
Breaking the Paradigm Mentality

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Abstract

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This paper reflects critically upon the core argument of Burrell and Morgan's highly influential *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis* and evaluates responses to it. Although Burrell and Morgan were explicitly concerned to open up a wider field of vision to students of organization, their book simultaneously declared a new dogma: the mutual exclusivity of paradigms. The specific target of the paper is Burrell and Morgan's sharp division of 'subjectivist' and 'objectivist' forms of analysis. To challenge this dogma, attention is given to Kuhn's understanding that there is continuity as well as incommensurability in the process of theory development. In contrast to the 'pluralist strategy' favoured by Reed (1985) and the defence of paradigm incommensurability recently made by Jackson and Carter (1991), the paper follows Kuhn in commending a process of reflection committed to the identification and remedying of anomalies within existing theories. This argument is illustrated by examining the process of theoretical development within one branch of organizational analysis: labour process theory, where anomalies within the orthodox formulation of the dynamics of social reproduction have been identified by Burawoy and others.

Introduction

The publication of Burrell and Morgan's *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis* (1979) identified a potential for, and promoted a process of, theoretical diversity in organization and management studies. It at once reflected and reinforced a growing disaffection with the dominant, functionalist orthodoxy — a disaffection that had been gathering momentum during the 1970s (Silverman 1970; Gouldner 1971; Giddens 1976). By challenging the intellectual hegemony of functionalism, *Paradigms* has made a major contribution to opening up alternative forms of analysis within the diverse specialisms of management (e.g. Jackson 1982; Arndt 1985; Hopper and Powell 1985; Gower and Legge 1988; Hirschheim and Klein 1989).

An approving silence followed the publication of *Paradigms*. Prior to Reed's (1985) appraisal of its 'isolationist' strategy, it escaped critical examination, perhaps because it could pass as a textbook rather than as a distinctive and highly influential contribution to the development of its field. Subsequently, a number of critical commentaries emerged (e.g. Donaldson 1985; Hassard 1990; Willmott 1990a). The appearance of

these commentaries is a testament to the major contribution of *Paradigms* in raising the level of awareness and debate about the relationship between social theory and the study of organizations. In a spirited defence of paradigm incommensurability, Jackson and Carter (1991) have gone further by arguing that, in its assertion of the integrity of non-functionalist forms of analysis, *Paradigms* emancipates organizational analysis from 'the necessity for interminable justifications of different ontological, epistemological and methodological approaches' (ibid: 110).

This paper is yet another tribute to the importance and influence of *Paradigms* and yet, without denying its considerable virtues, a central thesis of the paper is that *Paradigms* is distinctly double-edged. Whereas it can assist in the emancipation of organizational analysis from the confines of functionalist assumptions, although the extent of this emancipation should not be exaggerated (Aldrich 1988), its support for theory development is, at best, ambivalent. Why? — because its division of social and organizational analysis into four, mutually exclusive enclaves or 'paradigms' lacks credibility, and is therefore poorly equipped to counter functionalist hegemony. Moreover, if taken seriously, the central argument of *Paradigms* unnecessarily constrains the process of theory development within polarized sets of assumptions about science and society.

According to *Paradigms*, philosophies of social science are either irredeemably 'subjectivist' or 'objectivist' in orientation. Studies of organization must therefore analyze organizational phenomena either as 'a hard, external, objective reality' or appreciate 'the importance of the subjective experience of individuals in the creation of the world' (Burrell and Morgan 1979: 3). Similarly, theories of society are directed by a concern for 'regulation' or for 'radical change'. Either the 'underlying unity and cohesiveness' of society must be assumed or society is understood in terms of 'modes of domination and structural contradiction' (ibid: 17). As Jackson and Carter (1991: 109), have recently argued, Burrell and Morgan 'were quite specific that a synthesis between paradigms cannot be achieved, that they must remain discrete and develop independently' [original emphasis omitted]. It is necessary to be clear about this. *Paradigms* is not presented by Burrell and Morgan as one possible (and currently plausible) framework for appreciating how and why there are diverse forms of organizational analysis, or even why there is a tendency for these forms to gravitate towards one or other of their polarized paradigms. Rather, *Paradigms* assumes, and strongly endorses, a restriction of analysis within the confines of four, mutually exclusive 'ways of seeing'. It is with the dualistic mentality of *Paradigms* that this paper takes issue. Specifically, the paper is critical of its polarization of 'subjective' versus 'objective' approaches to social science. By representing methodological diversity as a dualism — as an either/or — a tendency for social and organizational theory to gravitate to one or other of these poles is effectively cast into a metaphysical principle, thereby promoting

a new form of closure because the coherence of all attempts to resist this tendency is denied.

It is perhaps tempting to excuse Burrell and Morgan's 2x2 matrix as a self-consciously nominalist device for underscoring the diversity of forms of organizational analysis, and for revealing the relativity of the particular set of assumptions that underpin functionalism. For those who are less than comfortable with the sharpness and uncompromising character of the mutual exclusivity thesis, the idea of *Paradigms* as a heuristic device is doubtless appealing. However, *Paradigms* will be read in vain for extracts that lend support to this interpretation. Instead, the reader repeatedly encounters the thesis that analysis is, and must remain, confined within the structure of the matrix:

'To be located in a particular paradigm is to view the world in a particular way. The four paradigms thus define four views of the social world based upon different meta-theoretical assumptions with regard to the nature of science and society.' (Burrell and Morgan 1979: 24)

An alternative tack is to excuse this paradigm(atic) mentality¹ by suggesting that the 'isolationist' call² of *Paradigms* was intended, or should be read, historically, as a strategic device or ploy for protecting innovative forms of analysis from the imperialistic designs of functionalism. Certainly, the book struck a timely blow against functionalism by boosting the credibility and confidence of those inclined to question its truths. However, it will be argued that this blow can be sustained without making recourse to the improbable argument that organizational analysis is founded upon four, mutually exclusive paradigms. Not only does the mutual exclusivity thesis place (unnecessary) constraints upon theory development, but it is very doubtful whether, as a strategic device, it can cut much ice with those who are disinclined to accept its assumptions, or are determined to defy its demands.

The argument of the paper proceeds as follows. First, the central thesis of *Paradigms* is critically examined, paying special attention to its polarization of domain assumptions about science and society. Next, Kuhn's analysis of scientific development is reviewed. The purpose of this section is not to make the easy point that Burrell and Morgan depart from Kuhn's conceptualization of 'paradigms' (which they readily acknowledge). Rather, its intention is to show that if Burrell and Morgan had paid closer attention to Kuhn's interest in the *dynamics* of scientific knowledge development, their unqualified assumption of exclusivity and the associated advocacy of paradigmatic closure would have been abandoned or, at least, substantially revised. Kuhn's analysis suggests that theory development involves a process of struggle in which an accumulation of anomalies in existing theories stimulates (or supports) the plausibility and development of alternative theorizing. Whilst recognizing that 'old', discredited theory is not the same as its 'new', enlightened successor, Kuhn contends that there is continuity as well as incommensurability in the 'revolutionary' process of scientific discovery.

A basic anomaly in much social science, the paper then suggests, is the arbitrary division between 'subjective' and 'objective' approaches to enquiry, the coherence of which is challenged by post-empiricist philosophy of science (of which Kuhn's work has been of central importance (Bernstein 1983: 20ff)). This argument is illustrated by reviewing recent developments in labour process theory (LPT). It is argued that since the publication of Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (1974), the anomalous neglect of the 'subjective' dimension of organizational work has been a focal problematic of LPT. The challenge has been to accommodate an appreciation of this dimension without compromising the commitment of LPT to situating work organization within the 'objective' structure of production relations. This challenge has been taken up by Burawoy (1979, 1985) whose critique of the 'subjective'/'objective' division in orthodox LPT is discussed before considering how, in turn, his reconstruction of LPT has been criticized for its limited and anomalous treatment of the subjective dimension of the reproduction of class relations (Knights and Willmott 1989).

The view of theory development presented in this paper is compared and contrasted, in a discussion section, with other commentaries on *Paradigms* — notably, those of Reed (1985) and Jackson and Carter (1991). Reed's position is criticized for its objectivism and for an ahistorical conception of 'structure' that he seeks to integrate with a disembodied conception of 'action'. Contra Reed, there is no reliance upon 'the rational assessment of conflicting approaches through a process of critical scrutiny and debate' (Reed 1985: 204) to identify and steer a middle course between structural determinism and cognitive relativism. Instead, theory development is understood to depend upon the detection of anomalies and lacunae without having, as the 'primary mission' of this activity, the objective of moderating or flattening theoretical diversity. This conceptualization of theory development is more consistent with the post-empiricist position favoured by Jackson and Carter (1991). However, their defence of paradigm incommensurability is shown to be founded upon a narrow conception of the postmodernism of resistance. It is argued that this foundation is unlikely to prove effective either in resisting the forces of assimilation or in removing the bogey of 'scientific authoritarianism'.

Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis

There is little to quarrel with in Burrell and Morgan's (1979) contention that organizational analysis is unavoidably informed by some (often undisclosed) assumptions about science and society (cf. Gouldner 1971). Their effort to make these more explicit is helpful both in illuminating the role of assumptions in the production of knowledge, and in identifying the comparatively narrow set of metatheoretical postulates upon which so much organizational analysis is based. Much more contentious

is Burrell and Morgan's (1979) thesis that assumptions about science and society can be adequately represented as a binary opposition between 'subjectivist/objectivist' conceptions of science, and 'regulation/radical change' theories of society. They write,

'Our proposition is that social theory can usefully be conceived in terms of four key paradigms based upon *different sets of metatheoretical assumptions* about the nature of social science and the nature of society. The four paradigms are founded upon *mutually exclusive* views of the social world. Each stands in its own right and generates its own distinctive analyses of social life. With regard to the study of organizations, for example, *each paradigm generates theories and perspectives* which are in *fundamental opposition* to those generated in other paradigms.' (Burrell and Morgan 1979: x, emphasis added)

When interrogating the plausibility of this thesis, it may be asked: how often are sets of paradigmatic assumptions articulated in organizational analysis in such a pure form? Also, where they are perceived to deviate from this form, what does this say about the coherence of the 'mutually exclusivity' assumption that underpins *Paradigms*?³ Are we to conclude that responsibility for such deviations lies with the analyst (or the observer) who has simply failed to understand that the coherence of knowledge requires the compliance of analysis with one of four mutually exclusive sets of metatheoretical assumptions? The prompting of such questions suggests that the argument for paradigm incommensurability developed within *Paradigms*, and subsequently defended by Jackson and Carter (1991), perversely encourages a new form of hegemonic closure, the rigidity of which is transparent in Burrell and Morgan's advice to those contemplating working outside the functionalist paradigm:

'Theorists who wish to develop ideas in these areas cannot afford to take a short cut. There is a real need for them to ground their perspective in the philosophical traditions from which it derives; to start from first principles; to have the philosophical and sociological concerns by which the paradigm is defined at the forefront of their analysis; to develop a systematic and coherent perspective within the guidelines which each paradigm offers . . . *Each paradigm needs to be developed in its own terms.*' (Burrell and Morgan 1979: 397, emphasis added)

Researchers are recommended 'to start from first principles' — that is, self-consciously to 'ground their perspective' in one or other of the four, mutually exclusive sets of assumptions. By paradigmatic fiat, ambiguity and tension within all forms of analysis is backgrounded as theorizing is presented as a choice between four, discrete alternatives underpinned by given sets of assumptions. Instead of helpfully exposing a tendency within social and organizational theory to define its identity through the negation of the 'other', this tendency is caste into a metaphysical principle.

Back to Kuhn

This criticism of Burrell and Morgan's thesis can be expanded and clarified by returning to Kuhn's seminal work on the process of theory devel-

opment, from where their paradigm idea emanates. Before proceeding, though, it is relevant to stress the difference between the approach to Kuhn's work taken here and the complaint that Burrell and Morgan depart from Kuhn's usage of the term paradigm (e.g. Donaldson 1985: 38–39). This complaint is wide of its mark. For Burrell and Morgan (ibid: 37, note 1) explicitly note that 'we are using the term "paradigm" in a broader sense than that intended by Kuhn' (ibid: 37, note 1).⁴ In this paper, the purpose of returning to Kuhn's work is not to make the obvious and unilluminating point that key arguments of *Paradigms* depart from Kuhn's thesis. Rather, the purpose is to suggest that a close reading of Kuhn casts doubt upon Burrell and Morgan's mutual exclusivity thesis.

The Dynamics of Theory Development

Burrell and Morgan's usage of paradigm is to identify four, 'mutually exclusive views of the social world' (Burrell and Morgan 1979: x). In contrast, Kuhn's concern is to explore the process of theory development in which a disciplinary matrix, incorporating a number of exemplars, comes to gain/lose plausibility, and thereby achieve or relinquish a position of dominance. Burrell and Morgan appeal to the paradigm idea as a way of signalling or authorizing their division of social theory into four autonomous and rival 'ways of seeing'. In contrast, Kuhn accounts for scientific activity as a process of movement in which 'new' paradigms emerge, phoenix-fashion, from the ashes of those they replace.

It is important to recognize that Kuhn (1970) stresses the substantial continuity and overlap between paradigms in the mediation of 'normal' and 'revolutionary' moments of scientific practice. During the transition period, Kuhn observes, 'there will be a large but never complete overlap between the problems that can be solved by the old and by the new paradigm' (ibid: 85, emphasis added). Revolutions in science, he argues, do not generally occur as a consequence of an all-at-once conversion experience of the kind attributed to Saul when travelling to Damascus. More usually, they are stimulated by the prevailing ethos and accepted exemplars of 'normal' scientific practice which, in the very process of refining existing theory, detects internal inconsistencies and complications that facilitate the detection of further anomalies:

'Professionalization leads, on the one hand, to an immense restriction upon the scientist's vision and to a considerable resistance to paradigm change. On the other hand, within those areas to which the paradigm directs the attention of the group, normal science leads to a detail of information and to a precision of the observation-theory match that could be achieved in no other way. . . . The more far-reaching and precise that paradigm is, the more sensitive an indicator it provides of anomaly and hence of occasion for paradigm change.' (Kuhn 1970: 64–65)

Kuhn notes that the disciplined conduct of 'normal science' requires that fundamental doubts about favoured assumptions and procedures are suspended. For this reason, the elimination of any conflict — for example,

between theory and data — is resolved by making ‘*ad hoc* modifications’ to existing theory (ibid: 78). If this ‘normalizing bias’ were ever to become complete, there would only be endless confirmations of an existing paradigm (which is precisely what a defence of paradigm incommensurability demands and endorses). A necessary condition of theory development, Kuhn argues, is the recurrent questioning of existing theory as its favoured assumptions and procedures are pushed to their limits. It is this commitment that generates the accumulation of anomalies that stimulates theoretical innovation. As Bernstein (1983: 70) has observed,

‘What is most essential for Kuhn in normal science is the degree of precision and subtlety that can be achieved in working out the promise of a paradigm (not its dogmatism), for without this we would never be aware of the precise character of anomalies that can be used to challenge a paradigm.’

In sum, when examining the process of movement from an accumulation of anomalies to the crisis that precedes the emergence of a new paradigm, Kuhn highlights the *paradoxical* processes of struggle in which the development of ‘new’ theory is necessarily mediated by the detection of inconsistencies and anomalies in its predecessor.

Is Social Science Pre-Paradigmatic?

Before exploring further the significance of Kuhn’s ideas, it is relevant to address the objection that they are derived from a study of the natural sciences, principally physics, and that they are therefore of tenuous relevance for understanding the development of theory within the social sciences. In the natural sciences, the argument goes, it is not difficult to identify the replacement of one paradigm by another — for example, the revolutions in thinking that have been associated with the writings of Copernicus, Newton and Einstein. Nor is it difficult to conceive of these revolutions as ‘progress’, even though, as Kuhn (ibid: 206) explicitly argues, a consistent direction of ontological development (i.e. theory more nearly representing nature) is not readily discerned.⁵ In social science, by contrast, there is little evidence of a progressive supercendence of ‘paradigms’; and where one approach does become dominant (e.g. functionalism), its position, and the ascription of ‘progress’ to its dominance, is unlikely to escape fierce and continuing contest.

When dwelling upon these differences, some commentators have concluded that social science is ‘pre-paradigmatic’ — meaning that it has yet to achieve maturity, at which time a single paradigm will become widely accepted (albeit temporarily) as diverse alternatives are eliminated. This argument assumes (i) that the sense of progress ascribed to the natural sciences is inevitable and/or desirable and (ii) that the social sciences must follow the same path. Both assumptions are questionable. First, it may be asked whether an empiricist’s conception of science, founded

upon a scientific division of factual and ethical knowledge is either inevitable or desirable (Shapin and Schaffer 1985; Segerstrole 1989).⁶ Second, and relatedly, it may be suggested that the so-called pre-mature condition of the social sciences at once reflects and preserves a significant degree of resistance to the scientization of irremediably practical, moral problems and issues. As Giddens (1976) has argued, the concepts and ideas of social science are selectively appropriated by the subjects of scientific analysis. In this process, the politics of social science are rendered comparatively transparent — as they are judged to be more or less compatible with, or supportive of, diverse political philosophies.⁷

In an important sense, social science is advantaged by the comparative transparency of its moral grounds and significance which acts to promote a recurrence of contests between approaches founded upon different value positions. However, it is one thing to acknowledge these differences; it is quite another to represent them as, and reduce them to, four mutually exclusive paradigms in which 'subjective' and 'objective' approaches to social science are irremediably polarized. Kuhn's work has relevance for social science not because it inspires the identification of mutually exclusive paradigms, but because it sensitizes us to the dynamics of theory development.

Challenging Incommensurability

According to Kuhn, paradigms are incommensurable in the sense that there is no neutral language in which the contents of rival theories can be fully expressed or evaluated, but there is also a *logically necessary degree of commensurability*. The argument against incommensurability is well made by Giddens (1976: 144, cf Hassard 1988: 253–258):

'all paradigms are mediated by others'. While Einsteinian physics broke profoundly with Newtonian physics, it none the less had direct continuities with it at the same time; if Protestantism differs in basic ways from Catholicism, the content of the former cannot be fully understood apart from its relation to the latter as *critique*.' (emphasis in original; cf Phillips 1977: 109–110; Derrida 1981: 24).

New paradigms do not parachute in from the skies. Rather, they arise out of processes of social and intellectual struggle, often promoted by political and technological developments and contradictions within the wider structure of social relations, contradictions that stimulate critical reflection upon the plausibility of the assumptions underpinning established paradigms of knowledge. By restoring an appreciation of the dynamic process of theory development, it can be recognized that, although communication between alternative sets of worldviews is never isomorphic, *such communication is not only possible, but is a necessary condition of theory development*. Phillips (1977), for example, notes how feelings of uneasiness and doubt about the authority of 'normal science' increase the openness (or suggestibility) of researchers to less conven-

tional approaches — to ‘work going on at “the fringe” or the “cutting edge” — depending upon its subsequent success’ (ibid: 107). A moment may come when scientists experience a decisive break with their intellectual attachments to *particular* assumptions and associated signifiers — such as the meaning of ‘organization’ or ‘labour’. However, it is necessary to appreciate how the construction of new theory is invariably preceded by a lengthy process of struggle in which the plausibility of these assumptions is progressively weakened. Stimulated and promoted by developments and contradictions within the wider structure of social relations, this process of struggle renders plausible what was previously regarded as incoherent or fanciful.⁸

To sum up, Kuhn represents theory development as a process of struggle in which existing theory is problematized through an accumulation of anomalies that stimulate and support theoretical innovation. In the following sections, this argument is developed and illustrated by reviewing recent developments in one ‘school’ of analysis, labour process theory (LPT), in which a neglect of the ‘subjective’ dimension of work has been identified as a major anomaly. By taking a closer look at struggles to remedy this anomaly, it is possible to show how the process of reconstructing LPT casts doubt upon the coherence of Burrell and Morgan’s polarization of ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ approaches to social science. Since familiarity with labour process theory cannot yet be taken for granted, the following section sketches the distinctive contours of ‘orthodox’ LPT before considering recent efforts that identify and seek to remedy its anomalous neglect of the subjective dimension of the reproduction of class relations at work.

Labour Process Theory: Orthodoxy and Reconstruction

Orthodox Labour Process Theory

In common with other ‘radical’ forms of organizational analysis,⁹ LPT is premised upon the understanding that ‘many deep-rooted features of organizational life — inequality, conflict, domination and subordination and manipulation — are written out of the script (of functionalism) in favour of behavioural questions associated with efficiency or motivation’ (Thompson and McHugh 1990: 28). Central to LPT is the understanding that the study of the organization and control of work must take full account of its development within historically specific structures of production relations.¹⁰ Whereas conventional analysis is inclined to assume an underlying functional rationality of work design and equitable operation of labour markets, LPT understands the development of markets and the organization of hierarchies to be governed by the contradictory politico-economic imperative of the private accumulation of capital through the institutionalized exploitation of labour. As Clegg and Dunkerley (1980: 457) summarize the argument of LPT,

'What might appear on the surface to be a just exchange (between buyers and sellers of labour power) "inducing" the "contribution" of organizational membership will in fact have to be an unjust exchange if the organization as the capitalist's instrument for materializing profit is to remain in being in the long run . . . In capitalist organizations, exploitation is the material basis of capital's domination of labour as a class. Capital, with its functionaries in management, has a greater capacity for an exercise of power because its very existence is premised on the diminution of the power of labour.' (ibid: 457)

According to orthodox LPT, an adequate analysis of work organization cannot be based upon workers' reports of their experience or, indeed, upon an uncritical acceptance of the conventional meaning of economic concepts such as 'labour' and 'commodity'. Why not? Because these meanings are understood to be conditioned by the dominant mode of production of material life in a way that selectively 'constructs' rather than 'reflects' its reality.¹¹ What, for example, is routinely deemed — by a worker, a manager or a bourgeois economist — to be 'just exchange' is understood by LPT to involve, facilitate and conceal a process of pumping surplus value out of labour that is privately appropriated by members of another class. Because the meaning of concepts and practices is materially conditioned, variable and unstable, the conventional, empirical meanings of concepts — such as 'just exchange' — cannot be accepted at their face value.¹² Rather, their meaning is understood to articulate the historical relations that support and sustain their sense, a sense that is pregnant with contradictions that eventually bring about radical changes in their structure and thus transform meanings that are currently taken for granted. Current ideas and categories, such as 'labour' and 'commodity', are thus regarded as 'the abstract ideal expressions of . . . social relations. Indeed the categories are no more external than the relations they express. They are historical and transitory products' (Letter from Marx to Annenkov, quoted in Sayer 198: 126).¹³ As Marx characterizes 'the guiding thread of his studies':

'In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will . . . The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general' (Marx 1970: 181)

Marx's materialist conception of social formation leads him to locate the emergence and meaning of everyday concepts and practices — such as the 'exchange' and application of 'labour' — within the historically and culturally specific conditions of their articulation and development. Within Burrell and Morgan's matrix, orthodox LPT, as formulated by Marx and subsequently revived by Braverman (1974) is understood to comply with the attributes of the 'radical structuralist paradigm'. That is to say, 'objectivist' assumptions about social science, 'which emphasize the hard and concrete nature of the reality which exists outside the minds of men' (ibid: 326) are combined with a 'radical change' theory of society that 'focuses upon the essentially conflictual nature of social affairs and

the fundamental process of change which this generates' (ibid). Excluded from this paradigm are concerns with individuals' interpretations of reality since, as noted above, these are understood to provide an unreliable basis for understanding the basic nature and dynamics of social development.

It was Braverman's (1974) mistrust of, and dissatisfaction with, studies that had assumed the adequacy of workers' definitions of 'job satisfaction', etc. that prompted his revitalization of labour process analysis. In *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, Braverman concentrates exclusively upon 'the "objective" content of class'; and, in doing so, he assumes the coherence of separating the analysis of the reproduction of its 'objective content' from the consciousness and actions of workers (Braverman 1974: 27). As stated previously, the purpose of this methodological strategy is to counteract bourgeois studies which, in accepting the face value of workers' responses to surveys and interviews, disregard their conditioning by the underlying 'objective' structure of production relations. What these bourgeois accounts overlook, Braverman (1974: 171) contends, is how the capitalist rationalization of labour processes results in the removal of 'the subjective factor . . . to a place among its inanimate objective factors'.¹⁴

However, it is precisely the plausibility of separating the objective and subjective dimensions of class, introduced by Marx as a means of disclosing the material conditioning of consciousness, that has been at the centre of critiques of Braverman's work and associated efforts to reconstruct LPT. As we shall see, those who seek to reconstruct orthodox LPT have no quarrel with the argument that the subjectivity of individuals is conditioned by an oppressive structure of production relations, although there is an increasing resistance to the reduction of this structure to 'the paradigm of production' that tends to be blind to other forms of conditioning, such as gender. The objection to orthodox LPT is that exclusive attention to a conjectured objective structure, and a related emphasis upon its determination and passification of worker subjectivity, engenders a (misleading) neglect of how the subjective moment of labour is actively involved in the reproduction of class relations at work.

Beyond Orthodoxy

It comes as no surprise to find that Marx's theory of society finds no favour with exponents of 'the sociology of regulation'. For them, the refusal of radical structural analysis to confirm the adequacy of established, commonsense concepts and methods for depicting reality is interpreted as a sign of its political, anti-scientific bias. However, the assumptions of orthodox LPT have also been questioned by those who, sympathetic to its critique of bourgeois theory and practice, are uncomfortable with a methodological strategy that involves a separation of 'objective' and 'subjective' moments of social reproduction; and which results in attention to the former displacing consideration of its

interdependent relationship to the latter. For these critics, the challenge is to rectify what they perceive to be a fundamental anomaly in LPT without reverting to bourgeois forms of theory and practice that Marx and Braverman persuasively discredit and seek to replace. Elger (1979: 24) identifies an aspect of the basic anomaly in orthodox LPA when he notes how it grasps

‘the capacity of capital to reorganize the labour process, degrade the labourer, and propel her/him from sector to sector but . . . *fails to recognise “the working class as an active and problematical presence within the mechanism of accumulation”*’ (quoting Schwartz 1977, emphasis added).

Processes of practical reasoning, negotiation, resistance and struggle in the organization of work processes, critics of orthodox LPT argue, must be *integral* to, and not seen as a distraction from, an adequate understanding of how capitalist relations of production are practically organized and sustained. To be clear, there is no direct or implied challenge to the orthodox understanding that analytical attention must be focused upon the (class) structuring of labour processes. However, an adequate analysis of capitalist work organization, it is argued, must fully incorporate an understanding of labour as ‘an active and problematical presence’.

Now, if we return to Burrell and Morgan’s (1979) mutual exclusivity thesis, the rectification of the fundamental anomaly identified by critics of orthodox LPT would seem to require a shift or ‘conversion’ from ‘radical structuralism’ to an alternative — ‘radical humanist’ or ‘interpretive’ — paradigm. Let us briefly consider these options. According to Burrell and Morgan (ibid: 28), the *interpretive paradigm* ‘sees the social world as an emergent social process which is created by the individuals concerned’. However, if a shift is made to the interpretive paradigm, then ‘the sociology of radical change’ must be abandoned because, in focusing exclusively upon ‘intersubjectively shared meanings’, ‘problems of conflict, domination, contradiction, potentiality and change play no part in (its) theoretical framework’ (ibid: 31). Alternatively, if we shift to the *radical humanist paradigm*, we must abandon any suggestion that the analysis of contradictions within the structure of production relations provides the key to understanding capitalist work organization. Why? Because, according to Burrell and Morgan, within the radical humanist paradigm, ‘the concepts of structural conflict and contradiction do not figure prominently . . . since they are characteristic of more objectivist views of the social world, such as those presented within the context of the radical structuralist paradigm’ (ibid: 32).

Rather than abandon the assumptions ascribed by *Paradigms* to the radical structuralist paradigm, sympathetic critics of LPT have pursued what, for Burrell and Morgan, is an impossible, preposterous project. Instead of *either* resigning themselves to the objectivism of orthodoxy *or* switching to the subjectivism of alternative (i.e. interpretive or radical

humanist) paradigms, they have sought to incorporate an appreciation of the 'subjective' dimension without abandoning a commitment to radical, structural analysis of the dynamics of social reproduction. For example, Cressey and MacInnes (1980: 15) have stressed the necessity of understanding how, in expanding the forces of production, 'capital must seek to develop labour as a subjective force to unleash labour's powers of social productivity rather than abolish those powers'. Similarly, when considering the mobilization of opposition to capital, Lazonick (1978: 26, quoting Marx 1976: 929) has observed that

'there is no guarantee that the working class will be "disciplined, united and organized" against the capital-labour relation. If anything, trade unions as well as "labour" parties in advanced capitalist societies have served the function of disciplining, uniting and organizing workers to accept the relation between wage-labour and capital.'

Common to these departures from orthodox LPT is an identification of the anomalous neglect of 'the subjective moment' in the reproduction of the capitalist structure of production relations. Of course, neither Marx nor Braverman deny the existence of this moment. However, insofar as 'the subjective moment' of labour is recognized, it is represented abstractly as a purposive capacity that transforms the objects upon which it works (Marx 1976: 284f, 980f; Braverman 1974: 70f). Consideration of the practical involvement of 'the subjective moment' in the reproduction of the capitalist labour process is effectively excluded by a methodological strategy that treats individuals 'only insofar as they are the personifications of economic categories' (Marx 1976: 92). As noted earlier, the value of this strategy, compared with bourgeois alternatives, is that it draws attention to how individual subjects are positioned within, and conditioned by, a politico-economic structure of social relations. However, this strategy simultaneously marginalizes the presence and significance of the subjective, existential dynamics of social reproduction. To better understand this limitation of orthodox LPT, it is relevant to take account of the work of Michael Burawoy, its most incisive critic.

Beyond the Division of Subject and Object

Burawoy (1978; 1979; 1981; 1985) has made the most far-reaching contribution to the reconstruction of LPT. Other critics have exposed specific deficiencies — such as its neglect of the mutual dependence of capital and labour and the marginalization of the consciousness and activities of workers, but Burawoy directly attacks its division of 'subjective' and 'objective' dimensions of social reality — a division which, of course, is also at the heart of Burrell and Morgan's 'mutual exclusivity' thesis.

An adequate theory of the labour process, Burawoy argues, must incorporate an examination of how the process of production shapes the indus-

trial working class not only objectively — that is, the type of labour it carries out — but also subjectively — that is, the struggles engendered by a specific experience or interpretation of that labour' (Burawoy 1985: 8, emphasis added). That the valorization process requires 'the rule of the capitalist over the worker' (Marx 1976: 990) is affirmed by Burawoy. He insists, though, that the enforcement of this 'rule' does not necessarily take a form that workers find antagonistic or unwelcome. This is because supervision and discipline, which is necessary if the private appropriation of surplus is not to be placed in avoidable jeopardy, can be (hegemonically) organized in a way that effectively 'manufactures' a sense of autonomy that employees actively support and defend.

Manufacturing Consent

Burawoy's rejection of the subjective-objective dichotomy, which he calls 'arbitrary' (Burawoy 1985: 39), is most powerfully articulated in his study of shopfloor work at the Allied Corporation, a pseudonym for a large manufacturing company, where he worked as a machine operator for ten months. At the centre of his analysis is an exploration of an anomaly between, on the one hand, the orthodox argument that, with the progressive separation of conception from execution, the subjectivity of workers 'is removed to a place among its inanimate objective factors' (Braverman 1974: 171); and, on the other hand, his empirical observations of the organization and control of the labour process on the shopfloor. Contra Braverman (and Marx), Burawoy (1979) found that his fellow workers were very much involved, as active subjects, in the process of their subordination and exploitation. Reflecting upon the significance of this study in a later book, he observes,

'Objectification of work, if that is what we were experiencing, is very much a subjective process — it cannot be reduced to some inexorable laws of capitalism. We participated in and strategized our own subordination. We were accomplices in our own exploitation. That, and not the destruction of subjectivity, was what was so remarkable.' (Burawoy 1985: 10, emphasis added)

Focusing upon shopfloor 'games' dedicated to devising and pursuing strategies and tactics for earning bonuses, Burawoy (1979) describes how he and his fellow workers became preoccupied with preserving their rules. Aside from the material rewards, participation in shopfloor games was valued, *inter alia*, as a means of reducing fatigue and/or as a way of gaining an enhanced sense of choice in, and control over, the organization of their work. As Burawoy (1979: 199) puts it, 'workers are sucked into the game as a way of reducing the level of deprivation'. As a consequence, 'extraneous' conditions came to take on the form of an acceptable (i.e. legitimate), unquestioned background context. Just as 'one cannot play chess and at the same time question its rules and objectives', Burawoy conjectures, participation in shopfloor games 'generates the legitimacy of the conditions that define its rules and objectives' — in this

case, 'the expropriation of unpaid labour' (ibid: 38); and, in this sense, workers were seen to 'strategize their own subordination' (ibid: 10).

The Structuring of Choice

By setting worker consciousness and activity within the context of the capitalist organization of the labour process, Burawoy avoids a reversion to 'bourgeois sociology' where 'worker consciousness' is treated as a universal phenomenon, abstracted from the historically specific structures of its development. Actively involved in a process of subordination, through which surplus value is appropriated, workers' choices are understood to be framed within the confines, and in accordance with the metarules, of the capitalist system:

'the choices capitalism forces us to make also generates consent to its rules, its norms. It is by constituting our lives as a series of games, a set of limited choices, that capitalist relations not only become objects of consent but are taken as given and immutable . . . we are compelled to play the game, and we then proceed to defend the rules.' (ibid: 93)

Burawoy underscores the presence of the underlying structure of capitalist relations of production in conditioning the consciousness and behaviour of the workers at Allied Corporation. In the playing of shopfloor games, the rationality of individual workers who sought compensations for 'much of the boredom and drudgery of industrial work' (Burawoy 1979: 89) is aligned with the rationality of a system that seeks to maximize their productivity (ibid: 92). In this way, Burawoy understands how workers become 'willing accomplices' in their own exploitation¹⁵ without abandoning the Marxian thesis that their 'consent' is a product of choices structured by capitalism.

To account for how this happens, Burawoy urges LPT to take more adequate account of the conditioning of worker consciousness by 'ideological' and 'political' structures. The economic realm, he argues, is 'inseparable from its political and ideological effects, and from specifically political and ideological structures of the workplace' (Burawoy 1985: 39). As a consequence, an objective antagonism of interests between capital and labour cannot be assumed. There is, to use the jargon of Marxism, no class 'in itself', only the presence/absence of a 'class-for-itself' whose emergence depends upon the development of relevant conditions. The challenge, Burawoy argues, is to 'investigate the conditions under which the interests of labour and capital actually become antagonistic. In short, we must go beyond Marx' (ibid: 29). For any work context, he continues,

'involves an economic dimension (production of things), a political dimension (production of social relations), and an ideological dimension (production of social relations). These dimensions are inseparable. Moreover, they are all "objective" inasmuch as they are independent of the particular people who come to work, of the particular agents of production.' (ibid)

Whether Marx regarded these dimensions as separable is certainly contestable. However, for the practical purposes of expounding his critique of bourgeois political economy, the ideological and political dimensions are undoubtedly backgrounded.¹⁶ Concerned to remedy the anomalous neglect of other 'subjective' facets of action that condition the organization of work, Burawoy has sought to reconstruct LPT in a way that more fully appreciates how class relations are mediated by political and ideological structures; and therefore, that the interests of individuals are not objectively given by their (economic) class categorization but, rather, are emergent within, and inseparable from, the 'subjective' media of class structuration. The 'subjective moment of labour' must be incorporated into LPT, Burawoy (1979: 77) urges, because

'capitalist control, even under the most coercive technology, rests on an ideological structure that frames and organizes "our lived relationship to the world" and thereby constitutes our interests.' (Burawoy 1985: 36)

Clearly, Burawoy's work identifies, and then seeks to remedy, a tendency in orthodox LPT to reduce the objective moment of labour to the economic structure of production relations. However, his way of addressing this anomaly involves a recasting, rather than a removal, of the subject-object dualism: his response to the limitations of orthodox LPT is to temper its economic reductionism by adding a couple of other structural elements. As we have seen, the effect of this reconstruction is by no means negligible. Specifically, it problematizes the constitution of interests whose ontology is clearly bounded when individuals are treated as the personification of economic categories. Yet there remains a strong residue of subject-object dualism in his understanding that consciousness can be adequately grasped by analyzing the content and operation of structures that exist independently of the individuals through whose agency these structures are more or less intentionally reproduced. In one important sense, these structures are indeed independent of individuals who cannot wish them into, or out of, existence. Each individual remains 'the creature' of these structures, 'however much he may subjectively raise himself above them' (Marx 1976: 92) by (egoistically) denying his (or her) dependence upon them.¹⁷ However, in an equally important sense, *there is an interdependency of the reproduction of social structures and the indeterminacy of human agency* (cf. Giddens 1979). The reproduction of structures is a problematical human accomplishment — albeit one that is more or less routinized and unintended, and, in this sense, *an adequate understanding of the 'compelling' force of structure requires an adequate theory of the dynamics of human agency*.

Despite his valuable identification of the anomalous treatment of the subjective dimension of labour in orthodox LPT, Burawoy's reconstruction lacks a theory of agency. This, of course, is somewhat paradoxical, given his challenge to 'the idea of the subjectless subject' (Burawoy 1979:

77) within orthodox analysis, and his insistence that LPT must go 'beyond the juxtaposition of subject and object' (Burawoy 1984: 27). However, as we have seen, instead of exploring the interdependency of structure and agency, Burawoy's response to the anomalous treatment of subjectivity in orthodox LPT is to raise the profile and importance of ideological and the political structures in conditioning "our lived relationship to the world" (Burawoy 1985: 36). This move is undoubtedly helpful in correcting a reductionist equation of structure with crudely economic categories and relations, but human agency still remains something of a "black box". Rich descriptions of workers' lived experience are theorized principally in terms of economic, political and ideological structures that are deemed to 'force' workers to seek compensatory satisfactions — for example, by participating in shopfloor games; motivation for playing shopfloor games is attributed to workers' desire to seek compensation for a denial of their essential subjectivity, experienced as boredom and drudgery. In the following section, it will be suggested that Burawoy's reconstruction of LPT is flawed by a failure to appreciate the double-edged quality of purposiveness: it can be threatening as well as rewarding. The tenuousness of Burrell and Morgan's polarization of 'subjective' and 'objective' paradigms is further illustrated through an examination of the critique of Burawoy's thesis that 'consent' occurs because shopfloor games provide compensation for the denial or degradation of an essential human purposiveness.

Extending the Reconstruction of Labour-Process Analysis

In a number of contributions to the labour-process debate, Knights and his co-authors (e.g. Knights and Willmott 1985, 1989; Knights and Collinson 1985, 1987) have sought to take Burawoy's demand for a reconstruction of LPT a step further by contending that compliant behaviour at work — what Burawoy terms consent — cannot plausibly be reduced to a craving for compensation forced upon individuals by capitalism. Without denying that ideologies fostered by capitalism (e.g. possessive individualism) play a key role in defining and organizing workers' sense of identity and interests, these critics have argued that compliance with routines (e.g. shopfloor games) must also be theorized in terms of the existentially valued role that they can play in securing employees' (socially constructed) sense of identity (Knights 1990; Willmott 1990).

Reinterpreting the Compensation Thesis

To illustrate the Knights et al. thesis, it will be convenient to examine and reinterpret Burawoy's (1979) account of his experience of working at Allied Corporation. When first arriving on the shopfloor, Burawoy reports viewing his fellow workers' games with disdain. Over a period of some weeks, however, he gradually succumbed to their rules, and eventu-

ally became an avid player (ibid: 88). As noted in the previous section, Burawoy's own explanation of this process of acculturation is couched exclusively in terms of the presence of ideological structures that frame workers' lived relationship to the world, coupled with the understanding that the satisfactions of game-playing offered some valued compensations for the boredom and abasement of shopfloor work. However, a close consideration of his account suggests that Burawoy's interest in game-playing was rather more complex:

'I must confess that, at least in my own case, part of my initial contempt was a defence, to cover my inability to make out or to foresee any prospects of ever doing so.' (ibid: 88)

Applying the Knights et al. perspective, this 'confession' indicates that, initially, Burawoy experienced the shopfloor games as a threat to his sense of self-identity — a threat that he sought to neutralize, initially, through negation, in the form of contempt. The threat was parried by defining the games as beneath his dignity. Later, as he realized that a sustained refusal to participate in the games would make him an object of ridicule and vilification, participation in games of 'making out' became a valued vehicle for securing and enhancing his self-esteem — at least in the eyes of his fellow machine minders. As Burawoy (1979: 89) observes of his participation in the games:

'The difference between making out and not making out was thus not measured in the few pennies of bonus we earned but in our *prestige, sense of accomplishment, and pride*' (emphasis added).

According to Knights et al., Burawoy's observations suggest that participation in the games is not simply a means of gaining compensation for the boredom of factory work, although this may well be a valued consequence of identity-securing activity. More importantly, participation in the games provides a valued means of coping with *the problematic quality of self-consciousness* (Knights 1990; Willmott 1990). There is, as Burawoy (1979: 92) persuasively asserts, a critical link between the rationality of individual shopfloor workers and the rationality of the capitalist system. However, it is argued by Knights et al. that the rationality of the individual worker involves a complex process of seeking and securing opportunities for gaining a sense of meaning and identity, and is not plausibly reducible to a desire to gain compensations for the deprivations of (factory) work.¹⁸

The Significance of Indeterminacy

Marginalized within the methodological strategy advocated by Marx (1976), emulated by Braverman (1974), and only partially remedied by Burawoy's reconstruction of LPT, is an appreciation of how human purposiveness is necessarily tied to a sense of insecurity and vulnerability

about self-identity that has direct relevance for this reconstruction. As Bauman (1976: 29, quoting May and Kierkegaard) has commented,

'The experience of free will is by no means an enjoyable feeling. More often than not it is psychologically unbearable in a world posited as a set of chances which may be taken up but can be missed. In such a world, free will is experienced as an "agonizing burden", as "dizziness", which "occurs when freedom looks down into its own possibility".'

There is strong resistance amongst social scientists in general, and labour-process analysts in particular, to take seriously what may be termed the existential dynamics of human activity (Craib 1989; Willmott 1986). Any suggestion that the experience of insecurity and vulnerability has relevance for analyzing the labour process tends to be interpreted — as Burrell and Morgan (1979) might well predict — as an expression of 'bourgeois individualism' or 'subjectivism'; and any inclination to examine such experience more closely is understood to herald a return to the ahistorical and astructural preoccupations of 'bourgeois social science'. However, if, as Thompson (1990: 14) has argued, 'the construction of a full theory of the missing subject is probably the biggest task facing labour-process theory', it is appropriate that a reconstructed labour-process theory takes more adequate account of the significance of the indeterminacy and associated insecurity of human existence *and* the heightening of this experience by the individualizing disciplines of capitalism.

Indeterminacy, Knights et al. argue, is a condition of self-consciousness that facilitates and prompts reflection upon identity (Knights and Willmott 1985; Giddens 1991). In a comparatively closed (e.g. pre-modern) social system, reflection is limited: identity is ascribed by apparently fixed and unchanging authorities — sacred as well as secular. In effect, there is a hegemonic fusion of subject and object as the former is authoritatively defined by its immutable positioning by the latter. In the modern era, in contrast, the immutability of authority is challenged — not only by 'science' but, more immediately, by the mundane expansion of market relations and the distinctively capitalist organization of labour processes: 'all that is solid melts into air' (Marx and Engels 1967: 83). Formally free-labour markets operate to make the 'occupation' of the self an achievement, and thus a potential source of failure, with associated feelings of anxiety, shame and guilt (Sennett and Cobb 1977). As Giddens (1991: 21, original emphasis) has recently remarked,

'the reflexivity of modernity actually undermines the certainty of knowledge. . . . The integral relation between modernity and radical doubt is an issue which, once exposed to view, is not only disturbing to philosophers but is *existentially troubling* to ordinary individuals.'

As social relations become mediated by an historically conditioned awareness of indeterminacy, evidenced in the more or less conscious concern to secure identity through interaction (Knights and Willmott

1983, 1985, 1989), there is an emergent and expanding (and some would say postmodern) consciousness of the constructed, mutable character of both 'object' and 'subject' — a consciousness that animates the existential project of striving to secure the former in the latter. Pressures surrounding the constitution of the person as a marketable commodity foster doubts and fears about symbolic status as well as material value, anxieties that are routinely evaded through further (inevitably self-defeating) efforts to solidify identity. As self-knowledge becomes problematic and precarious, new forms of disciplinary power emerge — such as those inspired by industrial psychology and sociology (Rose 1990) — whose plausibility and seductive force are derived from their capacity to define and organize self-identity (Willmott 1993).

Comprising a variety of knowledges of self, the 'government of individualization', as Foucault (1982: 781) terms it, provides individuals with answers to the question: 'Who am I, and how shall I live and act?'. These technologies of the self are potent precisely because they are felt by individuals to be a 'productive' (not repressive) force — for example, by enabling them/us to deal with existential doubts, even as they simultaneously subjugate us to, and discipline us within, particular regimes of truth¹⁹ (Knights and Willmott 1989; Knights 1990). Describing subjection as a third type of power — the other two being domination (e.g. racism) and exploitation (e.g. capitalism) — Foucault (1982: 781) notes how

'This form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him.'

Drawing upon the work of Foucault, Knights and Willmott (1989) consider how processes of subjection enable individuals to gain knowledge of themselves as subjects: as people who are successful in confirming and reproducing prevailing regimes of truth as they/we strive to secure ourselves in employment, career advancement, life-style management, the maintenance of poise and sanity, sexual prowess, etc.²⁰ There is thus a significant degree of alignment between, on the one hand, individuals' efforts to sustain a secure sense of self-identity or 'normalcy', and, on the other hand, work organizations that provide a more or less supportive medium for engaging this effort — for example, by allowing shopfloor workers to engage in games through which self-identity is (re)constituted and affirmed.²¹ In this way, 'consent' is 'manufactured'. Yet, the very capacity of human beings to reflect critically upon the authority of management control ensures that consent/compliance is rarely, if ever, unqualified or unequivocal. An irremediable agonism, as Foucault (1982: 790) puts it, between power and freedom means that claims about the functionality of control are vulnerable to practical deconstruction (Knights and Vurdubakis 1992), a deconstruction that is facilitated by the volatility of capitalism as it continuously unsettles the routine glossing

of exploitation, domination and subjection within the employment relationship (Hyman 1987; Legge 1989).

Summary

Recent theoretical developments in labour-process analysis have been prompted by the identification of an anomalous treatment of the subjective dimension of class relations within orthodox labour-process theory. These developments have been reviewed to support and illustrate earlier criticism of Burrell and Morgan's thesis that 'subjective' and 'objective' approaches to organizational analysis are mutually exclusive. It has been argued that Burawoy's reconstruction of labour-process theory demonstrates the feasibility of incorporating an appreciation of the presence and importance of the subjective moment of labour without sliding into the mire of bourgeois industrial sociology, where the deprivations of wage labour are represented as an unavoidable feature of human existence that is abstracted from the particular, material conditions of its organization and control. Burawoy's critique of Marxian orthodoxy has been extended by Knights et al. They argue that remedying the anomalous treatment of the subjective dimension of social reproduction necessitates moving beyond its reconstruction as a product of 'political and ideological "structures"' that obscure and secure the appropriation of surplus value (Burawoy 1985: 39). Other forms of domination — for example, of gender and race — must be more fully incorporated into a reconstructed theory of the dynamic organization and control of labour processes. At the same time, conflicts arising from the contradictory generation and allocation of scarce resources must be analyzed as the medium and outcome of existential struggles over self-identity. Rather than striving to correct tendencies toward economic reductionism by augmenting a consideration of 'economic' structures with those that are deemed to be 'political' and 'ideological', Knights et al. have argued that the anomalous formulation and treatment of the subjective and objective dimensions of class in labour-process theory must be addressed by understanding how existential struggles with self-identity are promoted by, and serve to sustain, the contradictory organization and control of the capitalist labour process.

Discussion

The previous sections of the paper have been devoted to illustrating the thesis that the process of theory development is not constrained by the paradigm mentality enshrined in Burrell and Morgan's (1979) dualistic framework. Developments in labour-process theory, at least, suggest that the division between 'subjective' and 'objective' approaches to social science is problematical and anomalous; and therefore can, and should be, addressed and resisted — not treated as an immutable metaphysical

*Community-based tourism development.
The power struggle b/w capital and residents.*

principle that must be accepted and obeyed. Since the coherence of Burrell and Morgan's framework has also been questioned by other commentators, this section compares and contrasts the conceptualization of theory development presented in this paper with other responses to *Paradigms*. As a focal point of reference, it takes the divergent commentaries of (i) Reed (1985), who is critical of the paradigm mentality and seeks to replace it with a 'pluralist' strategy, and (ii) Jackson and Carter (1991) who defend the incommensurability thesis on the grounds that it reflects irreconcilable divisions in social theory and reserves a space for non-functional forms of analysis.

Redirections in Organizational Analysis?

Reed (1985: 205) broadly agrees with the central thesis of this paper when he writes that the paradigm mentality 'severely circumscribes the potential for creative theoretical development'. Rejecting Burrell and Morgan's argument for a strategy of 'isolationism' in which each paradigm is developed independently of the others, Reed identifies three alternatives: *integrationism* (e.g. Pfeffer 1982) which is persuasively dismissed on the grounds that it severely under-estimates the differences between competing approaches and depends upon a belief in an objective position from which to assess and synthesize their respective contributions; *imperialism* (e.g. Clegg and Dunkerley 1980) which is rather less persuasively rejected on the grounds that it claims to offer 'total intellectual unification' (Reed 1985: 208); and, finally, *pluralism*, a strategy championed by Reed, that 'looks for limited theoretical reconciliation where it is feasible' (ibid: 209), but without seeking to encompass all forms of analysis within the grasp of one totalizing approach. Pluralism, Reed writes,

'prefers one-sided accounts which reveal part of the complexity and ambiguity of specific social phenomena . . . the pluralist strategy offers a range of contrasting insights into the characteristic contradictions and tensions embodied in contemporary organizations.' (ibid: 201, emphasis added)

What this means, I suggest, is pretty much 'business as usual' in the sense that all approaches, old and new, can draw comfort and legitimacy from their sense of contributing to the study of one or more aspects of an unspecified number of interrelated features of an wholly indeterminate 'structuring process'.²² Seeking to avoid totalizing forms of analysis in which structural forces are abstracted from their (more or less intentional) reproduction by human agents, Reed universalizes the structures of social action. Described as 'complex', 'diverse', 'subtle' and 'paradoxical' (we are in agreement on this), these structures are oddly devoid of any historically distinctive form.²³ Reed's theory of agency is equally lacking in substance and depth. We are told that agents are 'knowledgeable' and 'engaged in meaningful interaction', but they are peculiarly disembodied; devoid of passion and emotion. There is also

much huffing and puffing about overcoming the polarity of 'structure' and 'action', but with precious little indication of how this is to be done.²⁴

Instead of encouraging efforts in a direction that resists polarization, Reed suggests that the 'most appropriate' way forward is 'theoretical diffusion' in which 'a wide range of theoretical approaches' is understood to examine 'different but interrelated aspects of the structuring process' (ibid: 200). In promoting this strategy, Reed substitutes for the relativism of *Paradigms* a pluralized objectivism that assumes reality to comprise a number of facets or aspects that are revealed by the deployment of diverse forms of analysis. By supporting a plurality of approaches, Reed argues, the diverse aspects of phenomena will be more comprehensively captured. In his most recent book, *The Sociology of Organizations*, this position is reaffirmed when he endorses the work of Gioia and Pitre (1990) who deploy Burrell and Morgan's framework to support their argument that 'the provincialism that comes with paradigm confinement might instead be turned towards the production of more complete views of organizational phenomena via multiparadigm consideration' (ibid: 587–588).

Though avoiding the most crass kind of objectivism — where an authoritative, Scientific Method is deemed to remove bias (Bernstein 1983: 178, note 27) — Reed's pluralist strategy assumes that we have access to 'a real world' that exists 'outside of, and provides some critical purchase on, the discursive formations through which we attempt to understand its complexities and uncertainties' (Reed 1990: 40). Of course, when undertaking analysis, we necessarily refer to a world 'out there' or 'in here'. However, our knowledge of this world is inevitably mediated by power-invested, value-infused languages. To deny this mediation is simply to endorse a more sophisticated (but no less problematical and ahistorical) variety of objectivism. As Jackson and Carter (1991: 125) note, once captivated by the idea that social science can adjudicate between truth and falsehood, it is but a small step to reject paradigm incommensurability 'in favour of a central authoritative science'. Indeed, it seems probable that Reed has already taken this step. For, when commending the pluralist strategy, he appeals to the idea of making 'the rational assessment of conflicting approaches through a process of critical scrutiny and debate' (Reed 1985: 204, emphasis added). Glossed by this rationalistic mentality is the difficulty of separating the 'facts' disclosed by the process of 'rational assessment' from the (plurality of) values that define ir/rationality. While the argument of this paper parallels Reed's attack upon the division of social science into four, mutually exclusive paradigms, it accepts, contra Reed, that there are incommensurabilities between value positions. In the absence of a neutral, universally valued or valid form of reason, 'the rational assessment' of conflicting approaches is beyond our reach.

In addition to these epistemological arguments in defence of pluralism, Reed seeks to justify his argument politically. The pluralist strategy, he

argues, secures 'intellectual freedom and choice' (ibid: 201). Of course, choices cannot be made in the absence of options — options that are supposedly provided by the pluralist strategy. Hence the rejection of integrationism and imperialism. Yet, Reed appears to believe that the existence of options *per se* ensures choice. Certainly, options are necessary, but they are an insufficient condition of choice (cf. Jackson and Willmott 1987), because choice depends upon the capacity to examine critically the basis of choice as well as the range of choice, and to *refuse* all options if none is acceptable.

Reed (1985: 208) seeks to justify his position by referring to Berlin's (1965) essay on Tolstoy's view of history, cited by Bernstein (1983: 228) who argues that we should 'learn to think and act more like the fox than the hedgehog'. This advice is interpreted by Reed as an endorsement of his support for a pluralist strategy that he believes will foster the development of an intellectual community (of organization researchers) committed to 'practical discourse', and therefore will be empowered to repel the recurrent monological threat of the paradigm mentality. However, when appealing to Bernstein's citation of Berlin, Reed overlooks the context in which the citation arises. The possibility of thinking more like a fox is related by Bernstein (1983) to the contemporary situation 'where power creates counter-power (resistance) and reveals the vulnerability of power, where the very forces that undermine and inhibit communal life also create new, and frequently unpredictable, forms of solidarity' (ibid: 228). Whereas Reed commends an objectivist epistemology that assumes the neutrality of reason and disregards the politics of choice, Bernstein (1983) draws our attention to the contemporary crisis in the 'single central vision' (Berlin 1965: 1) of objective scientific reason, and the opportunity that this presents for re-membering the connectedness of reason and ethics. As Bernstein (1983: 85–86) puts it, relating this insight directly to Kuhn's denial of the commensurability of scientific theories, an appreciation of the partiality of all forms of reason is a central tenet of post-empiricist philosophy of science:

'Implicitly or explicitly, many philosophers of science have maintained that the progressive development of science offers overwhelming support for the belief that such commensuration is the basis for distinguishing rationality from irrationality. What Kuhn (and others) have done is to explode the myth that scientific development offers firm and unambiguous evidence for the dogma that there is "a set of rules which tell us how rational agreement can be reached on what would settle the issue on every point where statements seem to conflict". They have not shown that science is *irrational*, but rather that something is fundamentally wrong with the idea that commensurability is the essence of scientific rationality.'

From a post-empiricist perspective, the authoritative sense of closure that the exercise of reason produces (e.g. in Azande witchcraft or in science) is understood to be self-sustaining *and* incomplete, and is therefore vulnerable to deconstruction. We should therefore abandon the comforting fantasy that reason, kept alive by its assessment of contending perspect-

ives, will enable us to 'steer a middle course between structural determinism and cognitive relativism' (Reed 1985: 204). Instead, we should deploy a self-consciously partial sense of reason critically and continuously to identify and struggle with anomalies in received theory and to maintain an awareness of the precariousness of our 'progress' (cf. Pollner 1987, 1991).

The Postmodernism of Resistance?

What, then, of Jackson and Carter's (1991) defence of 'paradigm incommensurability'? How does this compare with the position advanced here? An important common element is our shared scepticism about the coherence of Reed's thesis. More specifically, Jackson and Carter (*ibid*) question his claim that theory development is simply a matter of preserving diversity and steering 'a middle course' between extremes (e.g. between structural determinism and cognitive relativism), as if the obstacles and the destination were already well established (cf. Jackson and Carter 1991: 120–121). Where we differ, of course, is in our assessment of the necessity and value of paradigm incommensurability. To address this difference, I will focus upon the central plank of their defence of incommensurability that rests upon Foster's (1985) distinction between the postmodernism of reaction and the postmodernism of resistance.

Persuasively, in my view, Jackson and Carter link Reed's pluralist strategy to the postmodernism of reaction in which there is a commitment to a broader (less scientific) conception of reason that is intended to counter the (irrational) excesses (e.g. cognitive relativism) unleashed by disenchantment. A paradoxical effect of this 'reactionary' response, Jackson and Carter (1991) argue, is the encouragement of a form of liberal hegemony that shares with modernism a blindness to the power/knowledge relationship — a blindness that is most evident in its faith in the adjudicating force of 'objective' reason. The postmodernism of resistance, in contrast, is committed to maintaining and expanding the gains (in openness) arising from the disillusionment with modernism. Closely associated with a post-empiricist philosophy of science, the postmodernism of resistance denies that a unified conception of reason exists; and therefore questions the claim of the 'reactionary' view that rationality can be distinguished from irrationality. Where Jackson and Carter make a mistake, I believe, is in their identification of the postmodernism of resistance with the defence of paradigm incommensurability; and, relatedly, in their inclination to regard any attack upon the mutual exclusivity thesis as symptomatic of a reactionary weakening of resistance to functionalist assimilation. Paradigm incommensurability, they argue,

'is a concept which has practical historical (emancipatory) value. For, far from being an impediment to the development of genuine human understanding, it serves to protect actual plurality of modes of scientific enquiry from the imperialistic aspirations of an orthodoxy whose interests are rooted in performance and

control, rather than the liberation and emancipation of the individual in society.' (ibid: 110–111)

For Jackson and Carter, organization analysts are faced with a stark alternative: either defend paradigm incommensurability or be assimilated by functionalism. Presumably, they would regard the reconstruction of labour-process theory, discussed earlier, as an example of radical structuralist assimilation (i.e. the insights of the functionalist or interpretive paradigms are assimilated within an essentially unchanged orthodoxy). In contrast, the argument of this paper has been that, in common with other developments in social theory (Willmott 1990a), the reconstruction of labour-process theory places in question the coherence and relevance of Jackson and Carter's defence of paradigm incommensurability.

A Critical Strategy

Nonetheless, Jackson and Carter are right to warn that failure to appreciate important and irreconcilable differences between schools of analysis leaves more radical forms of analysis vulnerable to 'the encroachments of orthodoxy' (ibid: 126). Unfortunately, however, this risk is not averted by re-affirming the implausible dogma of paradigm incommensurability. Ultimately, the success of efforts to counter and reverse the dominance of functionalism depends upon the politics of theory, including the material and symbolic value that is placed upon theory development. In the groves of academe, which in the U.K.-context are very loosely connected to those of management practice (Whitley 1984, 1984a; Watson 1991; Ackroyd 1992) and therefore only indirectly conditioned by its demands, the fate of functionalist scholarship will depend upon the values of those who make appointments, dispense research grants and control access to refereed journals, etc. At this juncture, it is not too difficult to discern how changes in the funding of higher education in the United Kingdom — such as the continuing intensification and casualization of academic labour processes, the introduction of 'customer-centred' quality assurance schemes and the tensions between practitioner acceptability and academic respectability — will affect the work of those who engaged different 'paradigms' or 'methodologies' of knowledge production. Almost certainly, pressures will continue to mount for the production of 'quick and dirty', 'close-to-market' output, both in teaching and research. This should keep functionalism alive and kicking, though it will also provide ammunition for those who question its claims to 'objectivity'.

As pressures mount to make research and scholarship unequivocally cynical and nihilistic, the struggle to develop a more coherent and sustainable alternative to paradigm incommensurability and pluralism becomes more urgent. One possibility, consistent with the argument of this paper, is to foster the understanding that theory development occurs through a struggle to identify and address anomalies within schools of organiza-

tional analysis. Although developments in labour-process theory have been shown to exemplify this process, a similar approach to theory development could be more actively pursued by other schools that espouse a commitment to transgressing the boundaries of their 'normal science'. The process of crossing these boundaries is well described by Belsey (1980: 45–46, emphasis added; cf. Daudi 1990) who uses the term 'ideology' to describe how anomalies are routinely suppressed, but can nonetheless be opened up when an awareness of this suppression is incorporated into analysis:²⁵

'... at any given moment the categories and laws of the symbolic order are full of contradictions, ambiguities and inconsistencies which function as a source of possible change. The role of ideology is to suppress these contradictions... but their presence ensures that it is always possible, with whatever difficulty, to identify them, to recognize ideology for what it is, and to take an active part in transforming it by producing new meanings.'

Inconsistency is no less abundant than it is inescapable. The capacity of signifiers to capture their referents is irremediably incomplete, being accomplished only for the practical purposes in hand (Garfinkel 1967; Pollner 1987). For example, in *Paradigms*, an obvious anomaly is its inability to account for the position from which it is written (Chua 1986; Parker and McHugh 1991). In labour-process theory, we have noted how Burawoy's critique of orthodox analysis identifies the contradictory separation of the objective and subjective dimensions of class relations. However, as Marx's deconstruction of the commonsense meaning of concepts such as 'commodity' and 'labour' reminds us, it is necessary to take account of the material conditions and limits of 'pure' deconstructionism. Inclined towards a forgetfulness of its historical and political auspices,²⁶ 'pure' (i.e. ahistorical) deconstructionism overlooks how the identification of anomalies is often, perhaps always, stimulated and conditioned by processes of political and ideological transformation.²⁷ As argued earlier, the processes of theory development evolve within complexes of power/knowledge relations that facilitate and legitimate particular kinds of truth.²⁸ Theory development is fostered and fuelled when contradictions within social relations — such as those endemic to capitalism or patriarchy — disrupt the taken-for-granted authority of dominant patterns of signification and stimulate the formulation of alternative discourses — such as those of socialism and feminism.

These observations parallel Perry's (1992: 78) plea that organizational analysts should 'be more reflexive'. Specifically, he has argued that our 'knowledge-claims' about organizations are conditioned by 'the particular institutional and organizational arrangements of a discipline [that] shape and order' such claims. From this, it follows that disputes between knowledge claims cannot be resolved empirically — an argument that is also confounded by the idea of competing, autonomous paradigms of research — but neither can the distinguishing features of distinctive schools of analysis be regarded as objectively given. Instead of treating

epistemological positions as manifestations of metaphysical principles, as Burrell and Morgan are inclined to do, Perry invites us to understand them as products of social practice. However, unless we are to take for granted the authority of our own God's-eye view of the institutional contexts of knowledge production, our reflexivity must extend beyond a sociology of knowledge. One possibility, commended by Kuhn and broached in this paper, is to seek out, and wrestle with, anomalies — for example, through a deconstruction of the glosses that suppress contradiction and inconsistency — in a way that is mindful of the historically and politically situated quality of our reasoning. By becoming more practically reflexive about the conditions of theorizing, we move away from an external and seemingly authoritative form of analysis and towards an immanent, self-consciously situated form of critique 'that places at issue the categories in terms of which it initiates critical play' (Gunn 1989: 98).²⁹

Summary and Conclusion

The purpose of this article has been to complement a more penetrating assessment of Burrell and Morgan's mutual exclusivity thesis with an alternative conception of the scope and dynamics of theory development. A return to Kuhn suggested that theory development involves continuity as well as incommensurability between competing approaches as anomalies are identified and addressed. From this perspective, Burrell and Morgan's polarization of subjective and objective dimensions of social science transforms a dualistic tendency in organizational analysis into a metaphysical principle. To the extent that (paradigmatic) closure is deemed to be 'real', the 'truth' of this perception is produced by the play of power relations that suppresses or glosses the precariousness of its accomplishment. To the extent that such glosses are sustained through more or less subtle forms of oppression and inducement, subversive undercurrents of resistance are repeatedly created that unsettle their authority.

To illustrate this argument, developments within labour-process theory (LPT) were reviewed. Braverman reaffirmed a focus upon the objective structure of exploitation as he up-dated Marx's analysis of the movement from formal to real subordination of labour. For critics of orthodox LPT, exclusive attention to objective structures that condition consciousness is anomalous to the practical process of class reproduction. In Burawoy's (1985: 10) words, 'the objectification of work . . . is very much a subjective process'. In turn, Burawoy's effort to address anomalies within the orthodox treatment of human agency has been criticized. His remedy, it has been argued, involves little more than adding a consideration of 'ideological' and 'political' structures to an orthodox analysis of economic structures, so as to better explain 'the manufacture of consent'. In seeking to remove this residue of dualism in Burawoy's analysis, attention was shifted to the interweaving of the historical structuration of consciousness and the existential formation of self-identity.

The writings of Burawoy and Knights et al. have been shown to exemplify resistance to the dualism of subjective and objective approaches to social science — a dualism espoused as a methodological strategy of critique in orthodox LPT and solidified by Burrell and Morgan (1979) into a choice between four mutually exclusive paradigms. An appreciation of the interdependence of the existential formation of self-identity and the historical structuration of consciousness draws attention to the practical indivisibility of the subjective and objective dimensions of social reproduction. However, before *social practice* can *embody* this understanding, there must be a practical transformation of the structures, politico-economic and ideological, that support and sustain the plausibility of dualistic reasoning and its solidification within conceptual frameworks, such as the one that lies at the heart of *Paradigms*.

Notes

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1. The phrase was coined by Hammersley, 1984.

2. As Burrell and Morgan (1979: 397–398) put their argument, ‘Each paradigm needs to be developed in its own terms. In essence, what we are advocating in relation to developments within these paradigms is a form of isolationism. . . . Contrary to the widely held belief that synthesis and mediation between paradigms is what is required, we argue that the real need is for paradigmatic closure.’

3. Although some equivocality can be discerned in *Paradigms* (a point that is developed below in relation to post-empiricism), this is consigned to a footnote where it is noted that ‘some *inter-paradigm* debate is possible’ (Burrell and Morgan 1979: 36, note 2). Hassard (1990: 221) has claimed that this footnote suggests an endorsement of Giddens’ (1976: 144) contention (also discussed below) that ‘all paradigms are mediated by others’. However, a close reading of this footnote suggests that Burrell and Morgan’s emphasis is upon scientists’ awareness of alternative paradigms. That is to say, they recognize that scientists are not unaware of the existence of other paradigms. However, they stress that ‘relations between paradigms are perhaps better described in terms of “disinterested hostility” than “debate”’. We do not have to look far to discover examples of such hostility (e.g. Donaldson 1985; Contributions to the Symposium on *In Defense of Organization Theory*, *Organization Studies*, 1988, 9/1). Empirically, we can find numerous ‘confirmations’ of the paradigm incommensurability thesis. In this sense, *Paradigms* presents a plausible ‘map’ of contemporary social and organization theory. Its fundamental limitation, however, is that, in seeking to give equal legitimacy to ‘functionalist’ and ‘non-functionalist’ paradigms, it transforms an empirical, historical phenomenon into a metaphysical, universal principle.

4. Where Burrell and Morgan can be more fairly criticized is in referring their readers to Kuhn ‘for a full discussion of the role of paradigms in scientific development’ (Burrell and Morgan 1979: 37, note 1) without giving any indication of what *they* understand the role of paradigms to be. The observation that Kuhn himself deployed the term ‘paradigm’ in a variety of more or less (in)consistent ways (Masterman 1970) adds to the difficulty of interpreting what Burrell and Morgan mean by ‘broader’! In the postscript to the second edition of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970), Kuhn seeks to clarify the meaning he intended by distinguishing between (i) its use to describe ‘the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community (Kuhn 1970: 175) and (ii) its description of ‘concrete puzzle-solutions’ that are accepted by particular communities of scientists as exemplars of ‘good’ or ‘normal’ scientific practice. Whilst affirming the relevance and importance of both meanings, he suggests that the former, wider meaning be termed the ‘disciplinary matrix’ whereas the latter be called an ‘exemplar’ (ibid: 182–187). Given the breadth of the former conception of paradigm, it is even more difficult to understand the claim to have broadened it. As Jackson and Carter (1991)

incisively observe, Burrell and Morgan's usage of the term 'paradigm' was not so much 'broader' as almost completely different. Whereas Kuhnian paradigms are diachronic and convergent, Burrell and Morgan's paradigms are synchronic and divergent.

5. It is wholly misleading to suggest, as Donaldson (1985: 39) does, that Kuhn believes or implies that, in the long run, the truth will triumph. For Kuhn, 'the road to truth', as Donaldson puts it, is not simply 'an uneven one in the short run'. Rather, Kuhn questions whether there is *one* road and, if there is, indicates that his theory highlights its discontinuity. Certainly, Kuhn believes that later scientific theories are better at 'solving puzzles' than earlier ones and, *in this limited sense*, can plausibly be viewed as progress. However, he makes a very clear distinction between his belief in this kind of progress and any suggestion that the values which construe improvements in particular forms of progress can be equated with the values that identify truth. The very idea of incommensurability leads him to write that 'the notion of a match between the ontology of a theory and its "real" counterpart in nature now seems to me illusive in principle' (Kuhn 1970: 206). Moreover, according to Kuhn, conflicts between paradigms do not become 'mutually resolved', as Donaldson (1985: 39) claims but, rather, are merely superseded.

6. An (unintended) consequence of this division has been a de-coupling of scientific activity from a concern with the practical, moral issues of human well-being and emancipation (Habermas 1972). A commitment to challenge dogma is transformed into the dogma of scientism (Habermas 1974).

7. In contrast, the political dimension of natural science is obscured by the myth that its pursuit of the 'truth' is of little or no moral relevance or significance. A more or less intended contribution of Kuhn's work has been to challenge this myth by identifying the central importance of 'the value system which the scientific group deploys in periods of crisis and indecision' (Kuhn 1970: 209). It is not entirely fatuous to suggest that 'science' is currently entering a period of crisis, as doubts about its epistemological foundations are accompanied by growing scepticism about its contribution to a rapidly degrading environment and an increasingly technocratic civilization. Post-empiricist philosophy of science, including Kuhn's work, enables us to contemplate the possibility of a shift in the value system of scientists which facilitates more open recognition and debate of currently concealed or dissembled moral-political commitments, thereby permitting what Segerstrale (1989) has termed a re-colonization of science by the life-world. As Bernstein (1983: 84) has argued, it is 'the dogma of empiricism that Kuhn is challenging in his appeal to incommensurability'.

8. That said, it is also necessary to emphasize the danger of equating the general process of social scientific development with the replacement of *one* dominant paradigm by *one* other paradigm. In the natural sciences, this has resulted in the systematic devaluation and suppression of other sets of discourses and practices — such as alchemy and sorcery — for knowing nature. In the social sciences, there is a similar danger, as Burrell and Morgan rightly stress, of domination by one paradigm of enquiry. The argument of the paper is that theory development is also unnecessarily restricted by the assumption of incommensurability.

9. 'Radical' schools of organizational analysis include Critical Theory (e.g. Benson 1977; Jermier 1981; Alvesson 1985; Steffy and Grimes 1986) and 'radical' readings of Weber (e.g. Mouzelis 1975; Salaman 1978; McNeil 1978). However, it is labour-process theory, rooted in the later writings of Marx, that has probably had the widest influence, mainly because of its dissemination in major textbooks (e.g. Clegg and Dunkerley 1980; Thompson and McHugh 1990) and edited collections (e.g. Wood 1982; Knights et al. 1985; Knights and Willmott 1986, 1986a, 1988, 1990; Smith et al. 1991). This influence is not restricted to articles in specialist journals (e.g. Hyman 1987; Coombs et al. 1991) or edited collections (Wood 1982; Knights and Willmott 1985) but extends to articles and books specifically targeted at management academics and practitioners (e.g. Storey 1985; Boot et al. 1988).

10. It is worth stressing that by the historical specificity of work organization, Marx does not mean the variety of national or corporate cultural forms through which capitalism has found a mode of expression (Clegg 1990) — variations which have become a strong focus of interest in organization and management studies in recent years (Pascale and Athos 1981; McMillan 1985; Ouchi 1981). Rather, Marx's concern is to reveal the *dominant structure of social relations* which is shared by culturally diverse, but progressively homogenized, forms of work organization. The focus upon the underlying structure of production relations signals a development in Marx's thinking from his early work, where his critique of capitalism is centred upon an analysis of the expression and estrangement of 'species

being' (Marx 1975). That is to say, he moves from a critique that anticipates emancipatory energy arising from the alienation of universal species consciousness to a form of critique that concentrates upon the particular, historical structures that simultaneously foster 'commodity fetishism' and the contradictory pressures that stimulate its revolutionary removal. In his later work, it is the contradictory organization of historical 'structures' (in the form of antagonistic class relations and associated interests) that become the focus of analysis. For it is these, and not the alienation of species-being *per se*, that are now identified as the key to grasping the dynamics of emancipatory change (Willmott 1990).

11. The contents of worker consciousness, as revealed in attitude surveys, interviews and the like are deemed to be 'false' in the sense that the positioning and conditioning of consciousness within the class structure constrains its freedom and power to reflect critically upon its historical formation. As a consequence, it is vulnerable to, and constituted by, the blandishments of bourgeois ideology — such as the idea that each person is equal and can 'better' themselves through their individual efforts.

12. Here there is a close affinity between the philosophical realism of Marx and the radically reflexive nominalism favoured by phenomenology and ethnomethodology (e.g. Garfinkel 1967; Pollner 1987, 191; cf. Mehan and Wood 1974). However, whereas ethnomethodologists interpret the accomplishment of a sense of social order as a *universal* problem of 'indexicality', Marx understands the practical achievement of such 'closure' as a medium and outcome of an *historical* process of class struggle. From a 'realist' perspective, the closure of meaning is not arbitrary. Rather, meaning is a manifestation of the material conditions of its production. Precisely because of this connection between 'phenomenal forms' and 'underlying structures', the former is understood to present a means of accessing the latter.

13. Marxian critique does not simply negate the descriptive adequacy of conventional concepts but, more positively, regards them as points of access to the structures that condition their meaning, because commonsense reasoning is also understood to be symptomatic of the operation of an underlying structuring of relations that enables these meanings and practices to be articulated and taken for granted. By grasping the symptomatic character of commonsense understandings, what is abstract — namely, the material structures that support the world-taken-for-granted — can be disclosed by means of a critique of the phenomenal forms through which the structures are practically reproduced (see Marx 1973: 100 *et seq.*). At the heart of labour-process analysis is a critique of the bourgeois belief that the contract between the buyer and seller of labour power is made between free and equal persons. It is an argument dramatically made by Marx (1976) when he invites us to shift our attention from the sphere of circulation where commodities appear to be 'freely' exchanged, to the sphere of production where the subordination of wage labour ensures the systematic appropriation of surplus value from its productive efforts.

14. Here Braverman echoes Marx (1976: 1054), who describes the real subsumption of labour within the factory in the following terms: 'Though the workshop is to a degree the product of the workers' combination, its entire intelligence and will seem to be incorporated in the capitalist and his understrappers, and the workers find themselves confronted by the *functions* of the capital that lives in the capitalist. The social forms of their own labour — both subjectively and objectively — or, in other words, the forms of *their own* social labour, are utterly independent of the individual workers.'

15. So strong was the attachment of shopfloor workers to the playing of games at Allied that they actively supported managers in the use of coercive powers to punish workers whose behaviour posed a threat to the games' continuation.

16. As noted earlier, this methodological strategy is explicitly recognized in the preface of *Capital* where Marx declares (or perhaps warns) that 'individuals are dealt with here only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, the bearers of particular class relations and interests' (Marx 1976: 92).

17. For example, the capitalist cannot escape his/her position as an exploiter of labour, however much effort s/he makes to provide excellent conditions, support charitable causes, etc.

18. It is worth noting that Burawoy (1991) is unequivocally dismissive of theory that seeks to incorporate an appreciation of other sources of oppression within a 'post-Marxian' framework. In his view, 'it replaces the primacy of economic exploitation with multifarious forms of domination . . . it makes a fetish of opposition to all heuristics, and therefore has neither a means of selecting anomalies from history nor a mechanism for absorbing them' (ibid: 790). I consider this position to be unduly defensive and inflexible since it exaggerates the extent to which a reduced dependence upon an economo-centric heuristic constitutes a

dilution of heuristics rather than a refinement and enrichment of a deficient heuristics (Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 1987). Critical of other (e.g. analytical) Marxisms for their scientism, Burawoy's commitment to an 'engaged' Marxism seems to blind him to the limitations of his favoured standpoint. His hostility to a mode of theorizing that would enable him to remedy basic deficiencies of his standpoint, such as its gender-blindness (cf. Knights and Collinson 1985), is indeed perverse, given his understanding that 'the solution and generation of anomalies' defines the Marxian research programme (Burawoy 1991: 69).

19. As Foucault (1980: 98) puts it, individuals 'are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application.'

20. In a flash of insight that betrays an appreciation of the interdependency of the objective and subjective dimensions of class that is so conspicuously absent in Bravermanian LPT, Marx (1976: 1031) notes how the market discipline of capitalism constitutes self-disciplined, responsible subjects. Alternatively, as he puts it, 'the consciousness (of better: the *idea*) of free self-determination, of liberty, makes a much better worker of the one (i.e. the "free worker") than of the other (i.e. the slave), as does the related feeling (sense) of *responsibility*' (ibid: 1031). Processes of subjugation are perhaps most transparent in the discourse and practice of 'strengthening' corporate cultures (Barnard 1938; Selznick 1957; Peters and Waterman 1982; Deal and Kennedy 1982) and in the introduction of programmes, such as TQM, that involve workers in monitoring quality and mutual surveillance (Sewell and Wilkinson 1991). In principle, these regimes encourage employees to understand themselves as a valued 'human resource' that is capable of acquiring and/or confirming a 'productive' sense of self-identity by acting as a conduit for the core values of the organization (Willmott 1993).

21. This interpretation complements rather than displaces 'structural' forms of explanation that would, for example, explain the development of games in terms of the economic value of developing a competitive, 'macho' culture that restricts competition for jobs from other segments of the labour force (e.g. women). Workers' reproduction of this culture, and their resistance to its erosion, should be understood in terms of their identification with the values of masculinity as well as their material interest in safeguarding employment.

22. For an example of this, see Hassard (1991). His approach is critically assessed by Parker and McHugh (1991).

23. The works of Burns (1977), Crozier (1964), Gouldner (1954) and Child (1972) are identified as 'prime exponents of the pluralist strategy' (Reed 1985: 204).

24. See in particular Reed (1985, chaps. 4, 5) which may be compared with Knights and Willmott (1985, 1989).

25. In this paper, this argument has been illustrated through critiques of Braverman and Burawoy. Unless it be thought that their work is unusual or has been selected simply to confirm a thesis rather than to illustrate it, the same analysis can be applied to Burrell and Morgan's text. When reflecting upon the writing of *Paradigms*, they note that it arose 'as a result of certain nagging doubts and uncertainties about the utility and validity of much contemporary theory and research in our subject' (Burrell and Morgan 1979: xi). In other words, the writing of *Paradigms* was stimulated by a perceived inconsistency between the claims of organizational analysis and what it delivers. Sensing a failure in much organization analysis to live up to its own standards, let alone the standards of social science, Burrell and Morgan were inspired 'to examine the assumptions upon which it is based with a view to seeing it in a new, and hopefully refreshing, light' (ibid).

26. This is also a weakness of postMarxism (e.g. Laclau and Mouffe 1985) insofar as it is unreflexive about the conditions of its own plausibility. In *this* respect, I have some sympathy with Burawoy's (1991: 790) view that postMarxism 'tends to make a fetish of opposition to all heuristics', though not with his reactionary argument that Marxism's 'distinctive theoretical autonomy' must be preserved (see also note 17).

27. A similar limitation is evident in realist epistemologists who claim to disclose the essences/structures that underlie appearances, because they tend to overlook the particular conditions and assumptions that inform and support the plausibility of such claims. There is, then, a danger of realism endorsing scientism and authoritarianism (Gunn 1989).

28. For example, the appearance and influence of *Paradigms* in the United Kingdom coincided, *inter alia*, with the appointment of social scientists within business schools and management. An unintended consequence of this development, assisted by material impediments and peer resistance to recruiting 'practitioners', has been a market for texts that legitimize the teaching and research of organization as a *fully social* object, and thus as an

object of *social* theory. Similarly, the growth and development of labour-process analysis in the United Kingdom during the 1980s was not unrelated to its relevance for interpreting changes in the organization and control of production processes.

29. A commitment to practical reflexivity distinguishes this strategy from the project of critical/transcendental realism advocated by Bhaskar (1986, 1989). Although an attention to the internal relation of theory and practice is included within the purview of realism, it is not incorporated into its self-understanding or into its formulation of the relationship between the transitive and intransitive realms. As a consequence, there is an anomaly between its advocacy of continuous auto-critique and the view that 'for emancipation to be possible *knowable emergent laws must operate*. Such laws, which will of course be consistent with physical laws, will be set in the context of explanatory theories elucidating the structures of cognitive and non-cognitive oppression and the possibility of their transformation' (Bhaskar 1989: 114, emphasis in original).

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