Embodied knowing, knowledge management and the reconstruction of post-compulsory education

A case of ‘Find a (knowledge) market, suck it, satisfy it and move on’?

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Abstract

Western capitalist economies are said to be in the process of becoming knowledge societies with knowledge economies which engage knowledge workers whose coordination is achieved through forms of knowledge management. This paper seeks to explore the problematics of this 'formation' in relation to its embodiment. While this developing discursive formation speaks of knowledge-bases and bodies of knowledge, this paper will explore how these constructions intersect with knowledge-able bodies, or embodied knowing.

The paper will sketch the broad contours and practices of this discursive formation around 'knowledge'. It will also offer a critical engagement with work frequently drawn into this formation that highlights a tacit, embodied basis to 'knowing'. In order to further explore the salience of this formation, and its embodied discursive practices, the paper draws examples and material from post-compulsory education.

Methodological discussion: Bodily knowing, discursive formations and 'knowledge'

Labour, language and power are historically the three key themes of critical social science. In this paper ‘labour’ will be addressed as embodied practices or bodily knowledges. Language will be construed as texts and discursive practices which emanate from, and are productive of broad, strategic ‘discursive formations’ (Foucault, 1972). Power meanwhile will be regarded not in the first instance as relations of domination or exploitation between subjects (be they individuals or organisations or states), but more
broadly as an unstable and dispersed force/energy which produces assemblages of practices (of visibility, labour, force, language), which link embodied practices (labour) and discursive formations (language) in pervasive and productive ways.

This is not to suggest that exploitation and domination are not prevalent and on-going features of contemporary organizational life nor is it to deny the very powerful way in which political economic analysis of the 'crisis' in the interactions between the forces and relations of production can aid our understanding. For Marx it was not the forces of production which distinguishes one mode of production from another or the dominance of one mode in relation to another. The current mode might be distinguished by its forms of technological production (petro-chemical and computer-chip based technologies), but for both Marx and Foucault - in Foucault's terms - it is the relations of production which are the salient feature. It is the politics that surround the formation of knowledge-able labour, its access to and combination with these forces of production which is the crucial point of discussion in relation to a particular mode of production, or discursive formation. For Marx the issue is the problematics that surround power's work to 'fuse' labour and language in ways which enhance existing, or contribute to new, fields for the expropriation of surplus. Of course Foucault recommends a political economic argument as one way of explaining the transformation and dispersal of discursive formations (1977, 1991). But what is important for Foucault is how the formation works on and provides productive forms of self-knowledge and discipline. The question becomes: what new forms of self and new ways of working on the body are put to work?

If we assume, as the discursive formation around 'knowledge' tends to, that we are increasingly becoming a 'knowledge society/economy/era', then political economic analysis might address the way knowledge is rendered a commodity to be sold through market relations or as a unit whose use has been intensified in the interests of production, consumption and exchange relations.

Of course this begs the question of how to commodify knowledge. If 'knowing' is a human facility, and largely 'locked away' inside the bodies and minds of people - frequently as 'tacit' embodied forms - then the institutional or firm's task becomes how to make this knowledge explicit, or codified, or how to reconstruct the learning process so that valuable knowledge as it is generated can be 'harvested' or distributed to enhance organizational efficiency, or market relations. The crucial issues in terms of the relation of production from this point of departure would be how 'learning' and 'sharing' can be made as reliable, intensive, efficient and saleable.

A Foucauldian/Nietzschean position meanwhile, which could be said to broadly complement a Marxian analysis, would address the way power-knowledge practices engage in the production of disciplined bodies and subjects eg. workers, managers, professionals. The analysis might for instance address how the 'knowledge economy/society', produces the 'learning' or 'innovative' or 'creative body-subject.
In the broad sense writers influenced by Foucault's cartographies (1983, Deleuze, 1988, Knights and Willmott, 1989; McKinlay and Starkey, 1998) suggest that in the current era relations of exploitation and domination are less important than relations to oneself and one's body. Power relations work in the first instance to establish us as subjects with particular responsibilities for a body, a self, or as individuals with particular tastes, biographies and dispositions.

Power in this view is the production and constitution of forms of embodied conduct and reflexivity through various knowledges (for example knowledges of management and organization). These work to focus, enhance, empower or enliven our responsibility for our 'selves', and thus in the process constrain or pattern our forms of conduct and dispositions. It is these knowledges and practices of enhanced self-responsibility, as Foucault argued (1983,1977), which underpin relations of exploitation (our disassociation from the products of our labour) and domination (relations of violence and force). While critical theorists such as Maucuse and Fromm attacked the modern construction of individuality during the post-war years in their work, (particularly using Freud's work) in more recent times it has been the influence of the French post-structuralists (Foucault, Irigaray, Cixous, Deleuze, Derrida) which have been influential in structuring critique of modern forms of power. Where this work can be distinguished from that of the critical theorists is in its emphasis on the productivity or positivity of power. Deleuze for instance, in a published conversation with Foucault, argues that in terms of power interest is not the final answer; there are investments of desire that function in a more profound and diffuse manner than our interests dictate. But of course we never desire against our interests . . . There are investments of desire that mould and distribute power (1977:215).

The shift here is then to understand our experience of our world as power-induced practice. In relation to the embodiment of power Fay argues (1987; 143-164), in his critique of Critical Social Science, that an over-reliance on psychology's epistemological commitments to mind and cognition leaves obscured the power-induced aspects of somatic learning - e.g. bodily attitudes. Here the detailed 'etching' of skeletons and muscles, as in the case the soldier, in ways which turn a body into the site of where 'ideas and identities' potentially fuse (1987:152), leads to an appreciation of the way meaning is not so much found in the mind, or some psycho-symbolic space, but more usefully understood as 'inscriptions carried in the physical bodies of those who engage in them' (1987:150 emphasis added). Furthermore Fay notes that while 'bodily training' is less obvious and organized for say the factory worker, the priest, the prisoner, the doctor, or the servant, than that of the soldier, the process is essentially the same. 'To become a person of a certain sort is to acquire a body and a set of bodily dispositions appropriate to this sort' (Fay, 1987:150). The key addition Foucault's work brings to this is that 'power', as a strategic, imperialising 'operation', is not understood to be seeking, in the first instance although it may in the last, to constrain and force a body to enact a certain kind of
person. More, the body is the target of seduction, enlivenment, or empowerment to a point where the performance of a particular 'person' is articulated. It is this positive effect, or positivity, that gives power its full saliency in Foucault's work. In his 'own' words Foucault puts this as follows:

I would also distinguish myself from the para-marxists like Marcuse who give the notion of repression an exaggerated role - because power would be a fragile thing if its only function were to repress, if it worked only through the mode of censorship, exclusion, blockage and repression, in the manner of the great Superego, exercising itself only in a negative way. If, on the contrary power is strong this is because as we are beginning to realise it produces effects at the level of desire - and also at the level of knowledge. (1980:59)

Using these assumptions labour and language can be said to live through the body, on its surface, in its depths, in what Burrell identifies as 'visceral morphological flows' (1996:657). Here modernism's divisions between mind and body, agency and structure, theory and practice, individual and society, 'shape shifts' into a concern for 'fluidity, flows and [the] liquidity of the human body' (Burrell, 1996: 657), as a pliable form through which power works. As McDowell and Court argue in relation to highly interactive jobs of the current era,

power relations in the workplace are based not solely on bureaucratic domination from above but also through the manipulation of patterns of desire, fantasy, pleasure, and self image, in which gendered notions of appropriate behaviour and expressions of sexuality in this widest sense are important mechanisms in the establishment of particular norms of acceptable workplace behaviour (1994:773).

'Knowledge's' Discursive formation.

Like McDowell (1997), I am concerned here with the way power works in the so-called 'knowledge-based economy' on bodies and attempts to (re)construct patterns of desire, pleasure and self-image. The discursive formation around 'knowledge' tends to focus on two key forms of conduct: an 'innovative' or 'creative' disposition and the inculcation of a 'desire to share' (Moran, 1999; Dhawan, 1999). While the focus of discussion is frequently on the way new information and communication technologies are fuelling this shift to the knowledge economy, 'knowledge management', as Cranfield University's Peter Murray notes, is 'primarily a people and process issue and only partly a technology issue' (Insurance Today, 1999). Just to underline this, in a roundtable discussion on knowledge management published in the US computer trade paper 'Information Week' one chemical company executive claimed that:
'Until you can get very comfortable sharing, you have a real problem accelerating the creative process', (Buckman, R in InformationWeek, 1999, emphasis added).

And his colleague in the greeting card company suggested that:

There is an inherent tension between efficiency and innovation. Current organisations have been designed for efficiency. What we're looking for in the future is innovation (Bailsford, T, Information Week, 1999).

The British Government's latest competitiveness white paper noted 'success in the knowledge driven economy requires entrepreneurship from everybody in a position to innovate' (1998: sect. 41.4 emphasis added).

Important knowledge may reside as much in the deliveryman who takes the product to the customer as it does in the highest paid scientist in the organization (1998:5.3).

The 'knowledge economy' could be said then to demand an innovative body with a desire to share in such a way that organisational and production knowledges are reconfigured into more efficient or valuable forms.

One approach to this is to use researchers to study and codify innovation and knowledge sharing practices. John Seely Brown, director of Xerox's Palo Alto Research Centre, for example outlines in a Harvard Business Review article (1996) on 'knowledge management' how Xerox employed anthropologists to 'harvest local innovation' (1996:162) from its own office workers. They 'found' that clerks were constantly improvising, inventing new methods to deal with unexpected difficulties and to solve immediate problems. . . These informal activities remain mostly invisible since they do not fall within the normal specified procedures that employees are expected to follow or managers are expected to see. . . such informal insights rarely spread beyond the local work group'. (1996:163 emphasis added)

'Knowledge management' then involved 'harvesting' (from the female locale in this case), codifying and distributing these innovations in computer software and copying techniques to Xerox's clients. The key point is that it is the tacit knowing produced by improvising female bodies engaged in seeking some control over the conditions of their daily working lives which become the 'fruit' for Xerox's innovations in document management. The target is the tacit, momentary, process-based knowledge which may or may not be spoken about (that is rendered explicit) by those whom enact this knowing.

As well as attempting to codify such knowledge, the formation's effort is to enliven the body in its own learning, sharing and creativity at work. Numerous advertising campaigns
for the new 'products' of the knowledge era - computers and telecommunications - feature this body. Microsoft's 'conductor' in its Office 2000 promotion who is at the keyboard of his computer (illustration 1) decked with candles and with one hand in the air in the stereotypical pose of a musician's creative flourish is a good example here. It shows firstly how the body is confirmed as the site where the demands of the knowledge economy - for innovative practice - is literally played out, and secondly how these power relations are often identified with men. There is however in this case an incongruity in that the first two occupational groups identified in the caption are those most associated with women.

Illustration 1.

The caption reads:

Creativity belongs to artists and musicians . . . and typists and administrators and managers. The impact that Microsoft Office 2000 has on personal productivity is dramatic. By automating processes and providing seamless communications, you can now spend less time on head-down menial jobs and more on the lively, creative aspects of business'.

Of course I am not assuming here that anthropologists at Xerox, or advertisers working for Microsoft, or knowledge management officers or the plethora of consultants and computer sales people involved in the selling of 'knowledge work/management', are
succeeding in enlivening and producing an innovative sharing, creative body-subject who will act as seed-head for the harvesting and distribution of lucrative tacit knowledge. But I am suggesting that the political struggles which form the relations of production are played out, to a significant extent, in the dispositions and forms of conduct demanded of bodies. As is clear from most research based accounts of knowledge management the politics of knowledge and expertise continue to be sites of struggle in workplaces (McKinlay, 1998; Fincham, 1999). What I am suggesting is that the 'body', rather than being discarded as unnecessary in a world of information and communication technologies, and dense knowledge processes, remains a crucial site for economic relations. Of course this is not the 'body' of industrial capitalism to which Marx refers, which was subject to 'the uniform motion of the instruments of labour' which worked to form 'the peculiar composition of the body of working people' (from Capital in Elster, 1986:161). This is the body whose innovative performance, desire to share and tacit knowledge is the target. Yet this body presents itself as a problem for firms seeking to retain valuable knowledge, and countries seeking to maintain stocks of human capital. As the DTI notes:

Where the employees in the company embody the firm's assets, new types of incentive structure are required to ensure they are motivated and retained. . . . Investment in skills also need to be supported by a culture in the workplace that allows knowledge, creativity and commitment of the workforce to be fully exploited. (1998:sect. 1.18 emphasis added)

The traditional problems of labour mobility, of hierarchy, of divisional structures, of professional group closure are intensified if we assume that the scarce resource is 'knowledge' rather than other more tangible, purchasable and concrete assets (Grant, 1996; Liebeskind, 1996; Tsoukas, 1996). But in order to better establish these links, between the 'knowledge economy' and this sharing, innovative, creative body, we first need to map out the discursive formation around 'knowledge'.

For Foucault a 'discursive formation', is a group of statements, linked together by a whole range of discursive practices. These allow particular objects and subjects to be identified and articulated. More specifically Foucault identifies discursive practices as practices which delimit a field of objects, provide a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, fix norms for the elaboration of concepts and more generally provide a 'play of prescriptions that designate its exclusions and choices' (1977:199). To illustrate it is helpful to take a statement and draw out some of these points. The following is from Max Boisot's 'Knowledge Assets, Securing Advantage in the Information Economy' (1998).

Promoted by the rapid spread of the information economy, we are only beginning to think of knowledge assets as economic goods in their own right. (Boisot, 1998:2)

The statement can be read as a microcosm of the discursive practices of the 'knowledge' formation. It assumes for instance the 'information economy' as an object and agent, i.e. something that 'spreads'. The 'information/knowledge economy', also known as the
'knowledge age', 'knowledge era', might be regarded as the meta-object/agent around which this formation 'orbits'. Most publications, authorities and practices reference this object/agent drawing on various authorities from different disciplines for veracity: from sociology (Bell, 1974; Castells, 1996), from economics (Machlup, 1984, OECD, 1996; Nelson and Winter, 1982; Nelson, 1996; Howitt, 1996; Chandler et al, 1998) and from management (Drucker, 1988; 1993; Stewart, 1997; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995).

As Foucault outlined discursive practices frequently assemble a number of diverse disciplines and sciences and 'regroups many of their individual characteristics into a new and an occasionally unexpected unity' (1977:200). For example various statements from these disciplines are then linked by and through the sets of the publishing, publicity and consultancy practices of governments, international policy authorities (OECD) and the management consultancy industry (the 'big four global accountancy, consultancy firms are key players here). This industry, particularly, provides a raft of established relations, clients, databases and marketing practices which speed up and intensify the distribution of this formation.

The distinctive aspect of this 'age', 'era', 'economy', as Boisot's phrase suggests, is that the industrial economy of goods, is being replaced with the 'weightless', 'less tangible' but highly concentrated post-industry economy of knowledge. Fritz Machlup's categorisation (1980) for instance asserts that the primary areas for such an economy are in education, communications media, information machines and information services. Extensions of this categorisation suggest a primary 'information market', and a secondary sector, usually industrial, where knowledge-intensive production is replacing capital or labour intensive work. The OECD and DTI use a categorisation which slides from high technology knowledge-based industries and knowledge-based services such as telecommunications, computer and information services, finance, insurance, through high medium and low technology industries (DTI, 1998).

My general point is that such statements fail to discuss their own textuality as they operate to establish identities, relations and the broad ideational features of the 'knowledge' discourse. If this form of analysis was addressed then statements, such as Boisot's, would not be understood as emanating from and establishing a 'we' which is 'beginning to think of knowledge assets as economic goods in their own right', that is as emanating from thinking subjects, but critically as providing subject positions through which a person may come to speak and act, in relation to an object/s i.e the information economy, or knowledge assets.

Professor Boisot 'himself', meanwhile becomes identified as an authority and source of value in relation to the 'knowledge economy' for the consultancy industry, the academic discipline, the conference, the seminar, the publishing industry. These reinforce a subject position which can speak on behalf of the formation's 'object' - in this case the meta-object is the knowledge economy/era/society/age or 'knowledge assets.
In terms of the 'play of prescriptions', the formation construes the worker and manager as knowledge worker, and 'knowledge manager' which carry an intense desire to increase the depth, sharing and intensity of knowledge-ability in institutions through enhanced knowledge sharing and co-ordination. The literature suggests that a combination of practices be used here: computer based communications, data technologies and enhanced formal or informal gatherings (Liebowitz, and Beckman, 1998; Stamp, 1995; Papows, 1998; Davenport and Prusak, 1998). Through these knowledge workers and managers might be said to be worked on, and to work on themselves.

This involves, as Liebowitz, and Beckman (1998) prescribe, a typology of practices: collecting, selecting, storing, sharing, applying, creating and selling knowledge with each stage demanding different processes and technologies. 'Identifying' might involve for instance the traditional training aspects of 'skills assessment' and the filling of knowledge gaps with training activity. In this formation however such practices are recast as appropriate for 'learning officers' who might also be assigned the tasks of 'collecting' or acquiring knowledge to fill gaps in an organization's knowledge domain. Storing meanwhile will likely involve a range of computer-based technologies. The Financial Times survey of Knowledge Management suggested that:

> Organisations need technologies to support four function/processes . . traditional explicit information management, as well as collaborative technologies to manage interaction between people. They also need a data management view, in order to organise and store information, combined with an enterprise view for business usage. Knowledge management sits in the middle and integrates all those requirements, which distinguishes it from pure information management' (Newing, 1999)

But it is the 'sharing' of knowledge which is most frequently identified as the core problem to which knowledge management addresses itself. The official KPMG report of 'lessons learned' at the consultancy's Knowledge Management Conference in London in 1998 noted that most participants were concerned with turning

> individuals' knowledge into organizational knowledge (by means of connecting them or have them share experiences to a database or stimulating their innovativeness)' rather than finding creative ways of retaining their professionals.(KPMG, 1999)

Knowledge management, the report says, 'embodies the dream that when one person learns something, everybody else in the company knows it' (KPMG, 1999). Yet this needs to be put in context, as KPMG's Daniel Andriessen argues (1998), the dream of reducing the cost of knowledge to firms has met the harsh lessons learned by professional white collar workers during years of corporate downsizing. They are said to be simply unwilling to
trust the company for which they work. They ask themselves: "Why should I share my knowledge with the company and risk getting the axe once they have all I know?" Companies are faced with a seemingly insoluble problem: How to gain the trust of employees to share knowledge against an on-going background of downsizing and re-engineering programs. The situation becomes even more severe when there is a drive to use IT (e.g., Lotus Notes) to share knowledge. The problem with systems like these is that: everyone wants to get knowledge out, but nobody wants to put knowledge in. (Andriessen, 1998)

These comments are echoed in a recent Computer Weekly column:

Two options exist: manage the knowledge (its an object), or manage the people with the knowledge (it’s a process). IT prefers the former because it puts knowledge into databases and squirts it around networks. The latter approach accepts irritating realities, like the fact that employees are chary of yielding up their knowledge, as it's their own personal 'unique selling point/value proposition' (Computer Weekly, 1999).

It is perhaps little wonder then that prescriptions for 'sharing' or 'knowledge transfer' (Davenport and Prusak, 1998) prescribe 'talk' as the key site and method. "Start talking and get to work" is better advice in an economy driven by knowledge, advise Davenport and Prusak (1998:91). Of course this can involve any number of formal and informal settings and practices: water cooler chat, debriefings, fairs, conferences and forums with direct face to face contact identified as the most effective.

It is tempting to suggest at this point that if business people need to turn to a book on 'working knowledge' to discover that 'talk' is the key to sharing knowledge, and 'a major factor in the success of any knowledge transfer project is the common language of the participants' (Davenport and Prusak, 1998:98), then a broad crisis in the relations of production, to take this form of analysis for a moment, is underway. This may be the case. But at the same time I want to suggest that the presence of such prescriptions, shrouded often as 'research', suggests that the formation is also at work on the body. The emphasis on physicality, on breaking down barriers, of speaking in a common language, of sharing through face to face communication, suggests an enhanced 'communicative body', which carries a desire to share, teach, learn and forgets, or puts aside, its positioning as a commodity by individuating economic relations.

**Putting the body back in - the special place of 'tacit' knowing**

Michael Polanyi's treatment of the distinction between explicit and tacit knowing (1958;1969) has a special place in the emerging discursive formation around knowledge (Machlup, 1980:45-6; Nonaka, 1996; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Boisot, 1998; DTI, 1998: 5.6,5.9). Polanyi's oft-quoted remark - 'we know more than we can say', is spread widely across this discursive surface. While Polanyi's broad phenomenological reflections on
knowledge, the body and meaning are frequently at odds with the position he is assigned in the formation, his work serves as a touchstone. Why is Polanyi's work drawn upon?

Despite Polanyi's credentials as a scientist, his concern with the basis of scientific discovery, and his anti-communism, it is, I would argue, the functional and instrumental character of tacit knowledge, as he describes it, and its seeming ability to reveal to the 'knower' the whole, the true and the real, which is most seductive in Polanyi's work. His understanding of 'knowing' is based on relations between subsidiary understanding - embedded knowledge - as it bears on a focal object by virtue of an integration performed by a person (1969:182). This provides a way of understanding how we as 'knowers' create meaningful knowledge. As Polanyi argues

Meaning arises either by integrating clues in our own body or by integrating clues outside, and all meaning known outside is due to our subsidiary treatment of explicit things as we treat our body. We may be said to interiorise these things or to pour ourselves into them. It is by dwelling in them that we make them mean something on which we focus our attention (1969:183 emphasis added)

In essence knowing is a result of pouring ourselves into or folding the outside into ourselves - interiorising an outside. As a result Polanyi argues that all knowledge, including mathematics and sciences, is 'either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge' (1969:195).

The ideal of a strictly explicit knowledge is indeed self-contradictory. Deprived of their tacit co-efficients, all spoken words, all formulae, all maps and graphs are strictly meaningless. (1969:195, emphasis added)

The discursive formation on 'knowledge' meanwhile takes aspects of this but ignores his more general position on the nature of knowledge. Nonaka (1996), co-author of the much referenced 'The Knowledge-creating company' (1995) for instance suggests that tacit knowledge is highly personal. It is hard to formalise and, therefore, difficult to communicate to others. Or in the words of philosopher Michael Polanyi, 'We can know more than we can tell'. Tacit knowledge is also deeply rooted in action and an individual's commitment to a specific context. (1996:28)

Having said that Nonaka then goes on to identify four 'basic ways of creating knowledge in the organization' one of which involves the translation of tacit into explicit knowledge. But while Polanyi's work provides a platform to challenge simplistic and exploitative reading of 'knowledge management', and to open out a field of enquiry in this field, it is Polanyi's understanding of the body which is crucial, I would suggest, to the inclusion of his work in this formation. The body is clearly a crucial site for 'knowledge management' and thus the 'knowledge economy'.
Polanyi's body is, in all the experiments and practices he cites, a masculine, instrumental ideal. As Polanyi summarised: 'In all our transactions with the world around us, we use our body as our instrument' (1969:183). Polanyi's sense-giving and sense-reading body is found, in his texts, at work on experiments, reading, swimming, and learning to read x-ray and stereo-scopic images of other bodies. It is, in other words, the body of a masculine, 'knowledge-worker' who in the course of its egocentric marvelling at its own abilities, tends to lack a broader imagination of its positioning in social relations. Unlike for instance the philosophical treatments of meaning and knowledge in the social world presented by the critical theorist or the radical relations of meaning to embodiment presented by the poststructuralists (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988), Polanyi's body performs instrumental actions, skills and is thoroughly versed in the encultured knowledges of the professional/managerial middle class. Furthermore the body from which he speaks is the standardised body of 'man the knower' (Greene, 1969:xvi), which, as Acker argues, is understood as physically-able, disengaged from reproduction, emotionally under-control, lacking desire, isolated in its own performance and disassociated from itself (1990). While Polanyi's phenomenal challenge to positivism is clear, his 'experience' of himself and his body has a purity, a detachment, and idealism. It is this which proves highly seductive for the discursive formation around 'knowledge'.

Spender (1998, Spender and Grant, 1996) and others of a more critical persuasion (Tsookas, 1996) regard 'tacit knowledge' as a polite and reasonably unproblematic label for what is a raft of forms of knowing, e.g. erotic, intuitive, spiritual, carnal, psychic. While these might, in a pluralist epistemology, be regarded as 'knowledge', the discursive formation itself tends to forbid such inclusions. Meanwhile Polanyi's rational-instrumental body provides a sanitised and safe source of inspiration. Polanyi for instance does not talk, as many others have attempted to, of the erotics of pedagogy (McWilliams, 1996), the seduction of leadership (Calas and Smirich, 1992; Hearn and Parkin, 1995, Hearn et al, 1992) or the seemingly unconscious discrimination and harassment of women by men in non-traditional work (Collinson and Collinson, 1996; Cockburn 1991). When Polanyi addresses the political working of 'tacit' knowing, in his critique of Stalinism in the context of the cold war (1958), his position is so centred in his revulsion for the un-freedoms of the Soviet Bloc, that it lacks, as the Frankfurt School critical theorists outline, a critique of western indoctrination, and privilege. Polanyi's work then is used in the formation to buttress and define the kind of body the knowledge formation seeks to target. At the same time it brings with it a lack of appreciation of the way interiorisation (in-foldings) situate power relations in the micro-morphological flows of desire, perception and action, and which could then be said to conduct our forms of conduct or structure, our dispositions for the 'knowledge society'.

Knowledge Business - tertiary education in the knowledge economy - a case of 'Find a knowledge market, suck it, satisfy it and move on?'

The above suggests, via a brief critical reading of Polanyi's work, the importance of the 'body' to relations of production or forms of power embedded in the so-called 'knowledge economy'. The body, but more precisely the structuring of its desires, the inscribing of its surfaces, and its forms of practices, must be regarded as a key site for the encounter between forces and relations of production (Prichard, in press; Morse, 1994; Hetrick and Boje, 1992; Jackson and Carter, 1998).
As noted the discursive formation around 'knowledge', takes a keen interest in learning - identified as a desire to share, to become innovative and creative.

In the knowledge corporation, though, the push of training is converted into the pull of learning. Instead of waiting to be trained, its employees seek out knowledge on their own . . . The focus of responsibility has shifted to being taught to wanting to share' (Dhawan, 1999)

Meanwhile the more formal sites of 'learning' have attracted the attention of the discursive formation. International policy advice, 'guru'-style management publications, and the education research literature has begun to re-position post-compulsory education as a core site in the emergence the ‘knowledge economy’ (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1997, Hamel and Prahalad, 1996, Stewart, 1997; Machlup, 1980, DTI, 1998). Universities for example become the incubators of the digital age (Aley, 1997) as students and educators become knowledge workers or knowledge capitalists while the interests of corporations and universities converge (Gibbons et al, 1994) to produce a mutually supporting 'knowledge infrastructure' (Etzkowitz, 1997). As the sociologist Castells observes:

If knowledge is the electricity of the new informational-international economy, then the institutions of higher education are the power sources on which the new development process must rely. (Castells, 1994:16)

Knowledge however is broadly reconstructed. From a complicated set of reading and writing practices and relations between student and teacher, it tends to be construed as a commodified good or service packaged and sold either directly to a variety of markets or supplied on contract to firms and agencies including State funding agencies.

In Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Britain this reconstruction has been aided by the Neo-liberal shift in public policy, the increasing participation in post-compulsory education, the redistribution of the costs of tuition to immediate consumers, and the progressive managerial reconstruction of these public service organisations. The result is a more highly corporatised and commercially focused tertiary education. While 'knowledge' and learning have always been valuable positional goods, in the current setting they have become market goods, to be sold through advertising and consumer marketing practices (Marginson, 1998; 1996).

But if we draw a Foucauldian line of analysis, the emphasis is not on the way education practices are commodified, but on the way the new practices work on and through the body - how we become: saturated consumers of knowledge, willing collaborators, or helpful formalisers of tacit knowing. Commodification then is a broad term under which a more materialist reading of power, that is, the way power works on the body might be provided. Foucault suggests that in order to understand the productivity of power, ‘One needs to study what kind of body the current society needs (Foucault, 1980). If, as has been argued above, it is the communicative, sharing, knowledge-able body which is also 'jacked-in' or 'immersed' in digital code and knowledge goods, which the developing order 'needs', then tertiary education has a distinctive position. Tertiary education's importance to the knowledge era/society/economy is not simply as
a source of exploitable knowledge, but more broadly as a space where bodies can be inscribed as 'learners', preferably with life-long consumptive habits/desires for knowledge goods.

To put this in some context, Foucault argued that power would be weak if it worked simply by repression - by constraining the body, forcing it to undergo rigorous disciplinary practices. Repression invited, Foucault argues, a 'revolt' of the body (1980, 56). Like Daniel Bell, Foucault regards the student protests of the 1960s as just such a 'revolt of the body'. Bell notes:

In post-industrial society, the chief problem is the organization of science, and the primary institution the university or the research institute . . . in greater measure the student revolt (of the late 1960s) was a reaction to the 'organizational harnesses' a post-industrial society inevitably drops on intellectual work (Bell, 1974:116-118)

Foucault goes on to argue that power's response to this 'revolt of the body' has been an 'economic (and perhaps almost ideological) exploitation of eroticisation, from sun-tan products to pornographic films'(1980:57).

We find a new mode of investment which presents itself no longer in the form of control by repression, but that of control by stimulation: 'Get undressed - but be slim, good looking tanned'. (1980:57)

What might this suggest for education? The 'knowledge economy' demands life-long knowledge users and producers. Tertiary education is regarded as a significant site on both counts. Power works in both the formal and informal curricula not to repress and control the 'student body', but to enliven it, stimulate it, engage and focus its desire on itself, on different forms of pleasures, life-styles, modes of consumption and communication. The effect is to accentuate the university into a site of consumption, much like a shopping mall, where knowledge is consumed, and also as a generator of such goods¹ (Thompson, 1998; Ritzer, 1996).

Consider for instance the way 'education' is positioned in one advertisement from the Australian-owned ANZ Bank (illustration 2). The advertisement's caption reads: 'How ANZ can help you have a home and a life'. The advertisement use Acupuncture's theory of body lines to display what the bank regards as the typical consumption items on people's life line. The advertisement clearly links the body, consumption and education.

¹ Massey University is situated in Palmerston North - a provincial city some 140 miles from New Zealand's capital, Wellington. The city's main 'industry' is often regarded as education and, 'knowledge'. In the early 1990s the city was 're-branded' by marketing and communications consultants hired by the city council as The Knowledge City. Massey University, various Crown Research Institutes (AgResearch, Crop and Food Research, Hort Research, Landcare, and the NZ Dairy Research Institute), a Japanese-owned private university, International Pacific College, and a polytechnic make up the core of this sector. Economic impact studies argue that about 40 percent of the City's working population are employed directly in the sector while every 100 full-time students adds 2.6 million to the economy, generates 17 direct jobs, 18 indirect jobs and fills 17 four bedroom housing units. There are more than 6000 student rental properties in the city.
Consider also the following advertising copy from Britain's newest University:

Vibrant, vivacious, and very exciting - that's life at the UK's first new purpose-built University campus in 25 years. Enjoy the very best of student life in a unique waterfront setting surrounded by a wealth of bars, nightclubs, cafes, cinema and sport amenities in the heart of the fast growing and changing city of Lincoln. The University of Lincoln campus experience - study it live it love it.

Here the more formal aspects of learning and teaching have become a side line to the consumptive aspects of higher education (see also Fairclough, 1993). Ritzer meanwhile observes that:

Making themselves more like shopping malls is a positive step that universities can take. However in order to attract and please student-consumers, universities will also need to eliminate as much negativity as possible. After all, shopping malls have few if any negatives; the emphasis is on the positives. Thus we can expect universities to continue the trend toward grade inflation . . . steps will be taken to reduce the number of students who drop out or flunk out . . (and) a process of ‘dumbing down of higher education’ (1996:15).
The more formal curriculum meanwhile has been reconstructed, ostensibly in the interest of employability but also on the basis of consumer choice and satisfaction (Trowler, 1998). Surveys and audits have followed which attempt to demonstrate and report on 'satisfaction' and quality of 'services' provided. In the process a new kind of student is evoked - the communicative, consumptive, performative student-body whose stimulation, satisfaction and knowledge consumptive dispositions and desires are to be enhanced - particularly via information and communication technologies. Yet this may not be enough. Cultural theorist and self-proclaimed cyber-feminist Sadie Plant suggests that the new knowledge consumption patterns will leave the universities in their wake. She locates this desire to learn with the students themselves.

It has become increasingly obvious to students that specialist knowledge is increasingly unhelpful in a parallel world which favours versatility, adaptability and breadth. . . This generation needs neither training for careers, nor simply 'education for its own sake'. But rather the confidence and the ability to learn, survive and communicate in world increasingly geared to the new discontinuities and contingencies which lie in wait on graduation day. Twentieth Century students are in any case learning to learn for themselves, becoming detectives, hunting for contacts and data on the Net. . . these developments themselves have significant intellectual and institutional effects. (Plant, 1995:46)

The quote highlights, astonishingly perhaps, how closely aligned this cultural theorist's work is to that of international policy advisers, corporations and various vice-chancellors of the new economy (Eisenstadt and Vincent, 1998). It also illustrates how desire for the consumptive aspects of learning is being enhanced and dispersed away from the established disciplines and into electronic networks. Of course the 'oral logic' (Morse, 1994) of this desire is the focus here — bodies first and then minds and ideas. What is induced is the production of 'tacit' structures for the information economy, that is, the consuming, stimulated body which seeks out its intensities in knowledge goods and a desire to communicate, innovate, and share.

**Performing the manager's body in the new tertiary education**

But perhaps in relation to higher education this work on the body is most pronounced in those sites where the new commercial economy of stimulation is most focused: on the bodies of the senior post-holders, in the management teams and in the micro-spaces of managerial offices where the body of these 'managers' are orientated to these new 'realities' of 'knowing'. While mainstream academics might, as Plant writes be 'traumatised' or be nostalgically re-emphasising a golden age where classes were small and jobs for life (Plant, 1995:44), it is among the newly suited managerial elite of tertiary education where the body is most radically being worked on.

The brief quotation in the title of this paper is from an interview with the head of an engineering department in an East Midlands Further Education College (equivalent to a community college in the US and Polytechnic in New Zealand). It exemplifies in a few words the new aggressive marketised character of post-compulsory education in the UK, induced in part by the combined effects of reductions in public funding, the shift to an
recruitment-based funding regime and the re-masculinisation of senior management (Whitehead, 1996). In the early and mid-1990s this education sector was subject, like no other sector in the UK, to concerted Thatcherite 'attack' (Prichard, in press). The full quote is:

There is a market out there, get in there, suck it, satisfy it, and then move on. The only way you can do that is by staying light on your feet, and we are being slowed down a little. (by course accreditation processes and the funding authority etc.)

Before this the speaker said:

My background is engineering, and I was fairly commercial in that. So it was the way I think. Now what we have done is we have spotted gaps in the market, and we have gone for courses that have been extremely successful and there are particularly a lot of computer courses that are very fashionable and you can run it for two years and you’ve got a queue a mile long, and the third year nobody is interested anymore. Whatever it was, disappeared.

In this we can identify aspects of the 'work' demanded of the new entrepreneurial body-subject. Such a body is 'light on its feet', alert to demand/desire/fashion for educational consumption, to 'gaps in the market'. It also performs its commitment through satisfying this demand/desire/fashion.

Conclusions

What this suggests then is that 'organisations' and their routines should be regarded as tacit, as Nelson and Winter (1982) are at pains to point out. But that their 'tacitness' must be read corporeally, and not limited to sanitised masculine body ideals. For example erotic, consumptive, somatic, affective ways of knowing need to be addressed. It is here that power works, and the new economy with it. Tertiary education is a key site for the new economy, not because it is a functional or commercial source of ideas or revenues, but because it is involved in the production of a communicative-consumptive body, that is innovative, yet inscribed with a desire to share knowledge. The discursive formation around 'knowledge' tends to analytically strip knowing from people. Its practices tend to objectify knowledge for codification and testing. If it is not stripped away and objectified for codification as computer algorithms or as highly symbolic language, it is read as a cognitive formation, as frames, styles, schemes or activity systems (Blackler, 1997). These tend not to touch or breath or suck or live. The above argues that this is but a gloss. The imperialising work is being done on and through the body as a site of consumption and of communication.

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