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Writing:Labour

Damian O'Doherty and Anthony O'Shea

Labour as struggle, as process. Resistance and strikes, demonstrations, protests and fighting in the streets; fire, incendiary devices, manifestos, pamphlets, internet activism and blood spilt through ink. Molotov cocktails in the streets of Milan; a burnt out car in the streets of Manchester, England; a window smashed and an effigy of George Bush suspended from the window of a burnt out gambling casino in Michigan, Ohio; pay cuts and military privatisation…bombs in Iraq. There is a sense of disquiet and unease, of frustration and irritation that seems to pervade contemporary social relations: accidents waiting to happen, sleeper cells, and viral mutations. Social relations seem to be informed and deformed by what we might call 'a "logic" of the spring' characterised by a volatility that creates the conditions for the rapid accumulation of cause-consequence leading to a hyperventilating rhythm of boom-bust, escalation and collapse. Small scale events trigger repercussion in a cascading domino-like effect of connection and disconnection, accretion and amplification, building fly-by-night or footloose organizations. Isolated and ephemeral events may appear disconnected by space and time, by issue and agenda, but given this new logic of the social all manner of bastard and heterogeneous organizations are surfacing through linkages and connectivity that sustains an agitated, volatile state of being. Organization seems suspended on the brittle tinder sticks of a contemporary 'nervous condition' (Taussig, 1992), compounded and compressed by a multitude of forces combining control, repression, subordination, subjugation and *ressentiment* with spontaneity, counter-insurgency, resistance, ever more bizarre escape attempts (Cohen and Taylor, 1993), and the insatiable desire for vitality and liberation.

It is difficult to catch our breath and take stock of these conditions, and grammar may well be a necessary casualty of contemporary political struggles. This edition of ephemera is preoccupied with different forms of 'writing:labour' engaged in struggles of this kind. From debates about the contribution of labour process analysis to the understanding of emancipatory struggles in organization, through to a treatise on the England national football team as a maternal 'breast' that turns spectators into consumers who begin to resemble new forms of labour, *ephemera* 5.1 assembles a series of apparently disconnected studies. In appearance only, because there is a multitude of ways of reading, extending, and connecting with these pieces that may build temporary alliances and heterotopia/utopias that give vent and courage to further acts of experimentation and liberation. We call this 'writing:labour' because we see

writing as possible forms of praxis. Indeed, all writing is practice on one level. And writing is what ties together all our contributors. They are first and foremost scholars, writers, researchers, academics, or employees of a university that compels them to write, or at least publish. Writing is, inevitably, a material intervention in the social relations out of which it has been formed and to which it seeks to represent or respond. Writing is a practice that intensifies experience, whether one is reading or re-reading Harry Braverman and the corpus of labour process literature – as Stephen Jaros does in his piece on the possible extension of 'core labour process theory' (cf. Thompson, 1990) – or rewriting ethnographic stories of employee 'identity work' that helps illuminate the possibility of post-dualistic states of consciousness and being, as McInnes and Beech suggest.

The move from Braverman to Krishnamurti that this edition of ephemera proposes seems to form a line of flight that may be too fanciable for some. A whole series of questions and inconsistencies seem to emerge and call out for treatment and debate. For example, Jaros seems to operate with a highly focused and defined understanding of subjectivity and identity, which may be functionally essential in terms of his desire to develop a revised core labour process theoretical framework that can help make 'a contribution to empowering employees'. McInnes and Beech, on the other hand, work from an attentiveness to the self-overcoming and transcendental dynamics inherent to human subjectivity that takes us beyond and outside of any pragmatic compromise that restrains Being as utility and employment. Our struggle with 'time, fear and suffering' may well be the motivation for this editorial desire to construct a linear narrative from beginning to 'end', from closure to openness in the treatment of subjectivity. Beeston in his contribution, however, helps us see how 'to lean forward and write' in ways that overcome, rather than simply dream of an escape from methodological inhibition, to realise a praxis of 'writing's hard labour' that turns our insides out and opens spaces of intimacy and empathy between our Others. Between our Others is this heterotopia of writing that invites multiple assemblages, rerouting and rewiring, calling out for question, further debate, reversals, extensions and FIRE.

In 'Writing Method' one is taught to listen differently. Perhaps we may even begin to learn his 'writing method', or maybe even our own 'writing method' that compels a similar kind of subjective disappropriation to that of Krishnamurti, but in this giving up of the humanist self we may be leaning more towards that space of literature of which Blanchot speaks rather than the transcendentalism of certain strains of Eastern mysticism. Beeston writes in a rhythm of post-industrial angularity that merges fluidity with interruption, spasm and jump cuts with the flow of the iambic pentameter to challenge the deskilling and specialisation of methodology. Somewhere between a speaking and writing, or a 'saying' and 'the said', to cite Levinas – and therefore, until this moment (perhaps), to fail the ethical challenge posed by his writing – Beeston opens up a possible '3rd eye' in organization and work. His writing comes from elsewhere and some may find it difficult or obscure. This would be a grave injustice to the clarity that is there, in the sonorous clanging, if we may call it thus, of the texture that he conjures, a texture which is 'there' on the cusp of awareness and self-consciousness, at the limits of our knowing in the undernourished 'second sight' of our impoverished (post)modern being. The implications for organization remain profound.

Ten Bos considers the 'possibility of formless life' in the writings of Giorgio Agamben and traces the labour process back to Plato. Like McInnes and Beech, ten Bos finds way of challenging the teleology inherent to western thinking but goes back to Aristotle in order to uncover the tenacity of its hold on our traditional ways of thinking and writing. Teleological thinking arises is response to the comparative statics of Plato, and it is Plato who is arguably the first theorist of deskilling and the degradation of work. 'Quantity and quality are therefore more easily produced when a man specializes appropriately on a single job for which he is naturally fitted, and neglects all the others', Plato (1971) writes. He sought to banish time from the ideal state so that there was no development; the worker must stick to his task and specialised expertise so that every individual becomes a cog in the bureaucratised and Taylorised machine of the Republic. Aristotle offered some improvement on this reification and petrification. To ensure the realisation of virtue, vital to the integrity of society and its institutions, individuals were encouraged and 'cultivated' in ways that prompted them to strive towards the 'divine', instituting a kind of Maslovian journey towards self-realisation or, indeed, self-overcoming. Following this logic we arrive at that familiar humanist or human relations style injunction that individuals need a diversity of roles and tasks and crave the development of new skills and ever more complex activity within the context of a broad, ongoing challenge that is personal growth and maturity. However, this confines and disciplines individuals to the fate of a restrictive and teleological movement that maintains the means-ends utility that subjugates Being as labour.

In his writing and through his writing Agamben shows how 'the human' is part of a more extended mode of Being that insists upon the formless and constantly inspires the quest to break free of all utility and telos. It is perhaps through dancing that (wo)man recovers the formless as a condition of possibility for life and community, and in itself Agamben's writing is a form of dance that invites and provokes. Sarah Gilmore in her extended review of the 'England National Team and the Lovemark' might see the exclusion of dancing from the terraces of the stadium as part of a campaign to domesticate and discipline supporters so that they can be made customers of multinational corporate capital football. As customers they perform many of the functions associated with the traditions of labour familiar to students of the labour process. However, Gilmore shows how attachment and dependency is cultivated through group belonging, but this identification is ambivalent and is always at risk of spilling over into frustration, disappointment and violence. Her analysis is Kleinian in approach, but adds to our understanding of the complexity of forces at play in social relations and organization. Gilmore opens up ways of thinking about the complexity of subjectivity as a media of power and resistance, and retains an understanding of the unpredictability and volatility of the individual/collective as media and outcome of organization, as locus or trigger for assemblage and connection.

David Jacobs collects evidence of the rise of internet activism as a democratic challenge to the republican imperialism of mainstream American media and politics and in so doing adds to our sense of the (future) possibilities of struggle and resistance, particularly once we extend our awareness that anti-capital protest is not confined to a narrow segment of industrial labour. Finally, Ed Wray-Bliss reviews Bakan's *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power* and finds there an accessible and insightful contribution to our understanding of the abuses of power

perpetuated by the modern corporation. Such a clear and non-technically theorised form of writing helps provide understanding to a wide and diverse audience of the way the corporation works, but also, therefore, how it might be challenged and changed.

Writing:labour comes in many forms and there are many transversal possibilities of connection across this collection of papers. Draw your own map, assemble your own coordinates. Labour is struggle, always in process. On the horizon of our thought and being we can perhaps glimpse what Agamben calls here the 'coming community'. Some workers may still make cars. Others may drive them to football matches. Yet others cause them to burn, torch them in celebration or anger, as a life-affirming, life-advancing gesture, or in ecstatic rage and *ressentiment*. One thing is clear: things have a way of getting out of hand.

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the editors

Damian O'Doherty is member of the editorial collective of *ephemera*.
E-mail: damian.odoherty@mbs.ac.uk

Anthony O'Shea is member of the editorial collective of *ephemera*
E-mail: tony.oshea@sunderland.ac.uk

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Marxian Critiques of Thompson's (1990) 'core' Labour Process Theory: An Evaluation and Extension

Stephen J. Jaros

abstract

During the 1990s and into the 2000s, a substantial body of Labour Process Theory (LPT) research emerged around a 'core' concept of LPT initially outlined by Thompson (1990) and reiterated by Thompson and Smith (2001). While this research programme has yielded detailed case studies that shed light on labour process dynamics in a variety of workplaces, industries and governmental sectors, it has been a target of criticism by analysts of both postmodernist and traditional-Marxian persuasions, who argue that core LPT is theoretically flawed and politically inert (O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001; Tinker, 2002). This paper evaluates the Marxian critiques that challenge elements of LPT's conceptual core, and then leverages the evaluations to outline some future directions for LPT research. These include proposals for addressing the 'value' problem, the political problem, and the global political-economy problem in LPT research. In conclusion, a revised core for LPT is recommended so as to enhance the framework's ability to address work-related issues in contemporary global capitalism.

Introduction: Core LPT and its Critics

In an effort to bring together disparate strands of research influenced by Braverman's (1974) analysis of the labour process under monopoly capitalism, Thompson (1990) outlined four elements that he believed constituted a proper, and coherent, 'core' for Labour Process Theory (LPT). During the 1990s and into the early 2000s, researchers influenced by this core LPT concept developed an emphasis on describing how capital-labour dynamics unfold in a variety of specific workplaces and disparate labour processes (e.g., Smith, Knights, and Willmott, 1991; Jermier, Knights, and Nord, 1994; Warhurst and Thompson, 1998). This emphasis represented somewhat of a break from LPT's past, when initially and into the 1980s researchers incorporated the use of historical, cultural, and economic data to attempt to tie capital-labour dynamics at the point of production to the larger political economy and to formulate a class-wide politics for the working class (e.g., Braverman, 1974; Friedman, 1977; Edwards, 1979; Burawoy, 1985; Thompson, 1983). The more recent body of work has been lauded for having yielded detailed descriptions of multiple facets of work in many organizational settings (Jaros, 2001), but has been criticized by a number of analysts (Thompson and

Newsome, 2004; Tinker, 2002; Knights, 2001; Spencer, 2000) as having not resulted in much progress towards understanding phenomena such as the global nature of contemporary capitalism, nor of yielding a practical politics that improves the lives of working people.

LPT's alleged failure in these areas is hardly unique. One could argue that they are failures characteristic of all contemporary 'left' social theories of work. But with some exceptions (cf. Thompson and Newsome, 2004) most critics have maintained that in its present form, LPT, as exemplified by Thompson's 'core theory', is *fundamentally* inadequate to address them. That is, LPT's failure isn't explained by a failure on the part of researchers to properly apply what are sound analytical tools, it is that LPT's conceptual toolbox doesn't provide the necessary equipment (Tinker, 2002).

The critics cited above come at the problem of fundamental LPT inadequacy from different perspectives, often agreeing on little but its flaws. 'Core' LPT has been criticized from both postmodernist (cf. O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001) and traditional-Marxian (Tinker, 2002) perspectives. In this paper, we assess the relevance of 'core' LPT in light of the Marxian critique.[1] In addition to the strictly intellectual challenge this criticism poses for core LPT, it has arguably had practical force within the critical social science community. For example, perhaps in response to them, LPT has experienced an exodus of some researchers out of the LPT community and to Critical Management Studies (cf. Hassard, Hogan, and Rowlinson, 2001). Thus, there is a perception within some elements of the left community that LPT is a spent force. One of the purposes of this paper is to evaluate that perception by critically investigating the relevance and validity of the Marxian critique of 'core' LPT.

Thompson's (1990) 'core' Theory

To do so, we must first define what we mean by 'core' Labour Process Theory, since its proper theoretical content has of course been the site of much contestation over the previous decade (Grugulis and Knights, 2001a). To reiterate, in this paper, we define LPT in terms of the four 'core elements' described by Thompson (1990) and restated by Thompson and Smith:

1. The function of labour in generating surplus in capitalism, and hence the centrality of production to the system, and the privileged insight this affords labour for a theoretical and political challenge to the system. (2001: 56-57)

Thompson elaborates: "As the labour process generates the surplus and is a central part of man's experience in acting on the world and reproducing the economy, the (labour process) is privileged as a focus for analysis. This necessarily incorporates relations of exploitation, though it should not…involve a labour theory of value" (1990: 100).

Note: Core component one implies that, as per Edwards (1986), the labour process is characterized by a 'relative autonomy' from the broader political economy, meaning that changes in the latter do not necessarily have deterministic effects on the former. It

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1   An evaluation of postmodernist critiques of 'core' LPT can be found in Jaros (2003). Including that critique in this paper would be redundant and would exceed space limitations.

also means that the labour process can and should be 'isolated' from the broader political economy for analytical purposes. As Elger puts it: "On the one hand, workplace relations (cannot) simply be read off from wider class relations, and on the other hand those wider relations cannot simply be subsumed within an analysis of the labour process" (2001: 4).

Also, since Thompson (1990) explicitly disavows the Labour Theory of Value, Marxian theorists would probably view his use of the term 'surplus' problematic, given its traditional linkage to *labour* productivity. This is a point I will return to in the next section of the paper, which addresses Marxian criticisms of Thompson's core theory.

2. The necessity for constant renewal and change in the forces of production and the skills of labour due to the discipline of the profit rate and competitive accumulation of capital.

3. The necessity for a control imperative in the labour process in order for capital to secure profitable production and translate its legal purchase of labour power into actual labour and a surplus.

Note: point 3 is due to the 'indeterminacy' of labour, i.e., that while the capitalist purchases labour power; he/she must still transform it into actual productive work.

4. Given the dynamics of exploitation and control, the social relations between capital and labour in the workplace are of 'structured antagonism'. At the same time, capital, in order to constantly revolutionize the production process, must seek some level of creativity and cooperation from labour…resulting in a continuum of overlapping worker responses…from resistance, to accommodation, compliance, or consent.

This definition is utilized because it is the definition around which most self-avowedly 'LPT' research is done these days (Spencer, 2000; Jaros, 2001), and because it is this core theory which has been the target of criticism by Marxian analysts. Its utilization does *not* imply that all researchers who claim to 'do Labour Process Theory' acknowledge this core as correct, in whole or even in part. But given its centrality in contemporary LPT research – the research programme and criticism of that research that has emerged around it – it is the conception of LPT which will be utilized for comparison with traditional Marxian theories of work. In the next two sections, Marxian criticisms that aim at this 'core' are briefly summarized, and an evaluation of them is provided. In the final section, these evaluations are drawn upon to make recommendations for future research from within and around a revised core LPT framework.

The Marxian Critique of core LPT

The general form of the Marxian critique is that core LPT is today alienated from its Marxian roots (cf. Braverman, 1974). From this, the following specific criticisms have

been characteristic of the Marxian literature: That it is (1) managerialist, and (2) methodologically deficient.

Managerialism

According to Marxian theorists, Core LPT is 'managerialist', meaning that it treats managers as having too much discretion, independent of any systemic profit or surplus-value extraction imperatives, to determine the nature of work (cf. Cohen, 1987; Rowlinson and Hassard, 2001; Hassard *et al.*, 2001).

This criticism is rooted in a belief that core LPT is fundamentally flawed because it derives from Braverman's (1974) analytical concepts which were applicable to understanding a specific kind of capitalism, *monopoly* capitalism, which, while perhaps relevant during the time Braverman was writing, are not helpful in understanding contemporary global-competitive capitalism. In a monopoly or oligopoly market, dominant firms are characterized by (a) separation of ownership from control of the corporation, such that top managers are largely free from the constraints of ownership, and (b) the ability to reap profits by price manipulation in the product market. As a consequence of viewing capitalism through a monopolistic lens, early LPT saw no need to incorporate key Marxian concepts that underpin and explain exploitative work-relations, such as the 'labour theory of value' (LTV) or the 'law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall (LTRPF)' – concepts that also link what happens at the point of production in specific organizations with the broader capitalist political economy.

For Marxians such as Hassard *et al.*, point (a) is problematic because it implies that management has the freedom to act in accordance with their own personal interests, which may not necessarily coincide with the stockholder's interest in maximizing shareholder value. It is also problematic because it leads to the conclusion that there is a weak, non-deterministic link between system-wide profit pressures and the control mechanisms that organizations use against their employees. Managers are viewed as having lots of personal discretion in determining the forms that control may take. This has resulted in 'taxonomitis' – the tendency for LPT researchers to focus on manifestations of management control strategies or worker resistance behaviours in different industries and group them into various categories, typologies, taxonomies, etc. (cf. Friedman, 1977; Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999).

Taxonomitis is viewed as analytically problematic, because it is seen by Marxians as fetishizing differences across organizations and industries while ignoring, and leaving under-theorized and unchallenged, the underlying systemic dynamics of capitalist production. As a result, core LPT cannot adequately explain how labour process dynamics interconnect with the broader political economy. Point (b) is problematic because it implies that the extraction of surplus value from labour is no longer an *imperative*, because profits can be achieved in the exchange process by leveraging product market power. This is anathema to Marxian theory, which derives from the Labour Theory of Value the notion that exploitation in the labour process is an inherent aspect of capitalist production.

Methodological deficiency

Core LPT is 'methodologically deficient': Another Marxian-oriented critique of LPT has been offered by Tinker (2002). Tinker differs somewhat from Rowlinson and Hassard (2001), in that he calls for a return to Marx and Braverman. Much of Tinker's critique is aimed at postmodernist Labour Process Theory, and thus falls outside the purview of this paper. But he also takes aim at core LPT:

> Thompson's (1990) analysis exhibits a number of shortcomings that renders his core inadequate as a basis for progressive research. First, the authority for the choice of parts is a social conclusion, not a logical or epistemic one. While Thompson's four traits are putatively important, the criterion for their selection remains implicit, resting on an asserted consensus among protagonists. Consensus alone is not a tenable standard of truth for epistemology; it opens the door to every whim of popular ideology (e.g., that the earth is flat, God exists). Second, Thompson's core underrates the historical specificity of Braverman and Marx's political projects. This is most evident in regard to the importance to Braverman of challenging the ideology of upgrading. (Tinker, 2002: footnote vi)

Thus, Tinker challenges the notion that LPT researchers have come to a consensus that the four components described by Thompson (1990) and Thompson and Smith (2001) do in fact comprise the 'core' of Labour Process Theory. Also, in other parts of his paper, he elaborates on the 'lack of historical specificity' argument to maintain that the core is incomplete, in that it doesn't express a preference for the method of inquiry used by Marx and Braverman – the dialectical method. According to Tinker, it is non-dialectical, a-historical readings of Braverman (1974) that give rise to the notion, common among LPT writers of all kinds over the past 30 years, that a consideration of worker subjectivity and researcher praxis are 'missing' in his analysis. According to Tinker, they aren't so much missing as de-emphasized, and this de-emphasis was appropriate, given the historical specificity of the time Braverman was writing, i.e., a time when an emphasis on de-skilling and the objective characteristics of production were necessary *political* tactics to 'debunk' the prevailing Western ideology of economic revival via training, upgrading, re-skilling, and job enrichment. According to Tinker, eschewing the dialectical method not only accounts for LPT's failure to grasp the political strategy behind Braverman's analysis, it also explains why LPT has been, unlike Braverman, unable to offer a compelling political agenda of its own.

To summarize, Marxians tend to see core LPT as theoretically trivial and politically irrelevant to contemporary conditions. Since the mid-1970s global development has been characterized by the dismantling of western welfare states, de-regulation, global market expansion, computer-based technological advancement, the collapse of state socialism, and intensified competition. But because core LPT overstates managerial agency, it is myopically focused on what happens in particular workplaces. And because it has strayed from its Marxian analytical roots, it is without a method that can reveal the 'laws of motion' characteristic of advanced capitalism, and therefore doesn't have the conceptual tools to contribute to the explanation of these momentous changes or how workers can act politically to challenge them.

Evaluation of the Marxian critique

In this section, I provide an assessment of the degree to which the Marxian criticisms succeed in undermining core-LPT:

1. Considering the Charge of *Managerialism*: it is true that, as per Marxian criticism (a) above, core LPT research has emphasized that managers do have discretion to implement different kinds of control strategies and to take actions that benefit themselves, even at the expense of owners (cf. Thompson and Smith, 2001). This discretion is based on the core notion that the labour process is 'relatively autonomous', i.e., despite its linkages to the broader political economy, what happens at the point of production is not totally determined by those linkages, and is significantly influenced by contextual factors that are workplace or industry-specific (cf., Friedman, 1977; Thompson, 1990). The issue, therefore, is: is this core LPT view incorrect? The preponderance of the evidence suggests that it is correct: Empirical research rooted neither in a Marxian nor core-LPT tradition has shown that both across and within industries and countries, business firms do in fact display a wide *variety* of control strategies for managing labour (Clegg, 1990; Jermier et. al, 1994), which, contra the Marxian perspective, implies that the structural imperatives of capitalism are not so powerful that they override all or even most discretion, and that local market, institutional, and workplace conditions significantly mediate the relationship between system-wide profit imperatives and managerial responses. Furthermore, recent cases of corporate malfeasance such as Enron, Arthur-Andersen, Shaw Group, and WorldCom, in which top executives were able to line their pockets by de-frauding shareholders, provide at least anecdotal evidence that top managers are not so compelled by systemic pressures to enhance shareholder wealth that they lack the discretion to act in ways that benefit themselves at the expense of shareholders.

However, Marxian critics are correct in their delineation of the implications of managerialism for the concept of exploitation in the production process (point (b) above). By embracing the notion that profits can be earned in product markets (cf. Kelly, 1985) and that the Labour Theory of Value is not a relevant component of core-LPT, Thompson *et al*. do open the door to the Marxian conclusion that LPT does not posit worker exploitation as an 'imperative', an essential aspect of capitalist production. However, despite this, Thompson and Smith's (2001) description of core-LPT does clearly state that exploitation is an inherent aspect of capitalist production (see core points One and Four above). This means the core contradicts itself on this point. But, many Marxian critics (cf. Rowlinson and Hassard, 2001) do not tend to push this point, because they are themselves ambivalent about the validity of the Labour Theory of Value. This point will be developed further in the 'Future directions for core-LPT' section of the paper.

Also, to some extent, the disagreement over the issue of managerial agency and discretion is one of differing research emphases between LPT and traditional Marxians. Marxians are concerned with understanding capitalism as a total system, whereas LPT is concerned with understanding the labour process, the point of production where

products are made and services are delivered, which is one component of that total system. Thus, Marxians, studying and refining general concepts like the LTV and long-run profit tendencies, tend to emphasize commonalities in managerial strategies and worker behaviour across organizations and industries, while LPT researchers emphasize the explication of differences. At the risk of invoking a dualism, the former is interested in more of a 'macro' perspective on the study of work under capitalism, the latter more of a 'micro' one. Neither is mutually exclusive with the other and indeed they can and should be mutually supportive. Even an orthodox Marxian who pitches his/her analysis solely at a system-wide level should be interested in probing the *limits* of the compulsive power of systemic tendencies like the profit imperative and value-creation dynamics, as they manifest themselves in the decision-making discretion of capitalists in differing industrial sectors. It therefore makes little sense to dismiss the study of manifestations of discretion as trivial or unimportant.

However, on the whole, it is fair to say that LPT research has been characterized by an imbalance: too little effort has been invested in studying how workplace dynamics link with the broader political economy, and too much has been invested in studying differences across them, lending credence to the Marxian charge of *taxonomitis*. In practice, there has been a tendency to take the concept of 'relative autonomy' too far, treating it more as 'absolute autonomy' (Jaros, 2001). As was previously noted, this is how research that flows from 'core theory' differs the most from early LPT research, which, whatever its faults, was clearly focused on delineating linkages with the broader political economy (Friedman, 1977; Edwards, 1979; Burawoy, 1985). There are some signs that LPT researchers have begun to take this criticism to heart (Warhurst and Thompson, 1998; Thompson, 2003; Thompson and Newsome, 2004) but this work is in its infancy and to this point has been characterized by 'calls' to conduct more research in this area more so than actual empirical work.

But, looking forward to what needs to be accomplished, there's no evidence that doing so requires compromising the core 'relative autonomy' principle of LPT. What is required is an emphasis on the 'relative' aspect of this autonomy, and an investigation of mutual influences. A theoretical focus on studying variations in managerial control strategies and worker resistance to those strategies is not inherently incompatible with efforts to find system-wide commonalities among them, or to account for these differences by studying the influence of broader political-economic processes.

2. Methodological Deficiency: LPT, as per Tinker's (2002) methodological criticism, has indeed been *politically irrelevant*. Thompson (1990) argued in favour of the core approach in part on the grounds that if the LPT community rallied behind a common set of principles it could offer a clearer, amplified voice for its 'emancipatory tradition' of fighting for worker empowerment. Of course, not everyone doing LPT research chose to rally behind Thompson's core, but even those who did had little to offer in the way of a compelling political agenda (as admitted by Thompson and Smith, 2001). One reason for this could be that Thompson (1990) included only a passing mention (core element 1) to a political dimension in the core, and this only referenced *labour's* political position, it did not include a political role for the LPT researcher. Thus,

it is not surprising that research influenced by core LPT has been deficient in outlining a 'politics of production' over the past 15 years.

The notion that the 'laws of motion' that govern human history lead inevitably to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism is fundamental to traditional Marxian theory and was characteristic of the Braverman era LPT as well. But, Thompson (1990) argued that LPT should abandon this position because this Marxian prediction had been refuted by actual history. He noted that the Labour Theory of Value that Marxian political theory is based upon was empirically wrong (if it had been correct, worker revolutions would have overthrown capitalism by now) and conceptually problematic (the notion that labour is the sole source of surplus value is empirically unprovable). But having abandoned its revolutionary message, core LPT replaced it with nothing but a vague notion that labour is in a structural position to 'challenge' the capitalist system. True, Marxian critics of core LPT would be on firmer ground to lecture LPT on improving its political shortcomings if their approach had performed any better than LPT has. Amongst leftist theories of work and organization, LPT is hardly alone in its lack-of-impact. Arguably, only radical organizational environmentalism has had a significant effect on the political debate within the contemporary global capitalist context. Still, this doesn't excuse LPT's failure in this area. The absence of an element that provides guidance about the political role that LPT researchers should play is a shortcoming of the core formulation. But in this regard, neither traditional Marxism nor core-LPT has an articulate perspective on what an emancipatory workplace politics should look like.

Also, Tinker's (2002) criticism about a lack of *consensus among researchers about the 'core' elements* seems irrelevant to the issue of core LPT's conceptual usefulness. While there is something politically provocative about Thompson *et al.*'s attempt to establish *a* core theory, since this can be interpreted as a 'power play' whereby researchers who do not abide are labelled as not doing 'true' LPT (Jaros, 2001), that is a separate issue from the value of core LPT as a set of conceptual tools for understanding work, and Tinker acknowledges that on that technical ground, the core elements are 'putatively' important.

Finally, Tinker's charge that core LPT *misreads* Braverman (1974) seems to amount to little more than a historical point regarding Braverman's intellectual legacy. Other than how 'correct' he was or wasn't in his analysis, whether Braverman mistakenly 'neglected' subjectivity and praxis or whether given the political context of the 1970s he properly downplayed them is meaningful… how? Either way, the topics aren't developed in Braverman's analysis and that meant later LPT researchers were justified in studying them. Furthermore, given the failure of Marxian dialectics to correctly predict the overthrow of capitalism, it's not apparent why the dialectical method is worthy of inclusion as an *essential* element in the study of capitalist production and therefore as a formal part of core LPT. This isn't to say the dialectical method can't be useful, just that there is little ground for granting it primacy as *the* method for doing so.

Future Directions for LPT

In this section, I build on the evaluations of the Marxian critiques of core LPT to offer some ideas about where core LPT should go from here.

Theoretical issues – Value and labour process analysis

One important unresolved theoretical issue confronting core LPT concerns the relevance (or lack thereof) of the Labour Theory of Value (LTV) to understanding capitalist production. As discussed above, Marxian critics including Tinker (2002) and Rowlinson and Hassard (2001) argue that core LPT's abandonment of the LTV has resulted in two negative consequences – a cessation of the 'search for the laws of motion' that underlie capitalism, and a contradiction in core-LPT's view that exploitation is in fact an inherent aspect of capitalist production.

Nevertheless, somewhat paradoxically, Rowlinson and colleagues also do not consider the rejection of the LTV to be *fundamentally* problematic for core LPT. The reason for this reticence is that the validity of the LTV is questioned by many Marxian theorists as well. After criticizing core LPT for abandoning the LTV, Rowlinson and Hassard, in discussing the concept of exploitation in the labour process, acknowledge that "it is not necessary to accept the fundamentalist-Marxist assertion that Marxian political economy stands or falls with the LTV" (2001: 90). This statement reflects their ambivalence about critiquing LPT for not abiding by a theory that is controversial even among Marxians.

However, to my view, it is unfortunate that their ambivalence causes Rowlinson and Hassard to not fully press this critique. While the quote from Thompson (1990: 100) describing the LPT core claims that 'exploitation' isn't dependent on the LTV, this isn't congruent with commonly accepted definitions of what the term 'exploitation' means. As traditionally defined, exploitation is the notion that in capitalism, "the value of labour extracted from the worker *in the labour process* must exceed the value of labour power purchased" (Grugulis and Knights, 2001b: 17, my emphasis). In other words, on average, workers are compensated at a level below the value of work they do, and this excess value is pocketed by the capitalist. However, if labour is not, as the LTV proposes, the *sole* source of 'surplus' value in production, then that undermines the ground for asserting that market wages and benefits do not compensate 'the worker' fully for the work they do, meaning that contra core LPT, capitalist production is *not inherently* exploitative. There are several implications for LPT's 'core theory' that flow from this single point (cf. Jaros, 2004):

1. Privileging the Labour Process for Analysis: The theoretical basis for the core LPT notion of 'privileging' the study of the labour process over other spheres of value-creation and value-realization activity, such as the labour, product and capital markets, cf. Kelly (1985) and his notion of a 'full circuit of capital', is undermined, since the justification for that privileging is that the labour process is the site where *exploitation* occurs.

2. Structured Antagonism: It implies that 'structured antagonism', the ever-present class-conflict of interest between labour and management – is likewise not an

inherent part of the capitalist labour process, at least to the extent that, as core LPT holds, structured antagonism is caused by exploitation at the point of production.

3. LPT's Moral Stance: Finally, there is a moral/political dimension to this issue. Though not formally included in the core, LPT has traditionally had a political orientation focused on developing ideas that empower workers to resist managerial control and eventually overthrow capitalism (Thompson, 1990). The moral justification for this is putting an end to exploitation; but if exploitation isn't an *inherent* feature of capitalist production, there is no *a priori* reason for being 'on the side' of workers in that struggle.

To my view, the solution to the 'value' dilemma isn't a return to the LTV. Ultimately, as many critics ('radical' and 'bourgeois') have noted the notion that labour and labour alone has the 'peculiar characteristic' of being able to produce value-added is an empirically unprovable one. In Marxian theory, it is today more an article of faith, or a meta-assumption about the nature of human development (Jaros, 2001). And Thompson's (1990) critique of the LTV remains sound – if the LTV were correct, Marx's predictions about the overthrow of capitalism would have been borne out, but they haven't been. Thus, a return to the LTV wouldn't improve LPT's conceptual armoury, because it would still be a vulnerable foundation for the core theory.

But, it is still possible to salvage the progressive orientation of LPT even absent a LTV. Capitalism can be conceptualized, in a manner of speaking, as being 'biased' against labour in a systemic sense, but the locus of that bias would lie in compelled labour market exchange: Marx's notion that, as a class, the labourer is compelled to agree to a working relationship that favours the capitalist, because the labourer has nothing to sell but labour power, and is thus goaded by, in Weber's (1908) words, the 'whip of hunger', whereas the capitalist can 'hold out' in negotiations longer due to greater wealth/resources (Marx, 1867/1976). The worker is thus compelled to agree to something that wouldn't have been agreed to absent that compulsion. This concept of unequal labour market exchange also allows us to salvage the core-LPT notion of a fundamental *antagonism* between management and labour, which could have its locus in the fact that because the effort-bargain it 'agreed' to was objectively made under duress, labour could subjectively perceive that bargain to be not fully legitimate, and act to battle management *at the point of production* for alterations to the bargain (wages, benefits, working conditions, etc.) that would make it more 'just'.

Recently, Elger (2001) argued that a weakness in core-LPT has been its failure to study how work experiences within a firm interact with the worker's experience of segmented (internal and external) labour markets. This is important because:

> The promise of such approaches is that they provide a basis for understanding sources of similarity and difference in workers' experiences across different local labour markets and labour market segments and, crucially, the ways in which workers experience a range of instances of wage labour as they move between workplaces across their working lives. (Elger, 2001: 81)

Whilst Elger (2001) doesn't identify specific aspects of a worker's experiences at the point of production that are likely to be influenced by an understanding of their

experiences with external labour markets, I'm suggesting that capital's structural bargaining advantage over labour could be an experience that serves as a basis for the observed tendency for worker-management relations to be antagonistic. Of course, this structural advantage may not be a universal characteristic of all labour markets (local bargaining conditions as shaped by specific cultural and legal environments, and/or the vagaries of supply and demand may provide some workers with a temporary advantage that allows them to bargain on an equal or even superior structural footing with capital), but these instances are proposed to be exceptions to the general 'rule' (systemic tendency) which favours capital.

However, for this systemic tendency to be a source of workplace antagonism, labour would have to be cognizant of the fundamental power-inequality that shapes the effort-bargain. If labour is not subjectively cognizant, then it stands to reason that the objective existence of the unequal power relationship will not influence behaviour. Thus, though objectively-speaking we can talk of a tendency towards a 'structured imbalance' between capital and labour in the shaping of the effort-bargain, the notion that this manifests in a 'structured antagonism', i.e., actual antagonism in the workplace, would seem to be an empirical question, one that is reflected in labour subjectivity and identity in particular workplaces or industries (cf. Beil-Hildebrand, 2004), as opposed to something that can be *a priori* presumed to be always present under the surface, shaping any observed surface-level behaviour such as compliance, consent, or resistance.

Subjectivity

This point about labour cognizance raises the issue of potentially conflicting Marxian and core-LPT approaches to the issue of worker *subjectivity*. Originally, there was no conflict between these approaches, because Braverman (1974) followed a traditional Marxian line, which conceptualizes workers as the *missing subject* in capitalism, i.e., once labour becomes a commodity, it loses its 'voice' and is spoken-for by capital, until at a certain point workers gain class-consciousness and overthrow the edifice. To traditional Marxians, the psychological or social-psychological experiences of individual workers are uninteresting, unless they can be shown to develop into class consciousness (Miller and Rose, 1995). But within a few years, LPT theorists rejected this Marxian view as too structural-deterministic. Burawoy (1979) attempted to rectify this problem by studying empirically the social-psychology of production; how the worker's desire to establish a stable, proud sense-of-self while living in fear of being downsized results in 'game playing' behaviours that have the effect of buttressing managerial ideology, and later (1985) tied this to the development of hegemonic political regimes in different eras of capitalist development, but his efforts were critiqued for over-emphasizing worker consent to and compliance with managerial control (Knights and Willmott, 1990).

Though he did not include an analysis of subjectivity as an element of core theory, Thompson (1990) did identify it as a pressing problem, and advocated bringing non-Marxian social theories to bear on it, but when other researchers heeded this – for example, the stream of Foucauldian-inspired work on identity maintenance (Knights and Willmott, 1990) and Collinson's (1992, 1994) work on the gendered nature of subjectivity) – their efforts were criticized as straying too far from the 'material' realities of work (cf. Warhurst and Thompson, 1998). Much of the last half of the 1990s

and into the early 2000s was consumed by advocates of the materialist and existentialist/postmodernist perspectives critiquing and de-constructing each other's work, with no resolution achieved.

Today, core-LPT approaches to employee subjectivity emphasize explicating employee resistance to modern managerial control efforts such as cultural indoctrination (Beil-Hildebrand, 2004), emotion management (Taylor and Bain, 2003), and technological surveillance (Warhurst and Thompson, 1998). In this regard, Akroyd and Thompson's (1999) development of the concept of employee 'misbehaviour', which attempts to describe various forms that anti-managerial behaviour can take, is exemplary. The model conceptualizes worker-management struggle as occurring across four contested domains: worker identity, worker effort, working time, and the product of work. Notably, these contestations are over local, workplace conditions, not the broader capitalist system per se. Thus, core-LPT approaches to subjectivity aim at trying to map the *domain* of conflict, at the point of production, as it relates to subjectivity, while making no presumption that any particular form of struggle will necessarily or even likely lead to the development of class-consciousness and formal, collective political activity.

This core-LPT perspective on subjectivity would seemingly be diametrically opposed to Marxian points of view. However, during the same time that these core-LPT developments were taking place, Marxian researchers, perhaps chastened by the collapse of state socialism in the east and welfare-state capitalism in the west, struggled to find evidence of class-wide worker consciousness, much less its organic expression and development in particular industries and workplaces (Rowlinson and Hassard, 2001; Domingues, 2000). As a result, many Marxian theorists have moved away from the orthodox 'if it doesn't reflect class-consciousness it doesn't matter' perspective, and towards a position that is largely congruent with the core-LPT emphasis on resistance and misbehaviour at work. Barchiesi's (2003, 1996) work is emblematic of this movement. He argues that Marxians like himself should work to develop a concept of:

> Subjectivity (that) requires a departure from the kind of orthodox Marxist-Lukacsian understanding of class consciousness based on a dialectic of "false" and "true", with the former associated with the everyday acceptance of workplace capitalist domination and the latter with the culminating moments of organization and struggle. (Barchiesi, 1996: 6)

Barchiesi argues that worker subjectivity cannot be assumed as 'transcendental to the field of events' and must be analyzed as the contingent product of interacting workplace and both local and global cultural, economic, and institutional processes. He acknowledges that because cultural and institutional factors mediate what happens at the global-systemic level and at the workplace level (a point acknowledged by Ackroyd and Thompson, 1999), worker subjectivity and resistance will likely take different forms in different places (Barchiesi, 2003).

This revised Marxian approach dovetails nicely with Ackroyd and Thompson's notion of 'misbehaviour' and consequent worker subjectivity manifesting in many resistant or anti-management forms, contingent on local political and material conditions. True, Barchiesi, like other Marxians (cf. Martinez-Lucio and Stewart, 1997), is still keen to study whether and how worker subjectivity will manifest in collective, large-scale

consciousness and political action, but since this manifestation is no longer posited, at least in the short run, to be inevitable, this analytical concern doesn't contradict the core-LPT approach.

Likewise, other Marxian-oriented LPT researchers, led by Paul Stewart (Martinez-Lucio and Stewart, 1997; Stephenson and Stewart, 2001; Stewart, 2002) have explored the issue of subjectivity by studying the existence of various forms of 'collectivism' amongst workers at the shop-floor level. In doing so, Stephenson and Stewart (2001) do critique Ackroyd and Thompson's (1999) concept of organizational misbehaviour. They argue that the 'misbehaviour' concept is limited because it (a) focuses on the behaviour of individual workers, missing collective manifestations of subjectivity, and (b) focuses on acts of misbehaviour, i.e., acts that management disapproves of, ignoring forms of collectivism that don't involve overt conflict with management. But as Thompson and Newsome (2004) note, the differences here aren't fundamental. They persuasively explain that the goal of the 'misbehaviour' model was to specifically explore just those aspects of employee subjectivity that are 'anti-management' in nature, and doesn't imply that subjectivity cannot take forms that are more overtly collectivist, or support or involve cooperating with management. Thus, the models can complement each other.

Also, a resolution of Marxian and 'core LPT' differences on subjectivity could be facilitated by insights from postmodernist-influenced investigators (e.g., Knights, Willmott, Wray-Bliss). Perhaps one way to overcome the postmodernist/materialist divide and move LPT forward on the subjectivity issue could be to posit that (a) yes, as per the postmodernist perspective (cf. O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001), employee subjectivity is often characterized by anxiety about the need to maintain a 'stable, autonomous' sense of self, and that this pre-occupation with individual identity-maintenance paralyzes his/her ability to act critically and self-reflexively analyze and resist capitalist employment relations, but (b) employee anxiety is animated not solely by an inherent existential 'need' to maintain a stable identity. As per the 'core LPT' perspective, it also reflects the material 'reality' of work under capitalism – fear of losing benefits, fear of pay cuts, fear of being 'right-sized' and outsourced, and so forth.

Both Jaros (2001) and Tinker (2002) note that the notion that workplace anxiety is animated *solely* by existential will-to-stability is itself the kind of 'essentialist' notion that is anathema to postmodernist thinking. A more defensible tack would be to posit identity-stabilization as one possible locus of employee subjectivity, and empirically assess it vs. competing explanations (cf. Charles and James, 2003; Parry, 2003). This would mean studying subjectivity in the workplace – to gather primary data on it – in addition to de-constructing other researcher's published texts by applying a will-to-stability framework (as per O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001).

But, this approach recognizes a key insight of the postmodernist critique – that Marxian and 'core LPT' perspectives on subjectivity have been hindered by a wedding to essentialist-humanist conceptualizations. It posits critical reflexivity (on the part of the researcher and researched) rooted in an ethical stance committed to undermining subjugating power dynamics, both at the point of production and in the broader society, as the starting point for developing a critical consciousness that can challenge the status quo. It also shares some commonalities with the notion of 'weak socialization'

(Bakhurst and Sypnowich, 1995), which posits that all specific social identities, including possibly those forged primarily at work, are influenced by, but not determined by, cultural and economic structures and discourses.

This discussion implies the need for ethnographic research to untangle the relative import of workplace and non-workplace influences on employee subjectivity. One goal that remains to be accomplished is an *explanation* of how workplace experiences interact with broader institutional, national, and international influences to shape worker agency (cf. Ailon-Souda and Kunda, 2003; Collinson, 2002; Bakhurst and Sypnowich, 1995). This implies the need for research that untangles the relative import of workplace and non-workplace influences on employee subjectivity. In this vein, Adler (2003) conducted a case study of software engineers in four companies and found that worker subjectivity was significantly shaped by US government-mandated changes in work documentation. The implementation of standardization procedures for software development mandated by the government changed the nature of work from being highly individualistic (software engineers developed code by themselves) to much more interactive (teams of software designers working together, and negotiating the standards to be applied and passed on to future developers). Management functioned as an intermediary between governmental pressure and the labour process, implementing control procedures to enforce those aspects of the government mandate that improved efficiency and managerial control over work assignments, but resisting those aspects that threatened to alienate software engineers and drive them from the firm.

All of this changed the prevailing self-construal among engineers from one of 'lone hacker' to a much more interdependent social identity. In this case, the source of changes in organizational control strategies and consequently employee identity wasn't managerial discretion alone, but also resulted from the influence of external stakeholders (the government and customers). Similar dynamics may be apparent in other labour processes, and this kind of research may constitute a fruitful path to learning how workplace identities are influenced by broader socio-political dynamics.

Methodology and linkages with political economy

Perhaps the most valuable contribution of LPT to the study of work has been the rich and abundant body of qualitative research into the labour process. This is the area where LPT has the clearest practical advantage over its Marxian rivals, who often develop their ideas from 'armchair theorizing'. However, LPT still faces the problem of 'one-off' case studies identified by Thompson (1990). As acknowledged by Thompson and Newsome:

> A great strength of LPT is its capacity to connect the workplace to a broader political economy. Without that, the research programme can disappear into micro-level case studies of control and skill strategies whose causal chain ends at the factory gate. (2004: 7)

The latter statement dovetails with the arguments of Marxian critics such as Rowlinson, Hassard, and colleagues, who of course have made the point that this 'capacity' to link what happens in specific workplaces to the broader political economy has not been realized.

Thompson and Newsome's comment is meant to encourage future research projects that aim specifically at tackling this issue, and such work is necessary. However, LPT might also be able to generate insight into these linkages by utilizing the findings of *previous* research – the substantial body of existing case research – since these linkages might appear, or at least hypotheses about them might be formulated, if *patterns* across these disparate case studies could be empirically identified. Characteristics of global capitalist political economy should be manifested in commonalities (in control mechanisms, patterns of workplace conflict, pressures on identity maintenance, etc.) that characterize seemingly disparate labour processes located in different economic sectors and/or regions of the world (Stiglitz, 2002).

This means that LPT could benefit from the application of methods that facilitate knowledge-accumulation across qualitative research studies. Researchers could use aggregation techniques such as meta-ethnography (Noblit and Hare, 1988) to summarize the findings of many case studies and tease out patterns and linkages amongst them. In recent years, the feasibility of this technique has been enhanced by the development of computer software that helps the researcher to identify common themes in concepts (such as 'subjectivity', 'control', etc.) that may have been formally defined differently in various case studies (Miles and Weitzman, 1994). LPT researchers have taken the lead in studying the impact that technological advances in control and production techniques have had on the nature of work (Milkman, 1998), but haven't been as effective in keeping abreast of how improved technology can help 'enhance productivity' in our field work. Meta-ethnographic methods could allow us to identify the 'universal in the specific' (Barchiesi, 2003).

Another, future research-oriented possibility that would enhance LPT's ability to generate insight into globalization processes would be to develop more quantitative instruments to measure important LPT concepts. Currently, the main data gathering technique in LPT research is case study research via interview and observation (cf. Beil-Hildebrand, 2004). A limitation of this method is that it is impractical to employ in cross-national or cross-industry research, the kind that can generate insights about global political economy. In contrast, survey questionnaires can be used to gather data from thousands of employees on a worldwide basis. Quantification would also allow for statistical analysis of relationships among the measured variables. The nearly sole reliance on qualitative methods that has characterized LPT research (for somewhat of an exception, see some of Harley's work – e.g., Hall and Harley, 2001; Jarley, Harley and Hall, 2002) has led to the formation of a research culture that produces 'deep' knowledge (nuanced, fine-grained understandings of particular workplaces) but not 'broad' knowledge (knowledge that is generalizable to other organizations, industries, countries etc.).

Of course, this means overcoming the aversion to quantitative methods that is part of LPT's culture. LPT is rooted in the work of Braverman (1974), and one of Braverman's goals was to revitalize the study of work by critiquing the prevailing Industrial Sociology and Industrial-Organizational Psychology approaches that were (and still are) the dominant paradigms of 'mainstream' bourgeois theories of work behaviour. Braverman had an aversion to the use of quantitative techniques, which he associated with "a pre-occupation with mapping job satisfaction, employee attitudes, and the

nature of social values extant in the employment relation" (O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001: 113). Braverman considered quantitative measures to be inadequate for analysis of deep-structural systemic tendencies in modern capitalism, while later researchers have rejected them as having little value in 'penetrating below the surface' of superficial employee attitudes to tap more fundamental aspects of identity and subjectivity.

However, while the purposes that mainstream industrial sociology used quantitative methods for may have been 'bourgeois' in nature, there's nothing inherent in these methods that makes them useful only for that purpose. Nor are quantitative and qualitative methods mutually exclusive. They can be used together as a crosscheck on each other. Qualitative methods could be used to generate a general/richer understanding of themes and concepts, and then these could be translated into scale-form to permit statistical aggregation, thereby possibly producing deeper and broader insights into the global labour processes. For example, Littler and Innes' (2003) study that used quantitative methods to assess the relationship between corporate downsizing and firm-level de-skilling outcomes across 4000 organizations, and checked those results by comparing them to the findings of in-depth case studies of some of the same firms in the larger statistical sample, is in this regard exemplary. Though this study was confined to a single country (Australia), there's no reason the same kind of approach couldn't be used cross-nationally, to gain insight into how globalization processes and workplace dynamics interpenetrate each other.

Politics

Finally, politically speaking, the implication of the notion that capitalist labour processes are only potentially, not inherently, exploitative but that labour markets are systemically skewed in favour of capital at the expense of labour is that the LPT researcher should work to educate labour and the general public about unequal labour market power dynamics, and the effect this has on the effort-bargain. This addresses the issue of labour-cognizance noted above. LPT researchers are educators, and are in a structural position to educate workers and the public about the systemically unequal context of effort-bargain negotiations.

Note that this proposal doesn't entail a top-down, elite-researcher-lectures-ignorant-worker-about-their-true-condition approach. Rather, it shares commonalities with Wray-Bliss (2002; 2003), who has argued that even many postmodernist-inspired LPT researchers, ostensibly committed to a reflexive/critical ethics aimed at subverting the subordination of employee 'voices' both in the workplace and in their wider lives, may be carrying out their research in a manner that gives the researcher an 'authoritative' voice, one that reproduces hierarchical relations between researcher and researched and buttresses the systemic subjugation processes that reproduce the worker's subordination within the capitalist labour process. Wray-Bliss's point is important because it has both methodological and political implications. Politically, it follows O'Doherty and Willmott's (2001) admonition that the critical researcher cannot work with research subjects to end their subordination to capitalism until the researcher has first achieved an ethical/political stance that doesn't subordinate the research 'subject' in the process of conducting research. It recognizes that hierarchical relations between researcher-researched are connected to broader systems of domination that underlie capitalist

employment relations, such that subverting the former is a prerequisite to undermining the latter.

Methodologically, it implies that a starting point for understanding wider systems of domination such as employee experiences in the labour process is the researcher's understanding of, and critical interrogation of, his/her own tendencies to engage in actions that reproduce research-subject subordination in academic forums. This proposal posits research into the labour process as a mutual learning process (though a problematic, not idealized one) between the researcher and researched. It also recognizes that the researcher is in a somewhat privileged position, a standpoint that provides him/her with a 'soapbox' from which to amplify the product of researcher/researched collaboration.

But, it also emphasizes that, as Thompson and Smith note, "the capitalist labour process consists of *real* structures and relations whose dynamics are open to empirical observation and demonstration, however partial and limited" (2001: 56). Workers are systemically subordinated to capital in the labour market, and this often translates into real, lived-experienced deprivation in their daily lives.

I make this point because there is a danger that the Wray-Bliss argument can be taken too far: in applying his method, one could conceivably get lost in a mental hall-of-mirrors, agonizing over every step of the research process, worrying endlessly about whether one is reproducing Foucauldian 'webs of power'. The researcher could slip into an obsessive introspection that might paralyze the researcher and prevent an analysis of real-world material subjugation (much as O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001, note that an obsession with establishing a stable sense-of-self can prevent the researcher and researched from looking outward and critically interrogating systemic forms of domination). But to my view, this is only a danger, a possibility: it is also possible to use the reflexive/ethical method without slipping into this kind of obsessive introspection, and the method is not incompatible with a concern for understanding and politically combating the material realities of the capitalist labour process, and an analysis of how they link with broader systemic tendencies. To the contrary, it facilitates their accomplishment.

Also, LPT researchers should participate in mainstream political processes and agitate for legislation that ameliorates the imbalance in the labour market itself (e.g., social welfare legislation that provides adequate support for the under- and unemployed so as to lessen the compulsion to accept an unjust effort-bargain) and that ameliorate its effects in the workplace (e.g., improved wages, benefits, and working conditions). And LPT researchers should join with researchers studying other forms of domination within the workplace (gender based, race based, etc.) to investigate how labour's subordination to capital via the labour market is interrelated with other forms of oppression at the point of production and to work jointly with them to overcome those forms of oppression.

Essentially, a 'reformist' agenda that, though it doesn't jibe with Marxian demands for revolutionary action, does speak to improving the lot of working people in the here-and-

now while not relying on empirically-unsustainable leaps-of-faith about the inevitability of working-class revolution and the overthrow of capitalism.

Conclusion – A Revised core

The preceding discussion points to the need for a revised 'core' for LPT. The elements of the revised core should include:

1. The function of labour *as one input* generating surplus in capitalism, and an input that interacts with other inputs both inside and outside the labour process to create value, and hence the *important* role of production to the system, justifies the study of the labour process as a focal point for analysis.

This revision resolves the LTV contradiction in core-LPT by eliminating those aspects of Thompson's (1990) core element that rely on the LTV (i.e., labour as the sole source of surplus value and the labour process as the sole locus of value creation) and the notion that exploitation at the point of production is inherent to capitalist production. It also recognizes that even though the labour process is not the sole source of surplus, since it is a source of surplus it still merits distinct analytical attention.

2. The necessity for constant renewal and change in the forces of production and the skills of labour due to the discipline of the profit rate and competitive accumulation of capital.

This is identical to the Thompson *et al*. core element (2).

3. Due to the indeterminacy of labour, there is a control imperative in the labour process in order for capital to secure profitable production and translate its legal purchase of labour power into actual labour.

This revision is for the most part substantively identical to the Thompson *et al*. core element (3), except that the concept of labour indeterminacy is made explicit as the basis for the control imperative, and substantively, the reference to 'labour surplus' is dropped, since this relied on the LTV assumptions of core element (1).

4. Given the structural inequality of labour market transactions, the social relations between capital and labour in the workplace have a tendency to be characterized by antagonism. At the same time, capital, in order to constantly revolutionize the production process, must seek some level of creativity and cooperation from labour, resulting in a continuum of overlapping worker responses… from resistance, to accommodation, compliance, consent, or active cooperation.

This revision eliminates the concept of '*structured* antagonism', antagonism as an *inherent* aspect of capitalist production, based as it was on the concept of labour as the sole-source of value, and replaces it with the notion that unequal labour market conditions *tend* to create antagonism, contingent on labour's subjective recognition of this inequality. It also recognizes that labour may actively cooperate with management,

if it perceives a congruence of interests and/or an absence of exploitation. Additionally, our analysis of politics and methodology lead to two additional core elements:

5. Labour process theory is not analytically pre-disposed to any particular kind of method. Quantitative or qualitative methods utilizing dialectical or non-dialectical reasoning may all be capable of shedding light on the nature of work under capitalism, depending on the specific research question being investigated.

6. Given the objective, structurally unequal power relations between capital and labour that shapes the effort-bargain transaction, LPT is normatively pre-disposed to favour labour when labour and capital engage in struggle. The LPT researcher is committed to acting politically to ameliorate the effects of this unequal relationship in the short run, and eliminate it in the long run. This means that the LPT researcher should critically interrogate his/her ethical stance towards the 'subjects' of research, so as to ameliorate the possibility that the research process reproduces systems of domination that the researcher is committed to undermining.

A corollary to (6) is a recognition that other forms of domination are also manifest in the workplace, and that understanding labour's subordination to capital as a consequence of unequal labour market transactions may depend on understanding how this subordination interacts with racial and gender-based forms of oppression, among others, and acting politically with researchers who focus on those forms of domination.

From its inception, LPT has struggled against criticisms of its theoretical and practical relevance. Today, challenges to 'core' LPT come from leftist critics who argue that Marxian perspectives refute the underlying principles that characterize the core concepts. However, this revised core enables LPT to overcome some conceptual flaws while retaining those elements that have made it a robust perspective from which to study the dynamics of capitalist production, as evidenced by the rich body of empirical work it has generated on subjectivity, control and resistance, and power relations in work organizations. Still, attention to the theoretical and methodological issues highlighted above could prove fruitful in improving LPT's conceptual tools for understanding modern global capitalism and making a contribution to empowering employees in the process.

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the author   Stephen Jaros is an Associate Professor of Management at the Southern University College of Business, where he facilitates learning in the fields of international business, organizational behaviour, and critical management studies. He is currently the Program Chair of the Critical Management Studies group within the U.S. Academy of Management. His research interests include commitment and identity within organizational culture, patterns of technological change across global markets, and labour and knowledge-based theories of value.
Address: Associate Professor of Management, Southern University, College of Business, Department of Management and Marketing, Baton Rouge, LA, USA 70813
E-mail: sjaros3@cox.net

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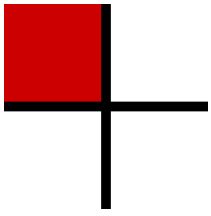
On the Possibility of Formless Life: Agamben's Politics of the Gesture[*]

René ten Bos

abstract   Human activity is routinely thought of in terms of form and teleology. In the first section, it is argued that this is due to the spell of Plato and Aristotle. In the second section, Agamben's struggle to evade teleological schemes is discussed. He argues for a politics of the gesture. This is a politics that blurs entrenched distinctions between the human and the non-human and therefore opens a perspective to a communality that questions not only positivist anthropology but also, and in relation to this, teleology.

Introduction

Many philosophers, scientists, and intellectuals have argued that work or labour is a pre-eminently human characteristic. That is, we differ from animals because our actions can be designed as if there were a goal attached to it. Work, Georg Lukàcs (1973) once argued, is 'teleological positioning' ('*teleologische Setzung*') and I believe that most philosophers would somehow be in agreement with this. If activity loses its aim, it is no longer seen as work.

As a consequence, work is generally located in an atmosphere of objectivity and necessity. Working persons are not ordinary subjects anymore but have become, so to speak, objectified subjects: they act in conformity with rules and regulations rather than according to their own creative desires. They subject themselves to well-determined roles for they understand that this is the best guarantee to acquire means of existence. Work is routinely couched in rigid forms. We have lost the ability not to think about human activity in terms of organization. Reflections about work and organization run the risk of becoming senseless and irrelevant when elements such as form, goal, differentiation, efficiency, or coordination are lacking. It is even worse than this: such reflections do not only ignore economic or industrial essentials but also human ones. It is "a basic characteristic of human beings", argues John Rawls (1971: 523), that

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> no one person can do everything that he might do; nor a fortiori can he do everything that any
> other person can do. The potentialities of each individual are greater than those he can hope to
> realize; and they fall far short from the powers among men generally. (Rawls, 1971: 523)

And who would dare to disagree with this? There are always so many possibilities that remain unfulfilled were it not that people start working together. According to Rawls, organization, training, and planning offer the sole prospect of realizing at least some of all these dormant possibilities. In fact, they even help us to overcome our anger and frustration with all that seems so unrealisable.

Yet, there is something nagging about this. Work, it is true, may help us to realize the otherwise unrealisable, but what is the price to be paid for this? To realize the unrealisable people have to divide work and the problem is that this division of work cannot be achieved without a division of their very selves. Put simply, the organization of labour cannot be detached from the organization of human beings. This has profound consequences for the communities to which they belong. These become communities of identities, functions, classes, and exclusions. These are communities based on separations.

Can human activity be thought of as formless, inclusive, integral? In the first section of the paper, I shall maintain that reflections about the subject hardly ever escape from the tyranny of timeless form. That is, they either follow a 'Platonic principle' or an 'Aristotelian principle'. According to both principles, the very idea of formless activity is meaningless. But is it? In the second section, I will discuss the concept of a gesture as it is developed by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. He introduces this concept as an alternative to Aristotelian conceptions of human activity that are, in his view, always related to means-end schemes. The concept of the gesture radically breaks with these schemes. The gesture, Agamben maintains, is a means without an end. Hence, the gesture refers to a formless kind of life that allows for a community (*polis*) without entrenched identities, functions, and exclusions. Agamben offers us the possibility of a politics of the gesture. What are we to make out of this?

The Shadow of Teleology: Plato and Aristotle

Plato

Plato understood that the division of labour in the state he logically constructed could only be successful if linked to the separation of the community in corresponding classes. The person who produces belongs to a class of producers (shoemakers, weavers, farmers are the preferred examples); the person who fights belongs to a class of fighters (soldiers, warriors); and the person who rules belongs to a class of rulers (philosophers). So already here, in a work that has been argued to have laid the foundation of Western philosophy, we have a technical and more philosophical justification of the division of labour. It is only through specialization and professionalism that we can make more than we would achieve otherwise (which is the technical justification). Specialization and professionalism are also perfect responses to people obviously having different natural aptitudes (which is the philosophical justification). In Plato's logical universe,

every talent deserves its own specific function. Indeed, this is regarded as a matter of justice and not doing what is in accordance to your natural talents is deemed to be a gross violation of this justice (Plato, 1971: 347a-347b).

Plato's trust in a state run by specialists is not innocent at all, as has been pointed out by many commentators, since it is to be understood as nothing less that an attack on Athenian democracy. A timeless and therefore incorruptible class division was proffered by Plato as an indispensable alternative to what he could only understand as chaos and weakness. His objections to democracy are crystalline clear. Admittedly, democracy is attractive for it has to offer many different colours. Sometimes, it seems as if all the colours are shown off in the shops and that is, according to Plato, a blessing for women and children (1971: 557c). He links democracy to what we nowadays would consider as immoderate consumption. Such consumption is nice for the masses (most notably, women and children) but disastrous for a state that has to wage war on enemies in order to gain wealth (which is, of course, a really masculine activity). Democracy lacks coercion and authority, respect and rightness. More importantly, it lacks sense for truth and transparency amongst its political leaders.

In the preface of my English edition of *The Republic*, the translator argues that Plato's alternative for democracy is a kind of totalitarian aristocracy in which positions are determined by talent rather than by blood. If we are to coin modern terminology for what Plato envisaged, then 'management meritocracy' (1971: 50) would, at least according to my translator, be a serious candidate. Now, this is, of course, based on an intolerable trans-historical understanding of Plato who was, after all, not a management author *avant la lettre* – but it makes one thing very clear: in a well-ordered society, human interaction is determined by unshakeable technical and social distinctions. Plato is not a management thinker but managers are clearly enthralled by what Marx referred to as 'the Platonic principle'. This is based on an understanding of the all-importance of time:

> So do we do better to exercise one skill or to try to practice several?
> To stick to one, he said.
> And there is a further point. It is fatal in any job to miss the right moment for action.
> Clearly.
> The workman must be a professional at the call of his job; his job will not wait till he has leisure to spare for it.
> That is inevitable.
> Quantity and quality are therefore more easily produced when a man specializes appropriately on a single job for which he is naturally fitted, and neglects all the others. (Plato, 1971: 370bc)

Marx (1981: 387) captures the Platonic principle as follows: The workman should be directed (*gerichtet, richten*) towards the job. The reverse situation, that is, when the job is directed to the workman, is deemed to be hopelessly inefficient. Lack of specialization would allow the workman to carry out as many additional jobs as he likes. As a consequence, the job would 'wait' for a workman to be picked up and hence "the right time for production would be lost" (*ibid.*). Marx argues that the Platonic division of labour is governed by serious concerns about useful and useless time. As such it should not be related, he argues, to the city-state of Sparta that Plato admired so much but to class or caste system in ancient Egypt, the first industrial model state that we know. It is well known that Plato was an admirer of Egypt and that his ideas about

the ideal state resonate with what he happened to know about the situation there (see also, for example, Popper, 2003: 242, 245-246). His image of Egypt was informed by a deep discontent with movement and change, exactly the kind of stuff that he bemoaned so much in the Athenian democracy where he lived. Social institutions, Plato contends, should be petrified in time as if they were to be denied any development of their own. Something similar was assumed with respect to the 'natural aptitudes' of the workman. A weaver is a weaver, a shoemaker a shoemaker, and a warrior a warrior, and all these people are involved not only in stupidity but also in injustice if they are deviating from the straight and narrow path that nature has laid down for them. Job enrichment would be something unheard of in Plato's ideal state.

After Plato, real states have never been able to strictly follow his recipes. It is well known that his Sicilian experiments with the totalitarian state were doomed to fail. On the other hand, we should not derive too much optimism from Plato's political failures. His ominous shadow has never been far away, not even in democratic territories. Marx (1981: 388), to mention just one of his heirs and critics, rather desperately asked himself: *"Le platonisme, ou va-t-il se nicher?"* ("Where will Platonism find its niche?").

The great German philosopher had his suspicions. Organizations and companies have never been able to get rid of their platonic mainsprings. They are the self-declared figureheads of efficiency and hence have developed, like Plato himself, a distaste for loss of time. Perhaps, one might even say that the contemporary and fashionable discontent with bureaucratic inertia might be platonically inspired. It is this inertia that justifies so many people to argue that the entrepreneur, who is seen as the master of efficiency, should become a role model for the red tape (du Gay, 2000).

Simultaneously, however, the enterprise seems to represent the seamy side in the ongoing debates about the uncomfortable relationship between democracy and efficiency. A democrat differs from the entrepreneur or the manager in that he refuses to subject others to a temporal regime: he or she modestly accepts that the adjustment of people and time will never be perfect. In other words, s/he will never transmogrify time into a scarce resource that, depending on the circumstances, allows one to tie people down to a fixed place (Moore, 1963: 7). The managers in an enterprise fancy the idea to adjust time and space and indeed struggle to fix human beings to well-defined spaces that we can best understand as tiny boxes. These boxes are denied any dynamics of their own. Movement is only possible between them rather than in them and is restricted to clear and indisputable lines. The core of the platonic principle is that a human being and his or her 'natural aptitudes' are to be understood as forms or ideas that can never change. Experts who are appointed rather than chosen see to a correct allocation of boxes.

Aristotle

Aristotle takes issue with the kind of conceitedness that is characteristic of the Platonic principle. He was the first thinker who understood that Plato's assumptions about the intrinsic relationship between the technical and social division of labour could not be taken for granted, let alone that it would in any way be sanctifying. Of course, Aristotle avers that logic and efficiency are important and that it is better when a person directs

him- or herself to only one task (1984: 1237b), but he adds that a technical division of labour need not necessarily be linked to a social division of labour. Indeed, he insists that the question of linking both kinds of divisions is not a technical but rather a political matter:

> [In setting up a state,]…a number of agricultural workers will be needed to supply food; and skilled workmen will be required, and fighting men, and wealthy men, and priests, and judges of what is necessary and expedient. This enumeration being finished, it remains to consider whether they should all take part in al these activities, everybody being farmer and skilled workman and deliberator and judge (for this is not impossible) – or shall we postulate different persons for each task? Or again, are not some of the jobs necessarily confined to some people, while other may be thrown open to all? The situation is not the same in every constitution; for…it is equally possible for all to share in everything and for some to share in some things. These features are what makes the constitution different: in democracies all share in all things, in oligarchies the opposing practice prevails. (Aristotle, 1984: 414-415 or 1328b)

Aristotle argues that in the democratic city state citizens are able to carry out many different kind of functions. He assumes that these citizens have sufficient 'virtue' to carry out the many different kind of tasks that belong to a gentleman's life. If they live theirs in a 'mechanical or commercial' way, they would simply 'militate against virtue'. I will not enter here into the issue of virtuousness. My point is rather that Aristotle was perhaps the first philosopher who came to understand that the wealth that results from the division of labour might have a very strained relationship with particular social demands. This is why, in his exemplary study on Aristotelian elements in contemporary managements and economies, James Murphy labels the Greek philosopher as a precursor of Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, and Karl Marx for they all understood that history hides a tragedy in the sense that the material liberation of the human being somehow seems to require his or her spiritual subjugation:

> The inexorably growing division of labour is a Promethean tale of how the destruction of the individual leads to the prosperity of the species. (Murphy, 1993: 25)

The necessity of labour undermines human freedom. In one of his fantastic footnotes, Marx (1981: 387) points out that all philosophical sympathy for the division of labour could not prevent the citizens of Athens from celebrating the ideal of 'autarky': political freedom and independence (*autarcheia*) were held in higher esteem than wealth. Now we know that it is hard to think of a political or social philosophy that does not address the fact that technology seems to be devoted to the species rather than the individual. Aristotle (1999: 322-324) was the first thinker who problematised this. In the last pages of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, to be more precise, in chapter 7 and 8 of the tenth book, he extensively elaborates on the concept of autarky. The most perfect activity of a human being belies any relationship or coordination and is, at least in this sense, truly divine.

Two remarks need to be made here. First, the Aristotelian focus on activity can be seen as a correction of the Platonic focus on production; so, it is in the Aristotelian scheme of things that the emphasis lies on practical wisdom (*phronesis*) rather than on knowledge (*episteme*) or expertise (*techne*). Second, Aristotle links the activity of *autarcheia* to theorising, thinking, and contemplating rather than to production or scientific labour. The point that I want to put forward here is that the Aristotelian idea of perfect activity

cannot be related to production, coordination or the division of labour. It belies the very idea of boxes. Or so it seems.

Rawls (1971) speaks of the 'Aristotelian principle' which he understands as a basic principle concerning human motivation. As indicated above, Aristotle assumes that there is an innate good in each human being, a good, moreover, that is superior to their very selves in that it directs their actions to some ultimate good (1999: 310, 1173a). That Aristotle thinks of this innate good in terms of an instinct that brings the human being into touch with the divine as a formative principle is relevant here. Even a contemporary thinker as Rawls argues that this principle allows the human being to attain for something higher, even though he does not link it so much to the divine as to the reasonable and the good. Insofar as the division of labour frustrates these high-spirited intentions of the person, it should be condemned as unreasonable and perhaps even as evil.

Rawls rephrases the Aristotelian principle as an intuitive idea with two elements:

a) The more people improve their performance when carrying out certain tasks, the more they enjoy what they do;

b) If they have to choose between two activities, then they will generally prefer the one that calls on "a larger repertoire of more intricate and subtle discriminations" (Rawls, 1971: 426).

Lurking behind these elements is the thought that complex activities are more pleasant because they "satisfy the desire for variety and novelty of experience" (1971: 427). Here, Rawls emphasizes the importance of anticipation, surprise, personal style, and expression, all elements that we would not associate with the Platonic principle discussed earlier. The point is that these elements become irrelevant when one is to carry out highly specialized and rather simple tasks. The Aristotelian principle explains why it is that people are motivated to carry out complex rather than simple tasks, why it is that they want to exercise at least some influence on what they have to do and also why it is that their desires change over the years. I submit that this emphasis on change and dynamics in motivational patterns of human beings is the most important Aristotelian correction of the management meritocracy that Plato had in mind. Rather than resting petrified in Plato's ideal state, the human being is now envisaged as a lover of complexity, self-improvement, and more or less radical innovation.

However, Rawls points out that the Aristotelian principle is not universally applicable. He alerts us to the risks that are involved with complex tasks, to the learning process that can become as tedious as they are fruitless, and also to all kinds of social and psychological inhibitions. As a matter of fact, Aristotle was well aware of these problems. When it comes to work, one has to accept the obvious fact that not everybody will be capable of actualising his or her potential. Having said this however, it seems to be that the strive for actualisation is more intense than ever (ten Bos and Rhodes, 2003). We may wonder whether this should be something that we are to endorse and whether we should not opt for a somewhat moderated version of the Aristotelian principle. Why would everyone engage in the game of ever increasing complexity and subtlety? A certain nostalgic craving for simplicity and even for non-activity does not seem to be

unwelcome at all. However, such musings notwithstanding, it is the full-blown Aristotelian principle that has become widely accepted. Even Rawls, who has doubts about it, allows for the fact that the principle fits in with our nature to such an extent "that in the design to social institutions a large place has to be made for it, otherwise human beings will find their culture and form of life dull and empty" (Rawls, 1971: 429).

In our culture, dullness and emptiness is, no doubt, the worst that can happen to a human being. In the philosophical talk show *Das philosophische Quartett*, broadcasted by German television on the 16th of February 2003, Rüdiger Safranski, a well-known German philosopher, claimed that the core problem of our entire civilization, our culture and our education is to prevent that human beings, when they become older, will be bored stiff. That is why we should have them read newspapers or watch television, and, most important of all, have them do some decent job. Emptiness and boredom are omnipresent enemies for a life that is there to be enjoyed, also on the job, indeed, especially on the job. The well-known Greek fear for emptiness is still very much with us today.

Rawls is a case in point. He invokes the image of a chain of activities in which *n* is an activity that implies all the kind of skills that are necessary to carry out activity *n-1* and some more skills added to this. The further you are on this chain, the more likely it is that enjoyment and happiness will prevail. Hence, the Aristotelian principle assumes that human nature always has a tendency to become less empty and to move onwards along the chain of activities that is life. We are all fastened to this chain.

Of course, we do not have to accept this story. It smacks of implacable teleology: no matter how difficult it sometimes is, in the end all work aims at the achievement of happiness and virtuousness (which are, in the Aristotelian scheme, inextricably linked). We only have to look at the behaviour of those who apparently have arrived at the full actualisation of their potential, that is, at the idiosyncrasies of leaders in business and politics to understand that teleology might boil down to a false promise. But even so, Rawls seems to have a point when he states that the Aristotelian principle seems to express nothing less than a "deep psychological fact" (1971: 432) that, in combination with rational planning and an understanding of the world as it is, accounts for many of our judgments. Put more straightforwardly, in our culture many people think that it works like this. We all seem to plan with a certain goal in mind. Of course, sometimes we come to an understanding that not everything in life can be planned, but a life without *telos* is deemed to be unacceptable. I have said that The Aristotelian principle differs from the Platonic one in that it allows for some movement and dynamics, but these new dynamics is carefully designed and not at all the same as agility or liveliness. What we have to do over time is very well organized. The community of human beings is directed towards happiness and virtuousness.

Rawls has his doubts. Sure, you have to adjust the design of your institutions to the state of affairs as Aristotle might have seen them, but to what extent? Is the Aristotelian principle irrefutably 'good' or 'true'? What kind of people do we get when they only think in terms of future realizations or actualisations? Will they not think that everything that belongs to the past, their past, is stupid or boring? Is the past only a way

through to what in the end will turn out to be a success? And have we really laid down our adherence to the Platonic principle? Or is it more that we have adopted a hybrid position between the two principles, one that faces the temptation of dynamics but refuses to accept it as such? Is not what we are left with a kind of movement that is restricted because it is so well ordered? In our society, Kingwell (1998) explains, most people long for happiness, even those who work in organizations, but who of them is willing to go for happiness without relying on recipe and technique? Success needs to be certain. It should therefore be carefully extracted from organized and purposeful work. This is what Plato and Aristotle, for all their differences, would agree on.

Can we escape from their shadows? Is it possible to conceive of work or activity in a way that evades the teleological scheme? Is it possible to relate them to formlessness? It is to these questions that I will turn now.

Non-Teleological Activity: The Gesture

The Anthropological Machine

The French philosopher Michel Serres (1987: 132-133) has argued that work is always a struggle against noise. If you let the things in the world fend for themselves, then foxes will eat the poultry, aphids will destroy the vine, and the canals will be filled with mud. Without work, everything gets blurred. In this sense, Serres points out, work is not related to human beings. Life is always a struggle against the endless flow. Order, isolation, and organization are the weapons of life itself against the omnipresent tendency towards formlessness.

So, Serres doubts whether work is the defining human characteristic. Animals work, plants work, everything works. But if work does not define humanity, what does? In a book called *The Open: Man and Animal* Agamben (2002) has claimed that the separation of the human from the animal is, if anything, based on a constitutive political act rather than based on a hard-boiled anthropological fact. In his entire work, Agamben therefore refuses to offer us a positivist anthropology that would indicate how and why human beings differ from non-humans. He argues that this distinction is based on a *politically* inspired formula:

> *[H]omo sapiens* is neither a substance nor a well-defined species: the formula is rather a machine or an artefact in order to produce knowledge of the humane. (Agamben, 2002: 37)[2]

So, what we have here is an anthropological machine which ironically "lays bare the absence of a distinguishing feature of the human being" (2002: 39). This machine or this formula is a historical invention after which humans can envisage their own being as merely 'anthropomorphic'. Human beings are, in other words, animals that resemble the human being. But if in this way human beings lack an essence or *telos* of their own, then they are, according to Agamben, not only human but also profoundly non-human.

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2   In subsequent passages, I have not always used English texts. The translations into English are mine.

The human being is a formless creature that has never been able to escape from its own bestiality or inhumanity.

At the end of a discussion about Pico della Mirandelo, Agamben (2002: 40) submits that it is for his or her inhumanity that the human being can assume many different characteristics and faces. Man is, in other words, chameleonic. Humanism, Agamben adds, is therefore paradoxically based on the discovery of the non-human in humanity. As such it is, in words of Peter Sloterdijk (who is appreciatively quoted by Agamben, 2002: 84) in the business of 'domesticating' the alien element in itself. "What presents itself as reflection about politics", writes Sloterdijk, "is in truth a fundamental reflection about the rules for the business of the human park. If there is a dignity of the human being…, then it is especially because human beings are not only kept in the political theme park, but are also keeping themselves there" (2001: 331). We are therefore the animals who have the capacity to keep themselves and we can do this only if we are able to recognize the non-human as an immanence in ourselves. The possibility to be-in-a-park requires an understanding of what it would be not to be in a park. Outside the park is an unruly hell. Inside it, you have goals, rules, laws, organization, and so on. Teleology is omnipresent in the park.

The idea to keep human beings in a park is, as Sloterdijk maintains, essentially political, and I think that Agamben would agree wholeheartedly with this. He points out that humanity claims to have a mandate for the integral management of its own bestiality (2002: 86). However, he does not write about the human beast in a park but about the human beast in and, more importantly, outside the *polis*. As is well known, Aristotle defined the human being as a *zoon politikon* (political animal). This implies that only a human being can be in the polis. What is outside the *polis* is what one might refer to as the less-than-human. It has no other dimensions than bestiality and physicality. In other words, these dimensions were not frequently *politicised* in Greece.

One of Agamben's major claims is that it is exactly these dimensions that became a strategic objective for modern politics. This is why modern politics is essentially a bio-politics. (Indeed, with hindsight one might say that the Greek treatment of barbarians, slaves and women were an instance of bio-politics as well. Foucault is therefore wrong in claiming that bio-politics is a modern phenomenon. His claim was right to the extent that it alerted us to the exceptionality of bio-politics in the Ancient world.) Modern politics no longer focuses primarily on humanity as a well-defined form (citizen, king, employee, functionary, president, and so on) but increasingly also on the less-than-human (life itself, bare life, bodily life, animal life). Agamben writes more or less extensively about animals, children, embryos, the proletariat of modern cities, angels, drifters, comatose patients, refugees, prisoners, inmates of concentration camps, indeed, about death itself. Put otherwise, he writes about anthropomorphic creatures that somehow have not actualised their fully-fledged human form or have lost their form.

In this sense, his work seems to resonate particularly well with a number of recent studies in history or in art history about extreme violence that renders people formless, wordless, or faceless. Krauss and Alain-Bois (1997) have used Bataille's concept of '*informe*' to discuss some scatological tendencies in modern or post-modern art. Groebner (2004) embroiders on the concept of the *Ungestalt* (formless) to discuss the

way in which representations of extreme violence in the late Middle Ages are related to contemporary representations of the same (in film, in graffiti, and so on). His discussion is guided by some very 'Agambenian' questions: "How, then, was medieval violence portrayed, and how were the hideously injured bodies given a voice? What role did anonymity play? Finally, how was illegitimate, threatening violence distinguished from proper, 'ordering' violence?" (Groebner, 2004: 16). In the next subsection, we will see that Agamben thinks that ethics, as he understands it, is about giving a voice to the voiceless.

The Capacity to Die and the Capacity to Speak

The stakes of Agamben's philosophy are enormous. To understand why we must briefly consider some of his intuitions about the relationship between death and language. The less-than-human is only alive and has no voice at all in the polis. This implies that it has no relationship to death for it is only the speaking animal (*zoon logon echon*) that has an idea of its own mortality. According to Agamben (1991: xi), it is philosophers like Hegel or Heidegger who have alerted us to the strange relationship between the human capacity to speak and the human capacity to die. In the words of Heidegger, only *Dasein* is being-to-death (*Sein-zum-Tode*). Anthropomorphic creatures – be they animals or inmates of prison camps – do not speak but are only living. They are, as it were, "immortal living things" (Derrida, 2003: 130; see also: Sloterdijk, 2000). In a sense, therefore, they cannot be killed because they, being unaware of their mortality, cannot die. Yet, they *are* killed. But since they cannot properly die, we can kill them, by dint of a sovereign act, *unpunished* (Agamben, 2002). In Heidegger's famous words: we can make them "cease to live" (see also: Agamben, 1991: 2). This is what routinely happens to animals who are hunted, to comatose patients in hospitals where the plug is pulled out, or to refugees that are sent back to their lands of origin. Agamben wants us to understand that even in these situations we are actually talking about death and about killing. Such an understanding, however, assumes that the less-than-human gets a voice of its own. Only when they can speak, can they die. We may also, for example when we are unable to give them a voice, render ourselves voiceless. Only by making ourselves less-than-human can we hope to see the less-than-human. This might be the only chance that we, as humans, have.

What is excluded by the anthropological machine from the community of human beings takes central stage in Agamben's work. To bear witness to the less-than-human is what Agamben understands as an ethical duty for human beings. As he explains in a deeply moving passage:

> Just as in the starry sky that we see at night, the stars shine surrounded by a total darkness that, according to cosmologists, is nothing other than the testimony of a time in which the stars did not yet shine, so the speech of the witness bears witness to a time in which human beings did not yet speak; and so the testimony of human beings attests to a time in which they were not yet human. (Agamben, 1999a: 162)

Agamben's entire work is about the (im)possibility of encounters with the less-than-human and, for him, this is in fact a question about the (im)possibility of ethics. This is by no means a settled question for we have to undertake some very difficult thinking. More precisely, we have to think of a community that includes whatever there is

(Agamben, 1993), we have to think of a post-sovereign politics that does not exclude life (Agamben, 2002), and, indeed, we have to think of a language that is not just the vehicle of thought as such but that, in its openness to the voice of life itself, ultimately brings thought to a standstill (Agamben, 1991). In short, we may have to think the kind of thought that thinks nothing anymore. Only this might make encounters with the less-than-human possible. But this possibility should not be taken for granted. As Groebner (2004: 37) has it, it implies that we would really be able to see what we probably fear most.

Can we ever therefore really understand the (non)voice that speaks to us from the *Muselmänner* who were sent into the gas chambers? Immediately after the just quoted passage, Agamben elucidates how disturbing the ethical demand of an encounter with the less-than-human is:

> Or, to take up an analogous hypothesis, just as in the expanding universe, the farthest galaxies move away from a speed greater than their light, which cannot reach us, such that the darkness we see in the sky is nothing but the invisibility of the light of unknown stars, so the complete witness (…) is the one we cannot see: the *Muselmann*. (*ibid.*)

Even if we abandon our claims to language, sovereignty, or humanity in order to see or hear the less-than-human, there is still the possibility that we see or hear nothing. Basically, this is what ethics is all about: to think a possibility that might prove to be impossible.

A Politics of the Gesture

It is against this backdrop that we should understand the concept of the gesture. Agamben invokes the idea of the gesture as an element of a coming politics that takes the body or the less-than-human as the starting point. But is this not the same as bio-politics? Did not bio-politics depart from similar assumptions?

No, bio-politics can only think of the body in order to exclude it by an act of sovereignty. It is this sovereignty – the very claim that we are positioned to end another creature's life by excluding it from our community – that is the starting point in bio-politics. A politics of the gesture, on the other hand, wants to include the body, the physical, the less-than-human. It wants to undo the unholy effects of the anthropological machine that allows us to think in terms of humans and non-humans, in terms of represented and non-represented bodies, in terms of qualified life and bare life. Central to a politics of the gesture is an understanding that the concept of the human being is very insecure.

Only if we see this, may we lend an ear to a new politics, that is, a politics which subverts all claims to sovereignty and thus defies any legitimacy to the distinction between bare life on the one hand and the qualified life on the other. In terms I used earlier, this politics wants to overcome the distinction between a human life that has attained a perfect form and a life which somehow has not. It argues that, given the unstable nature of the *anthropos*, we should refrain from referring to this creature in terms of fixed essences evidencing his or her alleged sovereignty (the thinking animal, the political animal, or, indeed, the working animal).

Agamben dreams of a politics which radically subverts this sovereignty. The problem with contemporary (pseudo-democratic) politics is, he argues, that it has become a media spectacle which cannot but expropriate our sense for community. Here, Agamben is a true follower of Guy Debord's analysis of the society of the spectacle (Debord, 1967). In this society, language is no longer able to forge communities. It rather transforms human beings in solitary atoms who are merely capable of absorbing images like commodities. "The extreme form of the expropriation of the communal is the spectacle, that is to say, the kind of politics in which we are living. But this also means that in the spectacle our linguistic nature meets us in the wrong form" (Agamben, 2001: 81).

Against this, we need to reinvent a language that is a truly communal and non-exclusive language. This might entail that politics needs to be conceived of not so much as a process of talking (*parlare*, parliament) but as a politico-bodily practice. Such a practice does not assume that the talkative citizen is a standard unit of analysis but rather takes the body as its starting point. The new post-democratic practice that Agamben has in mind departs from an understanding of bodies. In the end, a gestural politics should enable the encounter between the human being and the less-than-human. What does Agamben expect of this new politics? In a crucial article, he quotes Max Kommerell, a German literary theorist who wrote about gestures in literature: "[A] new beauty begins, one that is similar to the beauty of the gestures of the animal, to soft and threatening gestures" (Agamben, 1999: 80).

What are we to make of this new beauty? Agamben does not have in mind a new kind of aesthetics that purports to elevate life into art or art into life, but rather an understanding that there is an indifference between life and art. Only a politics, Agamben (2001: 77) argues, that understands the fundamental indifference between both understands its true tasks (which is and should always be related to the community). The new political practice is about the organization of *situations* – Guy Debord is never far away and neither is (silent) film and theatre – in which you are willing to say, in Nietzsche's sense, that you want this over and over again, if necessary, countless times. The point is to completely change the world without violating or harming it, that is, you change the world by affirming it. Saying 'yes' to life as such entails that you refuse to exclude – exclusion is, of course a way of saying 'no' (a 'no' to this particular group, a 'no' to an identity that differs from yours, a 'no' to your body or a 'no' to the animal in you). The refusal to exclude is based on a refusal to accept form or teleology.

In the society of the spectacle, we only organize with particular goals (*telos*) in mind. Even here, Plato and Aristotle are not too far away. For example, we want to obtain certain commodities in the hope that the quality of our lives will improve. As a consequence, we have lost our capacity for the gesture which is, Agamben (2001: 78) claims, exactly the other side of the commodity (for it totally lacks any use and exchange value). Paradoxically, however, in a society dominated by images and commodities, everybody becomes obsessed by the possibility of the gesture. Yet, what we have are oftentimes false gestures, that is, gestures "as foreign as the gesticulations of marionettes" (1999: 83). Nietzsche – that is, the Nietzsche that Agamben makes him

out to be – understood this very clearly. His insistence on a life-affirming activity is a case in point:

> [T]he eternal return is intelligible only as a gesture (and hence solely as a theatre) in which potentiality and actuality, authenticity and mannerism, contingency and necessity have become indistinguishable. Thus spoke Zarathustra is the ballet of a humanity that has lost its gestures. And when the age became aware of its loss (too late) it began its hasty attempt to recuperate its lost gestures in extremis. (Agamben, 1999: 83)

Beauty, Ethics, Gag

What we have here is a call for a politics that is about the creation of situations allowing for a gesture. To understand the power of this call, one should bear to mind that Agamben (2001: 77) defines capitalism (or the society of the spectacle) as a project that aims at the elimination of possibilities and potential from life itself or, perhaps better, at the elimination of chance – and it has to achieve this by pushing everything into a well-defined directions. Agamben is in doubt about this project as it excludes the less-than-human of which he argues all ethics should be about. As we have just seen, he opts for a politics that effaces the distinction between the human and the non-human. I opened the article by saying that, for many philosophers, the key distinction between humans and non-humans is linked to an understanding that humans are capable of teleological activity. Now, Agamben's strategy is to ponder the possibility of human action that is not teleological (and therefore not anthropological at all). We need a concept that allows us to escape from the '*teleologische Setzung*' that Lukacs had in mind when he discussed the working animal. The gesture is exactly such a concept.

He (2001: 59) introduces a subtle distinction made by the Latin writer Varro between *facere* (making, creating), *agere* (acting, performing), and *gerere* (fulfilling, taking on). The idea is that, for example, a poet can create (*facere*) a play without performing (*agere*) in it. The artist, on the other hand, can perform in the play without having created it. Now, Varro argues that the emperor in a country engages in an entirely different kind of activity: he neither creates nor performs but takes on certain responsibilities and fulfils duties. It is as if he 'carries' a task, an office, and so on. This is referred to by the expression '*res gerere*' (thing that is carried). How should we conceive of this carrying activity that Agamben describes as 'gesture'?

First of all, it might be appropriate here to grasp the *historical* appeal of Agamben's musings about the gesture. In the Roman Empire, politics was always about gestures. An oration by a politician in the Senate or in a stadium could obviously not be understood by all members of the audience for microphones had not been, as far as we can tell, invented yet. Good orators therefore knew that they were not understandable for many people. But when you cannot fully rely on the power of your voice, gestures become quintessential for your political performance. As Aldrete explains:

> Gestures were an indispensable bale part of oratory and served many purposes. Hand and body motions could mirror the verbal component of an oration, impart emotional shadings to a word, serve as an alternative language for communication and enhance the innate rhythm nature of many orations. Gesture truly offered a way for Roman orators to achieve eloquence not only with their words but also with their entire bodies. (1999: 42-43)

Agamben's reflections on the gestures are based on an understanding that politicians nowadays have lost the capacity for the gesture, not only in a literal but also in a figural sense. All we see on TV-screens are talking heads and mikes. We ought not to forget that the head is the pre-eminent site of the tic or the spasm – it is the site of the non-gestural. No wonder then that (business) politics nowadays is not about beauty and eloquence anymore but about goal-setting, decisiveness, and toughness. Politics has therefore become a largely anaesthetic affair: it is not about beauty nor is it about the capacity to be affected or to be passionate (see also Nancy, 1991). All these elements are cancelled out by the project-nature (or, if you like, managerial nature) that so much politics has assumed. When we glance at people like Blair and Bush, we sense in their highly programmed speeches and their spastic focus on pre-established goals that the syndrome of Gilles de la Tourette might be lurking behind all that they say: their speech as well as their behaviour betray the eclipse of the gesture. Flexibility – that is a key element of the gesture – is understood by them as a weakness, backbone is all that matters.

Second, there is a subtle *philosophical* argument as well. Agamben point out that Aristotle (1999: 185, 1140b) makes a famous distinction between *poiesis* (production) and *praxis* (acting): production always has a goal outside the activity of producing itself, whereas successful acting is always its own goal. It is this distinction, as I explained above, that has determined much thought about work and organization. On the one hand, there are activities that are means to realize certain extrinsic goals; on the other hand, there are activities that can do without means and are goals within themselves. Agamben (2001: 59-61) points out that both activities, *poiesis* and *praxis*, are dominated by the *telos*, that is, by some conceptualisation of goal, form, intention, and so on. (I have discussed this to some extent in the first section.)

The gesture, however, refers to activity that is liberated from the teleological straightjacket. Agamben describes the gesture as a means without end and he argues that we have to take this in the sense that it *both* refuses to become a means to an end *and* refuses to become an end in itself. He refers to the French poet Mallarmé who has referred to a similar principle in terms of a *milieu pur* and to Kant (2001: 61) who defined the entire domain of aesthetics, both in art and in nature, as "finality without end" (*Zweckmäßigkeit ohne Zweck,* translated in Italian as*: finalità senza scopa*).

Now, for Kant it was quite clear that ethics is about ends. We cannot find goals outside ourselves (for example, in nature) and therefore we have to look for them in ourselves: the final end of our lives lies in our own moral destination (2001: 185). As Kant sees it, nature and art have a purely "formal finality" (2001: 79): in them, there is finalization, realization, actualisation, but there is no underlying end. This is indeed what defines beauty: it is "the form of finality in an object inasmuch as it can be perceived without the idea of an end" (2001: 93). For Kant, aesthetics and ethics are therefore separated: in the first domain only finality prevails and in the second domain, which is essentially human, there are (also) ends.

I take Agamben's reflections about the gesture as a correction of Kantian (and, indeed, all teleological) schemes. The reason is that, like Plato and Aristotle, Kant has succumbed to the temptations of the anthropological machine: ethics is excluded from

the non-human domain. We may think of a tiger or, to mention an example by Kant himself, of a tulip as beautiful, but they are not to be understood in any ethical sense. As I indicated earlier, for Agamben, ethics is precisely related to the non-human (or less-than-human) domain. I take him as saying that Kant was destined to be (morally) deaf for the voice of the non-human for he made such a rigid distinction between aesthetics (as something that can be related the non-human sphere) and ethics (as something that cannot be related to the non-human sphere). It is exactly this distinction that Agamben wants to overcome. The concept of the gesture allows him to unify aesthetics and ethics. The provocation is, of course, that we have here an ethics without ends. In Agamben's view, ethics is neither about *poiesis* nor about *praxis*. Varro is important here for he opens up an old and almost entirely forgotten dimension of activity: a gesture shows (rather than says or, as Wittgenstein would say, *zeigt* rather than *sagt*) that one is willing to function as a means that remains uncontaminated by ends.

Yet, the gesture is not detached from the linguistic. Kommerell, to whom I referred earlier, claimed that the gesture is always an expressive showing of a person who makes us aware that s/he is somehow lost in the very language that s/he is able to use. As such, we may infer from this that the gesture is closely linked to language. Yet, it opens up to another side of language, to a kind of non-communicative speechlessness dwelling inside it: the more people struggle with words, the more they seem to be at a loss within these words. When we speak, it is as if an unsayable labyrinth weighs us down. The person who makes a gesture might perhaps be argued to show us a way out of this linguistic labyrinth.

The gesture interrupts language precisely at the moment when it is actualising itself. To put it more clearly, the *factum loquendi*, that is, the fact that human beings are-in-language is what cannot be said, but is shown by the gesture. It shows language as pure communicability. But as pure communicability, there is no need to restrict language to humans. Communicability opens up a possibility of language that stretches further than the human voice and that is open for communication with non-human or less-than-human spheres as well. This is exactly why Agamben takes such a great interest in where communication seems to be a failure (at least from a rational-humanistic point of view): echolalia, stuttering, spastic behaviour, animal sounds, and so on. The gesture opens up to an *ethos* (a dwelling place) where communicative success cannot be guaranteed beforehand.

This allows Agamben to link the gesture to the idea of a 'gag'. A gag, of course, is something that might be put into your mouth in order to prevent you from speaking. But it is also something that is linked to the mimic or theatrical. The struggle with speech can also be a silent improvisation of the artist. Here, we have an example of non-language that is not without communicability. The gesture is not about communication but about communicability. The gesture should intercept the process of language which lies at the heart of the polis and replaces it by a formless communicability. "What unites human beings among themselves is not a nature, a voice, or a common imprisonment in signifying language; it is the vision of language itself and, therefore, of experiencing language's limits, its *end*. A true community can only be a community that is not presupposed" (Agamben, 1999: 47, emphasis in original).

Clearly, there are false gestures and pure gestures. It is in the latter that Agamben locates the sphere of a politics to come. Only, in an almost silent or, perhaps better, in a formless and nigh-to animal-like theatre are people able to go beyond representation and communication. Only there will they find communality.

Dancing

But where do we find examples of the gesture today? Are there people willing to abandon the sphere of necessity and to reduce themselves to pure means? The French philosopher Michel Guerin (1995) has distinguished four kinds of gestures: action, giving, writing, and dancing – and he refers to the latter as the 'pure gesture' for we cannot think the other three without goals or ulterior motives. Dancing is so pure, Guerin adds, because we can immediately start with it and do not have to resort to deliberation and planning. Manning (2003) develops a similar argument in relationship to Argentine tango: she refers to it as a milieu which is entirely independent of pre-ordained constraints. Precisely because these constraints are absent, an intensity and a sensibility that are alien to the objectivity of work become possible.

Guerin points out that the gesture is a meagre alternative for words. It is strongly context-dependent and always focused on what is vital or most important. This should not come as surprise for the gesture has not time or means to articulate itself in complex situations. This is why it can, contrary to language, hardly be corrected. Language is exuberant, wasteful, and shrouded, whereas the gesture is frugal and naked. This is not to imply that the gesture is subservient to language. We should not merely conceive of it as a kind of lesser language that provides us with additional information about, say, the personalities, interests, or feelings of those who speak. Indeed, the gesture is more than just gesticulation or body language for it seems to be impossible to distinguish meaning from behaviour. Like Agamben, Guerin points to the animalistic and sensual qualities of the gesture. Meaning coincides with behaviour, he argues, and becomes essentially detached from reflection and deliberation. It is almost as if meaning becomes an animalistic willing-to-say that is closely akin to life itself. In this sense, the gesture escapes the realm of bodily techniques. Perhaps, Guerin suggests, it foreshadows or prefigures these techniques.

Animalistic and unreflective as it may be, Guerin (1995: 16) understands the gesture as the pedestal of tradition or culture. The dance is a goal-less activity that initiates and imitates. Its principle is technical, but its consequences are always symbolical. The dance evades the realm of the objective but this is exactly what allows it to create unexpected communalities. Blissfully indifferent to notions such as objectivity and profitability, it denies the established system, but it is this denial that causes it to express what it wants to express. The dance never imposes certain meanings upon us. Being its own expression, it rather proliferates meanings and therefore forms of togetherness (Newell, 1999: 16). In breaking through linguistic barriers, the dance has important political characteristics: it founds and creates communality. Manning relates the tango to a

> politics of touch which engages in the means, that is, in the potential of listening to the breath, the body, the distance and the closeness of another human being, a listening to what might be considered the very ethics-in-deconstruction of humanity. (2003: section 15)

Manning adds that tango is not about a fusion of two bodies in a kind of bestial ecstasy. Tango is not the same as dirty dancing. It rather expresses not only consensus with another body, a kind of sense-sharing if you like, but also a 'dissensus' with it, an impossibility to fuse with another body, a fundamental incommensurability. Gestures therefore do not so much perfect communication as betray that communication can never be perfected. This is, I suggest, how we might understand Agamben's emphasis on communicativeness rather then on communication. Where the latter is infested with teleology, the former is merely means without end. Again, The Nietzschean inspiration should be clear here:

> The human being is a rope tied between animal and superman, - a rope across an abyss. (…) What is great about the human being is that he is a bridge and not a goal; what can be loved about him is that he is a passage and a downfall. (Nietzsche, 1988: 16-17)

Zwicky (1992: 46) defines lyrics as a gesture that should simplify our being in the world. Perhaps, this can be said of all gestures. They might be the droplets that allow us to concentrate on the silence of water. The gesture aspires a unity with the world that is unavailable to average language users. To invoke a well-known Heideggerian theme, we chatter and chatter but the communality of two or more people is not based on this chatter. A silent glance in the eyes can be sufficient (Barthes, 2002), a dance or a delicious meal might do as well, perhaps a piece of music – all these gestures create togetherness where language and organization fail. The lyrical gesture, Zwicky (1992: 372) points out, does not have any temporal organization. Otherwise, it would become a merely domesticated and weakened kind of gesture. Due to its bestiality and wildness, "the gesture is an activity which shows us that we cannot live in communality if we have not anything in common with the world in which we live" (*ibid.*).

Thought

The politics of the gesture refers to a post-sovereign, non-exclusive, and affirmative politics. It is an anti-humanistic politics as it refuses to acknowledge a special status for human beings or for particular human beings. If humanism is worth a thing, then it should open up itself to spheres where humanity is at issue. That is to say, humanism can only be grounded in the non-human. This implies that we have to think about the communality between the human and the non-human or the less-than-human. That is, we have to overcome the anthropological machine.

This implies that we should give up ingrained conceptualisations of thinking. It is no longer an activity linked to a particular organ that is well developed among human beings. It is rather an *experience* the object of which is the potential character of life and of human reason. Agamben quotes Aristotle who defined thought as "being whose nature is to be in potency" (2001: 18). 'Thought', he writes a few lines earlier, "is what we call the tie which places life-forms in a connection that cannot be resolved" (2001: 17). It is, in fact, an experience of a potential community in which no life whatsoever is excluded. It is about this experience that the politics of the gesture evolves. It has nothing to do with work. The politics that Agamben has in mind is a non-working practice that prefers thought, understood here as formless experiment, over the teleological positioning we know as labour.

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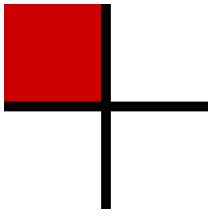
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the author   René ten Bos is a professor of philosophy and organizational theory at Nijmegen School of Management, Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands. He also works as management teacher for Schouten & Nelissen.
Address: Heydenrijckstraat 82, 6521 LR Nijmegen, The Netherlands.
E-mail: renetenbos@xs4all.nl

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Writing Method

Rob Beeston

Most papers on research methodology, like most courses, are notoriously flat. And whilst boredom from the start is clearly a fundamental block, the implications for social science reach much further. Question: if the prospect of methodology deadens its practitioners what does it do to its subjects? Within this question are a hundred issues that any primer on research methods would quickly bullet point, as there are an even greater number of conceptual tools that any practitioner (well versed in primers) would set to work. But methodology is apt to miss the irony of this, because methodology is imperious like this; its reflections endless and its travels so diaphanous it returns each time with further examples of why it's imperialism must not lose sight of the sea. Notwithstanding a further reflection might method better appreciate the view if it stopped stepping back and committed itself there and then to writing more forwardly of what it saw? Might it resist its urge to withdraw and lean forward instead to write? Even when it writes about writing? Might it write well and resolve at a stroke some of the recurrent conundrums that distract methodology from writing?

The problem of method is never more acute than upon first entering the field to find it not only in tact but having been so for years. All ears if a little fingers and thumbs this moment of method is magnificent, an embodiment of the naivety and nostalgia against which a good deal of subsequent method is judged. Inevitably this moment doesn't last and is at any rate immediately charged with making sense and proving its worth beyond these first flushes of truth. To the empiricist with the bravura of his new world to report and to the theoretician with her pre-conscious ideas to compose the gathering need to word the world comes as a quickly sobering recall. It might be a jolt but this moment is hardly a surprise. It's what the methodologist has most recently lived for and what he read all those books for and the demands it makes now will rewrite every one and method will never be the same again. And so methodology takes the world to task until it begins very soon to add the reservations it inherits about its self to those it brings back and which multiply now on every word. It quickly learns to circumnavigate these quickening sands, stepping back before treading too boldly forward until at some learned point (when the books begin to join up) it finds the ways and means to do both at once. Eventually method's gaining confidence recalls the moment when either empirically or theoretically it first saw the world, that which it has all the while remembered, somewhere, as magnificent and whose intractability it now sets more ably within its sights. And so it recovers a sense of purpose and renews its ethical breadth. Its

original ambitions are transfigured because matured becoming thereafter less alienated as technique first catches up with and then emboldens this inchoate sense of the world. And after much writing just ahead of each thought, and ideally in mind of this time before method, it sits finally back having done good work by adding the grit of another piece of the world. And then, as a point of note first and foremost, it compares its various considerable achievements with certain other ways of organising the world, those perhaps that don't think of themselves methodologically, or even as methodical, maybe those that put madness before method and only mention method at all because clearly something has happened and they have somehow arrived, or maybe those proceedings that are clearly methodological in nature and even in discipline but less so in territory like the various laws of form. Methodology aspires to neither of these but as a point of note first and foremost (and wary of the next response) it sees by comparison how much it sounds like itself, even, and in particular, when it doubts the sound of its own voice.

The methods of social science distinguish themselves by virtue of amongst other things their conceptual machineries, their modal innovations, their theoretical terminologies, and the historicity they sign and date upon each. Conceptually method has seen and heard the world in various ways and in a process both admirable and unfathomable has variably borrowed and improvised the tools, debates, and literatures with which it registers itself as methodology. The seasoned practitioner (she who long ago read the primer and perhaps now writes others) is in the valuable and (to the student) enviable position of being able to make fast moves with method by touching base with and either delving into or wisely bouncing off the concepts and gauntlets which signpost the field. It is a testament to its history that methodology has long registered its most pressing problems and its proudest achievements not only within a conceptual literature of its own but (and here is the cross-cultural evidence) along the lines of many other arts and literatures, including those inspirations to which it often defers. The vocabularies are different across the generic divides (which is the point about cross-culturalism) but across many varied terrains move methodology's most pressing issues; those it variably dislocates between the inside and out, universal and particular, one and many, self and group, and the various economies of generality and restriction; the terms of each just the one eternal pairing of another dozen tangents, some particular to social science, others astutely borrowed and often-as-not traced back but all informing method in some way or other. The tensions between these vast and shifting oppositions prove their worth, ultimately, in the daily search for that enigmatic conception which, in a space beyond both ink and interference, will fully express the dynamic relation; that which endlessly, unfathomably, and sublimely powers the social world. To this end, methods indebted from Aristotle to Wittgenstein head out along a thousand different paths to an even greater number of ends in pursuit of that vast best space where the unthought is thought and summoned to unconceal the world. And if not to unconceal it as such then to say that without it the world is lost to method and method is less than moral, barely able to conceive of the violence it does and the good that it doesn't.

Despite their various allusions towards the spaces of literature geometries like those of the inside out are prized less for their literary qualities than for either their conceptual clarity or the promise of it once integrated with the rest of methodology's machinery. The risks of trading something like a literary eloquence for the more defensible clarity

of thought are well established and make in turn their own characteristic mark on methodology's list of concerns. Pragmatism raises the distinct possibility that the vast expanse between inside and out could quite legitimately be lost just as easily as it once made sense. And so method has at some point to confront the further possibility that what is left in the wake of its clarifications is occasionally anaemic, easily cumbersome, and at worst, and as Rehn (2002) notes it *ephemera*, downright ugly. On an almost quarterly basis methodology proposes various solutions to this quite familiar problem. In all its guises (violence, distance, impropriety) the basic problem of ugliness fronts first and foremost an urgent call to prettiness, a face less dour, more gesturally aware. So a method this conscious of its ungainliness defers to *aesthetics* to make amends for its flaws. But the question of aesthetics is as false here as anywhere, at least short-thrift because it risks not so much pronouncing the arrival of something that is already unnamed within good method but diverting fluency from its less affected practice. There are more impartial questions of methodological dexterity than those that self-consciously invoke the aesthetic; more impartial because as a matter of course, that is, by their very apperceptive nature, they work already with fugues and arabesques and not just the suddenly imperative designation of them, which is to say, the aesthetic is an effect not a mode whose greatest exponents are likely to find its embellishment vulgar. As another potential distraction 'performance method' falls easily out of this push towards dexterity in recompense for the earlier privations of clarity. And whilst performance has its merits, its vanities add another layer of preciousness to method when performance per se, that is, word and world walking hand in hand, comes less ostentatiously and more intimately (like the aesthetic) through good method itself.

Traditional methods aren't known for either their aesthetic value or their high performance. So critical method has become inseparable from theory and philosophy. And these it reads not only out of erudition but pragmatism also. If the aesthetic and the dynamic are generally imperative then philosophy has a thousand ideas on how to go about it. The void between word and world and the invitation then to glance self with group and to prick the page with the unsaid is pleased when in amongst the annals it alights upon a pair of terms or a set of ideas (perhaps a catalogue of a thousand) that are dynamic to the core and so will likely survive first extraction then liberal re-distribution. But such is the benevolent spirit and the inherited industriousness of method that the citation itself is quite traditionally co-opted and because we're now firmly on methodology's turf eternally defended. What this does to the source is less the concern in the end than how it translates into method. And when this facet of method anticipates the end of metaphysics as an in-road at last to the *world worlding* it is, ironically, method more than world that turns. When this method assigns libidinal economics to ventilate the body its humours are all too easily bled dry by talk of *libidinal economics*. Where various poesies are indeed more dextrous and perhaps less corrupt really only method cares. And still the world turns. Method holds its ideal-sublime up to the disciplinary light, often in awe, occasionally in fear, typically with more than an ounce of worry but always an arm's length (stylistically not reflexively) to get a better look and assure itself of rigour. Out of a sense of integrity and in the absence of God method-as-method often struggles and always worries. Dissatisfied with words in the face of the world, profoundly unconvinced that somewhere soon is the mouth of the dumbfounded (ecstasy) or the voice of the under-represented (violence), this method looks beyond words: simple, patient, curved, words as words in no uncertain terms: to aesthetics and

performances and philosophies and all manner of extra medias and modes to turn the inside out at last and behold the world in a way its words alone never quite could. And so method crafts whole machineries to think the unthought and catch a glimpse of the world. Meantime, writers splash a dash of blood in their ink, just a little, and round on the kind of words that take almost for granted what less worldly words spend whole theses lamenting.

In the pursuit of the unthought method makes the most of its many resources. It delves systematically into its past out of both indebtedness and progress and it signs and dates the trajectories accordingly. This historicism is something that method quite rightly rarely leaves home without. But the manner with which it routinely equates citation with clumsiness is an encumbrance the vitalities within could often do without. Interrupting writing with a kaleidoscope of names and dates is less the problem than the ease with which this particular self-discipline inadvertently machines an overly conceptual prose. And whilst this disserves the current field with words that ring true little further than the page its greatest disservice by far is to the past because not only is this type of reverence prone to evacuation it becomes quickly a collective effort: firstly the fetishism of certain texts and then, sometime later, a declaration of their end by virtue of a time which is post-, that is, the ironisation of what just before was revered. Maybe fear is behind this need on the one hand to revere the past and on the other to outmode it; a morbid fear that a past without inverted commas is less the surgical light of modernity's scrupulousness than a sepia-yellow that taints all who linger in it with naivety, even necromancy. Maybe there are other fears even deeper and given the candid approbations of such charges maybe these are more latent than conscious. But whatever the reasons method tends to either pick over the past as if it were fragments pieced back together out of little more than reverence or toss it out with time altogether, with a nod maybe but often as not to prove method well-read, its function now to urgently move on. The past as legacy however, its insights set forth more naturally and generatively, literarily, that is, neither going to waste nor getting in the way, is written less often. This past is as unlikely to amputate Irigaray on page 68 as it is to outmode *Elemental Passions* (1982) altogether.

Good writing is a bonus where methodology is concerned. Given a wealth of either good ideas, trenchant history, or commendable ethics the actual writing of each can at best be excused and at least forgiven for the greater good of the rigours of method. And yet many of methodology's most conceptual problems (sublimity for example) are beset by language and to the extent that such conundrums are nothing of the sort until words intrude return always to language; which is to say, a prejudice toward the written word would stand more roundly accused if writing wasn't what methodology was ultimately about. As it stands the written word of method begs certain questions of methodology's practitioners. Broadly speaking these are questions of how practitioners of various kinds (but all wielding pens) regard themselves. More manageably is the question of ambition. And more acutely still of resignation. Can a researcher justifiably resign himself to writing unworldly words by claiming to be a researcher not a writer? Can she justify diluting her efforts still further by deflecting writing into aesthetics, performances, and historiographies; each at times perfectly adept but needing to be written in the end only now to greater distraction? I ask these condescending questions of those methodologies whose multi-medias simply don't convince. Of those that clearly do I ask others: does

an effective multi-modal method liberate writing? Does it open research to those who can't, won't, or don't want to write and will clearly never feel the full scrape of the nib? Does it lift the emphasis from writing and put it…where exactly? Or are these stylised moves that methodically un-block the nib just writing as it was meant? Except now they've become too self-conscious (or reflexive or recursive) to write naturally as such? If method at every step and out of concern for its tread listens neurotically for the sound of its own voice then what, ironically, becomes of the ring of its truth?

Methodology often looks to literature thinking it lacks something when in fact it has everything except the permission to write. And when it's not looking at literature directly it often prefers those philosophers who do. In fact it admires any grip on the world that still lets it turn because therein lies the answer to many of methodology's most pressing concerns and the colourful truth of some of its grandest concepts. And yet it still ties itself in knots because it can't seem to do the same and the nearest it gets is set to fail because the unspeakable so said is largely self-fulfilling. The newcomer to methodology could be forgiven for thinking absence is a law unto itself with no need of justification beyond the vagaries of ethics. This is in part at least because along the way the origins of absence have become largely obscured, often vacated, and, ultimately, transcribed with a only questionable feel for the world that makes them turn both empirically and theoretically. The crux of the matter lies in that very basic but very modern question 'why absent method?' A question that answers something of itself when put more equivocally and less methodologically: why turn the inside out and make the world a mindful place? Why do the reverse and make the mind as big as the world? Why turn the particulars of action into a universe of relations: a little portable cosmogeny (Boulez, 1986), a celestial ball game (Serres, 1982), an internal astronomy (Genet, 1949), or a spark in the black (Xenakis, 1996)? Why pitch this very particular kind of universalism, even essentialism, into the ruins of post-modernism? The much-misunderstood best bet for an active post-structuralism? Why pass between the multiple and the monad and put the life back in contradiction? Why pass from the one to the many on the peripheries of vision? Why just look when you can see? Or hear when you can listen? Why over-expose the sublime with an over-wrought sense of rigour? And then lament the loss? Why sweat it out indoors with piles and piles of books when many of these very words, impressive in their largesse, depend quite explicitly upon far wilder weathers for their pages to blow about? Heidegger (1959) has it that the world is darkening, Serres (1990) that no one goes outside anymore, so why put *An Introduction to Metaphysics* and *The Natural Contract* under the desk-light of method?

When a question becomes a pre-occupation its original spark is easily and gradually lost. The question 'why absent method?' has for so long and in so many ways been asked by social science that its registers have to varying degrees become stylistically compromised, self-consciously embellished, and awkwardly expressed, arriving ultimately at a variably staid state of Otherness that doesn't really remember why, too busy as it is conceptualising how. And if methodology is ugly it is often because it has long since lost the distinction between self-serving and world-turning prose. More specifically it has lost the will to tell when one should inherit the other. Instead methodology becomes technology, which in and of its self (and as Heidegger, 1977, rather brutishly said) is not very pretty. What is pretty though is the turn of the world that in spite of too much method still turns heads. And on a daily basis (like dawn) this

remains the root and proof of methodology's most promising geometries. The enigmas of universal and particular, inside and out, and monad and many will with enough morning continue to give method its unprecedented access to violence. But with only the gentlest of nudges, that is, granted certain permissions, there is also this more redolent world of the ecstatic. 'To write well' is the summary answer to the oft forgotten question 'why absent thought?' Why exactly more than routinely? Because with ugliness averted, its vowels more rounded and its knots cut short, theory might be nudged back to the intimacy where much of it and at least the best of it began, sharing its insides with others. Because finding words that turn naturally with the world – just a few in the right place to let the point finish itself – might find the universal always already at work within the particular and in as many different ways as there are stories to be told. Because if Otherness came home, if it were unconcealed right here, say, in the universe of a particular relation or the fear in the eye that is politics by another name, then method might not need to travel so far. Because if something more literate was to animate representation (and all it takes is a nod, the occasional shift in pitch) then better writing almost by itself might save the labours of so many self-defences; more rounded writing that snags fewer threads and ties fewer knots, those threads and knots that are nothing of the sort in various places beyond method. This method, quite naturally and less neurotically, might be able already to imagine how others live, needing to apologise less because its reach would be no longer so short. As it is and as Serres (1982) says in *Genesis*, the multiple has perhaps been thought but it hasn't been sounded.

The question 'why?' absent method has long been lost to the more pragmatic 'how?' But ironically, and by virtue of so much machinery, the pragmatic has become the least practicable of all: the performative, the reflexive, the recursive, aesthetic, and peripatetic. Almost everything in fact that distracts from the original question and the wideness of its eye, a question that on closer inspection (why *absent method?*) is not about method at all. Closer, rounder, it asks after that full and foreboding sense of the world the best of methods apprehend, that method 'absents from'. If method was less concerned with its own insecurities and if as a result it resisted the urge to innovate ever more ways of reassuring itself that its worst fear is not coming true, then its worst fear might not come true and the world might have more of a chance at being more roundly written. And if method was better written then absence might do what it says and avail its self of what too much method by definition cannot. Maybe literariness per se has no place in social science. But if some of its lessons were learned, or more likely some of its permissions granted, then absence in general might have something to say besides that it just is and how duty-bound we are to somehow factor it in. If the virtues of ethics, design, analysis, and theory didn't automatically excuse how each is actually written then the violences and ecstasies so beloved of method might emerge to an extent and with a degree of redolence that less literate concerns can ill conceive let alone do justice to: secrecy, lies, maybe the fear in the eyes, the many violences that method is concerned to reveal but less equipped to slip behind; and desire, excess, and their auras of sex and power, the various ecstasies whose heights inspire method and whose movements it rushes to write out but which its moderations typically miss. If method is ugly in many ways it is ugliest of all when it satisfies itself but fulfils few of its promises. In this there is little reward for the labours of method, save more method.

A critique of the various methods that supplement writing as if writing had failed returns, naturally, to writing. No doubt writing is as difficult as method and just as far from a resolution. But if the problems of language that beset much of method have their roots in a lack of permission then method's energies and even some of its ethical commitments run the risk of being routinely misplaced. It would over-stretch the point to say as literature sometimes has that language is the only subject. But there is nevertheless a permission to speak in this that methodology doesn't have. As it stands methodology rarely regards writing as within its remit or well-written prose this deliberately within its scope. And when it does dwell on this it steps back to ask what writing means to method instead of what it is to lean forward and write. Methodology inhibits this writing not by having too many other ambitions or by being too precious. On the contrary: it embraces literature often and is all too aware of the vitalities of language, philosophical issues of writing and difference finding themselves easily alongside empirical ones of inscribing the sublime. Rather it inhibits this permission by relentlessly stepping back into the meaning of writing instead of leaning forward, pen in hand, to write better method. Methodology borrows everything from literature it seems except the permission to write. So by the time literature's most diaphanous silences, sonorities, and wounded presences have been brought back they sound distinctly like method, which wouldn't be a problem if methodology didn't then lament the loss and lose writing not just to the knot but to the tools, machineries, and anxieties that routinely swipe at its hulk, returning at some point, inevitably, to a logocentric analysis of the ultimate impossibility of writing. (And still the writer writes.) Accordingly the permission to write is writing-praxis only insofar as the hyphen is an active and daily bridge but not if 'writing-praxis' is another retreat from the practice of writing; which is to say, discussions of writing must be careful, no different in fact to the writing of writing. Writing like this begets not a revolution and ideally not even a discussion, just the setting forth of a simple solitary permission.

Writing is undoubtedly difficult and full of just as many pitfalls and spirals as method. And as with method so it should be. But there is a difference between writing's hard labour and the artistic aura with which methodology cloaks it as a means to discount it in all but subject-hood so it can get back to proper method (pen in hand). This difference between sweat and lustre is crucial because methodology's elevation of writing ensures its most telluric labours are kept far removed from those of method when otherwise they might be cultivated together from the start in pre-empt of such a drift. As it is writing is what you do if you have ambitions either outside of social science or scandalously within it. Methodology tends to think anything more resonant than its standard prose as lustrous as art but sonority is actually far more prosaic than its accusations of poetry admit. Perhaps if poetry had been less evacuated by post-methodology then better writing might be less alienated by the alignment in the first and journals less inclined to use the love of words as either a stick or a summary dismissal. But as it stands, *poesy* has long blown the idea of better writing out of all proportion and the spectre of the poet worries methodology's sense of integrity at the first suggestion of it. The aureole that casts writing in this bright-darkness affirms for students and practitioners alike the earliest privations of Methodology 101 when in fact all that writing needs to re-pitch its horizons is a few new words and to be less neurotic about knots. Its blood and sweat might then be more directed, writing still about aesthetics and performance but with a permission to write well about them rather than machining or

book-ending them. The will-to-write and write well is no more poetry than post-methodology. It is rather an occasional shift in pitch and an accent from the start. The geographies and even some of the vocabularies are there already in the becoming of inside out. And whilst literature has much for method to admire it has more to fear from the blank page than method's rich reserve of dislocations is ever likely to.
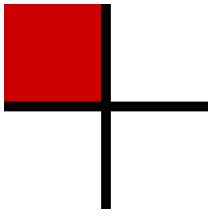
Methodology is imperious. It is apt to enrol the notion of better writing for itself and do everything in the world with it other than let it go into method and write a little better. It is apt along this way to take the notion of better writing (a deliberately solitary phrase) towards deconstruction et al and further the critique of method. Likewise it is apt to ask if better writing has escaped method by this point or if it has fallen back into the same trap of adding more to method with its talk of absence. It is apt then to seize quite critically upon this negotiated reference to absenting method, thinking this phrase's saving grace is an epilogue that writes coolly, defiantly, and radically on anything but method in order to cut the knot and complete the argument and be at last the last of method so it can go out and kindle the world. And so arrives an after-, an against-, or a critical methodology that talks about methodology without talking about methodology and concludes with the novel as the only plausible answer. Methodology is imperious like this: apt to make more of better writing than its solitude warrants, to do everything under the sun with better writing other than write just a little better. And still the writer writes. In fact there is no break, scandal, or call for papers, just more of the same with a permission to write. There is no radical strategy to cut the knot of escape's impossibility, chiefly because there is no need of escape in the first other than that which (like proper escapology; literature maybe) is convinced of proximity. And there is no deconstruction besides that which precedes itself with the sonority from whence it came (like Derrida in *Of Grammatology*). Such a method might well react to so much late-modernity, to its fictions and reflections and its games, moves, and knots and its endless steps back, its spirals into ironies with their questions crossed out and their tongues thrust coolly in their cheeks. It might react to each of these refusals and more. But more pointedly is the will to lean forward and write, and to align itself with writing even when it writes (which it surely will) about what writing means when it comes to practicing method.

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the author

Dr Robert Beeston lives in Sheffield. He is currently completing his first novel.
Address: c/o ephemera

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

Peter McInnes and Nic Beech

abstract

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

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

Post-dualistic Experience and Clock Time

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

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

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

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

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

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

Desire/Fear and the Future

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

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

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

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

The Journey Metaphor

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Post-Dualistic Being and Organisation

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

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

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

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

A Story of Ben's Career Journey

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Story of Lucy's form-designing journey

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Concluding Remarks

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

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the authors   Peter McInnes is a lecturer at Strathclyde University. He is currently engaged on the arduous journey towards a PhD studying identity dynamics for which he suspects there is no destination, even if his colleagues assure him otherwise. Along the way he has found enduring interest and distraction researching the relation of technology to individual identity and the emotional, embodied, experience of people at work.
Address: University of Strathclyde, Graduate School of Business, 199 Cathedral Street, Glasgow, G4 0QU
E-mail: peter@gsb.strath.ac.uk

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

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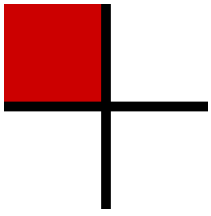
Internet Activism and the Democratic Emergency in the U.S.

David Jacobs

abstract

The Internet renders efficiencies in political organization and mobilization. Already, network technologies have assisted activists in protests of corporate-led globalization, facilitated union struggles, provided alternatives to mainstream news media, and generated a new on-line model of political fund-raising. However, activists and elites both have relied on the Internet, and the cumulative effects are murky. The US presidential election of 2004 provides a prism through which to assess Internet strategies as a means for non-management stakeholders to influence the course of American politics. Republican party dominance of the mainstream media and the three branches of government increase the challenges of stakeholder organizing, particularly given the evidence of a shift toward authoritarian rule. I intend to examine Internet activism with respect to such organizations as MoveOn.org and TrueMajority.org; both of which claim to represent workers, environmentalists, and allied stakeholders.

Introduction

The Internet has altered the conduct of business and the practice of politics, but the contours of this change can only dimly be perceived. This technology renders multi-directional communication nearly instantaneous and reduces the marginal cost for each new recipient. The so-called 'virtual workplace', in which employees perform and coordinate much of their work on-line, is the subject of experimentation. Web protests have compelled low standards employers to acknowledge worker abuses and have required manufacturers to correct product defects. Similarly, the Internet has permitted citizens to broadcast protests of government policy, to coordinate demonstrations around the world, to report human rights abuses to a global audience, and to advance perspectives overlooked by mainstream media or targeted by government censors. The Internet is spawning new forms of journalism (for example, the weblog or 'blog' – a personal journal) and new on-line activist organizations (e-unions and grassroots campaigns) (see Jacobs and Yudken, 2003).

Internet activism contributes to the vitality of civil society. By civil society one means the realm of intermediate associations which check the abuse of power by the state and other powerful institutions and increase society's capacity to resolve vexing problems (Levine, 2000). Pre-Internet computer networks helped build space for civil society and

trade unionism in 1980s Poland. Today the Internet poses a challenge to authoritarian governments seeking to control the flow of information.

The U.S. Defence Department's role in the development of the Internet resulted in a system providing redundant paths of communication in order to reduce vulnerability to attack. An unintended result is an architecture that fosters the development of network structures in civilian and commercial applications. That is, the Internet facilitates the creation of informal and fluid organizations based on lateral relations among employees, consumers, and citizens. These parallel structures are not constrained by formal organizational boundaries or hierarchies. For this reason, they are potentially effective as vehicles for campaigns by such corporate stakeholders as employees, consumers, and others (Jacobs and Yudken, 2003).

The fact that nearly anyone can construct a website gives the Internet the power to challenge power relationships. At the same time, the myriad views advanced on-line can be bewildering. Of course, nothing in the technology precludes deliberate deception, incitement, or exaggeration – Sunstein (2001) has warned of the perils of ideological polarization in this context. Web users have learned to consider the identity and vested interests behind websites and to search for validation of arguments.

The Importance of Stakeholder Organization

Abusive authority in the workplace and corporate injury to the community are enduring obstacles to social justice and human development. Those without authority in the corporate context (the 'economic non-authorities' as Greenstone, 1977, labelled them) have an interest distinct from those who own or manage. Given the persistence of abusive forms of authority in 'market' relationships, activism by such 'stakeholders' as labour, consumers, and environmentalists derives its rationale from the need to counter such power. If anything, the consistent growth in size and resources of the corporate enterprise makes the need for counter-organization greater.

Stakeholder organizations, including labour unions and non-governmental organizations, require several characteristics to be effective. They must have the capacity to monitor corporate and government behaviour, to develop strategies of response, to mobilize their members for common action, to seek allies in the public at large, to negotiate solutions, and compel enforcement of negotiated agreements. Trade unions practice these functions in the context of collective bargaining. Note the efforts of anti-sweatshop groups to do so. The Worker Rights Consortium and Fair Labour Association have developed competing codes and monitoring regimes for apparel manufacturers (see Worker Rights Consortium, 2004). WashTech.org, an on-line association for high tech workers at Amazon and Microsoft, has built an active on-line community and has scored successes through litigation and pressure tactics (Jacobs and Yudken, 2003). Internet activism provides a new platform for monitoring, deliberation, mobilization, and effecting change.

The 2004 Elections

The 2004 elections in the United States present a case study of the impact of the Internet on stakeholder activism. Two significant developments defined the extraordinary context of the 2004 elections. First, the older media of newspapers and broadcasting have become increasingly concentrated in ownership and control. Since the Telecommunications Act of 1996, a handful of media companies have reinforced their dominant position in radio, televisions, and cable. Viacom and Clear Channel own a decisive share of radio stations. Viacom, Disney, and GE have multiple stations on cable and broadcast television. These powerful corporations are susceptible to the Bush administration political influence. Clear Channel, for example, has organized rallies in support of the Administration's Iraq policy (Rampton and Stauber, 2004: 108-109). Sinclair Broadcasting directed its stations to pre-empt network programming to air a documentary critical of Bush's 2004 opponent, Senator John Kerry. This reality elevates the importance of the Internet as a vehicle for dissenting voices.

Secondly, the Republican Party dominates all three branches of the federal government and practices an ideology which is hostile to most conceptions of stakeholder power. The Bush administration represents a conservative corporate constituency, much of it nurtured in the low regulation anti-union states of the South and West. Schattsneider (1960) observed in *The Semi-Sovereign People* that one of the great achievements of democracy was to compel business leaders to contest for power in a pluralist politics rather than to govern directly. However, contemporary Republicans at times seem to be seeking to create the one-party politics of the South on a national scale (Lind, 1996).

Robert Kuttner warns of the danger of one-party government:

> Even more insidiously, the radical right would likely use its wall-to-wall control of government to reduce liberties, narrow electoral democracy and thereby minimize the risk that it would ever lose power. Republican one-party rule would also strategically target progressive habitats, changing laws that currently tolerate or incubate oases of progressive political power and build liberal coalitions, such as the labour movement, universal social insurance, and an effective and valued public sector. (Kuttner, 2004)

New Political Formations

From the late 1990s to the present time, unions, environmentalists, public interest activists, and others have turned to the Internet to combat Republican initiatives. MoveOn.org emerged in response to Republican efforts to impeach and convict President Clinton. Other Internet organizations reached prominence with respect to the suppression of the Florida vote in the 2000 election and the Iraq war. In all three contexts, activists found the broadcast media and major newspapers largely unresponsive to their concerns.

The Washington press corps seemed to share the Republicans' hostility to Clinton (see Blumenthal's *The Clinton Wars* for a thorough analysis of the media's shortcomings). MoveOn was organized to urge Congress to censure President Clinton for his

misbehaviour and 'move on'. On-line activists provided critical assistance to beleaguered Democrats and placed pressure on Congress.

Media coverage of the 2000 election tended to treat irregularities and voter fraud as a bipartisan initiative. Buzzflash.com, Democrats.com, and similar sites provided Democrats with the means to sift through the conflicting information about the vote count. When a consortium of American newspapers released a misleading report based on their analysis of the Florida ballots contending that President Bush would have won the election under most recount scenarios, these websites exposed contradictions in the official story (Parry, 2001).

Major newspapers like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* uncritically disseminated White House misinformation about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction in the months leading up to the Iraq war. The Democratic Party lacked a consensus policy. Leading Democrats in Congress, including Senator Joseph Lieberman (Democrat-Connecticut) and Richard Gephardt (Democrat-St. Louis), endorsed the broad outlines of the Bush administration approach. Several on-line organizations assumed a leadership role in organizing anti-war Democrats. Two of the most effective were MoveOn.org and TrueMajority.org, an initiative of Ben Cohen of Ben and Jerry's Homemade Ice Cream. Former Vice President Al Gore chose MoveOn as a sponsor for his major speeches criticizing the Bush Presidency. Former Vermont Governor Howard Dean, an anti-war candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, turned to a commercial affinity group site, MeetUp.com, and to the MoveOn model to mobilize his supporters. Buzzflash.com and Democrats.com scoured the press for articles challenging Bush claims. In effect, the Internet, not the formal party apparatus, emerged as the major platform for Democratic activists.

The founder of MoveOn.org Joan Blades has described her organization in this way:

> The powerful thing about MoveOn is that it is not a one-way broadcast media [sic]. The Internet, when used best, is a two-way media. We get thousands of emails. We have a forum in which people can post comments and those comments can be rated so we get a sense of what tens of thousands of people feel most passionately about. We also do surveys when we're trying to figure out the right thing to do. We aim to express the passion of our members in something actionable that we can all in fact do. (McNally, 2004)

MoveOn.org now claims 2.8 million members. MoveOn activists have sponsored bake sales, anti-war vigils, composed anti-Bush advertisements, staffed phone banks, and endorsed candidates. The technology permits the coordination of grassroots meetings, facilitates fundraising in small amounts, builds a sense of community and efficacy among participants, and instantaneously disseminates information.

MoveOn has brought back older traditions of political oratory. MoveOn-sponsored addresses by former Vice President Al Gore have been carefully crafted, carefully reasoned arguments, rather unlike most contemporary political rhetoric. I attended one such address on October 18, 2004 at Georgetown University. Gore spoke forcefully about the authoritarianism and wilful disdain for facts that characterize the Bush administration, pointing out incidents in which the administration has suppressed information in order to pursue an ideological agenda of expanding corporate power.

MoveOn communications with the membership ensured that there would be a sizable and well-informed audience in attendance. The cable television-sponsored C-SPAN channel broadcast Gore's speech to the nation.

MoveOn bundles old and new organizing techniques. Gary Wolf (2004), writing in *Wired*, doubts the originality of MoveOn's political recipe: "The group's massive, virally spreading petitions, its decentralized fieldwork, and market-tested messages have not produced a fresh, original form of politics. Instead, they've stirred up a weird mélange". MoveOn even has professional marketing and polling consultants, not to mention the financial support of George Soros. Of course, as Wolf admits, the organization's significance is not a function of novelty per se. Progressives have built successful mass organizations with the help of alternative media during many periods. One need only remember the important roles played by the Oklahoma Socialist paper, *Appeal to Reason*, *LaFollette's Weekly* and Wisconsin progressivism (see La Follette, 1968), the *Village Voice* and reform politics in New York City.

TrueMajority.org is the project of Ben Cohen, a business leader long associated with various campaigns for corporate social responsibility and responsiveness. Cohen reports TrueMajority's membership as 435,000. The following organizations have endorsed the principles of the campaign: National Council of Churches, Campus Greens, Co-op America, Global Exchange, Greenpeace, INFACT, the Service Employee International Union (SEIU), etc. Noteworthy entries on this list are a few historically significant proponents of corporate social responsiveness: INFACT, Greenpeace, and the National Council of Churches. TrueMajority does not formally participate in presidential politics but it has coordinated lobbying and demonstrations in support of social welfare spending and enhanced diplomacy.

According to *PRWeek* (Quenqua, 2002), TrueMajority works through Internet economies:

> The free site operates on the principle that millions of citizens feel strongly about the same issues, but lack the time to take action to support them. True Majority users, who agree on 10 basic principles, are periodically sent e-mails that give them the opportunity to send a fax to their congressmen with a single click. Those principles include championing human rights, ending American dependence on oil, renouncing the militarization of space, and getting the money out of politics.

Democratic Presidential candidate Howard Dean sponsored an important website, DeanforAmerica.com (itself inspired by MoveOn.org), that played a significant role in establishing the viability of his candidacy. Clearly, Dean's Internet strategy was not sufficient to counter the swell of criticism that emerged in the traditional media (as well as the controversy surrounding his 'scream' in a campaign speech widely disseminated by e-mail). However, DeanforAmerica has now been transformed into DemocracyforAmerica.com, which is seeking to involve Dean supporters in Congressional campaigns. Moreover, the Service Employee International Union (SEIU), which originally supported Dean, is consciously applying the lessons of the Dean experience to its own web projects, including FightfortheFuture.org.

Another important element of Internet activism is its contribution to intelligent vigilance. On-line activist journalists or bloggers have scoured the Internet for evidence of questionable political tactics and abuses of due process. For example, one site, emergingdemocraticmajority.com, has subjected mainstream political polls to a thoroughgoing analysis. In American politics, misuse of polls by the media runs rampant. Thoughtful investigation by Ruy Teixeira at emergingdemocraticmajority and others provided the critique that MoveOn used to challenge the Gallup polls, a very prominent firm that Democrats have long suspected of deliberately over sampling Republicans. Economist and *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman relied in part on Teixeira's analysis in order to frame a warning that media misrepresentation of public opinion might facilitate Republican suppression of likely Democratic votes:

> …there is a widespread public impression that Mr. Bush holds a commanding lead.

> By the way, why does the Gallup poll, which is influential because of its illustrious history, report a large Bush lead when many other polls show a dead heat? It's mostly because of how Gallup determines "likely voters." And as the Democratic poll expert Ruy Teixeira points out (using data obtained by Steve Soto, a liberal blogger), Gallup's sample of supposedly likely voters contains a much smaller proportion of both minority and young voters than the actual proportions of these voters in the 2000 election.

> …we must not repeat the mistake of 2000 by refusing to acknowledge the possibility that a narrow Bush win, especially if it depends on Florida, rests on the systematic disenfranchisement of minority voters. And the media must not treat such a suspect win as a validation of skewed reporting that has consistently overstated Mr. Bush's popular support. (Krugman, 2004)

Bloggers and assorted websites provided an early warning system alerting activists to decisions by Republican Secretaries of State that might obstruct voting by recent registrants. Dailykos.com assembled a database covering such stories.

One significant success of the progressive blogosphere came in the struggle with Sinclair Broadcasting over its decision to air a controversial documentary attacking Senator Kerry's anti-war actions on its many affiliates. Bloggers helped organize a campaign of public pressure on Sinclair, including calls to advertisers and investors to abandon the company. The New York State pension system added its weight to the campaign, challenging the ethics of Sinclair's in-kind contribution to Bush's re-election. The broadcaster ultimately chose to air a relatively balanced program on Kerry's Viet Nam service and other issues (Dailykos, 2004).

Many bloggers have introduced internal review systems according to which member submissions are posted once and then upgraded in placement if other members 'recommend' them. Moreover, favourably reviewed posts are sometimes cited on friendly sites. Thus does a comment expand in influence.

Blogger Chris Bowers provides some general analysis of the so-called 'blogosphere'.

> The left-wing political blogosphere has been, for quite some time now, an independent, collaborative, freeform news and analysis project that is geared primarily toward agitation and action. We are not trying to do the same thing that Reuters, CNN and the Washington Post claim to be doing. We are not just trying to present information and let those who consume it decide for themselves. Our content is actively geared toward political organizing. (MyDD, 2004a)

Bowers maintains that the left and right halves of the blogosphere function differently. He argues on the one hand that left-wing blogs tend to emphasize discussions on an array of issues, providing detailed content and community comment. On the other hand, right wing blogs (for example, drudgereport.com, newsmax.com, freerepublic.com, and instapundit.com) tend to observe the chain of command in the Republican hierarchy. They practice the web equivalent of the bullet vote by directing their web traffic to a single story. This magnifies their impact in the mainstream media. The right-wing blogosphere "stays more on message, and has easier access to larger media outlets than the lefty-blogosphere" (MyDD, 2004b).

The difference Bowers perceives between left and right bloggers may be largely a function of the structure and practice of the contemporary Republican party. The party itself is highly disciplined and centralized. It stands to reason that allied bloggers would submit to this discipline. On the other hand, the libertarian right often supports different sorts of blogging.[1] Some sectarian parties of the left sponsor only official websites under strict central committee control.

The Democracy Deficit

The new political initiatives on the Internet must contend with a variety of factors that contain democracy in the US. One of the best known features of the federalist structure of the American system is the electoral college. The electoral college consists of the real 'voters', those who cast the decisive ballots for the presidency. In theory, states' electoral votes are cast in accord with the preferences of the state popular vote. The presidential election is actually fifty-one separate state elections (including Washington, D.C.). States make their own rules for voter registration, ballot access, voting technology, etc. This vastly complicates the political struggle.

The US has a robust civil society, with groups of many kinds competing for citizens' attention. However, the federal system permits substantial variation in policy on the political process, and democracy is 'apportioned' unequally. Unions, environmental groups, and other stakeholder organizations are seldom truly national organizations because of their weakness in the more conservative, 'business-friendly' states in the South and West, unlike the Chamber of Commerce, which is active and effective in all states (Schattschneider, 1960).

The Internet may help produce and sustain national organizations promoting stakeholder interests despite the challenges of the federal system. The Internet provides 'free spaces', in the vocabulary of democracy theorist Harry Boyte (1989). Boyte describes free spaces as a realm of "voluntary associations that sustain an important measure of independence from large-scale systems and institutions of government" (Boyte, 1989: 138). He points to the example of African-American beauty parlours, which nurtured the civil rights movement in the South, and one must also stress the role of African-

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1 See, for example, Andrew Sullivan's site, www.andrewsullivan.com

American churches. Safe spaces, of course, do not themselves build movements. The Internet can provide the link between small groups of dissidents and national efforts.

Counting the Vote

Ironically, President Bush's apparent electoral victory may have set the stage for a powerful confirmation of the value of web activism. Multiple allegations of Republican voter fraud have surfaced, and the blogs have become the primary source for relevant information. Disseminating their work on the web, statisticians have reviewed exit polls that had predicted significant Kerry margins in battleground states and have hypothesized about anomalies in the vote count. Missing voter registrations, questionable treatment of 'provisional votes', shortages of voting machines in minority neighbourhoods, 'inflated' numbers of absentee ballots, large majorities for Bush in counties with a Democratic registration advantage, possible tampering with electronic voting machines, uncounted votes for Kerry, and other charges (almost all of these problems in Ohio and Florida) have been weighed in the blogosphere. The mainstream media have been slow to investigate these claims.[2]

As I have suggested, Republican practices do suggest a troubling pattern. Republican Secretaries of State have been extremely aggressive in manipulating voting procedures to the benefit of the party. To add to suspicions, Diebold Election Systems and Election Systems and Software, two of the major electronic voting machine companies, were founded by brothers and bankrolled by a leader of the Christian right and advocate of theocracy (Fitzrakis, 2004). Leveraging advantage in the Republican-leaning corporate sector (including the voting technology companies) seems fully consistent with overall party strategy. Conservative jurists like Antonin Scalia (Nichols, 2004) argue that there is no federally guaranteed right to vote and that state legislatures have the ultimate authority to devise relevant standards and practices. This provides a jurisprudential foundation for Republican voter suppression tactics.

Fans of the Spielburg film *Minority Report* may know that writer Philip K. Dick was an insightful and occasionally delusional social critic. Dick's award-winning novel, *The Man in the High Castle*, is a disturbing tale of layered illusion. The Axis Powers have won World War II. On the other hand, dissidents, consulting the *I Ching*, insist that it was the Allies who won. Competing versions of reality demand disparate patterns of verification. Today the voting sceptics are testing their hypotheses in debate on the blogs. One finds that Kos on Dailykos and Chris Bowers at MyDD have distanced themselves from those alleging fraud but the sceptics continue to post their evidence for fraud on these sites.

Earlier in this essay I identified a few crucial characteristics of stakeholder organization: the capacity to monitor corporate and government behaviour, to develop strategies of

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2 A December 15 article in *The Washington Post*, "Several Factors Contributed to 'Lost' Voters in Ohio" (Powell and Slevin, 2004) delicately covered the controversy and some commentators on the cable news networks have done so as well.

response, to mobilize members for common action, to seek allies in the public at large, to negotiate solutions, and compel enforcement of negotiated agreements. The preliminary evidence suggests that the Internet supports stakeholder organization on all of these dimensions.

The following questions are crucial. First, can the Internet counter the fundraising advantages of right-wing corporate interests? Howard Dean's fundraising successes and blogger fundraising for other 2004 candidates suggest some curtailment of the Republican advantage. Small amounts of money may be bundled for maximum effect by web activists. MoveOn threatens to render some of the traditional fund-raising leaders irrelevant and has antagonized them by claims to this effect.

Second, can progressive bloggers and websites constitute a robust alternative to the corporate media and ultimately pressure the mainstream media into change? There have been many small victories thus far, for example, the 'Stop Sinclair Campaign'. However, the news departments for the broadcast and cable networks remain subject to pressure from the corporate office and sensitive to Republican pressure. It is likely that the major newspapers and networks will be slow to investigate election irregularities. In their pursuit of 'balance', they will continue to downplay the egregious nature of Republican efforts to suppress votes. Progressive activists will rely upon the bloggers and a small subset of newspaper columnists to tell the story. This constitutes a modest but significant success in the development of alternative media.

Third, can the Internet facilitate mass organization and mobilization in 'hostile' political jurisdictions (for example, the non-union South or Republican-ruled Ohio)? Here the preliminary evidence with respect to the 2004 election is negative. Internet activism was unable to prevent Republican strategies to suppress the minority vote in Ohio and probably several other states. However, this is a long struggle, and it represents nothing less than the redemption of the post-Civil War years of Reconstruction. The progressive blogosphere remains deeply engaged in this struggle.

With the Republicans' successes in extending one-party government, the Internet will continue to be a major platform for the democratic opposition. There will almost certainly be a battle within and about the Internet over privacy. Republicans and corporate interests may seek to use the network for purposes of surveillance rather than lateral communication, as was evident in the Pentagon's 2002 'anti-terrorism' program called 'Total Information Awareness' (DARPA, 2002).

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the author   David C. Jacobs is a Professor of Management at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland. He previously taught at Kansas State University, the University of Michigan-Flint, and American University. Jacobs is author of *Collective Bargaining as an Instrument of Social Change* and *Business Lobbies and the Power Structure in America*, as well as co-author, with Joel Yudken, of *The Internet, Organizational Change, and Labor*: *The Limits of Virtualization*. He currently serves as Chair of the Critical Management Studies Interest Group of the Academy of Management.
Address: 110 Sunnyside Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, USA.
E-mail: Jacobsd@hood.edu
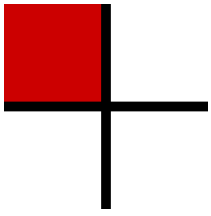
How Do I Love Thee? The England National Team and the Lovemark

Sarah Gilmore

> …we are never so defenceless against suffering as when we love, never so helplessly unhappy as when we have lost our loved object or its love. (Freud, 1930: 82)

> What are we doing when we do something *in the name of love*? Why is it assumed to be better to do the same thing if it is done *out of love*? (Ahmed, 2004: 124, emphasis in original)

I can't pinpoint the exact time when the flags went up – probably close to the commemorations of the Normandy landings. But if the cross of St George emerged to acknowledge the contribution of a passing generation, the flags not only remained after the services but germinated all over our city with the advent of Euro 2004 a few days later. At first, I thought this symbolised the kind of patriotism associated with places like Portsmouth: old cities with centuries-old associations with the armed forces and the particular mentality that deeply rooted connection generates. But it seemed that this demonstration of support and fervent hope was not just confined to this city but was being replicated throughout England.

> As it turned out, it wasn't a local quirk. It was happening all over the country…a friend in London excitedly rang…to tell me he had been overtaken by a car sporting a flag in each window, two mounted on broomsticks thrust through the sunroof and a massive Three Lions badge on the bonnet…he had a suspicion it might have something to do with the bloke on his estate who painted his roof – and his lawn – with the cross of St George. (Needham, 2004: 24)

Truly, this was love – love unconfined, unabashed and unafraid to say its name.

For Saatchi and Saatchi global CEO, Kevin Roberts, this manifestation of attachment is evidence of a Lovemark being bestowed upon the England side (Roberts, 2004). For him and his organisation, there is now a high degree of similarity in terms of quality of goods and services produced by contemporary organisations. Therefore, the distinguishing factor determining their success will increasingly depend on the ways in which they engender a genuine emotional connection. His concept of the Lovemark relates to the nature of this appeal and its core components: mystery, sensuality and intimacy. Examples cited of familiar Lovemarks range from the iconic cars of Ferrari to more everyday consumables like Marmite with the nature of a product's appeal being capable of analysis through its location on the love/respect axis. Goods and services having low love, low respect ratings are situated as commodities, with those possessing

low respect and high love as fads. High respect, low love products are termed brands, with only those being high in love and high in respect gaining the prestigious status of Lovemarks (Roberts, 2004: 146-149). One of the main Lovemarks in the UK arguably applies to the national sport, football, and in particular to the English national team, which despite decades of underachievement still engenders powerful feelings of emotional commitment amongst football supporters – a loyalty beyond reason – the hallmark of a genuine Lovemark (www.Lovemarks.com).[1]

However, this example of attachment to the English national team illustrates the problematic nature of this concept, rooted in Roberts' (2004) conceptualisation of love: perceiving this emotion as being inherently positive and positively transformational. The critical case utilised here will illustrate how this form of love is certainly visible, but that there is a more problematic form of the emotion co-existing here – one that is intertwined with this 'legitimate' form of love – but is markedly different; represented by spectator disorder, the football hooligan and the persisting (but diminishing) allegiance of far right political groups to the national team.

This review offers a critique of the Lovemark through an analysis of two forms and expressions of love displayed towards the England team. This will utilise a largely psychoanalytic reading of love (e.g. Freud, 1922, 1930; Klein, 1952) offering a more ambivalent assessment of this emotion as well as the work of Ahmed (2004) concerning the cultural politics of emotion. Her analysis converges with this study both through the use of Freud and via her focus on tracking the cultural significance of the use of 'love' and the ways by which right wing, fascist groups seek to shift their representation as 'hate groups' by converting that hate into love and protection of the country. Thus there is a resonance with fictional and non-fictional accounts of following England that perceive certain behaviours as being demonstrations of love of country and the reassertion of a lost national identity. Some implications for those who seek to protect and prosper from the England team's Lovemark are then discussed.

Hillsborough and Hypercommodification

For those charged with protecting the image and the 'marque' of the national game, the form of love attached to the game over the past twenty-five years – described by Crabbe as "the embodiment of an unrepentant nationalistic 'Englishness'…systematically and negatively associated with aggressive masculinity, drunkenness, open displays of nationalism, xenophobia and racism" (2004: 63) – ruptures the carefully constructed football 'product' developed in the wake of the Hillsborough stadium disaster and the

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1   Whilst Saatchi and Saatchi are part of the Publicis Groupe – an amalgamation of similar agencies to SandS plus media-buy organisations – Publicis would not exploit the concept of Lovemarks because it 'belongs' to Saatchi. Therefore, the other member organisations would want to develop their own singular proposition(s) for their clients. This means that the uptake of the Lovemark model depends on Saatchi convincing their clients such as Procter and Gamble, Toyota, General Mills etc. that by using this concept, they will improve sales and market share. Hence, the key is to convince *Saatchi* clients of the veracity of the Lovemark approach rather than 'sell' it via promulgation through Publicis.

restructuring of the game in the 1990s. This restructuring was facilitated by the advent of satellite TV and exponential increases from TV rights income, and a *hypercommodification* of the sport (Giulianotti, 2002). If commodification "is not a single process but an ongoing one, often involving the gradual entry of market logic to the various elements that constitute the object or social practice under consideration", then "the marked intensification of this process in recent years is of a different order to that which was experienced up until the late 1980s, and so might now be described as a period of hypercommodification" (Giulianotti, 2002: 27).

Such developments within the market and marketing of football have been strongly rooted in a presentation of the game that stresses its inclusivity and the increasing diversity of supporters in terms of age, colour, ethnic orientation and gender. Thus highlighting football's ability to bring all sections of the community together via their shared desire for the game and the feelings of belonging experienced when following one's team. Recently this has been epitomised by former England player, Sir Bobby Charlton in an advertisement for MasterCard during the Euro 2004 championships: 'England united – priceless'.

Since the early 1990s developments within the football industry have seen the intertwining of key 'coincidences of interest' (Williams, 1999; 2003) with the broader, contemporary condition of 'disorganised capitalism' (Lash and Urry, 1987). At the heart of these 'coincidences of interest' was a struggle to fill the vacant leadership role in the game noted by Lord Justice Taylor (1990) in his report following the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster. This saw an alliance being created between two powerful parties who sought to fill that role: the game's governing body, the Football Association (FA) – which sought to maintain and extend its dominance of the game – and the (then) First Division Chairmen seeking alteration in the financial structuring of the sport (and by implication a new league). But whilst the main outcome of this uneasy alliance was the formation of the FA Premier League in 1993, another significant driver for the Premiership was the need to place the *national* team and its particular needs at the heart of this new league and of the national game (Fynn and Guest, 1994).[2]

Thus, the national team and its significance need to be located within wider changes occurring within football during the past decade. This has involved a social realignment of the sport coupled with a decision taken by the FA and major clubs to focus on a more affluent consumer segment (The Football Association, 1991). Using highly sophisticated marketing and media-led methodologies to exploit a resurgence of interest in the game, the result has been the generation of diverse and extraordinary volumes of capital entering the sport from entirely new sources such as TV rights moneys, the Internet and telecommunications corporations, transnational sports equipment manufacturers, public relations companies and the major stock markets through the sale of club equity.

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2   At this point it is interesting to point out that a relationship thread of some longevity exists between Saatchi and Saatchi and the FA. Alex Fynn being a Saatchi advisor to the FA during the formation of the Premiership and another, Adam Crozier becoming its Chief Executive. Additionally, Kevin Roberts' consulting partner, Clive Gilson was acting as a consultant to the FA when it recruited current England Manager, Sven Goran Eriksson.

Simultaneously, a new set of social and cultural relations arose during this period: seeing the greater immigration of elite, overseas football players to the English game, the gradual proliferation of continental and global competitions, the huge rise in the salaries of many football players – even in the lower leagues, new media outlets for sports (e.g. satellite TV, club TV, the Internet and the new generation of mobile phones) and new forms of cultural encoding seen in these media (Giulianotti, 2002). These new forms of encoding hinge around the personalities, attainments and the bodies of key figures; utilising them and the lifestyles of the international playing elite who frequently operating as powerful signifiers of class, nationality, politics, gender, bordered and borderless lives (Wong and Trumper, 2002). It is against this backdrop that we have seen the rise of superstar players such as David Beckham (the current England captain) and, more recently, Manchester United player, Wayne Rooney.

And The England Team

Over the past decade, these new forms of cultural encoding of football have seen further developments in the ways in which it is reported and represented across the media. Certain events, matches and players now attain a symbolism that extends beyond the confines of the sport with players and managers involved within such events being subjected to a degree of representational manipulation that is unparalleled and, is often outside the control of players, their clubs or their governing bodies (Gilmore, 2004; Maguire et. al, 1999). This 'manipulation' of national sporting events and sports people is successful in engaging emotion – in the present case, love – because, as acknowledged by Weiss, sport is shaped by and derives symbolic significance from its close links with society.

> With its classic, socioculturally valid and transparent norms, it forms a social subsystem in which different types of identity reinforcement can be found through…a sports performance; or it can be experienced vicariously as sport spectator. (Weiss, 2001: 393)

For him, in modern societies there is no other social subsystem that gives so many people, regardless of their religion, gender, age or social or educational level, access to a system of social validation and acknowledgement by others. Arguably the sports media are aware of this and exploit such social validation and the feelings sports performances can and do engender in those who watch and follow a sport or a particular event. This is demonstrated in Garland's (2004) analysis of the English tabloid press coverage of the 2002 World Cup Finals and Maguire *et al*'s (1999) analysis of the same concerning the England v Germany match in Euro 1996. Whilst covering different tournaments in markedly different parts of the world, both analyses show how the tabloids used wartime nostalgia in an attempt to draw upon the 'fighting' characteristics that are seen to be inherently English and intertwined football coverage with that of the news and current affairs – providing interesting contextual material in which to analyse how notions of national identity were being articulated. Although the coverage of the 2002 World Cup Finals did not reach the "xenophobic, chauvinistic and jingoistic gutter journalism" shown by some sections of the tabloid press during Euro '96 (National Heritage Select Committee, 1996: 1, cited in Garland, 2004: 81), Garland illustrates how a new, more inclusive Englishness was evolving amongst England supporters. An

Englishness that was not reflected in relevant tabloid coverage where a narrower focus prevailed rooted in a more nostalgic sense of national identity.

This suggests that notions of Englishness are evolving, with Crabbe (2004: 71-72) arguing that the 2002 World Cup Finals saw a symbolic decoupling of Englishness from a tabloid articulation of it. The latter being located within an exaltation of assimilationist sentiment by defining Englishness within a pageant of white nationalism. Thus, the advent of the flags during Euro 2004 seemed to indicate that the attempts of the FA and the UK Home Office to re-market the image of England supporters in order to create a more socially inclusive supporter base might have persuaded even the more reticent English middle classes to put aside their squeamishness concerning their national team:

> By wearing this flag I would like to show my support for the England team but: 1. Wholeheartedly reject any connotations of xenophobic nationalism; 2. Dissociate myself from anyone who removes his shirt in public; 3. Salute the rich contribution made by my Celtic cousins to British life; 4. Reaffirm my commitment to the European Social Chapter. (Needham, 2004: 24)

Thus suggesting that there was evidence that greater inclusivity was experienced and expressed when supporting the national squad, Needham cites the poignant story of journalist and writer Sarfraz Manzoor; showing that it had taken him 30 years to be able to buy an England shirt without fear of resentment or mockery.

> That night, as Asians, blacks and whites joined together…I remember thinking: this is what patriotism could be like if we could defang it of its nastier elements. (*ibid.*)

And as the re-development of Wembley Stadium forced the national side to play its international matches – competitive and friendly – away from the capital and in a variety of Premiership grounds, access to England matches increased (funds permitting).

More recently, a culture has emerged of watching such matches on big screen TV in local pubs and bars, arguably facilitating and replicating (albeit on a smaller scale) the emotional climate and experience of watching live matches. With greater confidence being expressed concerning the short and long-term abilities of domestic players, coupled with the advent of more intimate, local settings for national games, it could be argued that the England national team's Lovemark status is confirmed. But it could equally be stated that it has always had that status in the hearts of the football public and beyond – especially since 1966 and England's win over Germany in the World Cup Final at Wembley.[3]

> Lovemarks are, by definition, top of their class for the people who love them. The passion for a Lovemark can be intense. At the far end of the scale people will lay down their lives for a Lovemark. In fact, nations may well be some of the most powerful Lovemarks of them all. (Roberts, 2004: 75)

But there is another side…

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3   Roberts' (2004) examples of Lovemarks include a wide variety of goods, people, experiences etc. that have existed and have been the object of love, affection and desire for many years. It therefore seems as if Roberts is engaged in a form of post-hoc activity, appropriating iconic moments and figures through the award of Lovemark status and their presentation through this lens.

Disenfranchisement and Identification

Unsurprisingly there is an increasing desire amongst political and administrative authorities concerned with the management of the game to extend this sense of transformation witnessed in the popularity and cultures of support pervading the domestic leagues to the national team.

> A significant element of the English FA's concern to extend this transformation to the cultures of support which surround the national team was driven by a desire to prevent forms of disruptive behaviour which were seen as highly media sensitive and damaging to the game's public image and commercial appeal. (Crabbe, 2004: 65)

Whilst the Football (Disorder) Act 2000 aimed to restrict football hooliganism (with the main focus being the international sphere), the FA launched *englandfans* on July 1st 2001. Aiming to renew the England Members Club, its publicity materials aimed to evoke nostalgia for football as a family game – showing images that were family oriented, but also contained some representations of ethnic diversity. Thus, the combination of legal banning orders and *englandfans* have the ability to restrict access to tickets to those regarded by both the FA and the police as undesirable or *potentially* dangerous.[4] Whilst the focus on broadening the appeal of football to a wider constituency is laudable, as noted by Crabbe (2004) the formal controls being exerted here seek to exclude those with criminal convictions – be they football related or not. It is therefore arguable as to whether such initiatives are truly transformational or simply managerial. Following Crabbe again, it is possible to apply a Foucauldian reading (1979) and see 'the family' becoming a rhetorical instrument of government through its symbolic invocation. It is therefore interesting to juxtapose an alternative, arguably 'excluded' sensibility against these developments – as seen in the burgeoning football hooligan literature and the release of the film 'The Football Factory' at the start of the European Championship. Whilst this is a fictional account of the life of a seasoned Chelsea hooligan, and a 'core text' in this genre (e.g. King, 1999; Ward, 1998) its release coincided with police warnings of a rise in soccer violence, and the arrival of a so-called new breed of teenage hooligan being used as 'foot soldiers' by older men engaged in organising pre- and post-match fights (Goodchild, 2004). Indeed, pre-season coverage in the UK has increasingly noted the gradual rise in football-related violence connected with league and cup games.

However, despite stringent attempts to curb its occurrence overseas during international competitions that involve the national squad, this demonstration of a love of country persists – and is also continuously represented in fictional and non-fictional accounts of following England (King, 1999; Brimson and Brimson, 1996; Brimson, 2000). Such enactments and representations are ones the UK's criminal justice system and the FA would like to eradicate because such disorder inevitably inspires memories of the malaise in the game in the 1980s – one which saw the game blighted by "routinised

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4   Over 2,000 banning orders were in place in the UK for Euro 2004, thus preventing foreign travel and match attendance for those concerned.

problems of serious spectator disorder" (Williams, 1996: 4) – and as such, this kind of love is an unwanted blemish on the 'marque' of the national team and English football.[5]

> Following England is all about pride and history. Our place in the pecking order. For centuries we've been kicking shit out of the Europeans. They start something and we finish it. We're standing on the White Cliffs of Dover singing COME AND HAVE A GO IF YOU THINK YOU'RE HARD ENOUGH…I'm proud to be English and proud to say so. (King, 1999: 23, emphasis in original)

But for many football supporters, the re-orientation of the game towards a more affluent sector of the English public has effectively left them disenfranchised, with few being able to afford or gain access to tickets to important England matches. For some, the alteration in the ways in which support is enacted and displayed is experienced as dismayed alienation from a game they feel they no longer own – yet are expected (nay *required*) to continually finance as a means of appropriately demonstrating their love – or move elsewhere – to celebrate it should they fail to adhere to the new norms and circuits of consumption and civility.

> Just what the fuck is going on?…there does seem to be a rather large number of blokes walking around with inflatable clogs on their heads and others with their faces painted all sorts of colours…to me, dressing up like a complete prick is not part of going to football…these people had tickets and were keeping the real fans away…They should be banned from football, not encouraged…We're in danger of losing our game to these wankers and I think it is the duty of every England fan to tell these prats to grow up, get a life or fuck off. (Brimson and Brimson, 1996: 136)

It is therefore unsurprising that there is resistance to the experience of these 'soft' disciplinary mechanisms now expected as part of demonstrating love.

> The FA must love their designer fans, just the image they wanted the world to see: your average face-painting, fun-loving, boy-meets-girl, loves-football, go-every-week English fan. (*ibid.*)

Given this example, we could see love as means of bonding with others in relation to an ideal (Ahmed, 2004: 124). But this ideal has two forms: one form of the ideal taking shape as an outcome of the processes outlined above which partially illustrate the means by which this bonding and formation of an ideal are encouraged by key stakeholders in the England 'marque'. An alternative would consist of a process of alignment linked to nostalgia for the 'traditional' patterns of following England (indeed, following *football* itself during this period) prior to the changes ushered in by the Taylor Report (1990). Love here therefore becomes a crucial means by which individuals become aligned with collectives – independent and 'official' club supporters associations, web sites, fanzines – through their identification with this (lost) ideal. But this form of alignment arguably relies upon the existence of others who have *failed* that ideal or (as in the instance cited by Brimson and Brimson above) have debased it through engagement with processes of commercialisation. But whilst many supporters would find much to agree with in King's quote below, only a minority would engage in the forms of action outlined in

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5   Returning to the past is a problematic state because of the tensions caused by divergent conceptualisations of what that past represents and signifies to football stakeholders – especially supporters.

graphic detail in 'England Away' as a means of asserting love, a form that has been exploited and enjoined by elements of the English far right.

> The architects have made the grounds sterile and the seats have killed the atmosphere…they've mixed everyone in together and you're not going to be singing your songs if you're next to a granny or some bloke with his kids. It's in the media and business side of things that the trendies have cashed in…But Billy's songs are good. It's the humour and the situation. ONE BOMBER HARRIS. (King, 1999: 56)

Whilst I do not want to make too much of this shared space or align the far right too closely with disenfranchised fans (most of whom would hold groups like Combat 18, the National Front and the British National Party in abhorrence) Ahmed's (2004) analysis is helpful here as it "proceeds by reading texts that circulate in the public domain, which work by aligning subjects with collectives by attributing 'others' as the 'source' of our feelings". Her work, and the use of psychoanalytic theory, facilitates an explanation not only of this process of bonding in relation to an ideal, but the experiences engendered by loss. As an additional explanation, the work of Klein (1952) facilitates an illustration of the inherent ambivalence of love, so in these ways, psychoanalysis provides some explanations of love which facilitate a critique of Roberts' current conceptualisation of the Lovemark.

The Cultural Politics of Love: Group Identities and Loss

For Freud, love is central to the formation of groups and that groups are formed through their shared orientation towards an object. More specifically groups are formed when "the individual gives up his ego ideal and substitutes for it the group ideal as embodied in the leader" (Freud, 1921: 129). Thus, within a group setting, the bond relies on the transference of love to a leader, whereby the transference[6] becomes the common quality of the group. Whilst maintaining that the aim of love is sexual union, he also argues that other loves, whilst diverted from this aim, share the same libidinal energy that pushes the subject towards the loved object. Put simply, groups are formed through their shared orientation towards an object – obviously in this scenario that shared orientation concerns football; locally through allegiance to one's club and through consistently following the sport in an engaged, direct way – as demonstrated through club and national team support via *attendance* at matches; through enactment in traditional, routine rituals that generally denote 'typical', dedicated supporter behaviour.

> [An] ecstasy (of support) is produced by the communal practice of singing and supporting the team. However, those communal practices are not only staged in the ground. The pub is also a crucial site of the creation of masculine solidarity. In the steam and inebriated atmosphere of the pub before the game, the lads first thought is to re-create their sense of mutual solidarity, which (sometimes) reaches its height in the ground. (King, 1998: 151)

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6   Transference is a process in the therapeutic relationship whereby the patient transfers childhood wishes, feeling, fantasies and modes of behaviour onto the analyst (Sandler *et al.*, 1992). As Gabriel notes (1999: 310), it generally involves positive and negative feeling and has resonance within an organizational setting as it is likely to affect relations between subordinates and superiors

The question here is what happens when that object is lost? Here, Freud shows how the ego can assume the characteristics of the lost object of love through introjection.[7] In plainer terms, the loss of the object is compensated for by 'taking on' the quality of the object. Thus, those who feel a profound sense of loss connected to the changing ways by which support for England are demonstrated could 'take on' what they perceive to be 'qualities of the object' they have lost (i.e. their sense of ownership of football and of the national team). Mourning and grief therefore become expressions of love with love announcing itself most passionately when faced with and experiencing the loss of the object (Freud, 1917). Hence the powerful emotions gendered in Taylor's interviewee who mourns the loss of his club:

> Anyone with a thought in their head and a sense of history can see and feel the deleterious changes affecting football…a one-time Liverpool fan, active since childhood told me: 'the link has been severed. I've lost the love…the feeling that the team needs me and that they won't succeed unless I'm here'. (Taylor, 1997: 38-9)

As Ahmed notes, "the impossibility that love can reach its object may also be what makes love powerful as a narrative" (2004: 130), which has interesting implications for Lovemarks because this impossibility or issue of difficulty in attaining the Lovemarked product is a highly risky strategy. Whilst it might work for high-end products and services, those are rare marques, which we might be prepared to wait for – as Roberts illustrates (Roberts, 2004: 140). But, returning to the main theme here, whilst at one level love takes the form of reciprocity; it is also an emotion that lives with the failure of that demand and can often do so through an intensification of its affect.[8] So, love might then work to bind people together in the *absence* of the loved object, even when that object is 'the nation' or by extension here, the England national team (Ahmed, 2004: 130). Thus, the sense of abandonment and rejection experienced by those who follow England and have been disenfranchised from that activity (for whatever reason) might actually *increase* their investment in the team.

> The subject 'stays with' the nation, despite the absence of return and the threat of violence, as leaving would mean recognising that the investment of the national love over a lifetime has brought no value…one keeps loving rather than recognising that the love that one has given has not and will not be returned'. (Ahmed, 2004: 131)

In this sense, love is a form of waiting. And the longer the period of waiting, the more one has invested in terms of time, labour and energy the more has been expended. The failure of return here therefore extends the investment. As Ahmed states, "If love functions as the promise of return, then the extension of investment through the failure of investment through the failure of return works to maintain the ideal though its deferral into the future" (*ibid.*). But, this process might also require an explanation for this failure otherwise hope would turn into despair or 'giving up' on the lost object. Thus, those who have made the kinds of investments in the England team (following Ahmed), require an explanation as to why their cherished object of the highest levels of

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7   Introjection is being used here in the Kleinian sense (and is sometimes referred to as introjective identification) that denotes a process of taking an external object into the ego or self.

8   The term 'affect' or 'charge of affect' refers to the investment of memory, thought, wish or phantasy with emotion (Sandler *et al.*, 1997: 42).

team success has not been 'returned' since 1966. Arguably, it is the role of key individuals and authorities to provide an answer as fans continue to demand its return; focusing their anger and frustration on those perceived to be withholding it. Hence the increasing concern over the internal running of the English FA because they are perceived as being a major force concerning the commercialisation of the sport as well as having a high degree of responsibility for the England team. The fictional and non-fiction hooligan literature referred to earlier seems to mirror Ahmed's process: providing explanations for their disenfranchisement and outlining the main obstacles to restoration with the object of their loving investment. But, as will be argued, this process requires an obstacle for its continued existence.

Using the accounts of love on the Stormfront web site as an example, Ahmed shows that for this group, the nation as lost object has been taken away and the impact of that theft must be repeated as a means of confirming love for the nation. Where this particular example is concerned, the fantasy of the return of this love *requires an obstacle*:

> the racial others become the obstacle that allows the white subject to sustain a fantasy that without them the good life would be attainable, or their love would be returned with reward and value. (*ibid.*)

Thus, the failure of return is 'explained' by the presence of others who are *needed* in order for the investment to be sustained. The reliance on the other as the origin of injury becomes an ongoing investment in the failure of return. As outlined previously, the 'other' here can be defined as the interconnected stakeholders in the development and commercialisation of the England marque: the FA, corporate sponsors and those who 'feed' off the sport in order to provide information and entertainment services to a football public (press, media etc); those who have had a central role in creating and being sustained by the processes of hypercommodification. Additionally, Ahmed shows how the narratives promulgated by such far-right and fascist organisations re-orient themselves as 'love groups': "*Because we love, we hate, and this hate is what brings us together*" (2004: 43, emphasis in original). Such an argument resonated with fiction and non-fictional demonstrations of love within the hooligan literature – as illustrated below. With the enactment of violence on opposition fans abroad being perceived as a means of illustrating love of country; of reasserting a national supremacy abroad that has seemingly been eroded by European integration – whilst simultaneously mourning its loss and identifying those who provide an obstacle for its resurgence.

> Harris is already in Amsterdam and the word going round is that Berlin is going to be major. It's all there at the right time because you're not going to find many blokes on this trip who agree with the way England's being ripped apart by Europe. None of us wants to be ordered around by Berlin. That's what the last war was about. It's all big business and laws coming in through the back door. Not that I believe in our legal system being the best in the world because that's bollocks. Anyone who's dealt with the English legal system knows that it's run by the rich, for the rich. (King, 1999: 13)

Love and Ambivalence

Within the psychoanalytic domain, the emotion of love is hugely important, and the discussion here is necessarily curtailed and has been (somewhat arbitrarily) restricted to Freudian accounts, coupled with those of Klein. Having utilised Freud's explanations of group formation and their application to this case, it is useful to continue with this analysis because it also provides a challenge to Roberts' conceptualisation of love through its definition of it as essentially ambivalent in nature: showing that we can love and hate the same object; indeed, that there is no love without the accompaniment of hate.

As Freud stated within 'Civilization and its Discontents', one of the means by which we could avoid suffering (and some people do) is to make love the centre of every aspect of our lives (Freud, 1930: 82). But whilst Freud notes the important role played by this emotion in our pursuit of happiness, he acknowledges that it also makes us vulnerable to the loss of love and to our dependence upon another – someone who is 'not me' and who has the ability to take love away. Thus, at the height of being in love "the boundary between ego and object threatens to melt away…a man who is in love declares that 'I' and 'you' are one, and is prepared to behave as if it were a fact" (Freud, 1930: 66). For Klein, such a borderless identification would have resonance with an infant's attachment to the breast coupled with early feelings of omnipotence – and whilst the elucidation of her work here might seem somewhat disconnected from the narrative created so far, the processes have interesting applications to the England team.

Through her observations with children, Klein claimed that there is in the unconscious a fear of annihilation of life. She states,

> I would also think that if we assume the existence of a death instinct, we must also assume that in the deepest layers of the mind there is a response to this instinct in the form of fear of annihilation of life. Thus in my view the danger arising from the inner working of the death instinct is the first cause of anxiety. (Klein, 1952: 29)

To this contributes the fact that the ego turns destructive impulses against this primary object. The young infant feels that frustration by the breast, implying a danger to life, is the retaliation for his destructive impulses towards it and the frustrating breast is persecuting him. So, the first form of anxiety is of a persecutory nature – and is connected to the first object of love, which it splits into a good, loving, nourishing breast and a bad, persecuting one. These processes of splitting are accompanied by projection and introjection whereby the infant projects destructive impulses onto the breast, deflecting the death instinct outwards, and in this way the attacked breast becomes an external representative of the death instinct. This 'bad' breast is also introjected and this therefore intensifies the internal danger situation – the fear of the activity of the death instinct within. The introjection of the bad breast therefore involves the introjection of the portion of the death instinct that had been deflected outwards and the ego attaches its fear of its own destructive impulses to the internal bad object.

> "Come on England," one yelled as he urged his compatriots to charge a police barricade. "You're a traitor, you're meant to be one of us," a fan spat as he pushed and shoved a photographer. "Wherever you go, I'm going to follow you and twat you," said another. (Lister, 4004: 9)

But this activity of the death instinct deflected outwards as well as its working internally cannot be considered apart from the simultaneous operation of the activity of the life instinct. This attaches itself to the external object, the gratifying, (good) breast, which becomes the external representative of the life instinct. The introjection of this good object reinforces the power of the life instinct within. This good internalised breast, which is felt to be the source of life, forms a vital part of the ego and its preservation becomes an imperative need. Therefore, the introjection of this first loved object is inextricably linked with all the processes engendered by the life instinct. The good internalised breast and the bad, devouring breast form the core of the super ego in its good and bad aspects; they are the representatives within the ego of the struggle between the life and death instincts. Klein termed this the paranoid-schizoid position. So, the love experienced here is fundamentally ambivalent and her experience and conceptualisation of early infant emotional processes are undoubtedly bleak.

But, more hopefully, from the beginning of life, the ego tends towards integrating itself and towards synthesising different aspects of the object – an expression of the life instinct. Ultimately these processes of integration become more frequent and lasting as development goes on and in such states, a measure of synthesis between love and hatred in relation to these part-objects comes about. This gives rise to depressive anxiety, guilt and the desire to make reparation to the injured loved object. Within this depressive position the infant perceives and introjects the mother increasingly as a complete person, implying a fuller identification and more stable relationship with her. Whilst the focus here is predominately on the mother at this point, the infant's relation to the father and others people within its environment also undergo a similar change. Thus, the splitting processes diminish in strength and are predominately related to whole objects, as opposed to the part objects of the paranoid-schizoid position.

What facilitates this process of integration is:

> the individual's feeling that integration implies being alive, loving and being loved by the internal and good object. (Klein, 1952: 312)

Thus, we eventually attain a state of synthesis. However, returning to Klein's arguments concerning the struggle between the life and death instincts, she states that *this struggle persists throughout life.* Hence the lengthy exposition of the infant internal processes outlined here, because this source of anxiety is never eliminated and enters as a perpetual factor in all anxiety-provoking situations. This has interesting implications not only for the love at the heart of the Lovemark and its location within our most primal of experiences where love is essentially ambivalent, but for competitive sports (Gilmore, 2004). As an illustration here, in his analysis of the lads' fandom at Manchester United, King highlights the love they felt for their team. A love that facilitates the synthesis seen in the depressive position between their feelings of disappointment (and hostility) at the changes occurring at Old Trafford during the 1990s and their deep-seated need to persist with their support of their team despite the changes.

> But this attachment, which could be such a powerful resource of opposition has facilitated the lads' acceptance of the transformation of football…their love of the team compels them to continue attending…As long as changes in football allow the lads to preserve some of the ecstatic solidarity of their fandom intact, they will accommodate major grievances and inconveniences. (King, 1998: 166)

And the Lovemark?

It could therefore be argued that the idea of the Lovemark possesses a degree of intuitive appeal, but that Roberts' (2004) conceptualisation of love fails to account for its depth and complexity. This could potentially result in an experience of inauthenticity by consumers when this theory is actualised. For the use of love to market and sell products and services is not new – even though Roberts might argue that its systemisation through the Lovemarks matrix marks a departure here. Because a tool is now in place to offer potential clients both the structure and the metrics needed to chart a path and measure the progress of the Lovemark concept when it is used.

It is interesting that 'Lovemarks' provide only a limited discussion of our first experiences of love that are so fundamental to us; with the central operation of our first non-me object (i.e. those who occupy the mother role) given scant focus. If Roberts and his team had identified the first objects of love we experience, and investigated the nature of our attachment to them, the ambivalent, problematic, intense nature of love would have emerged – without even considering the psychoanalytic reading used here.

For those charged with protecting the England Lovemark, it could be argued that the continuation of spectator disorder which accompanies the team's presence at major tournaments is needed to re-enforce the 'legitimate' (arguably disciplinary) form of love they utilise to brand the marque. And whilst the discussion here has necessarily polarised love and its expression, there needs to be an acknowledgement that many football fans are fairly nonchalant about the national team: wanting it to do well, following the team's progress through various competitions and experiencing inevitable disappointment when they do not meet expectations and desires, but placing love of *club* at the heart of their feelings, investing their primary love of the game and their fiscal and other priorities *there*.

Finally, how have the revelations of the sexual activities of key England figures: the Captain, David Beckham, the Manager, Sven Goran Eriksson and the former FA Chief Executive, Mark Palios, impacted on the marque they were allegedly employed to cherish, develop and maintain? And what is the longer term damage inflicted on the public image of the national team? For these two bodies are inextricably intertwined with the FA enduring heavy and continuing criticism for its managerial and fiscal ineptitude. Following 'Svenngate', could it be argued that the FA (with worrying corollaries for the England team) is now perceived more as a 'lovebite'[9] than a Lovemark? With some very interesting implications for alternative marketing of the marque…

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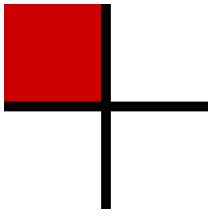
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the author   Dr Sarah Gilmore: Although urged by her mother and grandmother to marry well or at least get a good job as a teacher, Sarah decided to become a Trade Union Officer, marry incredibly unwisely and ultimately pursue a career as an academic. Tempted to jump ship and train as a child psychoanalyst, she realised that she would never get through the mother-baby observations (think train sets, think dressing up, think Scalectrix) let alone con a training analyst as to her suitability. She therefore combines the main loves of her life – football, psychoanalysis and workplace storytelling (i.e. gossip) – with her research focus on managerial work and management development in fast-paced environments. Often using psychoanalytic concepts to understand the complex nature of managerial work and the endlessly fascinating dynamics of individual and group behaviour.

Address: The University of Portsmouth, Business School, Richmond Building, Portland Street, Portsmouth, PO1 3DE

E-mail: sarah.gilmore@port.ac.uk

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Pathology, Power and Profits… in Paperback

Edward Wray-Bliss

Joel Bakan's *The Corporation* is an accessible and engaging critique of the corporation written for a non-specialist, mass audience. It has been published in the UK to coincide with the release of the multi-award-winning documentary of the same name in UK cinemas.

The central premise of *The Corporation* is that large corporations share a common, and deeply problematic, institutional form. Specifically they are legally constructed as 'persons' with their own identity and interests; they are mandated in law to relentlessly and selfishly pursue these interests; they externalise all costs and negative consequences that result; and they have none of the effective checks and balances, nor are they required to display anything corresponding to moral or social conscience that we require of their rather more corporeal/less corporate human cousins. Having constructed the figure of this anti-social corporate 'person', Bakan then utilises psychological discourse to diagnose the subject as 'pathological', if not 'psychotic'. This gives the book a simple hook that is used to good effect throughout. Having said this, I can't help thinking that Erich Fromm's use of these same concepts in *The Sane Society,* published in 1956, combined with his thoroughgoing appreciation of Marxism and Freudian psychoanalysis, presented a far richer critique overall. Where Bakan critiques one capitalist institution, and perhaps by so doing risks letting a number of other targets and the wider structures of capitalism off the hook, Fromm explored the reproduction of this pathology throughout a broad range of social, religious and economic aspects of capitalist society. Fromm's book, however, is not, regretfully, a current best seller, or therefore the subject of this review.

Returning to Bakan. In Chapter One, possibly the best chapter in the book, Bakan engagingly explores the construction of the pathological corporate personhood. He does this through an interesting summary of the rocky legal and social history of the rise of the corporation from the sixteenth century to the present day, concentrating mainly upon the UK and US context. Along the way he notes such items as Adam Smith's antipathy toward what he regarded as this scandal and corruption prone organisational form; the movement from explicit prohibition of corporations (The English parliament's Bubble

Act of 1720) to their promotion and widespread protection under the law (from 1825 onwards); and a series of landmark cases and statutes in the US and the UK that institutionalised, and protected, the corporation as the institutional form that we know (and loathe) today.

Following this opening, the remainder of the book's six chapters flesh out Bakan's initial premise. Chapter Two charts the corporation's 'normal' reproduction of deeply problematic acts. Chapter Three explores its externalisation/avoidance of costs or liability for such acts. Chapter Four highlights the limits of democratic control over the corporation and the corporation's increasing control over democratic institutions. Chapter Five documents the increasing corporate colonisation of public life. Finally, Chapter Six proposes some ways to constrain and correct the pathological corporate 'person' (more on this later). In these chapters Bakan supplies many interesting and varied examples of odious corporate practices. Some of these are already infamous (General Motor's cost-benefit analysis of the exploding Malibu car gas tank, for example) but many also new to this reader. Amongst the latter, some of my favourites include the interview with Marc Bary (corporate spy) who, amongst other nefarious acts, sets up phoney recruiting firms that lure corporate executives to fake job interviews only to surreptitiously debrief them on behalf of a competitor; a four page list of 42 of General Electric's major illegal acts between 1990 and 2001; and the botched attempt at imposing a corporate controlled fascist government in the US in the 1930's by some of the country's top business leaders.

In addition to these examples of shoddy corporate practices, Bakan also makes good use of interviews with the great and the (not-so-)good, a device favoured by other current popular critiques of corporations (e.g. Klein, 2001) as well as their ideological opponents – the writers of management guru texts. Bakan weaves throughout the text excerpts from his discussions with Noam Chomsky, Naomi Klein, and Michael Moore alongside anti-corporate activists, 'reformed' ex-CEOs, current CEOs (both those embracing and not embracing 'Corporate Social Responsibility') and leading figures from the pro-corporate right – including Washington lobbyists – heads of pro-corporate think tanks and Milton Friedman. All of the above are used to examine not only the book's basic premise, but also to make some pertinent critiques of a number of current attempts to soften the image of the corporation as irredeemably anti-social. Several chapters, for instance, have contributions to make to debates around Corporate Social Responsibility. The opening chapter notes the rise in interest in this topic not just in recent years but also at the end of the First World War and again in the 1930s. Both periods are characterised by a loss of public faith in the corporation's social contribution, resulting, as in our recent decades, in business leaders seeking to reassure the public that corporations could be trusted to manage their own affairs with a social conscience. Corporate Social Responsibility is also a major theme of Chapter Two where Bakan notes that their have been some valiant, and quite conceivably genuine, efforts by business leaders such as Tom Kline (Pfizer Inc.), William Ford, Jr. (Ford), or indeed Anita Roddick (Body Shop) to imbue their corporations with some social conscience. However, he argues again that the corporation's legally constructed mandate to pursue its own narrowly defined 'best interests' means that such efforts confront not only prevailing cultures in the corporate world, but also the legal constitution of the corporation. The author illustrates this last point well by referring to

the defining case law of *Dodge v. Ford Motor Co.* where John and Horace Dodge, two of Ford's major shareholders, used the courts to reverse Ford's decision to use profits to lower prices for customers rather than pay dividends to shareholders. As the judge in the case expressed his ruling, a corporation should not be run "for the merely incidental benefit of shareholders and for the primary purpose of benefiting others" (p. 36). This case, and the 'best interests of the corporation' principle that it has come to stand for since, Bakan argues, effectively renders the morality of individual corporate members, no matter how senior they may be and no matter how heartfelt their moral position, a largely irrelevant sideshow. Such sentiments, and efforts, will inevitably and ultimately be subordinated to the legally constituted dominant self-interest of the corporation. In making this point, Bakan, paradoxically, echoes his interviewee, Milton Friedman, who argues that the one and only social responsibility of corporations is to make profit. As Bakan phrases it, "Corporate Social Responsibility is thus illegal – at least when it is genuine" (p. 37). The difference between the two positions, of course, is that Friedman seems content whereas Bakan argues for changes to the economic and regulatory context to make the fiction of corporate social responsibility a fact.

Turning for a moment to the style of Bakan's text, for those coming to this book having previously read some of the other popular anti-corporate texts such as Klein (2001), Korten (2001), or Monbiot (2000), some feeling of familiarity, even repetition, may start to creep in. Bakan's book is written in a similar style, it takes on many of the same targets, and is written for the same non-specialist mass audience. (So, with regard to this last point, those primarily interested in pushing the conceptual boundaries of the field should perhaps look elsewhere to more theoretical – and less popular – texts). Nonetheless the book's accessibility, even familiarity, does serve to make the book potentially an excellent teaching resource that might help encourage a broad spectrum of students to engage more critically with corporate practices. But before this is interpreted as damning with faint praise, I feel that the book also makes a number of other contributions to the popular anti-corporate literature and may also give the Critical Management Studies field some things to think about.

First, the focus upon the legal constitution of the corporation is a useful and interesting addition that the author, a professor of law at the University of British Columbia, is ideally placed to bring to the popular anti-corporate genre. I found the discussion of the relevant statute and case law, both past and present, fascinating and a further reminder of how much of that most serious of games played between capital and labour (and the environment, the consumer, etc) is already rigged. In addition, a further interesting effect of Bakan's charting of the legal 'personhood' of the corporation is that it would now seem quite proper for us to talk of a corporation, rather than only the people who interact with it, as having 'interests'. While this is indeed a reification and anthropomorphizing of the corporation, it is a reification that merely seems to reflect the corporation's status in law.

Second, I think the book has something interesting to say about the way we represent others' voices in our critical academic texts. Bakan is unmistakably hyper-critical of the form and function of corporations, and this critique inevitably extends to those who run corporations or act as agents or apologists for them. However, his interviewees and the people named in his examples, who span the poles of pro and anti-corporate ideology,

are all treated in the text with a generosity and respect that, ultimately, seems to add to rather than diminish his overall critique. Bakan seems to have found a style of representation that allows him to explicitly problematise the agency of some of his subjects without using (abusing?) his authorial position to diminish their moral status. By not questioning the voracity of his subjects' espoused beliefs or intentions, Bakan's critique comes across as one that is not 'cheapened' by problematising individuals. It's quite possible that this representational form may be merely a legacy of Bakan's legal training – I assume that the cultivation of an air of decorum and respect to one's opposing council is generally expected in such contexts – but it did also speak to me of an ethical relationship towards the voices of respondents that our critical community might usefully reflect upon (Wray-Bliss 2004). As someone who slips into the polemical in my own work, and has started to notice some critical research on organisation tending toward a superior, even dismissive, attitude on the part of the author towards other academic and non-academic voices, I find Bakan's style (or ethics) both refreshing *and* effective.

Third, the book gives me pause for thought regarding the nature of the practical contribution of both Bakan's text and those doing critical management studies. Central to Bakan's critical project, as his last chapter (*Chapter Six*) makes clear, is a desire to contribute toward a change in the practices and constitution of corporations. *Chapter Six* is part hopeful rhetoric, part appraisal of a range of current attempts outside of the regulatory regime to call corporations to account, and part Bakan's own proposed remedies to the current malaise which focus upon regulatory mechanisms. Taking each of these in turn, the chapter's attempt at hopeful rhetoric, for me, was at times more aspirational than wholly persuasive, perhaps signaling that Bakan had done almost too good a job constructing the image of the monolithic pathological corporate entity in the previous chapters. Having said this, his review of the possibilities of calling corporations to account through anti-corporate protest (which he regards as a necessary complement to and catalyst for governmental regulation, but not a substitute for it), consumer/ shareholder democracy (limited efficacy and more importantly fundamentally undemocratic as no money equals no voice), non-governmental organisational pressure (helpful but not sufficient or sufficiently democratic) and corporate social responsibility (well intentioned, perhaps, but ineffectual) displays a critical but far from pessimistic mindset. Throughout his review of the above mechanisms Bakan consistently argues that, in the absence of a wished for, but unlikely, short term radical shift away from laissez-faire capitalism, state regulation of corporations must remain the principal means by which corporations should be brought to heel. He does not make this case ignorant of the current corporate stranglehold over governments but rather, it seems, out of a principled commitment to democratic means, which he understands as synonymous with legislative constraints on corporations formulated by democratically elected governments.

Toward the end of the chapter, Bakan proposes a number of general prescriptions for increasing this legislative control over corporations. Though each of these seemed eminently desirable they did also seem to me to be a bit of a wish list without a great deal of attention to how they may be practically achieved. For instance, under the heading 'Challenge International Neoliberalism' Bakan calls for Nations to

work together to shift the ideologies and practices of international institutions, such as the WTO, IMF and World Bank, away from market fundamentalism and its facilitation of deregulation and privatization. (p. 164)

Assuming that the reader both shares this goal and believes that such institutions can be redeemed (cf. Korten, 2001), Bakan still provides few clues of the necessary practical steps towards achieving this desired outcome. In all fairness, however, and to turn this critique back on ourselves, it doesn't seem that the critical organisational/ critical management studies community has yet offered much practical help in this regard either. And even if we shift attention from such global institutions to CMS's more familiar focus on challenging oppressive practices within work organisations, our field, while eminently capable of documenting and theorising such practices, has not seemed overly concerned to explore ways to practically challenge these. Whether the above is a fatal flaw of either Bakan's book or CMS I'm not sure, but it is, I feel, a limitation of both. Though in this respect, the fact that Bakan has constructed a bestseller that will reach so many readers does suggest that Bakan's book, like Klein's before it, will, despite its limitations, almost certainly have more influence on more readers than most CMS's texts put together (also Parker, 2002).

To some up, *The Corporation* is an accessible and interesting addition to the popular anti-corporate genre. While sharing a number of features, and examples, with previously published texts the book's central focus upon the legal constitution of the corporation makes this a useful incremental contribution. In addition, there are, as indicated above, a number of other stylistic and conceptual aspects to this book that gave this reader something to think about. I am already recommending this to students taking the Organisational Behaviour module I teach – to be read in conjunction with more theoretically explicit (and thereby probably less popular) critiques of management and organisation. And if the 'pathological' trope running throughout this book grabs these students, I'll probably encourage them to read Erich Fromm (1956) next.

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the author   Edward Wray-Bliss works at Nottingham University Business School. His research has explored the ethics and politics of i) Critical Management Studies and Labour Process Theory research practices and ii) problematic practices in the workplace, most recently those of sex discrimination and drug testing. He has published on these and other issues in the journals *Culture and Organisation, ephemera, Organization*, *Organization Research Methods*, *Tamara*, and, forthcoming in *Human Relations*.
Address: Nottingham University Business School, Jubilee Campus, Wollaton Road, Nottingham NG8 1BB, UK.
E-mail: Edward.Wray-Bliss@Nottingham.ac.uk

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