is so central to contemporary New Zealand identity. *The Evening Post's* summation of the relationship between the location and the brand was typical of how many felt:

The brew is loaded with egalitarian symbolism; a beer made by craftsmen rather than machines, in a clean, green place where old values still matter. To drink Monteith's is to taste a slower, simple way of life. It is a slice of heritage.⁴¹

For many, what Monteith's had come to represent was not simply some story made up to sell bottles of beer but a reflection that was anchored in 'reality'. Moving production outside of the West Coast directly contravened the authenticity of the brand to such an extent, claimed public relations consultant Gerry Morris, that "DB's integrity and credibility was now totally suspect".⁴² The Mayor of Grey District argued: "Monteith's is a West Coast name. When it's made in Auckland it's not a West Coast product – and everyone will know it".⁴³ The public too were well aware of the selective nature of the reality of brands. In a letter to the editor, locals asked if "the sign outside the brewery

39 Klein, N. (2000) *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*. New York: Picador.

40 Letter to the Editor, *The Greymouth Evening Star* (23rd March, 2001), p.6.

41 Quoted in *The Evening Post* (28th March, 2001) 'Bitter to the loyal end', p.1.

42 Quoted in *The Greymouth Evening Star* (27th March, 2001) 'DB bosses call for capital meeting', p.1.

43 Quoted in *The New Zealand Herald* (24th March, 2001) 'Brewery's end sparks call for a beer boycott', p.13.

proudly tells of the involvement in the local community since 1868. Is it now going to be replaced with one saying it was sold out to the masses in Auckland?”⁴⁴

The story we have told has not simply been a heroic tale of resistance in which the local community repels the domination of the insidious corporation. Such a story could have been told if we had simply retrieved, without question, any of a range of locating binaries. To do so would certainly have been easier. And potentially more politically digestible. The question then would have to be asked as to the nature of those politics. The problem of left melancholy is that of a politics of the past dominating our engagement with the present. Resisting left melancholy begins with recognising this.

Bitter Aftertastes?

David Held reminds us that globalisation involves processes that are not simply either ‘economic’ or ‘cultural’. He suggests that globalisation demands “rethinking the nature, form and content of democratic politics in the face of the complex intermeshing of local, national, regional and global relations and processes”.⁴⁵ Our engagement with the Monteith’s Affair has been motivated by the desire to translate some of its complexities and ambiguities into our collective reading of globalisation and its challenges. Whether or not we see the affair as having a somewhat bitter aftertaste – in terms of the (im)possibilities of resistance, the dynamics of brand culture, the marginalisation of workers, and so on – is in some sense conditional upon our ability to make linkages with other ongoing challenges and struggles. This process of articulation does not demand the reduction of globalisation to the binaries that all too often prevail.

Wendy Brown suggests that breaking free from left melancholy requires “a spirit that embraces the notion of a deep and indeed unsettling transformation of society rather than recoiling at this prospect”.⁴⁶ It is without doubt that much of the public protest against globalisation is infused with the spirit of transformation. What is less clear is that this hoped and worked for transformation is able to break free from collective desires that readily come to worship long lost gods. What these notes have sought to offer is a reminder of some of the complexities of contemporary processes of globalisation. These notes are not offered in what Gibson-Graham have called a debunking mode (describing what something is and should not be)⁴⁷ but in the spirit of making links between the protests on the street, and the complexities of the struggles of local communities. These links are not always obvious. And, in many cases, local struggles are not even recognised as struggles against globalisation, either by those who are involved, or those who are spectating.

44 Letter to the Editor, *The Greymouth Evening Star* (26th March, 2001), p.5.

45 Held, D. (1995) *Democracy and the Global Order: From Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University, p.ix.

46 Brown, W. (2000) ‘Resisting Left Melancholia’, in P. Gilroy, L. Grossberg and A. McRobbie (eds.) *Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall*. London: Verso, p.28.

47 See Gibson-Graham, J. K. ‘An Ethics of the Local’, *Rethinking Marxism* (Forthcoming).

the authors

We are part of a research group exploring stories of globalisation and their determinations.

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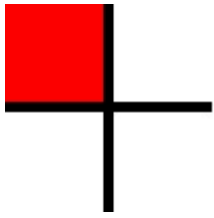
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After Marketing and Social Construction

Pauline Ferguson

review of:

Chris Hackley (2001) *Marketing and Social Construction: Exploring the Rhetorics of Managed Consumption*. London: Routledge. (HB: pp.191, £55, ISBN: 0415208599)

After learning of Chris Hackley's recent monograph I was intrigued as to what it might offer. In line with the intent underlining this special issue 'After Organisation Studies', his contribution, as part of an interpretative series within marketing, appeared to be part of a wider move in the development of disciplinary research. Agreeing personally with 'going after the after' (in the sense of pursuing open critique towards progressive ends), this book, by setting out to explore marketing academia in such a way, held undoubted appeal and promise.

Within the book Hackley aims to investigate what he describes as shortcomings within academic marketing. From the beginning, he locates himself outwith the realms of 'mainstream' marketing in order to gain insightful distance from this particular group, as his domain of enquiry. "So I invoke unities like 'marketing' and 'social construction', and indeed 'mainstream' merely in order to destabilise and then reconstruct them in the pursuit of my own literary marketing agenda" (p. 1).

Central to Hackley's pursuit is the notion that the 'mainstream' approach preserves an unhealthy level of prescriptivism, through its ideological maintenance of managerial relevance and consumption expertise. Enabling his description and dislike of the mainstream penchant for the one-dimensional, bullet-point approach where complex social behaviours and conditions are "collapsed into a text of marketing management" (p. 186), Hackley underlines the value of a social constructionist lens. Providing critical distance and an 'alternate' voice for analysis, social constructionism he argues, is a perspective which can facilitate development through an illuminating and emancipatory look at rhetorically closed off areas of marketing thought. Generating understanding into how various texts have been "worked up, sustained and defended" (p. 39) "through

language and other symbolic practices” (p. 46) allows for space, he argues, within which creative and increasingly valuable research can ensue.

Theoretical Positioning

Hackley underlines his political wish to promote through his book a general “rhythm” (p. 47) of social constructionist acceptance within marketing thought. “I want to try and write about a shifting point of departure for social research in marketing” (p. 39).

Rather than choosing to espouse preference for particular methods, he feels that with respect of the positivist norms pervading the discipline, emphasis should be placed on social constructionism being introduced and accepted more fully as a viable research approach.

With this in mind, Chapter Two demonstrates Hackley’s organisation of some of the main schools and approaches within social constructionist thinking. As such he decides to present concepts like ethnomethodology, sociology of scientific knowledge, post-structuralism and postmodernism in a rather limited, relatively list-like fashion. At one stage in the offering (although one must excuse misinterpretation on my part of any ironic intention by Hackley) he even goes as far as to provide, despite his social constructionist perspective, a nine point list underlining “social constructionism’s potential contribution to marketing thought” (p. 52). Although taken together this constitutes a highly useful resource of references and literature, the presentation of such concepts was at times confusing and arguably (even acknowledging the introductory status of his offering) lacked the necessary depth in dealing with what are often complex issues.

Overall I felt such an approach was slightly disappointing. I would have preferred Hackley to pursue here a more overt and substantial critique of the various social constructionist ideas and influential works. One particular let down came through the omission of some key texts dealing with issues arguably important to his worthy mission. For example, with Hackley’s intent to create distance for himself from his own discipline in order to subject it to reflexive attention, he could have *gone after* (in terms of searching out, as well as building on) the work of Latour and Woolgar (1979), who deal with these central ideas through their concentration on institutionalised knowledge construction. Further, the work of Bourdieu (1988) considering intellectual life, and Law (1994) with his different ideas on organisational ‘ordering’ may perhaps have been useful inclusions.

Additionally, a more explicit development of his own theoretical position through treatment of the literature beyond introductory level, would have in my opinion, offered more value to the text. I would argue that it may have provided a stronger basis for his scholarly intent, as well as facilitating the reader’s ability to comprehend and engage more fully with the analysis later in the book.

Analytic Closure

The textual scrutiny of marketing's 'mainstream' arrives in Chapter Three with Hackley posing the question: "what are the main ways in which marketing is textually worked up as an empirically bounded, normatively ordered and problem-categorisable field of enquiry?" (p. 74). From this stems a journey within the book which sets out to textually investigate various instantiations of the marketing field.

Hackley raises countless examples of realist discourse which he renders guilty of fuelling an intellectually deprived marketing readership. In trying to unpack this prevailing ideology he critiques standard textbook offerings, provides a thorough investigation into marketing communications rhetoric, as well as spotlighting some of the history and personalities behind major marketing institutions such as the Academy of Marketing. These chapters were aimed at shaking the bastions and presumptions (he presumed) that are instilled throughout the discipline, in order that we may think beyond them. To this end I think Hackley in providing a much needed voice for such issues will be largely successful.

Here may have been a good time for Hackley to engage in a more varied empirical strategy towards exploring the discipline. What struck me, whilst reading through some of his work, was his anecdotal style of reportage, which, whilst offering enlightening opinions, also, ironically, seemed in a way to mirror his main disgruntlement with 'mainstreamism'. By using no naturalistic accounts of how the discourse he spoke of unfolded in the field (i.e. the utterances and actions of the people who are perpetuating such culture), I believe he, like the ideology he critiques, can also be said to have collapsed marketing reality into a text (p. 186). This can be highlighted in the quote below, which underlines Hackley listing his own assumptions as the basis for his research contribution. "Mainstream influences in marketing research theory and education are *intellectually inhibiting, philosophically naïve and politically disingenuous*, not to mention *managerially useless*" (p. 8).

Alongside the empirical shortcoming in generating such categories, I also felt that he offered too little direct evidence from the written texts he did choose to deal with. Engaging and working as a reader through Hackley's interpretations without access to the textual data, I suggest may inhibit imagination, and the chance to open insightful personal understandings. Perhaps Hackley missed a chance to untie reflexive potential throughout this book. As he valuably underlines, any move beyond some of the closed thinking within marketing would be most welcome.

Politics and Text

It is important to raise here, however, that in forwarding criticisms or indeed *going after* Hackley's work myself it is not without a recognition and appreciation of the institutional context within which it has been written. As Hackley himself points out that "research is a political thing constructed through texts" (p. 39), and as such particular modes of expression must have been, of course, subtly (or not) tailored.

A good example of Hackley working within institutional 'reality' may be highlighted well through drawing attention to the extensive citations employed throughout his text. As well as providing a first class guide to research and researchers throughout the marketing field, this at times excessive authorial display of disciplinary knowledge through referencing, perhaps also reveals an element of necessary rigour and legitimacy-seeking on Hackley's part. This along with his excessively self-referring writing style clearly marks out a strategy, unconscious or not, which, arguably highlights to his target audience (those who need tempted to social constructionism) his proclamation of marketing mastery. "Each text, laboratory, author and discipline strives to establish a world in which its own interpretation is made more likely by virtue of the increasing number of people from whom it extracts compliance" (Latour and Woolgar, 1986: 285).

As such, the display deemed necessary on Hackley's part, may perhaps help render himself deserving of an exploration into lesser known territories such as social constructionism. Additionally it may be this style which facilitates the approaches' likelihood of acceptance in the first instance, as well somewhat ironically helping to promote an overall movement towards life *after* mainstreamism.

Acknowledging this inseparable reality of politics and text, my final comment about this book comes from Hackley's 'insistence' on building the blocks of social constructionism within marketing by purely targeting 'mainstream' discourse. I am not suggesting that mainstreamism should be exempt from scrutiny. On the contrary, I think that by *going after* this grouping Hackley demonstrates many times over hugely interesting and previously 'unheard' reasons why they should not be exempt from critical attention. However, given his offering early on in the book that marketing thought is being stifled partly by increasingly divided perspectives within the discipline, the choice here to critique *one* of those sides may well have been unnecessarily antagonistic. As an author who rightly proclaims 'inclusive' (p. 2) intentions for uses of social constructionism within marketing, I feel that by adopting this focus he may have misrepresented the enlightening potential of such an approach. Given the scope of social constructionism to disregard boundaries, this may have been an opportunity for the author to help subvert, not perpetuate, the current futile disciplinary divides.

This last remark represents fairly well my overall evaluation of *Marketing and Social Constructionism*. Although agreeing strongly with the spirit behind Hackley's intention to critically pursue the research potential within marketing, I feel that the manner in which he approached the subject, often denied the full realisation of his goal here. Despite this, I believe that the book through its introduction of the topic, constitutes an important foundation and statement for the discipline in general. It is very much hoped that its ethos substantiates itself further, after *Marketing and Social Constructionism*.

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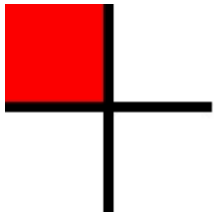
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After Cultural Economy

Gavin Jack

review of:

Paul du Gay and Michael Pryke (eds.) (2002) *Cultural Economy*. London: Sage. (PB: pp.240, £18.99, ISBN: 0761959939)

Introduction

Many social scientific narratives about the study and representation of contemporary markets and organizations are marked by the mobilization of a now conventionalised dualism. On the one hand, so we are often told, markets and organizations are economic entities whose existence is based on causal relationships determined by objective and material conditions, which are independent of the value-laden sphere of human culture and society. Cultural and societal activity therein become an ideological outcome of determinate *a priori* economic relations. These are often seen as the markets and organizations of economists, and in organization studies, their images are often visible in the work of systems theorists and particular kinds of Marxist political economists. On the other hand, and by purportedly stark contrast, we have a notion of markets and organizations as social creations in which cultural practices influence economic processes. Notions of economy are brought into existence and given prescience by the discursive practices of human beings and non-human objects, sometimes in a dialogical, sometimes in a dialectical, relation between the perceived constrictures of social structure and the perceived intentions and actions of social agents. In short, then, social scientific understandings of markets and organizations have often taken dualistic form, around the economy-led account of so-called 'political economists' and the culture-led account of so-called 'cultural studies', and particular kinds of anthropology.

This representation of a dualistic narrative is, of course, reductive and overly simplified on my part, but it does seem axiomatic of the way that academic study of economy-culture relations in the social sciences has frequently been marshalled. And this more often than not leads to the adoption of overly sanitized positions in complex debates like those on culture-economy relations. Several recent works on culture-economy relations

(notably Ray and Sayer, 1999) have deployed this dualism not just as a discursive prop aimed at organizing its constituent contributions, but, more importantly, as part of the technology necessary for the manufacture of a contribution to knowledge. For, in setting out a quasi-binary opposition at the beginning of one's text, it then becomes pertinent to suggest that its contribution is one which demonstrates how we might (and of course should) go beyond this dualistic thinking. The question for any text that sets itself up in these terms is, however, not just whether it succeeds in thinking beyond the dualism, but what this kind of thinking might look like when committed to text.

Cultural Economy is an edited book which, to a large degree, follows such a conventionalized narrative. The book is the product of a workshop on cultural economy held at the Open University in the UK in January 2000, and its multidisciplinary contributors (from social anthropology, sociology, cultural studies, media studies, geography) constitute some of the leading UK-based commentators on the relationship between culture and economy. In addition to an introductory chapter by the editors Paul du Gay and Michael Pryke, the book comprises eleven substantive chapters covering an interesting and varied range of topics (from advertising and work ethics to popular music and virtualism), methodological approaches (from ethnography to historiography) and rhetorical styles (from strong polemic to carefully argued empirical study), a diversity which renders its reading a stimulating and variegated experience. The eleven chapters are loosely organized into four thematic parts: chapters 1-3 (by John Law, John Allen, Don Slater) analyse how economic knowledge is constructed; 4-5 (Paul Heelas, Angela McRobbie) focus on work ethics and their increasing culturalization; 6-8 (Keith Negus, Sean Nixon, Liz McFall) explore the historical and contemporary cultural-economic constitution of aesthetic and creative industries and 9-11 (Daniel Miller, Alan Warde, Nigel Thrift) address the relationship between cultural economy and political economy. In reviewing this book, I do not intend to replicate this narrative structure since, in reading this text, I notice connections and contradictions that span across the four parts of the book and subsequently disorganize its intended order. This review sets out to reflect the re-ordered connections of my reading in exploring the delights and disjunctures of this book.

As with most introductions to edited texts, du Gay and Pryke's initial chapter is both a claim to the territory of the book and a well-qualified outline of its scope, structure and generic thesis. They begin by mapping out the so-called 'cultural turn' as their discursive terrain, highlighting the contingent nature of this term upon the 'context and preferred project' (p. 1) in which its exact meaning is made. As they point out, the cultural turn could be used to signify the contemporary interest in the production of meaning at work; the growing importance of culture, creative and aesthetic industries to Western economies; or, in terms of the theorization of economic and organizational life mentioned earlier, the ways in which discourse actively constitutes the subjects and objects of these worlds. The contemporary nature of this relationship between culture and economy is the one that du Gay and Pryke's text sets out to explore and assess. In this lucid introduction, the editors make it clear that they approach the term 'cultural economy' with two senses in mind.

The first involves a reversal of the (implicitly encoded) Marxian base-superstructure model which asserts the autonomy of the economic sphere over the cultural, and the

determination of the latter by the former. Using some nice examples of the retail service sector, du Gay and Pryke not only demonstrate the inseparability of economic and cultural categories, but also assert (perhaps not surprisingly following a distinctly Foucauldian, post-structuralist line of thought) the discursively constituted nature of economically relevant activity. Viewing economy as culture, then, involves a focus on “the practical ways in which ‘economically relevant activity’ is performed and enacted” (p. 5). Many of the chapters in the book, and perhaps most successfully John Law’s, instantiate this cultural economic analysis as “an emergent form of inquiry concerned with the practical material-cultural ways in which ‘economic’ objects and persons are put together from disparate parts” (p. 8). It is in this way that the editors desire to collapse the culture-economy binary, which has been a key feature of social scientific thought for two hundred years.

The second understanding of cultural economy which guides their book is the so-called ‘culturalization thesis’. Best substantiated in Lash and Urry’s (1994) *Economies of Signs and Space*, the culturalization thesis represents an epochal claim about the relationship between culture and the economy, namely that the economy is now ‘more than ever culturalized’. Perhaps more recognizable as a variety of claims about living in a ‘knowledge economy’ or a ‘network society’, this thesis is based on a temporal disjuncture according to which we live in a time marked by a radically different relationship between the economy and culture than previous eras. Du Gay and Pryke set out to challenge this thesis through their text, although, unlike some of their subsequent contributors (notably Miller), they do not reject the culturalization thesis wholesale since, as they point out, some of the work (notably by Warde, Heelas and Allen) suggests the importance of a situated form of culturalization thesis. Having said this, they suggest two major lines of critique which become fairly well substantiated in subsequent chapters. The first is that such epochalist theories represent grand narratives which are often so grand that they are decontextualised and ‘empirically insubstantial’ (p. 8). In this regard, one of the strengths of this book is its call for and exemplification of the kinds of empirically fine-grained genealogical method recommended by Foucault. McFall’s chapter on the history of advertising practice is an excellent example of just this kind of method, one which, in the case of her work on persuasiveness, explodes much of the sweeping generalization about economy and society that forms the backdrop of epochalist claims about changes in advertising appeals.

The second and related line of critique of the culturalization thesis as an argument about epochal cultural economic relations is that it presupposes a distinction between economic and cultural logic. For, in order to say that a period of time in society is substantively more cultural than a/the previous one, one must hold on to some conceptually distinct idea about what is and is not cultural. In writing on advertising, for instance, this distinction often manifests itself in a line being drawn between a more use-value centered past and a more sign-value present, as noted by du Gay and Pryke. Once more, interestingly enough, we see the re-emergence of Marxist terminology used to construct dualistic forms of commentary about culture-economy relations across different time periods. Here again the editors are illuminating a binary that underpins thinking on this particular area of economic life, a binary which subsequent chapters take to task with differing degrees of success. In short then, *Cultural Economy* works from a well-specified editorial frame whose two key discursive props are, first of all, a

broadly conceived post-structuralist form of cultural economic analysis which collapses culture-economy dualisms and, secondly, a now well established culturalization thesis, based on an epochalist grand narrative about changing relations between culture and the economy. These two props provide the backbone of many of the arguments pursued in the subsequent chapters.

Chapters

As mentioned earlier, I shall not review each of the chapters in the order set by the editors, but instead group them together in ways that reflect my own readings. To begin with I return to an earlier theme in this review, namely the way in which dualisms are often deployed in order to frame a piece of writing and its subsequent contribution to knowledge. Most of the chapters begin with some commentary on the problematic separation of economic and cultural spheres, and go on in different ways to demonstrate the foolishness of such an analytic distinction. A common method for developing such a position, pursued by Law, Nixon, Slater and Negus, lies in the interpretation of empirical data they had each collected via different means for previous research projects. Law's account, for me the strongest of these four contributions, draws upon material collected from ethnographic work in the Daresbury SERC Lab in Cheshire, UK to demonstrate not only that material practices in this lab were simultaneously cultural and economic (in line with the generic thesis of the overall text), but also that these practices enacted what he called 'complex interferences between orders and discourses', i.e. the construction of different economic subjectivities which interfere with and complicate each other. Law has already published some of this Daresbury work (see Law, 1991), so it is perhaps not that surprising that his chapter is so well developed conceptually and analytically. He brings together an impressive number of theoretical ideas from STS (Science, Technology and Society), Actor Network Theory and Foucauldian post-structuralism in outlining his conceptualization of the everyday practices involved in the production of economically relevant activity in the lab. His chapter is well-written and clearly structured and is an effective example of how to achieve analytic depth through an examination of the micro-practices of everyday life.

Slater, in his chapter on cultural and economic relations in an advertising agency, also sets out to dissolve the dualism between culture and the economy, drawing upon previously collected ethnographic material (he calls it 'historical fieldwork', as the data were originally collected in 1980). His particular interest lies in understanding the meaning and construction of markets through the lived social practices and material objects of ad agency employees. For me, what was interesting about this chapter was not so much his argument that notions of markets or competition are not economic in the conventional sense, nor that producers cannot understand the cultural form of their product outside of a context of market competition (p. 63). This is essentially an expression of the *rapprochement* of culture and economy typified by the book as a whole and, as Slater himself points out, is of limited aim in terms of theoretical contribution. Rather, it is Slater's attack on 'culturalist' approaches i.e. those deriving from the culturalization thesis, to understanding the constitution and practices of markets that is most strident and worth reading. In this regard, Slater cites Judith

Williamson's work on advertising as an example of a culturalist approach that willfully neglects the micro-economic practices of selling in favour of an examination of the way that advertising reproduces the ideological structures of a patriarchal capitalism. Having become axiomatic in studies of advertising (see also McFall's chapter in this book), this marginalisation of the micro-economic has the effect, according to Slater, of rendering the kind of macro-ideological analysis pursued by Williamson "an abstract, disembodied functionalism" (p. 75). Slater is particularly clear that studies of cultural economy require more relevant theories of the sociology of economic life, in order that a more nuanced account of cultural economies might be achieved. As he says:

[T]he space currently occupied by the culture-economy divisions and reductions can be reconstructed at least partially by treating concepts such as markets, products and competition as lived realities rather than formal categories...this approach must include economic theory as an object of research, in that it plays a constructive role in the production of economic realities...but it enters the picture as a participant rather than an observer. (p. 76-77)

We will return to Slater's call for a sociology of micro-economic life later.

The chapter by Nixon is very similar to Slater's in terms of both theme and thesis. Based on some interview material (the exact amount is unspecified) and documentary evidence, Nixon also looks at advertising agencies and more specifically at the ways in which contracts of agreement between agencies and clients, and attendant financial arrangements are organized culturally. Interestingly, Nixon is the only author to draw upon the work of Ernesto Laclau in articulating the mutual constitution of the cultural and the economic (Foucault tends to be the 'favourite' of the contributors to this book). His chapter focuses on the fate of the commission-based system of remuneration which had traditionally formed the backbone of client-agency relationships in advertising and was under threat from new systems of remuneration based on the agency becoming more accountable and transparent to the client. Taking agency remuneration as a form of economic activity, Nixon demonstrates that this shift from one form of payment to another was reflective of a wider cultural reconstruction of the identity of ad agencies as particular kinds of service provider. This he uses as evidence for the manner in which particular cultural practices and forms provide the basis for the constitution of commercial relations in this industry. Like Slater's chapter, Nixon's is clear and well structured and instantiates well the first sense of cultural economy set out by du Gay and Pryke.

Through a study of the popular music industry, Negus explores the formation of what he terms 'aesthetic' industries. Again in a similar vein to Law, Slater and Nixon, Negus draws upon previously collected interview data and other materials which he has published on the subject of pop music (in 1992 and 1999) as the basis for his work. Using this material he, like the previous three authors, convincingly demonstrates that what might appear to be a fundamentally or an essentially economic decision in the music industry such as the signing of an artist, is in fact a product of a set of historically specific cultural values. Apart from the careful theoretical mapping which Negus presents at the beginning of the chapter, and his persuasive data analysis, the value of this chapter for me is the explicit concern with the politics of recognition, and concomitant issues of social and cultural marginalisation in the music industry. Negus does not so much pay lip service to this, as convincingly demonstrate the cultural and

institutional arrangements through which such marginalisation is achieved. This is one of the very few chapters in the book (McRobbie's and perhaps Thrift's chapters excluded) that deals explicitly with the social effects of particular forms of cultural economy, and, to that extent, this is an important chapter.

By this point, all these chapters, in narrative terms for sure, and substantive terms for the most part, are beginning to resonate with each other, forcing the reader into submission and promising to take the mutually constitutive relations of cultural and economic categories more seriously. But no more please – I believe you!!! Each of these chapters is convincing on the whole, Law's most so, Nixon's is a little predictable. Slater tempts us with a sociology of microeconomic practice as his parting gift, and Negus provides a more concerted focus on the social effects of aesthetic economies. Although persuaded by the arguments of each chapter, the fact that not one of these authors bothers to tell us anything about their research design nor any aspect of methodology does leave me a little cold. I am all for greater attention to the fine-grained details of everyday life, but these might do well to come with at least some kind of methodological health certificate. Indeed, the neglect of issues of methodology is, with the exceptions of McFall and Thrift, characteristic of this volume. Some inspection of the manner in which evidence was gleaned and transformed into written narrative might have enabled the reader to decide whether or not they were actually reading about the practices and experiences of research participants or whether they had been forced to make way for the *a priori* findings of the researcher. Unless we consult the previous publications of these authors on the topics elaborated upon in this book, we may never know. We may simply just have to trust them in their capacity as established names in this field of inquiry with methodologically sound research studies (Or should we? Would less established names get away with this?).

Moving on then, I am persuaded that the empirical studies of economy as culture work. Three other chapters which fitted together well for me are Heelas' chapter on work ethics, McRobbie's on the role of youth in the Blairite 'talent-led' economy and Thrift's on 'fast' managerial subjects. The first two of these in particular are both very strong chapters, offering compulsive and well developed arguments, freer of the discursive shackles of the culture-economy binary than the chapters outlined above. Perhaps this is, as du Gay and Pryke point out in their introduction, because these chapters present arguments sensitized by the second sense of cultural economy which frames the book; that of a culturalization thesis. For me, what holds these three chapters together is a concern with the modern subject at work and their related subjectivities. In different ways, they all ask questions about the contemporary nature of subjective relations to work and how these provide the basis for different modes of identification. Heelas focuses on the development of what he sees as a new type of work ethic, that of the 'self-work ethic' which he associates with a contemporary form of 'soft capitalism'. Soft capitalism indexes the notion that economic success is associated with 'soft' characteristics like culture, knowledge and creativity rather than just technological or cost-based advantages. According to Heelas, it involves a greater turn to culture than previous forms of capitalism in solving the so-called 'problem of work' (Berger, 1964), that is the production of work as a meaningful activity that will foster commitment and motivation amongst employees.

As a form of the culturalization thesis, Heelas is arguing here that this form of capitalism is relatively more cultural than previous kinds, but this is for him only a matter of degree and not an argument that suddenly work has ‘become’ cultural. This increasing call to culture, for example through the increasing use of experts, training and development programmes, consultants and so on, has inculcated a new form of work ethics in recent years, one which draws upon what Heelas terms the ‘exploratory’ mode of modern capitalism. In short, this form of ethics is one that provides the opportunity for organizational subjects to ‘work on oneself, to learn and become more effective’. It is about self-development in the name of productivity and, as such, it relates the meaning of work much more directly to personal identities than previous forms of work ethic. Heelas’ final point is that such a development is indicative of what he views as the dominant value of contemporary society, that of ‘life’. This turn to life, to the ‘inner realms’, hails modern subjects to “get in touch with as much as life has to offer” (p. 92) – and doing this through work forms an important basis of contemporary work ethics. Apart from the clarity of exposition Heelas brings to his argument, I think that he succeeds in achieving what du Gay and Pryke referred to as a ‘suitably situated’ form of the culturalization thesis which neither claims too much for itself (see his confessions of limits on p. 92), nor contains the kinds of sweeping generalizations and ham-fisted binary oppositions characteristic of other kinds of culturalized grand narratives. Where Heelas does, for me at least, miss a trick (and he points to this himself) is in the lack of a social politics of this kind of work ethic. Only certain kinds of people have access to this turn to culture in the workplace. Heelas does admit that this turn to life is in evidence “among better educated, more expressivistic members of the population” (p. 92). I would have liked this statement to have been opened up and developed a little, but perhaps this is beyond the scope of a chapter-length contribution.

One cannot level the same criticism of a lack of explicit political commentary at McRobbie’s chapter, also on the nature of work in the ‘new’ cultural economy. Her focus is the growth of self-employment in the creative industries and the study of creative work more generally. McRobbie provides both a critical commentary of three of the best known contemporary writings on the experience of work (Sennett, Beck and Leadbeater) and also draws upon some of her previously published work on young fashion designers to evaluate critically the politics of a new, government-led cultural regime called the talent-led economy. Initiated under previous Conservative governments in the UK, and pursued even more vigorously by New Labour, it places its focus on uncovering personal talent as the basis for job creation and is mostly directed towards youth as a work creation exercise. In an engagingly written and politically astute analysis of this kind of government initiative, McRobbie explores the ways in which this new kind of work ethic, based as it is on self-reliance, self-determination and independence, is both an example of societal individualization and an ideological means of combating social exclusion. For, in emphasizing the notion that the talent-led economy provides the opportunity for everybody, regardless of social background, to gain employment (i.e. to create work for themselves), this discourse extends to “incorporate disenfranchised sectors of the population” (p. 100). And given that getting people into work has become a quasi definition of government itself, this is one discourse that allows Tony Blair to believe not only that he is tackling unemployment but also issues of social inclusion. As she goes on to highlight, self-employment in the creative industries is, for most, an experience of hard slog and minimal material reward

resulting in a shift sideways to related, but different creative occupations in later life. It is also a de-socializing form of work, rendering the establishment of social relations through work problematic. And it also serves to mask the systemic nature of social exclusion and its workings through the variables of class, gender and race.

For me, then, McRobbie's chapter is an excellent example of the ways in which an analysis of cultural economy can incorporate both a politics of redistribution as well as a politics of recognition into its frame (Fraser, 1995). Not one of the other chapters offers such a heavily politicized reading of contemporary cultural economy and this is what makes this chapter stand out from the rest. It is not just saying that economics and culture are mutually constitutive categories, or that culture industries are more prevalent in the contemporary British economy (she takes these as read). Rather, it goes far beyond the dualisms that restrict the analytic frame of other contributions and offers us an explicit politics of cultural economy.

Thrift's chapter is also a story about the modern subjects of capitalism, but in his case it is a narrative about so-called 'fast' managerial subjects. The background to his chapter is the claim that 'emergency' and the constant requirement for change is endemic in modern day capitalism and necessitates new kinds of knowledges and skills on the part of managers. Managers are required to become change agents in order to deal with 'permanent emergencies', a necessity which has paved the way for what Thrift terms "new kinds of fast subject position" (p. 202). Thrift's chapter is not, however, a study of managerial subjectivities in the manner of many recent Foucauldian inspired forms of organization analysis wherein contemporary organizational discourses hail employees to morph themselves into organizationally desirable blueprints. This would have been a little predictable and dull for an organization studies audience. What is different about Thrift's chapter is his argument that discourses of permanent emergency have involved the production of new spaces in which this subject position can be created and affirmed. As such, his contribution is one of recognition of the connections between space and subjectivity. Drawing upon Foucault's notion of governmentality, Thrift argues that visible spaces for subjection are an important part of governmentality and his interest is therefore one of how spaces figure as technologies of the self. He talks about three forms of space in this regard: spaces of visualization (e.g. business magazines), embodiment (e.g. training sessions) and circulation (e.g. business travel and mobility, construction of new office spaces), looking at the ways these foster the kinds of citational practice necessary for the affirmation of a fast subject position. This is an interesting chapter and, I get the impression, work in progress for Thrift. It would have been nice to have had some empirical data on space-subject relations, but for now the important discursive argument will have to suffice.

A similar view might be expressed about Allen's chapter on symbolic economies. Allen argues that despite the increasing focus on symbolic, aesthetic and other affective forms of knowledge brought about by the rise of culture industries, many accounts of economic knowledge "remain trapped within a formal, codified script of knowledge that, often unintentionally, marginalizes the expressive and prioritizes the cognitive" (p. 39). The first half of the chapter demonstrates this claim through an analysis of recent works on cultural economy by Lash and Urry (once again), Leadbeater (once again) and Reich and Zukin. He argues that these writers, to differing extents (he seems to have

more sympathy for Lash and Urry than the others), fail to acknowledge the symbolic basis of all industries, be they manufacturing or services. So, heavy engineering and telecommunications have just as much of a symbolic basis as, say, advertising or PR. This is not to say that they have the same symbolic bases, but it is to argue against the frequent assumption of cultural economic analysis that only creative and so-called aesthetic industries work with symbols. In addressing how it is that, despite other intentions, these writers continue to marginalize expressive forms of knowledge in favour of cognitive reason, he looks at how they deploy particular kinds of binaries between, say, the material and the symbolic or the cognitive and the aesthetic in accounting for the different forms of economic knowledge. For Allen, to separate out these different kinds of knowledge is problematic since, in the texts he reviews, they provide the possibility for ascribing overly homogenized meanings to each side of the binary. The contribution of Allen's chapter, lies in the way he brings heterogeneity to our understandings of what counts as the symbolic. Drawing upon German philosopher Ernest Cassirer, Allen outlines various kinds of symbolic knowledge (expressive, significatory, representational) as a basis for a more nuanced understanding of economic knowledges. He deploys this in order to argue that what distinguishes industries is not whether or not they have a symbolic base (all industries do), but the distinctive combinations of symbolic knowledges. Allen's contribution then is one that wishes to emphasise the importance of avoiding the hasty codification of economic knowledge, maintaining the fuzziness of such knowledge and identifying the particular combinations of symbolic register which mark out one kind of industry from another. This chapter is certainly one that other contributors whose interest lies in the aesthetic industries would have benefited from consulting in order to achieve further analytic depth to their work.

McFall's chapter, along with Law's and McRobbie's, is one of the strongest in this collection and one that, like Allen's, would have benefited other contributors that attempt to critique the culturalization thesis. McFall's object of inquiry is advertising history and her particular foil is the culturalization thesis which, of all areas of cultural economic analysis, has achieved almost hegemonic status as a narrative tool in the area of advertising. The particular form of this thesis which she deals with is the perceived move away from the use of informative appeals in advertising to the greater use of 'persuasiveness' as a rhetorical device. She outlines how arguments about the increasingly persuasive appeal of advertising are linked, according to this grand narrative, to wider transformations in economy and society which assume our present epoch to be consumption-driven, more culturalized and reliant on de-materialised signs and symbols as the basis for social relations. As such, this form of the culturalisation thesis (notably Wernick, 1991) is closely implicated with the view that it is the forces of consumption which have led to this wholesale change in advertising message. Using a historical, empirical approach of the sort exemplified by Foucault's genealogy, McFall convincingly demonstrates the importance of organizational, institutional and technological change in the changing shape of advertising form. Through a study of the use of typography in advertising, she shows how concrete and material shifts in the field of production, rather than consumption (holding in place, of course, an analytic distinction between these), have formed the basis of changes in appeal and the apparent move to more persuasive strategies. By demonstrating the importance of a production-focus, McFall contributes not only an empirically grounded argument which

problematizes consumption-driven epochalist claims but also a unpicking of advertising as a constituent practice that consists of both cultural and economic elements. In this way she illuminates clear connections between the two senses of cultural economy pursued by the editors of the book, in this instance, by showing how culturalization theses themselves rest on the assertion of problematic dualisms of culture and the economy.

Unfortunately, I found the final two contributions to this text by Miller and Warde less satisfying. This is not to say that I completely disagreed with their theses, but it is to say that I found some the development of their arguments difficult and at times very patchy. Starting with Warde, his chapter represents an inspection of the culturalization thesis as it has been formulated in regard to the area of consumption. Based on a critical appreciation of Celia Lury's book on consumer culture, Warde cautions against claims that consumer culture inculcates a greater aestheticization of everyday life by suggesting that consumption behaviour is dictated by other forms of logic such as thrift, and that its importance is restricted to "a fraction of the middle class and some youth sub-cultural groupings" (p. 194). For him, the aestheticization claim is exaggerated and suggests the need for empirical research to substantiate it better. However, as he himself admits, the evidence he presents for this last point is very thin (he cites one empirically-based research study) and, as far as I am concerned, there is no reason to believe him any more or less than the writers whose work he critiques. Furthermore, I found his claim that "the scope and intensity of the politics of consumption is not great" (p. 196), highly problematic, not only because it lacks, for me, a suitable evidential basis, but also because it patently ignores over half of Lury's book (which he uses as a central point for his argument) which deals with the relationship between consumption and the politics of recognition, a relationship whose scope and intensity Lury provides substantial evidence of. I found the conclusion to his chapter, that contemporary economic relations are more or less culturalized than their historical predecessors, a distinctly underwhelming conclusion to a meandering and, particularly compared to other chapters, a rather mediocre argument.

Miller's chapter represents a outright rejection of the culturalization thesis as a manifestation of the cultural turn. Miller's argument, which is at times very opaque and difficult to follow, is one about what he terms an 'unintended political economy'. For him, there is a significant gap between the intentions and behaviours of social actors and the actual outcomes and manifestations of these intentions. As such, much of the development of economic life, he would appear to be arguing, does not correspond to the desires and wishes of the originating social actors, a suggestion that leads Miller to label economic life as a form of 'unintended political economy'. Based on this Miller concludes that cultural economic analysis might do well to create a greater balance between the study of 'origins and causes' and 'consequences and effects'. Whilst not necessarily finding this latter point contentious or unwelcome, I did find the argument developed to get to this point incredibly self-referential (he cites six pieces of his own work), reliant on some hugely sweeping assumptions about the nature of British capitalism (e.g. that it is structured and therefore dependent upon the pension funds and management consultancy industries) and methodologically problematic. In some places, it is dismissive in tone, in others it too generous to itself.

Discussion

In concluding this review, I would like to sum up its main points, offer an overall evaluation of the text and point to the issues that have stayed with me (some of them festering) since reading it. On the positive side, this is a text whose ground is well specified and ordered by the editors in their initial chapter. Their discursive props are clear and they have been generally well imported as a structuring device into the constituent contributions. In terms of the first notion of cultural economy pursued by the book, there is plenty of well constructed evidence, the most sophisticated of which is represented by Law's work, to demonstrate the mutually constitutive nature of the cultural and the economic or, to paraphrase Law, the practical ways in which economically relevant activity is enacted and performed. Sensitised by a commitment to everyday social practices as the site of this mutual constitution, many of the chapters gain their strength from the primary, and in particular, the ethnographic data, on which their claims are based.

However, the scant attention paid to methodological detail across the volume (Thrift's work being a notable exception) is a problem. The fact and the fiction of empirically abstracted fragments raises many questions and picks up recent debates in anthropology about the status of ethnographic accounts and questions of ethnographic authority, debates made possible by Geertz's (1973) understanding of anthropology as an interpretative, hermeneutic activity, not a positivistic science, and by Clifford and Marcus's attempts to deconstruct the ethnographic voice (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Summing up the contribution of Clifford and Bourdieu to debates in anthropology and sociology, Alan Read believes that their respective works have made "the innocence of 'being there' and returning with anything less than a haversack of fictions, impossible" (1993: 10). Some reflections on the fictional nature of the accounts of cultural economy given in this book would have been valuable.

Furthermore, there is a problematic absence of the voices of research subjects in this text. Apart from the methodological issues this raises, this forces me to question whether the collapse of the culture-economy dualism risks running into the problem that it is perhaps an important way in which research subjects themselves go about negotiating everyday organizational and economic life. In other words, it may be an important organizational marker in the lives of the research subjects investigated. In this particular text, the collapsing of this binary is the product of the magic of intellectual inquiry in social praxis, with no voices which might counter this position and suggest its social usefulness (see Surman's contribution in this issue). This is not to say that I believe that there is some foundational understanding of culture and the economic which the authors have not revealed, but to suggest that human subjects' apprehension of binary oppositions might well serve to help them organize their place in the world and exert some sort of control over it. Stopping oneself ironicising subjects' accounts and transforming them into the image of our analytic frameworks may have something important to contribute to the levels of theoretical sophistication which research often achieves by hook or by crook. Apart from these methodological difficulties, the book is a solid and at times very illuminating exposition of economy as culture and it certainly opens avenues for further investigation such as what we mean by symbolic economies,

the relationship between space and subjectivity, new forms of work ethic, and the sociology of microeconomic life *inter alia*.

The critique of the culturalization thesis, the second prop of the book, is however less conclusive. Some contributions make strong arguments against this thesis whilst others plump for some sort of situated form of the culturalization thesis. On the one hand, Heelas and McRobbie make compelling arguments for this latter position, arguments which, to me, are persuasive. I think that dismissing culturalization theses outright is a little hasty and that a more tempered and specified version can bring some interesting insights into cultural economy, as both these chapters do. McFall's chapter offers an excellent example of how historical research methods can be used to achieve a more nuanced reading of culturalization theses in an area of inquiry (advertising) in which their structures of argument have become axiomatic.

Apart from the methodological issues involved in constructing the knowledges represented by each of the chapters, my second main concern is the general lack of an *explicit* social politics of the cultural economy imparted by the book, with the notable exception of McRobbie's chapter in particular and some of Negus' work too. It seems to me that most of the authors are so keen either to demonstrate the mutual constitution of cultural and economic categories, or articulate some other kind of polemic, that they lose sight of the social effects and divisive nature of cultural economic regimes. For me, this is a disappointing aspect of the book. I had hoped that the book, using whatever terminology it liked, might offer greater debate about what Nancy Fraser (1995) calls the relationship between the politics of redistribution and the politics of recognition. This would have been to acknowledge an interrelationship between a set of political concerns which have often fallen victim of the dualistic thinking that has traditionally marked social scientific endeavour, as mentioned right at the very beginning. And, to be more specific, this dualism has involved, particularly in organization studies, the counter positioning of a Marxist inspired politics of systemic inequalities producing material divisions of wealth with a Foucauldian-led politics highlighting the cultural marginalisation of particular social identities. This political dualism is itself an outcome of the kinds of culture-economy binary problematised by the book, but it seems to me that the contributors largely fail to grasp this political nettle, instead choosing either to ignore or to denigrate Marxist theories of the social in order, I suspect, to legitimate all too comfortably a Foucauldian line of thought. There is hardly any mention of Marx (perhaps two or three references in total) despite the frequent use of his terms and the denigration of his ideas is best summed up in Slater's comment about "the days before Marx was passé" (p. 60). My feeling, particularly in du Gay and Pryke's introduction, is that they and others are skirting around several bigger debates but ignoring them in order to hold in place, albeit provisionally, a well-specified editorial framework around a particular kind of Foucauldian post-structuralism. Perhaps their repudiation for Ray and Sayer's (1999) book on the cultural turn, which definitely has Marxist sympathies, is indicative of their setting out of a terrain to defend from the challenges of critical realism or historical materialism. As such, I feel this is a book that is itself, implicitly at least, guided by a dualistic form of thinking around politics, one which presupposes a Marxist materialism to be overly determinate. An unsympathetic reading of this volume then might be that it represents, in large part, a de-politicised post-structuralism, but perhaps this is a little strong.

And this brings me to my final point and returns us to the initial skit of academic narratives on cultural economy outlined at the beginning of the review. There, I mentioned that this volume follows a conventionalized social science narrative, wherein one begins by defining a field of study in terms of a dualism and then manufactures a potential contribution to knowledge by suggesting that the present work goes beyond it in some way. In relation to du Gay and Pryke's work, that which comes 'after' conventional cultural economic analysis is a recognition of the mutual constitution of the cultural and the economic and a suspicion of overly ambitious grand narratives about cultural change. This is their contribution. Fine, but it does seem that this is only made possible in their text by hiding an implicit reliance on a further set of dualisms in social science (as mentioned above between politics of recognition and redistribution) around the spectres of Marx. Now, I am not suggesting some return to a form of unreconstructed Marxism, nor making materialist politics an additive to cultural economic research. Ironically given his view of Marx, I think that Slater's call for a sociology of micro-economic life could be a very fruitful avenue for developing the form of cultural economy favoured by this book and developing a more sensitised account of the interrelationship between these different kinds of politics. This volume hides a potentially even more fruitful contribution to an understanding of what it might mean to come 'after' cultural economy and that for me would be a return to and a careful re-reading of those seminal texts which have shaped the trajectories of our thinking in this field – notably Marx's *Capital* and Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Du Gay and Pryke do draw upon Weber in their introduction, but the wholesale ruling out of Marx is an opportunity missed. This to me says more about the politics of intellectual inquiry in the contemporary academy than it does the politics of everyday life.

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