

## Power and Postmodernity: Reflections on the Pleasure Dome

by: Richard Marsden and Barbara Townley

### **Introduction**

There is an implicit tension at the heart of this commission to contribute an article to the inaugural issue of the Electronic Journal of Radical Organization Theory (EJROT). An electronic journal on a World Wide Web site is made possible by the revolution in information technology that has transformed the experience of space and time which is widely thought to have ushered in postmodernity. Radical organization theory, on the other hand, is a creation of the 1970s and is a modernist phenomenon, in large part, because it is rooted in Marx. The widespread, albeit contested, belief that Marxism is 'wrong and, thankfully, dead' (Buss 1993) is regarded by many as the most fundamental difference between modernity and postmodernity.(1) To crystallize the issue: 'electronic journal' points to the future, to fin de siècle postmodernity, 'radical organization theory' points to the past, to the modernity that emerged out of the nineteenth century. The juxtaposition of postmodernity and radical organization theory poses the question of the ability of the last to explain the first. This is the focus of our article. We begin with some observations on what we take to be an allegory of the postmodern condition -- the world's largest shopping mall and leisure centre -- and use this to focus discussion on the changing organization of time and space within the sphere of circulation. We then assess radical organization theory's capacity to explain these developments by reviewing its intellectual roots in the radical concept of power and traditional Marxism, noting the criticisms it has sustained. To help transcend some problems of radical organization theory we present a relational concept of power and a novel reading of Marx. We argue that the condition of postmodernity bears many similarities to the problem with which he began in the 1840s and suggest that, far from marking the death of Marx, postmodernity cannot be understood without his concept of capital.

### **The Postmodern Condition: An Allegory**

The city in which we live contains the largest shopping mall and indoor leisure centre in the world, West Edmonton Mall. It comprises around 800 stores, a seven-acre Waterpark, with year-round tropical climate and fauna, a 15 acre amusement park, with 25 of the most technologically-advanced rides, a 2.5 acre indoor lake equipped with four 'seaworthy' submarines,(2) where dolphins play and perform, a 360 room Fantasyland Hotel, containing 'themed' rooms, a National Hockey League size ice arena, a Casino, 19 movie theatres and an 18 hole miniature golf course. All this is arranged along a 2 mile long, 2 level concourse, covering the equivalent of 48 city blocks, with 58 entrances and parking space for 20,000 vehicles. With 11 major department stores, over 150 restaurants, 55 shoe shops and 35 jewelry stores, it is a place where almost every conceivable good and service can be bought. You can eat, walk and shop all day here without running out of choice. Truly, it is 'one of the definitive shopping events of our age' (Shields 1989: 159). We shall use it as a focus for examining the condition of postmodernity: a transformation of the organization of time and space caused by a marked increase in the turnover time of capital, materialized via design and architecture and refracted in cultural forms (Harvey 1989, Jameson 1991).

The Mall contains a collage of simulacra that disturb conventional understanding of time and space. Wander along its labyrinthine layout and you will come across replica of a nineteenth century Parisian street (Europa boulevard) and New Orleans' Bourbon Street, where people sit out in 'open air' restaurants under artificial stars. Stroll to the end of the boulevard and look out over the lagoon in which stands an exact replica of the Santa Maria. Nearby stands Fantasy Hotel and its themed rooms, African, Arabian, Bridal, Hollywood, Igloo, Polynesian, Roman, Truck and Victorian, each of which 'promise to fulfill your quest for the ultimate in travel adventure'. To enjoy a fantasy about the North, sleep in an Igloo 'surrounded by the tundra, your dogs awaiting their next journey'. Or travel to the Pacific in the Polynesian room, rest before the 'waterfall emptying into a rock pool' before setting off on 'a warrior catamaran under full sail'. If time-travel is your desire, be swept away to the time of

Anthony and Cleopatra and sleep on 'a round velvet covered bed with silk draperies' surrounded by 'white marble statues ... and an authentic Roman bath'. In the Coach room 'your very own' home-drawn coach 'will transport you back to the 1880s'. Next to the Fantasyland Hotel is Waterworld where you can enjoy the only permanent indoor bungee jumping site in the world, body surf artificial waves, lie out on make-believe sand beneath an imaginary sun and luxuriate in tropical heat and humidity. And people do. Millions of shopper-tourists come to Edmonton specifically to visit the Mall. It regards itself as a tourist destination, a paradise to shoppers around the world, and indeed it draws more visitors than the nearby Rocky mountains and is reported to pump over one billion dollars a year into the Alberta economy.

The simulacra of West Edmonton Mall are offered not to stimulate local shoppers to visit more exotic destinations but to dissuade them of the necessity of doing so and to seduce distant shopper-tourists with experiences of the world under one roof. These reproductions do not envy their originals, they aim to supplant them: 'We are giving you the reproduction so you will no longer feel any need for the original' (Eco, cited in Shields 1989: 153). In the words of one of the owners of West Edmonton Mall: 'Now people in this area never need go to New York or Paris or Miami. They can come here' (Nader Ghermazian, cited in Shields 1989: 150). Indeed, in a sense, the copies are superior to the real thing for they are free of the unpredictable, troublesome and sometimes dangerous mixture of the social and the natural which help define human experiences as real. There are no beggars on the Bourbon Street of West Edmonton Mall, it is never too hot or too cold and it never, ever, rains or snows. The effect of this collage of simulacra of places remote in space and time -- a Parisian boulevard here, a Spanish galleon there -- is to create a 'spatiotemporal haze' (Shields 1989: 152).

The external appearance of West Edmonton Mall is redolent of Coleridge's 'pleasure dome', a figment of his opium-induced visionary epic poem about the Kubla Khan, written in 1797- 98, the first stanza of which is:

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure-dome decree:  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man  
Down to a sunless sea.  
So twice five miles of fertile ground  
With walls and towers were girdled round:  
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,  
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;  
And here were forests ancient as the hills,  
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.(3)

Wealthy eccentrics have always created private pleasure domes. The Xanadu of Orson Welles's 'Citizen Kane' is modelled on William Randolph Hearst's San Simeon mansion which was a repository of objects from around the world. West Edmonton Mall is a pleasure dome for the public, a fantasy world constructed of simulacra and offered for mass consumption. Millions of shopper-tourists come for gratification, enjoyment, indulgence and play; to escape, forget and lose themselves. Amid all this falsehood it is the pleasure that is real and the disturbing of spatial and temporal coordinates, which confuse our sense of who and where we are, is a precondition of entering this collective fantasy. The Mall is practically windowless. There is little way of knowing whether it is night or day, the day of the week, the season or even what country you are in. The effect 'is like living in a painting by Magritte where reality and representation merge, or like one of the impossible worlds of Escher' (Shields 1989: 154). In this fashion, the fantastic representations within West Edmonton Mall acquire a reality of their own, a hyper-reality.(4)

Hyper-realities express a transformation in the experience of time and space and are an integral part of the postmodern condition. This article about postmodernity is itself a hyper-text, existing everywhere and nowhere, readable simultaneously by individuals remote in time and space who can communicate

with each other instantly but most of whom will never meet.(5) Postmodernity is a world in which everything can be simulated and in which the copy is increasingly preferred to the original. Hyper-realities are found in malls, restaurants, hotels, theme parks; in self-contained fictional cities such as Disneyland, in California, Tokyo and Paris, and Disney World, in Florida; and in real cities such as Los Angeles and Miami. All are facades woven out of collective fantasy. The original for these, of course, is Disneyland, built in the mid-1960s, with its replica of Main Street, U.S.A. What is interesting about Disneyland is that it is modelled not on a real American town but on its depiction in the Disney movies, especially those peopled by real actors grafted onto imaginary landscapes which tell the story of the American Dream. Disneyland expresses what is, by now, a familiar theme: the fiction is made into a movie which is made into reality.

Within hyper-reality, fact and fiction, past and present, intermingle. The simulacra of Fantasyland Hotel do not copy the reality of Cleopatra's Egypt or Queen Victoria's England but their depiction in movies and TV dramas, in this case, Burton and Taylor's 'Cleopatra' and the Public Broadcasting Service's 'Sherlock Holmes'. Fact and fiction, past and present, come together nicely in the Mall's 'Sherlock Holmes' pub -- a 'real' English pub (complete with table service). It is how North Americans imagine an English pub. Of course, most pubs in England, a country fast becoming a vast theme park of its own history, long since ceased to be authentic. But, no matter, the intent of the simulacra is that you forget what they are substituting for. It is like being on a set of a film about reality and here anything can be simulated, even sincerity. Consider the typical service encounter in which the salesperson adheres to a script, smiling on cue and giving rehearsed answers to customer inquiries. It is the sincerity of a *performance*. But, as Brown (1995) points out, hyper-realities can be more sincere in their inauthenticity than the real thing. West Edmonton Mall is located in a city that is a patchwork of anonymous designer landscapes, replete with artificial lakes and parks, in which every tree and flower is planted, neighborhoods doing their best to look like what we think real communities ought to look like. Further afield, what are thought to be genuine historical sites often lack authenticity. Santa Barbara, for example, is built in colonial Spanish style, but these quaint red tiled homes were built after the earthquake in the 1930s. Ironically, given the Mall's replica of a New Orleans street, the restorers of that cities' historic Vieux Carre 'were not averse to replacing dilapidated wrought iron balustrades with plastic versions of the same, leading Relph to describe it as a "Creole Disneyland"' (Brown 1995: 186). Just as sincerity can be simulated, so authenticity can be manufactured. This loosening of time and space moorings creates an insatiable desire for the real -- most basically, for real bread, butter and beer -- and, nearly always, the real is assumed to reside in the past. Hence the plundering of the past by marketers and the design and manufacture of 'retro-products' which combine nostalgic styling with the latest technology (Brown 1995: 118). In Fantasyland Hotel, witness the 'authentic trucks that have been remodelled into truly unique beds' and the 'antique gas pumps' as decor in the Truck room and the 'authentic Roman bath' in the Roman room.

Above all, the Mall is a market for commodities, a place where buyers and sellers meet. Traditionally, of course, markets occupied a definite place (often in front of churches) and occurred at particular times (on 'market' days) and gave rhythm to the flux of daily life (Zukin 1991). West Edmonton Mall, however, is not a replica of a traditional, medieval market; it is a model of how public spaces are privatized, internalized and organized on the principles of Betham's panopticon. Former shop-lined streets, full of the rough and tumble of public life, become aisles of department stores and concourses of malls, full of docile people who must always look as if they have bought something or are about to buy, whose every move and transaction is monitored (Shields 1989: 160). Accompanying this privatization of public spaces is a subtle shift away from human rights and freedoms and towards the rights of private property -- try picketing in a mall. In this fashion, these much frequented, privately owned and controlled social spaces where commodities are bought and sold come to resemble the places where they are produced.

It is tempting to laugh off all this as an amusing curiosity, but shopping malls are the most frequented urban social spaces in North America. They now play a pivotal position in the lives of several hundred million consumers and are a new focus of communities (Shields 1989: 149). There are a diminishing number of truly public urban social spaces and we are left with only islands of privatized social spaces

between which one travels in one's own portable private space, an automobile. It is for this reason, as Bill Bryson recounts, going for a walk in urban America is a 'ridiculous and impossible undertaking' :

*I had to cross parking lots and gas station forecourts, and I kept coming up against little white-painted walls marking the boundaries between, say, Long John Silver's Seafood Shoppe and Kentucky Fried Chicken. To get from one to the other, it was necessary to clamber over the wall, scramble up a grassy embankment and pick your way through a thicket of parked cars. That is, if you were on foot. But clearly from the looks people gave me as I lumbered breathlessly over the embankment, no one had ever tried to go from one of these places to another under his own motive power. What you were supposed to do was get in your car, drive twelve feet down the street to another parking lot, park the car and get out (Bryson 1989: 46- 7).*

Nor can malls be dismissed as a North American phenomenon. This product of urban planning is one of North America's most popular exports. Malls are a postmodern phenomenon and, if they have not yet arrived, they are coming to a neighborhood near you.

Step outside West Edmonton Mall and look back. You will see a non-descript building resembling a futuristic aircraft hangar, set among anonymous suburban housing in one of the most northerly cities of North America located amid rolling parkland: to the west, the Rocky Mountains and their foothills; to the east, the monotony of the Prairies stretching to Ontario; to the north the tundra and the Arctic; to the south, the rangeland of Montana and the rest of the United States. Sweeping across this land is the counterpart within production to the hyper-reality of the postmodern market -- the use of information technology to dynamite the foundations of modern organizations by 'reengineering' business processes. As Harvey puts it, it is now possible for a large multinational corporation ... to operate plants with simultaneous decision-making with respect to financial, market, input costs, quality control, and labour process conditions in more than fifty different locations across the globe' (Harvey 1989: 293). Reengineering meshes with total quality management, post-Fordism and the 'new' industrial relations: the introduction of flexibility within the production process and the labour market, and the inculcation of a new individualism which threatens to undermine the collectivism of trade unionism. The ultimate reengineered organization is the virtual workplace: it has no office, just a Web site, e-mail address and voice mail system; it has no employees, just independent contractors. As an organization, it is lean, flat and flexible. If the taste of the market changes the business can vanish completely and reappear later with a new name and a new look.(6)

It is important to note the connection between postmodernity and reengineering for it reveals the transformed relationship between the circulation of commodities and their production. Reengineering is necessary, we are told, only because 'suddenly the world is a different place' (Hammer and Champy 1993: 17). Reengineering is the culmination of a trend towards rebuilding organizations on the customer's behalf; it is the expression within production of postmodern marketing (Hammer and Stanton 1995; Drucker 1993; Brown 1995). The focus of Hammer and Champy's 'Manifesto for Business Revolution' is not the relationship between employer and employee but that between buyer and seller. Reengineering is built on the belief that the globalization and fragmentation of markets has shifted the balance of power away from producers and towards customers who demand high quality products, at fair prices and excellent service (Hammer and Champy 1993).

Finally, what of postmodernism, that is, the genre of literature devoted to this new historical condition, much criticized for its relativism, nihilism and obscurantism? There is little point in repeating these criticisms here.(7) But two points need making. First, much of this literature examines what are essentially marketing phenomena: advertising, design, new product development, the experience of consumption and, of course, shopping and entertainment malls (Brown 1995). Second, as cartographers of the changing contours of the culture of the market, postmodernists map the loosened moorings between words and their referents, the disturbed syntax and grammar of things, caused by their reorganization in time and space. While we might want to retain the idea that obscurantism has been elevated by some postmodernists into a rhetorical strategy ('reality is difficult to understand,

therefore, so too is my writing'), the possibility remains that postmodernity abounds in paradox, illusion and double meaning. Like the drawings of Escher, hyper-realities (such as West Edmonton Mall) are visual *non sequiturs* which present us with an intellectual challenge.

Is radical organization theory up to it?

### **Radical Organization Theory**

Radical organization theory is a body of knowledge organized around the theoretical object 'control of the labour process'. Before elaborating what it is; how and why did radical organization theory develop? It is the product of several intellectual developments of the 1970s, in particular, the interrelated critiques of the pluralist concept of power and empiricist epistemology, interest in the 'labour process' and a renaissance of Marxist scholarship. Pluralism is based on an empiricist epistemology: the actual or threatened use of observable sanctions is regarded as an experimental test of power. The critique of empiricism widened the scope of enquiry into power beyond the actual or threatened use of observable sanctions to latent, unobservable conflict and to the shaping of preferences and perceptions contrary to people's interests (Marsden 1982). These complementary critiques were condensed in Lukes's 'radical' concept of power: 'A exercises power over B when A effects B in a manner contrary to B's interests' (Lukes 1974: 34). The notion of 'real' or 'objective' interests, the innovation of the radical concept of power, shifted attention to moral and political judgements of what these interests are, to what people 'would want and prefer, were they able to make the choice' (Lukes 1974: 34; Marsden 1993).

While there is no necessary connection between the radical concept of power and Marxism, there is a strong contingent one. The radical concept of power was read in the context of what is commonly referred to as 'traditional' Marxism, i.e., interpretations of Marx based on the base-superstructure metaphor made famous by what is normally regarded as the definitive summary of historical materialism, the 1859 Preface (Marx 1859a). Marxian analysis focused on the workplace, construed the real interests of employers and employees as conflicting and imputed to employers the motive to control the behaviour and performance of employees and imputed a corresponding motive for employees to resist this control. According to this view, one's real interests correspond to one's objective class position in the economic base, but one's subjective perception of those interests is typically obscured by an ideological superstructure. It is for this reason that the radical concept of power, false consciousness and ideology tend to go hand-in-hand. In this fashion, Marxism became the measure of real interests, its moral absolutism settling the relativism at the heart of Lukes's radical concept of power. These developments coincided with publication of Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (1974) which drew attention to Marx's analysis of the 'labour process' in volume one of *Capital*.

Such was the strength of association between 'control' and 'labour process' that 'control of the labour process' became construed as the *modus vivendi* of the organization of work for a generation of radical academics and became the 'theoretical object' of radical organization theory (Marsden and Townley forthcoming).

This constellation of forces was used to critique positivist, functionalist organization studies, principally by Stewart Clegg and his various collaborators (Clegg 1975, 1977, 1979, 1981, Clegg and Dunkerley 1977), culminating in what could be regarded as the handbook of radical organization theory, *Organization, Class and Control* (Clegg and Dunkerley 1980), a book which advocated the 'political economy of organizations'. This was complemented by Burrell and Morgan's *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis* (1979), which created the conditions for intellectual diversity by relating organization studies to four paradigms about the nature of social science and the nature of society. 'Functionalist organization theory', 'Interpretative Theories of Organization', 'Anti-organization theory' were contrasted with 'radical organization theory', an approach which was developed in Burrell's article of that name published the following year (Burrell 1980). The organon of control worked its way through industrial relations, industrial sociology and labour history, even

touching accounting and management studies, blurring their disciplinary boundaries and creating common ground among them. In this fashion, 'control of the labour process' became, and probably remains, the touchstone of the academic left.(8)

The key question: to what extent is radical organization theory able to explain the condition of postmodernity, characterized as it is by a transformation in the experience of space and time and the supremacy of consumer sovereignty and postmodern marketing? This question raises a host of issues the exploration of which could usefully employ future contributors to EJROT.

A start is to acknowledge the severe criticisms to which 'control of the labour process' is subject. It neglects human subjectivity and agency (Cohen 1987; Storey 1985 and 1989; Knights and Willmott 1990), lacks an adequate vocabulary for dealing with ideology (Bray and Littler 1988; Littler and Salaman 1982), and cannot relate the internal work organization to its external environment, particularly the State (Littler and Salaman 1982; Edwards 1986; Bray and Littler 1988). To these criticisms one can add the observation that the radical formulation of power, in terms of control versus resistance, is regularly confounded by empirical evidence, which consistently shows that managers are seldom interested in control *per se* and that workers are often complicit in the practices radical analysis suggests they should be resisting (Burawoy 1977; Cressey and MacInnes 1980; Edwards 1986). It is not control versus resistance that is the defining characteristic of workplace relations but their dual-sided nature, i.e., the coexistence of creation and alienation, empowerment and repression, cooperation and resistance (Townley forthcoming). Without assessing the veracity of these criticisms, and their counter-arguments, there does seem to be a consensus that 'control of the labour process' long ago reached the limit of its possibilities and, perhaps most fundamentally, it is no longer thought to be an adequate theoretical object. Burawoy sums up the situation:

If there is a single concept that has served to generate ahistorical accounts of organizations and to mystify their operation, it is the concept of control. *By virtue of its use as a general concept -- and by incorporating an imprecision as to whom or what is being controlled, for what ends, how, and by whom -- modern social science has successfully obfuscated the working of capitalism* (Burawoy 1985: 26, our emphasis).

Burawoy acknowledges that the limitations of control are rooted in Marxism and its bifurcation of society into an objective economic base and a subjective ideological superstructure. To these 'internal' criticisms of 'control', then, one should add Foucault's criticisms of Marxism's tendency to be preoccupied with defining class at the expense of understanding the nature of the struggle, to focus on the 'head' or ideology and to neglect the rest of the body, and to deduce an understanding of power from a motive ('why') rather than from empirical investigation ('how'). 'The way power was exercised - - concretely and in detail -- with its specificity, its techniques and tactics, was something that no one attempted to ascertain' (Foucault 1980: 115-16). Foucault's critique, combined with the revolts in Eastern Europe during 1989 and the subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union, did much to contribute to the crumbling intellectual credibility of Marxism (Remnick 1994).

The roots of 'control of the labour process' in Marxism are important to note when assessing radical organization theory's capacity to explain postmodernity, for the pervasive belief that Marx was wrong and socialism does not work is often taken to mark the end of modernity.(9) As Drucker puts it: 'Only with the collapse of Marxism as an ideology and of Communism as a system ... did it become completely clear that we have already moved into a new and different society' (Drucker 1993: 7). It is unnecessary to agree with this assessment to appreciate its salience, for it is Drucker's advocacy of customer-driven management that is behind the current attempt to blast the foundations of modern organizations by reengineering business processes. Consumer sovereignty and postmodern marketing is the driving force behind the present manifesto for business revolution, overhauling both public and private sectors and 'rapidly colonising the erstwhile command economies of Eastern Europe where the market is supplanting Marxism as the societal touchstone' (Brown 1995: 42; Peck and Richardson 1991; Yakovlev 1993).

In the face of these intellectual and practical developments, there seem to be two poles of reaction among radicals.

First, abandon 'control' and embrace postmodernism. Here one thinks of Gibson Burrell's intellectual trajectory, from his 'Radical Organization Theory' (Burrell 1980) and *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis* (Burrell and Morgan 1979), to the series of articles, produced with Bob Cooper, exploring the modernism-postmodernism debate (Cooper and Burrell 1988; Cooper 1989; Burrell 1988 and 1994) and his more recent work on the organization of sex, time and pleasure (Burrell 1984, 1992a and b). This reaction also seems to lie behind his creation of the new journal *Organization: the interdisciplinary journal of organization, theory and society* in 1994. The editors' introduction to the first issue ('Why Organization? Why Now? '), declares that the journal aims to develop new modes of thought and analysis to map the new ways of organizing, managing and governing. They concur with the following description, by Gellner, of the present period of 'rapid and disjunctive change' (Burrell et al. 1994: 6):

*The events which took place in 1989, two centuries after the French Revolution, did more than merely terminate the bipolar balance of terror which had kept the peace for nearly half a century; they also brought to an end the older ideological equilibrium and the habit-encrusted formulation of issues which went with it. The concepts we use to describe the world now urgently need to be reformulated. Our current intellectual predicament springs not, as it has been fashionable to say, from the death of God, but from the demise of 19th-century God-surrogates. We are facing a new situation in which the old polarities of thought can no longer apply, or at the very least require scrutiny. This clearly will be the central task of social thought during the coming years (Gellner, cited in Burrell et al. 1994: 5, our emphasis).*

It is reasonable to suggest that there is a connection between the perceived need for this new journal and the perceived need for a revolution in the organization and management of work. Perhaps the editors of *Organization* and the architects of reengineering (Hammer and Champy) are responding, albeit in very different ways, to a common stimulus. The overriding point is that to embrace postmodernism is to risk losing one's grip on Marx.

A second response is to defend Marxism and attack postmodernism. There have been precious few instances of this within organization studies, so we have to look elsewhere. Callinicos's *Against Postmodernism: A Marxist Critique* is representative. The fundamental issue posed by postmodernism 'is whether classical Marxism -- which most left-wing intellectuals now, like the New Right, regard as terribly old fashioned -- can illuminate and contribute to improving our present condition' (Callinicos 1989: ix). Much depends on what is meant by 'classical Marxism', but ordinarily it refers to readings of Marx centred around the base-superstructure model that lies at the heart of 'control of the labour process' and identified as a problem by Burawoy. The difficulty of this strategy is that Marxists have long regarded this metaphor as a liability and have struggled (so far) in vain to develop a coherent alternative reading. All attempts to do so must come up against Cohen's (1978) formidable demonstration that Marx did indeed provide ample justification for classical interpretations of his work.(10) It is much criticized, but it has yet to be superseded. In the meantime, postmodernism is written off as self-indulgent and unintelligible idealism, and its widespread acceptance among erstwhile radicals is explained in terms of the political odyssey of the 1968 generation, which stands accused of allowing itself to be incorporated into the new middle class. Postmodernism, from this standpoint, is best understood as 'a symptom of political frustration and social mobility rather than as a significant intellectual or cultural phenomenon in its own right'.(11)

All this poses the question: what is now 'radical' about radical organization theory? In the midst of hyper-realities, where the distinction between experience of past and present, fact and fiction, becomes blurred, the meaning of Left and Right is far from clear. Arguably, there is even a reversal. The New Right has appropriated the terminology of the Old Left (the sub-title of Hammer and Champy's book on reengineering is 'A Manifesto for Business Revolution', an ironic and, frankly, impudent, twist on

Marx and Engels' call for revolution in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, of 1848) and the Left is in danger of being seen as a conservative force, harkening back to a world that no longer exists and clinging to an analysis that is no longer regarded as credible.

The establishment of EJROT itself can be regarded as a throw-back to happier times: when Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan demolished positivist organization studies' philosophical foundations, when the critique of empiricism revealed, as if for the first time, the importance of 'theory', and who can forget those biting critiques of Stewart Clegg showing how mainstream thought misunderstood 'power' and 'control'. Those were the days.(12) In this sense, by combining nostalgia with the latest technology, EJROT can be construed as a retro-journal aimed at recreating an imaginary past, a product of postmodern times not dissimilar to a radio station set up to play the hits of the 1970s. Now, of course, Stewart Clegg is a professor of management, Gibson Burrell a professor in a business school financed in large part by employers, and Gareth Morgan has been extremely successful as a management consultant; and if the *Organization Studies Symposium* on Donaldson (1985) is any guide, radical organization theory has never established a foothold in North America and remains largely a British phenomenon (*Organization Studies* 1988; Hinings 1988; Marsden 1993). And, by the way, was not the point of radical organization theory to displace 'organization' altogether, not to celebrate the concept twenty years after its radical critique? But we digress.

There is, of course, a middle way between embracing and rejecting postmodernism. This is evident in attempts to understand postmodernity and use that understanding to re-think Marx. We are thinking here of the work of Zukin (1991), Woodiwiss (1993), Soja (1989), O'Neill (1995), Jameson (1991) and, particularly, Harvey (1989). In the remainder of this article, we want to contribute to this middle way by presenting first a relational concept of power and then an alternative reading of Marx.(13)

### **A Relational Concept of Power**

'Power' is a concept of causes. Every concept of power, therefore, comes attached to an understanding of causation and ontology. The only question is, which? Given this, when evaluating the radical concept of power, at the heart of radical organization theory, it is interesting to note that the critique of epistemology which gave it birth left its underlying empiricist ontology unscathed. Radicalism shares pluralism's belief that power refers to the causation of one person's behaviour by the behaviour of another; A has power over B if A's behaviour causes B to do something that B would not otherwise do (Isaac 1987). Radical analysis retains pluralism's empiricist A ---> B formulation of power, but differs in two respects. First, it has different assumptions about the real or objective interests of employees and employers, based on a different -- radical or Marxist -- analysis of society. Pluralism construes interests as shared or, at least, reconcilable; radicalism construes interests as conflicting. Second, on the basis of this understanding of conflicting interests, radical analysis differs from pluralist analysis in imputing to A the motive to control the behaviour of B, and in imputing to B the motive to resist. The main innovation of the radical concept of power is the idea that one can know the nature of individuals' real interests, deduce what they would 'otherwise do' and, on this basis, understand who has power over whom.

The radical concept of power's lingering empiricist ontology collapses three distinct, if interrelated, types of cause:

- a. material: the elements or matter from which an action is produced,
- b. efficient: the agency by which an action is produced, and
- c. final: the end or purpose for which a thing is done.(14)

The material cause of social action is the capacity to act of individuals bestowed upon them by the social structures connecting them (Isaac 1987). The efficient cause of social action is the exercise of this capacity and this is contingent on their political skill and purpose. The final cause of social action is the intent or motive of the person. Contra both pluralist and radical concepts of power: it is not the behaviour of A that causes the behaviour of B, rather the relationship  $R_{ab}$  between A and B is the material cause of the behaviour of both A and B; the way in which A and B act out this relationship is the efficient cause; and the subjective meaning through which each actively constructs, interprets and



assesses this action is the final cause (Isaac 1987: 85-6). The radical concept of power recognizes only efficient causes. This has three consequences. First, it cannot distinguish between power and domination. Power is always 'power over' or domination, most often the control of employees by managers and employers. It cannot grasp how power, as Foucault argues, can simultaneously enable and repress. Second, because it cannot distinguish between power and domination, the radical concept of power obscures recognition of the presence of more insidious forms of domination than 'control' allows (such as, we would argue, postmodernity). Third, because it conflates material and efficient causes it cannot recognize the need to discover final causes. Rather than encourage empirical investigation of the purposes of people, the radical concept of power encourages their theoretical imputation. It deduces an understanding of power from a motive, e.g., employers control and workers resist because they have a motive to do so.

The import of these criticisms is that to understand who acts and why (efficient and final causes) we must first understand the social mechanisms structuring their capacity to act (material causes). This 'relational' concept of power can be connected to the work of several social theorists (Weber and Foucault come to mind), but, given our earlier arguments connecting radical organization theory to Marx it is his concept of power we are interested in here.

We contend that in developing his model or theory of capital, Marx is less concerned with who exercises power and why (efficient and final causes) than with how the social relations created by capital -- an 'entirely objective organization of production' -- cause the capacity to act of both employers and employees (material causes): 'the capitalist is just as enslaved by the relationships of capitalism as is his opposite pole, the worker, albeit in a quite different manner' (Marx 1866: 990). Marx conceives power as a capacity to act, bestowed by real, if non-empirical social structures and mechanisms, exercised by people, contingent on their motives, political skills and circumstances. He is primarily concerned with material rather than efficient and final causes. In other words, he is less concerned with overt conflict between A getting B to do something B would not otherwise do, and more interested in the social relations which cause both A and B to do what they ordinarily do (Isaac 1987). This points to the importance of explaining the normal. To reiterate: Marx provides no imprimatur for the radical concept of power. *Capital* is not a theory of 'interests' ('real' or otherwise), it is a model of the social relations which structure individuals' capacity to act.

We want to suggest that many of the problems associated with 'control of the labour process' stem from reading Marx through the radical rather than this relational concept of power. Recognition of this mismatch is helpful in two respects. First, it re-directs attention to Marx's contention that the *primum mobile* of capitalist production is not 'control' per se but the creation of a surplus by developing 'the productive forces of social labour.' This is 'the absolute motive and content' of the capitalist's activity (Marx 1866: 990). This puts the techniques of work organization grouped under the rubric of 'control' in a different light. As Sheila Cohen explains: 'the organization of the labour process has very little to do with "control" in the sense of a power struggle, and everything to do with "efficiency"' (Cohen 1987: 42-43, our emphasis). 'Efficiency' -- 'productive with minimum waste or effort' -- is precisely the aim of organizing labour into a productive force. This shifts the explanatory focus away from 'control' to how the relations of production both empower and repress in the search for efficiency.(15)

Second, it helps explain the difficulty of labour process theory, especially the reported incoherence of 'labour process' as a theoretical object. Just as 'power' has been abstracted from the internal-relations of production that took Marx thirty years to depict, so 'labour process' has been abstracted from the social relations of production that give it life. The labour process, says Marx, is simply 'the process of production, separated from capital' (Marx 1864: 382); and, as every Marxist knows, capital is a social relation of production. Plucking the labour process from social relations of production prises it apart from the valorization process, shatters the unity of the production process and divorces production from circulation -- Marx's carefully crafted 'organic whole'.(16) Put another way, it reduces to a static entity that which Marx was adamant can be understood only as movement (Marx 1865: 108). No wonder labour process theorists are in such a quandary (Knights and Willmott 1990). This is what happens when one chapter is abstracted from one volume of an unfinished work, and when Capital

itself is abstracted from the complex evolution and scope of Marx's prodigious output. To paraphrase Weber, the labour process is not a taxicab one can take where one will: it comes as part of an internally-related, organic whole.(17)

Let us relate this discussion to the sphere of circulation, the market, and the developments within it that have so captured the imagination of postmodernists. We want to suggest that radical organization theory, as presently configured, is ill-equipped to explain these developments. The influence of the 'labour process' focuses attention on production at the expense of circulation, and the empiricism of its radical concept of power is logically incapable of grasping the causal connections between these two temporally and spatially discrete spheres. The moral absolutism of Marxism's interpretation of 'real' interests sustains a belief that the market is an ideological mystification imposed upon a hapless public and encourages the view that marketing is merely a tool of capitalism's apologists not to be taken seriously. This stance towards the market is a mistake: the one thing the losing side in politics can do without is a sense of its own innate superiority.(18) As the author of a recent book on postmodern marketing puts it:

*It is the left that got it wrong; it is the left that has had to come to terms with the carnivalesque and liminality of the marketplace; it is the left that has been forced to modify its long-time stance of supercilious superiority and lofty disdain; it is the left that has been emasculated, recuperated and commodified by the running dogs of capital* (Brown 1995: 139).

Marx would agree. Exchange may be the core concept of marketing, but it also mediates between production and circulation and, however far apart in time and space they may be, being knitted together by the circuit of capital, they 'intertwine and intermingle, adulterating their typical distinctive features' (Marx 1864: 44). Circulation may be the surface of society, but it is the equal of production in importance; the surface of an object is as intrinsic to its nature as is its interior. Put simply: the glitter and tinsel of the hyper-realities of postmodernity are no less important, and no less real, than the sweat and grime of factories. Along with the rest of circulation, they 'belong within the concept of capital' (Marx 1858: 638, his emphasis).

### **Postmodernity and Capital**

The tourist-shoppers of West Edmonton Mall, which we characterize as an allegory of the postmodern condition, seem vastly removed from traditional Marxism's focus on class struggle at the point of production. Indeed, they are. But they bear a striking resemblance to the problem with which Marx and Engels began in the early 1840s (a decade often taken to mark the start of modernity). Since the formulation of a problem often contains the means of its resolution, it is worth reflecting on the connection between postmodernity and the problem which propelled Marx on his life's work.

This problem is described for us by Engels' empirical observations, recorded in *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, and in Marx's theoretical analysis of Hegel's philosophy of law (Hegel 1967). Most commentary on Engels focuses on the unspeakable living and working conditions described in his book. But, as Marx argues, capitalism proceeds through urbanization, so we should heed some comments of Engels in the chapter 'The Great Towns'. There he notes that 'the fundamental principle of our society everywhere' is its dissolution into 'narrow self-seeking monads', each wrapped up in their private interest, 'unfeeling isolation and 'brutal indifference' to others (Engels 1969: 58). This world of monads, 'the social war, the war of each against all' (Engels 1969: 58) is referred to as 'civil society', a term derived from Hegel, for whom it is 'the battleground of the individual private interest of all against all' (Hegel, cited in Marx 1843a: 41). Civil society is a society of free competition in which individuals pursue their private interests governed by the principle 'survival of the fittest'. Indeed, Marx draws a direct parallel between this social world and Darwin's law of natural selection:

*It is remarkable how Darwin rediscovers, among the beasts and plants, the society of England with its division of labour, competition, opening up of new markets, 'inventions' and Malthusian 'struggle for existence'. It is Hobbes' **bellum omnia contra omnes** [war of all against all] and is reminiscent of Hegel's **Phenomenology**, in which civil society figures as an 'intellectual animal kingdom', whereas, in Darwin, the animal kingdom figures as civil society (Marx to Engels, June 18, 1862).*

As Engels was empirically investigating the 'dissolution of mankind into monads' Marx was theoretically investigating the same problem via his critique of Hegel's 'Natural Law and Political Science in Outline: Elements of the Philosophy of Right'. His thoughts are left to us in the form of three rough manuscripts, 'Contribution to Hegel's Philosophy of Law', 'On the Jewish Question' and 'Introduction to the Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right' (Marx 1843a, b and c).(19) Here Marx explores the connection between this monad, civil society and the State in the context of a discussion of the Rights of Man. He argues that these rights -- to liberty, equality, property -- 'are nothing but the rights of a member of civil society, i.e. the rights of egotistic man, of man separated from other men and from the community' (Marx 1843b: 162). 'Liberty' is the right of the monad to do everything that harms no one else. It is based 'not on the association of man with man, but on the separation of man from man. It is the right of this separation, the right of the restricted individual withdrawn into himself' (Marx 1843b: 162-3). 'Equality' is nothing but the equality of the liberty described above, 'namely: each man is to the same extent regarded as such a self-sufficient monad' (Marx 1843b). The right to private property is 'the right to enjoy one's property and to dispose of it at one's discretion, without regard to other men ... the right to self-interest ... It makes in other men not the realisation of his own freedom, but the barrier to it' (Marx 1843b: 163). The bond holding monads together is 'natural necessity, need and private interest, the preservation of their property and their egoistic selves' (Marx 1843b: 164). Marx distinguishes between merely 'political' emancipation, embodied in the Rights of Man, and 'human' or 'real, practical emancipation'. Political emancipation, says Marx, sarcastically, is 'the emancipation of civil society from politics', the right to be an isolated monad. 'Only when the real, individual man reabsorbs the abstract citizen ... will human emancipation have been accomplished' (Marx 1843b: 168).

To anyone who thinks that this atomization of society is no longer relevant, look around you: an intensification of this process of dissolution is at the heart of the condition of postmodernity. A contemporary definition of 'civil society' would include the self-absorbed, hedonistic, channel-hopping, net-surfing postmodern monad, 'demanding instant gratification and ever-escalating doses of stimulation' in a world of 'I want' which recognizes few limits to what can be commodified (Brown 1995: 80). As Marx would put it, they are restricted individuals withdrawn into themselves, monads increasingly torn from their real communities by the transformation in the organization of space and time, seeking out others in virtual communities, living in imagined communities constructed out of television, video and film images. Postmodern identities are defined by patterns of consumption, not work roles. As such, they are fluid, adaptable and 'easily changed through the acquisition new repertoires of products with the requisite marketing-implanted images' (Brown 1995: 138). In this way, a unified identity given coherence by a sense of time and place gives way to an 'empty self' which can be 'refilled, decanted and replenished with whatever personae the occasion demands' (Brown 1995: 80). To this one can add that the inculcation of a reactionary commonsense during the 1980s, which made the ascendancy of marketing possible, rested on a belief nicely condensed by Margaret Thatcher's famous remark that 'there is no such thing as society', only individuals.

These observations on Marx's starting point are important for two reasons. First, Marx practiced a mode of inference known as retrodution, according to which one reasons 'in reverse' from explicandum, the thing or problem to be explained, to putative explicans, the explanation of the problem (Hanson 1958).(20) One can understand and evaluate Marx's explicans only if one knows the problem to which it is the supposed explanation. Second, given the striking similarities between these modern and postmodern monads, separated by 150 years, Marx's retroductive line of argument from this initial problem, formulated in the 1840s, to his model of capital, described in the Grundrisse

notebooks, *Capital and Theories of Surplus Value*, should interest students of postmodernity and radical organization theory.

Marx forms the opinion that the private individuals of civil society, who imagine themselves beyond social forces, and the public citizens of the State, who imagine themselves equal to others, are mirror images, products of the same (yet-to-be-explained) atomizing process. This belief lies behind Marx's remark that the establishment of the State and the dissolution of civil society into monads are 'accomplished in one and the same act' (Marx 1843b: 167). The idea of the State, manifest in the Rights of Man, is based on the juridic self-understanding of 'separate individuals'. It is in this sense that 'man' is the 'basis, the precondition' of the State (Marx 1843b: 166). It is the juridic self-understanding of monads, not Hegel's philosophy, that is the problem to be explained. Hegel merely idealizes the conception of the State held by the monads of civil society and popularised by political ideologists (Marx and Engels 1846: 348).

The relationship between civil society and the State is cemented in the market. Here, the buyer faces the seller, not as the worker faces the employer, but 'as money confronts the commodity' (Marx 1863, Part 3: 290): 'it is not capital and labour which confront one another, but capital and capital in one case, and individuals, again simply as buyers and sellers, in the other' (Marx 1864: 44). By abstracting from material differences among the monads of civil society, buyers and sellers, exchange transforms socially differentiated individuals with concrete needs into juridic citizens with abstract rights. The needs of strangers; the rights of citizens. As Marx puts it, exchange 'makes an abstraction of real men'. It abolishes 'distinctions of birth, social rank, education, occupation ... when it proclaims, without regard to these distinctions, that every member of the nation is an equal participant in national sovereignty' (Marx 1847a: 153). Exchange creates an imagined community of juridic persons with abstract rights 'divorced from the ... circumstances which concretely make them what they are' (Sayer 1987: 104). To relate this discussion to West Edmonton Mall, carrying their power and their bond with society in their pocket these egotistical monads, indifferent to each other and motivated by self-interest, exercise their sovereign right to shop, to impulsively buy.

Marx sought the 'essential relationship', 'the inner nature' of the 'empirical collisions' of these abstract private persons that comprise 'civil society'. Over the course of the fifteen years that went into the making of the Grundrisse notebooks, he develops his analysis from the 'man' of civil society (Marx 1843a), to 'labour' (Marx 1844b), to 'social relations' (Marx and Engels 1846), to 'movement' of these relations (Marx 1847a). 'The only immutable thing,' he concludes in *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Marx 1847a: 166), is the abstraction of movement *mors immortalis*'. The 'ultimate aim' of his analysis, Marx later writes, is 'to reveal the economic laws of motion of modern society' (Marx 1867b: 92). In the *Grundrisse*, Marx construes 'civil society', 'this society of free competition' (Marx 1857: 83), as the surface or the phenomenon of a process taking place 'behind it' (Marx 1857: 255), and explains it in terms of the 'moving unity' and 'inner necessity' (Marx 1857: 415) of the elements comprising 'the internal structure of production'. The name of this 'inner structure' and 'complicated social process' (Marx 1864: 830) -- which 'actually conceals the inner connection behind the utter indifference, isolation, and alienation' of the problematic 'abstract private person' -- is capital.

Capital is analogous to DNA. This is not an fanciful as it might at first seem. The discovery of the structure of the DNA molecule, by Crick and Watson, verified Darwin's theory of natural selection. Darwin's theory of natural selection and Marx's theory of capital are parallel: 'Just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of evolution in human history' (from Engels' address at Marx's funeral, cited in Colp 1982: 470). Marx 'read, and then reread, Darwin's *The Origin of Species* in the early 1860s, looking for some natural-scientific basis for his own political and social conceptions' (Colp 1982: 461). There can be no doubt that Marx viewed 'the development of the economic formation of society ... as a process of natural history' (Marx 1867b: 92). He studied the cell form of society, 'very simple and slight in content', but more difficult to study than the 'complete body' or 'organism' (Marx 1867b: 90).

It might be objected that this analogy with DNA leads to an unduly deterministic concept of capital. But this would be to misunderstand both DNA and capital. DNA is not the inert, predictably stable molecule it is often taken to be. It is a metabolic molecule, an integral part of the cell and responsive to what happens around it (Rennie 1993). Capital is analogous to DNA because it is the primary, self-replicating genetic material from which action is produced and is present in nearly all social organisms. Earlier, we argued that to understand who acts and why (efficient and final causes) we must first understand the mechanisms structuring their capacity to act (material causes). Capital is a material cause. It is the material out of which action is fashioned. Marx's model of capital aims to explain the mechanism which structures the capacity of individuals to act. How this logic of power unfolds in practice can be discovered only empirically, for this unfolding depends on its context: the exercise of the capacity to act is always negotiated and is contingent on political skill, the motives of people and the circumstances of its deployment.(21)

We want to suggest that this brief reconstruction of Marx's retroductive line of argument produces a novel, and more intelligible, conception of his stated object, announced in *Capital*: 'the capitalist mode of production, and the relations of production and forms of intercourse corresponding to it' (Marx 1867b: 90). 'Forms of intercourse' refers to the explicandum with which Marx began in 1843 and worked on throughout the 1840s: the interactions among atomized monads who imagine themselves to be independent and free. These monads constitute the surface of society, the sphere of circulation created by the process of exchange: 'a very Eden of innate rights of man' (Marx 1867a: 280). 'Forms of intercourse' (Marx 1867b: 90) or, as Marx puts it elsewhere, 'forms of social/human life' (Marx 1867a: 168), should be understood in the same way as Wittgenstein's 'forms of life,' i.e., as integral to and constitutive of social relations, rather than as a mere reflection of an external, objective reality: the surface or form of an object is as real as its inner structure or content. The 'mode' and 'relations of production' are the explicans of these 'forms of life,' the twin axes of Marx's model. The mode of production is not a social formation, as it is often regarded: it is an organizing process -- the day-to-day business of earning a living. Relations of production are not a 'base': they are a substratum -- the internal structure of society, the product of this process. The mode and relations of production are the process and the structure, respectively, of the 'inner connections' between the monads that Marx set out to explain in 1843.

## Conclusion

We argued that the limitations of 'control of the labour process' are rooted in the radical concept of power and traditional interpretations of Marx. We sketched an alternative, relational concept of power and suggested an alternative reading of Marx by reconstructing his retroductive line of argument, from those monads identified as a problem in 1843 to his concept of capital. Let us conclude by indicating the significance of all this for radical organization theory and the problem of postmodernity.

However much it might twist and turn, radical organization theory keeps coming up against the roadblock of those interpretations of Marx based on the base-superstructure metaphor of what is still construed (wrongly, in our opinion) as the definitive summary of historical materialism -- Marx's Preface to his *A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy* (Marx 1859a and b).(22) An understanding of Marx's retroductive method of working poses two simple questions: what is his explicandum (the problem to be explained) and what is his explicans (his explanation)? These questions are seldom asked. One reason they are seldom asked is because they are so difficult to answer. And one reason they are so difficult to answer is because traditional Marxism has driven a wedge between his explicandum and explicans, or, as they are better known, between the early and the late Marx, relegating the first as juvenilia and sanctifying the authority of the last. Out of this bifurcation the belief emerged, later solidified into an assumption, that Marx aimed to explain the capitalist mode of production and his work has been understood and evaluated in that light. This is a mistake. To repeat: Marx's model of capital aims to explain what happens on the surface of society, in particular, the atomization that lies behind those mirror images, civil society and State. It does not, we contend, aim to explain capitalist production per se. This is to confuse his explicans with his explicandum. If Marx practices the retroductive mode of inference then this severing is doubly

serious: we do not understand the problem to which his work is the putative explanation, and we are denied the ability to assess the last in the light of the first. Hanson (1958: 990) describes a retroduced theory as 'a cluster of conclusions in search of a premiss' and this seems a fitting description of traditional interpretations of Marx's analytic.

The way to restore the connection between Marx's explicandum and explicans, between the young and the late Marx, and transcend traditional Marxism, is to read his work chronologically-bibliographically, tracing the complex evolution of his ideas. Here, perhaps, radical thought can move forward. This reading reveals that the scope of Marx's intended opus is much broader than *Capital* suggests. We know, for example, that he intended to pursue his 1845 commitment to write a book on law and the State. Even within the restricted scope of Marx's 'Economics,' his work is unfinished. Given his dissatisfaction with the various editions of volume one and the incomplete and fragmented nature of the manuscripts that Engels edited into volumes two and three, 'Capital must be read as an incomplete work of uncertain bibliographic and substantive status' (Oakley 1983: 126), rather than the definitive work it is often taken to be. In short, Marx did not finish what he set out to investigate and he did not present all that he did investigate. As Bhaskar puts it, Marxism is:

*A research programme initiated by Marx but no more completed by him than Copernicus completed the revolution in thought which Galileo, Kepler and Newton developed, and Einstein and quantum theory have radically transformed this century* (Bhaskar 1989: 5).

A chronological-bibliographic reading and an understanding of Marx's retroductive method point to the potential and the need to continue that research programme by reconstructing, developing and applying the model of capital that lies dispersed between the six volumes of *Capital and Theories of Surplus Value* and the *Grundrisse* notebooks.

To return to our earlier argument, while the trajectory of Marx's line of argument points to the 'inner organization of the capitalist mode of production' (Marx 1864: 831) as the process, the 'essential relationship' between these problematic monads, since he never completed his 'economics,' much less write his book on the State and synthesize the critiques of political economy and jurisprudence, he never explained how, in what way? We can retroduce that this must be so, but how it is so we must work out for ourselves. Retroduction is a logic of discovery, not proof. Demonstrating the veracity of Marx's account would entail retracing his steps and returning to the surface of society -- in fact, to just those phenomena we recognize today as postmodernity.(23)

## Endnotes

1. Buss writes in response to an article by Omar Aktouf (1992), in the *Academy of Management Review*, which proposes that we give some thought to neo-Marxist conceptions of management. Buss's letter is a useful summary of what seems the prevailing stance towards Marx, certainly of that among North American organization theorists. See Aktouf's reply (Aktouf 1993).
2. There are, incidentally, more submarines in West Edmonton Mall than in the Canadian navy.
3. Our inspiration for this interpretation of 'Kubla Khan' comes from Burrell's account of the organization of pleasure (Burrell 1992a).
4. Of course, West Edmonton Mall has its own WWW site, at <http://www.westedmall.com>, a virtual reality of a hyper-reality. Double click on the photos to download them, then use JPEG View to crop and zoom and explore the nooks and crannies of the rooms. See the warrior catamaran under full sail and the waterfall emptying into a rock pool in the Polynesian room. Why, the Web page is almost as good as the real thing.

5. Compare this form of reading to medieval times when text was oral and collective in character, without an obvious 'author', and readers were accustomed to reading aloud and in public within a 'textual community'. Reading can be a communal, rather than a solitary, act. See Thompson (1968) on the role of collective textual interpretation by artisan study groups and correspondence societies in the making of the English working class.
6. The underside of this palace of consumption, of course, includes the 15,000, or so, people who sell these commodities within the Mall, many of whom are part-time, relatively low paid and most of whom are difficult to unionize, and the millions of employees, all over the world, who produce them.
7. For criticisms of postmodernism, see, for example, Callinicos (1989), O'Neill (1995) and, for a feminist critique, Brodribb (1992).
8. This genre became institutionalized in Britain in the form of the Annual Conference on the Control and Organization of the Labour Process, held since 1982 alternately at UMIST and Aston University, and, more recently, at the University of Central Lancashire.
9. As Jameson (1991: 207-8) notes, this conviction is 'reinforced by the disintegration of any clear conception of what socialism ought to be and how it ought to function, particularly in the socialist countries themselves'.
10. For an argument against Cohen's interpretation, see Marsden (1995).
11. These words are found on the back cover of Callinicos (1989). His line of argument is complemented by Meiksins Wood (1986) and Miliband and Panitch (1990).
12. For younger readers, we allude here to Mary Hopkin's 1968 hit record 'Those Were the Days, now, perhaps, an anthem for the Left in postmodern times: 'those were the days my friend, we thought they'd never end ... we'd live the life we choose, we'd fight and never lose, oh we were young and sure to have our way ... then the busy years went rushing by us ... we lost our starry notions on the way ... nothing seem[s] the way it used to be ... older but no wiser, for in our hearts the dreams are still the same'.
13. What follows is influenced by that other questioning of reality which gathered momentum alongside postmodernism -- the ontology of critical realism. The implications of realism for organization studies are discussed in Marsden (1993). For an introduction to realism see, for example, Sayer (1992) and Bhaskar (1989). Briefly, realism posits the existence of real, if, sometimes, non-empirical, social and natural objects (such as quarks, magnetic fields and, we maintain, capital) that are independent of our knowledge of them. The aim of science is to explain the flux of empirical events by discovering the causal mechanisms of these objects and by developing conceptual models of them.
14. These come from Aristotle, via the Oxford English Dictionary.
15. On this theme, see the Foucauldian analysis of human resource management in Townley (1994).
16. Marx makes clear in the *Resultate* that the distinction between the labour process and the valorisation process is purely *conceptual*. They cannot be empirically distinguished. They form a 'single and indivisible' production process. (Marx 1866: 991). 'The immediate process of production is always an indissoluble union of *labour process and valorization process* just as the product is a whole composed of use-value and exchange-value, i.e. the commodity' (Marx 1866: 952, his emphasis).
17. We borrow this from Sayer 1987 (ix), who uses it to refer to the hijacking of Marx's views by traditional Marxists.

18. Jameson is relevant here. He argues that 'the problem of the market is itself central to the problem of theorizing or conceptualizing socialism ...' (Jameson 1991: 208).

19. In the following summary of Marx we leave unaltered his use of the personal pronoun 'man' because, writing in the 1840's, that is precisely who he means.

20. Retroduction is a logic of discovery according to which explanation is built-up 'in reverse', from explicanda to explicans. It is a serendipitous process of discovery that occurs via 'imaginary experiments (Weick 1989) adjudicated by the criterion of 'interest' (Davis 1971). A retroductive inference takes this form:

1. some surprising phenomena, P123, are observed
2. P123 would be explicable if H were true
3. hence, there is reason to think H is true

Marx allied this retroductive mode of inference with a realist ontology. The realist ascribes cause by invoking real, and sometimes invisible, entities whose characteristics, properties and powers are capable of explaining the problematic phenomena. For the realist, then, retroduction is a mode of inference by which empirical things are explained by postulating (and, subsequently, demonstrating) the existence of real generative mechanisms. A realist retroductive argument takes this form:

1. some surprising phenomena, P123, are observed
2. P123 would be explained if H were to exist and act in the postulated way
3. hence, there is reason to think H exists and acts in this way.

Although there is no logical necessity between P and H, retroduction is nonetheless a form of logical inference, 'asserting its conclusions only problematically, or conjecturally, it is true, but nevertheless having a perfectly definite logical form' (Peirce, cited in Hanson 1958: 1087). Hanson's distinction between the three forms of inference is worth noting: 'deduction proves that something must be; Induction shows that something actually is operative; [Retroduction] merely suggests that something may be' (Hanson 1961: 85). Retroduction is a logic of discovery, not proof.

21. The exercise of this capacity is, we believe, what E.P. Thompson calls 'class' it is 'the way the machine works' (Thompson 1978: 295). It is also the 'internal logic' of the 'great, 'bourgeois arch of state formation (Thompson 1978: 257 and 296; Corrigan and Sayer 1985). On this theme see Marsden (1992) and (forthcoming).

22. For an examination of the relative merits of the Introduction to the Grundrisse notebooks and the Preface as guides to Marx's work, see Marsden (1995). Prinz's argument that the Preface was written in code with a wary eye on the Prussian censor (Prinz 1969) suggests that it should be read with great circumspection. It seldom is.

23. Harvey (1989), of course, paves the way by relating the condition of postmodernity to the 'space-time compression' driven by the need to reduce the turnover time of capital and, thereby, improve the conditions of profitability. To this we offer the following supplement or qualification. The time taken by the circuit of capital is 'equal to the sum of its time of production and its time of circulation (Marx 1865: 124). It follows that turnover time can be reduced in either one of these spheres. 'The chief means of reducing the time of production is higher labour productivity .... The chief means of reducing the time of circulation is improved communications (Marx 1864: 70-1). Each has an impact on the material world because the logic of capital is active in the design, architecture and construction of a wide range of things, from tools and machines to buildings and complete cities. The cell, that basic disciplinary space, is also a basic unit of architecture. We suggest that the social upheavals recognized in the argument that we are experiencing a transformation from modernity to postmodernity correspond to a shift in emphasis from reducing the turnover time of capital within production to reducing its time within circulation. Modernity and postmodernity, like production and circulation, coexist side by side, internally-related products of the same organizing process.



## References

### Works by Marx

We cite works by Marx by their date of original composition rather than their first publication. CW refers to Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*. New York: International Publishers, 1975-.

1843a *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. CW 3.

1843b *On the Jewish Question*. CW 3.

1843c *Introduction to Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. CW 3.

1844a *Critical Marginal Notes on the Article The King of Prussia and Social Reform*. By a Prussian. CW 3.

1844b *Paris Manuscripts*. CW 3.

1844c *The Holy Family or Critique of Critical Criticism: Against Bruno Bauer and Company* (with Engels). CW 4.

1845 *Theses on Feuerbach*. CW 5.

1846 *The German Ideology: Critique of Modern German Philosophy According to its Representatives Feuerbach, B. Bauer and Stirner* [vol. 1], and of *German Socialism According to its Various Prophets* [vol. 2]. (with Engels). CW 5.

1847a *The Poverty of Philosophy: Answer to the Philosophy of Poverty by M. Proudhon*. CW 6

1847b *Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality: A Contribution to German Cultural History Contra Karl Heinzen*. CW 6

1848 *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. CW 6 (with Engels).

1857 *Introduction to Grundrisse notebooks*. With 1858. Also with 1859b.

1858 *Grundrisse notebooks: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*. 1973. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

1859a *Preface to 1859b*

1859b *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. 1970. Moscow: Progress.

1863 *Theories of Surplus Value*. Part 1: 1963, Part 2: 1968, Part 3: 1971. Moscow: Progress.

1864 *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. vol. 3: *The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole*, ed. F. Engels. 1967. New York: International Publishers.

1865 *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. vol. 2: *The Process of Circulation of Capital*, ed. F. Engels. Moscow: Progress.

1866 *Results of the Immediate Process of Production*. Appendix to 1867.

1867a Capital: A Critique of Political Economy. vol 1: The Process of Capitalist Production. 1976. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

1867b Preface to first edition of 1867a.

### **Works By Other Authors**

Aktouf, O. (1992). Management and Theories of Organizations in the 1990s: Toward a Critical Radical Humanism? *Academy of Management Review*, 17(3), 407-31.

Aktouf, O. (1993). The Aktouf Article Some Clarifications. *Academy of Management Review*, 18(3), 395-96.

Bhaskar, R. (1989). *Reclaiming Reality: A Critical Introduction to Contemporary Philosophy*. London: Verso.

Braverman, H. (1974). *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Bray, M., and C. R. Littler. (1988). The Labour Process and Industrial Relations: Review of the Literature. *Labour & Industry*, 1 (3): 551-587.

Brodribb, S. (1993). *Nothing Mat(t)ers: A Feminist Critique of Postmodernism*. Toronto: Lorimer.

Brown, S. (1995). *Postmodern Marketing*. London and New York: Routledge.

Bryson, B. (1990). *The Lost Continent: Travels in Small Town America*. London: Abacus.

Burawoy, M. (1977). *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process Under Monopoly Capitalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Burawoy, M. (1985). *The Politics of Production: Factory Regimes Under Capitalism and Socialism*. London: Verso.

Burrell, G. (1980). Radical Organization Theory. In D. Dunkerley and G. Salaman (eds.), *The International Yearbook of Organization Studies 1979*. London: Routledge.

Burrell, G. (1984). Sex and Organizational Analysis. *Organization Studies*, 5 (2): 97-118.

Burrell, G. (1988). Modernism, Post Modernism and Organizational Analysis 2: The Contribution of Michel Foucault. *Organization Studies*, 9 (2): 221-235.

Burrell, G. (1992a). The Organization of Pleasure. In M. Alvesson, and H. Willmott (eds.), *Critical Management Studies*, London: Sage (pp. 66-89).

Burrell, G. (1992b). Back to the Future: Time and Organization. In M. Reed and M. Hughes (eds.), *Rethinking Organization: New Directions in Organization Theory and Analysis*. London: Sage (pp. 165-83).

Burrell, G. (1994). Modernism, Postmodernism and Organizational Analysis 4: The Contribution of Jurgen Habermas. *Organization Studies*, 15 (1), 1-19.

Burrell, G., and G. Morgan. (1979). *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*. London: Heinemann.

- Burrell, G., M. Reed, M. Calás and L. Smirchich. Why Organization? Why Now? *Organization*, (1994) 1 (1), 5-17.
- Buss, T. F. (1993). Marxism is Wrong, and Thankfully, Dead. *Academy of Management Review*, 18 (1): 10-11.
- Callinicos, A. (1989). *Against Postmodernism: A Marxist Critique*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Clegg, S. (1975). *Power, Rule and Domination: A Critical and Empirical Understanding of Power in Sociological Theory and Organizational Life*. London: Routledge.
- Clegg, S. (1977). Power, Organization Theory, Marx and Critique. In S. Clegg and D. Dunkerley eds., *Critical Issues in Organizations*. London: Routledge (pp. 21-40).
- Clegg, S. (1979). *The Theory of Power and Organizations*. London: Routledge.
- Clegg, S. (1981). Organization and Control. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 26 (4), 545-62.
- Clegg, S. and D. Dunkerley. (1977). *Critical Issues in Organizations*. London: Routledge.
- Clegg, S., and D. Dunkerley. (1980). *Organization, Class and Control*. London: Routledge.
- Cohen, G.A. (1978). *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Cohen, S. (1987). A Labour Process to Nowhere? *New Left Review* 165: 34-50.
- Colp, R. (1982). The Myth of the Darwin-Marx Letter. *History of Political Economy*, 14 (4): 461-482.
- Cooper, R. Modernism, postmodernism and organizational analysis: The contribution of Jacques Derrida. *Organization Studies*, 10 (4). 479-502.
- Cooper, R., and G. Burrell. 1988. Modernism, Postmodernism and Organizational Analysis: An Introduction. *Organization Studies*, 9 (1): 91-112.
- Corrigan, P., and D. Sayer. (1991). *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Cressey, P. and J. MacInnes. (1980). Voting for Ford: Industrial Democracy and the control of Labour. *Capital and Class*, 11: 5-33.
- Davis, M. S. (1971). That's Interesting! Towards a Phenomenology of Sociology and a Sociology of Phenomenology. *Philosophy of Social Science*, 1: 309-344.
- Donaldson, L. (1985). In *Defence of Organization Theory: A Reply to the Critics*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Donaldson, L. (1988). In *Successful Defence of Organization Theory: A Routing of the Critics*. *Organization Studies*, 9 (1): 28-32.
- Drucker, P. F. (1993). *Post-Capitalist Society*. New York: Harper Business.
- Edwards, P. K. (1986). *Conflict at Work: A Materialist Analysis of Workplace Relations*. Oxford: Blackwell.

- Engels, F. (1969). *The Condition of the Working Class in England: From Personal Observation and Authentic Sources*. London: Grafton.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon.
- Friedman, A. L. (1987). The Means of Management Control and Labour Process Theory: A Critical Note on Storey. *Sociology*, 21 (2): 287-294.
- Hammer, M. and S. A. Stanton. (1995). *The Reengineering Revolution: A Handbook*. New York: HarperBusiness.
- Hammer, M., and J. Champy. (1993). *Reengineering the Corporation: A Manifesto for Business Revolution*. New York: Harper.
- Hanson, N. R. (1958). The Logic of Discovery. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 55 (25): 1073-1089.
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hegel, F. (1967). *Philosophy of Right*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hinings, C. R. (1988). Defending Organization Theory: A British View from North America. *Organization Studies*, 9 (1): 2-7.
- Isaac, J. C. (1987). *Power and Marxist Theory: A Realist View*. Ithica: Cornell University Press.
- Jameson, F. (1991). *Postmodernism: or, the cultural logic of late capitalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Knights, D., and H. Willmott. (eds.) (1990). *Labour Process Theory*. London: Macmillan.
- Littler, C. R., and G. Salaman. (1982). Bravermania and Beyond: Recent Theories of the Labour Process. *Sociology*, 16 (2), 251-269.
- Lukes, S. (1974). *Power: A Radical View*. London: Macmillan.
- Marsden, R. (1982). Industrial Relations: A Critique of Empiricism. *Sociology*, 16 (2), 234-250.
- Marsden, R. (1992). The State: A Comment on Abrams, Denis and Sayer. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 5(3), 358-77.
- Marsden, R. (1993). The Politics of Organizational Analysis. *Organization Studies* 14 (1): 93- 124.
- Marsden, R. (1995). Marx's Method: the 1857 Introduction and the 1859 Preface. Centre for Economics, Industrial Relations and Organization Studies, Athabasca University, mimeo.
- Marsden, R. (forthcoming). Class: the way the machine works. In A. Mills et al. (eds.), *Managing the Organizational Melting Pot: Dilemmas of Workplace Diversity*. London: Sage.
- Marsden, R. and B. Townley. (forthcoming). The Owl of Minerva: Reflections on Theory in Practice. In S. Clegg, C. Hardy and W. Nord (eds.), *Handbook of Organization Studies*. London: Sage.
- Meiksins Wood, E. (1986). *The Retreat from Class: A New True Socialism*. London: Verso.
- Miliband, R. and L. Panitch (eds.) (1990). *The Retreat of the Intellectuals*. London: Merlin.

- O'Neill, J. (1995). *The Poverty of Postmodernism*. London: Routledge.
- Oakley, A. (1983). *The Making of Marx's Critical Theory: A Bibliographic Analysis*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Organization Studies Symposium. (1988). 9 (1).
- Peck, M. J., and T. J. Richardson (1991). *What is to be Done? Proposals for the Soviet Transition to the Market*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Prinz, A. M. (1969). Background and Ulterior Motive of Marx's Preface. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 30 (3), 437-50.
- Remnick, D. (1994). *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire*. New York: Vintage.
- Rennie, J. (1993). DNA's New Twists. *Scientific American* March: 122-132.
- Sayer, A. (1992). *Method in Social Science*. London: Routledge.
- Sayer, D. (1979). *Marx's Method: Ideology, Science and Critique in Capital*. New Jersey: The Harvester Press.
- Sayer, D. (1987). *The Violence of Abstraction: The Analytic Foundations of Historical Materialism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Shields, R. (1989). Social spatialization and the built environment: the West Edmonton Mall. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 7, 147-164.
- Soja, E. W. (1989). *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London: Verso.
- Storey, J. (1983). *Managerial Prerogative and the Question of Control*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Storey, J. (1985). The Means of Management Control. *Sociology*, 19 (2): 193-211.
- Storey, J. (1989). The Means of Management Control: A Reply to Friedman. *Sociology*, 23 (1): 119-124.
- Thompson, E. P. (1978). *The Poverty of Theory and Other Essays*. London: Merlin.
- Thompson, E. P. (1968). *The Making of the English Working Class*. London: Penguin.
- Townley, B. (1994). *Reframing Human Resource Management: Power, Ethics and the Subject at Work*. London: Sage.
- Townley, B. (forthcoming). Beyond Good and Evil: Depth and Division in the Management of Human Resources. In A. McKinlay and K. Starkey (eds.), *Managing Foucault*. London: Sage.
- Weick, K. E. (1989). Theory Construction as Disciplined Imagination. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 516-531.
- Woodiwiss, A. (1993). *Postmodernity USA: The Crisis of Social Modernism in Postwar America*. London: Sage.

Yakovlev, A. (1993). *The Fate of Marxism in Russia*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Zukin, S. (1991). *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World*. Berkeley: University of California Press.