



December 30, 2007

*Q*ualitative
*S*ociology
*R*eview

Volume III

Issue 3

**Ethnographies of
Artistic Work**

edited by

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Available Online

www.qualitativesociologyreview.org

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Qualitative Sociology Review

Volume III, Issue 3 – December 2007

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.3.3.01>

Howard S. Becker and Marie Buscatto

Editorial introduction: Special Issue “Ethnographies of Artistic Work”

Many sociologists have picked their research topics - sometimes those which occupied them for their entire career - because of some experience, something in their background which gave them a more detailed knowledge of a topic than is available to most other people. You might belong to an ethnic group whose distinctive culture appears interesting to you once you have acquired the sociological ideas that give it that interest. You might have participated in a political group or activity and now feel that the conventional accounts you read of such political actions don't square with your experience. You may have worked in a factory or office whose culture, which seems so banal seen from the outside, takes on great interest once you learn the sociological way of thinking about it. And you might, like the editors of this issue of the *Qualitative Sociology Review* Journal, have practiced one of the arts, performed in musical groups before a public, and learned what such performances require of you, what the "real" problems of being an artist of that kind are (as opposed to the problems some theory might suggest you will have), and learn the real world contingencies that govern the eventual form art works of that kind take.

When you study an art you practice yourself, you know from what you have done and what has happened to you the problems, large and small, people who do that kind of work confront. You know how the work requires you to cooperate or compete with people in a variety of other statuses, and how what they do affects what you can do. You know how recalcitrant the physical materials you work with can be, how they can refuse to act as you expect them to. You know how the audience for the work you and your colleagues do can react, what you have to fear from them and how you will shape your work to avoid those problems. You also know that creativity, even if often experienced as a very intimate and subjective process and presented as a solitary experience, is also shaped by the artist's past experiences, technical constraints, collective arrangements and larger social realities. Two articles presented in this special issue wonderfully illustrate such points. Having studied computer music at a professional level before starting as a PhD candidate in Chinese studies, Basile Zimmerman felt prompted to study “*music creation involving technical objects*”. Observing the work of Xiao Deng, a chinese disc jockey in 2003 and 2004, Zimmerman could show the agency of objects which intervene in the process of this artist's musical creativity. He can thus describe, through very specific examples, how the DJs' creativity is, in several ways, technically, physically and socially influenced. Erin O'Connor, in order to understand glassblowing practices better – from problem-solving to personal style – decided to learn how to blow glass in diverse contexts, not only to reproduce existing forms, but also to develop original works of art. As a result, she can show, through her own experiments, how the artist's “*embodied history*,” as

well as the “*place, or situation, of embodiment,*” affect how individuals blow glass *in situ*. Only daily, careful, precise observations, based on a quasi-professional knowledge of artistic production, enabled these two researchers to understand how artistic creation occurs over time. They show how artists, confronted with difficulties, failures or disappointments, find solutions deeply ingrained in the social context they come from and/or are part of.

When you study an art you practice yourself, you also know how the artist's physical appearance may affect how things are done, and your own participation in artistic activities. Being a woman, an old man, a young foreigner, or a local affects what you or others create as artistic products. That happened to Marie Buscatto. As a female amateur jazz singer, she could not only identify the marginalized situation of females in the French jazz world, but also observe all those ordinary situations (musical or social) where this gendered marginalization was “naturally” produced, elaborated and legitimated. Only through repeated observation of concerts, rehearsals, jam sessions or private gatherings could she progressively identify how jazz professionals, men and women, singers and instrumentalists, created “*the arrangement between the sexes*” (to borrow Goffman's powerful concept).

Being part of a “world of art”, you also learn to be skeptical of any account of an art work that assumes that the work represents the cumulated choices of one person, the “artist,” whose “intentions” it therefore embodies. You know, instead, that the work results from the choices of many people whose work is conventionally seen as auxiliary but which in fact exercise as determining an influence on what audience members get as the artist's intentions. You also learn that people will find ways to communicate and interact, verbally and through gestures, to get things done, one way or another. Using videos of Bombay film makers at work which he shot as an assistant director, Emmanuel Grimaud shows how “*film making gestures*” enable the people on a film set to coordinate their activities. The crowd of people on a Bollywood set may not even know what the film they are working on is about. But they know how to do their jobs and, through simple film gestures, cooperate to produce a “coherent” work of art. The way they interpret those gestures, the habits they have developed as professionals, thus affect the content of the final movie.

But, of course, you don't have to be a “real” practitioner of the art you study, though that helps you grasp nuances more easily. You can achieve the same sort of intimate knowledge by offering yourself as a volunteer willing to do the chores others will be glad to hand over to you. Theaters can always use people to do the hundreds of things, not all of them requiring professional skills, putting on a play requires. That's what Celia Bense did with the Circle Theater in order to study all the activities--artistic, administrative, technical and aesthetic-- and all the social roles necessary to the production and distribution of a dramatic work. She can then account for the “*cooperation modes*” in theater activity as well as the “*motives*” that lead participants to cooperate so that the theatrical organization continues to operate.

You may also get access to people who act as artists in very closed areas without doing anything, without helping in any way, even if this makes it more difficult to observe what needs to be observed. This is what Sabine Chalvon, in French television, and Marie Gibert, working with Yemenite dance companies in Israel, have done. Chalvon studied “*literary adaptations for French television.*” She simultaneously analyzes the works and the context in which they are produced in order to relate the “*moral configurations that emerge in the stories*” to activities carried out by identifiable persons, in specific, empirically observable circumstances.

Through an analysis of the processes of writing and producing televised works of fiction, she studied how television characters acquire a moral nature. She finds that the moral landscape these characters are located in is neither stable, autonomous, transparent or consensual. It is, rather, shaped by material logics, constrained by temporal dynamics, dependent on professional coordination. Marie-Pierre Gibert focused on the work of Yemenite “ethnic” dance companies in Israel, seeking to understand how this artistic activity helped produce a “Yemenite identity” in relation to an “Israeli” sense of belonging. Her detailed analysis of “Yemenite” dance repertoires in Israel, combined with a classical ethnography of dance practices and their context of performance, led her to identify the “*dynamics of self-positioning of the Yemenite group*” within the surrounding Israeli society. Her careful description of how choreographers, dancers and audience develop specific dance forms shows how those dancing Yemenite-Israeli compromises enable people to both “feel” Yemenite and Israeli.

All these researchers have thus been there when IT is happening, when the work of putting together the play, the musical performance, the film, the scenario, the dance choreography or the glassblowing was done. They combine a description of the artistic work and its context with a careful analysis of the work of art itself--its content, its form, its moral components and its technical realities--in order to connect WHAT is done with HOW it is done. Being there means you needn't depend on second-hand knowledge, on what someone tells you about what happened. We can't always be there, but if we have been there at least some of the time we can ask meaningful questions we wouldn't otherwise know enough to ask. Because we know how these cooperative activities usually take place, we recognize meaningful departures from routine and can look for and ask about other changes in cooperative patterns that may have produced these unexpected results.

This is, perhaps, only to say that it is better to know than to guess, better to have seen than to speculate, better to have experienced the realities of art making than to accept idealized stories about Art. You can then combine what artists produce as works of art and how they produce them in a more rigorous, complex and lively way. Because so many social scientists have accepted this challenge, Marie Buscatto could co-organize a conference at La Sorbonne in Paris in 2006, at which more than fifty researchers analyzed and reported on this kind of research experience in several art worlds: music, dance, visual art, glassblowing, circus, theater, graffiti, textile design, cinema, internet art, architecture, story telling or television. Some of the papers are published in a special issue of the *Ethnologie française* Journal, “L'art au travail”, beginning of 2008. Some of them, profiting from on line publication, are found in this issue of *Qualitative Sociology Review*.

Citation

Becker, Howard S. and Marie Buscatto (2007) “Editorial introduction: Special Issue - Ethnographies of Artistic Work.” *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year
(http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)



Qualitative Sociology Review

Volume III, Issue 3 – December 2007

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.3.3.02>

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“Des personnages de si près tenus”, TV Fiction and Moral Consensus

Abstract

How can we understand the adaptations of literary classics made for French television? We simultaneously analyzed the works and the context in which they were produced in order to relate the moral configurations that emerge in the stories to activities carried out by identifiable members of the production team, in specific, empirically observable circumstances. This empirical approach to the constitution of the moral panorama in which characters evolve rejects the idea of the pure autonomy of ideological contents, suggesting instead a study of the way normative demands and professional ethics are combined in practice, thus combining a sociology of characters and a sociology of professionals and showing how professional priorities influence production choices. This detaches the moral question from the philosophical horizon it is associated with in order to make it an object of empirical study. Adopting this perspective produces unexpected findings. Observation shows that the moral landscape in which characters are located is neither stable, autonomous, transparent, or consensual. It is instead caught up in material logics, constrained by temporal dynamics, and dependent on professional coordination. It is traversed by tensions between professional logics, and logics of regulation.

Keywords

Fiction; Television; Literary adaptations; Moral sociology; Television production ethnography; Characters and moral life

French television offers fictional programming that is the object of recurrent criticism. It is criticized for presenting characters who are too smooth, too wise, too accommodating. Such criticism can be found in the press, written by critics, but it is also widely voiced by professionals, as well, who complain about the tone of French television and about the “moral order” that reigns in its fictional programming. The work I am presenting here seeks neither to express this criticism, nor to argue with it, but to look at it and see where it leads. French televised fiction is considered highly structured on a normative level; the characters it presents are often positive heroes, the realm of their explorations is seen as confined to certain acceptable activities. In this study I wish to take the opportunity to understand more precisely the way, at a given moment, in the heart of the televisual institution, this ranking of acceptable actions is established. How are moral consensuses formed, what is the nature of the

final decisions, how is responsibility collectively taken for the consolidation of this normative order?

This article aims less to look at the content of this moral order – which is the object of other facets of my work that have been developed elsewhere – than at the way in which it is formed. The question raised consists in knowing whether it is possible to grasp, from a sociological perspective, the practical way in which these normative contents are developed. For a long time ideological criticism has dealt with the content as if it were “already there,” and then the work of the sociologist consisted simply of revealing the ideological structure of the texts of mass culture, the way one would dig the skeleton of a dinosaur out of the sand, that solid, consistent and stable framework that kept society and its plans together. But if one adheres to a less deterministic view of the social order, one is led to move the center of sociological attention to the very genesis of these productions. The approach suggested in this work therefore proposes to simultaneously analyze the works and the context in which they are produced in order to relate the moral configurations that emerge in the stories to activities carried out by identifiable persons, in specific, empirically observable circumstances. To do this it proposes an ethnographic analysis of the processes of writing and of producing televised works of fiction.

How the Study Was Carried Out

The study whose preliminary results I wish to sketch here deals with *literary adaptations for television*. It concerns mainly adaptations of novels, short stories, tales or comic strips, in televised fictions (TV films or cartoons) intended for adults or children. Such works existed in written form before being adapted for television. By authors as diverse as Homer, Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo, Paul Féval, Emile Zola, Hector Malo, Jules Renard, Daniel Defoe, Hergé or Goscinny and works like the *Odyssey*, *Le Comte de Monte Cristo*, *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, *Les Misérables*, *Le Bossu*, *Nana*, *Sans Famille*, *Poil de Carotte*, *Tintin* ou *Robinson Crusoe*, etc. The advantage of this corpus of literary adaptations was that the original texts provided a point of departure for comparison: it was possible to contrast the film versions with the literature that had inspired them and thus to discover almost cartographically the transformations of their moral ideals.

The investigation follows the different stages of the production of works of televised fiction, from conception to completion, in three film production companies, in public television stations, during filming, festivals, and press screenings. It consisted of an ethnographic immersion, interviews, and an investigation among hand-picked informants familiar with the problematics of this study and trained to gather the type of material sought after. Attention was focused not on the functioning of the professional environments, but on the influence that carrying out their activities had on the development of the characters.

I carried out my inquiries on the functioning of the professional environments in 1988, and then later on in successive waves. Working this way enabled me to observe the changes which have occurred in the organization of French television and their consequences on the manufacture of contents. Because I was seeking to understand the change of the characters' aspirations, I was led to undertake an entire network of inquiries among scriptwriters, directors, producers, actors, make-up artists, costumers, sound engineers, cameramen, etc., in order to understand how the latter had understood them and tried to make them concrete. Indeed, characters are dependent on a large number of participants who, from one end of the chain of production to the other, intervene to define them. The division of artistic labour is

accompanied with what one may call a division of moral work which attributes to each one a particular place, which needs to be described, in the production of these assemblages of morality.

For this reason, the issue of the making of the moral landscape in which the characters evolve – an issue which is at the heart of my concerns - breaks up into several questions that need to be addressed simultaneously. First of all, one needs to understand the place of each professional body in the construction of all characters and in the development of what will constitute their common world. It is necessary then, for each trade, to understand what is linked to professional requirements or to concerns of general ethics properly speaking. Professional requirements are identified according to criteria related to optimal conditions to accomplish its mission. Concerns of general ethics are related to a diagnosis of the state of the society and the values which, from the point of view of the TV professionals, can, have to or do not have to, be defended by the characters.

This study thus looks at the different participants involved in the production of an audiovisual work and at the way they successively assume responsibility for the question of the morality of the fictional world. To achieve this, it follows the entirety of their activities in sequential order while proposing an ethnography of their concerns as they are expressed through criticisms, complaints, demands, or disappointments, at every level of the chain of production, as a function of the characteristics unique to each profession. The idea, and perhaps the originality, of this study is that it gathers the assessments, critical or self-critical, that the various protagonists express among themselves, address to the work or to its characters, without distinguishing those that bear on the conditions in which their professions are exercised and those that bear on the traits of the characters.

This methodology is tied to the very specific nature of the products: it is not *objects*, but *subjects* that come out of the chain of production. The dynamics of production is a dynamics of incarnation. The chain of production engenders beings who are endowed with morality and reason. The characters have a sense of good and evil, aspirations concerning the way in which they should conduct their lives, and interpretations about the reasons that prevent them from achieving their ideals. But at the same time, the way they manifest these traits depends on the more or less successful way they have been constructed. Therefore, the judgements to which they are subjected by those who create them, mix judgements *on what they do* and judgements *on the way they have been created*. If one wants to understand how professional logics play a role in the definition of moral contents, it is thus necessary to observe the articulation between these two dimensions, the way this articulation is made explicit and evolves. And in order to do so, one needs to follow in detail all the operations which constitute the chain of production.

The Concerns of the Adaptor

The task of reconciling the diverse imperatives falls in the most detailed and most imperative way to authors/adaptors. To create a credible story adaptors must reevaluate the entire moral architecture of the text given to them. Their work consists of bringing together a certain number of temporal scales: the time in which the story takes place; that of the time when the novel was written (sometimes several centuries later); the successive cinematographic or televisual adaptations that have already been made; and the times in which they are living – or that they can envision in the future. Dealing with periods very distant from each other places adaptors in a very unique situation. Because they cannot be content simply to note the differences that

arise, in a vague feeling of cultural relativism, they must act upon them. They must reduce them, like a surgeon reduces a fracture. They must derive the consequences of the transformations that arise and undertake a work of reevaluation of the different elements available to reorganize the plots while retaining credible characters in a new context. They who are on the front lines: their professional competence will be evaluated according to their ability to rearticulate the moral horizons.

In order to impose his own professional priorities, the scriptwriter/adaptor must begin by energetically fighting against all sorts of established hierarchies. When a writer undertakes an adaptation of a classical text for television he begins by upsetting all sorts of hierarchies. He changes the nature of the work he is dealing with and whose original status he is degrading. He seizes the text, takes it apart, cuts it into pieces, explodes it. He turns a completed text into an incomplete text. The tale was closed, now it is opened up. However majestic, however brilliant it once was, it is stripped down to become a simple draft, which feeds a script that is itself only a document of preparation, because in the audiovisual world what is written down is always in a subordinate position. The original text is downgraded. Modernization imposes a de-ranking.

This involves not only the text. It also involves the organization of labor. In this first phase, and that concerns the sketching of the moral landscape in which the characters evolve, the scriptwriters, not the directors, have the most important role. Directors emphasize or strengthen a trait but the decisive gesture does not belong to them. This statement reverses the situation as it has been established in France, where the director is seen as the principal author of the televised work. From the point of view that concerns us – and which is perhaps most important in relation to the sociological question of the influence of the mass media – the study begins by upsetting a double hierarchy: the hierarchy of works that placed the original masterpiece above the script, and the professional hierarchy that placed the director above the scriptwriter.

The work of the adaptor for television consists less in taking up a general challenge concerning the inter-understanding of cultures than in isolating elements that appear impossible to transpose. Indeed, unlike theater directors who are constrained by respect for the texts they are interpreting, the television scriptwriter is free to take great liberties with the original text. He isn't concerned with being faithful to the work. However, he must assure the transition between highly differentiated anthropological models and find solutions so that the new text makes sense in the civilization in which he is working.

Let's look at an example. On December 22, 2003 France 2 aired an adaptation of *Robinson Crusoe* written by Frédéric Vitoux, directed by Thierry Chabert and starring Pierre Richard. In the first scenes Robinson is out on the open sea in a dinghy. He hasn't been shipwrecked, as in the original novel, but had fought with the commander who, out of greed, wanted to return to Guinea to increase his profits with a new shipment of slaves. Robinson Crusoe had protested and was put off the ship. One must note that these scruples are not in the novel. In the book (Dafoe 1978) the character had set off on his expedition with an impassioned enthusiasm:

In my Discourses among them [fellow-planters and merchants], I had frequently given them an Account of my two Voyages to the Coast of *Guinea*, the manner of Trading with the *Negroes* there, and how easy it was to purchase upon the Coast, for Trifles, such as Beads, Toys, Knives, Scissars, Hatchets, bits of Glass, and the like; not only Gold Dust, *Guinea* Grains, Elephants Teeth, &c. but *Negroes* for the Service of the *Brasils*, in great Numbers. (pp. 39-40)

Not only does slavery not pose any problem for Daniel Defoe's Robinson, but, recognizing that "*Negroes were excessive dear*," he eagerly becomes involved in smuggling. One can easily see the adaptor's difficulties when he encountered this passage in the novel. The problem that confronted him is not a moral problem. There is no moral fault in creating horrible and detestable characters. One might even say that this is one of the indelible rights of fiction. Rather it is a problem of logic that relates to the very definition of the characteristics of a hero. Whereas at the beginning of the eighteenth century Robinson could be both a hero and a slave-trader, this situation, three centuries later, is more difficult to uphold. Either he is a hero and works against the exploitation of minorities by coming to their defense and struggling for their freedom – which is what he does in the course of the film; or he remains on the side of the slave traders and then can no longer claim the title of hero. This dilemma is no doubt found in all forms of adaptation but with television it takes on a particularly salient dimension due to the place that normative expectations hold on television, since station executives want their main heroes to be exemplary characters.

Consequently, for a scriptwriter, ensuring the moral and narrative tenor of his story consists of holding together, as tightly as possible, the demands for believability and the moral constraints of acceptability. In the case of literary adaptations, these two phenomena conflict: there is a gap, introduced by temporal distance, between believability and legitimacy, between what is morally acceptable and what is logically coherent. The author is thus forced to twist the text to make it fit into new frameworks, to distance himself, to abandon any reference to the original text: he reorganizes relationships of kinship, adds characters, modifies relational grammars or transforms denouements. But his concern is generally retranslated into the terms of his own professional preoccupations: when a scriptwriter reflects upon what one of his characters "can" or "cannot" do, he doesn't separate the factual dimension and the moral dimension: ethical considerations are not made explicit in an autonomous way. They are buried beneath issues of narrative coherence.

The Concern of Co-producers : General Ethics and Culturalist Routines

The situation is slightly different in the next stage, when the scriptwriter submits his text to the station executives: the moral issues as such are more explicit. If the production is ambitious, it will be expensive. One then enters into the realm of co-production. Securing a budget necessitates the intervention of international partners, each of whom has specific requirements as to how what might be called national televisual norms will be dealt with. Behind the scenes at meetings, in comments on decisions that have been made, representatives of each country/co-producer are designated simply by their first names or by reference to their geographical region, or by the television station with which they are affiliated (one says the French, the Italians, or RAI, France 2). Having become representatives of their "cultures" through this process these participants then propose modifications to the scripts. Each person handles in his own way his sense of the power of the mass media and his responsibilities vis-à-vis his own audiences. In fact, those involved obey different moral imperatives. The countries that are invited to the discussion table are used to proposing changes in details, which allow them, while justifying their presence and their professionalism, to highlight the small specific points to which they are specifically attached, and on which it may be judged advisable to satisfy them. Writers and producers have dozens of stories to tell on this subject, stories through

which they pin national stereotypes onto each of the foreign partners. In the realm of animation, for example, which is particularly sensitive to the question of moral decisions, it is said that the Scandinavian countries are uncompromising about the egalitarian division of heroism between little boys and little girls; that in the adaptation of Tintin, the Americans took Captain Haddock's whisky away, and in that of Lucky Luke insisted that his cigarette be replaced by a blade of grass (in spite of the otherwise suggestive effects that this substitution might have) When Greek mythology is co-produced it is out of the question for Cronus to eat his children. The fact that whales, whose protection is now a priority, have become victims, leads to a serious reevaluation of the treatment of Moby Dick. It is also said that France and the other Latin countries are considered by Anglo-Saxon countries to be particularly lax in what they allow their young people to watch. The round-table discussions are occasions to evaluate these cultural assumptions. The extent of the transformations of scripts is proportional not to the seriousness of the stakes involved, but to the amount of the financial participation of each of the co-producers, which is always frustrating for the small countries. Their moral influence is limited. Their argumentative strength is the weight of their budget.

Art of negotiation among the representatives of the producer countries consists of anticipating the remarks of the foreign partners, while leaving open elements in the scripts. "One must always anticipate the details on which one is willing to give in." Organizing meetings, knowing the participants, identifying regularities, foreseeing the way they will be analyzed by relating them to the person who expresses them, to his society, his station, or his country – all of this is good professional practice. If one shows that someone involved is predictable, that his comments are repetitive and that they are made religiously from one meeting to the next, independent of the content of the program itself, they have a good chance of their being ignored. By showing one's annoyance (squirming, making faces, gestures, crumpling paper, shrugging shoulders, raising one's eyes) or by having the last laugh, one can refocus the direction of remarks: they were directed toward the work, they will be redirected toward the one who made them.

But one must avoid public humiliation, whispering, knowing glances, the importance of coffee breaks to circulate evaluations. Identifying the routines of intervention, leaving the most complicated issues for the end, counting on fatigue and jet lag, using margins of negotiation left open by a slight imprecision in the mastery of the language in which the meetings are held, becoming allusive, jumping back abruptly into one's own language to rally one's supporters, using references incomprehensible to other national groups, employing untranslatable humor – these are some of the tactics one observes during these meetings. They are no doubt found in all spheres of activity that bring together international partners, but the difference here is related to the final product: what is at issue are neither goods nor services, but characters, quasi-people, who are launched into the public arena with the moral characteristics with which they are endowed.

If one considers the foundations upon which consensus is finally established one notes that they are primarily fixed negatively. The moral ideals of the characters are not mentioned, and the field of their explorations is limited. At this stage of the process, regulation is essentially negative. It passes above all through the collective establishment of a list of banned items that continues to be added to as the number of participants is increased. The partners of co-productions do not wish to truly interfere with what creates the internal coherence of the dialogue. In fact, caution demands that international partners not interfere too much with the contents. They remain in the margins of the works. As one writer sums up:

With people from other countries, we can't understand each other. There are too many problems if we go into the details. If we listen to everyone, the film is ruined. For the scripts, it's agony. For the dialogue, it's death! Really! So they will leave us alone we agree to the bans we can respect, and we give good roles to their actors.

What is interesting about this remark is that it goes to the heart of our problematics. What makes it humorous (or perhaps cynical) is that it sums up the givens of the problem: the (ambitious) plan that consists of counting on the universalist inter-understanding of cultures is "swapped" for the (more modest) satisfaction of promoting a handful of national actors.

The Involvement of TV stations

Most often, then, it is on the national level, within the sponsoring station that interventions are most decisive. And even if French television remains a highly centralized institution, power over the characters – and their moral definition --- is not a hierarchical power. This is true for a good reason: few will explicitly intervene concerning moral issues. No one wants to use the term "morality." The term is like a hot potato tossed from person to person, as if it were an insult. Even at the highest levels in TV, where decisions are made, it is rare that a moral position is voiced as such. This phenomenon is explained by a sort of normative evolutionism that identifies "morality" with reactionary positions and a refusal to speak of morality with modernity. Because of this, programming advisers translate their requirements into terms that reflect their own professional objectives.

The goal of the changes they propose is to attract audiences. "What one hears is: your characters aren't attractive enough: it's too segmented." The moral intent as such is de-legitimized. Professionals prefer to hide behind what they think the audience wants even if this is risky and uncertain, rather than to refer to arguments that stress their moral sense.

The following example illustrates the point. During a discussion concerning a script that portrayed a story of pedophilia, a woman spoke up to stress that these questions in the current French context were becoming an obsession: "It's crazy! That's all we ever talk about!" Everyone agreed. Another participant added: "Today, Nabokov couldn't write *Lolita*!" Again, everyone agreed. However, there was a bit more reticence (some participants no doubt wondered whether it would be a very good idea to show *Lolita* on television). "Yes," added a participant with conviction, "what is absurd in all of this is that we seem to forget that children are sexual beings!" All eyes turned to that person. Caught up in the logic of what he was saying, and without noticing the disapproval he was eliciting, he continued: "It's true, it's grotesque, we act as if we didn't know that children can experience desire, too!" The atmosphere became glacial. Uncomfortable. He stammered. Today we are far from the liberated outbursts of the 70s. At the other end of the table someone spoke up, saving the situation: "There are all the same a whole bunch of other problems in the world, we can certainly find other human dramas to tell in our stories." General agreement. Consensus is arrived at along with a general relief, because it is always difficult to put others on the spot publicly.

In the implementation of regulations there is a mixture of elements of strict positioning located on a certain level of generality which mark boundaries that must not be crossed, and points of detail that form the very germ of common interventions which seem more anecdotal than substantial. However, all these aspects at the time

of the meetings seem to be placed on the same level. Far from being established, the ranking of priorities appears to be relatively unfixed. It is less the strength of arguments that determines the success of a remark and its insertion in the final manuscript than the *moment* when it is made. Time pressures intensify negotiations throughout the decision-making process. Because of this, the order in which changes are proposed plays an important role in determining those that will be adopted: for those who wish to hang onto an aspect of the script that is likely to be contested, what is important is to gain time. One must fill the debates with minor subjects. One must count on the overloading of the decision-makers' schedules. The constraints of urgency and the lack of time have a considerable impact on the content of the works. The chronological logic weighs on the hierarchical logic and deforms it.

The Chain of Transmission: Explicit Regulation, Implicit Regulation

Once the changes have been negotiated, they are communicated to the scriptwriter, who often does not personally attend production meetings. Indeed, the dynamics of writing are always a bit fragile. When a writer is confronted with his censors, one runs the risk of sterilizing him. Which is of course unfortunate from a psychological point of view – it is always upsetting to be confronted by others with one's writing difficulties. But it is above all disastrous on an economic level: productions are carried out on very tight schedules. The slightest delay has a ripple effect on the entire production; not respecting the schedule has a major financial impact on the production. Thus it is above all for financial reasons that maintaining the creative potential of the writer is an absolute priority. A delay in filming upsets the entire process, but it also, which is even worse, risks losing the best actors, because the higher an actor is in the hierarchy of recognition, the more his schedule is filled. This is why go-betweens are used. They are responsible for communicating the suggested corrections to writers. But they do not just play the role of interpreter: they are expected to employ a certain diplomacy, which often consists of showing he is removed from the participant who is not present in the face-to-face interactions.

These mediators thus serve as relays. But other difficulties arise here, linked to the imprecision of vocabulary. Unlike literary criticism which developed by inventing a precise and refined vocabulary to describe characters and effects of style, notably moreover because criticism was in written form, discourse on televisual works has remained singularly poor. Most commentaries are delivered orally. The same terms are used constantly, with, moreover, largely unexpected moral connotations. Thus "nice" for example, is an extremely depreciative adjective. In contrast, "cruel" is rather a compliment ("There's so much cruelty ... I love it!")

Many sentences are incomplete, the terminology used is vague. One notes a pronounced taste for oxymorons that enable one to be extremely positive, while preserving the possibility of multiple interpretations. The term "complicity" is particularly valued, perhaps because it is structurally ambiguous. The adverb of intensity, "too much," without any adjective, either signifies satisfaction: "He is too much!" or difficulty in pinpointing one's own thoughts: "He is too..." So it is forced to show both praise and reservations. A difficult task for an adverb. A single adjective can serve to describe highly different characteristics. For example, during a conversation concerning the same work, the adjective "ludic" can be used in four or five different ways. It is a quality of the original text, a trait that a character should have, the description of the state of mind that reigned at the time of filming, an actor's craft, or the ultimate appreciation shown toward the final work.

A proposition might lead to an immediate agreement, but it is sometimes more difficult to uncover the hidden meanings in it, at the moment when it is time to communicate to the absent writer the reactions his text elicited. Even if notes were taken scrupulously, remarks made in a notebook, sketchy and vague, remain impenetrable. Generally, many questions are resolved intuitively, through an appeal to complicity and to sensitivity whose effectiveness should not be underestimated (“It is... well... Ok,.. you see what I mean...”). One must note, moreover, that those involved often understand each other. What catches the one whose profession consists of gathering phrases and hoping to make sense out of them off guard, is nevertheless part of indisputable tacit knowledge. In fact, what counts for the writer is locating a difficulty more than the procedures proposed to fix it, because the solution is not often found in the text: (“It’s up to us to defend the piece. We have to explain, argue, say why. If someone says ‘this sequence has to be cut’ and we think it is really important, either we give in, or we re-think. In general it is a sign that there is something in the script that isn’t working.”) There is another solution to compensate for the difficulties of describing in words what will become images: it is a shortcut through a reference. Thus, during meetings there develops a specific competence linked to the knowledge of the cultural universe of those in charge: a certain scene in a certain film; a certain expression of a certain actor in a certain series; a certain type of kinship relationship. Immediately, the character invoked surfaces in the minds of those present, wearing his story and accompanied by his expressions, which enables an economical description. One must, moreover, note that illustrative examples are drawn from film or from American TV series more often than from French televised fiction. In any event, sharing common cultural references is a strategic element in the formation of consensuses.

Discussions over contents are often sociological hypotheses about the functioning of the social world, during which participants test contrasting perceptions of social reality through the way they envision the sequence of plausible events. However, even if these debates involve different anthropological conceptions, it is not on this plane that confrontations occur. There is no well-ordered exchange of clearly ranked arguments. The participants have a line of defense reinforced by their professional expertise. For writers, for example, it is a matter above all of defending the coherence of their entire project against isolated interventions that would change its nature: they protect themselves against the loss of emotional density: (“You’re going to strip my film!”) But above all their obsession is with a loss of coherence: “A script is machinery, it’s clockwork. You can’t move one thing without taking the risk of upsetting everything.”

Observing meetings in progress shows that one is not dealing with a structured debate, with argumentation that would enable the participants to refer to a well-ordered hierarchy of acceptable arguments. The exchanges are hybrids. They don’t speak first about issues of narrative logic, of the coherence of characters, of the originality of scenes before evoking higher arguments about the moral position of the work. Arguments blend together endlessly, passing from one register to another. An objection is raised on one level, it is answered on another. Thus when a reader is alarmed over an anticipated unfolding, (“We can’t let that get through”), the scriptwriter answers, while stressing the loss of emotional density that would accompany the change: “If Thomas splits with Sylviane, I’ll lose the best scenes in the film!” Since the tension between the logic of creation and the logic of regulation are insolvable, they are often resolved through a juxtaposition of arguments. There is always someone to recall responsibilities: “We mustn’t forget that we’re creating fiction,” and to recall professional demands: “We still have to have stories to tell!”

So the debates are not consensual. The final work that appears to viewers as a seamless whole with its calm and smooth characters, who, for that reason, spark criticism of the work, is at the time of production often a succession of violent trials: "A script is like the front lines; there are places where one gives in, places where one resists," which sometimes goes as far as indignant confrontation: "But have you noticed that there you are stomping on my moral rights!" But here, too, certain parameters temper the violence of reactions. A writer's re-employability depends on his reputation. Since the analytical resources available in this professional milieu to qualify, describe, and resolve a crisis situation are essentially psychological, the threat to a writer consists of being labeled with the negative description that arises most often in the notes I took: "He has an ego problem." Indeed, for a writer everything is a question of balance: he has to be "himself" "without having an "ego" (the use of Latin is always a bad sign). The only strategy possible for the one who risks being described as such consists of making it known that it is not his personal identity he is defending, but indeed that of his character. This is very difficult. To succeed he must find the right tone, that is, not appear too involved: it is by showing his detachment with regard to his characters that a writer gives the best guarantees of his professionalism. In the case of literary adaptations, the problem is further complicated because all those involved have personal knowledge of the work and the protagonists, and engage in discussions with series of associated memories (the time when they read the work, vacation, adolescent dreams...). Then it's a contest of images and misunderstandings.

Let's focus for a moment on the costumes of *Milady*. *Milady* is an adaptation of the *Three Musketeers*, directed by Josée Dayan, with Arielle Dombasles. This film was not very well liked, either by the scriptwriters (the most famous among them preferred to have his name removed from the credits), nor by the station which kept it for a long time before deciding to show it, nor by the critics who were reticent, nor by the audience which didn't tune in. (It fell below the general average for the time slot). By contrast, the film was very much appreciated by the creator of costumes:

I was lucky that the costumes of *Milady* were done by the Caraco studio which is a high fashion studio. They make dresses for Lacroix, for the fashion shows. If you see the costumes in person, they're made in such a way... they're made of leather, but real high quality leather! the finishing touches are incredible, bordered with little pearls, there is patchwork, all done by hand ... such precision... They're better than costumes made for film or theater.

Great care had been taken with the clothing. More than 700 costumes had been used, rented in France and throughout Europe. The heroine's had even been made to order. The objective was to find the best possible combination of material and color to express the perversity of *Milady*. These were the moral demands of the costumer, demands that involved a choice of material:

In the beginning, when they told me about the *Milady* project, I thought a little bit about the character. In fact, *Milady* is an Amazon... She's a woman who behaves like a man. And that's what I was looking for in the costumes. Even though they were period costumes, it was important that a certain aggressiveness be felt. So I decided to make Arielle's costumes in the period, but all in leather. There is suede, gilded leather, leopard, Cordoba leather. And it's a great perverse role. And afterwards, when Josée Dayan told me about the rest of the cast (Florent Pagny, Asia Argento, the Depardieus...) people you wouldn't think of ... I told the director, 'the cast

seems like rock and rollers; we should make a rock and roll version of Milady.' the three musketeers are in leather, sort of like black bomber jackets. They were members of the king's guard, but at the same time they were half-mercenaries. They had to be sexy, that's what was important. It's a very sexy story, that's why they're all in leather.

Thus it is through the choice of material even more than that of the color that the perversity is portrayed. Of course associations with leather invoke an entire universe of S&M reference, but at the same time, that is not what is most noticeable, because the television screen sacrifices the material to the colors, as it sacrifices touch, odor, taste to sound and sight. This point raises an issue that one finds more generally, characteristic of the distribution of tasks: often, the care given to a detail, perceived above all, indeed sometimes only by the professional himself, from what is most specific and detailed in his expertise, contributes much to his satisfaction with his work. Thus it is through the little things that are not always very noticeable and rather distanced from the final impression produced by the work as a whole to the viewers who are uninitiated, that a professional attributes moral value to his work.

Similarly, the assessment of his partners, directors or actors, rests on their ability to put themselves in the service of these specific demands, perceived from that point of view:

That's what's great about Arielle: you can put anything on her, and you don't have the impression she's wearing a costume. She's a true professional. Imagine, acting in the middle of the summer! She's amazing, she never complains. She's ready for anything. Very few actresses would have agreed to film in a bustier in the middle of summer with Josée Dayan's schedule! 4 scenes in one day, bam, costume change! And always in a good mood, laughing, singing...

What defines an ideal collaboration is when each person allows the other to go as far as possible in the demonstration of his professional abilities. In this case, an example is the disappointment, indeed the anger of Arielle when she found out she couldn't keep the wonderful dresses made just for her, which is wonderful praise for the costumer! The ultimate moral considerations, that moral and ideological order denounced by critics, are thus overshadowed by professional priorities that themselves engender their own criteria of morality. Thus, a production that skimps on the dry-cleaning budgets commits a true moral sin, from the point of view of the costumers.

Each group of professionals operates what one might call "a filtering reception." The original work is metamorphosed. Each person reconfigures it in function of the priorities assigned by his profession. It is thus chopped up into heterogeneous logics and becomes a sort of monster, through the hypertrophy of the characteristics relevant for the professional who is working on it. This is, moreover, what makes observing filming so interesting: it is an experience of perceptive enrichment. Each profession deforms and enriches the work from its own point of view: it is converted into a cluster of luminous rays with a range of projectors to regulate for the photo-director; a group of sounds to save and noises to eliminate for the sound engineer. For the make-up artist there is a back-and-forth between powdered skin and shiny skin, lips to outline, mascara that mustn't run: a set becomes an ocean of pores and eyelids to watch. For the costume artist, there is a wardrobe of clothes to maintain: wrinkles that call for ironing, tears that call for pins and needles. Since there is only one way for a costume to be clean and neat, and a thousand different ways for it to be rumpled, the movement of the plot poses problems for the costumers. They must

be sure that the clothes are capable of going back in time. It is thus necessary for rigs to be in sync with a filming schedule that is more concerned with the schedules of the actors than with the condition of their clothes. For the production manager, the work is translated by a schedule with felt-tipped pens, a list of hotels selected according to the prestige of an actor: a promising early career can merit a hotel with as many stars as one chosen for an actor at the end of a recognized career. These choices are public manifestations of a certain degree of recognition of professional merit, and the slightest blunder in the combination of these parameters can seriously degrade the atmosphere of a week of filming.

All these elements, from the most humble to the most serious, intervene in the film's contribution to the display of a moral horizon. At each of these stages a division of normative labor is manifest which is divided among the different people involved and, as the study shows, at each stage is incorporated into a professional logic that is always considered to be of the highest importance.

The priorities defined by the professionals are always linked to a certain idea they have of the way to "do their work well," which brings a barrage of intermediary moral judgments that are interposed between the higher objective of decency and morality that the story should fill from the point of view of the institution that feels responsible for it, and the assessments that the professionals make of it, in function of their own concerns. A certain number of tensions arise out of the contradictions that can exist between professions when the search for optimal quality for one of them interferes with the imperatives of coordinating the whole.

At each of these stages a specific type of complication appears, like so many micro-upsets whose more or less positive solution is instructive. Thus one sees a normative division of labor that is distributed among the different people involved and, as the study shows, at each stage is incorporated into a professional logic that is always considered a priority. The ultimate moral considerations are thus overshadowed by professional priorities which themselves engender their own criteria of morality. To concretely analyze how a consensus on questions of morality is come to presupposes not seeking to extract a core of pure values, but considering how the transforming alchemy that redesigns the work in function of the priorities of each person involved is carried out. Not all have identical importance. It is the result of these multiple interventions that gives the different characters their definitive coloration. Understanding how the personality of a character is defined thus amounts to being attentive to a group of mediations, each of which has its importance and which are equal to each other and which must each be observed to understand their respective weight in the realization of the final product.

For An Ethnographic Approach to Moral Consensuses

Thus, by separating the moral question from the philosophical horizon to which it is usually connected and by choosing to make it an object of empirical investigation, one notes that the issues are raised rather differently than if one were content to undertake a sociology of values or of representations. The moral landscape within which the characters are located appears to be neither stable, nor autonomous, nor transparent, nor consensual. It is caught up in material logics, constrained by temporal dynamics, dependent on the coordination of the various professionals at work. It is fraught with tensions between professional logics, creative aspirations, and logics of regulation.

Contents are not independent of the constraints that presided over their construction. A connection exists between the moral expectations of the characters and the optimal conditions of realization of the hopes of the professionals at work, to their most extreme ideological components. Thus it is not impossible that the success of certain moral forms imposed on television screens is connected to the fact that those forms have successfully and rather harmoniously combined strictly professional demands and the more vague expectations of cultural modernity – unlike other forms that disappear precisely because they do not achieve this alchemy. Thus, for example, the sexualization of the characters, that is, the central importance granted to the composition of their personalities by their sexuality, stands out in the storylines not only because, as a scriptwriter pointed out: “Freud covered that, it’s cheap psychoanalysis,” but because this transformation enables the profound renovation of the treatment of stories: this option did not exist, or not in this way, when the texts were written. It thus satisfies the imperative of creativity and of renewal. At the same time, sexualization gives the subject it is structuring an internal coherence that is in agreement with the logic of the story: it structures the text, giving it a backbone, since a motivation leading to action is clearly favored over all others. In addition, this modality of the construction of the subject around its sexuality is full of suspense, since the unconscious turns interiority into an enigma. Finally, it legitimizes a representation of images of sexuality that are likely to arouse in the viewer a mimetic desire that has the advantage of gluing him to the screen. It thus brings together the imperatives of creativity, innovation, modernity, coherence, economy, and of the audience.

Similarly, involving women in duels, giving a sword to *Julie, Chevalier de Maupin*, or a foil to Aurore de Nevers, allows the restoration of the thematics of the novel of cape and sword and does justice to the ambitions of female emancipation, while gleaning in passing a few nice scenes (swaying hips, flowing hair, revealing ribs and tears). As for the emergence of homosexuality in films, it is requested by producers not only out of a desire not to appear discriminatory, but also because this enables the recycling of an already available reservoir of outdated romantic scenes: one needs change the gender of one (only one) of the characters to make thousands of love stories come straight into cultural modernity, which undeniably facilitates the imaginative work of the scriptwriters. Thus these are the “constraints in a fishbowl,” the little small-scale arrangements that can be determining for the conditions that produce moral contents...

An interesting sociological issue arises at this point: there is a confusion between criteria of moral judgement and criteria of judgement of professional ability. How to define the phenomenon at the heart of this problem? The confusion of the criteria of judgement is a consequence of the fact that part of the descriptive vocabulary used in the ordinary evaluation of the veracity and credibility of the character (such as a filming team managed to compose and to incarnate them), is *the same* as that which is used in the ordinary evaluation of the representation of the moral sense that a character (such as the scenario builds it) should represent. In other words, a confusion is caused by the fact that there are no specific languages of description to express the evaluations of the first or the second type. In the absence of such specific languages, the terms of ordinary moral judgements are also those of the judgement of professional ability. The question the investigation seeks to begin to answer is thus: to what point does this terminological identity generate a confusion in the use of criteria of moral judgement which, without being deliberately sought, appears in the course of the production of the work of fiction at each stage of its making, in different ways for each trade involved in the process?

One can give a few illustrations of this phenomenon. A person who says to an actor during filming: "He is good, he is excellent!" does not evaluate moral aspects of the character. He speaks neither about his kindness, nor about his generosity, nor about his loyalty. He refers to the way in which he fulfils his role (which can be that of a true villain). His evaluation rests on strictly professional criteria and refers to the credibility of the scene which is being played, compared to what the scene is supposed to convey. "Pretty!" says another, while seeing a well directed blow of fist which reaches the face of one adversary. However, he does not really refer to aesthetic criteria. It also happens that the same commentators express their feelings with respect to the behaviour of the character ("an old marvellous lady! A very nice kid").

They refer then to criteria of general ethics. They can also call the actor everything under the sun because he drank too much the day before, because he has rings under his eyes or because he does not know his text. Or finally because it is well known that he behaves badly according to professional criteria which are also moral criteria, i.e. because he "takes all the credit". Commentators may also be pleased by the way the make-up girl succeeded in hiding the physical effects of the actor's behaviour of the day before ("Fortunately she is here with us! She is really good!"). All this is important, but not in the same way and not for the same reasons. However, if one wants to have a fine-grained understanding of the way contents of TV production are defined, and especially the way they evolve, such data are useful to start with.

Expressed moral judgements are available for the investigator in a compacted form. They resort indeed to the same vocabulary, and attribute to each of their elements several heterogeneous meanings. However, it is not a question of a banal polysemia. As in fact the same terms are used to make judgments of a rather different nature, such judgements end up replacing one another, contaminating the criteria themselves in a discrete and almost invisible way. Various criteria are expressed in a hidden way behind identical formulations. For this reason, it is necessary to collect the judgements as they are produced, without selecting them, treating them on a hierarchical basis, or purifying them *a priori*. One needs to grasp all of them, how heterogeneous they are, and follow their evolution. The imaginary characters are created starting from a professional ethics. This professional ethics uses a register homonymous to the registers of general ethics. It provides references and models which, while being structured by particular professional requirements, have a lever effect on the ordinary moral categories.

This article thus promotes the project of a realistic approach to the constitution of the moral panorama in which characters evolve, and, rejecting the idea of the pure autonomy of ideological contents, suggests carrying out a study on the way normative demands and professional ethics are, in practice, combined. To do this, it suggests granting a very particular importance to the moment when a sociology of characters and a sociology of professionals *are attached together*, to grasp the way professional priorities weigh on the production choices to influence them. There is a partly programmatic dimension, for the methodological principle it leads to (to grasp the moral universe of the characters from the moral categories of the professionals) was not set forth at the beginning of this study, but forms its principal result. This result enables us to identify the place we must focus on. It enables us to choose the type of interactions to be observed. It reveals a wealth of details, following specific describable and identifiable logics which have a decisive role in the way normative arrangements are established. This simple phenomenon of *the refocusing of*

sociological attention enables one to escape the determinism of ideological lines and to reveal the moments when alternatives open up.

Proceeding in this way detaches the moral question from the philosophical horizon with which it is associated in order to make it an object of empirical study. If one adopts this perspective, unexpected findings immediately multiply. The way the question is usually raised appears to be quite far from what observation reveals. The moral landscape in which the characters are located appears to be neither stable, nor autonomous, nor transparent, nor consensual. It is caught up in material logics, constrained by temporal dynamics, dependent on professional coordination. It is traversed by tensions between professional logics, creative aspirations, and logics of regulation.

The ethnographic study enables us to eliminate three illusions: that of a world of manipulation, in which what is at stake would be clearly perceived and the processes cynically mastered by hardened professionals. It also distances us from a representation of a coherent, logical, abstract, and well regulated space of discussion led within an ideal public space within which would take place a debate on values that are worth defending in the name of a certain idea of what the televisual institution should be and of the responsibilities that fall to it. Finally, it rejects the idea of an underlying structure that exists before the actors and dictates their unconscious choices to them. The frameworks of the agreements are not imposed as cultural codes that would *a priori* establish a consensus on forms of morality: they are put to the test of the coordinates of the context, give rise to debates through the tests in which are simultaneously tested the coherency and the legitimacy of the whole.

Fictional characters are not industrial products like any others. They are beings endowed with a moral sense, who have a sense of good and evil, of right and wrong, expectations of respect and recognition and certain aspirations concerning a fully accomplished life. They convey all these ideas into the public arena. They encounter publics there. They thus participate in the construction of a common world.

Understanding a production and the logics it implies does not prejudice the way it will be received, but it clarifies the conditions for its reception. What is at stake is essential because it is these fictional beings, so closely reined, so closely attached, well mastered, well attached to the needs of those who created them, who will then be let out into the world and will accompany people in their daily lives, with the characteristics that have been given to them. They will then make their contribution to the formation of a general moral sense. Characters let out into the world. Gone with the wind.

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Citation

- Chalvon-Demersay, Sabine (2007) "Des personnages de si près tenus', TV Fiction and Moral Consensus." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)



Qualitative Sociology Review

Volume III, Issue 3 – December 2007

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.3.3.03>

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Tracing the Action of Technical Objects in an Ethnography: Vinyls in Beijing

Abstract

To do ethnography implies dealing with the agency of technical objectsⁱ. The aim of this paper is to share a few ideas on how to tackle the one of vinyls in the particular activity that is the *mix* of a disc jockey. To do so, I first provide a general picture of the work of Xiao Deng, a Chinese disc jockey I observed in Beijing between 2003 and 2004. Then I present three observations of specific events that occurred during that period which, I believe, bring into light not only some specificities of the agency of the technical object “vinyl” but also useful information about how one can take into account the agency of objects when doing ethnography.

Keywords

Technical objects; Technology; Agency; Ethnography; Music; Vinyls; Disc Jockey; China; Beijing

Before writing about Beijing, electronic music and vinyls, I would like to give some information about the reasons that gave birth to the lines that follow.

All data were collected by myself between August 2001 and August 2004 during field research I conducted in Beijing for a Ph.D. thesis in Chinese studies that I eventually defended in July 2006, at the University of Geneva in Switzerland. The discussion suggested here is, in a way, an English summary of a section of the original penumⁱⁱ.

A dissertation in Chinese studies is, in most cases, a very different work than a dissertation in social sciences. While this paper on ethnographical work is not the place to discuss the differences between the two disciplines (we are indeed missing a lot of fun), I would like to point out that the main idea I had in mind during the research was to “understand the meaning of foreign technical objects in China”. This formulation was confusing, but its direction was much clearer: I wanted to contribute to a better understanding of what was happening in China at the time. Modern technical objects --I mean computers, mobile phones, video games, these kinds of objects - were obviously playing a major role which I wanted to analyze. As one could easily observe, most of this recent technology was invented and certified by Westerners (a striking example is the computer ASCII keyboard - the first letter, “A”,

stands for *American*)ⁱⁱⁱ and I had therefore labeled the goal of my research with the word “foreign technical objects”.

In 2001, at the beginning of the research, I had already a solid background in computer music which I had studied at the Institut de Musique Electroacoustique et Informatique of Geneva from 1997 to 2000. At that time, I had wanted to become a professional computer musician and I had spent three years sparing no energy in studying its ins and outs, before eventually changing my mind and going back to Chinese studies. This unrequired knowledge for a sinologist Ph.D. candidate had a strong influence on the decision to focus the research on “music creation involving technical objects”.

Although very little was known at the time about electronic music in China and there was plenty of work to do, my goal was, -- from the very beginning --, to try to discover new theoretical concepts. I did not pursue the objective of providing an ethnography of something like “electronic music in Beijing at the Banana club”, or an historical picture of “techno djing in Beijing at the end of the nineties”, for example. On the contrary, I organized my field research so that I would focus simultaneously on highly different fields, in order to maximize differences among emerging concepts. Thus, apart from the Chinese disc jockeys and vinyls presented below, I have observed the interaction of a computer musician with his software, a noise-music composer with his headphones and portable digital studio, a rock band with their synthesizers, and some other minor observations on mobile phones and everyday activities using a computer.

How the observations were conducted

Thanks to the advice of my co-advisor, Prof. Ellen Hertz, my first readings in social sciences were *Outsiders* (Becker 1973) and *Artworlds* (Becker 1982). Until today, even now that many other readings have followed, these two books remain the works that influence the most the way I conduct and compose my scientific contributions. Later, they were joined by *Basics for Qualitative Research* (Corbin and Strauss 1998), and *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You're Doing It* (Becker 1998). Since these are famous works in the field, I am not going to present them in detail here but discuss the main methodological points that I had in my mind while observing the activities of Xiao Deng and his vinyls, together with those that guide me today while writing these lines.

Two ideas that I would like to mention are the one of “art as collective action” (Becker 1982) and the general idea that “things are not going to be as (I) expected”. Although I was interested in the user to technical object relationship, it was very clear for me that I had to pay attention to simply *everything* I saw. Thus, I spent much time writing down notes about the audience in the clubs, employees, the weather, my own feelings at the moment, and so on, in order to make sure I could keep a general picture of the flow of information.

Since I had quickly got the feeling that taking notes while being with the people I was observing was not a good idea (I felt uncomfortable, and my interviewees were quickly suspicious), I wrote down my notes mostly at my home, late at night when I came back or often the next morning upon waking-up. On some rare occasions, I took notes on the spot, took pictures, did recordings, and collected materials that required direct intervention. Now that I want to share my observations, I am trying to express myself using simple and clear language, as I always much appreciated in the writings of Becker.

The data indeed had a long journey, changing forms from the spot to my field

notes in French, to my Ph.D. dissertation, and finally to this paper in English (which is not my first language, and was corrected by a friend). As the reader must have noticed, I favour an autobiographical account, rather than a methodologically or theoretically oriented one.

On the field

All the observations presented below were collected between August 2003 and August 2004, in the city of Beijing, except for one situation I observed in Shanghai (see observation number 3). This stay in China was accomplished thanks to a grant of the Swiss National Science Foundation, and was part of a series of three studies in Beijing that started during the summer 2001, when I did short-time field research (five weeks) on the electronic music scene and met Xiao Deng for the first time. After the main field research in 2003-2004, I went back to China and spent the summer 2005 in Beijing again (including a four-week' stay at Xiao Deng's place, who has become a close friend).

Two aspects of my previous studies have been of enormous help while collecting the data. First, as I graduated in Chinese studies in February 1997 and then spent one year in Beijing in 1997-1998, I was already pretty fluent in Mandarin at the beginning of the research. Most of my interviewees were not able to communicate easily in English or in any other Western language, and so most discussions were conducted in Chinese. Second, as I am a musician too, most Chinese musicians were very interested in exchanging thoughts with me as soon as they knew that I was "a musician too". As a strongly technique-oriented computer musician (I belong to the minority few who enjoy reading user-manuals, and spending days and nights trying to master the ins and outs of the tools), most musicians I met in China were very much interested in my technical knowledge. Our discussions, most of the time, focused on the technical tools used by musicians ("What software do you use?"; "Did you try this particular synthesizer?" "What do you think about it?"). This aspect was reinforced by the fact that Westerners are usually well seen in Beijing's art circles, and that many foreigners go to Beijing clubs on a regular basis. Speaking and exchanging ideas with a European was not something exceptional.

After the first contacts I had had with local musicians during the summer 2001, and my general impression at the time, I decided to focus on three different "electronic music artists" for the main twelve months of research in 2003-2004. In particular, I wanted to observe the activity of one disc jockey and his, or her^{iv}, interaction with the technical objects present at the dj-desks. If I had had a good feeling with Xiao Deng during a two-hour's chat we had in August 2001 at our first meeting, when we saw each other again in August 2003 he seemed very busy and it remained unclear whether I would be able to know more about him and his artistic activities (he was djing and writing songs) until the beginning of the year 2004.

The clubs

Between August 2003 and August 2004, a club (“club” in English or in Chinese 俱乐部^a *julebu*) as referred to by my local musicians friends, was a place where people met, drank, and danced, especially on Friday and Saturday evenings. There were only about a dozen clubs in the city, and most were located in the neighborhood of the Bar street (酒吧街 *jiubajie*) in Sanlitun 三里屯, which was generally considered by most Chinese and foreign habitants of the capital I have met as the district where the nightlife of the city took place. This fact could be observed by taking a cab at night, between midnight and the early morning, to notice that if most districts were dark and quiet, the surroundings of the clubs were illuminated and noisy.

If I did not spend most of my time interviewing customers, owners, and employees of the different clubs, I performed a few comparative tests between what I observed in the club where Xiao Deng played most of the time and the other places, in order to help me understand what was going on. For example, I spent once one whole night going from one club to another and back, trying to compare the size of the audiences, the type of music, the prices, and the artists that were playing. This kind of exercise was very tiring, and very frustrating in the sense that the size of the audience could vary very fast depending on the time (e.g. nobody at 9 p.m. but a huge crowd at 11 p.m.); during the time it took me to move from one club to another and back, things had sometimes already changed a lot.

According to these rapid observations, the crowds differed visually from one club to another: some had very few body movements while dancing and the clothing of the people appeared cheaper and cautious; some performed exuberant dances, and looked expensively and fashionably dressed. Of course, these differences varied a lot during the year. When asked about differences between clubs, Xiao Deng and his friends, and also most foreign or Chinese people I talked to, often referred to electronic music subgenres like *minimal techno*, *house*, *hip hop*, *drum'n bass*, and so on, which they linked to economic or social status (“It is a cheap place, only kids go there”; “That club is for prostitutes and big guys”; “That club is frequented by models and famous people”) to categorize the differences between clubs. Xiao Deng, according to this scheme, was a *techno* DJ, mixing at *techno* clubs, which were the most expensive of the city and frequented by “models and famous people”. Xiao Deng and his friends considered these places as the “best clubs” of the city.

However, these details about Beijing clubs, regarding the main observations I would like to point out later in this article, do not really matter. Therefore, I simply would like to conclude these comments by saying that the nightlife of Beijing clubs was, to my eyes, in size as in kind, somehow similar to the nightlife of my hometown, Geneva, in Switzerland. As such, there were indeed many differences between them, the most obvious one being the fact that the population of the two cities has a ratio of 20 to 1. Of course, there were hundreds of local particularities as well, but still, Beijing clubs deserved the label “electronic music” and “club”. In the same way as a “swimming-pool” is, in most countries, a place where people go to swim, those places were there for people to meet, drink, listen to music and dance. As a researcher, they were the places where I had to go on Friday and Saturday nights to meet musicians,

^a Technical note: uploaded SongTi or STSong font is required to see the original Chinese characters in this article.

observe the work of disc jockeys, and confront the discourses of my interviewees.

Verification techniques

Inside the clubs, the music was usually very loud and there was a lot of cigarette-smoke. Most of the time, as I came early and stayed until late in the morning, going there on a regular basis was extremely tiring. I also have to confess that, although I had several years of practice in computer music, my experience of club dance parties in Europe was, at that time, almost non-existent. To suddenly spend so much time in clubs was indeed a very special experience for me. The clubs were very important places for two of the artists I was observing, and whether I liked it or not (ok, I liked it), I had to go there every time there was a party. Some evenings, when I did not feel like going out at all, this obligation was extraordinarily painful. Some other evenings, when I did feel like going out, it was very distracting. How not to have fun in a place everybody came to have fun?

After about six months of weekly appearance in the clubs, my obstinacy bore fruit: my presence was known and accepted by Xiao Deng and most of his acquaintances; I could meet many musicians at the same time (many were quite obviously using the parties to negotiate contracts, collaborations and so on), and I moved very easily from one group to another, collecting information through informal discussions as well as direct questioning.

In most cases, I simply tried to cross-check information between sources. For example, if someone mentioned the fact that someone else had given her special software, I would ask the person about the software, saying something like “this person said you gave him this software, do you use it very often?”. I could then find out if the software had really gone through the path sketched out by the other informant, and know more about the competences of the person who made it circulate that way. After several weeks, I could figure out who was usually very precise in her or his descriptions of facts, who liked to inflate things a little bit, who enjoyed talking about technical stuff, and so on. This method helped me also to trace a little bit how the information about myself was spreading among the musicians, and how elements I had mentioned in other conversations (especially technical information) had been considered.

I also asked the musicians I had selected as my main sources to give me some pieces of music they had composed one or two years *before* we met. These works, upon which I could not possibly have had any influence, were precious sources of insight about the accuracy of their discourses on how they created new pieces of music: for the one who has the tools and the knowledge, a recording contains a lot of technical information that can be analyzed and tested. For example, a mp3 file, once put on a compact disc, does not sound the same as a recording from, say, a vinyl. By comparing the stories told by the artists with technical elements present in the works, I have often been able to confirm, or disprove, the information that had been given about the use of one or another technical object. This information, as well as the technical processes involved, were insights about the accuracy of other information people were giving about their current, unfinished, work.

Anonymity of the artists, and censorship of the author

As the lector may have already noticed, all information in this article that could help the reader identify Xiao Deng or his friends have been systematically hidden. I use pseudonyms to refer to the informants, and I do not even mention the clubs' names in Beijing. If it is a habit in social sciences to respect the private life of the sources, the somewhat extreme discretion taken in this paper is related to a specific methodological choice.

To have an artist talk openly and thoroughly about her work is not an easy matter. While most artists are usually willing to explain how they succeeded in creating a new work of art, many are reluctant to tell how they failed to perform certain tasks, especially if they believe the explanations behind the failure would give them a bad image. Doubts, mistakes, failures, and shames are therefore, according to my experience, among the most difficult data to get when doing field research on artistic work. As this research focused on the use of technical objects, it was obvious to me that the most interesting situations were *precisely* those involving failures and mistakes, -- because such cases often bring into the light what is really going on between the tools and its users (compare with a car accident, and how the description of the process of this awful event give hundreds of items of data about the driver, the car, and the interaction between the two)^y.

In order to get this kind of precious data, and to avoid artists trying hard to give an special image of themselves and their work, or hide on their real difficulties or technical peculiarities, I have systematically explained several times to my informants that my research was on "technical objects, not artists", and that their names would never appear in a book or in a article because "that is not the topic of the research". I also selected artists that I felt could become, through the path of the field research, real friends. As often with close friendship, one does not pay much attention to give a certain picture of oneself, because one knows that the other one will not give away "harmful" information. This method, in the case of Xiao Deng, both furthered and held back the research: Xiao Deng communicated very intimately with me, shared inner thoughts, personal difficulties and life situations; but now that I know this article will be published on the Internet, how can I possibly use this kind of private information? I definitely collected precious information working this way *and* censored valuable data writing this article because I do not want to harm my friend in any way if he, or anyone related to him, was to come across these lines.

In the end, although I am pretty satisfied with the observations I managed to collect, if I imagine myself as the reader of this paper, who did not experience the field research as I did, I think I would have the feeling that some things are missing, that descriptions could be more precise or more developed. Facing these weaknesses, which are clearly part of this research too, I have to say it was not easy for me to go to someone else's home, especially a close friend, to take pictures of his everyday life and ask personal questions without embarrassment. Since I was not writing, say, an interview for a music magazine, my goal was not to show the good quality of his work. I was there to find out "what was happening" between him and his tools. I often felt very uncomfortable asking Xiao Deng for specific information I knew he wasn't willing to share (for example, how he ended up using one synthesizer instead of another one). Several times, in order to make sure I would get the information I believed was most important for my research, I willingly gave up collecting trivial biographical information (for example information about his family), to make room for a more informal technical dialog (a debate "between artists" about a specific technical process is a very different discussion than an interview with a

person asking questions and the other one answering).

Xiao Deng, his vinyls, and some other people or things that acted

Xiao Deng, in 2003-2004, was a professional disc jockey in the sense that his skills were very high, --he had been mixing for many years and was considered by his peers as one of the best DJ in China --, and that this activity was his main source of income. I will first present the conditions under which I came to know him, how I conducted the field research on his activities, and then provide a detailed account of my main observations.

I met Xiao Deng for the first time in August 2001. He had been hired to mix one night in a club where I was going to on a regular basis to observe the activities of a group of live musicians. When I saw him at the dj-desk, I remember being struck by his mixing skills: his movements were fast and precise, he seemed to have many years of practice. After his set, I was introduced to him by an acquaintance and we exchanged a few words. He told me he had started to use a computer to write songs, and we agreed I would visit him at his home after a few days so that he would let me hear his music. One must note that at that time, I wasn't interested in observing disc jockeys. After I had visited him at his home, I came to the conclusion that his work as a beginning composer didn't provide enough data for my research, and I decided neither to conduct further research about his work, nor to keep in touch with him.

In August 2003 however, the situation was different. Following my inquiries about technical objects, readings and discussions with my advisors, I wanted to find a disc jockey whose activities I could observe in details during my stay, so as to focus on the related technical objects. Since I had already met Xiao Deng once, and I knew from another musician I had regular e-mail contact with that he was still very active on the Beijing scene, the idea of observing his djing activity came naturally to my mind. I went to see him a few weeks after my arrival in Beijing, and after several months of regular meetings at the clubs where he was playing, -- I leave out here the inescapable hassle of getting closer to the informant --, Xiao Deng and I became friends. In March 2004 I could conduct my observations in a very comfortable setting, and it was clear to me that he would be "the DJ" of my research (next to a computer musician, a noise artist, a synthesizer player, and a few others).

As mentioned before, in the past, although I had spent much time doing computer music, my musical activities in Switzerland had always been limited to the somewhat "academic" and "experimental" circles. When I arrived in Beijing in August 2003, I did not really know what a disc jockey was, and my experience of club dance parties was minimal. To spend two nights a week, at least, observing Xiao Deng's activity, and meeting other musicians, was completely new for me. To mention but one example of unexpected discovery, at the end of 2003 I realized Xiao Deng and his mates were going to bed about 4 a.m. and waking up around midday *every day of the week*. I had to change my life schedule in order to be able to keep up with them. As the research went on, I eventually stabilized my sleeping-time to 7 a.m. - 2 p.m. (for those who wonder, it means about a month of headaches until the body gets used to the new setting, and one's facial skin -- deprived of sun-rays -- gets a yellowish tan, alas different than the local color).

Xiao Deng and I shared a common taste in some matters of electronic music. We both admired the work of Richie Hawtin (a famous canadian disc jockey and composer), and we both owned recordings of a style of music that is usually called *minimal techno*. Our paths separated, however, on the field of experimental music

(which he did not like very much), and dance music (which I did not like very much at that time). Besides, a strong link between us was established on the basis of my technical computer music skills, which were much appreciated by Xiao Deng. I helped him several times to solve technical problems with his machines, worked twice as a sound engineer for two of his songs, and he often introduced me to his friends by emphasizing my technical knowledge. One must note, however, that although Xiao Deng and I spent many hours together, shared experiences and thoughts, those were focused on his work as a computer musician. I don't think I had any influence on this work as a disc jockey, an activity which he had been practicing for many years and in which he was very self-confident.

Biographical elements

On the basis of Xiao Deng's own story about himself, and a few items of information gathered among his friends and family, I will now give some biographical elements about his life, so as to give the reader a general idea about his background. To respect his anonymity, some details have been replaced by more general descriptions; above all, real names and exact locations are not mentioned.

Xiao Deng was born at the end of the seventies, in a province located in the north of China. His father was an actor, his elder brother a musician, his mother had some experience as a Chinese opera singer, and as a child he benefited from his family orientation toward the arts. At the age of eleven, he passed the examination for the Beijing Dance Academy (the best in China), where he studied traditional Chinese dance and went to high school. Upon graduation, although he was a good dancer and two departments wanted him to continue his training at the Academy in the professional sections, he decided to quit and moved to the south of China where he started to work in a bar as a go-go dancer. He quickly became interested in the activity of the local DJs (who were not mixing but only "playing" compact discs, --see the description of the mix below), and eventually started to dj himself.

The timing was very auspicious: in the mid-nineties there were scarcely any DJs in the country, and as soon as he started this activity, many places were willing to hire him. On the behalf of his musical knowledge acquired during his dance studies, Xiao Deng had learnt the basic skills of djing very fast and he could soon make a living upon this activity. He worked in clubs and moved from one province to another with a friend who was working as MC (short form for Master of Ceremony, a person who talks to the audience while people dance). They made short stays in various places, including one club in the Hunan province (in the south of China) where Xiao Deng's monthly salary went up to 7'000 *reminbi* (about US\$843 at the time), together with free lodging in a four stars hostel belonging to the owner of the club. After some time, Xiao Deng eventually settled down in the city of Shenzhen, south China, close to the Hong Kong border. His monthly salary had then reached 15'000 *reminbi* (sic). One must know that these amounts, as indicated by Xiao Deng, were large sums of money (about eight times the salary of a taxi driver). They coincide with the peak of dance events in Beijing, when DJs were very successful, -- a period often referred to with nostalgia by the DJs I have met during the last few years.

In 2000-2001, Xiao Deng moved back to Beijing and started to work at a local club as a resident DJ (i.e. a disc jockey who works for a club on a regular basis; in Xiao Deng's case several days a week). He made friend with a Japanese student, who quickly became his co-tenant, promoter, manager, and supplier of vinyls and electronic music devices (through frequent trips to Japan).

The Year 2003-2004

From August 2003 to August 2004, when I observed Xiao Deng's activities, he was among the few DJs of the capital regularly invited to play in other provinces, as well as at the local clubs. Apart from his djing activity, Xiao Deng also composed songs at the request of different backers (I noted three: a beer company, a soccer event, and a famous Japanese producer). Although he had been a resident DJ in the past, during these twelve months he worked as an independent disc jockey, not attached in any way to a specific club. His Japanese friend was taking care of the larger part of the administrative work related to his djing performances, including contacts with the club owners, financial deals, promotion of the events (through posters and flyers), and so on.

Xiao Deng's status, as a disc jockey, was clearly established by several facts. He was mixing once or twice a week at clubs whose entry price was the highest in the city (50 *renminbi* --about US\$6--, most other clubs had an entrance fee from 10 to 30 *renminbi*). Most often, his coming to an event was announced a few days in advance by various posters and flyers displayed in the clubs and other places in the city (e.g. shops, bars, or foreign student dormitories at the universities^{vi}). His competences as a DJ, stressed by his peers whenever I asked them their opinion on him, focused on his body movements. In my opinion, this particular skill was clearly linked to his previous training as a professional dancer (the necessary competence is the same, listen and move one's body accordingly). Although he did not practice *scratch* (the art of accelerating or decelerating a vinyl with one's hand, to create pitching effects)^{vii}, he was very clearly making, in a much more obvious way than other DJs, all kinds of changes and sound effects that most of his colleagues did not perform, concentrating instead on the choice of the records only. Although it has not been mentioned by any of my interviewees, I believe Xiao Deng had also a sense of rhythm and an above average understanding of the crowd's "feeling of dance". An aspect I could observe in the reaction of the people dancing, was that they looked more enthusiastic when he, rather than "average" disc jockey, was playing.

Xiao Deng and most of his disc jockey friends could be grouped under the banners of dance music subgenres *techno* and *house* (with their many variations, *techno-house*, *deep house*, etc.). *Techno*, as a subgenre of the club dance-music style, was often used by Xiao Deng to categorize his work: he was, in his own words, a *techno* DJ. He notably used this description to express a difference with *hip hop*, a subgenre he had mixed some years ago and that was, in 2003-2004, played in other clubs and by DJs that did not mix up much with Xiao Deng and the people around him (although fascinating, the different uses, representations, constructions and deconstructions of the musical styles and subgenres by the informants go far beyond the scope of this paper, -- which focuses on technical objects. For this reason, they are not discussed in detail here.)

The Mix

The activity of Xiao Deng and the other disc jockeys I observed during the field work consisted in most cases in selecting recordings (mostly vinyl discs, but they sometimes used other mediums, like compact discs, tapes, or digital files played directly from a computer), and then chain them so that there would be no interruption in the music.^{viii} This practice was described by both Chinese and Western informants with the English word *mix*^{ix}, which referred at the same time to the general activity of the DJs while playing in the clubs and to the transition procedure -- the *mix*, that is -- between two different musical sources.

Sometimes DJs would just add pieces of music rhythmically, so that the transition from one song to another became imperceptible (the audience would have the feeling of one single song lasting several hours) and contribute to bring the crowd to a state of trance. Sometimes, on the contrary, they would link very different styles or subgenres, and generate special contrasts in the atmosphere that would make the structure of the whole performance mosaic-like. Sometimes, they would superimpose recordings, and let both records play together more than a minute or two, so as to create completely new musical pieces.

If I noted a few situations where some of Xiao Deng's DJ friends were employed by radios, department stores, or other institutions, their activity occurred for the most part at night in bars and clubs. In general, a local disc jockey in Beijing was a man, who owned a substantial collection of vinyls or compact discs. Every time he went to work, he would carry a selection of these records with him, and play them at the dj-desk of a club, using the turn-tables and cd players provided. A first selection of the records -- an average of 60 to 80 -- was done at home (impossible to carry all the records), and therefore the music one could mix was limited because it was impossible to mix a record which was not in the selection of the day. However, I believe important choices between available records occurred at the dj-desk, according to the crowd's response to the music. In a way, the mixing process was indeed a "mix" of the choices at the artist's disposal, between available records in his selection and possibilities or impossibilities of mixing one song with another (considering their respective musical structures), plus his reading of the crowd's reactions, calling for certain forms of music.

For the audience, as well as the other disc jockeys, the *choice* of musical pieces, which I will discuss again later, constituted one criterion to determine the difference between a "good" and a "bad" DJ. It can be compared, I think, to the listening of music at home: if some songs are very pleasant to the ear in the afternoon, others are more likely listened to in the morning, or in the evening. In the same way, a song the listener already heard many times will not make the same impression as a song being heard for the very first time. A techno DJ, in Beijing between 2003 and 2004, was someone who was able to feel the mood of an audience and correctly determine which kind of music to play at that particular moment. Of course, there were also many other criteria that made a Beijing DJ well-known or appreciated by his audience, such as gestures and shouts at the crowd while playing, fame and so on.

Process of the mix

The hiring of Xiao Deng as a disc jockey for a dance event has always occurred, as far as I have observed, without the support of any written document. For example, Xiao Deng was contacted by someone he knew (by phone, text-message, e-mail, during a conversation in a club, or by chat on the Internet) who would ask him if he could mix at a certain place on a certain date (the exact time of the mix was usually fixed later). This person was most of the time another DJ or the manager of a club.

Another scenario, which I haven't been able to collect much information about but which was very frequent, was when the event was organized by Xiao Deng's Japanese manager, who contacted the manager of a club, and offered to organize a party. A big difference between these two scenarios was that in the first case, Xiao Deng cared only about his work as a disc jockey (i.e. bring his vinyls, and mix them), and received his money in cash from the club after his set. In the second case, the Japanese friend took care of most of the promotion and installation for the event, collected the entrance fees (which he would keep while the manager of the club kept the money resulting from the selling of beverages), and gave Xiao Deng (who also, according to his own schedule, gave a hand promoting and setting up the event) his share.

The days he played, Xiao Deng had to decide which records to take with him for his mix. If he occasionally made the selection quickly before leaving his house, most of the time, he started the day before, or several hours in advance. A vinyl is not a very light object, he could carry no more than three hundred. In most cases, he carried about sixty to one hundred, and this amount went down to twenty (for an easy and short party for which he was pretty sure he knew what to expect), and up to two hundred for an important event where the audience's taste wasn't at all clear to him. He used special DJ bags to carry the vinyls. One was small, could hold about fifty records and was slung across the shoulder. Another one was much bigger and wheeled, it could hold up to five hundred vinyls. When using this second bag, Xiao Deng usually also put his headphones and other belongings in it, next to the records.

If the event was organized by his work group (constituted of the Japanese promoter, a Chinese girl who was in charge of public relations and wrote all texts related to the events, Xiao Deng's girlfriend, a second DJ and his girlfriend, plus additional staff, whose number varied according to needs), he usually arrived at the premises around six p.m., to help installing the dj-desk, setting up the loudspeakers (if necessary), decoration, and so on. If the event was to happen in a place already set up (e.g. a bar), or was organized by others, Xiao Deng came two or three hours before his set, and had a few beers waiting for his turn to mix. Typically, a party had between two and four different disc jockeys. The first played from, say, 11 p.m. to 1 a.m., the second from 1 a.m. to 3 a.m., and so on. The schedule seemed to vary on the basis of three criteria: the size of the event, fame of the DJs, and the amount of public. Most of the time, the DJ considered to be the most important played at the time when the audience was at its maximum, in general between 1 a.m. and 4 a.m.

Once at the dj-desk, a double-sided process took place: on one hand, Xiao Deng chose the next vinyl to play on the turn-tables. The *techno* songs he used to play had an average time of seven minutes, but he rarely played them from beginning to end; a change was likely to occur every four to five minutes. On the other hand, Xiao Deng created different kinds of variations over the music, using the audio effects provided by the dj-mixer (e.g. volume variations, changes in equalization, reverberation or delay).

A set usually lasted between two to four hours. While mixing, the activity of Xiao Deng took on a cyclical form. One vinyl playing on the first turn-table, he took a second one, put it on the second turn-table and listened to it using headphones (so that the audience couldn't hear the sound of the second vinyl being examined), and synchronized its speed to the first vinyl using the pitch-tracking knob. He located in the musical structure a moment that seemed appropriate to start the combination of the two records (the one already playing and the new one), and stopped the second record at this particular spot. When the playing of the first record reached a suitable moment, he started the second record, and, using the control knob for the volume of the second turn-table, operated the transition from the first record to the second one. Once the transition had been carried out successfully, he started anew, with another record. This operation, the *mix* that is, could last between less than a second if one record was suddenly stopped (imagine a relay), to a minute or two with the two records playing together and the overlaying of the two making up what is sometimes called "the third record". While performing these repetitive movements, Xiao Deng carefully observed the audience's reactions to the music, and made his choices of the next records to be played accordingly^x. This question, at least as I observed it on the *techno* scene in Beijing at that time, seemed to be a very important aspect of a DJ's activity: to play according to the audience.

Sometimes, Xiao Deng chose a record, put it on one of the two turn-tables, listened to it, and decided not to play it. He then started again with another one. Alternately with the activity of selection, he created many personal variations on the music. He could make two records play at the same time, as described earlier, or modify the parameters of the control knobs on the dj-mixer. In the first case, he sometimes used two somehow similar songs. The transition then went unnoticed by the audience, giving the people the feeling of a long song. This kind of transition, where technical subtleties went mostly unnoticed, was not, I believe, very important to the audience, but any musician familiar with the art of mixing present in the club could admire his technical skills. One criteria for a "bad" mix, as discussed by Xiao Deng and his mates, was when a DJ would mistake bars, creating unintentional superpositions between two songs.

As mentioned before, Xiao Deng was particularly talented in using the control knobs of the dj-mixer to create effects over the music. For example, he quickly turned down the volume, and then turned it up a few seconds later, synchronizing the silent period with the current rhythm. In a similar way, he used his sense of rhythm to modify the settings of the high, medium, or low frequencies, or add special effects provided by the mixer. He often combined these changes with the superposition of songs, so that the mix of the different tunes sounded appropriate. Since Xiao Deng was especially talented for this sort of manipulations, he used it a lot. He was fast, precise, and looked very natural compared to other DJs whose eyebrow movements, body stiffness, or obvious mistakes, were frequent. His self-confidence was also noticeable when he was answering my questions. For example, he once told me he didn't really "think" about the next record while playing, but that he "felt" the best choice by looking at the covers of the records. He had, I believe, some kind of unconscious competence, synonymous of a great mastery of his tools, constituted of the control knobs as well as of his records collection.

The average length of a mix by Xiao Deng was about two to three hours, and repeated two to three times during one evening. For example, he mixed from 11 p.m. to 1 a.m., then was replaced by another DJ during two hours, and then played again from 3 a.m. to 5 a.m. When he was not mixing, or just standing in the clubs listening to other DJs' sets and meeting friends, Xiao Deng was mostly staying at home with

his girlfriend. He smoked, drank beers, and described himself as a slacker who had huge difficulties to act if not under pressure. For example, if he was to compose a song, he preferred to have an order, with a fixed deadline. My observations have confirmed this personal diagnosis.

Choice of the records on the Internet

In order to bring new music to the public, Xiao Deng was regularly buying new records. Unfortunately, at that time, there was no vinyls shop for DJs in Beijing (as there were many in Geneva, for example). For this reason, he followed a special procedure: he first went on dedicated Internet websites (e.g. labels websites, or on-line vinyls shops), through which he could listen to sound excerpts and write down the names of the records he wanted to buy. In mid-2004, when I observed him doing this work at his home, he used the website *decks-records.de*. Here is a screenshot, taken in Xiao Deng's personal home computer in June 2004.



Figure 1

Xiao Deng explained me how he usually clicked on the section “Techno-News” (the thumb on the upper left side), and then paid attention to this section only. From left to right on the illustration above, we see in the lower part an image of the cover of a record, the name of the artist, subgenre information, the name of the label, and the possibility to listen to a short excerpt in mp3 format (represented by a loudspeaker icon). According to Xiao Deng, this section helped him instantly access new records of the musical subgenre he was interested in (i.e. *techno*). He listened to the excerpts (about thirty seconds for each song), and wrote down a list of his choices of future acquisitions. After that, he gave the list to his Japanese friend, who used the

opportunity of a trip to Japan to go to a vinyls shop (it was not rare that some records would already be sold out)^{xi}. Once purchased, Xiao Deng listened to the records at his home, and put them in storage boxes.

Equipment

Below is a picture of the desk where Xiao Deng had installed his two turntables, and where he used to practice his mixes. The turntables and the dj-mixer are similar to those available in the clubs at the time.



Figure 2 Xiao Deng's home, June 2004.

- a. 1 Technics 1200 turn-table (second hand, bought by Xiao Deng in Shenzhen for about RMB1000) (US\$120)
- b. 1 vinyl (this one is a promotional record, sent by a friend from France, that's why it isn't labeled, just a few hand-written signs).
- c. 1 dj-mixer Vestax 50A (second hand, bought by Xiao Deng in Beijing through a Japanese acquaintance, about RMB15'000, US\$1807).
- d. A second turntable (same origin and price as the one on the left).
- e. 1 pair of Sony headphones^{xii} (lent by his Japanese co-tenant, but belonged to another Japanese friend who was also a DJ).
- f. Vinyls could be found all over the place, notably behind the first turn-table, on the second turn-table, and under the desk.

(One can also note over the Vestax dj-mixer a small box with fake vampire teeth Xiao Deng had bought for a fetishist party^{xiii}, as "to take part a little bit in the atmosphere", he said).

I estimated the amount of vinyls owned by Xiao Deng around 1'500. Although I never saw his compact discs, I believe he had quite a lot of them too, because he told me he used to mix cds when he started. Since he was now using only vinyls, those could not be seen at his home, so I guess they were stored somewhere in his apartment.

The Audience at the parties

As mentioned earlier, since I did not do systematic interviews of the people I met at the clubs, I am not able to give much information about Xiao Deng's audience. Based on my own, mostly visual, observations, and informal conversations I had here and there during the hundred or so times I was at the clubs, I would say that Xiao Deng's average public was composed mostly of Chinese people but with a substantial minority of foreigners whose proportion could be anywhere between ten and fifty percent, depending on various factors^{xiv}. The total amount of clubbers seldom exceeded a few hundred (in general about one hundred for a small event, and about five hundred for a big one; local managers of each club moving the furniture and other installations accordingly so that the place would always look full of people), and the majority of people, Chinese or foreigners, was between twenty and thirty years old.

The main activity, as seen by an external observer, consisted in getting together on Friday and Saturday nights, to dance and drink alcohol. From the point of view of the managers, the goal seemed first to be able to get as much people as possible, who were hoped to spend as much money as possible. This objective, except for a few very successful clubs, was hardly ever reached. A description of Beijing clubs at that time could easily have had a sentence pointing out "places sometimes very crowded during week ends but empty most of the time." For this reason maybe, clubs had, so I heard, an average life expectancy of one to two years.

The criteria of the presence or absence of people, many or few, was used by everyone to qualify the success of an event. It was related to financial considerations for the managers, to the atmosphere for the public, and to both for Xiao Deng whose income and fame depended on it. The usual question, for someone who was outside calling someone inside a club at the moment of the party was: "Are there many people?" (人多吗? *Ren duo ma?*). If the question can be easily understood for a manager, whose income is usually related to the amount of money spent by the audience, it is more difficult to explain for the other people. The explanations given by those I met in the clubs where Xiao Deng was playing were as follow: the employees were bored if the people were not so numerous, there indeed was less work to do but they preferred an active and "lively" (热闹 *renao*) atmosphere (the question of losing their job or not, in case of bankruptcy, didn't seem to be an issue -- maybe because it was easy for them to find another job, as explained to me by a manager); the people in the public, which I asked several times about the comparison with sightseeing (situation where, to my experience, in China as in Europe, most people prefer not to be in the middle of a crowd), spoke about their desire of "being with other people" (跟别人在一起 *gen bieren zai yiqi*); finally, DJs insisted on the necessity to "communicate" (交流 *jiaoliu*) with the audience to make a good mix.

Xiao Deng, in particular, stressed the importance of interaction with the crowd, because, he said, "the feeling is different" (感觉不一样 *ganjue bu yiyang*) than with a mix done at his home^{xv}. This special relationship between a DJ and his audience wasn't always positive. I remember a discussion with Zheng Dao^{xvi} (a well-known

local disc jockey) who had finished a set and looked particularly upset. When I asked him why, he told me he had enough of “serving the junkies” (为吸毒者服务 *wei xiduzhe fuwu*^{xvii}), that he had been forced to mix only to give them a feeling of “glide” (飞 *fei*, literally “fly”), and that he did not have any interest in doing so^{xviii}.

Because one of the other musicians I was observing for my research worked as a manager in a club (Lao Dong, the “computer musician”, not discussed in this paper), I spent much time in different clubs hearing the managers speaking and arguing about their business. I came to the conclusion that there did not exist a ready-made formula to make people come to a club on a regular basis. The success (i.e. the continuous presence of a numerous audience) seemed to be dependent on a subtle mix of many elements: location of the club in the city; design of the place; management of the entrance fees^{xix}; style of music and disc jockeys; promotion (flyers given away during previous parties or left at specific locations, e.g. a fashionable clothes shop or foreign students dormitories at the local universities); financial resources; relationships with the city authorities; friends circles and fame of the managers, owners or DJs; staff management; fashion changes; flow of information the day of the party through mobile phones and Internet forums; reputation of the club; period of the year; and weather conditions.^{xx}

Financial income of the mix

The monthly income of Xiao Deng changed quite a lot according to the number and kind of dance parties he participated in. I estimated it about 4000RMB (US\$482), moving from 15'000 to 20'000 (US\$1'807 to US\$2'409) for a very busy and successful month to zero during calm periods without any opportunity of work (notably during the winter, e.g. Chinese New Year, where people wouldn't go out much). Almost the entire amount of this income came from the mixes and collaborations in the organization of parties with the Japanese promoter, plus very rare additional amounts when he composed a piece of music for an advertisement.

Xiao Deng often complained about the pressure related to the fact he did not have a regular income, and did not know what tomorrow would be. He was personally involved in promotional work, and wasn't happy with that. It consisted of, one day I accompanied him, in going to foreign students' dormitories at the University of Beijing and the Normal University of Beijing (my presence was a plus, because a Caucasian face made easier getting past the security guards at the entrance), running up and down the floors, slipping flyers about a party under the doors of each room. Xiao Deng stressed the fact that such work for dance parties took a lot of time, it was not rare that, after some promotional activities on the very day of the party, he would be completely exhausted when he had to start his mix. He also complained that doing such kind of work didn't let him enough time to write songs.

Looking at the vinyls

Now that I have sketched Xiao Deng's life and djing activities, I would like to present three observations which focus on the agency of his vinyls. Although all three are closely related to the general picture of the mix described above, it is important to note that my goal here is not to seize the activity of mixing but the one of the technical object “vinyls” which constituted only a small part of it. Formulated as a question, the idea here is to understand “what exactly were the vinyls doing?” in the process of Xiao Deng's mix, in Beijing between 2003 and 2004.

Observation 1: “Xiao Deeenng!!”

It was not rare, when Xiao Deng (or another DJ) mixed at the beginning of a party around 10 or 11 p.m. that no one danced during quite a moment. Most people arrived around midnight, sometimes even later. If there was a competing party the same night at another club --for example with a famous disc jockey from abroad-- the dancefloor could stay empty until 3 a.m. and suddenly, whenever a load of people decided to move from the other club, be overcrowded.

In the absence of a sufficient number of dancers, Xiao Deng’s work wasn’t very rewarding. The few people present in the club concentrated more on their conversations than on the music, and if a few swayed their hips while drinking, those who crossed the dancefloor did so mostly to greet someone or to go to the toilet. The difference with a crowded dancefloor, some other day, was striking. Xiao Deng then, was the king, he ruled. The people seemed to hang on his gestures: a bad choice of a vinyl and everybody stopped dancing (this situation occurred once in 2004 when he decided to test one of his own songs I helped him to mix where the bass frequencies were badly tuned - by me, that is). A good choice, and the enthusiastic dancers raised their hands, whistled and screamed “XIAOOO DEEENNG!!”.

A few hours later, if Xiao Deng was the disc jockey in charge of the last set, and most of the crowd had already left, he would find himself almost alone in the dance hall. The only people still in the club were a few drunkards unable to move, a few unstoppable dancers, employees who already started to clean the place, and a lone researcher who decided to impose on himself to stay until the very last second of the party in order to make sure he did not miss any clue.

At the end of spring 2004, by dint of following Xiao Deng at the parties he mixed, I started to remember the tunes of the vinyls he mixed on a regular basis and, in a general way, his musical feeling through the mix. Every time I went to hear him play, I paid attention to all his movements as well as those of the other participants, DJs, dancers, and the employees of the clubs. One night, a group of regular customers was present, among them a guy -- let’s call him Guo -- I knew a little bit since we had chattered a few times. He was an enthusiastic dancer, often in the middle of the dancefloor, making lots of gestures and shouts. As I was standing nearby, and that he and I were behind a group of tall people which prevented us to see the dj-desk, Guo raised up this arms and shouted “XIAOOO DEEENNG!!”. The problem, --as I knew for having noticed the change a few minutes earlier when I was closer to the dj-desk--, was that *it was not Xiao Deng who was mixing*, but the second disc jockey who had just started his two hours’ set.

Guo was no musician, and probably paid less attention than me to the slight changes of the songs mixed by the DJs, but his mistake was even more striking in that I wouldn’t have been able either, -- if I hadn’t seen the change with my own eyes --, to hear that it was not Xiao Deng who was mixing. The current record was not one of Xiao Deng’s favorites, but it could have been a song I had never heard, for example a new one he had just bought, because it did not sound very different from his usual style. It could also have been, (although I don’t think that was the case here), a vinyl from Xiao Deng but temporarily used by the second DJ in order to manage the transition to his own collection of records.

Before commenting this observation, I present two other cases.

Observation 2: Disc jockey without Records

Here is an excerpt of a discussion I had in Shanghai with an European disc jockey, as related in my field notes (translated from French).

[Shanghai, the 2nd of February 2003] (...) I stayed until the end, around 7 a.m. [The German DJ] mixed from midnight to about 4.30 p.m., he was very good. Then Marc took over, and he was also really good, I was surprised because usually Marc is not that good. I said it to Ken who (...) commented (...) 'Yes, Marc has very good records.'

This comment, which I find interesting because of how it links the work of a disc jockey to the quality of his records, can be linked to a situation I observed in Beijing at the beginning of July 2004: Zheng Dao, a well-known and much appreciated Beijing DJ (previously mentioned in the section *The Audience at the parties*), went on tour to Europe. While he was playing in Zurich, he unfortunately had his DJ bag with eighty-six of his best records stolen (as my grandpa said, Switzerland is not what it used to be). I had heard him mixing at a party a few days before his departure, and I went to listen to his set again when he came back to Beijing. The difference was huge: a few weeks before, his mix had many astonishing sounds, subtle rhythmic changes, and I had seen an audience literally in trance, subdued by the music. That evening --a few weeks later, after his bag had been stolen-- his mix was poor, flat sounds and rhythms that sounded old fashioned, even a little bit steely, and his performance clearly did not fascinate the audience. Emotions set aside (Zheng Dao wasn't very happy to play his "old" records), the relationship between him and his vinyls looked suddenly very special to me in the following months when, his stock of vinyls slowly being reconstituted, his mixes were getting better and better again. As a DJ, he was, in a way, his records.

Of course, things aren't that simple. However, from the technical perspective which is the core of this paper, it is interesting to note that a good DJ is, in the example above, a DJ who has good records. A disc jockey who does not have good records becomes, somehow, until he gets them back, a bad disc jockey. In other words, records, and their content, are part of the artistic quality of the disc jockey.

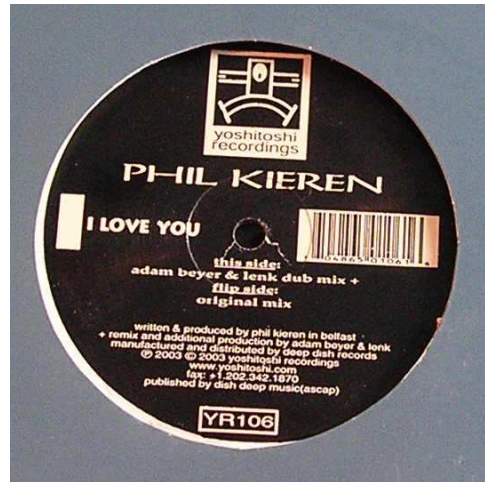
Observation 3: Records, without disc jockey

As mentioned earlier, Xiao Deng's sets usually last about two hours. I also explained that he often went to clubs two to three hours in advance, and had a few beers at the bar, waiting for his turn to play. When he had drunk a lot, he sometimes needed to leave the dj-desk during his mix in order to go to the toilets. To do so, he put a record on one of the turn-tables, synchronized it to the previous one, performed the mix and let the record play. The average length of the songs being around seven minutes, he had enough time to do his round-trip to the restroom.

Although I have never observed Guo or anyone shouting "Xiaooo Deeenng" while he was away, it could as well have happened; to the question "who is playing now?", the answer goes: "*the record* is playing".

Is a DJ with Good Records a Good DJ?

Let us have a look at one of the vinyls. The picture below was taken at Xiao Deng's place, in June 2004.



Figures 3a & 3b

As anyone with good eyes or a magnifying glass can see on the lower part of the enlargement on the right, this record was “*written & produced by phil kieren in belfast*”. It was probably not the one used by Xiao Deng in the observations presented before, but since it was one in his collection, it could as well have been the case. Phil Kieren can help us understand what is going on with the technical object “vinyl” in the process of a DJ mix if we use the advice provided by Bruno Latour (1988):

(...) every time you want to know what a nonhuman does, simply imagine what other humans or other nonhumans would have to do were this character not present.” (p. 299)

For clarity's sake, let's consider from now on that the record played in each of the three preceding observations was this one -- “I Love You”, from Phil Kieren--, and let's call it “Bob” to make a difference with its numerous clones sold in various places around the DJ world (a vinyl of this type is usually produced in hundreds or thousands).

Bob's actions have already been brought to the foreground in the three preceding observations: 1. Guo shouts at Xiao Deng, but he has been replaced by another DJ. Guo cannot notice his absence because the music he hears is Bob's, not Xiao Deng's; 2. Zheng Dao has his eighty-six best records stolen, and becomes a “bad” DJ until his collection is reconstituted. This story tells us how much Bob is needed on the stage: while he is stuck in Zurich, Zheng Dao struggles to find a substitute for him and the quality of the show is temporarily weakened; 3. Xiao Deng goes to the toilets and does not worry about the music, because Bob takes care of the crowd while he is away.

As we saw earlier, Xiao Deng's status, while mixing in a club, changed according to circumstances. Whenever the audience was small, no one seemed to care that a DJ was behind the dj-desk, carefully choosing records, adding subtle

changes to the music. A few hours later, when the dance hall was overcrowded, Xiao Deng became a star, many eyes were fixed on him and the very same movements which had gone unnoticed before were suddenly very important to all. Now of course, things are not that simple: if one wants to grasp the “importance” of a disc jockey in a club in Beijing, he or she must also consider his or her fame (famous DJs usually played at the best schedule), the day of the week (Tuesday was very different from Thursday, Thursday being also different from Friday or Saturday), in which club and with which audience, the personality of the DJ (e.g. exuberant or not), the choice of the records played (a famous song, appreciated by many created different reactions in the audience), and so on. But still, in a way, in the description above, we can say that the number of people in the room determined whether Xiao Deng’s work mattered or not.

Considering the very same process, Bob’s situation is not very different from Xiao Deng’s. Its agency varies according to circumstances. A close (and slightly obstinate) look at it helps us understand the shape of Bob’s actions, as we try to follow its path. The first thing to note is probably that Bob had indeed a long journey: born in Belfast, he is now living in Beijing. In the process of the mix, his activity is strangely similar to Xiao Deng’s. At first, still in the DJ bag, Bob doesn’t do anything. No one cares of him, and he could as well be elsewhere (at Xiao Deng’s home, in Belfast, in the toilets?). Then, picked up by Xiao Deng, carefully placed on the second turn-table, being slowly mixed with the preceding record Bob becomes suddenly an important agent in the flow of interactions. He is collaborating with the second record, the dj mixer effects, and Xiao Deng, to produce a suitable output for the dancers, in a similar way as the different members of a rock band play together on a stage. Then, when the mix between the preceding record and Bob has been operated by Xiao Deng, Bob is alone at the dj-desk. Xiao Deng is behind, looking for the next vinyl to be played. All the music, the subtle changes provided by Bob and transmitted to the crowd are but the product of Phil Kieren’s (and many other musicians, sound engineers, etc.) *recorded*, indeed, activity.

Conclusion

The point I would like to emphasize here is Xiao Deng’s action of *use*. While we see how the flow of agencies during the DJ mix made the artist move from the background to the foreground and return, it is the fact that “Bob” is being *used* or *not used* by Xiao Deng that makes him *active* or *not active* in the overall movement. For the ethnographer, *the moment of use* brings into play the agency of the technical tool in the social world. Of course, the idea of “use” here is meant in a very broad sense. For example, in the case of someone who has just bought a new music player, or a mobile phone, the simple fact of carrying the device in one’s bag already induces agency, because it changes its owner’s feelings of oneself (by enhancing the perception of her social status for example). In another way, e.g. carried in the hand but not switched on, it could change the visual appearance of the owner, making her look more fashionable in the eyes of others. Switched on, it would, then, have a strong agency, cutting the user from its local audio environment, or connecting her to someone situated in a distant place.

How and what the technical object plays are, of course, the next questions^{xxi}. But while these last two points go beyond the scope of this paper, I believe, as I have tried to illustrate above, that the question of *the moment of use* is central when one wants to describe the agency of technical objects, -- a kind of agency which is often, at first, invisible to the eyes of the observer. It gives the observer a hint that a new

agency comes into play: if an object is being used, it has necessarily agency, and this agency must necessarily be taken into the broader ethnographical account.

So is a DJ with good records a good DJ? Certainly not. If that was the case, everyone who can buy records could become a famous artist. Bob, although obviously not quite innocent in Beijing's mixes, is always taken hostage by Xiao Deng, who decides whether or not he will play on stage with his other, human and non-human, comrades. However, if the DJ remains the one who is in charge, we see that this "being-in-charge" changes a lot throughout the mixing process, where so many actions are taken off the artist's mind by technical devices.

Endnotes

- i This paper gives a detailed description of collected data and does not discuss in depth theoretical issues related to the agency of technical objects. However, Akkrich (1987), Latour (1988), Callon (1986), while unknown to me before and during the field work, had indeed a strong influence on the way I present the data today. For a recent publication on the agency of objects see also Latour (2005: 63-86); for a discussion on the agency of artefacts in art, including the works of art themselves, see Gell (1998).
- ii A PDF version of the original thesis --in French-- is available in Zimmermann (2006).
- iii As for the question concerning the relationship between the West and China in matters of technical innovation, see Cao (2004).
- iv If all the local DJs I have seen in 2001 were men, some interviewees mentioned a few women who were djing too. I did not encounter any of them until the summer 2005, however.
- v This idea is discussed in Latour (2005: 81).
- vi As far as I understand the promotional work, the places were chosen because of their potential customers: the bars and the shops were trendy places where clubbers would go during the week, and the foreign student community often came to the clubs too. However, regular Chinese university students, and ordinary bars or shops in the city were not considered as potential customers. In 2003-2004, when I spoke about my research at Beijing University, none of my Chinese colleagues (master and doctoral students at the Department of Sociology) had been in a club in Beijing even once in their life.
- vii Xiao Deng told me he used to have a strong interest in the practice of scratch some years ago, but he eventually gave up doing exercises. This decision was, I think, linked to the act he considered himself as a *techno* artist; scratch is usually the privilege of *hip hop*, and the special effect achieved by altering the speed of the turn-table is mostly done on vocal sounds (*techno*, in general, does not have human vocals, contrary to *hip hop*).
- viii I did not make any comparative observations with Western DJs (an environment that I am not familiar with), but most of the elements presented here such as the description of the mixing-activity process, the importance of the audience, or the number of vinyls chosen by the artists for an event are similar to those of Jouvenet (2001).
- ix In Chinese only as a noun, "a *mix*" (mix, 一个 *mix yige mix*). In the verbal form, the usual saying was more "put music" (放音乐 *fang yinyue* or 搭接 *dajie*).

- x On the “the quest for the right piece [of music] at the right moment” or sociology of taste and the question of locations and moments, see the enlightening *Dora’s failed interview* in Hennion (2007: 110-111).
- xi In August 2005, when I was staying at his home, Xiao Deng had decided to use his laptop computer for mixing, using Native Instruments’ *Traktor* software and mp3 files. He told me he did no longer buy many vinyls, but was still following the procedure described here, not sending his Japanese friend to buy records for him but looking himself for mp3s on the Internet by means of peer-to-peer software (i.e. a cost-free and illegal way). When I asked him if it worked well, he said: “The songs of this website [that you can see now on this label’s website on my computer screen], most of the time [I] can find all of them.” (这个网站的那些歌，基本上都能找到。 *Zhei ge wangzhan de nei xie ge, jibenshang dou neng zhaodao*)
- xii Unfortunately I have lost this model’s reference. I believe they were professional quality headphones, quite standard, probably worth less than 125 €.
- xiii In 2003-2004, a fetishist party in Beijing was an event where most of the audience would dress in black and white, with various sadomasochist costumes but with a bon-enfant atmosphere.
- xiv For example, during the World University Games handled in Beijing in 2001, many additional Westerners came to the clubs. A similar phenomenon can be observed every summer, when the Chinese language courses for foreigners start at Beijing universities.
- xv This aspect may be changing with the spread of the Internet: in March 2004, I saw Xiao Deng mixing in his room in Beijing for someone who was in the Guangdong province, using software that allowed him to see his friend, who had a video camera (Xiao Deng did not have one himself, so he was only transmitting sound information). Some international artists are already giving long-distance concerts by means of this type of technology (e.g. the German band Monolake <<http://www.monolake.de>>).
- xvi Fictitious name.
- xvii These words, in Chinese, are a direct allusion to another very common saying in PRC: “Serve the people” 为人民服务 *Wei renmin fuwu*.
- xviii One must note here that Zheng Dao was addressing me, a Western musician who had just listened to his set. Although his remark inscribes itself in a set of problems I have observed several times, it is possible that it was also a way of telling me why he mixed one particular kind of music instead of another, some songs being sometimes considered by disc jockeys as “easy to mix” and others less so, indicating the ability of each artist to use more difficult materials or not. Xiao Deng sometimes referred to this kind of “easy” songs using the terms of “music pleasant to the ear” 好听的音乐 *haoting de yinyue*.
- xix The musicians who were regulars at the clubs I visited didn’t pay the entrance fee of dance events (which could vary between 30RMB and 50RMB). Once I had been acquainted with them, I never paid a single entrance ticket again. When I arrived to a club, I looked for someone I knew (an employee, someone in the audience) who then informed the security guards, saying, for example, “friend of Xiao Deng” 小邓的朋友 *Xiao Deng de pengyou*. I then got a stamp on my wrist (a common trick used to distinguish among the people going in and out, those who had already paid their ticket from those who had not), and I got in.
- xx Dance parties in Beijing, at least those I have observed, were playing a very obvious role as a “meeting place” for a certain kind of community. Musicians

were but a subgroup of a corpus which included personalities from the movie industry, video and design artists, and many others. Many work discussions (contracts, projects, collaborations, etc.) were taking place in the clubs in a systematic way. This characteristic of Beijing clubs was particularly striking by the fact that if many professionals of the entertainment industry were attending the dance parties every Friday and Saturdays nights, many were not dancing (especially DJs; recently I have made this funny observation --“disc jockeys don't dance” -- in clubs in Geneva as well), were not flirting, but were talking business.

xxi For a discussion in French on these two other points, see Zimmermann (2006).

Acknowledgments

I thank Nicolas Zufferey, Ellen Hertz, Michael Lackner and Howard S. Becker for their invaluable help during the past few years; Qiu Zeqi for constructive discussions and criticism at various stages of the research project and for the invitation to join his team of postgraduate students at the Department of Sociology of Beijing University during the academic year 2003-2004; André Ducret, for teaching me Sociology of art; Deng Suo and Zhang Yan (at the time Ph.D. candidates, Department of Sociology of Beijing University), for useful suggestions while discussing the theoretical analysis; Caroline Grillot for guiding my steps at the very beginning of my field research; Mareile Flitsch and Antoine Hennion, for crucial advice and kindness at difficult times during the writing of my thesis; Andrej Seàn O'Murchù for comments on this paper and helping me improve my English; Vanessa L. Vanpetten for her interest in this discussion while still at the pre-alpha stage. The financial support of the Swiss National Science Foundation under grant PBGE 1 101317 is gratefully acknowledged.

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(<http://www.unige.ch/cyberdocuments/theses2006/ZimmermannB/meta.html>)

Citation

- Zimmermann, Basile (2007) "Tracing the Action of Technical Objects in an Ethnography: Vinyls in Beijing." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year
(http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)



Qualitative Sociology Review

Volume III, Issue 3 – December 2007

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.3.3.04>

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Contributions of Ethnography to Gendered Sociology: the French Jazz World

Abstract

In the last few years a number of studies have explored the epistemological uses of the ethnographer's gender in sociological research and the effects of gender on research results. These studies aim either to analyze how ethnographers can use their "gender" to open up observational possibilities, or to analyze observations made while maintaining as much control as possible over the conditions of their sociological interpretation. But relatively few papers discuss using ethnography to study gendered social relations. This article applies that approach to the observations made in our field study of the "world" of French jazz. We present here three of the main ways that the epistemological enrichment offered by ethnography may in turn enrich analysis of gender relations: access to "invisible" practices, analysis in terms of "*the arrangement between the sexes*," the possibility of generalization.

Keywords

Ethnography; Gender; Art; Jazz; Music; Work; Ethnography; Epistemology

In the last few years a number of studies have explored the epistemological uses of the ethnographer's gender in sociological research and the effects of gender on research results. These studies aim either to analyze how ethnographersⁱ can use their "gender" to open up observational possibilities through a sense of shared understanding, flirtation, or trust, or to analyze observations made while maintaining as much control as possible over the conditions of their sociological interpretationⁱⁱ. The results derive from "reflexive" work (Burawoy 2003; Buscatto 2002; Weber 2001) done at different moments in the research using "gendered" analysis of the relation between the ethnographer and the respondents.

But relatively few studies discuss using ethnography to study gendered social relations. This article applies that approach to the observations made in my field study of the "world" of French jazz (Becker 1998 [1982]), specifically at the link between gender analysis, used here to apprehend the social situation of French female jazz singers, and the use of ethnography in the study. Using ethnography as a primary research method allowed me to identify and explain the marginal, doubly segregated position of French women jazz singers. Ethnography made possible not

only a major generalization—women jazz singers are marginalized—but also the analysis of the social processes that produce and legitimate this gender-based marginalization.ⁱⁱⁱ

Two types of gender-based hierarchical ranking in the world of French jazz

Four years of fieldwork^{iv} in the world of French jazz revealed major forms of gender-based differentiation^v. French jazz is a man's world—more than 90% of musicians are men—but about 65% of singers are women.^{vi} And even the French women singers receiving the most recognition from colleagues, audiences and critics never make their living fully from their art, but are situated in the lower spheres of the “informally recognized ranking of these jobs—taking account of the income involved, the hours of work, and the degree of community recognition of achievement felt—(which) constitutes the scale by which a musician measures his success according to the kind of job he usually holds.” (Becker 1963: 103-4).

I thus identified a hidden phenomenon—the negative hierarchical position of French women jazz singers—and revealed three social processes that produce and legitimate this “gendered” hierarchy. Male instrumentalists and female singers are distinguished by gender-specific conceptions of music. Singers want to produce a melodic, textual interpretation of songs, often standards composed by others; instrumentalists dream of composing their own songs and associate women singers with commercial jazz, which they denigrate. Furthermore, “male” conventions—social, language-related and musical—shape work relations, making it difficult for female singers to get into and stay on the jazz music market. Lastly, stereotypes of women shared by most male musicians reduce women jazz singers' employability and confine them to less esteemed musical positions. A conflictual hierarchical ordering of women singers and men instrumentalists is thus observed, even though most of these musicians would prefer an experience of harmonious equality.

How did ethnography help me develop such an innovative view of this question?

Privileged access to “invisible” realities

Ethnography makes it possible to learn about “invisible” practices of *in situ* actors (Becker 2002; Cefai 2003; Morrill and Fine 1997). An ethnographer who observes a group for a long time—and this may include becoming an active member of that group—can observe and identify moments, discourses, and behaviors inaccessible to a “stranger” researcher using interviews or questionnaires. This material may consist of taboo practice (e.g., the sorcery practices observed by Jeanne Favret-Saada 1977). Ethnographers can attain to private or public life moments hidden from “strangers”—“squares,” to borrow the term used by the dance musicians Howard Becker studied (1963). Or they can reveal incommunicable, floating or contradictory practices such as “natural” body practices (Faure 2004) or the variability of principles of action by context (Grimaud 2004). This special access to low-visibility social practices allows the identification of multiple kinds of rationality underlying individual actions and the way they are constructed in the action.^{vii}

The desire to investigate

My position as an amateur singer triggered my desire to investigate this subject. I have been singing jazz since 1993, and in 1998 my progress in music and a certain amount of free time led me to participate in a jazz singing workshop at a jazz school in Paris where most of the participants were women who were professional singers or becoming so. The rest were amateurs with solid experience, like me. I also participated in an intensive jazz-singing master class with professional and semi-professional women singers.

In the instruction and advice given by the teachers, themselves well-known professional jazz singers, and in the anecdotes exchanged among the singers during breaks, friendly gatherings or work sessions, I learned about the tensions, conflicts and other negative experiences they had with instrumentalists. Without being fully part of this social world, I was also beginning to note experiences similar to their “stories” in my regular interactions with instrumentalists—in jazz singing workshops, for example, and vocal jam sessions (Buscatto 2003b).

My decision in June 1998 to keep an ethnographic journal was directly linked to my desire to study this conflictual situation—unpleasant and musically sterile for the women singers—sociologically. The first lines of the journal read:

Just finished my class at School X, am full of experiences and vague ideas about relations between singers and musicians. Free-ranging discussion on the difficulty of finding musicians, making music with them.

After noting a few negative anecdotes (the first in a long series), I laid out a few concepts that would guide my future research strategies: “trajectories,” “images of woman,” “social behaviors,” “conceptions of music.”

Ethnography gave me full access to the conflict that marks the daily life of women jazz singers and men jazz musicians. I could have detected the difficult relations between the two parties by reading jazz magazines and conducting formal interviews with jazz musicians of both sexes, and I have sometimes used those means to collect denigrating remarks about “not very serious” singers or those with “risqué necklines,” denunciations of tactless musicians, and to learn that musicians often only collaborate with women singers in order to get jobs so that they can make ends meet. But this material would not have been enough to identify the systematic nature of this behavior and the way it affects all French jazz singers regardless of technical level, musical style, “appearance,” social origins and mode of expression.

Identifying the negative hierarchical position of women jazz singers

Ethnography let me deconstruct the discourses produced by these men and women, and thus explain the conflictual relations between women singers and male instrumentalists. It also let me redefine the object of study, shifting focus from those conflictual relations to the negative hierarchical ordering experienced by all French women jazz singers I observed, a focus that revealed the gender-based differentiation at work in the jazz world. My first fundamental result due to ethnography is that French women jazz singers occupy the lowest levels of the musical hierarchy regardless of technical level, artistic reputation or musical style.

Even the most renowned singers, those most fully recognized by their peers and the critics - those who receive positive reviews when their discs come out, are openly complimented in private discussions, and/or are programmed for renowned festivals or clubs - never fully make their living from jazz. Main reason is that they are

very seldom hired as “sidewomen” by instrumentalists. Their position enables them to do no better than steer clear of “side” jobs - teaching, peripheral music, choir-directing, running music workshops, cultural entertainment, etc. - that are the common lot of relatively unknown musicians of both sexes. Making one’s living from jazz implies playing in around ten groups a year, only two or three of them led by the same musician (Coulangeon 1999; Buscatto 2004). The fame of foreign jazz singers - Diana Krall, Norah Jones, Stacey Kent, to cite only the most renowned - and the relative ease with which a “group with a woman jazz singer” may get hired to perform at private parties or in clubs or cafés, makes people think that “serious” women jazz singers do well, or even better than men instrumentalists. These experiences mask these women’s low degree of integration into musical networks, a situation that leads to their “exclusion” from the most comfortable musical positions, reserved for more renowned instrumentalists, those who make their living “exclusively” from jazz (Buscatto 2004).

This empirical observation, which has since been regularly corroborated by the actors involved and other singers and instrumentalists I have had occasion to present my works to either orally or in writing, nonetheless always at first astounds my musician interlocutors and sociologist colleagues.^{viii} Ethnography alone gave me the elements and perspective that made it possible to get beyond this first mistaken assumption about the situation of women jazz singers, an idea fueled by repeated daily experience, i.e., the fame of foreign jazz singers and the relative ease with which jazz groups with a woman singer get work performing in “commercial” contexts.

The result was only conceptualized in this form at the end of the writing process, in response to a comment from the manuscript reviewer at the *Revue Française de Sociologie* who, after reading a first version of my academic article, asked me to clarify the terms of my understanding and suggested the concepts of segregation and discrimination. This remark was an incentive for me to formalize the gender-based differentiation that is actually operative in this art world and to finalize my first analyses around the concept of social hierarchy. But only by systematically gathering a significant amount of information relative to the work situations experienced over time by women singers and men instrumentalists, their social characteristics (age, training, musical style, appearance) and their private-life (marital situation, living arrangements, birth of a child) was I able to identify and prove that contrary to common understanding, all women jazz singers (not just the least serious among them) are subjected to negative hierarchical ranking.

The interviews were conducted during a limited time period and at a specific moment in each respondent’s trajectory and therefore, produced only partial information, limited in time and partially incorrect about the different components of respondents’ occupational activity and how their informal social networks were organized. I systematically reconstructed these professional activities and trajectories by cross-checking the information transmitted to me in the interviews conducted in 2001 with that collected in the course of my observations over four years: informal discussions, reading of performance programs, participation in musical events, etc.

As mentioned, ethnography makes it possible to gain privileged access to “invisible” body or discursive practices, whether they be “natural,” taboo, incommunicable, contradictory or simply not very well known to the actors who engage in them. Identifying these practices then influences the way that unsuspected social phenomena are identified—i.e., negative hierarchical ranking of women jazz singers—and the way the modes of producing and legitimating them that are operative at the very heart of social interaction are analyzed.

“The arrangement between the sexes” as point of entry into the analysis

Likewise, the observations I was collecting soon moved me to discard a first approach, despite its being the one generally used to explain phenomena of gender-based differentiation in artistic fields. The approach I did not choose is concerned above all with artists' socio-occupational trajectories, trajectories usually reconstructed by means of life-story narratives or non-directive interviews. That approach is quite efficient in apprehending moments—in childhood, at school, in the course of a career, for example—or social beliefs—e.g., a gender-based understanding of a particular instrument and the practice of playing it—that underlie certain gender-based differentiations. It sheds light on the fact that women are less likely to be present in the artistic field, as shown by Dominique Pasquier (1983) for painters or Hyacinthe Ravet for orchestra musicians (2003). And it explains the most important form of gender-based differentiation operative in jazz: women sing, men play an instrument. I have recently used this approach to better apprehend the minority situation of women instrumentalists in the world of French jazz (Buscatto 2007).

But that approach does not apprehend the process by which the hierarchical order in this music world is produced and legitimated; it does not enable us to understand how women jazz singers get situated at the lowest levels of musical renown and job conditions. Reformulated in the terms that define my object of study - namely, the conflictual relations between women jazz singers and men instrument players—this approach did not capture the reasons underlying this patent mutual rejection and denigration. I therefore chose an interactionist approach, where the understanding is that musical interaction between these two categories of musicians - “the arrangement between the sexes,” to borrow Goffman's expression - is where the observed gender-based hierarchical ordering is most likely to be realized, expressed and negotiated: “It is here that sex-class makes itself felt, here in the organization of face-to-face interaction” (Goffman 1976-77: 208). It is in this encounter that both the rules governing collective relations among musicians and the terms defining “good music” are negotiated. Just as those musicians' music is constructed when they play, so the esthetic, musical and social conventions that orient relations among musicians are defined in the moment of interaction. It is at the very heart of musical practice that I identified the modes of producing and legitimating the “naturally” practiced hierarchical ranking of women jazz singers and men instrumentalists on the French jazz scene.

In 1999 I began the long labor of integrating myself into the world of men instrumentalists, an undertaking that influenced the way I handled the investigation. During the first two years that I kept my field journal, my principal concern was learning how to relate to the instrumentalists so I could make progress in music (at the time, I was doing research on organizations; jazz was my secret garden) and trying to understand the situation from these men's point of view. I enrolled in an “instrumental music class” at another Paris jazz school. There I was the only woman - and an amateur jazz singer to boot - in a class of men instrumentalists, professionals or in the process of becoming so (the teacher was also a male instrumentalist).

Class session after class session, rehearsal after rehearsal, I experienced precisely what my fellow woman jazz singers had related. But I also became familiar with a more “male” conception of jazz. For example, while jazz-singing training sessions were fundamentally (though not solely) devoted to interpreting old standards, instrument workshops made no mention of standards and focused instead on improvisation (result published in my 2003 demonstration). The first social process

underlying gender-based hierarchization is therefore that the “male” gender-based notion of music is the dominant, more legitimate one in the jazz world.

This experience also accustomed me to new ways of communicating. “Doing your improv” and “asserting yourself as a leader” became standard expressions, and exchanges were about keys and chord sequences—instrumentalists get annoyed when indications about how to play are not given in formal technical terms. My hesitations provoked silence and annoyance with them, whereas with my jazz singer colleagues they elicited encouragement and discussion. On the other hand, my energetic “improvs” elicited encouragement from instrumentalists whereas they were generally ignored by my women jazz singer colleagues. Gradually, a second hypothesis emerged, later examined and confirmed by means of complementary research techniques: the social, language-related and musical conventions (Becker 1982) that organize relations among jazz musicians are all gender-related, and the dominant conventions are once again “male.”

I also observed that the only women singers who manage to hold their own in the jazz world are those with a male instrumentalist partner. Not only does a male partner, regardless of his age, provide access to a more open, regular network, but he is very likely to manage his partner’s group, directly (by composing arrangements or managing relations with the musicians) and/or indirectly (by handling the singer’s reputation, for example). Such a partner seems a necessary source of assistance in daily interactions and plays a fundamental role in keeping these women relatively present on the weak job market. All women singers who tried to penetrate that market or stay on it while having a love relationship with a non-musician partner failed in their endeavor. Breakups were often costly. I was only able to reach this conclusion thanks to long, careful observation of women singers in professionalization spaces such as vocal jams in Paris cafés and music centers (2003b; 2006b).

The eminently “male” character of the French jazz world may be qualified thus: men define good music and the social conventions attached to women singers. But this kind of functioning and the imaginary that goes with it are in turn linked to broader social functioning, and this allows for a fuller demonstration of ethnography’s generalizing capacity.

Ethnography’s capacity for generalization

By giving us access to low-visibility social worlds, ethnography provides a privileged view into “micro” realities. But thanks to the multiplication of “games of scale” (Revel, 1996), it can also enable us to identify broader social phenomena (Burawoy, 1998). In other words, ethnography also proves a useful tool for identifying the wider movements that produce and transform social relations, and for describing them down to their finest realities. I was able to link the social and musical situation experienced by women jazz singers to broader analysis in terms of gendered social relations. Vocal jazz is clearly defined as “a woman’s job.” Women jazz singers experience all the social realities of this, from “invisibility” of their vocal and stage know-how to the use of denigrating representations of female seduction.

Direct access to a “sexual” imaginary: the eternal feminine

My position as a woman jazz singer awakened a desire among the male instrumentalists to invite me out, in modes ranging from friendly to amorous. The absence of women in these men’s worlds makes women’s presence “pleasant,” according to different male musicians I met with, and changes the “nature” of the evening; e.g., subjects and tone of conversation, jokes (Kaplan-Daniels 1967). But the image of female seduction that the jazz singer inspires also seems to have played an important role in motivating these musicians to invite me out (Ryen 2002; Arendell 1997). I observed this more clearly when the attraction they showed was for my girlfriends - some of whom included me in the “plans” that then took shape—but also when the men were overtly trying to flirt with me.

I then came to note that merely by going on stage and singing expressively, my seductive power increased several times over among both unknown spectators, who sometimes tried to get a date with me after a jam or concert,^{ix} and some of my instrumentalist colleagues, often strongly attracted to the “singer.” In the course of jams, parties or training sessions, the way people looked at me varied radically by whether or not I had sung on stage. It often happened that an instrumentalist who had ignored me before I went on stage came up to talk to me and even tried to flirt. There seemed to be an imaginary in which the singer was associated with highly evocative erotic seduction. The fact is that the increased seductive power of a woman singing jazz is associated on different points with the devaluing of her professional abilities.

The invisibility of stage work

First, singing presupposes a specific kind of stage work in that the singer is the only member of the performing group who is constantly relating and communicating with the public (through eye contact, the lyrics), narrating stories to them. The singer is the only one required to think out her position on stage so as to appear both relaxed and involved (this implies thinking about how to hold the microphone, move on stage, facial expressions, clothes). Both instrumentalists and singers consider this reality a constraint, but instrumentalists think of themselves as invisible on stage. And neither instrumentalists nor singers think of the stage presence and expression just described as full-fledged work. It is understood instead to express the singer’s personality and her “natural” assets, namely physical ones. Stage expression is granted no value in itself because only musical value counts. Though singers consider the musical work involved in interpreting melodies and expressing emotions to be central, they do not speak of the part of the performance involving on-stage gestures and movement as a specific kind of work. These observations have been fundamental in establishing the tie between the “natural” seductive power of the singer and non-recognition of her stage work, that work being perceived as merely a more or less successful expression of her natural ability to please.

The invisibility of stage work thus turned out to be associated with the classic function of women seducing men. The singer is understood to be showing that she has a natural taste for seduction, which she is simply putting in the service of vocal success. She comes to resemble Woman as delivered up to male fantasy, the hetaera so well described in *The Second Sex* (Beauvoir 1949). Her beauty, charm, sensuality, superior eroticism distinguish her from other women and offer her up for the public’s pleasure. A jazz critic writes of the celebrated Canadian jazz singer, Diana Krall: “*She has the new voice of women today. A non-deliberate voice. The*

virtually non-resonant voice of anxiety-free desire.”^x The woman is understood to seduce by way of her natural female charms, unrelated to any work or construction. She expresses eternal femininity, and on stage she is merely serving once again one of the traditional but ambivalent functions of seduction; i.e., being a passive object of the other’s desire—in this case the public’s—and source of the other’s pleasure.

The voice is not an instrument

For instrumentalists, [the voice] is natural, it doesn’t require work, they don’t recognize the work. That explains the old cliché about the singer, man or woman: they’re not musicians. (a woman singer)

This assessment of the way instrumentalists regard singers was uttered by a musically trained singer who both plays piano and composes. Her skills are invisible to instrumentalists because she expresses them through singing. The voice is not a capacity that may be worked on, it’s natural:

Singers want to think of themselves as instrumentalists. But the voice will never be an instrument. It’s a more sensitive type of expression, it’s part of people. (guitarist)

The voice is thus confined to a naturalist image, and this in turn limits women singers’ job opportunities. First, this stereotype reduces the likelihood of their being hired to sing with a group because it is extremely difficult for them to win recognition as legitimate colleagues. Women singers are regularly criticized for having insufficient vocal abilities—this is how male instrumentalists understand the extra transposition work they are often asked to do. The fact is that standards are composed in keys that are highly unlikely to work for most singers, sometimes for technical reasons but generally for esthetic ones. Women singers often request transposition into a lower key—just as great women jazz singers have done. The request for a key change is interpreted as proof of vocal weakness and discomfort in musical work, and the understanding is the same even when the singer does the transposing herself.

Another example is the tendency to think of the voice as an occasional instrument for creative musicians. This stance may readily be found among male musicians who improvise a great deal; they are likely to improvise a few melodic phrases in their performance and make all sorts of sounds with their voices. When they sing, they mobilize a number of the musical qualities they have constructed in practicing their main instrument; they say they are satisfied with the new possibilities that singing offers them and feel virtually no need to work on their voice.

Musicians also tend to think it appropriate for only a few traditional functions to be open to women singers; namely, expressing the melody and relating to the public. Singers cannot be trusted with rhythmic accompaniment, sound effects or free improvisation, according to a well-known musician who asserts that singing is exclusively melodic. It is also said to be difficult to hire women jazz singers as sidemen since they are necessarily in a leader position and their very presence can disturb the fragile balance of the group.

It is therefore extremely difficult for women singers to be recognized as professionals with professional qualities, a specific technical skill or ability. Their qualifications are invisible (Maruani and Nicole 1989), and this means they are not considered “real” musicians who deserve to be hired to work in a group. This image of singing directly affects women jazz singers’ job possibilities. Those who consider

their voice an instrument and call themselves vocalists complain that it is extremely difficult, even impossible, to find musicians with whom they can fully realize and live out this other definition of the voice. They are seldom hired as sidemen. When they are, the experience is unlikely to be repeated. Not only does it not become regular collaboration with the instrumentalist, but it in no way gives the singer access to his network of musical contacts, in contrast to what happens for other male instrumentalists. “Quality” singers all seem to have realized a major musical project in their career, but the collaboration was not repeated. No equivalent projects followed on the first, even when the leader seemed satisfied with the results. Two of the singers I met with, women whose musical level was equal to the instrumentalists’, did indeed experience success. But they say they felt so pigeon-holed in the role of “the singer” that they quit jazz, one temporarily, the other permanently. Some attempts are being made to combat these stereotypes and thereby enable women singers to find a new place. The French pianist Martial Solal says of his vocalist daughter Claudia:

I think I've written in a really different style. I introduced new arrangements, different ways of playing rhythm ... The group is a kind of trio surrounded by brass: two trumpets, two trombones, a horn, a tuba, plus a voice. It's my daughter Claudia who's going to play this difficult role—I'm talking about a voice, not a singer.^{xi}

But this notion of the voice is not widely shared by the instrumentalists I met, and the occasional counter-discourses do not seem accompanied by much in the way of practice, with the notable exception of musicians whose life-partner or daughter (as for Martial Solal) or sister is a singer. Singers of course do manage to construct musical relations with a few musicians, but those relations are occasional, fragile, and characterized by a high level of dependence.

This analysis is based above all on daily observation. Though the points just enumerated do come up sometimes in the course of interviews, they are mentioned in quite general terms. And they are often concealed, particularly by mid-level or marginal musicians who do not want to publicly denigrate their female employer. The various comments, judgments and norms just presented are omnipresent in daily interactions. After a workshop session where I brought a standard I had transposed into another key, an instrumentalist in the workshop complimented me: “At least you know how to transpose,” he said, suggesting his disparaging vision of women singers as unskilled. There was also the repeated experience of being told by instrumentalists during an improvisation session where I'd managed to do fairly well that for me it was easy to improvise because “the sounds come out of your mouth all by themselves”—a remark that reveals a vision of song as emanating naturally from the body. At the end of a series of enthusiastic jam sessions in an intensive summer course, an instrumentalist told me it was nice to play with me because “at least you're not a pain in the ass.” And then there was the time around three in the morning, when a few professional instrumentalists began criticizing some singers they knew for being more interested in their plunging necklines than their musical technique. But above all, the women singers I know—friends, teachers, or simply women I've met—are never regularly invited to participate, whereas my instrumentalist pals, even those who are not very well known, are regularly able to realize projects, and even if they aren't a success they will be invited to play again by colleagues at a similar level.

Conclusion

I have presented three of the main ways that the epistemological enrichment offered by ethnography—access to “invisible” practices, analysis in terms of “the arrangement between the sexes,” the possibility of generalization—may in turn enrich analysis of gender relations. In so doing I have suggested (though not explored in as thorough detail) ethnography’s epistemological contributions to the study of artistic work in connection with a variety of research concerns: the ability to describe practices (dress, objects, uses of the body, architectural arrangements), as in my work on vocal jam sessions (2003b); the ability to apprehend certain highly personal, private experiences, such as vocal expression (2005b); access to certain closed social milieus such as the jazz world (2004), and identification of biographical trajectory stages and their constitutive elements over time within a given social milieu (2006b).

The use of ethnography in this article is in keeping with the “reflexivity model”; specifically, the feature of an observer embedded in the world she means to study. Avoiding the “trap of overinterpretation” (Sardan 1996) requires using a set of “precautionary” principles, procedures, and techniques at different stages in the study; these bear on observation contextualization as well as on such practices as note-taking, cross-checking, saturation, triangulation, and testing one’s material by submitting it to the observed subjects and to colleagues (Lahire 1996). The researcher’s relation to his or her respondents and object of study can then be established as one of the elements with which to construct the analysis, proof, and demonstration.

Translated from French by Amy Jacobs

Endnotes

- i “In its most characteristic form it involves the ethnographer participating, overtly or covertly, in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research” (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995: 1).
- ii Examples are Terry Arendell’s study (1997), Arlène Kaplan-Daniels’ (1967), Anne Ryen’s (2002) and my own (2005a).
- iii This article takes up some of the material developed in Buscatto 2006a and 2005a.
- iv The ethnographic study was conducted from June 1998 to June 2002. Taking advantage of my position as an amateur singer, I gained prolonged access to the daily realities of 77 professional jazz musicians playing a variety of instruments and characterized by diverse styles, lengths of time in the profession and reputation levels. So as to better grasp the ways these male and female musicians justified their practices, this ethnographic material was supplemented with systematic reading of the specialized press and interviews of 20 musicians, done in 2001 (Buscatto 2003a, 2004, 2007).
- v Based on *Le Guide-annuaire du jazz 2004*, approximately 2000 musicians considered themselves as jazz musicians in France. While about 8% of them are female musicians, only 35% of singers are men and 4% of instrumentalists are women.

- vi Of a total of 133 singers listed in the *Guide-Annuaire du Jazz en France 2000*, 93 are women.
- vii In addition to being a powerful means of describing the details of daily life (dress, bodily practices, architectural space and arrangements, objects), ethnography helps us accede to both the internal organization of artistic practices and the social logic behind them.
- viii I have regularly encountered this reaction of amazement in research seminars and informal exchanges with my sociologist colleagues and at various moments during my recently completed research study on women jazz instrumentalists (Buscatto 2007).
- ix It also became clear that these invitations “disappeared” when the instrumentalists were there with their women partners.
- x Francis Marmande, “Une plainte sensuelle en dix chansons,” *Le Monde*, Oct. 27, 2001: 33.
- xi “Un Deca pour Martial Solal,” interview with R. Czarnes, *Jazzman* 78 (Mar. 2002): 10.

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Citation

- Buscatto, Marie (2007) "Contributions of Ethnography to Gendered Sociology: the French Jazz World." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)



Qualitative Sociology Review

Volume III, Issue 3 – December 2007

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.3.3.05>

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The Film in Hand Modes of Coordination and Assisted Virtuosity in the Bombay Film Studios

Abstract

Less has been said about the hand movements of the film makers, their cultural dimension and the place of this "corporate language" in the film making process, probably because this object is difficult to capture even with a diary. Gestures go too fast to be sketched on the spot and often faster than the perception of the ethnographer. Some of these gestures are made to stabilize the frame or simulate the camera movement but lots of them are difficult to classify and don't fall into this category, like the ones which are produced to accompany the actors' action or to invite him to perform a certain action and which have more to do with a mode of demonstration involving the entire body. This article, mostly based on videos of Bombay film makers at work, tries to identify the specificity of these gestures in terms of communication or interaction and their potential of coordination in the film set dynamics.

Keywords

Gesture; Demonstration; Film set; Shooting; Bombay; Ethno(video)graphy

As for the fact that I work on the scenario with my collaborators and avoid letting the actors read it, that's the result of experience. I've noticed that when actors can read the scenario at home in the evening, in front of a mirror, helped by family members, they adopt certain facial expressions that are absolutely not right. So, if possible, I prefer for the actors to arrive completely blank, without their own fixed idea of the character, which absolutely could not be the same as mine, or at the best of times quite different.

Federico Fellini

On a film set, every one must know his job, but doesn't need to know what the film is about. Professionals working on a film set have very unequal knowledge of the images the director has in mind, and a large part of the production team's work consists in mutually persuading each other and then persuading the other professionals of the feasibility of the image to be realised. It would certainly be difficult if the director had to explain his script to each and every lighting attendant. When a shot is decided, the information is distributed to the technicians through an army of assistants. This challenge is tackled in different ways according to the teams involved. Some teams hold countless sessions of brainstorming and collective narration before and between shoots, but it is also common for production assistants to blame their director for a lack of clarity, for continually changing his mind or for being confused, or for actors making several films a day to learn about the scene they are going to shoot just a few minutes before facing the camera. The invention of the screenplay and its celebration as the instrument of reason, capable of taming the cinematographic imagination, has changed this uncertainty but not removed it, for even when the work of writing is carried out in the rules of the art and the screenplay is transformed into a scenario and then into shot lists, the same operation of shared visualisation on the film set still has to take place, and the concrete gestures of the actor must still be decided. Added to which, the factors hindering the successful realisation of the script inevitably multiply during shooting, and it is very rare for a film to be the smooth execution of a preconceived plan. At best it comes close, but it is never equivalent. The film set therefore produces alternative methods for providing those who need it with the most up-to-date information about the schedule to be followed.

The Bombay film studios have sometimes gone quite far in experimenting the possibility for the actors to arrive "completely blank" on the set, for reasons that we shall explain more clearly later. And the film directors have come to use interesting ways of demonstrating to the actors what they have to do, especially in the field of choreography and stunt direction. The purpose of this article is to analyse the place of these intermediary settings and modes of demonstration in the film-making process. My material consists in video footage of filming in which we can see actors, directors and assistants interacting to convince each other what should be done at different moments of the take. Most of them were filmed during my research study in the studios of Bombay where I worked as an assistant director (Grimaud 2004). The reader might find in the following pages an answer to this enigmatic question: - how have the Bombay film studios become one of the most prolific industries in the world? This question has prompted many Hollywood production houses to send industrial spies to Bombay to discover their "secrets of production". Part of the answer could lie in the solid learning devices that spontaneously take place on the film set to find out what the shot is about, involving not only the director and the actors but also those who surround them (assistants, doubles, supporting men), who play an important role in ensuring that the actors acquire the right skills, the action or gesture that makes the difference.

The making of: an Authorised Disclosure Zone (ADZ)?

Before analysing the videos that I have shot to capture the demonstrative universe of the film set at different moments, I would like to make a few remarks regarding the possibility (or impossibility) of using the making-ofs available in the market as ethnographic material. Although I spent several years working as a production assistant, I had great difficulty in filming the interactions that take place on the set in Bombay. Strangely, it is easier to learn how films are financed (an open secret in Bombay), and to make a film on this subject by interviewing important personalities, to understand the pressure exerted by gangs (who go as far as telling the actors or producers what scenes to do over the telephone), to see a producer persuade an actor to take part in a film with the help of a princely sum of money or to see the latter accept for sometimes rather disreputable reasons, than it is to focus one's attention on the other side of the camera. This paradox is easy to explain. Today, the "making-of" has become an obligatory exercise for the big production companies, which add a few excerpts of the filming process to the films they distribute. And if everyone knows that crime syndicates have long been financing the production of films, then revealing the fact, even on film, amounts to beating a dead horse. In filming a shoot, on the other hand, there are commercial interests at stake, and the director is loath to allow pictures of his film sets to leave the production company before the film's release, because the scenario or the set could be plagiarised by someone else.

The stakes of the disclosure are not the same. Ironically, the zone that must be protected from the over-curious gaze is not situated where one would expect it to be, at the level of the procedures of financing, the workings of crime syndicates and the mechanisms of intimidation weighing on the production. The secret lies in that vulnerable interstice between the camera and what lies behind it, where one can capture, steal and misuse images of the actors at work and grasp the artistic turmoil in which the director tries to transform a screenplay into pictures.

Most of the making-ofs released by production companies are intended to show the actors in a more natural setting, to humanise them away from the spotlights or to emphasise the pleasure they have in working with one director or another. They rarely bring to the surface the hesitant work of conceiving and orientating the gestures of the actors in their interaction with the production team or the conflict and uncertainty that any production is bound to experience at one time or another. Cleverly orchestrated, the making-of, in its current form, remains on the surface, within an authorised disclosure zone, generating its own secrets by never showing everything, not even the dynamic through which the images observable *in situ*, on the set, are formed.

It is always interesting to follow a team making a making-of, if only to realise that a film set differs from a theatre stage in the mass of technical equipment that weighs on the performance and in the fragmentation of the acting, subjected to the harsh law of the cut. The cut is a powerful tool in the constitution of the world of the film set, imposing a special rhythm and providing the making-of with its *raison d'être* and its effectiveness. And because the camera captures the actor at a certain, necessary distance, the actor thus "objectified" is deprived of the key to judging his own performance, so that he must abandon himself to the judgement of those who magnify him through the camera. And this is why the other side of the camera is not only the locus of capture of a well-defined interaction, but also a place of control and persuasion. Intense interactions between the cameraman, the director and the actors can thus take place between takes, to orientate the performance of the actors. In the

theatre, the director can rarely intervene in this manner, once the play has got under way. The back of the camera and the back of the theatre do not share the same status. Theatre rehearsals do have an equivalent in the movies, in a multiplied, chopped-up and accelerated form, between takes, but the back of the stage is there to accompany a performance, whereas the back of the camera provokes the performance and puts it “in the can”, to be rearranged again later, in the editing studio.

Different from the making-of, the continuity video throws an interesting light on the way that filming “censors” its own process while it is taking place. It is often used by the director’s assistants to check the continuity between shots and to enable all the elements in a scene to be verified. A support used in all modern filming, destined for internal use by the production team, the continuity video records the shots from the camera’s point of view, to constitute a baseline that can be consulted at any time. Continuity assistants who amuse themselves by filming what happens in between takes may be accused of overstepping their functions and wasting film. Continuity videos show the repetitive dimension of the takes and the way that gestures become consolidated through repetition. Actors have to perform the same gestures several times before a good take is filmed. Most continuity videos are slightly out of kilter and clumsy, because they are filmed under rushed conditions and because it is difficult for the continuity assistant to reproduce the camera viewpoint exactly.

See ^[a] **video clip 1** <http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/Volume8/videos/video1.php>

But the continuity video does not give us access to the motives which lead directors to repeat a given take or, for that matter, to their underlying mechanisms of demonstration, even if we do catch glimpses, in the previous clip, of a choreographer and his assistant accidentally filmed while demonstrating the right gestures to the actors before the latter take their places in front of the camera. This work of incorporation is supposed to make sense in the final image, which effaces it, or pushes it out of the frame by its very arrival, and producers rarely see fit to include more than snippets of it in the ADZ.

All pictures obliterate their reverse side, at the very same time as they take form. The more progress the film makes, the more the history of the filming becomes complicated and the work of demonstration and persuasion required takes on the aspect of a trade secret.

Opening the black box of the film shot

One way to open the black box of the film shooting process is to focus on the film makers' working gestures while they are devising a shot. Filmmakers move beyond speech, communicating by means of a sort of sign language when they want to visualise their images or explain them to others. When the time comes to shoot the film, the screenplay is an old memory. Largely internalised and assimilated, it must now be expressed in concrete images. To realise the shots they have in mind and ensure that their instructions are understood by the cast and crew, filmmakers have a singular way of taking the set in hand, using gesticulations or manual demonstrations

^a Technical note: all video clips presented in this article are available at the journal’s website. Internet access and windows media player (.wmv) compatible plug-in are required. To watch the videos just click on the link. It typically takes one or two minutes to download. If you are not able to watch the videos online, download them using a proper URL from the appendix.

(Mac Neill 1992; Rosental 2005). The action to be performed must be made visible to the actor, explained several times, corrected and modified so that it becomes definitively fit to be shown. And this is achieved by means of relays (assistants, stand-ins) who rarely appear in the finished film, unless they are given minor parts to play (one of the hoodlums who gets beaten up, one among several dancers in a ballet). The most complex systems of demonstration are those of the choreographers and stunt directors, of which we shall see a few examples later.

The moments of demonstration on a film set are always very intense, but relatively difficult to describe in a simple notebook. Video seems particularly appropriate, because we can replay movements in slow motion, describe the gestures more precisely and grasp their "interstitial" quality (Piette 1996; Goodwin 2003). In slow motion, the coordinating aspect of these gestures can be seen more clearly. Without the hands and their clarification of the way the camera field should be organised and its different elements positioned, no take would be possible. Rather than a language, this set of gestures that directors use to communicate the actions they visualise more clearly would be better described as a singular kind of "demonstration scaffolding", for although it does use signs reminiscent of deaf and dumb language (Delaporte 2002), which are immediately understood by people in the profession, it also uses a large amount of trial and error, gestures of exhortation and body stances with the aim of persuading the actor to do what the director wants, and these cannot be reduced to the automaticity of a sign language (Hutchins and Palen 1997; Haviland 1993). Working gestures and intermediary devices that are erected around the actors to enable them to make the right gesture or expression at the right time can be considered as temporary constructs that are made for the realisation of the shot, but in certain cases, we shall see that the link between these scaffolds and the final result is not only one of transformation. By looking closely at that which is explained or expressed through the setting up of "demonstration scaffoldings" (Vigotsky 1934) and which could not be communicated otherwise, we shall see how the film set stands out as an original medium of human manipulation, where director and actors try out singular methods of influence. When directors start using their hands (and their feet, shoulders, hips, etc. – because when it comes to demonstration, there are no holds barred), something happens which sociology and film theory have curiously neglected and which concerns, more generally, all the procedures used *in situ* for the purposes of persuasion.

Take a scenario in hand

See video clip 2 <http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/Volume8/videos/video2.php>

Now let us take the shot designing process at different stages and start with a first video clip. In this first clip, a screenwriter is explaining the scenario to a replacement cameraman who has just arrived on the shoot. Here, the replacement cameraman knows absolutely nothing about the film he is to work on, and he is being briefed. He has been told that he will be filming an action scene, but that is all he knows. The time between takes is quite long enough for this catching-up, and if the newly-arrived cameraman contents himself with doing what he is asked during the first takes, it only takes a brief time, and a "session" with the screenwriter, for him to become a creative partner for the director, making his own suggestions of camera angles. They are on the site of filming, and the account the screenwriter gives to the cameraman refers to positions that can be immediately visualised and makes use of gestures that are commonly used by other screenwriters when they have to relate an

episode or story vocally. Here, the word and the gesture take over from the screenplay and writing operations. The hand accompanies, designates and moves the camera and the actors, but at the same time it does more, for it can express the energy of a story, the rhythmicity of the action and the effect the action has on the spectator. The scene thus gesticulated becomes more than a proposal, it becomes a veritable incitement to action, and having just arrived, the cameraman finds himself immediately faced with a gestural world and the constraint of choosing camera angles in a real space, whereas if he had read the screenplay that he had, perhaps, received beforehand, he would probably not have been so quick to start thinking about its execution. "We follow the hero Ajay, he grabs a guard standing there from behind, hits him, throws him over there and runs off with the child", narrates the screenwriter. The scene has been pre-digested, ready to be executed. The cameraman does not need to be told much to grasp the film in progress and propose new options. Many sequences are confirmed and reworked in this way during the "dead time" provided by the material organisation of the take and its appropriation by the actors, as the following clip shows. Here, the action coordinator is explaining the take to an assistant.

See video clip 3 <http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/Volume8/videos/video3.php>

The following paragraphs will show that it is not always necessary to know the screenplay of a film in order to work on the shoot as a technician or even, to a certain extent, as an actor. In Bombay, where actors often work on several different films in one day, their knowledge of the screenplay may be quite vague, although they would never admit this. But on the set, there are several safeguards that allow the actors to remedy this ignorance and to learn enough on the set to shoot the day's schedule.

Making a frame out of one's fingers

Let us now move forwards in the process of realising the take. Here, the procedure differs little from one shoot to another. The take is proposed and conceived by the director (and his assistants and, if need be, the choreographer or action coordinator) and then translated into directions to the different departments (lightmen, set assistants).

See video clip 4 <http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/Volume8/videos/video4.php>

The director, preoccupied by the conception of the shot, rarely troubles himself with communicating it to the different professionals involved; he delegates this tedious work to someone else. It is up to his first assistant to issue the orders, as soon as he thinks the shot has been more or less defined. Usually, the director decides the shot in company with the cameraman, moving the frame around virtually with his fingers.

This gesture by which the screen is materialised may occur during the "creative wandering", when the director paces up and down the set looking for new ideas and better camera angles, or once he has conceived the action. It then helps to test or to project what he has in mind and to convince the others that they are seeing the same thing. The difficulties of shared visualisation on the set are thus resolved by operations that vary little from one shoot to another: tracing the picture in the air, framing space, delimiting the contours of the image and the movements (tracking,

high-angle, low-angle, tilt shots, etc.). We can find the same operations among so many filmmakers that we can consider it a routine mode of expression.

See video clip 5 <http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/Volume8/videos/video5.php>

The hand is the essential tool of simulation. It can be used to experiment a movement in space or to shift the camera position virtually, without really having to move it, and so to make the camera movements present to the technicians involved. At the same time, it helps everyone to reach agreement about speeds, tracking in or out, changes in focus, etc. At this stage, the director and cameraman usually simulate the scene to be filmed with their assistants, giving an extra degree of physicality to the planned take. However, the frame thus materialised, which has been enough to convince the director's collaborators, may be no more than an illusion of the final take. The director may subsequently realise that there are better camera angles than the one chosen, especially if the actor is not on the set and this preliminary work of positioning is done without him. The hand, held up to the eye like a frame, a sign that the image is about to emerge, is the ultimate reference for convincing the others and it accompanies filmmakers in their many decisions.

Moving the set by gestures

Now let us watch a fifth clip, filmed when the take really has been decided, the position of the camera has been fixed and all that now remains to do, for the shooting area to materialise definitively, is to adjust the parameters of the take in relation to each other.

See video clip 6 <http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/Volume8/videos/video6.php>

The assistant director's gestures for placing the lights have to be repeated several times, until the right positions are found: "forward", "more to the left"... These pointing operations and gestures to indicate the position and direction of set accessories, men and lighting elements (projector heads, feet, reflectors scrims and nets, etc.) must give rise to real movements: approaching, moving forwards or backwards, tilting, raising, moving to the left or right, lowering a projector, etc. This is the stage involving the greatest number of coordinating gestures. The lighting acts like an air-conditioning system, not only because it is hotter under the projectors, but also because the space of the demonstration is thus framed by humans, who surround the shooting area, forming a wall of lights around it. At this stage, the field of the shot, more brightly lit, held by dozens of hands which bring it into existence, becomes clearly identifiable for everyone.

The assistant director places himself in front of the camera, in the position of the actors, so that information can circulate more effectively, and the assistants standing in for the actors constitute a reference for all the measurements. The cameraman gives his instructions to his assistants. The arms, hands and fingers serve not only to perform precise pointing gestures, they also move by approximation (higher or lower). This can only work because people are prepared to act as relays of instructions for each other, expressing them once again in the form of gestures.

In this way, the assistants extend the cameraman's indications with a great many gesticulations and the stunt director conveys them to his team. If it is pointless for a lightman to know the screenplay, he must, on the other hand, have enough intuition to foresee and anticipate what he will be asked to do. Young lightmen

generally accompany more experienced ones and content themselves with following the orders of their seniors, who know from experience, once the order of the take has been given, where to position their equipment. Knowledge of the shot to be filmed thus reaches all the members of the production crew, by means of a set of relays that dictate the positions and directions to adopt. The information spreads to the four corners of the set, even if it is subsequently slightly modified or elaborated upon, for there is nothing clear-cut or obvious about this circulation of information.

The extras at the other end of the set are usually kept informed by the junior artists supplier, but the latter, if he is going to be ready in time, must make a considerable effort to fetch the information from as close as possible to its source, i.e. the place where the director and cameraman have done their “creative wandering”. In this way, the image gradually acquires its tangibility, through successive stages; it becomes concrete through the different human interactions that give it a palpable form. In the next part of the article, we shall examine the most delicate manoeuvres, which take place between the director, the actor and those who represent or stand in for the latter during the take.

Assistants, dancers, extras and the miracle of coordination

Different directors vary greatly in the way they demonstrate movements to actors. This is certainly the most delicate stage in the process of materializing a take. Most often, the director does not content himself with simply indicating a position or movement to an actor, he performs it before the actor’s eyes. We have seen Phalke do this. The demonstration depends on the desired action. Theoretically, at this stage, the number of possible gestures is infinite, which was not the case before. When it comes to expressing camera movements, (tracking, high angle shots, low angle shots, close-ups, etc.), the possibilities are limited. But the gestures used to direct actors consist in veritable accompaniments of the action, or measures that lead the actor to a given movement by getting as close as possible to him, to orientate the whole of his body as best one can. This work usually involves the use of three different categories of relay: assistants to act as mirrors, supporting men and doubles.

The following clips will help us to grasp the systems of demonstration most commonly used by choreographers and fight masters. The choreographer’s or fight master’s assistant demonstrates the movement to be made, and this is then repeated by the actor. When he has finished playing his role of substitute, the assistant then retires from the field of the take so the actor can take his place. A choreographer or fight master may have several assistants to act as mirrors (one assistant for the dancers, another for the star, for example, and another for the extras). This leads to complex systems with multiple mirrors.

See video clip 7 <http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/Volume8/videos/video7.php>

Let us watch the filming of an everyday song in an unspectacular setting, with simply one female dancer and a few male dancers. The choreographer has been invited by the director to choreograph the music bequeathed by the composer. He does not know the scenario, and he does not need to for the purposes of his work. He only knows that he must put into images a song with a South-American feel, with a young model whose first role this is as an actress. In fact, the director himself does not know exactly where he is going to fit this song into the film during editing, but this

does not prevent him from being present and having clear ideas about what sort of choreography he wants.

The choreographer turns up at the shoot with his team of assistants and dancers and practically takes over control of the take. No choreography has really been prepared in advance. And the choreographer has decided not to give much time to this film, because he has other films to work on and he feels he is being underpaid. This is of little importance because, as we shall see, he has dedicated assistants, whose commitment must be total (unlike their boss) and without whom there could be no choreography.

Here, the movements are worked out on the very site of the shoot. Watching the dynamic of the take, we can see that two essential figures serve as mediators between the dancers, the actress and the choreographer. They are entrusted with the task of conveying to the actress the movements developed by the choreographer. Often, in fact, they have conceived these movements before the choreographer himself, and the latter draws on what they propose as if drawing from a pool of possibilities or choices. These “walking memories”, the assistants, serve as stand-ins during the rehearsal, and then withdraw from the scene. So there are phases of filming, re-filming and rehearsal and phases of conception between the takes when the choreographer turns to the director and to his own assistants, serving as stand-ins for the leading actress who will then replace them.

All this takes place in “fast motion” or in a state of urgency. And it is probably because of this acceleration and urgent division of tasks (between those who propose or suggest and those who perform) that Bombay filmmakers often say that “everything here is improvisation”. Instead of one large phase of writing and another of filming (or, in the case of a dance scene, one large phase of devising the choreography followed by another of performance), there is a multitude of small cycles of conception/rehearsal/shooting and re-shooting. Here, the take really becomes a place of gestural conception (and not simply performance). There are many people to be managed and departments to coordinate on a shoot, and there is always something miraculous about this coordination. The camera is there to capture the best coordination, however brief or ephemeral it may be. The choreographer’s assistants place and re-place the dancers, they distribute the positions and the background fills with male and female dancers who reproduce an identical sequence of steps.

The preparation unfolds in several stages. Firstly, the camera field is divided in two: the background, where assistants specifically allotted this task direct a crowd of participants, and the foreground, the favoured domain of the leading actress. The first sequence to be filmed, once it has been conceived, appears to be chopped-up, fragmented. And this is usually how choreographies are filmed. Short shots from different angles are preferred to one long sequence shot filmed several times. The “cut” is an integral part of the work of demonstration. It is harder to get the actress to reproduce an entire sequence than to pre-cut the action into small units (movements) that will be spliced end-to-end during the editing. This principle has been adopted by most of the choreographers of Bombay, not only because it enables them to work faster, but also because the more cuts there are the more possibilities one has of magnifying the action with zooms. The movement gains in iconic power when it is multiplied on the screen by numerous dancers and extras and frozen at the end of the take, filmed almost at a standstill. The assistants then have simply to indicate the posture to be held for the dancers to reconstitute the movement requested of them. So during a first phase, the action to be performed is internalised by each of the

dancers as an automatism. They repeat the same movement while the assistant works on shifting it to the foreground with the leading actress.

The choreographer then mimes the tracking, introducing the camera into the human system of movement amplification he has just devised. The camera becomes an accessory of the choreography. This convenient way of progressing or of reaching an understanding on the set is also a mechanical and efficient means of internalising the distance between the subject being filmed and the camera. *A priori*, the actors express nothing that is not deliberate. If they do express a certain spontaneity and the choreographer introduces randomness into the dance, it has been worked on to such an extent that it is “synthetic randomness”.

The choreographer puts a lot of work into naturalising or fluidifying what we might expect to appear robotic, but which never is, thanks to well-calculated disruptions. The spontaneity of a choreography, it is said in Bombay, depends on the many “filmi” breaks that are grafted onto it. These are not actions like the others, and the choreographer’s assistants cannot substitute for the actor to show him which break can be introduced to spice up the take. On this occasion, it is up to the choreographer alone to propose something. The procedure varies little from one shoot to another: a large movement is conceived and then, from one take to the next, the choreographer seeks the little detail that will change everything, the wink, the sway of the hips or the well-placed slap that makes all the difference and captures the attention. This is where the complexity of the “filmi” resides. The break, once it has been suggested, is repeated several times, until it becomes an automatism. The cameraman, the choreographer and his assistants have reproduced the slap the actress gives her dancing partner fifty times before obtaining one good enough to be shown on the screen. The difficulty that the director and choreographer experience in getting the actress to give her slap the right orientation, speed and sinuousness show the extent to which the attachment of a gesture and an actor cannot be taken for granted, especially when it involves breaking the choreographic logic. The camera captures a successful action that may seem completely spontaneous on the screen, passing for a natural movement of the actor, whereas it has in fact required hours of repetition during shooting. Indian film choreographers adore “choreo-breaking”, creating the favourable conditions for unpredictability to spring up in the foreground by placing a huge number of dancers performing repetitive steps in the background. The break is all the more effective when it takes place in the foreground and the movement to be broken has previously been reaffirmed in the background as an automatism, multiplied by the dancers who serve as foils to the leading actor. The more the dancers behave like robots, the more the actor who introduces disorder and nonchalance into the mechanism becomes human. Although the actor has had his movements on the set dictated to him and has spent his time copying his partners in order to internalise the automatisms, on the screen it is he who appears as the demonstrator *par excellence* who ultimately gives a lesson in humanity to the spectator. In the following paragraph we shall examine another example that sheds light on this reversal effect, or the way the demonstration is inversed when the back of the set is hidden.

Enemies and accomplices in action, or the art of pulling punches in an action scene rehearsal

Two action coordinators, Moses and Kaushal, devise an action scene, more precisely a fist fight. Like the choreographer in the previous clip, the two fight masters have taken over the set with their troop of assistants and stuntmen. This time, however, the stakes and method of the demonstration are different. In brief, the problem they face is to find a way of throwing convincing punches which do not actually hit their target. For this purpose, Moses and Kaushal must conceive an “incomplete” action that looks as if it is complete. They must carry out an important work of consolidation around the movement (before, after, above, below, on the sides), amplify the impacts and reactions and make use of retinal persistence, i.e. the fact that human perception naturally completes the trajectory of an incomplete gesture when it is performed fast enough.

See video clip 8 <http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/Volume8/videos/video8.php>

Here, the demonstration calls for less power than the take, it is slower and the movements are broken down one after the other. The sequence is divided into actions and reactions with the assistants, to be quickly appropriated by the actor. Moses and Kaushal’s men are professional amplifiers of action. It is then up to the actor to polish the action, so that it appears smooth, and to give it more power. The actor’s double now takes over the action to coordinate the other stand-ins and show them how to hit the actor, throw him, strangle him, grab him, etc. Moses confirms the figures and positions. The actor takes his place once again at the centre of the stage and the cameraman arrives to define the frame. Moses then takes control of the frame to show the cameraman the best angle. Meanwhile, the actor has internalised the earlier demonstration and the cameraman shows everyone clearly the movement and frame he is going to use. The actor has therefore successfully been led to perform a whole sequence of movements by surrounding him with a certain number of people charged with the task of devising the sequence (during the demonstration) and then performing it with him in front of the camera. As in the previous case, the movement has been carried by a system of men, an army of demonstrators who do not totally disappear from the final shot, remaining in the picture in a reversed role, having abandoned their initial function, ceasing to act as models of reference. In the action scenes, what makes the actor appear heroic, or what makes this final role reversal from “demonstratee” to demonstrator possible, is the acceptance that only the leading actor can break the dynamic of the fight or turn it upside-down (in the style of choreographic breaking), all the more so since the system of men who carry it is wholly orientated towards enhancing his abilities as a warrior and presenting his gestures as deadly blows. In this sequence at least, he is the only one who can deliver fatal blows, sometimes by a simple movement of his index finger, because he is surrounded by a group of enemies who are in reality accomplices or foils. The supporting men carry a heavy burden on their shoulders, defeated and won over from the start, even before they get beaten up.

Stunt doubles, or how to convince an actor not to jump from the first floor

In the preceding clips, we have identified several relays of demonstration (the use of assistants, dancers and supporting men) which also function as means of amplifying movements and which depend on a more or less complete camouflage of the other side of the take. The diversification of relays does a lot to lighten and focus the actor's work, limiting his role to performing the right movement, the positioning of which has been pre-defined by his entourage. But what happens when the degree of risk or difficulty of the take is increased, when a complicated stunt is introduced, for example? Of course, the actor runs the risk of confirming to an even greater extent that he is there simply to perform the final flourish in a process that is always laborious but that is endowed, by the star's arrival on the set, with an aspect of repetitive tedium. However, the introduction of an element of danger may call for a radical reorganisation of the demonstration. A new group of intermediaries appears, the stunt doubles, increasing the complexity of the take and representing one of the possibilities of recourse most often used in film. As we have already seen, when the actor is accompanied, his entourage fades away at the right moment or swaps status with him so that he can appropriate the action he performs. The assistants disappear when necessary, the dancers charged with enhancing the slightest sway of his hips play their role of background automatons during the take, although they are often much better dancers than he is, while the martial arts experts no longer appear in the picture as anything other than subjugated specialists, understating their talents to the benefit of someone much less skilful than they are. The double charged with performing a stunt in place of the actor does not entirely disappear either, he infiltrates the final picture, also camouflaged and modified, but not in the same way as the dancers and supporting men. The double pretends to be someone else, at least partially (in his silhouette, back, fist, etc.) but at the same time he reminds the actor of the latter's inability to perform a movement without a skilful system to support him.

In the following clip, the actor has refused to jump from the top of a platform. The stunt director has tried to persuade him, but the actor really does not feel like doing it and would rather someone else jumps in his stead. The stunt director has placed cardboard boxes on the ground to soften the fall. The jump takes place; the stuntman hurts himself slightly, but almost certainly less than if there had been no boxes there to cushion his landing.

See video clip 9 <http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/Volume8/videos/video9.php>

A second jump is then organised and this time it is not the start of the jump that is filmed, but the explosive landing on a glass table, which shatters at just the right moment thanks to electrical discharges fixed under the glass. This time, the stuntman's injuries are more serious, his hands are covered in blood, and everyone congratulates him on his wonderful jump. Once again, the action must be magnified, the gesture must be celebrated, and to do so the action is divided into two stages or "peaks": the impulse and the impact. If the jump had been filmed all in one go, it would have been much trickier to achieve this contrast. The cut necessitates two systems for amplifying the movement, however rudimentary they may be, a pile of boxes in the first case, a stepladder and a human structure in the second to enable the stuntman to fall precisely and to achieve the full extent of the jump.

It is by focusing on the impulse and the impact that the film crew succeeds in concealing the use of a double. By filming one close-up of the point of departure and

another of the body smashing into the table, the camera can avoid the zone of the face, which might have betrayed the ploy. So the action that will finally take place on the screen has never actually happened as such; it is the synthesis of two real actions, just as the actor that will be seen performing on the screen is in fact composed of two bodies. The final synthesis would happen later in the head of the audience.

It is worth noting that journalists interested in the film world and its mechanisms generally treat duplicates as if they were a particularly murky system to be demystified, a perfect symbol of the other side of the set. We regularly come across articles in the press about the “men of the shadows” who perform stunts for famous actors. This expression is not really accurate. It would be more correct to speak of men who appear camouflaged in full light. Stunts using doubles are commonplace, they are stage routines in the same way as the assisted choreographic shoots or action sequences with pulled punches described above. These different cases all belong to the same set of demonstrations, and the example of the stunt double is at the same time both extreme and normal, with the actor stepping aside physically to make way for his demonstrator, for in this case too the double has performed as a demonstrator, not as an actor. A few words from the action coordinator are all it requires for him to know what to do and how to do it. The stuntman is much better at jumping than the actor himself, and does not need to have the action explained to him before throwing himself into space. With the double, the system that usually supports the actor functions without him. And the production team saves time by not having to rehearse the scene with the actor. They have removed one of the stages in the relay chain of demonstration. Paradoxically, the use of a double does not add a system, it removes one. It is a short-cut in filming.

Demonstration scaffoldings and assisted virtuosity

The variety of demonstrations performed for actors depends very much on the clarity or visibility of what has to be done, of the screenplay or pictures to be realised. For, as we have seen, there is a direct relation between the gestures on the set and the opacity of a project, screenplay or scene. Ideally, one should enlarge the range of comparison to other film industries, to other styles of direction and alternative ways of supporting the image by demonstration scaffolds, because there are other ways of creating a network of human assisted creation on a film set. If there is a cruel lack of comparative data available in this field (ethnographies of film sets are still very rare, and we have said earlier what we think about the usual "making-ofs"), we can at least indicate one way to take this comparison further, relating the way actors learn how to perform a shot on a film set to common theories of apprenticeship.

The Russian theoretician of learning Lev Vygotski (1934) proposed the notion of “Zone of Proximal Development” (ZPD), which became popular in the sciences of apprenticeship to describe the distance between the actual level of learning of an apprentice who learns alone how to solve problems and the potential level of development that he could attain with the help of an expert or a more advanced partner. Vygotski used a complicated terminology to say something quite simple: assisting the apprentice enables him to achieve a result that he could never attain on his own. We have seen that the Bombay film studios exploit this basic principle of apprenticeship to get the actors to do things they could never have done without assistance. They go even further by multiplying the demonstrators and the people who will make the action easy to digest for them, using devices to fragment the shot

into smaller elements or special assistants who will act as "mirrors" during the shot to remind them of the gesture to be made. One can well imagine other ways to deal with the necessity of demonstration on a film set, and many film-makers have experimented, in India as well as elsewhere, other styles of direction and other acquisition methods for the actors. A sequence of great lucidity, one of the first making-ofs in the history of the movies, "How Films are Prepared", by Dadasaheb Phalke is a short study film that Phalke screened with each of his full-length films to explain the technical aspects of film-making to his audiences. This is a paradigmatic film not only for film theory, but also for gestural anthropology and the study of demonstration devices. The gesture appears as what it really is, an explanatory enterprise or an expenditure of energy needed to make clear, in this case to the audience, what the director does and how he does it. Phalke mimes technical operations to help the spectator understand what film-making consists of. He is filmed with the actors, showing them the work to be done, in the prop and costume room and during construction of the set. The demonstration is iterative and emphatic, for Phalke is seeking to explain the whole art of filmmaking.

See video clip 10 <http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/Volume8/videos/video10.php>

Paradoxically, Phalke simulates the work of writing at the end of the film, rather than the beginning ("thinking and thinking again", the insert title tells us), and it is the gesticulations used during shooting and their power to coordinate that are highlighted. These demonstrations are of different types and suggest that the take requires a large number of gestural manipulations and explanations: stylised, "melodramatic" gestures expressing the director's attitude, marked by a theatrical heritage, gestures of pointing and orientation, gestures for positioning the actors. This work of demonstration appears to have been all the more essential because Phalke's actors had no experience of acting for the camera and had to learn everything from scratch. Phalke redoubled his mimes to get the actors to understand the actions to be accomplished in front of the camera. These demonstrations, the purpose of which was to realise an image or to get the actor to internalise a pre-visualised image, do not have the same status as those in which Phalke mimed editing or writing and which sum up a technical manipulation in the twinkling of an eye. However, we cannot separate the two, for what is striking about the way Phalke presents himself as demonstrator, director of actors and technicians all at the same time, is the distance at which he operates: the actors are directed at a distance, a "proximal" distance. What they produce with their bodies is recorded at a distance by the camera, and it is also at a certain distance that the film is examined (neither too close nor too far away). Filming means going back and forth between the actors and the camera, showing them close-up the work to be done and then filming from further away.

Film is the art of remote control, and if we follow Vygotski's theory, Phalke's mimetics is a relatively classic model. To show his novices how to be film actors, Phalke behaves like a *mirror* in front of them, he never pushes them around, maintaining the visual distance needed for his actors to see him as an image to copy. His gestures are there to compensate for a lack of knowledge on the part of his actors, who do not know what they ought to do. They are also a means of inviting the actors to tame the amplification machine constituted by the camera, which produces a magnified image of them. When Phalke returns to his position behind the machine, his status has changed in the eyes of the spectator, he is no longer simply a

gesticulating demonstrator, he has become a master of the “cine-guidance” of actions.

An alternative way to deal with demonstration is offered by Federico Fellini. Gideon Bachmann’s film of Fellini at work during the shooting of *Satyricon* might well become a cult film for ethnographers working on film sets. It will help me to conclude this analysis. Fellini does not go in for the long chain of mediators of mime, he does not burden himself with translation, but he intervenes from time to time directly on the actor’s body. When Fellini directs his actors, as Bachmann’s film demonstrates, he does not hesitate to turn their heads in the direction he wants (“to the left, to the right”) or to push an actress to express her sensual pleasure by pretending to slide his foot between her legs.

See video clip 11 <http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/Volume8/videos/video11.php>

The contrast between these moments of direct manipulation and the chains of intermediaries analysed above is too striking to be overlooked. They represent the two extremes of persuasion between which any production team fluctuates in its own manner. On the one hand, the respectful but constraining distance which necessitates a multiplication of gestures to get the message across, and on the other, the interventionism which can go as far as manhandling the actors to “get them to live unbeknownst to themselves”, as Fellini puts it in his interview with Bachmann. It is equally difficult, he explained, to direct trained actors and absolute beginners; the former have to unlearn the film work they have done and the latter must learn to let life escape despite themselves. By not letting his actors see the scenario, Fellini kept them as “pure” as possible for the shooting, so that he could obtain what he wanted. More than conjuring, which had inspired Phalke, or hypnosis, which has inspired other directors, Fellini’s style of directing actors was inspired by puppeteers.

From childhood on, Bachmann underlined, Fellini had had a pronounced liking for puppets, getting his schoolfriends to pay for the shows he organised on the terrace of his house. Fellini transferred puppeteering onto the film set, where putting on the show is no longer a question of manipulating objects or people for themselves, but for the camera, and through the camera for the audience.

Without pulling on any strings, Fellini moves his actor’s head so that it responds, at a certain angle, to the image “in the name of the audience”, and because “it looks good”, as he says to the actor Martino on the set of the *Satyricon*.

All instructions or interventions are conveyed elsewhere, within the camera that automatically swallows up whatever it is presented with. If Fellini could make the sort of declarations he did about actors without appearing a shocking manipulator, it was because he was a past master in the art of getting actors to turn in performances that they themselves did not expect, by directing their slightest movements. The actors themselves accepted this manipulation, because they knew that things would escape from them that they might not control, but that someone else was supervising for them and that would be good to watch.

The actors of Fellini who expressed themselves in front of Bachmann’s camera were happy puppets, emphasising the pleasure they experienced in this form of cine-guidance, where they were, admittedly, forbidden from reading the screenplay and therefore anticipating what they could do, but where they were also liberated from the constraint of self-assessment. However, we must avoid the temptation of branding Fellini with a specific work protocol. He himself believed that he had no system, that he moved forward case by case. We can only concur on this point, for on set he appeared to fluctuate between different ways of managing the relation with his

actors, sometimes returning to more classic forms of remote control. In an erotic scene in the *Satyricon*, for example, it is at a distance that he directs the take with his hand, imposing the atmosphere of the scene and indicating when the actors should kiss each other during the take.

Fellinian intimism is above all a matter of the hand. It encircles and guides the actors in the action. "Watch my hand" he says to Martino during the take.

If, at certain moments, Fellini allowed himself liberties that other directors forbade themselves, at other moments, too far away from his actors, he seemed to lose control or to have to gesticulate for all he was worth to get his instructions followed.

In his interview with Bachmann, Fellini gave precious information about his style of directing: rather than letting the actors read the scenario and then having endless brainstorming sessions with them, it is better to create an atmosphere, a favourable climate, so that "the actors breathe the air of the film". It might be objected that Fellini had a very personal way of directing actors. In fact, however, the individuality of Fellini's method is less striking than its absence of singularity. He used the same technical gestures as other filmmakers, and his body movements, apart from the simulations of camera movements, were just as dependent as those of other directors on the actions that he wanted his actors to perform. It is when they are indexed to the movements the actor must make that the mime of Fellini and that of Phalke become singular. The actions they seek to get their actors to perform make all the difference. Like those of other directors, Fellini's direction of actors implies, to the contrary of a fixed code or mode of communication, the establishment of a "remodelling" contract, where the actors agree to let themselves be guided by someone who would probably be incapable of doing what they do, but who is as aware or more aware of their visual plasticity and the effects it will produce when magnified by the camera. As Fellini said, "First I look for physiques and then I work on them with the actors".

From the point of view of the primacy of the gestural engagement, what happened with Fellini's actors is not far removed from what we have observed on the Bombay film sets of the 1990s. On the other hand, the way in which the actor's "virginity" in relation to the script is maintained in the two cases appears to stem from almost completely opposite motives. In one case, it leads to the centralisation of the demonstration in the unique figure of the director, and in the other it leads to the multiplication of assistants and experts around the actor. In the case of Fellini, ignorance of the screenplay was deliberately cultivated in order to maintain the singularity of the characters he had in mind. In the Bombay of the 1990s, many believed quite simply that they had no need to read the screenplay to know their role, but it was for other reasons than those given by Fellini. Many actors (there are of course a few exceptions) would prefer to take part in a carefully assisted impregnation "on the spot" rather than spending six months internalising their character. Actors have integrated the fact that what is locally called the *filmi*, a style of gesture, of dialogue, a certain form of mannerism, requires its own set of procedures of impregnation or assimilation. The actor gives his best performance when helped by a solid process of fragmentation of the shot, through human scaffolds like the ones we have described, producing the conditions for the expression of an *assisted virtuosity*.

Conclusion

This little detour by way of Fellini, who sometimes interrupted the chain of explanation in favour of a direct hold on the actors' bodies and a certain roughness in the relation of manipulation, throws light on the variety of systems of demonstration used on film sets in general. Breaking the normal scheme of learning, Fellini shows that the actor doesn't need to internalise the action in his mind in order to reproduce it; he can be led to perform a certain action through a corporal process. In its most extreme version, this mode of direction can result in the actors being relieved of the need to memorise, when the director repeats each line of the dialogue to the actor while he is acting. Not only was this type of device popular in Cinecittà, but it has been experimented many times in the history of cinema (see the recent *Don Quichotte* by the Catalan film-maker Albert Serra). Such scaffolds show what is at stake in the "proximal zone" involving the directors and actors, sometimes giving rise to new ways of optimising the learning process necessary to achieve the shot. This optimisation has taken a particularly efficient form in the Bombay studios, through the assistance of human scaffolds (multiplication of assistants acting as mirrors, supporting men, demonstrators), the fragmentation of shots and sequences, and the adroitness of the exchanges of position between actors, doubles and demonstrators. But these practices should not eclipse the fact that many other methods have been experimented, especially in the field of the cinema d'auteur.

In every instance, it is the distance from the camera that has to be managed, somehow or other, and that the protocols of demonstration seek to remedy. We can draw some principles concerning the way the take is supported by a process of demonstration and gestural manipulation. Video enables us to transcend the vague impression that filmmakers use "sign language", to draw finer distinctions and see exactly what the difference is between gestures that *transpose* or concretise an internal image (translating a story, narrating a scenario with the help of one's hands, for example), those that *project* a shared object or whose purpose is to objectify it for others (positioning the frame, the camera movement, before the take or in between takes), devices that *coordinate* and so help to set up the take (positioning the actors, lights, accessories, etc.) and demonstration scaffoldings that *reproduce* or whose purpose is to be performed in imitation (executed by the assistant or the double in front of the actor, so that he can perform them in turn). Inevitably, there are more movements of transposition in the early stages (see the narration session) and an increase in reproductive movements in the later stages, as the moment of the take approaches. The quantity of reproduction increases or accelerates as we get closer to the take, while the quantity of transposition and projection decreases, taken in charge by the camera.

Gestures are used to fulfil various needs, and their power of persuasion is so great that one can make a film without ever leaving the gestural plane. As one gets closer to the take, the demonstrative technique widens and diversifies (assistants, supporting men, doubles, etc.). This observation precludes us from reducing the modes of demonstration on the film set to a "sign language", unless we separate the gestures from the intermixing of human forces that gives them their meaning. The work of demonstration and accompaniment needed for a take varies according to the difficulty of the movement, the actor's experience and ability to internalise what is asked of him, the number of elements that have to be coordinated (props, special effects), but even the simplest actions entail an impressive number of prior demonstrations: for an action to take place on the screen (running, jumping, falling, cutting someone's throat, slapping, punching, shooting), the take requires a greater

number of manipulations than the same action carried out for real. Shooting someone for real requires a good aim, it is no easy task. Pretending to shoot with verisimilitude in front of a camera does not need the same precision, but it is more onerous to perform in terms of collective coordination: in addition to the standard equipment for filming any interaction, it requires, at the very least, a pyrotechnician, a weapons master and a special effects supervisor to simulate the impact of the bullets or repair the damage before each new take. The gestural and human resources called upon at different stages of the conception constitute different facets of the *manual mode of the take*. Unfortunately, the various ways of playing on this mode are not accessible through the usual making-ofs, and my aim has simply been to suggest a few concepts to deepen our exploration of a field that certainly requires more ethnographical case studies, not only in Bombay but also elsewhere.

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Appendix

- Video clip 1 <http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/Volume8/videos/video1.wmv>
Video clip 2 <http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/Volume8/videos/video2.wmv>
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Citation

Grimaud, Emmanuel (2007) "The Film in Hand Modes of Coordination and Assisted Virtuosity in the Bombay Film Studios." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year
(http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)



Qualitative Sociology Review

Volume III, Issue 3 – December 2007

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.3.3.06>

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Staging the Social Drama of Work: Ethnography of a Theater Company as a Means of Analyzing Theater Activity

Abstract

This paper shows how conducting the ethnographic study of a theater hall and company can help define theater activity. Once the aesthetic of the social organization is set apart from the proper division of labor, theater appears as a collective activity which requires the cooperation of eight groups playing different social roles. The cooperation modes rest on a meshing of direct or indirect services for the actors who carry out the core task of performing. This specific organization of work around a central group is what makes the activity artistic. Simultaneously, the service relation offers the possibility for some categories to bring their relationship with actors closer to a state of symmetry and sometimes reverse asymmetry. As a status enhancing opportunity, service relationship for actors also directly or indirectly provide the grounds for participant commitment and thus guarantee long-lasting operation for the theatrical organization.

Keywords

Theater ethnography; Collective activity; Division of labor; Tasks; Social roles; Service relationship; Commitment

Actress Jane Christian plays *Matilda*, a young South-African married woman of the 60's who, when alone, vividly recalls the days when she was a singer. Wearing a yellow-daffodil flowered cotton dressing-gown, she stands in the middle of the stage and starts singing on Myriam Makeba's famous tune *Forbidden Games* as though she were back in her cabaret days. The audience silently sits in half-light. Sitting near one of the entry doors, Victor, an ushererⁱ, is watching it over. In the wings, Isabelle Nardi, the dresser, is helping actor Soumaoro Kante adjust his detachable collar. On the upper circle and peering over the stage and the orchestra section, Pascal Laville operates the blue and red spotlights that bathe the actress on stage in a cabaret-like atmosphere while Simon Chénabi, the sound engineer, is playing the sound track of Makeba's song. At the desk in the entrance, two usherers are preparing the books to be sold after the show. Jacques and Izabela, the ticket sellers, have gone back to the ticket office to keep the accounts. All of them are active members of the Circle Theatre (referred to here as the Circle or CT)ⁱⁱ; a theater company founded more than

thirty years ago by Alex Meadow a stage director and since then, artistic director. All of them contribute to the artistic activity called theater. But what exactly is this activity? How can it be socially defined? Most sociological studies on theater have been concerned with studying its most visible participants. Actors training, tasks and careers have been thoroughly described and analyzed (Menger 1997; Paradeise 1998 and Katz 2006) and the new artistic figure of stage directors detailed (Proust 2001). Laure de Verdalle (2003) has accurately accounted for the changes that affected East-German playwrights and stage directors during the reunification process. In France, sociological analysis sets strong emphasis on the specificity of actors and stage crew job statuses and the *intermittent* system.ⁱⁱⁱ Because of the importance of public funding, French theater audience members have been the focus of in-depth examination with a view to sketching out theatergoing as a cultural practice^{iv}. The impact of government intervention as well as pressure for artistic innovation have been seen as increasing the division of labor and a rationalization process to which the collective organization model of the theatrical community praised by many drama companies stands as a means of resistance^v (Proust 2003). However, except for Eleanor Lyon's study of the social organization of theatrical production in a US context (1974), theater has not given rise to analyses that detail the various categories of people who participate according to their respective tasks, their cooperation modes, the type of perspectives they develop on their participation and what makes them maintain such participation.

This paper aims to show that the symbolic interactionist perspective developed by Becker for artistic activities (1982) and adopted for the study of a theater hall and company improves our understanding of theater activity. Indeed, theaters like the Circle offer a stage on which most of the different activities necessary to the production and distribution of a piece of drama are presented. This enables the researcher to better see the participants' social roles and thus set back into question the conventional three-category typology resting on the artistic, technical and administrative personnel. It brings to light the type of relationships needed for participants to be able to cooperate and the motives they develop to commit themselves to the production and distribution processes the social activity of theater involves. It thus reveals the social drama of work (Hughes 1993) in theater but points to the transferability of some concepts to other worlds of art (Becker 1982). The monography of a theater thus appears as a means of understanding an organization's *working drama*, that is the stage on which participants to a theatrical organization adapt the role they play to the roles played by the other persons and by doing so over time enable the organization to last^{vi}.

Prior to presenting some of the results of my empirical research at the Circle Theater, I will sketch out fieldwork conditions and research methodology. As with the conventional analysis of plays, this paper is then built around three main parts. The first part deals with defining the setting. It points out the possibility that strong focus on task description offers of separating the aesthetic (Becker 1982)^{vii} of an artistic organization from its proper division of labor. The second part focuses on the characters and their parts: who they are, what they do and how they do it.^{viii} It shows how task description and allotment, confronted to the different participants' perspectives help bring out social roles thus enabling the construction of a new typology of participants. The last part reveals the plot that is to say what keeps all these participants together. It thus accounts for the cooperation modes in theater activity as well as the motives that draw participants into maintaining cooperation so that the theatrical organization continues to operate therefore contributing to its

durability.

Methods and Fieldwork conditions

This paper stems from the fieldwork research carried out for a PhD dissertation in the field of sociology (Bense Ferreira Alves 2005). It is based on direct observation of parts of the work performed by the members of the Circle Theater (CT) as they were completing some of the numerous tasks that the production and distribution of a theater play directed by Alex Meadow implied except for rehearsals^{ix}.

During the five years (1999 – 2004) of fieldwork, I spent many days and nights as a volunteer worker with no set position at the theater. I thus started as assistant to the dresser and moved to that of cashier, then usherer while simultaneously remaining just a versatile helpful hand when required and a non-obtrusive observer when I felt it most appropriate. This observation at different stages of the theater season and daily life produced field notes of different natures (observation notes, situated talk) mainly focused on defining the clusters of tasks (Strauss 1985) or “bundles of tasks” as Hughes would say. Along with observing activities and interactions, I conducted counts (specially among the audience) as well as formal extensive interviews of a biographical nature so as to be able to trace access to the occupation and to the organization but also collect individual participant perspectives on their roles within the organization and the way the latter had evolved. Lastly, I explored different types of archives about the Circle Theater so as to rebuild the rather long history of the place. Life histories as well as the participants’ perspectives on the division of labor and organizational changes were then confronted to this historical material. This brought life to both the elements that made up the life-long aesthetics of this theater hall and those that enabled its adaptation to a changing environment^x.

The Setting or the Circle’s Aesthetic

A Theatrical Place in Paris

The Circle Theater is worldwide famous for its thrust and orchestra-leveled stage, red-and-brown-pigment dilapidated walls and corroded iron-wrought dome that makes it resemble the remains of a temple in which a cult would still be secretly celebrated. A 19th-century theater hall built on the borders of newly annexed Parisian suburbs, the Circle Theater had been abandoned for 25 years before it was occupied and reused as a place for theatrical rehearsals and performances in the mid 1970s. At that time, the government was engaged in promoting theatrical production by means of a wide variety of subsidies^{xi}. Many already well-known stage directors started looking for premises that would not only host their shows but would also offer space for rehearsals therefore giving them the opportunity of becoming the directors of new theater halls and of being able to control part of the distribution process. All types of spaces were then occupied from closed down plants or railway stations to a disused cartridge depot. Finding the abandoned shell of the Circle Theater enabled Alex Meadow and his partner Yvonne Segla to apply for a government subsidy specially meant for theater companies with a place to rehearse and perform which provided them with a competitive advantage over other theater companies.^{xii} The amount of money received could cover the refurbishing works required to match safety standards and then the yearly creation of theater shows that claimed that the

text and actors were central by not resorting to setting, costly costumes and large stage personnel, but making wide use of the Elizabethan scene and acting techniques such as pantomime. All of these elements enabling the CT to put forth a distinctive theater product on the Parisian market. The artistic and administrative directors^{xiii} also claimed that the type of drama offered at CT was available to all types of audience members and fostered wider audience participation thanks to the association of several elements: reduced staff and craft organization with little specialization, the theater hall specific localization and architecture that enabled sale of low-cost seats, simple and clear stage situations, absence of etiquette in interactions, as well as side-show activities. If we replace these claims in the evolution undergone by dramatic art since the end of the 19th century, they appear in direct descent of the work conducted by Pottecher, Gémier, Appia, Meyerhold and Craig, Artaud, Brecht and Grotowski that championed new interaction patterns between company members and their audiences during performances by simultaneously revisiting theater architecture, text and actors' performances.

During fieldwork, audience interaction patterns with other participants to the Circle were of the following kind. At one point on stage, Jane Christian, thanks Soumaoro, who plays a reverend, for having warmly welcome her to the women's club he supports. She also shows gratitude to Lionel, another of her acting partners, who embodies a women member of this same club. Jane Christian then comes close to a woman seated in the first row at the orchestra. She addresses the latter as if she too were a member of the club and thanks her for her help. The audience member is first surprised and then smiles. When the actress continues with another patron, the latter smiles and nods as if grateful for the acknowledgement. Despite the absence of heightened stage and of sophisticated décor, the like-life scenes and absence of conventional protocol in the theater hall, audience members do to move onto the plastic mat that delimits the stage or provide an improvised cue to the actress, thus fully becoming part of the play's cast. Actors and audience members then play different parts in the production and distribution process of the play. Géraldine Bayle is a member of the audience. She has come with a group of students to whom she teaches theater in high school. Prior to attending the show, she had to convince the students to come and accompany her to the Circle and had to get in touch with the chief cashier so as to get special prices when booking the seats. Géraldine Bayle thus plays the part of an intermediary between potential audiences and theater professionals. Audience members that can gather groups of people to buy several tickets at a time - like teachers with their students or members of worker's councils with their colleagues - can thus play an active part in increasing attendance volumes. By doing so, they contribute to securing the theater's receipts. Resorting to audience members acting on behalf of institutions or groups is a very widespread practice in the theater world^{xiv}. At the Circle student audience members can also play another part. About a fortnight before the opening night, a performance of the newly created show directed by Alex Meadow is sometimes organized at one of the high schools of the students who regularly fill in the house. After the actors have performed the play with only a few props, the students are asked to provide answers to the director's questions about what they understood of the play. Thus, they play the part the director conventionally plays during rehearsals when acting as a surrogate audience for the actors and act as work-in-progress evaluators within the limits set by the director. However, we can see that, as in most theaters and despite the specific elements put forth as audience participation incentives, theater patrons at the Circle Theater have mainly two conventional bundles of tasks. On the one hand, by coming to the theater, attending a show, expressing their feelings and convincing other

people they allow the theatrical event to take place and to last. On the other hand, observing audience behavior during a performance also shows that the more active part theatergoers take in the performance of actors is the collective support they can bring by laughing at a scene or their collective refusal of support by remaining silent or showing disapproval. Task description therefore enables the researcher to measure the adequacy between audience participation as claimed for - that is to say its role in the theater aesthetic - and the role played by this same audience in the division of labor that exists in the production and distribution process of a play. When systematically conducted for all groups of participants, task description underlines that there is sometimes a huge gap between an aesthetic and the actual division of labor.

A theater hall is then, in Howard Becker's terms (2004: 2), a place that has been socially defined - some people share a view on how it has to be used, by whom and it therefore receives financial means so as to operate. However, even a physical place is constantly being redefined socially through the actions and judgments of the types of participants that cooperate so as to keep it going which implies that these participants, their tasks, their cooperation modes and the perspectives developed on them must be thoroughly examined.

The Characters

If the sociology of work and occupations has long been looking for the social roles^{xv} (Hughes 1996 [1951]: 314) beyond the positions held in social organizations^{xvi} (Blumer 1998 [1969]), fieldwork in the sociology of the arts, and the sociology of theater in particular is still constrained by the three local categories above-mentioned. Although trying to define artistic work, as well as technical or administrative work for their specificities is necessary, relying on these categories hinders the description of the division of labor as well as the definition of the social roles within a theater by comforting the view on artistic work as esoteric. As a drama production and distribution unit, a theater gives access to almost all the sequences of tasks required in a row or simultaneously along the course of theatrical project and divided up according to various criteria among all participants - that is to say an *arc of work*^{xvii} (Strauss et al. 1985).

Participants and their Social Roles

When standing in the middle of the stage, singing *Forbidden Games* in red light, Jane Christian is indeed playing a situation with words and gestures in front of an audience. As such, she belongs to the category of "actors", that is to say the group of participants whose occupation is to embody dramatic characters on stage. In the theater world, the sole presence of actors gives a theatrical nature to the production and distribution process of a theater piece. The product of their action is a theater show whose consumption is immediate and which is thus also a service for those who consume it. The term used underlines that, just as the "artists" defined by Howard Becker (2004: 24), the "actors" carry out what they define and what other participants to that world underline as being the "core activity" in the production of a work of art.

When later, Naomi Todd - who has replaced Jane Christian on stage^{xviii} - appears in front of the audience, she is wearing the gown that Isabelle Nardi had previously sewed for her out of a piece of poplin she had bought in a nearby store. All

three actors wear suits that Isabelle had found in a second-hand shop. Katia Ploevic, who then replaced her as the dresser, had the suits dry-cleaned and then held them up for the actors to put them on while they slipped their feet in shoes that Isabelle had made easier to put on by replacing the laces with elastic. While operating his light desk, Pascal Laville expresses satisfaction at the cabaret scene. After many years of work at the Circle, he had been able to make proposals of colored lights that the stage director, Alex Meadow, had agreed to during rehearsals. Things being set up, the dresser and light engineer are now making sure that everything goes smoothly the way they were “blocked”^{xxix} so as to support the actors tasks on stage. They all follow a written or digital “cue sheet”.^{xx} Just as the stage manager, costume, set and, music designers, as well as property people and stagehands that usually make stage crews, Isabelle, Katia and Pascal see themselves and are seen as “serving the actors”. They form the category of the “support personnel” a group made up of all the people who, behind the scenes, bring direct assistance to actors during rehearsals and on-stage performances so that a play performed by actors may be created and presented in front of an audience^{xxi}. This category was inspired from Eleanor Lyon’s typology of theatrical production divided into “acting” and “non-acting personnel” or “support personnel” (Lyon 1975: 68)^{xxii}.

Prior to playing their parts, Naomi and one of her three male acting partners, Lionel, had both gone through a casting process. Alex Meadow had previously chosen a play to be put up at the Circle. He had then decided to hire four actors and three members of the support personnel on top of Pascal. He had talked long-time participants Soumaoro and Aboubacar into playing in it before having his assistant get in touch with potential actors and actresses for the other parts. He had then watched them play a scene with Soumaoro and Aboubacar in front of him and his assistant and, then decided whether or not the outside candidates fitted the roles. The stage director had set out the overall amount of time necessary for the play to be rehearsed and defined when it would be presented to the general public. He had also defined the rehearsal schedule, delimiting the scenes that would be worked on, with whom and with what type of props. Although actors and technicians were asked to make different performing, lighting, costumes, and sound propositions all along the rehearsal process, Meadow expressed the final decision when it came to choosing. Even if he considers that his task is to help actors find the best way to perform a scene, and defines himself as a guide providing actors with a path to follow, Meadow devised this path on his own accord and does not consider this as an answer to actors’ demands for services. As such, and contrary to most of the other members of Lyon’s “support personnel”, Alex Meadow does not see himself as “serving the actors”.

The situation observed at the Circle Theater as well as previous fieldwork experience with a professional theater company, therefore, pointed at different social roles for some of the participants listed by Lyon. Indeed, if the artistic and administrative directors do bring material aid (a place and money to put up the play) and the stage directors do provide intellectual and coordination support to the actors, they are also their direct or indirect employers, exercise control over all other participants and directly act on the organization of work by affecting a position to people who are then going to act on the organization from this very position. Such a redefinition of the social roles of these participants accounted for the need to create the new category of “management” composed of those people who, by prescribing what other participants to a theater company and hall should do and defining interaction modes, set the rules of the game on which the production and distribution

of a theater play is organized. They are the stage directors, administrative and artistic directors, as well as theater managers. The fact that many stage directors concurrently hold the position of managing director strengthens their roles as rule setters, task distributors and controllers^{xxiii}.

After some negotiation with Christophe Hörer, the then administrative director, 6.4 ft-tall Soumaoro signed a new contract for the tour of the show he was playing at the Circle. Taking into account the terms agreed on, Weronika Maresz, one of his secretaries, wrote out the contract and had Soumaro sign it. In charge of preparing the tour and as agreed with the director, Beatriz Heinz, the tour assistant, had previously informed the actor that although she had done her best to accommodate him comfortably for the whole length of the worldwide tour, he would have to suffer some discomfort and accept to sleep in a normal bed for one night. Indeed, one of the mid-sized towns of the tour did not provide hotels with king size beds. Acting on behalf of the administrative director she had previously made sure that the selling price for the show, the billing and *per diem* lists^{xxiv} were approved by the welcoming theater by writing out a contract that read the terms of the sale set out by the director and sending it to the other party. Later on, she had made sure the playbill matched the Circle's communication requirements. Just as a tour guide, she had then booked flight tickets, checked out on hotel availability and standards, made sure setting, costumes and props were shipped on time to the right place and provided the actors with a detailed travel warrant. She regularly accounted for her tasks to the administrative director. During the tour, Beatriz then frequently paid visits to the actors so as to make sure everything was running smoothly. Although sometimes attending actors, Beatriz and Weronika's bundles of tasks are specially designed to directly help the "management" in its own administrative tasks (preparing administrative work and carrying out follow up tasks). Their activities customarily lie behind the lines of offensive operations that is to say the stage. These personnel is made of secretaries, accountants and tour assistants for instance, who often define themselves as strongly dependent on members of the management in a kind of patrimonial relationship - they see themselves as serving a "boss" and working in his shadow. These personnel are therefore called "back-line personnel".

Although recruiting participants and allocating work among them, Christophe Hörer's main task at the Circle is to find money for the shows to be put on and in particular those directed by Alex Meadow. He tries to find people that are ready to put money in a show either as a financial investment on future receipts or as a tax-reduction technique. For Alex Meadow's last show, Hörer convinced a few corporations he was used to working with to act as sponsors but mainly signed co-producing partnerships with some of the theaters that would then welcome the show during its tour. Although the show required large amounts of money since it comprised a long period of experiment in different countries before rehearsals, many theater halls and festivals were ready to financially contribute since they were sure the show would attract large audiences. These people then make the group of "sponsors" without which artistic works such as theater shows would not be produced and distributed^{xxv}. State authorities, local authorities, banks, art patrons and independent producers are to be found in that category. In spite of considering themselves as helping artists and as people having a strong influence on the organization, the fact that these individuals define themselves as providers of financial assistance to institutions and not directly to actors makes them belong to a specific category independent from that of the "support personnel".

The show has started and late audience members are not allowed in during the first twenty minutes so as not to disturb actors on stage. Still, the outside doors of the

theater are open. At 9:25, a young woman comes in. She says she wants to book a seat. Victor, the usherer that has welcomed her answers he cannot make the decision. He goes and calls for Izabela the cashier. He comes back and says she can book a seat at the reduced price of 14€. Izabela comes in. The young woman says she only has 10€ in cash or a check. Izabela chooses the check although the woman had started taking her wallet out of her purse. Cashiers, usherers, bartenders and waiters of theater halls contribute to the distribution of the show by acting directly in contact with audience members, managing the flows so these people may have access to the theatrical product and service. In the theater, some of them like the ticket office cashiers make critical decisions as to letting people enter or not and advising them on how to increase their chances of entering or on abandoning attempts. Drawing from Deutscher's analysis of a bureaucratic organization such as a public housing office their role is somehow similar to that of "gatekeepers" (1968) or to Lipsky's "street-level bureaucrats" (1980). However, not all of them are in a position to select people and forbid access to the institution but conduct tasks that do contribute to the clients' assessment of the theatrical product as a whole. Thus and because all of them define themselves as people serving on the front line, being the first people to deal with the institution's clients and acting as buffers who absorb the hostilities of the organization's clients, another category emerges to encompass these participants: the "front-line personnel".

As we have already seen in the earlier part about the Circle's aesthetic, the body of clients served by the institution can sometimes play the part of make-believe partners for actors and authorized critics. However, their main activity is to attend the performance, witness the artistic event, formulate judgment, which as Gilmore (1990) says "shows artistic knowledge" and, by doing so, make it exist both financially and in experience (Dewey 2005 [1934]). In art worlds such as the theater world this group of participants is called an audience. So as to better render the idea that these people consume and receive both a product and a service but can also play other parts I chose the term "public".

Lastly, "critics" express their judgment on the works of art and resort to systems built by aestheticians to explain what make their worth (Becker 1982) thus participating in its distribution and to the development of its aesthetics. Although the category is made of both media critics and aestheticians, the term "critics" is chosen here so as to fit worlds in which the production of a good or a service is being assessed by other people than audience members and that have made an expertise in assessing other people's work^{xxvi}.

The few examples provided here have helped us define the division of labor at work in theater activity by pointing to a typology of eight different social roles. However, a lot of drama companies are either forced - for lack of money - or seek - for ideological purposes - to limit the number of participants who do not carry out the core tasks thus emphasizing the central part of actors. In such organizations, the production and distribution process of a show may require that actors also be stage directors, general managers, stage crew and usherers thus matching the conventional definition of "craft organizations" that is to say one in which the work is divided among only a few number of versatile participants. Fieldwork experience at the Circle and at another professional drama company showed that although the categories of participants may vary in their content from one organization to another the different social roles must be fulfilled even if it meant being fulfilled by the same person.

This account has also helped us glimpse at the type of cooperative links that these categories keep up in the production and distribution process of a play. Indeed,

by underlining the type of relationship in which carrying out a bundle of tasks places each group of participant, the new typology pointed up the interdependence links between each category and the direct subordination links of some categories to others - actors and back-line personnel in relation to the management, support personnel in relation to the actors, front-line personnel in relation to the public, for instance and called for further enquiry into the nature of these relationships.

The Plot: Cooperating and Maintaining Cooperation

Service Relationships as Cooperative modes

Katia, aged 36, has been working as a dresser in the theater world for many years but can also boast experience as a dresser in many other worlds like the opera and dance worlds, as well as the movie and fashion industries. After nearly a year of working for the Circle Theater on the worldwide tour of a show, she and the rest of the cast —three actors and an actress, plus the light and sound managers— are back in the theater hall for a two-month performance period. Having spent much time together since tours imply not only participating in the show performances but also traveling and eating with fellow co-workers as well as being accommodated in the same hotels, actors and dresser know each other pretty well, kiss one another and show signs of intimacy and absence of power distance.

Here is the account of some of the tasks conducted during one of the performances: Katia helps 60 year-old Soumaoro put on his camel beige vest and later helps him take it off. When he takes off his hat and places it on her head she smiles. He then starts unbuttoning the detachable collar used to embody the reverend. Later, she kindly reminds him of tying up his fake shoelaces as he enters his dressing room and starts tuning his guitar. While accomplishing these tasks, Katia keeps up conversation with Soumaoro on menial subjects and more personal matters such as the water damage at her flat and father and daughter relationships. In the meantime, Katia also helps Lionel, who at the age of 22 is playing small parts in the play, and Antoine, the male leading role, aged 27, dress and undress. She also provides assistance to Naomi, aged 31, the female leading role, with some of her costume changes. She thus gives a hand to Naomi holding her dressing gown up when the latter puts it on, helps Lionel take off his polo shirt and hands him a towel so that he can wipe off the sweat that runs along his chest and wipes out Antoine's face and chest as he crosses the rapid-change hall and proceeds to an armchair. Meanwhile, Lionel gets into a pair of pants and shirt and puts his socks and shoes on. When Naomi comes back from the stage, she takes off her slippers and lets them in front of the props table. Katia helps her with her gown. As Naomi goes to her dressing room, Katia pushes the slippers away under the table and says to me:

They're in the way. Anyone can stumble on her slippers. I keep pushing them under the table but she always puts them back were she had left them. I never say anything but, I think that as an actor, not being able to understand that is so selfish, it makes me crazy! You see when she transforms her dressing gown into a dress I have to roll her sleeves up. Well, at the beginning she wouldn't stick her arms straight. I had to show her, by mimicking her behavior, how hard for me it was to work quickly that way so that she would at last straighten her arms!

Later on, as she is sorting out clothes to be washed, Katia recounts how she changed the actors behavior towards their costumes. As they were used to leaving all their garments on the floor of their dressing rooms she told them that the costumes would wear out more quickly and that new ones would have to be found. She knew that actors don't like to change costumes once they have got used to wearing them and that this would bother them. Actors therefore started putting their costumes on chairs.

When bringing all these elements together and matching them with other pieces of information gathered through informal talk or interviews we don't only see that Katia does not behave the same way with each actor but we understand why she does it. Comparing these interactions and the perspectives expressed on them by their agents (Katia and other dressers) with analytical categories drawn out from similar service relationships we can categorize Katia's behavior. In the theater world, the dressers' tasks consist in helping actors dress and undress, but also in taking care of the costumes – cleaning them up, ironing, mending and putting them away. Although their direct assistance to actors and to costume care has an impact on the pace and the aesthetics of the show, dressers are not considered as major participants to the production and distribution process of a theater play. Indeed, their tasks being very close to domestic ones, mainly carried out by women and, part of them —the cleaning tasks— usually carried out in the basement of theater halls. Thus, dressers are seen and see themselves as lower grade participants to this artistic activity. This low status is made official through the position they are given in the hierarchy of theater jobs. Although they are considered as technicians for the training and expertise that their job requires, they are usually poorly paid since the pay index for their job is the lowest one in the technicians pay grid. For all these reasons, dressers, on the one hand, tend to think that actors and actresses either ignore them —considering the dressers' tasks have meaningless impact on the show's production process—or despise them —overtly mistreating dressers. On the other hand, dressers see actors and actresses as irresponsible participants that they constantly have to protect against their own mistakes.

As Roth's hospital emergency staff members (Roth 1971), dressers like Katia first carry out a moral evaluation of their clients and establish categories of clients and demands. Katia assesses actors according to moral values either shared by members of the general society like age, or that are specific to her world like the importance of the actor/actress in the play and his/her fame. While Soumaoro —an old actor and a longstanding member as well as a “pillar” of the Circle Theater as he has been playing regularly on Alex Meadow's shows for nearly twenty years— “deserves” her services, the others, less famous and younger actors are “undeserving”. She also establishes categories of demands to be met or not. Helping actors and actresses with tasks they cannot do on their own or that can be accelerated thanks to her aid and so act on the shows pace is “legitimate”. Picking up clothes from the floor, which is a task associated to a servant's position, is “illegitimate” in a work organization that publicly advocates equality between participants. At the Circle Theater, this “dirty work” can therefore be delegated by skilful dressers who can boast previous work experience in the organization and use their position of insiders to teach some newly recruited actors what kind of assistance they can claim for and what they can't. They can't do so with the oldest actors of the Circle. Thus, and although their relationships show many signs of mutual respect and closeness, these actors are not considered as “good clients” by the dressers like Katia. Indeed, although they are used to carrying many tasks on their own, by leaving their costumes on the floor they also show they are capable of some disrespect. In

terms of dressing, therefore, a “good client” is someone who gives little work to the dresser and shows some consideration for her/his tasks. At the other end, a “bad client” is someone who gives her/him much work and doesn’t pay enough attention to her/his activity. As Ray Gold’s janitors with their “bad tenants”, dressers can put limits to their demands of service by refusing to bring help on tasks that are peripheral as regards the core activities of their bundles of tasks as conventionally defined within the Circle Theater. Thus, during rehearsals, Katia once refused to help Naomi try and manage the difficult handling of a prop that happened to be a suit. Indeed, prior to that situation, the actress had not looked for Katia’s advice thus denying both her skills in handling a piece of costume and her part in the show’s production process. Naomi was then forced to beg Katia for help who then offered that they took some time for a special training session on the handling of the suit. Just as Katia’s, the dressers’ behaviors towards the actors therefore constantly affect their work and their way of behaving. Of course, not all situations enable dressers to resort to “client training” so as to readjust their position in the service relationship. Some places like, the *Comédie Française*, impose a routinization^{xxvii} of the work on their employees that reinforces their lower position. Still, as Robin Leidner showed, no doubt that even in the most routinized organizations, “interactive service workers” such as the dressers can use any routine that they see as fostering readjustment so as to get closer to symmetric service interactions (Leidner 1993).

The dressers’ tasks not only affect the rhythm of the show, they can also change the aesthetic elements that are usually considered as resulting from the actors’ activity or from actors-director relationships. After two months of daily performances of a show adapted from a Shakespeare play, Isabelle was confronted to a cleaning problem as regards a piece of the protagonist’ costume, a black all-linen and silk tunic. Dylan Trent, the actor that embodied the character, being used to resorting to the foam produced by white toothpaste to mime an epileptic fit, the tunic was becoming irremediably stained. After having tried many cleaning techniques and convinced the actor to try and use other products so that it might not leave marks on the costume, Isabelle resolved to talk to the director about the risk of damaging a piece of expensive British tailored-made costume that this element of the actor’s game represented for the show. Without mentioning the cleaning issue, the director managed to have the actor slightly change his game to avoid the use of staining products. Dylan Trent therefore abandoned the foam prop and resorted to miming fits with body movements.

The service relationship has been analyzed as a power relationship in which each partner is granted a certain room for maneuver (Crozier 1977; Jeantet 2003). However, what we see here is that this type of relationship does not so much rely on a power issue than on a question of asymmetry between provider and beneficiary. As Gold (1952) and Bigus (1972) showed, the provider constantly utilizes tactics to bring his relationship with the beneficiary closer to a state of symmetry. During this readjustment work, participants start from their own status and use the maneuver room they have at their disposal within the organization. Because they see actors as irresponsible participants and themselves as having a lower status, dressers try to readjust the asymmetric relationship in which they are placed as providers of a service to actors.

In taking advantage of the possibility given to them to readjust their position in the service relationships, dressers do not fit the conventional view on their occupation that presents them as subordinates who willingly submit to actors’ whims and desires. Nor do the major part of the participants who use the maneuver room they are granted in an activity that implies that all cooperative links be service

relationships to readjust their position and thus play a wider part in the production and distribution of a play. Sometimes they can even reverse the dissymmetric relationship they are placed in as service providers and thus, change their statuses and social roles. This is what happened to the stage directors in France who, as a group, are no longer seen as mere coordinators but have acquired the status of artists without carrying out the core tasks of acting^{xxviii}. The status of artist therefore also appears as relying on the adaptive process of interactive groups willingly or unwillingly delegating or preserving the peripheral tasks around their core activity. It needs some participants to agree to part with a task, other participants to agree to take it on and to be able to use their coordinating activity to convince the rest of the participants to agree with the new allotment for this status to appear.

Beyond the Series of Participants, Division of Labor as a Series of Tasks

Three quarters of an hour before the show starts, the usherers open the main double-door on the square thus giving access to the theater hall to the audience members that have been crowding the square in front of the theater for many hours. Amin the maintenance manager goes out on the square and starts sorting out the people who already have their tickets from those who don't so that the first ones can proceed smoothly to the entrance. These audience members are then being taken care of by Sylvie, an usherer "doing the door" which means that she stands at the double-door located in the hall of the theater and leading to the corridor that circles the theater hall. After checking the tickets for side and floor, she advises audience members as to the path they will have to follow to get to their seats. Pascal, the stage manager stands nearby so as to prevent audience members from forcing access by making sure the other side of the double-door stays closed and, thus helping the usherer at the door carry out her task. On each floor of the theater hall, other usherers show audience members their seats, sometimes just pointing at them sometimes taking some audience members all the way to their appropriate seats while simultaneously trying to contain the flow of newcomers. On opening nights and full performances, the administrative director comes to meet special guests and personally sees them to their accommodation. Some actors also come to "the door" to look for acquaintances or relatives, thus carrying out reception tasks. Meanwhile, the audience members that are waiting for tickets to buy, progressively move to the desk and are attended by the cashiers who either sell them remaining seats or try to organize waiting lists for seats left over by no-show audience members.

The previous example shows how, as focusing attention on the usherers' tasks the observer can take advantage of watching members of other groups take part in the reception activity that traditionally falls onto the front-line personnel. Focusing on the different clusters of tasks and the people who carry them out can lead to defining groups of participants according to their social roles. However, such an entry tends to reduce the time dimension of the production and distribution process of an artistic work since it scarcely provides the possibility of describing parallel or stringed tasks. As a field condensing different activities, the theater hall just, as the hospital, offers the researcher the possibility to observe different groups while accomplishing similar or different tasks in the conduct of an arc of work. This enables the researcher to both strengthen the definition of social roles and depart from set perspectives on some of the bundles of tasks required for a theater play to be put up and presented in front of an audience.

This short description hints at another factor in the division of labor. The fact that managing the flows of public members cannot be defined as a "dirty work" that is

spontaneously relegated by the management to subordinates. Indeed, in some cases it can become a highly praised task provided the audience members to which this service is rendered are selected and defined as “deserving”. Thus we can say that the value of a task also relies on the statuses of both the service recipient and service provider. It also hints at the fact that theater, like other cultural institutions, gives the possibility to participants to be versatile workers in spite of the bureaucratic tasks and work segmentation involved and that this doesn’t necessarily affect their social role^{xxix}.

Status Enhancement as a Commitment motive to a Theatre Company

Many of the participants I was studying had been working at the Circle Theater for many years. At the same time, everybody was telling me that nothing was ever settled at the Circle and people would never know in advance if they were going to be part of a project or not. I therefore started wondering what made these people stay and maintain a “consistent line of activity” within an organization over a long period of time by rejecting any alternative in spite of the conventional “project-based form of organizing” (Faulkner and Anderson 1987). This amounted to questioning people’s commitment motives as expressed by Becker (1960). In France, and probably because of the specific job status the *intermittent* workers are granted as related to conventional short-term workers, current analysis on commitment to artistic organizations is based on understanding market mechanisms. Those rely on a vision of the employer – employee relationship in terms of a commercial relationship. Participants to theatrical organizations are seen as individuals who, for most of them, offer their workforce because they have balanced out “efficiency salary”, skill-assessment based on reputation, insurance mechanisms covering unemployment periods and psychological satisfactions linked to the non-routinized work attached to a project-based production system (Menger 1991, 1997, 2002 and 2005). However, as Florence Weber (2000) would say, if this is a way of seeing interactions, it does not make room for exploring the thickness of the links between interaction partners. What struck me then when doing so was that each individual’s participation to the Circle, whatever his or her social role, seemed extremely intertwined with that of the director and greatly dependant on how they considered their status in the organization and the way other people regarded it.

As far as Alex Meadow was concerned, the data collected had led to the following portrait: a very famous director whose continuous success for over 60 years of career had never been denied but who never gave himself over to stardom; a man that had achieved the position of theater master thanks to the continuing success of the shows he had directed but also thanks to his numerous writings that build up part of the theoretical body of texts used in many drama schools; a member of the management personnel of the Circle Theater who simultaneously held many positions (adapter, translator, artistic director and play director) and therefore concentrated decision power in his hands both in the production and distribution process and in the definition of artistic work; and finally, the pivot of all work interactions in rehearsals as teams were made of multicultural actors who could not but rely on him so as to interact with the other members, and of support personnel that only deal with him and his assistant.

Pascal Laville had started at the Circle Theater as a former electrician that had discovered the performing arts by carrying out lighting tasks for holiday village shows. He says that he owes Meadow the fact of having left a worker’s condition and having had access to an executive’s position. He receives a good salary, bonuses for

taking part in the creation process, daily tour allowances and the symbolic benefits of taking part in a famous theater, going on worldwide tours and being personally acquainted to the director who regularly shows he appreciates his work. Such portraits illustrated Weber's (1993) somewhat abstract concept of "charismatic leadership" for all instances about Meadow matched the "prodigious qualities", "moral authority", "intellectual authority" as well as all the pragmatic elements that enable an individual to establish a leadership mainly linked to the personal interest in the material rewards and social honor he provides. Though all employees seemed to be linked that way to this leader, the notion of personal interest remained vague and could not explain why some participants maintained their participation while others chose other alternatives after one or a few collaborations. Part of the answer was to be found in studying the group of actors that presented a great age gap. While the oldest actors were all ongoing participants to the Circle Theater, the youngest ones had only been one-shot participants to a show directed by Alex Meadow. Scrutinizing their life stories, careers and perspectives, I found out that all of the older actors had, when meeting Alex Meadow in the 1960's or 1980's, rejected a certain way of working in the theater world and were hoping for a reformation of their private lives as well as their professional lives. They found in Alex Meadow a consciousness master and guide, who, by providing an esoteric definition to their work gave them the possibility to change their ways of life. By becoming his "disciples" —in Weber's meaning^{xxx} —, they themselves acquired a moral authority and some "prodigious qualities". Thus, by participating to the Circle, Soumaoro Kante has been able to enhance his social status as a griot^{xxxii} that had long been denied while living in Africa. For the black actors of this group such as Soumaoro, personal relationship with Alex Meadow has also meant being destigmatized. In the theater world, the casting process of actors for a play still relies on role types. Those are still much marked by some criteria such as age, sex, and skin color. Thus the character of Hamlet in the eponymous play conventionally corresponds to a leading role held by a young man, Caucasian, expressing a certain kind of melancholy. Skin color still acting as a "master status-determining trait" (Hughes 1993: 147), a black actor will find it difficult to be given the role of the young Scandinavian prince. He will be mainly offered to play black characters more common in contemporary drama and entertainment shows than in classical drama highly praised as a cultural commodity. The fact of playing the leading role in a play of the classical repertoire directed by Alex Meadow that could also lay claim to worldwide fame helped Soumaoro get out of the role type defined by the color of his skin. Thanks to his long-term commitment to the Circle and to his spiritual and charismatic leader, he was then, sponsored by Alex Meadow along the path of vertical mobility by having access to other positions in the theater such as that of stage director and has become a "Wise" participant to the organization (Anderson 1999).^{xxxiii} Meanwhile, Alex Meadow maintained constant innovation in his shows and distance in personal relationships with these actors. The disciples movement to social and professional enhancement which provided them with the possibility of acquiring some autonomy from their own group and the leader's progressive depersonalization of relationships comforts the "routinization"^{xxxiii} process of charismatic domination that allows the organization to last. Dylan Trent, a young black actor who had already experienced success in out-of-type roles offered by other famous directors, was not indebted to Alex Meadow for his destigmatization. He, nevertheless, found in his participation to a show directed by the famous director, a means of achieving status enhancement. Indeed he hoped this participation would help him have access, in the future, to ever more prestigious roles with ever more famous directors. As many other young actors he was a "believer-but-non-belonger"

to the Circle. Although old and young actors had developed very different motives to their participation to the Circle Theater, what emerged was that both groups hoped their collaboration for a certain period of time would bring future status enhancement outside the organization. Indeed, just as many other participants to the Circle, their commitment to this theatrical organization was linked to their simultaneously betting on the achievement of another goal. This hinted at Howard Becker's use of Thomas Schelling analysis of bargaining in which side-bets constitute the motives to commitment (Becker 1960).

If those examples put forth the fact that status enhancement was at the core of commitment motives, many other examples pointed to the importance of status defense and acquisition of label, some of which could be achieved thanks to a "game"^{xxxiv} played inside the theatrical organization. Although, proper description of commitment motives will not be carried out here for it would need a whole paper to provide in-depth description and analysis^{xxxv}, it led to the building sub-categories among all groups of participants according to their commitment motives and degree of participation^{xxxvi}. This led to a slight reformulation of commitment in such symbol-production organizations as theaters. Indeed, individuals commit themselves to a theatrical organization over a certain length of time by making side-bets and/or playing a "game" with the management within the "routinization" of charismatic domination that allows them to foster status enhancement within or outside the organization itself.

Conclusion

Contrary to most artistic activities, theater is easily seen as a collective activity in which, in spite of their central parts, actors depend on the contributions of many other people to produce and distribute a piece of art called theater. Despite such perception, we have seen that examining who gets to do what, when and how sets back into question the conventional view on the division of labor between the three local categories of participants. In spite of the craft organization it claims for, task description and individual perspectives at the Circle thus pointed to the production and distribution of a theater show requiring eight different categories of participants each playing different social roles: the "actors", the "support personnel", the "management", the "back-line personnel", the "sponsors", the "front-line personnel", the "public" and the "critics". We also understood that theater is an activity which gives the possibility for these tasks to be carried out by only a few versatile participants in a series of tasks. Whatever the categories of participants used, the eight social roles will always be needed. This points to the fact that a theater company resembles any type of ongoing concern (Hughes *ibidem*) and that the distinction between craft organization and enterprise lies not in the number of social roles but rather in the constant upholding of a particular aesthetic and collaborative work (Strauss 1985) pattern.

Theater activity is marked by the specificity of the cooperative links it requires since, as in all artistic activities, each category provides direct or indirect service to the group who carries out the core activity, here the "actors". The "actors" themselves offering a service to the "public". The theater show then appears as the result of the efforts put in by each one of these categories to readjust a dissymmetrical service relationship. When some categories —such as the stage directors— are in a position to almost reverse the service relationship, thus also changing the symbolic meaning of their tasks they can become "artists" although they do not carry out the central task

of performing a part in front of an audience. This hints at the fact that “art” besides being a specific activity can also sometimes be a label (Becker 1963) because it is highly symbol productive. Nowadays and in our society, the art label acts as a positive characteristic in the definition of an occupation and, thus, in the definition of status. The stakes that acquiring this label represent, such as that of expert for many professions, is at the core of the division of labor in the world of theater.

Lastly, scrutinizing people’s points of view on their work and statuses sets back into question the conventional idea that commitment to a theatrical organization relies on labor market pressure and attraction for so-called non-routinized activity. Concentrating information gathering on a few participants to a single organization enables the researcher to provide thick descriptions that approach the complexity of work relationships and motives and their strong bonds to status definition in a symbol-producing world. Therefore, the ethnographic study of a theater points to the fact that art is most of all a work and that, as such, it places its participants in a whole set of moving and permanently redefined interactions. A theater is just a field that gives the opportunity of seeing cooperation in an artistic activity in a more blatant way and glance at some of its meaning because it is concentrated in time and space. Drama, therefore, is much more than a metaphor for the ethnographic study of a physical place such as theater which is also a drama company. It offers a stage on which the production and distribution process of the piece of art work is carried out. It thus provides clues in understanding work in other symbol producing art worlds.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Marie Buscatto and Howard Becker for their editorial work on this paper. Their most appropriate suggestions on the former version of this text have helped me improve its final content. What is written here, however, can only be construed as representing my own analyses.

Endnotes

- i So as to match gender representation the term is here preferred to that of usherette.
- ii To protect their anonymity, all participants and places have been granted pseudonyms.
- iii In the audiovisual and performing arts, artistic and technical personnel are entitled to a specific unemployment insurance system called *intermittence*. It relies on collective agreements that define the conditions for eligibility (appendix 8 and 10 of the November 13, 2003 convention listing the activities and occupations, the number of hours required and the period of time the insurance applies to). Section L. 594 of the French labor regulations (*Code du Travail*) links recruitment on the specific short-term contract called *CDD d’usage*—that departs from common law short-term contracts—to the *intermittent* status granted to eligible artistic and technical personnel.
- iv French national statistics crossing socio-demographic data with artistic genres regularly provide an assessment of French people cultural practices. See for instance Olivier Donnat and Paul Tolila (2003). Study of audience consumption transactions as advocated by Gilmore (1990)—that is to say description of the

cognitive organization of artistic consumers and analyses of the social conditions explaining this organization— has not been carried out as regards theater audiences. For a description of the career patterns of the Circle's audience members, their initiation to the theater hall, the different categories of audience members and their interactions with front-line personnel and actors, see Bense Ferreira Alves (2005).

- v Four elements base the theatrical community ideal-type that the author has built up to help understand how the company (*troupe*) stands as a normative ideal for theater participants: founding myths, an economy of asceticism around a director whose authority relies on exemplary forms of sacrifice, and the isolation of the community.
- vi This definition stems from the perspective adopted by Erving Goffman (1971: 9-10) in studying the type of social life that is organized within the physical limits of a building or an establishment and which uses the theatrical performance as a metaphor. I adapted it so as to both account for the social drama of work in a theater and the persistence of such a social organization over the years.
- vii As defined by Howard Becker, an aesthetic is a means to tie “participants’ activities to the tradition of the art, justifying their demands for resources and advantages ordinarily available to people who produce that kind of art”, as well as a guide that helps participants cooperate and provides them with a justification for their actions (1982: 132-134).
- viii For the purpose of this paper, I will not, however, go into the details of task allotment, delegation, denegation, and overlapping.
- ix Not being able to sustain the total availability required for any potential member to be entirely socialized to the CT and be finally granted access to rehearsals, this part of theatrical work remained inaccessible to my observations.
- x Because of the worldwide fame of the theatrical concern studied and some of its participants and the general scope on theater activity that the Circle as a case study could claim for, only some of the dissertation findings were published in the form of an essay that erased all situational elements permitting identification and did not present data and analyses on the “public” (Bense Ferreira Alves, 2006).
- xi Theatre in France has been a heavily subsidized artistic activity since the 1940's. Public funding (by government or local authorities) has helped set up and develop a nationwide network of theatrical production and distribution units (theater halls and companies) but also of training institutions. From 1959 to 1968, theater was the spearhead of governmental cultural policy. Budgets to national theaters increased, permanent companies with daily-operations annual subsidies were set up and a special support fund for private theater was created. At the beginning of the 1970s', new funds were brought in for theatrical research and experiment. Theater is still one of the most heavily subsidized artistic activity but recent legislation on cultural sponsorship (Loi du 1er août 2003 relative au mécénat, aux associations et aux foundations) has been aiming to foster private enterprise funding thanks to tax incentives as a means of developing non-governmental financial support for the arts.
- xii The Circle Company was founded by Meadow and his agent Yvonne Segla, a few years before it settled in the summarily refurbished theater hall that became the Circle Theater directed by Meadow and Segla. It is a corporation that has regularly been entitled to government subsidy but mainly lives on the receipts of ticket selling and corporate sponsorship. Each year, the theater puts up a few concerts and drama shows produced by other companies and a yearly Circle

- Company show directed by Meadow and performed by a group of international actors some of whom are ongoing participants to the company. Although, from time to time, the company puts up a Shakespeare's play, it has no specific repertoire and shows are performed in English or French and sometimes both. These shows are usually performed for a one-to-two-month period at the Circle Theater before going on a worldwide tour and sometimes created abroad before they are presented at the Circle Theater. As a theater hall, the Circle matches Lori Morris description of a theatrical space: "A space is more than a home, it's a large part of a theatre's identity. And the space you find limits the work you can do in it. But communities have a limited supply of spaces theatres can use and groups have to compete for them". (Becker, McCall and Morris, 1989)
- xiii Between 1998 and 2005, the administrative direction of the Circle Theater briefly came in the hands of Christophe Hörer, the then director of a theater hall, an opera house, two opera festivals and an opera academy.
 - xiv College and high School students attendance is usually sought. Indeed, such "captive audience members"— have no choice but to participate—, they guarantee regular receipts.
 - xv For Hughes a social role is the part one thinks he /she is expected to play or allowed to play in the social drama of the organization in which he/she works.
 - xvi To Blumer's view, a social organization is a "framework inside of which acting units develop their actions". It "enters into action only to the extent to which it shapes situations in which people act, and to the extent to which it supplies fixed set of symbols which people use in interpreting their situations".
 - xvii An arc of work is the "totality of tasks arrayed both sequentially and simultaneously along the course" of a project. It differs from a line of work that encompasses different projects. In a theater hall like the Circle, both arcs and lines of work can be observed.
 - xviii Because of her baby, Jane Christian could not go on tour with the show. Naomi Todd took on the role and it kept until the show came back at the Circle for a two-month period of performances.
 - xix Blocking is the process through which the actor's basic physical movements on stage are established.
 - xx A "cue sheet" is the set of all the indications about effects or changes that each technician has to carry out during the performance and that are associated to a cue (the execution of a lighting or sound effect or of an actor's cue).
 - xxi When writing a text to be played on stage and giving stage directions playwrights usually provide direct or indirect help to the actors. Laure de Verdalle (*ibidem*), has pointed to the conditions that made East-German playwrights enjoy the high status of direct actors' support before loosing it in favor of stage directors by being granted less direct tasks to actors after the reunification process.
 - xxii Drawn out from the study of different types of theatrical organizations, Lyon's category initially comprised the producer, the director, the stage manager, and the stage crew. It has been taken on by Howard Becker who has widened its scope and identifies the existence of "support personnel" in all artistic activities thus reinforcing the category's opposition to that of the « artist »: all that is not carried out by the artist must be done by someone else (Becker, 1982: 24-25).
 - xxiii As an artistic director, Alex Meadow shared with the two administrative directors of the Circle, Yvonne Segla and Christophe Hörer, the task of hierarchically controlling theater employees. Although work with the actors and stage personnel in rehearsals has always been Meadow's preserve, he shared

- recruitment and dismissal decisions on other employees with his co-directors. As administrative directors, both Segla and Hörer were in charge of financially managing the business, of defining the tasks to be carried out and the way they were going to be allocated. However, they have always taken part in planning the theater shows program, therefore making artistic choices.
- xxiv The billing list sets the cast members with their separate wages. The *per diem* list sets the amount of money given daily to the cast for their personal expenses.
- xxv This group has neither been directly observed nor interviewed during fieldwork.
- xxvi By looking at the interactions that critics and aestheticians hold with stage and theater directors as well as actors, researchers could then show how the specific aesthetic of a theatrical organization builds up and evolves. However, as for the Circle, I lacked time to carry out proper study of the long-term relationships drama critics of major newspapers and magazines have with Alex Meadow and some of the long-term participants to the Circle.
- xxvii The term is to be understood here in its basic sense.
- xxviii Serge Proust has pointed to the conditions that, in France, fostered such change in definition (2001). By primarily founding the activity of stage direction on the interpretation of dramatic texts, stage directors of the 50s' freed themselves from literature. By simultaneously suppressing stage-directing scripts and enhancing the creative process through rehearsals, they organized the rarity of the product of their activity. Thanks to special commissions made of drama critics and academics, they gained progressive autonomy while developing institutional careers as theater directors in the different categories of government subsidized theaters.
- xxix For more details on the tensions between bureaucratic rationalization and autonomy in cultural institutions such as the theater, the circus and the museum see Bense Ferreira Alves and Poulard (2007).
- xxx That is to say the permanent auxiliaries to a prophet, linked to him by personal relationships and sometimes endowed with charismatic qualification.
- xxxi The griots are West African « masters of speech », historians, genealogists, advisers and mediators but also masters of ceremony, singers and musicians to noble Malinke families. As the eldest son of a griots' lineage, Soumaoro is in charge of transmitting his knowledge.
- xxxii Elijah Anderson resorts to Goffman's typology of stigmas so as to account for the social behavior of Black executives. He distinguishes three categories. The Own, the Normal and the Wise. The Wise are those who, in some ways, are privileged but who, because of education or life experiences have developed some empathy for those they consider are the victims of social injustice.
- xxxiii The term is to be understood here in Weber's meaning.
- xxxiv The term is used here as in the first part of Burawoy's definition. It is the fact for individuals to consent to the organization's interests by developing their own interests and not because of coercion. It does not integrate the second part that says that by doing so, workers obscure and secure surplus labor thus producing consent.
- xxxv Further analysis of participants' commitment motives to the Circle Theater has been provided in Bense Ferreira Alves (2006) and will be summed up in a forthcoming paper.
- xxxvi The "support", "back" and "front-line personnel" counted stabilized and non-stabilized participants. Among the "public", I found "followers" and "missionaries" who, thanks to their participation to a collective history, seemed

to perceive so many connections to the Circle that they could be said to really have strong experiences (as in Dewey's sense) when attending a show. I also found "casual" public members who were very frequent theatergoers who only sporadically went to the Circle.

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Citation

- Bense Ferreira Alves, Celia (2007) "Staging the Social Drama of Work: Ethnography of a Theater Company as a Means of Analyzing Theater Activity." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.3.3.07>

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The intricacies of Being Israeli *and* Yemenite.
An Ethnographic Study of Yemenite “Ethnic” Dance Companies in
Israel

Abstract

Focusing on the work of Yemenite “ethnic” dance companies in Israel, this article aims to understand how issues such as a shift in collective representations come to be invested into dance practices. In other words, it discusses how artistic creation and identity reconfigurations happen to associate in a dance form, and how an ethnographic study of dance practices and their contexts of performance may be a valuable way of accessing the dynamics of self-positioning of a group within the surrounding society. Linking together “classical” ethnography, analysis of dance products, and socio-political contextualisation, the present analysis shows that the articulation of two apparently contradictory ways of building these companies’ repertoire allows Yemenite dancers, choreographers, and also internal audience, to assume in one single dance form a sense of “being Yemenite” whilst not giving up the national dimension of their Israeli identity.

Keywords

Asymmetric ethnicity; Artistic creation; Cultural representation; Dance Company; Dance; Politics; Ethnography

From the 1960s onwards, many dance companies known as “ethnic companies” (*lehakot etniot*)ⁱ started to develop in Israel, each of which offering a staged representation of the dance repertoires of one part of the Israeli society (Jews of Yemenite, Moroccan, Indian origin and so on, but also non-Jewish groups such as Moslem or Christian Arabs, Druzes, etc). Through an ethnography of these companies’ work, and more specifically companies of Jews originating from Yemenⁱⁱ, this study aims to identify and analyse reasons of, and issues arising from, this transfer of dance practicesⁱⁱⁱ from an intra-community context to the stage.

The development of these companies takes place in a context of claims for cultural recognition by different communities facing a unified Israeli culture which was created in the first decades of the 20th century. Therefore this work aims to link together “classical” ethnography, analysis of dance products presented to the audience, and socio-political contextualisation, in order to understand how issues such as a shift in collective representations come to be invested into dance practices,

both at the Israeli Nation's level and at that of the different communities composing this society. In other words, how do artistic creation and identity claims happen to associate in a dance form?

Postulating that dance practices must not be looked at as the simple expression of a situation, but as powerful means to act in dynamic processes of identification, this article argues that ethnography of artistic practices should include both a close look at the creation processes and a contextualisation of these particular processes within the socio-political context. Therefore, after a brief presentation of the companies' general organisation, I will first analyse the form itself of artistic products performed for an audience. What are the dimensions in which choreographers and dancers feel comfortable to innovate, or on the contrary, what are the elements for which they do not accept any transformations? What do they borrow from external representations, what do they reject from them, and so on? I will then set out the Israeli socio-political background of such companies. This investigation of embroiled political issues will in turn shed light on the analysis of the dance, unveiling the intertwining of artistic work, construction of self-representation, and influence of an external (nationalist) glance^{iv}.

Organization of the Yemenite “Ethnic” dance companies and their audiences: a mixture of internal and external inputs.

Dancers

Yemenite “ethnic” dance companies generally consist of a group of about twenty persons whose ages range from 30 to 70 years old. Apart from very few exceptions, they all are of Yemenite origin, mostly of the second generation (i.e. born in Israel from Yemen-born parents), or immigrated to Israel at a very early age. Most of the time their families come from the same area in Yemen^v, and live in the same village or the same neighbourhood in Israel. As we will see later on, this common regional origin within Yemen strongly affects the content of the programme displayed.

Leaders

Two types of direction can be found among such companies. In many cases, the manager is one of the group members, and more than often he has played an important role in the foundation of the company. In such cases, he usually also assumes the task of artistic director or at least of “artistic convenor”, that is to say he has the last say on collective creations, decides on the set list of each performance, leads the rehearsals and so on. Otherwise, someone paid by the institution to which the company is related takes administrative leadership. Every company is indeed, at least to some extent, related to an institution: they may simply receive regular funding from the Education and Culture Ministry^{vi}, or depend on a local community^{vii}. Generally coming from a non-Yemenite background, and not trained in artistic matters, such an administrator will then work in close relation with an artistic director who is either permanently attached to the company, or occasionally works with the dancers.

Artistic direction

In terms of artistic direction, a first possibility lies in the permanent appointment of a choreographer to the company. He/she is mainly in charge of creating “new scenes” (that is to say, new stage-adapted presentations of traditional dances), directing rehearsals and deciding on the content and organisation of each show. Yemenite by origin, he or she is often trained as an Israeli Folk Dance performance

groups' choreographer. A second possibility is when no choreographer is appointed on a permanent basis. As mentioned before, this situation is more likely to happen when the company's leader belongs to the group of dancers. In such cases, stage-adaptation of a dance piece is the product of a collective collaboration by all the dancers and is finally approved by the manager. Moreover, when there is no permanent choreographer, outside choreographers (with similar backgrounds as the above mentioned) are invited from time to time to create a scene for the company's repertoire, or to give transversal advice on the entire repertoire. This may also happen when the leader belongs to the group. However, in such cases choreographic work generally points to the managing of time and space, or to some details about the gestures, but does not usually impinge upon the constitution of the dance pieces themselves; hence a manager explained to me: "*People who worked with us did not teach us how to dance, but how to do it on the stage*" (Zion Shlomi, "insider" manager of the Moshav Amka's company)^{viii}.

Similarly, as stated by dancers asked about the work of a choreographer who came to help them:

We did not want the choreographer to develop [create] things... We really wanted what belongs to us, exactly as they did it in Yemen. You see, we just wanted a few polishing. (Lea, dancer of Moshav Shaar Efraim's company)

Dalia [Avizemer] brought us a lot (...) She taught us 'how to dance', how this dance is the same as ours but 'how to enter or to leave the stage', how to manage time. (Sara, dancer of Moshav Bareket's company)

Audiences

Four types of audience may be distinguished, from the highest to the least « connoisseur ». First are those who once lived in Yemen. They are by and large aware of transformations occurring on the staged presentations; however, they usually enjoy the performance for it brings them pleasant memories. Second are their children or grandchildren who have never lived in Yemen and generally possess only a short knowledge of what was danced, played and sung there. For them, the performance then becomes a means of knowledge transmission about Yemen. Third, part of the audience is usually composed of Israelis who are not of Yemenite origin. Most of the time, their knowledge of Yemenite dance primarily derives from the truncated interpretation given by Israeli Folk Dance. Finally, Yemenite "ethnic" dance companies can perform in front of an international audience, either composed of tourists in Israel or by international festivals' audiences all around the world.

The elaboration of Yemenite "Ethnic" Dance Companies's Repertoires

The common denominator of all Yemenite "ethnic" dance companies is the shaping into a show of dance practices brought from Yemen, practices which were, until then, kept within family ceremonies or community circle, or even no longer practiced for several years. Let us have a closer look to the "final product" one can see performed on stage^{ix}.

On a first level, the shows are all organised on the same model, which is a succession of several "scenes". Each of these scenes being built up in one of those three different ways:

1. a dance piece is presented alone, without referring to its performing circumstance(s) in Yemen;
2. one or several dance pieces are integrated within a playlet representing the larger event during which they used to take place (wedding, henna ceremony, etc);
3. one or several dance motifs are used to make “danceable” an activity which was not so in Yemen (women’s daily work, teaching the Torah to young boys, etc).

The rest of this article will focus on the two last types of scenes which both (re)contextualise a dance practice. I call them “pedagogical dances” for they aim to give an account of life in Yemen.

On a second level, the examination of the making of those “scenes” shows several concomitant procedures. First, several elements or dimensions are usually maintained:

- Characteristic features of musical accompaniment are respected: only songs and percussion are performed, melodic instruments being traditionally banned among Jews in Yemen;
- Physical separation between men and women is kept such as it existed in Yemen: in the whole of daily, religious and festive life, the conjunction of religious and cultural injunctions led to the separation of men and women’s distinct territories;
- As a result, different repertoires developed in Yemen due to the fact that men and women’s dance and musical practices were not supposed to take place in the same venue. In the scenes offered today by Yemenite “ethnic” dance companies, differences between masculine and feminine repertoires are generally respected;
- Differences between regional repertoires are kept and emphasised: Yemenite Jews come from three main regions of which dance repertoires partially or totally differ. In turn, as mentioned earlier, each Yemenite “ethnic” dance company is most of the time referring to one specific place of origin by the selection of the dance pieces they decide to perform.

Second, formal changes happen in terms of space: facing the audience is instituted; the dancers' configurations (circles, lines, pairs, etc) and displacements in space begin to diversify (diagonals, backwards, etc). Changes in terms of time organisation also occur: dance pieces are shortened, the number of identical repetitions of the same motif are extremely reduced, etc. However, changes very seldom affect the internal structure of the dance pieces, i.e. the different motifs each piece is composed of are neither separated nor suppressed. This situation is expressed by one of the “insider” managers when questioned on the issue of evolution since the creation of the company at the beginning of the 1970s:

No, there have been no changes in the origins of our work. Maybe we became more “professional” in the way we are doing it, we are more confident in ourselves when we are on stage, that’s all. I think that when we start to lose basic elements, it will be the end of the group, the end of the founding idea. (Z. Shlomi)

To Change or Not To Change: The Dance “Product” As An Embodiment Of Israeli Issues

This analysis makes clear that the processes of adapting dance pieces to the stage are stretched between two contradictory extremes: on one hand, the will to “*do things just as we did them at home [in Yemen]*”, which implies “not to change anything”; on the other hand, the idea that it is necessary to acknowledge the presence of an audience and to attempt to please it, thus introducing some changes:

In order to make it understandable for the audience, it has to be a show. It is not exactly like a private party at somebody’s house. (Z. Shlomi)

[To please the audience, one has to] change a little bit, to do some variations, some choreographies. You have to change: all the dancers come together and then they spread out, so the stage seems fuller, the audience has more to look at. In Yemen there was no choreography... (...) It is impossible for any choreographer – me as well when I work with the company – to keep things static. (...) The choreography must be modern: a line, couples, a circle which becomes a line, lines crossing each other and then mixing together, and so on. Because the eye becomes tired from always looking at the same things (...) Tradition is here, it is embodied within the songs, the dance, but the choreography must change because it is not... In Yemen there was no choreography, they used to dance freely, spontaneously. Here in Israel you must show the audience what is going on. Therefore you must occupy the entire stage, change the [spatial] forms, the structures, so that it will be interesting, not boring. Those are the elementary rules. (Saadia Amishai, former choreographer and ‘insider’ manager of Hadera’s Company)

This dialogical tension is certainly not specific to those Yemenite “ethnic” dance companies in Israel. However, in the light of the historico-political context that undermines those companies’ development, it encodes here particular issues, acting as a counterbalance to the homogenising process of the new immigrants’ different cultural practices which occurred in the 1940s and 1950s with the creation of a new “Israeli culture”. Therefore, it is now necessary to contextualise the development of those “Ethnic” Dance Companies in their relation to the creation of the so-called Israeli Folk Dance.

The creation of an “Israeli Folk Dance” as a nationalist tool

Israeli Folk Dance^x was literally created in the 1940s as a tool for the cultural – and largely political – construction of a “new” Israeli culture. This process, which began at the end of the 19th century and went on during the main part of the 20th century, derived from the Zionist ideological will to shape every Jew arriving in Palestine according to the character of the “New Hebrew”^{xi}. More concretely, it aimed at “absorbing”^{xii} the new-comers as fast as possible in the creation of an Israeli society by having them adopt a single culture; the same for all. Viewed from this perspective, this new culture had a double purpose: to banish the past lived in diaspora, and to convey this new life-experience of building a Nation-State (Israel proclaims its independence in May 1948). In summary, this new form of dance could be described as an ideologically planned synthesis of the different repertoires of Jewish and non-Jewish communities present at the time in Palestine/Israel. Dance

pieces of these different communities were dismantled and only a few elements were then singled out to become the basic elements of this Israeli Folk Dance (kinetic or musical motifs; dancers' configuration, and so on). So, by carefully breaking the links between those elements and their geographical and cultural origin, the creators of the Israeli Folk Dance answered the double aim of Zionism which was the main ideological paradigm at the time: on one hand they erased every link with the life led in diaspora; on the other they attempted to extract some kind of "supra-judaism" from these different dance elements, from which they built up a new form of dance which would directly contribute to the looked-for cultural and physical unification embodied by the character of the "New Hebrew". However, despite this attempt to create something completely new, the general frame of this new form of dance remained strongly influenced by the European cultural patterns which were those of the first creators, almost all of them being European immigrants from the beginning of the 20th century^{xiii}. Among the selected elements, one in particular comes from the rich repertoires of Jews from Yemen, which became both a basic component of Israeli Folk Dance and, being named the "Yemenite step" by the creators of Israeli Folk Dance, the stereotype of *the* Yemenite dance.

Claiming an "ethnic" cultural recognition: the development of "ethnic" dance companies

A few decades later (1960s-1970s), there was a trend of protest rises against the socio-economic gap which remained between Jews coming from Africa and Asia and those coming from Europe and America - even several decades after their arrival. When Jews from Asia and Africa finally understood that the roots of this unequal socio-economic relation were buried in a cultural depreciation of their own practices, their claims for better education, lodging or salary were strengthened by a claim for cultural recognition. It was at that time, and within this socio-political frame, that the "ethnic" dance companies developed. Whilst bits and pieces of musical and dance repertoires specific to this or that community were instrumentalised in Israeli Folk Dance in order to build a single Israeli culture, those repertoires were now reinvested and exhibited as such by the members of the community themselves^{xiv} so as to oppose the "cultural roadroller" of the first decades.

Hence dance was again called upon, but this time to restore their legitimacy and specificity to the cultural patrimonies of the different communities^{xv}. Other socio-political factors added up to these protests^{xvi} and the ideology until then prevailing (which advocated a singular Israeli identity) finally started to erode gradually. It gave place to a pluricultural image of the Israeli society, the richness of which precisely lay in its diversity. In turn, this shift affected the Israeli politics of culture. Policy makers were fast to perceive that the existence of such dance companies could help emphasise the socio-political turning-point; to recognise these companies by allocating them some founding and organising festivals was to recognise the cultural specificity of their members, and so to assert the cultural pluralism of the State of Israel. However, the use of the adjective "ethnic" until today is a good indication that equality has not been achieved... The terminology in use is a means of keeping a symbolical difference between "ethnic" dance companies and "Israeli" dance companies (cf. above, note 1).

Reconfiguring Identities and Boundaries through Dance

Within this socio-political context, the tension analysed above between the two predominant building processes of “ethnic” dance companies’ staged-dances becomes clearer. The articulation of these apparently contradictory dimensions allows Yemenite dancers, choreographers, but also internal audience, to assume in one single dance form a sense of “being Yemenite” whilst not giving up the national dimension of their Israeli identity. Thus, through dancing (and/or looking at other persons dancing), Israelis of Yemenite origin are able to negotiate both a way to distinguish themselves from the image of a single Israeli identity, and to fully participate in the reformulation of a plural Israeli identity in which they hope to acquire an identical hierarchical status to that of the other members of the Israeli society. If we come back now to the construction of the scenes under study, this tension between “not changing anything” and “transforming elements to please the audience” plays a central role in the interaction between members of the Yemenite community and the Israeli society around them.

At one extreme is the will of “*doing things just as we did them at home [in Yemen]*”. By insisting on the diversity of dance patrimonies coming from Yemen, the artistic work of staging helps in re-building a heterogeneous Yemenite identity of which most of the non-Yemenite Israeli are particularly unaware. Unlike the unifying image built up by the Israeli Folk Dance suggests, there is no such thing as a Yemenite dance, but a dozen or so different repertoires depending on the actors (men/women), the areas within Yemen, the circumstances, etc. Furthermore, this claim for a Yemenite cultural specificity is set out with the exact same tools which were used to deny it; against the de-structuring of the dance pieces carried out by the creators of Israeli Folk Dance, the work of staging does not only feature the entire dance pieces, but also the circumstances of execution as a whole (wedding, etc) and that with a maximum of ethnographic accuracy (musical setting, clothes, differentiation of areas, of genders, etc).

At the other extreme is the will to “*acknowledge the presence of an audience and to attempt to please it*”. For those who create staged-dances, the point here is to understand the aesthetic codes and expectations of the audience they wish to touch and, at least to a certain extent, to conform to those expectations. Thus the artistic work takes place at two levels. On one hand, changes affect the formal dimension, such as the multiplication of the dancers' patterns in the space or the shortening of each sequence, in order “*not to bore the audience*”, as stated by most choreographers:

On stage you have to do something similar to theatre, to give the audience the possibility of understanding what's happening. Because what's the point of keeping it static, of showing something for a long time, of stretching a piece for ever, especially when it is a simple one. People will not understand what's going on. You need to have somebody who is explaining what's happening, then maybe they will understand... But if you create something very rhythmic, with a choreography changing all the time, the eye enjoys, the heart enjoys, and that's what you should do! (S. Amishai)

I thought that it was very important to give them [the ethnic dance companies] a separated stage, with a different attitude towards what's going on on the stage, a different attitude towards time, so that one does not get bored, and so on. If you know how to stage it, and if you know what you are coming to see, you can accept it and appreciate it. So you must find

the best way to expose them [the ethnic dancers], and not to have them compete with the boisterous Israeli Folk Dance! (Reena Sharet, external non-Yemenite choreographer)

Moreover, the aesthetical dimension of dance materials is reprocessed, aiming to transform an action into a show and not to simply demonstrate this action as it could be done in a museum display, for instance. A delicate balance is therefore needed; if the result is found too “artistic” by the audience of Yemenite origin, it will no longer be looked at as “really” representative of the Yemenite Jews^{xvii}, but on the other hand, if it is not enough so, the show is liable to be uninteresting for the non-Yemenite audience, the transmission of information or the translation of one culture towards another being then not achieved, whilst this is precisely one of the aims of this kind of performance^{xviii}.

Towards an Israeli-Yemenite compromise

On a second level, a more abstract process takes place in the elaboration of staged-dances, which underlines the important role played by both internal and external representations in self-image construction. One particularly striking example illustrates this argument: in almost every company's programme, one can find a scene featuring a two partners' dance. This dance piece originates from a male repertoire of the South-Centre region of Yemen. However, even though all companies do not come from this region, or are not always provided with enough male dancers and must then dress up women in men, almost every company attempts to have such a scene in its program. What is at stake here is that it is from this specific masculine dance in pairs that Israeli Folk Dance has selected what is now viewed in Israel as representative of *the* Yemenite dance. So by performing this dance piece in front of an audience, a Yemenite “ethnic” dance company is incorporating an image of the Yemenite Jews largely built outside the community and carried around by Israeli Folk Dance. Such performance becomes an effective mirror-play which sends back to a non-Yemenite audience what they expected when coming to see the show, since for them *that* is the Yemenite dance – *and only that*^{xix}.

The show offered by these companies therefore becomes the place of negotiation and elaboration of an identity which may be called “Israeli-Yemenite” in so far as it is largely influenced by life spent in Israel for *circa* fifty years. On one hand, the external unifying glance which rests on the Yemenite Jews contributed to the building of an image that they, in turn, made their own before sending it back again to everyone through dancing. On the other hand, such “show-case” aims at the breaking-down of a unifying image of the Yemenite Jews made up by the Israeli Folk Dance. However, the will to “*do things just as we did them at home*” tends to crystallise a situation which is no longer that which the actors are living daily. By referring to a so-called “authenticity”, this attempt to keep alive something which no longer exists as such since several decades ago brings together community practice, artistic work, museification and elaboration of an “imagined” Yemen (Anderson, 1983). And in fact, the “imagined” dimension of the Yemen shown here is even higher, in the sense that Israeli citizens are not allowed by Yemen to enter the country anymore. It is then impossible for choreographers or dancers to “refresh their memory” from time to time, as is the case of many cultural actors in a migrating situation. Therefore, everything rests on the memories of migrants who came into Israel no later than the beginning of the 1950s...

Conclusion

Bringing to light the role played by dance in the processes of reconfiguring identities in Israel, this article intended to demonstrate how an ethnographic study of dance practices and their contexts of performance may be a valuable way of accessing the dynamics of self-positioning of a group within the surrounding society. The analysis of the staged-dances shows the reconstruction of a self-image as the articulation of internal choices, with the recuperation and reinterpretation of an already existing image externally built within a specific nationalist context. This type of micro-analysis which combines analysis of the artistic product and ethnological analysis of the context of performance in a broad sense (i.e. ethnography of the conditions of production and larger contextualisation) could therefore conceal heuristic means for the understanding of dialectic processes of both differentiation and assimilation of a given group within the context of migration and/or minority, thus offering an empirical echo to Barth's ground-breaking analysis of interethnic relationships (1969). Indeed, one of the processes analysed here seems to be particularly tied to the migration context: to mobilise objects and/or action sequences (here dancing) in order to retain some dimensions of life before migration by keeping them unchanged (and to a large extent mummified), while simultaneously altering the relation to time and space in order to fit with the codes of the group with which they wish to exchange (and within which they have to "fit" to some extent). Although this is the case for several cultural forms, it seems that both polymorphous and polysemous nature of dance – and more largely still, of dance events – allows it more particularly to simultaneously combine several levels and several aspects of identification.

Finally, the larger question of representation of a culture in the frame of a show and/or a museum arises from this study. In fact, several authors have already drawn attention to the fact that an analysis of "national" or "folklorised" dance-shows could shed light on the way conceivers of such shows look at specific populations and desire to represent them in order to fit their political agenda^{xx}. Other authors have tackled this particular issue from the point of view of exhibitions' curators^{xxi}. The present study offers an original angle, since here, staging processes are mainly conducted by members of the culture that one wishes to represent. Nevertheless, Israelis of Yemenite origins are also, to some extent, influenced by outside interventions ranging from Israeli Folk Dance-trained choreographers coming to help them to suggestions from official organisations of festivals in Israel and abroad.

Endnotes

- i The expression "ethnic companies" (*lehakot etniot*) is the terminology officially in use in Israel. I use it here because it is suitable to the described phenomenon, in that sense that each dance company is specialising in the presentation of one particular cultural patrimony. But the term "ethnic" itself is questionable insofar as, in Israel, it is not used in reference to all the groups of the population: it is mainly used for Jews who came from Asia and Africa (often called, although not properly, Sefarad) and also sometimes for Arabs and Druzes. But no one would qualify Jews coming from Europe and America as "ethnic". Moreover, this distinction is reinforced by the fact that performances offered by these companies are more than often called "folklore", whilst what Israeli dance companies present will be called "dance" (*mahol*)...This

terminological asymmetry reflects an inequality in cultural recognition on which I will later reflect on at length. So inasmuch as these companies have an existence of their own, I keep this expression, but in order not to adopt its ideological implications, I shall put the word “ethnic” within brackets.

- ii Two main waves of immigration came from Yemen to Israel: the first at the end of the 19th century (approx. 10,000 persons), the second between 1949 and 1951 when about 50,000 people were directly transferred by plane from Aden to Israel. Since Israeli statistical categories count as “Israelis” the third generation of “Yemenite” immigrants, it is difficult to give an accurate number of Israelis from Yemenite origin living today in Israel. Nevertheless, in 2005, approximately 143,000 Israelis were either born in Yemen (33,200) or born from a father born in Yemen (110,300) (Source: *Statistical Abstract of Israel*, 2005, table 2.23).
- iii The expressions “dance practices” and “dance piece” are coined in analogy to “musical practices “ and “musical piece”.
- iv The study of these dance companies was undertaken in two principal directions from 1999 to 2005. On one hand, ethnographic fieldwork took place within three companies of which the members come from different areas of Yemen. Informal and formal interviews, as well as detailed observations were conducted during rehearsals, performances, and daily life of dancers, managers and choreographers. Moreover, I attended as many performances as possible given by the different companies still active today in Israel. On the other hand, formal and informal interviews were also conducted with individuals involved, in a way or another, in these companies' development whilst not belonging to one of them, nor necessarily being of Yemenite origin. I would like to thank in particular the companies and their leaders from Moshav Amka, Moshav Bareket, Kiriat Ekron, Moshav Shaar Efraim, Hadera and Kiriat Ono. In this article, I kept the names of choreographers and managers, but changed the names of the dancers when they were not talking on their own name but as a member of the group.
- v Three regions of Jewish settlement in Yemen are generally distinguished: South-Center (around the capital city of Sana'a), North (in the area of Heydan) and Eastern-South (around the city of Haban).
- vi Ministry organisation regarding culture changed several times in Israel between 1949 and today. At the creation of the State, culture and education were joined in the same ministry. Sport was added to it in the mid-1970s, then suppressed, then added again, and so on. Today, culture, sport and science depend of the same Minister, whilst education is on its own.
- vii By “local community” I mainly refer to Regional Councils or municipalities. Moreover, they are generally affiliated to an association which serves as intermediary between the company and potential organisers of performances in Israel or abroad, in particular the CIOFF (Traditional Arts and Folklore Festivals International Council), an international cultural NGO in formal consulting relations with UNESCO, and one of its local partners in Israel, the Maataf (Center for the Encouragement of Cultural Exchange and Folklore).
- viii Most of the quotes used in this article are extracts of discussions held in Hebrew but translated in English for the sake of this publication (Zion Shlomi's and Reena Sharett's interviews were held in English).
- ix For an example of such performances, see the website of the Yemenite dance company from moshav Amka: www.israel-folklore.com (folder “Gallery”).
- x “*Rikudei Am*” in Hebrew. Literally meaning “dances of the people”, it is usually translated either by “popular dance” or “folk dance”. In this article, I use the

denomination used in English by the actors of this form of dance themselves: "Israeli Folk Dance".

- xi Also called "New Man", this figure is supposed to embody and to personify both physically and culturally the construction of a new Jewish homeland and to depart from the stereotypical figure of the diasporic Jew. Among others, M. Nordau developed widely this idea, which he associated with the notion of "musclar judaism" (Eisen 1998). On the "New Hebrew", see Zerubavel 1994, 1995, 1998 and Berkowitz 1993.
- xii The words « absorption of immigration » (*klitat ha-alya*) and "fusion of the exiled" (*mizoug ha-galuyot*) in use from the day after the creation of the State of Israel (1948) to name one of the principal politic of the new government, are significant of this endeavour to deny and rub away the different diasporic cultures to give way to the new Israeli culture.
- xiii In particular Gurit Kadman (born in 1897 in Germany who emigrated in 1920 to Palestine), Rivka Sturman (born in 1905 in Poland, raised in Germany, and emigrating in 1929), and Sara Levi Tanai (born in 1911 in Jerusalem to Yemenite parents, but raised by Europeans). On another dimension of this cultural construction, the music, see Hirshberg 1997.
- xiv Although most of the creations of companies are initiated by "insiders" of the community, they were also greatly encouraged by outsiders, mostly academics and actors of Israeli Folk Dance desirous to "rescue" dance and musical practices "in danger of disappearing". The "Project for the promotion of ethnic communities' dances" (*Maf'al le tipouach rikoudei ha edot*) is thus set up at the beginning of the 1970s within the *histadrout*, in collaboration with the Ministry for Education and Culture and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The project was directed by Gurit Kadman, one of the first creators of the Israeli Folk Dance.
- xv Few companies existed before that period, but were usually not created by members of the community itself but by actors directly participating to the creation of a new Israeli Folk Dance. Their aim was therefore more to secure some kind of "stock of material potentially useful in the creation of Israeli Folk Dance" than to present existing dance practices for their own sake.
- xvi First of all, the consequences of the Six Days War (1967) and the Kippur War (internal disagreements about the annexation of the occupied territories, religious renewal, etc.), then the arrival of the Right in the government, for the first time in the history of this state (1977).
- xvii Such is the case in particular of the company called *Inbal Dance Theater* created in 1949 by Sara Levi Tanai (informal conversations with Yemenite and non-Yemenite audience; See also Roginski 2006:181). I did not mention this company in this article because from the beginning, the aim and the work of this company were quite distinct from the dance companies analysed here: although its choreographer Sara Levi-Tanai drew much of her inspiration in the dance practices of Jews from Yemen, she regularly stated, and fought for the dance scene and the audience to recognise, that she was attempting to create a new vocabulary of dance and not to present the dance of Yemenite Jews. On this particular issue, see the very comprehensive article of Roginski (2006).
- xviii Referring to a related, though different, context, the museum exhibits, D. Chevalier suggested that these notions of "transmission" and "translation" of a culture to another one are key concepts of the work of museography (*coll.*, 2002:111).
- xix I present this particular situation at length elsewhere: see Gibert, forthcoming.

- xx See in particular Shay 2002 and Nahachewsky 2003.
- xxi For instance, reflections arising from the creation in progress of the “Musée des Civilisations de l’Europe et de la Méditerranée” in Marseille, France (*coll.* 2002: 105); research on Folklife festivals at the Smithsonian Institution or elsewhere (Karp and Lavine 1991); or more lately the work of de l’Estoile (2007).

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Citation

Gibert, Marie-Pierre (2007) "The intricacies of Being Israeli *and* Yemenite. An Ethnographic Study of Yemenite 'Ethnic' Dance Companies in Israel." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)



Qualitative Sociology Review

Volume III, Issue 3 – December 2007

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.3.3.08>

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The Centripetal Force of Expression: Drawing Embodied Histories into Glassblowing

Abstract

Getting at the tacit understandings of an artful practice is critical in coming to understand the processes of creativity. To achieve this, the researcher, specifically the ethnographer, must place herself in the position of the maker, that is she must herself, make and create. This article provides an account of arriving at the methodological imperative of *in situ* ethnographic research through actual ethnographic research on the relation of maker and material. From an *in situ* position, it theorizes the modalities of expression in practice, from problem-solving, to personal style, to the intentional drawing in of embodied histories in practice. This incorporation of varying embodied histories into a current practice is then explored as the possibility for affecting what is recognized in the field as "new" or "innovative". We will see, however, that affect is grounded more in the corporeal revealing of unexpected aspects of the material worked up.

Keywords

Embodiment; Expression; Practical knowledge; Art; Glassblowing; Epistemology; Ethnography; Phenomenology; Materiality; Innovation

Expression is never solely of one art alone. That is, when we practice an art, such as glassblowing, we express more than the practice of glassblowing itself: we express an entire history of learned corporeal knowledges. The manner in which an embodied history is brought to bear on an artful practice differs across the spectrum of proficiency of a practical knowledge, such that it may bring about adaptation, more advanced problem-solving, the emergence of a individuated style, and work which appears new within the field – all modes of expression. Though we will consider these manifest modes of expression, this analysis will focus on the dynamics through which they are achieved, considering the glassblower's level of embodied knowledge and the ability this engenders in the glassblower to draw from other forms of practical knowledge – to make lateral shifts and metabolize her surroundings, whether material in terms of matter or place, or embodied in terms of personal history. These abilities, centripetal in character, since they draw in, gather to, and incorporate, we will see allow for individuation and affect the "new" which is perceived in the final work within art worlds as style and innovation. What it points us to sociologically is the significance of embodied history in these socially perceived accomplishments. It

is through examining the centripetal force of expression that we can understand the significance of embodied history in the creative process.

The body, an expressive vehicle, will be the seat from which these centripetal forces are investigated. From the body, we investigate how corporeal knowledge informs the breadth and depth of what the maker is able to draw into her practice from her embodied history. We will see that the limitations that her skill places on her relation with the material will determine the extent to which she is able to productively draw in other forms of knowledge, to make those lateral shifts. With some level of acquired proficiency, we will see that the maker is able to incorporate other domains, to put them to work – she develops a metabolic relation to what lies at the periphery. Peripheral knowledges, when drawn into a given practical knowledge, can affect metamorphoses of that practice. It is this metabolism, an affect of the centripetal force of expression in relation to embodied histories and practice, that is mapped throughout this essay. Thus, we bring to an understanding of artistic expression, modalities of corporeal knowledge and multiple embodied histories at work. This allows us to address the generative force of artistic expression without reducing it to a reproduction of social forces or a chimera of unique subjectivity.

Coming to an *in situ* ethnography of an art

The need for *in situ* ethnography in understanding the arts is not obvious. I attempted for the first time to explore an art ethnographically in the summer of 2003. From New York Penn Station, I set out on a bus to a meeting of rustic furniture makers in the Catskill Mountains intent to investigate how rustic furniture makers read and gave expression to the forest wood when making their pieces. Though I had read ethnographies and had been given ample instruction in the "how to" of ethnography, once in the field, I did not really know "how to" do ethnographic research. Specifically, I was unclear of how to do the 'participant' of participant-observation. Though enrolled as a participant of the rustic furniture gathering, I felt obliged, as a researcher of the small group, to remain affectively and practically detached – my enrollment serving only to legitimate my presence. I noted the difficulty of "participating" in my field notes:

Seven men and five women are whittling. The others observe. I myself have taken a stick because one of the women had asked me if I was going to whittle and when I said that I really didn't know because I was actually just observing for research, the look of confusion across her face made me feel like an absolute fool. So I took the small jackknife provided and skinned off a few strips of bark, revealing its fresh-smelling spring-green underside and moist wood within, hued like the meat of an almond. Despite the visual and olfactory pleasure, or maybe because of it, I felt uncomfortable 'participating'. I should not be whittling, I should be observing, I thought to myself. I've whittled walking sticks many times in my life – but only while walking in the woods because I needed a walking stick – never under a tent with a dozen other people, who I'm supposed to be observing. It is odd. Also, it seems strange for the sociologist to be 'whittling'. I go between whittling and observing. (Field Notes, July 15, 2003)

My struggle to conduct field work and, moreover, to draw conclusions from this field work, was obvious in the paper I submitted for the ethnography seminar in which I was enrolled for doctoral coursework. I intentionally removed myself and my experiences, which I had written in my field notes from the final text, not realizing that

this foiled what I endeavored to understand. Though I had tried to understand the rustic furniture maker's relationship with the woodland material and the significance of this in their art, I reached a conclusion in the seminar paper, "Rustics 2003: A look at the craft ethic and future of a small group of rustic furniture makers" far from that intent:

But rustic furniture making, in establishing itself as a field, has in fact transcended to an extent making outside the capitalist realm to which it was, and still is, sincerely committed. Though the tradition of making will continue, the field, reified in Shane's publications, can be appropriated to other ends, such as global business deals. This testifies to the ambiguity of the craft of rustic furniture making, more than the interpretability inherent in the organic approach to rustic furniture making. It is a field open to interpretation: as such it is prime for global patronage in a way that the fine arts, too often committed to systems of ideology and unable to be understood, even if abstractly, as artful work aimed at well-being, cannot. The question for rustic furniture makers will be how, and if, to square the ethos of the craft with the publications that define the field, and consequent funding opportunities. (Seminar Paper, July 2003)

Poor writing? Indeed. But more importantly, the conclusion in no way follows through on my original intentions to explore the maker-material relation in crafting rustic furniture. Rather, it is unintelligibly laden with the jargon of generalized theories of capitalism and systems of patronage as frameworks for analysis. Such a conclusion is evidence not only of being a young graduate student anxious to be perceived as she perceived her textual mentors – theoretically grandiose – but, it is also indicative of the limitations of ethnographic methods for addressing the questions of processes of creativity and the consequent knowledge and lifeworld production through disembodied discourses.

The ambiguity I experienced as a researcher in regard to my role in the rustic furniture gathering – to whittle, or not to whittle, to participate, or to observe – was critical in learning how to do the fieldwork that was necessary to get at the questions I sensed and later came to articulate concerning the processes of creativity and artful practices. At this point, I did not yet know how to account for experience in the research, or in the final writing, nor did I recognize the significance of my own body and its situatedness in researching the types of questions I yearned to reflect upon. I denied the presence of my body and forced my field notes into systems of patronage and theories of global capitalism.¹ Though I had experienced dissatisfaction with cramming my field notes into already articulated sociological discourses and found what I had written to be an inept portrayal of the craft I wished to elucidate, I did not yet understand what the shortcoming of my approach had been.

Despite this, I pushed forward in my interests in the processes of creativity that fall, trying to concretize a research proposal for my dissertation. Though I had been vaguely advised during a meeting to spend a good year reading all of aesthetic theory, I sensed, the ambiguity of my summer project still lingering, that the debates of aesthetic theory would address my interests no more effectively than had theories of patronage and global capitalism. Determined to persevere and sort out the summer failure, I contacted the educational directors of numerous craft facilities in New York City in hope of finding a site to conduct further ethnographic research. By the end of the week, I found myself at New York Glass, a not-for-profit glassblowing studio, discussing the possibilities for research:

So is your question on the difference between art and craft? Do you just want to observe?’ the educational director asked me. ‘Well, actually, I’d like to enroll in the course, to actually take the course. You see, I do ethnographic work, which means that I do my research through participation. It is not so much the question of the difference between art and craft that I’m interested in, as how we actually learn a skill, like glassblowing – I’d like to actually learn myself’ I replied. (Field notes, September 23, 2003)ⁱⁱ

Though the beginning glassblowing classes for the fall semester were enrolled to capacity at New York Glass, the educational director agreed that I could “sit in” on a class – we agreed to the Sunday morning beginning glassblowing course. There was a thrill to just being in the glassblowing studio – there is an ever-audible gentle roar, the heat carressing one’s skin, even from afar – the gas flames of the glory holes, in which the glass is reheated while being worked upon, the breathing hot furnaces of molten material, gas torches, alit and glowing. Heat reaches through light cotton clothes, presses against tough denim, and sends synthetic nylon to skin-scorching temperatures; it fills the nostrils with warmth, dirt, burning wood and newspapers, sweat. Warm hues are ever-emergent from behind the opaque doors of the furnaces, the interior of the glory holes and the molten glass itself, ever-luminous. Voices and orders and joking intermingle – glassblowing is always a collaborative endeavor.

Standing amidst this to “observe”, was again, like at the rustic furniture gathering, awkward – the role I had ascripted myself being the voyeur. After having observed the class for only one week, it was with some relief that the instructor, encouraged me in a tone tinged with insistence to blow glass myself. Not all of the students attended every session and one even dropped out – it was exactly the opportunity I had not known I was waiting for. I was somewhat hesitant, as I had not paid for the class and did not want to step on the toes of the paying students. His teaching assistant encouraged me, pulling a pipe from the warming rack so that I could take my first gather of glass from the furnace.

The molten glass at 1800 degrees Fahrenheit, unlike the docile branch which I was whittling at the rustic furniture gathering, did not allow me to occupy an ambiguous role. Gathering the glass seemed dangerous, fears of being burned raced through my mind, misperceptions of being singed by the gusts heat were felt by my body, while wifths of victory nonetheless wafted under my ego’s nose – in that fear and thrill, I was completely immersed and attentive to my body, the glass, and the blowpipe – that relation of maker and material via the tool that I had wanted to explore at rustic furniture gathering. Though I had been theoretically curious about this relation, I had not previously experienced the opening that immersion, that complete mode of *in situ* ethnographic research, made possible for coming to know and thus understand this relation. The intensity of the moment thwarted all reflection and analysis and made obvious, or felt, the acquisition of my body itself of the knowledge called glassblowing. Taking the blowpipe into hand drew me out of the ambiguous terrain of being a visual observer of a corporeally-known process: it disposed me so as to know the tacit workings and modalities of the practice. That creative expression that I longed to understand was embedded in the tacit understanding of my own corporeal practice.ⁱⁱⁱ The fortuitous immersion was the beginning of my understanding and writing on the embodied processes of creativity.

The immersion instigated by the molten glass placed me within that maker-material relation that I longed to understand. I gathered in order to get away from the furnace, that intriguing and still-threatening tank of glass – I *responded* to the

material, albeit it in a "fight or flight" manner. With the development of skill, my ability to respond to the material progressed beyond "fight or flight" to an ability to control the glass, to shape it. While an observer may note this shift in the novice's relation to the glass, the dynamic that substantiates this development would remain elusive. Such a shift is achieved through the acquisition of technique – that visible and observable development in the novice's practice – but also through the cultivation of the capacity to respond to the material. The novice must learn to respond to, and not simply act upon, the glass – to *listen*. This, the listening to and appropriately responding to the material, is the dialogical dynamic of the maker-material relation known in practice.

The glassblower listens and responds to the glass corporeally, with a body equipped for listening to glass; equipped with techniques and skills that act like a type of grammar, allowing her to express that which she becomes increasingly skilled to perceive – technique activating, much like words and gestures, meaning. In this sense, her ability to listen is limited by her corporeal capacities, more specifically the relation that the glassblower achieves both through and without techniques with the glass. In this dialogical manner, the glassblower through her corporeal capacities expresses the glass. I literally could not access those processes that I longed to investigate at the rustic furniture gathering without being embedded, only half-heartedly whittling the walking stick, fixated on, in fact paralyzed by, observing. Only in coming into the dynamic of practice, was I able to begin.

Equipped to problem-solve

It is often said that glassblowing is not about blowing the perfect piece of glass, but about coming up with effective solutions to the problems that consistently present themselves in practice. Such situations that arise are often referred to as "unpredictable". When I began to conduct interviews in the spring of 2004, two of my first interviewees, though speaking of the need of the novice to learn to control the glass, also spoke of the lore of the unpredictable. Paul, my first instructor, spoke of it directly: "Part of the thrill of glassblowing is that you don't know where it will take you. That it is so completely unpredictable" (Interview, April 13, 2004). Rob, my second instructor, spoke of "magic": "Making glass is like making magic, it's just like you've never seen it before, you have no idea what the hell is going on. And then sometimes when you've done it for years, you still have no idea what the hell is going on" (Interview, March 30, 2004). Though both Paul and Rob extolled the enchantment of the unpredictable, both also, as instructors, stressed the importance of learning how to cope with the unpredictable, or those "problems" that nearly inevitably emerge in the course of practice.

The unpredictable presents itself, for someone equipped to deal with it – to make those "proleptic adjustments to the demands of the field" (Bourdieu 1990: 66) – as a problem to be solved. In practice, what "solves" the problem at hand is not a moment of cognitive reflection, but rather the response of the spontaneous dispositions that are equipped to manage the situation: "...corporeal knowledge that provides a practical comprehension of the world quite different from the intentional act of conscious decoding that is normally designated by the idea of comprehension" (Bourdieu 2000: 135). The beginner fashions her corporeal capacity to deal with problem solving through apprenticeship, the logic of which consists in the oscillation between practice and reflection: the beginner practices, reflects upon her practice, adjusts her corporeal dispositions to better align with instructors' expectations, and,

so transformed, once again practices, which allows for incorporation and thus the recession of this new corporeal disposition into unconsciousness.^{iv} It is with the accrument of these “improved” corporeal dispositions that the novice develops the ability to “problem-solve” in her practice – her body comes to spontaneously recall the appropriate dispositions needed for successful execution of a technique or completion of a vessel.

Unequipped with this corporeal knowledge specific to glassblowing, my beginning glassblowing partner (in a winter 2004 course in which I was actually enrolled), Annie, and I failed to handle an unforeseen problem when attempting to blow a standard vase. The blowpipe carried sloppy gathers of glass at its end to be blown out into an egg-shaped bubble. Annie heated the glass and when returning to the bench to shape it, sat down, and asked me to blow. In typical beginner’s coordination, she had overheated the glass, and I, not noting her excessive heat, blew when asked with the force of industrial bellows – the egg bulged into a large amorphous blob. With a deep sigh of frustration, she took the blob to the glory hole, a cylindrical barrel-shaped reheating furnace and rested the pipe on the hip-height yoke, rotating it rotisserie-style and allowed the glass blob to reheat within the glory hole. Carelessly, she diverted her attention away from the piece in the glory hole towards me and chatted about the tribulations of rental housing in New York City. Soon, reckless flopping at the end of the pipe caught her attention: “Shit, what do I do?” she rhetorically asked and in place of doing anything, stopped turning the pipe and attempted to lift the glass, now stuck to the doors of the glory hole, out. Her response to stop turning, however, was the wrong response: centrifugal force keeps the glass on center.

Wresting the now overheated-glass from the glory hole's doors, the piece began to stretch and stretch, and once out of the hole, hang and hang – it was nearly two feet long. We were both looking at it, not knowing what to do. The two guys, who had been working at glory hole #4, were cleaning up their station and just walked by, ‘You can save it, you can save it!! Make a cookie for it!!!’ the one called out to me. I had no idea what he was talking about. ... He quickly gathered some glass and let it fall onto the marver and pressed it down into a “cookie” disc with the paddle, while the other lowered Annie’s long, long piece onto the “cookie”, creating a bottom for the otherwise too-thin and overextended ‘vase’. ...‘The next time it happens you can just jump up here,’ he said jumping onto the gaffer’s seat, ‘and you can hold it while your partner necks it. Then you can put on the cookie and break it off at the neckline’. Annie heated her ‘cookied-vase’ and we looked on at his mimed demonstration, giving him the ‘yeah, sure, no problem...yeah, right, we have no idea what you're talking about’ head nod. (Field Notes, March 19, 2004)

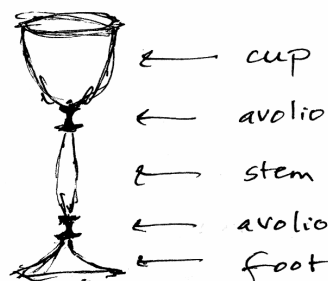
The turn of events surprised us – the stretching of the “vase” into a “tube” was not part of the plan and we lacked the resources, namely the corporeal know-how, with which to manage the unpredictable situation. While this occurrence had literally caused a stalemate of action, the other experienced glassblowers had perceived the unanticipated as a problem to be solved. Though they could identify a problem within the unpredicted occurrence and spontaneously respond, Annie and I could not. The novice, though she can search, cannot see the problem, i.e. that to be solved, without corporeally already knowing the answer.^v Annie and I, though in the glassblowing studio with blowpipe in hand and glass on its end, were not even at the cusp of this accrued corporeal capital, but rather at the very fledgling beginning of

basic skill incorporation. Our corporeal capacities, so limited, did not allow for us to identify and corporeally respond to the problem.

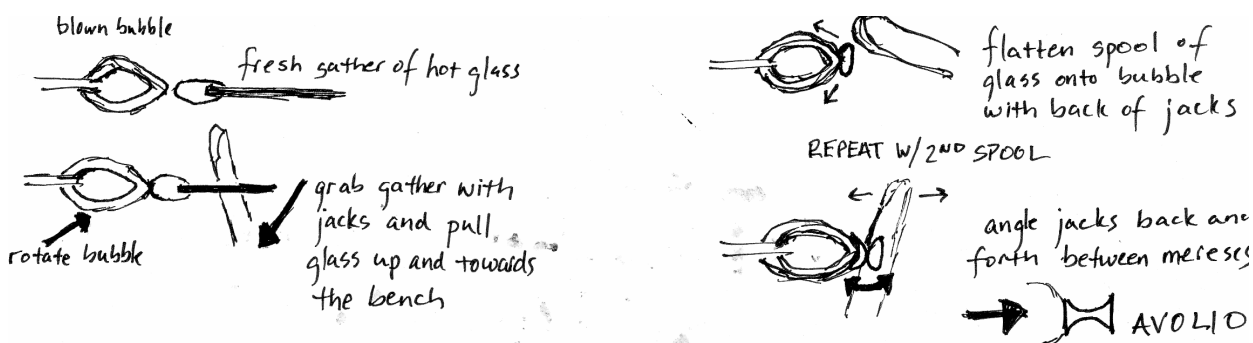
What was interesting about the glassblowers' responses was that they had each offered their own solution. While the one glassblower recommended that one of us jump up on the workbench to hold the piece vertically while the other necked the piece, the other glassblower off-handedly offered, "or, you can just sit down at the bench and neck it yourself". Though not very nuanced, this example does suggest that corporeal perception of a problem and the consequent solution is a *personal* configuration. That is, given the same problem and means to address it, each person would "solve the problem" at least slightly differently. How an individual handles the glass, tools, partners – the pace, the hand's "touch", the level of composure, the affects of ease or difficulty, in a consistent manner, is recognized by herself and fellow glassblowers as her "working style". The way in which she perceives the glass, itself a corporeal capacity, and the mode of working with the glass to which her corporeal perception dialogically lends, when consistently reproduced achieves a formal style, a steadfast manner of problem-solving.

Getting at the personal of practice: the development of style

Adam, the instructor of the Advanced Handwork class, in which I was enrolled in the fall of 2006 spoke of the relation between hand movements and an *avolio*. An *avolio* is a small hourglass-shaped piece of glass that connects components of a goblet, such as cup and stem, or stem and foot.



Components of a goblet



Typical steps for making an avolio

When you're making the avolio, make sure that it is stable. ...You need a nice sturdy avolio so that you have a good touchdown for the bubble for your foot and so that you can open it up," he said. He widened the lines of the middle curves of the 'bad' avolio he had sketched on the chalkboard. ...You know everyone has their style. You can actually tell whose cups are whose by their avolios sometimes – some are real stout but without good proportion, someone like Jim's have wide pads and a narrow waist, or Dante's, which are shaped like two perfect letters 'C's back to back... But both of theirs have nice proportion. Whatever your style, the proportions are important – that'll make a nice avolio". He continued to speak of the nuances of his wrist motions when shaping his avolios – the slight pressure, the angle of his wrist, the breadth towards which the jack handles reached in the pendulum-like motion that shaped the hourglass and to demonstrate the different angles of the hand used to achieve different styles of avolios." (Field Notes, October 2006)

While he spoke of style in a more formal tenor with attention to proportion and graceful lines, he grounded these styles in the working style of the glassblower. Thus, more advanced glassblowers encourage novice practitioners to watch the hands of the glassblower demonstrating, *not* the glass. While the style of the glass itself lends a working style to those who work upon it, the subtleties of the glassworker's corporeal movements also inform how techniques render the final form. The working style of the glassblower, though shaped by the glassblowing field also bears the affect of the personal rendering of these expectations. The expression reflects those corporeal capacities, which themselves activate and to that extent set the terms of the dialogical relation of maker and material – that is, determine the extent to which the glass can be "heard". While these corporeal capacities are developed through apprenticeship, incorporation of formalized corporeal knowledge, they bear, as we have seen, differences, such that *avolios* and the goblets to which they belong can be consistently recognized as Adam's, Jim's or Dante's. While we have recognized that a working style is informed by the dialogical relation between glassblower and glass, that corporeal ability to listen and respond to the material, we have not yet explained why working styles differ such that formalized expectations, such as avolios and the specific techniques for making them, carry the "touch" of an individual hand.

Harvey Littleton, credited with spurring the American Studio Glass movement in the 1950s, alluded to an additional stratum that informs the maker-material dynamic:

[A]s long as children are born – and they're born every minute and more often – each one of them has unique experiences from the moment of birth that are waiting to contribute to what they will be. Some of them will be influenced by glass as a material. And they will put all of that unique experience, things that we can't understand now, and they'll bring that to glass. What that glass will be who knows? ...Technique in and of itself is nothing. But technique in the hands of a strong, creative person, like...Marioni, takes on another dimension. ...[Glassblowing training] falls down when it says to a young person, 'Well if you learn this technique, you've got it made. You can be a Dante Marioni...without really investigating who Dante Marioni is, [sic] not only what he does.' Because what he does would not have been possible without knowing him. What his motivations are and so on. (Littleton 2001: 22)

What Littleton extols very frankly is the influence of a person's life history on her manner of glassblowing. The acquisition of technique alone, he points out, will not necessarily accomplish the end towards which those techniques are intended. The critical substratum of technique, and indeed of the glassblower's dialogical relation with the material, her ability to "listen" to the material, is the glassblower's body itself. While Littleton may appear to glorify the individual and essentialize expression in his claim that to be like Marioni, you cannot simply copy his actions, but must also understand what it is to *be* Marioni, his comment houses a significant point for understanding how it is that the *personal* of practical knowledge is possible: corporeal knowledge not of a given practice alone, but rather of an entire embodied history. Tacit knowledge is equipped not only in terms of tools and material, but also in terms of a person's own corporeal history, its modes of embodiment, those dispositions accrued throughout a person's own lifetime.

Previously, I have discussed prior corporeal dispositions as allowing a novice to adapt and manage within a new situation, for example, knowledge of handling fire or hot things gives some general preparation for handling hot glass.^{vi} While a consideration of adaptation allows us to understand how past practical knowledge facilitates the acquisition of new practical knowledge, it does not account for why that acquisition, in its expression via technique and that produced, differs from one person to another. Littleton's pointing to life history gets at this – to situate corporeal knowledge within "life history" is to indicate a critical characteristic of all practical knowledge: its situatedness. What Littleton points to in his discussion of Marioni's personal history in relation to the work he produces is Marioni's distinct style brought forth through the meeting of his corporeal history and his glassblowing practice – a convergence of embodied knowledge, embodied histories that affects individuation. To understand how this ushers difference into formalized expectations, we need to gain a greater understanding of the workings of the convergence of accrued corporeal knowledges. Thusfar, we have discussed tacit knowledge of glassblowing against a silent background, the *in situ* embeddedness of the practicing body located within a non-descript, unexplicated glassblowing studio. Tacit knowledge, always a personal configuration informed by a person's life experience, is additionally, however, always also located, that is specific to a place, or types of places. In turning to a consideration of how corporeal histories are situated, we can begin to understand in greater depth the roots of individuation in creative processes.

The Place of Embodiment: corporeal knowledge situated

Embodiment extends the body such that it dwells in and inhabits a world – a dry desert, a forested creek, an open tundra – situations which in turn each evoke practices unique to these possibilities. This dialogical situatedness equips the body, sets parameters for practice. Of this Bachelard speaks of contemplated nature itself aiding contemplation insofar as it already contains some means of contemplation (Bachelard 1971: 77), while Merleau-Ponty argues that materials themselves express a certain "style" (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 455). While embodiment contains and expresses through its phenomenality, its surroundings, and perceives and practices according to the style to which those surroundings lend, this embodied expression is informed as we have discussed, by the person's accrued corporeal history. Practice, then, will always be a convergence and expression of multiple embodied knowledges informed by the place, or situations, of their learning.

In 2005, a thoughtful and acute reader of my work, with whom I was in friendly correspondence, had written to me: "You concentrate mostly upon those aspects of tool which you hold in your hands, leaving the furnace, or the room, even to some extent the bench, in the silent and obedient service...". He went on to discuss the metabolic relation of the various layers of situations, which reciprocally relate to and inform each other. Though striking, I had not known how to approach the "silence" which the reader revealed, as this background was indeed for me, silent. I had not known how to address the situatedness of my immediate practice. The hotshop was an unthematized, "natural" setting for my glassblowing. Thus, I had not thought to ask whether the "glassblowing class" – Hot Glass Subversions – in which I enrolled for a three-week stint at an international glass art institution nestled into the foothills over the Puget Sound on the American west coast, was in the hotshop. "Naturally" I went to the hotshop for our first class meeting. Wondering where my classmates were, I watched the Italian master, teaching the Venetian course, at work.^{vii} "Are you coming?" the teaching assistant of my course asked, walking by me and out of the hotshop. My look of confusion followed her and I saw my classmates waiting in front of the neighboring studio. A sense of disorientation took over – my stomach fell. The class I had enrolled for was literally outside of the hot shop. I had only intended to "subvert" technique, not to remove myself from the hotshop.



Hot shop, left; casting studio, behind to the right

I went to the neighboring studio, the casting studio. Casting glass is a process in which the glassworker ladels molten glass, using an iron ladle, which can hold from four to ten pounds of glass, out of the furnace into a variety of molds and impressions and onto a variety of surfaces. I ladled glass with the rest of the class as instructed. Following the instruction was the invitation for all of us to continue on our own – that moment to "create" which is idealized as being met with uncontained enthusiasm.

I stood there awkwardly and kind of looked around, hoping for some sign to show itself. I looked at the glory hole located next to the casting furnace longingly and just wanted it to be on and glowing. I watched the others enthusiastically ladleing the glass and felt sort of bodiless - I really just didn't have a place to be. I approached, my instructor, Jocelyne.^{viii} I had to start in the bench. Otherwise, I was kind of paralyzed – I thought she

would be disappointed, but I had to ask. 'Um, Jocelyn, would it be ok if I set up a bench? ...um, I don't know what I'm going to do, but I'm feeling just a bit disoriented and feel like I just need to sit in a bench,' I meekly offered, feeling that I was disappointing her 'subversion' expectations, 'I just have to blow glass'. 'Sure, no problem, she replied, calling to the teaching assistant, 'Laurie will you help her set up a bench'." (Field Notes, July 26, 2006)

Out of place, I began by placing myself in the familiar: the bench. Heidegger discusses the collapse of reality when the tool is absent in the context of the missing pen for the philosopher. When the pen is missing from the philosopher's study, the remaining – the desk, the books, the view are cast into suspension because they cannot be turned into the requisite words.^{ix} In the same way, the bench and the tools make possible the practice of glassblowing for one who is accustomed to being equipped by these in order to blow glass. In their absence, the glass is rendered inaccessible, cast into doubt. Those things which generally invited my own performance and created the place of glassblowing were missing; my body was out of place, its corporeal inclinations awkwardly figiditing – practice, stymied. An art, whether glassblowing or writing, is wedded and interrelated to the place, which outfits that practice, that equipped scenario which simultaneously equips the body to practice: "[T]hings constantly at hand, with which circumspect being-in-the-world reckons from the outset, have their place" (Heidegger 1996: 96).

I guiltily pulled the bench before the glory hole, which had been fired up at my request and went with the teaching assistant to get blowing tools from the hotshop, that now-other place equipped for glassblowing. Once equipped, the unfolding of the situation I had longed for – blowing glass – still did not happen, my teaching assistant's parting words thwarted my idea of how to begin:

'If you blow, its fine,' she said, continuing with a sleight pause, 'I just think you need to blow what you normally wouldn't blow. 'Ok,' I said, as she walked away, thinking to myself, 'great – blow what I normally wouldn't blow – what in the world would that be....' I had been thinking to just start off with a cylinder – just a working shape since I was alone – and see what crossed my mind along the way about how to 'subvert' it. (Field Notes, July 26, 2006)

Embodied knowledge, as corporeal intentionality, always already arcs toward a solution. My teaching assistant was asking me to employ my bodily knowledge towards that which it did not know. Moreover, though sitting, so equipped, in the bench, the glass remained at a distance – not only due to the expectations 'to subvert', but also due to the fact that I simply did not have a partner. Glassblowing, though one can manage some small objects alone, is a collaborative endeavor. Equipped scenarios, however, invite participants and practice: a swingset, swingers and swinging, a wooden Lightening named Echo with hoisted sails, sailors and sailing, and equally, hot glory holes, hot glass, and glassblowing tools and bench, glassblowers and glassblowing. I stared blankly through the cold blowpipe resting across the arms of the workbench, trying to push my mind's eye beyond the cylinder to which it desparately clung when my partner-to-be, Michelle approached: "I'm going to blow with you," she said rolling the pipe back and forth over the bench's arms.

Stepping out of the hot shop constituted a breach insofar as the references through which situations had come to have meaning, such as hot glory holes and partners, were absent. The critical references which go into creating the practice of

glassblowing were reconstituted – equipping the hot glass with tools and bench, hot glory hole and partner. Situating oneself within the place equipped for the acquisition of tacit knowledge is perhaps the first movement towards acquiring that knowledge. While the introduction to the studio is essentially spatial – the equipment and tools are pointed to and named by the instructor – and I have considered the novice's taking of the tool into hand as the moment that negates the initial spatial relationship – perhaps it is the placement of the novice, a dynamic engagement of positioning oneself towards, that negates the studio as spectacle, along with, or even prior to taking the tool into hand. While the novice takes the blowpipe into the hand to gather glass, so too does she stand before the furnace; while the novice takes a tool, such as the jacks, into hand in order to shape the glass, she does this *after* sitting in the bench – she disposes herself and consequently sets her practice into motion, a temporal engagement with the practice which she had hitherto visually observed. To stand before the furnace, or to sit in the bench with the intent to blow glass, that is, standing before the furnace or sitting in the bench towards blowing glass, with the tool in hand, surrounded by the necessary facilities, including a partner, activates the possibilities of glassblowing. With the situation so equipped, the glass had purposive involvement for glassblowing for Michelle and I. The script or rules for the practice for which we had situated ourselves, however, had shifted. While we equipped our practicing bodies as they were accustomed, the expectations of us had shifted to that of subversion, such that our bodies could not spontaneously respond to that for which they were equipped.

In this awkwardness, we "performed" subversion, blowing out a glass cylinder in a metal mesh box. Similarly to how a novice acts *on* the glass without responding to the material, for example continuing to squeeze in a jackline despite the frigidity of the cooled glass, or continuing to heat the glass in the glory hole despite the fact that the glass has lost all the shape of the prior shaping, given her lack of a dialogical relationship with the material, we forced the glass into an idea of "subversion" – the result was unmoving, uninteresting, boring, forced.



First "subverted" piece

Describing the piece as forced recognizes the linear relationship of the maker to the glass. Though we both had developed at least a minimal dialogical relation with the material, able to both listen to the glass and corporeally respond, we could not address the subversion of the glass corporeally and thus resorted to imposing an idea of subversion upon it. If tacit knowledge arcs towards the known, what is it that we perceive as new, whether in terms of Marion's rendering of an avolio, or Jocelyn's expectations for subversion?

The body as expressive threshold of embodied histories

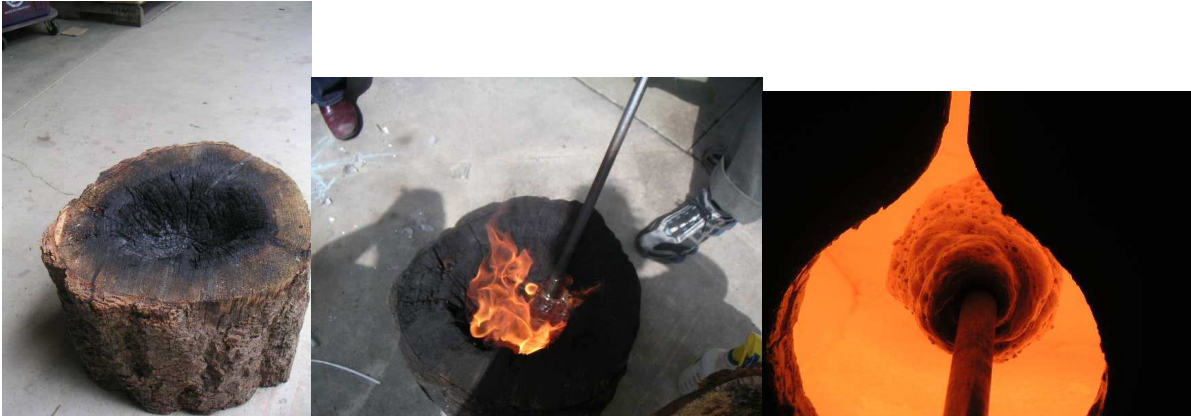
Earlier that day for the demonstration, Jocelyn had poured glass onto a logged tree stump, found by the school's wood shop and "taken its impression", lifting the cooled puddle of glass from the top of the stump, the stump's crevices, knots, and lifelines "impressed" into it. Growing up in the Huron National Forest, this bridging of glass and wood seemed familiar: I had created with logs, branches and bark – bridges, "fishing poles" with which to snatch moss from the creek's bed, deer blinds, letters scratched onto the peach underside of birch bark, woven branch-shelves, and later, when moving into urban areas, plant holders and sculptural branch assemblages simply nailed to living room and bedroom walls. Just as the studio equipped for glassblowing had "made room" for glassblowing, so too did the stump, and the woodland literally surrounding the glass school, make room for another corpus of embodied knowledge, that of creating with woodland materials. While the bench had created space within which I could dwell, the stump – if I were to create "outside" of technique – seemed a likely candidate. It provided a reference for a different set of bodily dispositions, embodied knowledge, which could be incorporated into my glassblowing practice.

'Um, Jocelyne, would it be ok if I used the stump?' I asked. It was just sitting there in front of the annealers which sat on the other side of the wall on which the forms were hung outside. Had been used maybe once, maybe twice. 'Sure,' she replied, waving her hand in the direction of the stump, 'Go ahead'. I flipped the stump onto its side and rolled it by the folks, who were casting glass into forms on top of the casting marvers in front of the furnace and let it fall back down just to the front right of the marvering table. 'What do you want to do?' Michelle asked. 'Maybe we could do a roll-up with it. Pour the glass onto the stump then roll it up on a collar – try to capture the texture inside, then try and blow it out – make tree trunks,' I replied. (Field Notes, July 26, 2006)

Rather than "subverting" the glass through "undoing" technique, the stump presented an opportunity for a lateral shift, a metaphorical adaptation, a metabolic incorporation, through which two *corpi* of embodied knowledges met; the body, as threshold intentionally drawing in a set of skills associated with wood to metamorphize the practice in which it was engaged.

Michelle and I ladled glass onto the top of the stump numerous times, which burned deep crevices into the wood. We were attempting to "roll up" the impression of the stump, capturing its texture and thus "replicating" tree trunks. "Rolling up" glass involves making a *collar*, a solid round-sided and flat-topped gather on the end of the blowpipe, the circumference of which is equal to the length of the flat glass intended to be "rolled up". As you roll the heated glass collar along the edge of the hot flat glass, it tacks onto the collar, creating a cylinder. When we tried to "roll-up"

the “impression” from the stump, it simply stuck. To get it out of the stump, we had to turn the pipe and try to remove the stuck glass by shoving the glass on the pipe into the crevices, hot glass picking other hot glass up and small chips of charred wood. In the glory hole, the glass expanded like a marshmallow over fire in the glory hole – bubbled and silverized, changing the actual composition of the glass via, we later discovered, a carbon reaction.



The stump progression

The result differed significantly from our “subverted” metal mesh piece. In this scenario, our lateral shift, our metaphorical adaptation and incorporation, though it had not yielded a piece due to the difficulty of working with the material, which, in stark contrast to the fluid softness of molten glass, had become quick to cool and stiff like brittle taffy. Making the metal mesh piece, we had made no such shift, but rather, had uncomfortably tried to make our bodies-equipped-for-glassblowing intentionally make something different through a shift in ideas – “let’s add this metal cage” – we had not infused our glassblowing practice with a different corporeal sensibility accomplished by a lateral incorporation; it had been a linear acting upon rather than a lateral integration.

While the equipped bench had activated the possibility of glassblowing; the stump drew in the woodland surroundings to which the place of glassblowing belonged, activated a type of regionalization, or pluralization, of our glassblowing practice. The peripheral embodied knowledge, that of creating with woodland materials – the context of our glassblowing practice, which then appeared relevant gave us direction – rather than arcing towards that “unknown” subversion and issuing forth sophomoric pieces, our corporeal knowledge was able to incorporate a previous corpus of knowledge such that a lateral shift, subversive through its pluralization, occurred.^x This drawing in, or “de-distancing” in Heidegger’s terms, is that gathering in of objects as useful things, the drawing of them into context. The stump was peripheral, even on object of an aesthetic gaze, until drawn into practice towards an integration through incorporating two *corpi* of embodied knowledges, a convergence achieved through a bodily intentionality shaped by the depth of life history.

The broadening of practice through the de-distancing of surroundings, which are appropriated through the polycorporeal capacities of individuals’ embodied histories affected the “new”, the distinct. Though the tenets of person’s embodied histories may be broadly shared across persons, such as dispositions related to race, gender or class, or skills related to urban or rural environments, the nuances of each embodied history as well as the manner in which the embodied histories converge, or are integrated, is a process of discovery. Referring again to Heidegger, it is a mode

of "directional discovery" in the drawing of things, or situations, once separate, together through establishing a relevance to each other – a relevance, I would argue, that is corporeally discovered in the arcing, or intentionality, of embodied knowledge towards completion, a sense of resolution, amidst displacedness, ekstasis: an incorporative integration of locale, or immediate with regional, or peripheral embodied knowledges to the effect of unveiling a new aspect of the material such that it affects the new or innovation. It is this directionality that marks this convergence as distinct from adaptation.^{xi} Through this lateral shift and corporeal incorporation, the world, here the glass, reveals itself in an unexpected way.^{xii}

There is thus an analogical relation between the expression and those converged embodied knowledges from which it issued, namely a likeness, rather than an objective similarity.

I threw up a thin wooden board onto the marver – I didn't want to throw the glass directly on the marver because it would cool too quickly. 'Now take the tweezers and stand on the other side – I'm going to throw this glass up there and we're going to smush it flat with a paddle and roll it up with the tweezers', I said. 'Alright, girl, whatever you want. Lets do it,' Michelle replied. I took that heat – got it ripping hot and swung the pipe just like when you are serving a blown foot – the glass literally did go almost flying off of the pipe – and let it flop down on the board. Michelle stroked the glass towards her with the paddle while pushing down and I pulled on the pipe towards me – fire breathed out the sides of the paddle as she pressed down. We snipped the glass off the pipe by the moile with some confusion – that hadn't really been planned for – and then with the tweezers "rolled it up", by touching one end to the other, charred check-marks of wood and flakes of ash clinging to the hot silvery glass. Turning it over to stand, I said, 'That's our trunk'. (Field Notes, July 27, 2006)



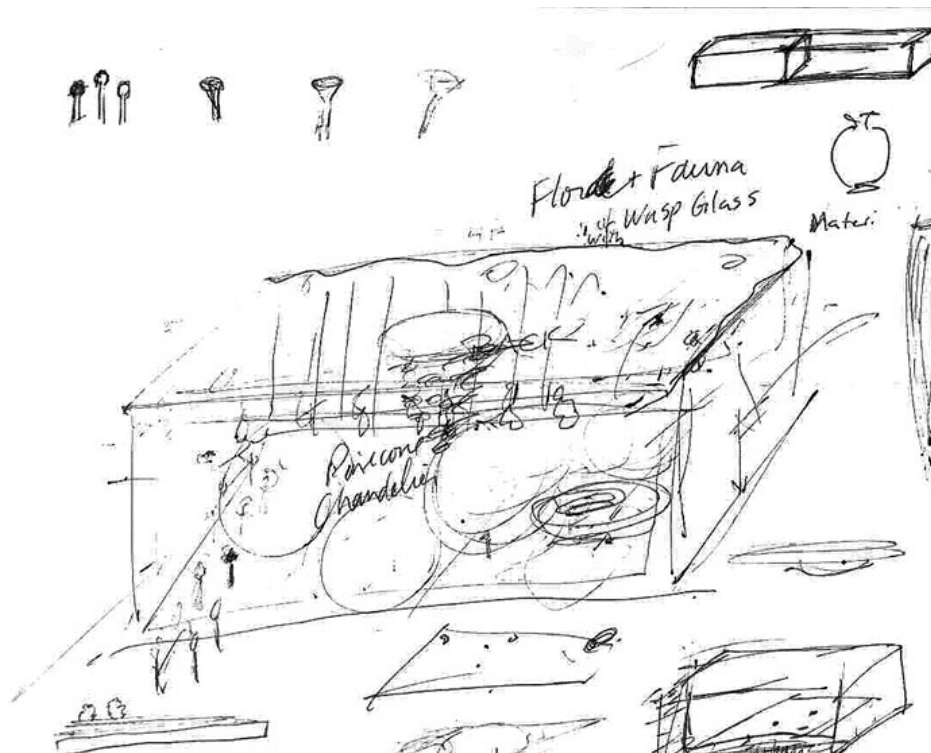
Tree trunks

We had started by trying to roll up the impression from the top of the tree stump to create "trunks", a ten to twelve inch cylinder that literally resembled tree trunks. In making the "trunk" in a way that did not aim to resemble, but rather to evoke, our practice and its expression shifted from one of representation to one of analogy: "Now that's the idea," Jocelyn said with a broad approving smile, as she watched us (Field Notes, July 27, 2006). While the analogy is seemingly perceived in the pieces themselves, the analogical relations are internal. That is, the relation of the practice, that convergence of glassblowing and woodland creating, and object, the evocation of tree trunk, is analogical; between corporeal knowledge, that structure of

experience, and the objects expressed. There is a likeness of this account of expression to Levi Strauss' account of totemism. While totems, for Strauss, are an analogical expression of the internal structure of the mind, here we see that the objects of expression are an expression of the structure of experience – the body an expressive threshold of the convergence of embodied knowledges, possible in virtue of the person's polycorporeal history. The analogy, therefore, is an effect of convergence, rather than of a rigid set of relations, or a dogmatic homology. In pointing to this, we point to the corporeal capacity to reveal an unexpected facet of the matter worked upon, which, though an opening for the expression of the matter, has been conceived as the affect of maker's intention, innovation – a concept which ignores the dialogical dynamic of practice and privileges the acting maker.

While it has been argued that totems spur collective solidarity or serve a variety of other purposes, here, without venturing so far afield, we can at least investigate the simultaneous development of a way of communicating and making discursively intelligible such corporeally discoveries – a practice of naming.

After dinner, Michelle and I sat on a bench in the hot shop with a couple of Heinekens and discussed our discovery and where we might go with it. We were conscious of planning a 'project,' as studio critiques and final studio visits were part and parcel of the course. Michelle suggested blowing rondels (plates) from the material; I had an idea of a diorama, a practice which I favored, within which we could create a forest, complete with british soldiers and hornworts. 'Well, we could make the diorama walls with rondels of 'this' material,' Michelle said, gesturing across the hot shop towards the casting studio where the stump still stood. 'Wasp glass rondels,' I responded, 'I love it.' 'Why wasp glass?' she said. "Just because it looks like the inside of a wasp nest," I responded, remembering the wasp nest in the lilac tree behind my parent's garage, the painting of the wasp nest by my great-grandfather that hangs at my mother's front door. 'So, we'll wasp up the glass for the rondels.' 'Wasp glass,' she said. 'Wasp glass,' I said. We talked about how much we loved this new wasp glass and imagined all that we could wasp up and dreamed of the contents of the diorama – essentially a flora and fauna scene, including the trunks, a cast glass bee, pinecone chandelier, and some hot sculpted british soldiers and hornworts. We pondered its title and how to present ourselves, in light of the collaborative nature of the project. With more inspired laughing at the electrical-like catching on to each other's thoughts, we titled it "Flora and Fauna with Wasp Glass" by Flora & Fauna." (Field Notes, July 27, 2006)



Flora & Fauna: Wasp Glass Diorama

While we called it "wasp glass" based upon its visual similarity to that of a wasp nest, we did not shift into the production of wasp nests. Rather, naming accomplished a familiarity and tangibility with the material – it made the process intelligible. Here, we see the import of not only lateral equivalences, that is that gathering together of differing worlds of embodiment and familiarity in contributing towards revealing the unexpected, but also of the significance of naming. Naming, rather than presupposing thought, accomplishes it. Vocabulary developed around the wasp glass, to which we first referred as "stump glass", points to the fact that the language that houses the speaker is substantiated both with material and the situation in which the speaker and, or maker, finds herself.^{xiii} This vocabulary expressed the new that issued forth from the convergence of embodied knowledges.

Just as we were able to create outside of "traditional" technique once situated, and in a sense, shifted through the gathering in of the woodland, we were able again shift within the new situation. When asked to give up the bench so that other students in the class, who had not blown before, could try, reluctantly we did. Even though the bench had allowed us to begin to blow glass, stepping away from the bench, once grounded in our engagement with the wasp glass, demanded that we create a different scenario in which to blow the wasp glass. What resulted was not only a plethora of new "techniques" which were informed by the wasp glass itself, as well as a diorama that exceeded the space of the box with which we had originally wanted to frame it. Rather than placing "a world" within a box, what had been created via the convergence of embodied knowledges created a world, which the viewer inhabited – it was called "archeological dig", a "petrified forest", bones, driftwood. In any case, the piece evoked places, perhaps because it expressed precisely the convergence of both actual materials and embodied knowledges wedded to specific places. The final "piece" communicated the metamorphosis of the glass and our glassblowing practice in virtue of these lateral shifts not only visually, but also olfactory: it smelled – the glass itself smelled of charred wood, one viewer

even putting his tongue to it to see if it had a taste. It was also rough and spindly, doling out glass splinters and cuts plentifully to Michelle and I both. The wasp glass forest was not of the clear, smooth and odorless glass world, but rather inhabited some place in between glass and wood.



Wasp glass forest

I do not purport, nor do I wish to, that this work is "Art". What I find value in is that this wasp glass assemblage, more specifically an analysis of its making, makes tangible an understanding of how the convergence of embodied histories as directional discovery can reveal yet known aspects of a given matter. Thus, we see the significance of those centripetal forces in expression, that drawing in of embodied histories from the periphery. It is not so much that the new or innovation is achieved, but rather that a person can corporeally articulate unexpected aspects of a material due to her situatedness and her ability, based on embodied histories – to engender a metabolic relation or breadth and depth, with that situatedness.

Conclusion

This inquiry has undertaken to develop an embodied understanding of expression in the practice of glassblowing. Through considering the dynamics of expression, such as corporeal knowledges, both present and past, and the metabolism of situatedness, we have been able to discern modalities of expression, such as problem-solving, style, and metabolic metamorphoses. This understanding has been arrived at via *in situ* ethnographic research – the body, that living body which both inhabits and is inhabited by the material and affective world, is the seat of the convergence of embodied histories, from which we have been able to understand the drawing in of peripheral knowledges towards revealing an unexpected aspect of the matter underhand. Disembodied ethnographic inquiries into expression, which

are grounded in the ontological underpinnings of a knowing mind and a known world, conceal this depth and breadth of the experience of expression. Furthermore, through understanding expression as an affect of corporeal capacities, themselves situated and historical and salient to all modalities of practice, challenges the employment of the concept of expression to distinguish a work of "art" from a work of "craft".

Acknowledgements

I would like to especially thank Michelle Coehlo, my partner, without which this experience would never have happened. I would also like to thank Jocelyn Prince for mentoring us and Kanik Chung for making my experience at the glass school possible. Thanks to the members of NYLON for reading numerous versions of this essay, particularly Craig Calhoun, Richard Sennett, Marion Wrenn, Claudio Benzecry and Melissa Aronczyk. I would additionally like to thank Peter Carl of Cambridge University – his comments from years ago have been at the forefront of my mind.

Endnotes

- i "This sense of human awareness as immaterial is facilitated and encouraged by bodily disappearance. Our conscious interaction with the world is sustained via a sphere of anonymous visceral functions... Yet these processes are carried out unconsciously, wrapped in a depth disappearance. Because such processes recede from the phenomenal life-world, human consciousness may seem *causa sui*, intertwined with no material principle. And in addition to this withdrawal of the unconscious body, there is a self-effacement within the structure of consciousness. As I have discussed at length, my experiencing body is ecstatic, directed away from itself. That from which I perceived, my body is literally over-looked. It can thus seem as if the experienced world is arrayed before the gaze of a disembodied mind" (Leder 1990: 116); "The experience of abstract thought thus provides one of the more powerful derivations for the notion of the rational mind as incorporeal. In this activity, the body of the thinker, the body of the sign, the body of the referent, are all experientially effaced. This strongly encourages the characterization of thought as a disembodied activity engaged in by an immaterial soul" (Leder 1990: 125).
- ii I have conducted in situ ethnographic fieldwork at New York Glass, a public access glassblowing facility in New York City since 2003. I situated myself in the field through enrollment in a beginner's glassblowing class. Since this time, I have taken five ten to twelve week glassblowing courses, acted as a teaching assistant for eight beginner-level glassblowing courses, apprenticed in a professional artist's studio for three months of building and two months of glassblowing, as well as enrolled in the country's leading glassblowing vocational school for a three-week intensive glassblowing course. During this time, I have additionally blown glass outside of scheduled courses. My field work data consists of detailing how I am learning the practice, as well as presentation and reception of work, the field of interaction, and modes of

dialogue. In situ in the material arts, by disposing the researcher to acquire the disposition and practical knowledge of an art, allows the research to explicate the tenets of tacit knowledge, its modalities across the spectrum of proficiency, as well as the varying levels of significance in creativity.

- iii The phenomenal body as groundwork is not a realm of imploded subjectivity. The phenomenal body is both a body in itself and a body in the world. Lived experience, seated in the phenomenal body, is always intersubjective, and moreover interobjective. The phenomenal body is intentional, is stretching towards, is both in itself and in that which is "external" to it. It is itself consciousness and the faculty of understanding: "Consciousness is being-towards-the-thing through the intermediary of the body. A movement is learned when the body has understood it, that is, when it has incorporated it into its 'world', and to move one's body is to aim at things through it; it is to allow oneself to respond to their call, which is made upon it independently of any representation" (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 139). Perhaps most importantly, participation, as immersion and consequently as incorporation of the dispositions of the art oneself, was, and continues to be, epistemologically key to accessing and theorizing the tacit understandings of an art. Tacit understanding is not an intellectual synthesis of successive acts by a discerning consciousness. Rather, it is a bodily intentionality: "practical, non-thetic intentionality, which has nothing in common with a cogitatio (or a noesis) consciously orientated towards a cogitatum (a noema), is rooted in a posture, a way of bearing the body (a hexis), a durable way of being of the durably modified body which is engendered and perpetuated, while constantly changing (within limits), in a twofold relationship, structured and structuring, to the environment" (Bourdieu 2000: 143-144). Tacit understanding must be gained through practice: "For the things which we have to learn before we can do them we learn by doing: men become builders by building houses, and harpists by playing the harp" (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*: 1103a30-1103b). Through repeated action, a hexis, a characteristic, or disposition, is developed and in this sense, we learn bodily. In this framework, the ethnographer seeks to understand the corporeal processes through which the practitioners come to live according to the norms, values, mores, ethics, of a given lifeworld, by herself incorporating those dispositions.
- iv For an extended discussion of the logic of apprenticeship, please see, O'Connor (2005)
- v It is in this sense, that Socrates argued in Plato's *Meno* that to see a problem is already to know the answer: "[Socrates] says that to search for the solution of a problem is an absurdity; for either you know what you are looking for, and then there is no problem; or you do not know what you are looking for, and then you cannot expect to find anything" (Polanyi 1967: 22). For Socrates, it is possible to already know the answers to the problems we perceive because our souls have lived before and carry the knowledge from those past lives into the present life – what we refer to as learning, then, is largely a process of recollection (*Meno*: 80d – 81e). While glassblowers' enduring souls perhaps are not that which allow them to see a problem, the enduring tradition of the art itself, which they have corporeally incorporated, surely is.
- vi See O'Connor (2005)

- vii Livio Serena has been blowing glass for fifty years on Murano. The glass school brought Serena to the United States for his first time that summer to teach Venetian techniques. Serena had never seen women blow glass before and he was adamant about the fact that he did not consider himself an artist.
- viii Jocelyne Prince earned her B.F.A. from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and her M.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design. She currently teaches at the Rhode Island School of Design and heads the Glass Department. Her studio practice pushes the boundaries of glass, working through a poetic dialog with glass physics, resulting in such works as sound waves recorded in liquid tin on glass.
- ix "Similarly, when something at hand is missing whose everyday presence was so much a matter of course that we never even paid attention to it, this constitutes a breach in the context of references discovered in our circumspection. Circumspection comes up with emptiness and now sees for the first time what the missing thing was at hand for and at hand with. Again, the surrounding world makes itself known. What appears in this way is not itself one thing at hand among others and certainly not something objectively present which lies at the basis of the useful thing at hand. It is 'there' before anyone has observed or ascertained it. It is itself inaccessible to circumspection insofar as circumspection concentrates on beings, but it is always already disclosed for that circumspection" (Heidegger 1996: 70).
- x "We understand the region as that to which the context of useful things at hand possibly belongs, a context which can be encountered as something directional, that is, containing places and as de-distanced" (Heidegger 1996: 103).
- xi "The directional discovery of something like a region belongs to the making room of Da-Sein. With this expression we mean initially the whereto of the possible belonging somewhere of useful things at hand in the surrounding world. Whenever one comes across useful things, handles them, moves them around, or out of the way, a region has already been discovered. Being-in-the-world that takes care of things is directed, directing itself. Belonging-somewhere has an essential relation to relevance. It is always factually determined in terms of the context of relevance of the useful things taken care of. The relevant relations are intelligible only in the horizon of a disclosed world. Their horizontal nature also first makes possible the specific horizon of the whereto of regional belonging. The self-directive discovering of a region is grounded in an ecstatically retentive awaiting of the possible hither and wither. As a directed awaiting of region, making room is equiprimordially a bringing-near (or de-distancing) of things at hand and objectively present" (Heidegger 1996: 336-337).
- xii "This capacity of a thing to reveal itself in unexpected ways in the future I attribute to the fact that the thing observed is an aspect of reality, possessing a significance that is not exhausted by our conception of any single aspect of it" (Polanyi 1967: 32).
- xiii On this basis, we can understand "...why thought tends towards expression as towards its completion, why the most familiar thing appears indeterminate as long as we have not recalled its name, why the thinking subject himself is in a kind of ignorance of his thoughts so long as he has not formulated them for himself, or even spoken or written them, as is shown by the example of so

many writers who begin a book without knowing exactly what they are going to put into it" (Merleau-Ponty 1963: 177).

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Citation

- O'Connor, Erin (2007) "The Centripetal Force of Expression: Drawing Embodied Histories into Glassblowing." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)



Qualitative Sociology Review Book Reviews

Volume III, Issue 3 – December 2007

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.3.3.09>

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Book Review:
Parenting and Inclusive Education
by Chrissie Rogers. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, pp. 189

“Parenting and Inclusive Education” written by Chrissie Rogers is an exceptional sociological work. It was constructed on the basis of narrative interviews (intimate stories) conducted with 24 parents of children with special educational needs (SEN)^a. The text treats about parental experiences, especially the experiences emerging in parents’ and children’s interaction with British educational system. Roger’s interviewees – white British citizens from working and middle class were bringing up 30 children (4-19 years old), some of the informants had two or more disabled children. The level of disability was differentiated - from dyslexia, dyspraxia, AD/HD through epilepsy, hearing and visual impairment to Down’s syndrome and autistic spectrum.

Chrissie Roger’s work gives the opportunity to follow her sociological reflections on British educational system based on the assumption of social inclusion. We consider the issues of social policy and - at the same time - we look at the social world with the eyes of the person who has experienced the mothering of a disabled child – the author’s daughter was also diagnosed a “SEN” child.

The assumption of Roger’s was to give contribution to the debate about parenting/mothering, impairment and education, “to create a sociological space to discuss in depth issues about dealing with difficulty and, specifically, learning disability (both at a theoretical and experiential level) (p. 3). The author treats the private world depicted in the narrations (“intimate windows to the lives lived”) - “as emotional response to the social world in relating to the self and well being” (p.4). She mentions C.W. Mills and feminist researchers and states that experiencing disability is the result of social construction within a social model of disability, which means that the parents not only experience the everyday difficulties resulting from the child’s impairment but also experience the impairment as a social construct.

The book consists of several layers of analysis. The first layer (chapters 3 and 6) regards the experiences of parents whose “children do not merge easily into social world”.

^a According to definitions, children with SEN have greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children at their age or have the disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities provided for other children at their age (p.4)

The 3rd chapter, "Mothering: Identification and Diagnosis of Impairment" is designed as "a building block" for the following chapters. The author discovers the "dark side of parenthood", starting from the point of diagnosing impairment up to the child's growing up. Following Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, Rogers underlines that rearing a child is a complicated task in individualized, postindustrial society and that it is much more complicated in the situation when a child is disabled. Expecting parents are not prepared for dealing with ill or impaired offspring, on the contrary - they are seduced by "romanticized notion of a perfect child" and myths about the ideal motherhood, according to which a woman has to sacrifice herself to a baby. The information of child's impairment is experienced as a catastrophe, a deep trauma which can be described within the frame of three concepts: denial, shock and disappointment associated with the whole spectrum of difficult, negative feelings – emotional pain, anger, anxiety, sense of guilt, sense of loss (of the dreamed, healthy child) etc. As having a child is also often experienced in the relation to an extended self, the delivering of the impaired child is threatening to the parents' identity. Thus parents, "stripped of their hopes and dreams", put into practice different strategies of denial like placing the difficulty in „less severe brackets", allocating problems to a different class of events (my child is not like others – these "retarded" ones). Although the reaction to the impairment is differentiated by sex – fathers need more time to accept a disabled child, both mothers and fathers follow the process from the initial shock and denial to acceptance towards the child and his/her "difference". This process can take weeks, months or even years. Furthermore, in numerous cases the accomplishment of biographical parental plan, based on the idea of rearing a child from infancy up to independency is blocked – parents are aware that their children will not finish the university, will not create their own families, will not have children etc.

When the impairment is visible, obvious and severe, parents experience emotions which are strongly conflicted with idealistic picture of parenthood, motherhood especially– when a child suffers deeply, they can even dream about his/her death and such thoughts inevitably provoke the sense of guilt.

In some sense not only the child is impaired. In chapter 6, "Living with impairment", the reader can gain some knowledge about the impacts of impairment on the whole family system. The presence of impaired child means the end of 'normal' life and the family members begin the biographical career of a "disabled family". The child's impairment produces the "disabled" parents and "disabled" siblings. Family members suffer from poor mental health (e.g. a higher level of anxiety, depression to suicidal feelings and fear of harming a child purposely). The high stress level and "the emotional roller coaster" results in escapes into drinking, withdrawing from family life and emotional breakdowns. The impairment strongly influences all aspects of family members' life. They face situations in which they can not avoid renegotiating life paths - from organizing the everyday reality, resigning from previous forms of activities, learning new forms of interactions with social world to changes in important biographical aims and plans (e.g. dilemmas on having next - hopefully – healthy baby). The impairment of the family is constructed also by the definitions formulated in the social environment.

The child's disability strongly influences also parent's vocational careers. Half of Roger's informants work part-time, one third are 'full time' parents. We can observe how the child's impairment pushes parents back into traditional family roles – mothers more often stay at home to take care of a disabled baby and fathers take up the sole breadwinner's role again.

Rogers draws the pictures of disabled family interactions with 'normal, social word', especially with parents of healthy children. She mentions "yahoos" created by J. Swift and Shelley's Frankenstein and states that having an impaired child can be described as delivering to the world someone unaccepted by all (relatives including) and who, as Frankenstein, provoke fear in others. The impaired child's appearance, his/her weird, difficult behaviour cause strong reactions of the social environment which can be described in terms of stigma and social exclusion (even baby-sitters are running away, especially when a child needs some special medical and rehabilitative treatment and/or breaks social norms). Rogers cites Shakespeare's opinion that "fear and objectification are key aspects of how disability is perceived". The practical result of this kind of perception means either isolation and (self-) exclusion or strong anger and readiness to fight for their rights and rights of their children. Parents who are afraid of being ostracized stay "at worst imprisonment at home – caring distress and potential anger". The obvious, but important, notion is that support in such a situation is a foundation of well-being – Rogers discovers that the experience of "support" depends not on a real support, but the definition of being supported and the expectations towards the others.

Obviously, the world described by Rogers is not the unified one. The situations of researched families are differentiated by their social status, material resources, education, by the impairment type, but also by the biographical fates (e.g. time of diagnosing the child – at birth, at early childhood or even in primary school). However, in my opinion, the analysis of "disabled families" private world has a universal dimension in euroamerican culture. The stories and parents' experiences would be similar in Great Britain, Canada, France or Poland. I regret only that the author concentrated just on mothers' experiences (Rogers writes much more about mothering than about parenting). To some extent it is "natural" as in the described families, these are women who play the role of primary care-takers, still a thorough analysis of fathers' stories would contribute a lot to the text.

The analysis of helping and educational system activities is the second layer of the book (chapters 4: "Statementing and Partnership: Working together?", and 5: "Experiencing a "Special Education"). In modern societies the maintenance of the private, family sphere is impossible when a family member (a child especially) presents some kind of "deviant" behaviour or suffers from the illness which hinders taking up the process of school education. The questions about social norms of adjustment and maladjustment arise, followed by the issue of responsibility for "such a child" and her/his family. These questions are usually connected with interventions of sets of experts into family life.

It seems to me that Rogers' reflection on the assessment process is very important, both for practitioners and social scientists. First of all she discovers that the British social care, medical and educational systems do not supply parents with enough support structures, while a child is being in the complicated and often long process of diagnosing and identifying the impairment. For sociologists the important conclusion is that Rogers's research shows us different connotation and understanding of labeling processes which in sociology is mainly associated with deviation. Due to Rogers' informants' experiences, diagnosis understood as a label of impairment engenders the relief that the child's disability is not "produced" by parents or by the lack of parental abilities etc. On the contrary – the assessment opens the possibilities of professional intervention. Parents wait for the label, fight for it, exploiting themselves emotionally and financially, they can even "buy" the label because it is perceived as a tool of understanding and therapy - "a passport to obtaining resources of help" and enables the control of everyday reality. Rogers

draws our attention to the fact that parents have instrumental attitude towards the labels – for example the children with autistic spectrum get more social acceptance than children with AD/HD.

The most important for the child's education is "statement of SEN", the legally binding document prepared by numerous professionals which is both a kind of portfolio of child and his/her educational needs and a kind of contract between local education authority, education provider and the parents. Rogers states that the interactions between parents and professionals are tense and difficult. The unequal status of these social actors is depicted in the processes of mutual communication. Officially parents are expected that they will take part in the process of stating. But parents often feel misunderstood, misinformed, overwhelmed by the expert professional language or even humiliated, and it seems that professionals quite often do not take into consideration the feelings and opinions of their clients and are not aware that "SEN" parents experience their situation as emotionally exhausting or even tragic. Some of SEN statements are not adequate to family and institutional reality. In such situation parents can negotiate it in the legal way, even in High Court - their emotional, financial and temporal costs are enormous in such cases.

The most difficult situations occur when a child's behaviour is perceived as "anti-social" and a family system is identified as problematic. Parents are "vindicated", "accused" of being a cause of child's difficulties and forced to participate in family therapy sessions which provoke traumatic experiences ("we were slated as a family", p. 77). In such stories we can notice the traces of professional maltreatment and evidences of systemic violence. Paradoxically, when the assessment proves that the impairment has a different origin, the issue of family therapy is located aside and a family needs to wait for the support via education route.

The inclusive education is the central issue for Rogers – she considers what social inclusion and inclusive education mean for the "SEN" parents. The standpoint of British government is that "SEN" children should be educated mainly in the mainstream schools. This standpoint corresponds with parental expectations (parents' dreams about adjusting a child to the norms of mainstream society or on the contrary their attempts to avoid negatively perceived 'special schools'). Rogers states that official assumptions do not fit the educational system based on the standards of academic excellence. Besides this, there is a strong tension between the needs of 'normal', gifted pupils and the needs of the impaired ones. It happens that disabled children are attacked by their colleagues, whose parents formulate stigmatized opinions about a disabled child, suspect that she/he comes from "pathological" family or threaten that they organize the school boycott if a child continues the education within its walls. British teachers are supposed to be trained for inclusive education system needs – but "SEN" parents mention very strong negative teachers' reactions ("I have the bloody retard in my class"). Even acceptance of school environment does not mean that a child will be protected from exclusion. Impaired pupils are often described as "sweet" or "lovable" and treated as school "mascots". Officially included, they are excluded practically, intellectually and emotionally. Some informants resigned thus from mainstream education after having noticed that this experience was too difficult for a child. Rogers describes the long journey followed by parents in their attempts to find the best educational settings for their offspring in 'special schools' or residential placements and the spectrum of their reactions towards the special education institutions from shock to a final acceptance. Respondents' children entered the education system in 1980-2002. The youngest group embraced the largest group of children in mainstream schools, thus it seems that the system has been developing towards the standards of inclusive education.

Anyway, Rogers concludes: "This idea of an inclusive education system theoretically runs parallel with the idea that family life should be uncomplicated and stable to a certain extent, as with expectations of mothering and child rearing" (p. 103).

The reader can also observe the functioning of other helping institutions like support groups and social work agencies. The first ones are rejected by persons who begin their career of a parent of a disabled child – they do not want to "confirm" child's impairment or they perceive support group as depressive organization with a tragic element. Later on – when a child is finally diagnosed - parents treat self-help groups either instrumentally – as a useful source of information or as places of common understanding in which they can resign from their "façade" and gain a temporary relief. As for social work agencies – in parent's opinion the social workers do not support "disabled families" enough. Moreover, most parents – the participants in Rogers's research, were in conflict with educational and helping institutions.

The 3rd layer of analysis regards the assumptions of social and educational policy and possibilities of creating the inclusive social system (mainly Introduction and Chapter 2: "Mothering and Disability. The Social, Cultural and Political Spheres"). The terms and concepts in which disability is described have changed entirely. But the questions arises – if the shift to non-labeling onomastics have brought the expected results in social reality and what relationships there are among the language of official documents, the philosophy of learning and the educational practice. What does inclusive education mean? - asks Roger – is it a policy, directive or a kind of rhetoric based on the ideal of tolerance towards the difference which ignores or hides the everyday excluding experiences of families with the impaired member. According to Rogers, the inclusive policy masks excluding experiences, and furthermore, the discourse on impairment regards the issues of class, unemployment, gender, ethnicity etc.

In the last chapter titled "Discovering Difference, Experiencing Difficulty" Rogers concludes that her work touches deep-seated cultural assumptions about difference and difficulty in post-modern reality. This plot was introduced in the second chapter and I cannot agree with the J. Young's opinions cited by Rogers that in modern societies the diversity has become the object of celebration, but this celebration does not regard "difficult classes" and "difficult people".

The methodological issues of Rogers's research are rather controversial. The position of the author who is both the educational sociologist and the mother of a "SEN" daughter is a particular one. Rogers is aware of the difficulties resulting from this doubled (or even tripled) role. She was acting not only as a researcher, but also as an interviewer, who needed to define her role in interactions with the interviewees and consider the possible changes if the research had been conducted by some other person coming from the outside. The obvious disadvantage of the author's situation is that the readers can impute her failure of non-objectivity. I wonder for example if a pessimistic description of intimate parents' world depicts the whole spectrum of their experiences (I can imagine that the situation and feelings of parents who rear a child with dyslexia are very different from the situation and feelings of parents who bring up a child with Down's syndrome). However, the advantage of this peculiar author's position is that we can acquaint ourselves with the social world of "impaired families" looking at it through "the glasses" of an inner observer who shared experiences with her informants. This peculiar position is a doubtful issue in this project, but I leave this question unsolved as I do not know the answer to this dilemma.

In my opinion Rogers' book can be interesting for social scientists. Although the lecture of the text can be very difficult for persons with idealistic attitude towards

parenthood and individuals who celebrate the value of life as a such, the book can be recommended as an obligatory text for professionals working with impaired persons and their families as well as for social sciences students.

Citation

Golczynska-Grondas, Agnieszka (2007) "Book Review: Parenting and Inclusive Education." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year (http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)



Qualitative Sociology Review Book Reviews

Volume III, Issue 3 – December 2007

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.3.3.10>

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Book Review:

The Deviant Mystique. Involvements, Realities and Regulation
by Robert Prus and Scott Grills. Preager Publishers, 2003, 313 pp.

Authors of "*The Deviant Mystique. Involvements, Realities and Regulation*" investigate the problem of social infamy. Robert Prus and Scott Grills disclose conditions that influence the process of constructing deviance as a public issue. They examine deviance as a socially constructed phenomenon. Prus and Grills distinguish major actors and roles that they play in deviance-making process. They write: "Our objective, thus, is to generate a sustained focus on the ways in which people define, experience, and act toward deviance within the many arenas of activity that constitute the human community" (from Preface).

Before we discuss details of the Authors' standpoint let us see how they define the term deviance.

[...] the term deviance refers to any activity, actor, idea, or humanly produced situation that an audience defines as threatening, disturbing, offensive, immoral, evil, disreputable, or negative in some way. At the very heart of this standpoint is the notion that nothing is inherently good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate. Rather, deviance is social in its very definition, or conversely, deviance is brought into existence only when something is so defined by an audience. (p. 3)

As we can see the problem of deviance is here embodied in definitions produced by social actors. Their definitions and interpretations of situation that initiate reactions constitute the status of someone who is going to be named deviant. Prus and Grills represent the standpoint totally different from the one of Robert K. Merton. His influential book *Social Theory and Social Structure* played important role in deviance perception among not only sociologists but also other people less connected with sociology. Merton connected deviance with breaking the major, socially rooted rules that are undisputed and common agreement prevails towards them. Somebody who "crosses the line" is almost automatically defined as a deviant, because being deviant is identified with not obeying the basic norms. Deviance is rather negative to society functioning because it stimulates its disintegration and lack of social integration. This standpoint was rather popular in these times and shaped social definitions of people whose behavior did not correspond with common agreement.

Prus and Grills use an interpretative approach that enables them to look at the problem of deviance from the level of interactions. Interactions lie under the process of labeling and perceiving someone as deviant. Their standpoint is very similar to the point of view represented by Orrin Klapp in his article *The Fool as a Social Type* (1949), Harold Garfinkel who wrote about group labeling in *Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies* (1956) and of course Howard Becker, the Author of the famous book *Outsiders. Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. The Authors of *The Deviant Mystique* are naturally also very close to Erving Goffman's conclusions that he presented in *Stigma*. All the authors mentioned above assume that public image which people tie with someone must not necessarily be compatible with their real characteristic. The heart of deviance-making process is public picture that is constructed, managed, shaped by the audience that takes into account selected premises and links them with the chosen individual. Prus and Grills write: "we take the viewpoint that deviance or trouble does not exist as an objective or inherent state but rather reflects some audience's (person or group) definition of that situation" (pp. 38-39).

The Deviant Mystique consists of 5 parts and 14 chapters. Part I entitled *Conceptual Frame* includes 3 chapters. The first one *Encountering the Deviant Mystique: Fascination, Indignation, and the Dramatization of Evil* refers to the problem of deviance as a social phenomenon. In this chapter there is also presented symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective that the Authors use investigating the problem of deviance. Prus and Grills convincingly connect basic premises of symbolic interactionism with the topic of their research goals.

In the second chapter *Intersubjective Accomplishment: Human Knowing and Acting* the Authors focus on basic premises that undergird the interactionist approach. There are also discussed qualitative methods with all their potentiality to show complexity of investigated reality. The Authors also provide the central conceptual frame and define the object of their interests.

Chapter 3 *Theaters of Operation. Deviance as Community Enterprise* presents "theaters in which members of the community operate and the ways in which they engage aspects of the deviance-making process" (p.10). The Authors touch the problem of how in various ways deviance can be experienced by people more or less engaged in constructing deviance. Moreover there is also shown problem of managing trouble. The Authors present strategies of dealing with deviance like: Spotting Trouble, Raising Consciousness, Identifying Deviants, Regulating Deviance, and Providing Secondary Aids. Prus and Grills also discuss the problem of Participating in Public Forums which seems to be crucial for spreading and directing deviance as a social issue. They distinguish its different ways such as: Interpersonal Exchange, Educators and Scientists, Politicians and Community Arenas, Religious and Secular Moralists, and Media Materials.

Chapter 4 *Defining Deviance: Perspective and Practises* and 5 *Labeling Deviants: Disrespectable Persons* belongs to the second part entitled *Designating Deviance*. The first mentioned chapter encompasses the preliminary matter of how people define something as deviant. The Authors investigate how influential social actors articulate, identify, promote and experience definitions of deviance within the human community. Under study are here strategies and conditions that help to define deviance. Chapter 5 presents following stages of designating deviance. It is focused on labeling deviance: "the ways in which particular people are implicated in the deviance-making process and the ways in which these targets manage the imputations, identities and reactions they encounter from others" (p.10).

The third part *Experiencing Deviance* consists of 4 chapters. The first one *Becoming Involved: Subcultural Mosaics and Careers of Participation* refers to careers of people involved in some situations that others consider as disreputable or even shameful. The Authors suggest that people labeled as deviants live in subcultural groups that gather people that are similar because of their traits, activity, interests, hobbies or other social category “[...] while people [...] often do things on their own, great deal of deviance achieves its essence only through people’s involvements in one or other subcultural contexts.” (p. 98). The seventh chapter *Engaging Subcultures: Interactive Life-Worlds* focuses on how people engage in subcultural arenas such as acquiring perspectives, achieving identities, developing relationships, doing activities, experiencing emotionality, and participating in collective events. The next chapter presents the ways people make associations. Prus and Grills write about such aspects of the process of building groups like: the grouping process, establishing associations, objectifying associations, and encountering outsiders. The ninth chapter *Solitary Deviance: Alone with Others* touches the contrary problem of “people’s capacities for developing more isolated or idiosyncratic ventures, [...] the ways in which people experience deviance and disrespectability on their own” (p. 11).

Chapters 10 – 13 are located in the fourth part entitled *Regulated Deviance*. Chapter 10 *Encountering Trouble: Handling Deviance Informally* raises the problem of informal institutions that regulate, manage or direct deviance. “In actual practice, thus, a great deal of deviance encountered both outside and inside control agencies is handled informally” (p. 183). The eleventh chapter *Organizational Agendas: Maintaining Control Agencies* focuses on “control agencies or those persons and groups in the community who have undertaken the task of regulating deviance on a more official, systematic, and sustained basis” (p. 12). The Authors discuss the problem of institutional control of deviance that is professionally organized (police, prisons, regulatory agencies). The next chapter *Assuming Office: Control Agencies at Work* is devoted to professional activity of people responsible for regulation of deviance.

The emphasis, here, is on the ways that these officeholders attend to organizational objectives, adjust to existing organizational practices, maintain order within the agency, engage (and treat) the targets with whom they work, and strive for personal viability within somewhat precarious organizational context. (p.12)

The last chapter of this part *Experiencing Disinvolvement: The Problematics of Disengagement* touches the problem of how people define their situation. The Authors write about: involvement processes and context, disinvolvement processes, experiencing treatment, ambivalence and reinvolvement. In the last part *In Perspective* and also the last chapter *Studying Deviance: Ethnographic Examinations of Community* the Authors present deviance as an aspect of everyday life. They convince that an examination of deviance lets us better understand community life with all its complexity.

The Authors of *The Deviant Mystique* investigate deviance surprisingly carefully. Each aspect of deviance-making process is discussed in detail. They examine activity of social actors, motives that direct their strategies and also contexts within which they operate. Moreover symbolic interactionism used here as an adopted standpoint enables them look at very sophisticated problem of deviance

from little distance, “frog’s perspective” as George Simmel called it. Thanks to that we can see from an interactional level how social actors create deviance. We can follow the strategies and contexts of interactions and their role in a total outcome. In my opinion this book is useful in proper understanding of human communities complexity and processes that occur there and constitute its activity. *The Deviant Mystique* seems to be right book both for people who have contact with problem presented here but also those who are interested in these issues just theoretically.

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Citation

- Chomczynski, Piotr (2007) “Book Review: Book Review: The Deviant Mystique. Involvements, Realities and Regulation.” *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year
(http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)



Qualitative Sociology Review Book Reviews

Volume III, Issue 3 – December 2007

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.3.3.11>

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Book Review:

Playing With My Dog Katie. An Ethnomethodological Study of Dog –
Human Interaction.

by David Goode. Purdue University Press, 2007, pp. 228

The book by David Goode gives us a possibility to take an extraordinary excursion to unremarkable and inscrutable world, so common for us that we do not usually notice it, although we participate in it everyday. It is a reconstructed world that shows us methods that we use in mundane life to establish an order in it and to live with others going through concrete situations. Our live consists of just these situations that we live by (as playing with a dog, talking with others, lining up the store, etc.) and not of socio – demographic data from the end of sociological questionnaires and of many other abstractions used by sociologists. What is observable and analisable not always becomes a topic of the sociological research. Ethnomethodology, a perspective used in the book, wants just to go into details and to extract them to the surface. We should not rest our analysis on the “shadows” of reality, that are cast by still available and analyzable empirical phenomena, although difficult to analyze because of sociological methods and common sense perception used by sociologists.

Methodology

The author of the book based his analyses of play interactions on common observations, on ethnography of instances of play, on video recordings of concrete plays with his dog and sequences of captured video images. There are a lot of autoethnographical motifs in the research and consequently in written book. The author use them to analyze data gathered by using “methodic procedures”, that are a part of “Garfinkel’s Analytic Device” (see Fig. 1) and proposes presentation of data by using aforementioned procedures and scrupulous analysis of the data.

(Lived Order) (Lived orderliness)	Methodic procedure	Data/ rendering description	Scheme of Detail Techniques of analysis
(DPBWK)*1	Reflecting on play and writing about it as it is naturally available	Reflection style textual data (data type1)	Content analyze / use as grounds for examining analytic and methodological issues
(DPBWK)*	Ethnography of actual instances of play	Ethnographic data (data type2)	Same as above
(DPBWK)*	Videotaping actual play	Videotapes of actual play (data type 3)	Repeated viewing of tapes – examine types for examples textually defined phenomena Examine tapes for unnoticed aspects of play
(DPBWK)*	Capturing video image in computer to produce still video images and sequencing them	Image sequences (data type 4)	utilize images to illustrate textually defined phenomena

1 - (DPBWK)*, the nomenclature in the first column refers to David Playing Ball With Katie as lived order

Figure 1. Garfinkel's Analytic Device as Applied to the Current Analysis

Analytic procedures presented above do not predict transcription of videotaped scenes. Repeated viewings and images sequencing is an analysis, that does not need its previous descriptive text covering the actions and images (although I did not notice it). Describing is a way of analysis.

Garfinkel's devise shows that the data are constructed in any case and that lived orderliness is produced by details. There is no amorphic perspective, transcending here and now and giving the transcendental knowledge, according to Goode. We always have some perspectives and see/act the world through them. Author of the book tries to be sincere in his assumptions and also to use "ethnomethodological indifference policy", i.e. to avoid using theories from existing literature before finishing empirical study.

Visual sociology – methodology continued

What lesson we can learn from Goode's analysis for practicing empirical visual sociology?

Video recordings were the basic data in analysis of plays between animals and humans. The recordings give the possibility of repetition and multiple watching the records of the same situation. It gives the chance of exact and scrupulous analysis of gestures and vocalizations occurring in the gesture exchange. Visual data, however, should not be treated as isomorphic with events that they are referencing/referring to. Recordings are done with help of a particular technology (video camera) and they are reproduced with specific technology too. There was possible reproduction and sequencing of images only in one second intervals in Goode research, because of technological limitations of his equipment. This decided about details (and sequences) of interactions that could be analyzed. Camera situated in some place

and with some angle, and/or unmanned camera, can cause that some events are going on beyond the scope of camera and cannot be recorded. It happened in the research of Goode (see p. 155).

Zooming can influence upon the level of minuteness of analysis. These all elements decide about constructiveness of data, and they should be treated as such data with taking into account the critical moments of their construction. This gives evidence of methodological fairness. Video- graphic recordings should not be treated as a simple reflection of reality, according to Goode.

There is a similar situation with presentation of data, because the reception of reader is determined by earlier decisions of the researcher what to present and how minutely? (see p. 197) Data do not exist independently as reflections of reality. They have “documentary” character and are evidences of the phenomena described in the scientific texts, even in ethnomethodological text (see Garfinkel, 1967, chapter 3).

Ethnomethodological orientation.

The everyday live consists of, so called, “**lived orders**” (or lived orderlinesses). The author introduces this concept in **chapter one**, after H. Garfinkel (2002). The concept describes “concrete, actual, and observable events” such as conversation, lining up at the store, giving directions, dying in a hospital, taking a test in fourth grade, crossing the street, etc. Although we are socialized how to converse with others or cross the streets, however in every single situation we do it in concrete circumstances, with just these people, at this place, at just this time, with just these problems at hand. A member of a society plays (owner/guardian) with the just this dog, in the place and at just this time. Ethnomethodology wants to describe how people achieve these situations. The concept of lived order gives us suggestion about general dimension of the phenomenon and the particular one, too. The lived orders are only done in details, so they must be described and analyzed in their detailed existence (p. 10).

There are described the plays of author with the dog named Katie. The naming of the dog is an evidence of personification and anthropomorphisation of animals. The relations with the dog are determined by these facts. They are full of anthropomorphic statements and “behaviors” (gestures) that are actualized in every occasion of play.

Relations between humans and animals are analyzed by many researchers from different perspectives and orientations. Many researchers assume psychological and socio – psychological perspective. Ethnomethodology is concentrated more on the actual playing and concrete players who are producing the play, not on their motives and psychological projects that are “introduced” into the play situation, as it is assumed usually in symbolic interactionism or phenomenologically inspired research. The symbolic interactionism assumes that every order can be only explained by shared meanings which organize social interaction. Ethnomethodology does not explain the phenomena of order by using the assumption of necessity of understanding others “lively inner states”. Motives, meanings, intentions and emotions are understood praxiologically in the context when such situation of understanding is needed; otherwise it is not necessary to use such concepts. The play is going on without these concepts.

Goode analyzes play as a lived order. The majority of guardians play with their dogs. Goode supports this statement with statistical data (p. 19). The play events and what was going on there were “naturally available” to players, apparently and observably (p. 20).

Presentation of the book

After presentation of the theoretical, methodological orientation and subjects of the study in the first chapter (see description above) author starts his presentation of empirical findings. **Chapter two** is the most important in the book. It is a description of the author playing with the dog, based on “procedurally inductive” research. Author starts with describing the personal history of the relations with his dog and with the characteristics of breed before he has started analyzing the play with Katie. These elements could give some background for understanding interactions and plays. Also it is important for the author to describe the contexts of play (where does it usually take place, for instance).

The author describes kinds of plays in which he participated with his dog. One of the plays is “getting the ball past Katie”. The video – recordings are exemplars of the play. Katie observes the waist of David when he wants to pass the ball over Katie. Katie reacts to feints, however usually she is not fooled by them. Katie observes, catches the ball and brings it back to David, or as usually, keeps it for herself. Some plays remind soccer game and are associated with it by positions taken by players, such as goalie or field defender. Katie sometimes changes the role from one position to another.

The throwing of the ball changes the adjustments of gestures of players. When David throws the ball, Katie watches the hand, not the waist of the partner of the play. She knows praktognosically, according to Goode, what she must do in this form of the play (p. 34).^a Changing the motifs of play requires cooperation with the other. Change from kicking to throwing needs other gestures and moves. Katie participates in the change following David, we can see it in the movie attached (Switching.avi; pp. 42- 43; CD attached to the book).

Katie is very engaged in the action when capturing the ball. She captures the ball in stride without hesitation and fumbling. When throwing and capturing are harmonized “they are events of *specific moral value* for both Katie and me. That is such events are appreciated by players as examples of ‘good’ throws and captures” (p. 36).^b

There is a talk during the play (“Good catch”, or “What a fast dog”). Talking is an interlude during the play; however it is also a part of the play. The babyish vocalizations of David also had some function in the play. The expressed appreciation of Katie and estimation of her efforts act as supporting gestures, at least to Goode.

Another form of play is *simple throw and retrieve*. Also during this kind of play David is talking. It is connected with praising the dog combined with cuddling, patting and verbal encouragements (as for example “go”). Sometimes Katie sits and keeps

^a I think, that there is too much interpretation by Goode. How he knows that she knows the positions? She can know only automatically that she must catch the ball kicked by David or follow him with his feints and sham attacks.

^b There is once again too much interpretation by Goode. The “moral value” could be imposed linguistically on “the lived order” by David with the little justified confirmation by Katie. What she confirmed is the completion of the gesture after the first gesture that has been summon waiting for completion (summon – completion). If there is a moral value then it is rather theoretical origin than locally produced and visibly confirmed and announced by both interaction partners. The similar situation could be with so called “esthetic appreciation” of the players, which is an association of the researcher and his interpretation. If the researcher looks for the locally produced orders, it should be analyzed in terms of the local play, not external terms, that are introduced by Goode. It is paradoxically against his ethnomethodological assumptions about “ethnomethodological indifference” given in the introductory chapter of the book.

the ball in the mouth and does not release it. In the situation David calls her “give me the ball”, “Give poppy the bally”, “Do not you want to play with poppy?”

Katie sometimes changed the kind of play and she decided to play with a stick than with a ball. She even barked at David when he did not respond to her “proposal”. She controlled the play. Vocalizations were very important elements of the play. “Small sounds” were expression of concentration by Katie on the play and testimonies of her big effort given to the play.

Katie and David played also with a stick in a park. When David threw the stick backward, Katie refused to bring it sometimes, because it took more effort to bring it back. Then she expressed the displeasure by barking at David. The stick thrown forward was preferred by her, because of the distance that was shorter when David approached the direction of the thrown stick. Is it not intentional?

The author writes that sometimes the kick “is intersubjectively understood by us as a poor kick” (p. 39). How does he know that? There is a problem of participant and observer relations. Goode mixed two languages here: the language of participant and observer (I think about the term: “intersubjectively”). It is difficult to be outside of the situation when you do in it participate with such commitment and engagement. The local understanding of events by participant/member could be an inspiration to have theoretical interpretations, who is the participant in this situation however? Did he vanish when a theoretician was born?

Goode points out to the contingencies of each play (this play at the just that time), although they have some general features because they are lived orderliness and have some leading motifs. The contingencies influencing on the plays could be weather, availability of objects to play (e.g. sticks), snow, presence of wild animals, etc.

The partners display lively or less **lively inner states** during play with one another. This is for Katie for example the willingness to play with David when he is working around the house. Maybe she treats the play as a work, according to the author of the book. Katie likes to show off. She is very vigorous in front of others observing her, also in front of the persons from outside of the family. Katie is also reacting to the presence of camera. Setting the camera by David stops her eagerness to play immediately when she wants to do it. It happened also that Katie did not want to play during 10 days, probably having some depression or because of other reasons not recognized by the guardian/observer. Generally the inner states of participants could be observed during the locally evoked events.

The author shows the pictures of sequences of plays with Katie and the recording of some plays on CD (attached to the book). He shows the lived orderliness that is played methodically, not random. “The lived” aspect is connected with that it must be made to happen, with just these players, in that place, under just this conditions.

Chapter three is a discussion with Robert Mitchell’s videographic research about dog – human play. Mitchell and Thompson (1991) see the players in play as a goal directed agents that have idea of keeping the play going on. The actions of players are organized into projects which are sequences of actions that are coordinated by players. The actions became routines through reciprocity of players. Although routines are not fixed, they are changed and transformed during a play and over time. When the projects are incompatible, players want to entice others through self – handicapping, refusal to play, manipulative self handicapping, etc. Humans and dogs are intentional players. There is mutual dependency and reciprocity between the players in any social play. They adjust their projects to each other. Moreover the play is made for amusement of the players. The quoted authors also mention about

the talk during play. It was compared to the mothers talking to their infants. It appeared that it has some similarities. It is a *baby talk* that consists of: high pitch, low mean length of utterances, high frequencies of grammatically acceptable utterances, repetitiveness, attention getting devices, and present tense verbs. (p. 73)

Goode agrees with many aspects of analysis by Mitchell and Thompson, **however he criticizes the idea of intention possessed by animals during the play.** His observation of the plays does not give any arguments that animals have intentions. The projects are not introduced to the play. Humans and animals create the moves and the play during just this play in a concrete situation and concrete time. The animal does not have a goal going into a play. The animals play without any intention to improve a play or a sequence of gestures. They just play. The repetition of gestures and the moves of amusement and joy are only observable features of the play, however it does not imply any intent or any awareness.

In **chapter four** D. Goode analyses usage of language to describe dog- human interaction. This is an analysis of antropomorphisation done and sometimes analyzed by Ch. Darwin, E. Crist, D. Wieder, V. Hearne, Bruno Latour and R. Mitchell. Anthropomorphization is not an epistemological error. Darwin was criticized for it because he “saw human and animal subjectivity and expression as aspects or outcomes of the same evolutionary process” (p. 84). His language about behaviors of animals was rather descriptive not coming from any theory. The language does not create the phenomena, it is rather a part of it.

People even assuming behavioral rationale for describing animals' behaviors, as scientists in biology, living together with animals must treat animals as individuals, and must treat their behaviors as meaningful and use anthropomorphic concepts to understand them on daily basis (see also my analysis of “Pets of Konrad Lorenz”, 2007). It is difficult to create “behavioral dope” from animals in everyday life, even if the guardian is Ch. Darwin or one of the founders of ethology, Konrad Lorenz. The mechanistic perspective of animal organism does not work. It is not possible to have “amorphic perspective” that is not rooted in some human base of knowledge. Anthropomorphic method is valuable form of scientific investigation, if we look at the behaviors and interactions of animals locally. Goode also used anthropomorphic terms in his plays with Katie and in his research explanations.

The concept of behaviorism or intersubjectivity is not needed to explain the interaction between humans and animals. No language is required to share the everyday life world, although it can be used on many occasions, it is not its necessary condition: “All subjectivities share this level of sensual intersubjectivity”. (p. 90). Some practices do not require any reflection or awareness; however they are done *in situ* praktognostically. The interactants and what they are doing is defined by the scenes and practices. The antropomorphization is a part of such practices. It is not an analogical thinking. According to R. Mitchell, it is a part of “appropriate use of language”. To say that somebody is “angry” does not mean any introspection of the other; it means simply understanding of the context and usage of some gestures in the context. Understanding other emotions is not projection of somebody state of minds to other either.

The researchers use often “anecdotes” to describe animals' behaviors. Such description of interactions prompts perception of animals as intentional creatures. The scientific observation of animals, according to Goode, should be a long term enterprise and we should analyze first rather syntax of their behavior (sequences of moves), than semantic dimension that consists of meanings that we are not sure.

In **chapter five** “At play and work...” author shows different kinds of dogs: working dogs, pets. He shows also that different kinds of dogs are politically

constructed, by law and socially created discourse. Dogs could be treated as useless and effect of “emourgeoisment” of, for example, nineteenth – century France. Working dogs can be of different kinds: guide dogs, hearing dogs, rescue dogs, police dogs, herding dogs, etc. These kinds of dogs show different forms of lived orderliness that is constructed in interactions with humans. Dog – guide and trainer’s dog are created by the interactions and practices used by interactants. The interactions are different because of different assumptions and practices of both relations and situations. Ethnomethodologists also create their own dog, ethnomethodological dog, that is constructed by detailed analysis of concrete situations and observations of details of locally achieved, indigenous order.

Chapter six is about Goode’s findings in relation to findings of other researchers, especially coming from symbolic interactionism. Goode’s response for a question “do dogs have minds” is “not necessarily”. Data do not indicate anything that could be an interactionally achieved mind, as is maintained in symbolic interactionism. There are only moves in a play, good or bad, it is also possible to indicate “lively inner states”, but it is not possible to observe and show minds playing together. Goode criticizes Arluke and Sanders (1996) analysis of the dogs minding and that these authors try to use the term associated with “intention and motivation”, or “awareness”, and say that minds are social accomplishments.

However, we can say, that the terms used by Goode “lived order/lived orderliness” are also concepts and that it is difficult to show them directly and without inferring from the data. We can show only behaviors referring to the concepts. The concepts come from a different level of reality than real and observable actions, gestures or moves. The participants of the play do not need the concept of “lived order” to play. There is a problem of course, how much the concepts are grounded in the empirical data, and how do they relate to the naturally happening and observed events?

Similarly Goode criticizes the utility of the symbol concept. According to him, symbolic interactionists exaggerate the importance of the language in social interaction. The shared symbols are, according to them, a necessary precondition for interaction. The data of Goode’s research does not indicate such necessity. Understanding is achieved locally and practically by reading bodily positions and postures. Catching the stick does not need any symbol for understanding the act. Shared understanding is not necessary in conversation among humans too. The social orderliness is not based on symbols or conversations. This is the most important difference between ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism, according to Goode.

However I think that there is a shared understanding of the exchange of gestures, and it is necessary for participants to continue a play. The animal predicts what can happen after her gesture and “takes the role of other”. “A” behaves in such way to evoke some expected gesture in “B”. “B” adjusts the gesture to continue the play, if she has such intent to be still in play. Both partners exchange gestures based on the definition of meaning of the partner’s gesture.

Using the concept of mind and symbol to understand empirical findings is not different from using documentary method of interpretation, according to Goode. Using theory one seeks for its empirical examples, and finding the examples one still justifies the theory/pattern looking more for further examples to support theory. Even detailed video taped analysis of situation does not change this way of thinking by researchers. Moreover so called “intimate familiarity” that is an exact knowing of the situation of interaction with dogs (although it is necessary) does not change the pattern of interpretation and does not improve scientific validity, according to D.

Goode. The author of the book criticizes researchers using the folk accounts (explanations of ethnologists, biologists, trainers, guardians) as scientifically adequate proves of some their thesis. The members of the “professions” may know much about the animals; however they know them from their own perspective.

We often meet empirical proofs that people treat animals as persons. And ethnographers show them as examples of “personification” of animals. Treating the dogs as persons, does not mean that they are persons, according to Goode. “My Roxy is just like my child” does not prove that Roxy is a person.

However if we look at the data of Goode, we can find that he treated dogs as persons, and reacted to them in the same way as to humans. Calling animals by names is only one aspect of treating them as persons. Using gestures, vocalizations and participating in exchange of gestures (as in a play) also can be a proof of treating animals as persons. Does it not mean that Katie was a “person” for him in the just this situation, just this time and by locally coproduced meanings of the person? Even, if David was not fully aware of it?

Symbolic interactionists put too much stress on the role of language in the social construction of dogs, according to Goode. Humans create identity of animals by talking, according to symbolic interaction concept. Moreover, animals are “linguistically disabled” creatures. However, dog can establish his identity to others by herself, e.g. jumping all over others in the park or playing with them without introduction by owner/guardian. It was the case of Katie in the described research. There is a bodily way of establishing of the identity in front of others. From ethnomethodological perspective there is too much theory in symbolic interactionist ethnography.

“Sharing perspective” is another weak point of SI and phenomenologically inspired approaches to investigate interactions of humans with animals. Taking the role of other, reciprocity perspectives have not been observed by Goode in his research. Gazing in one direction by human during a walk with dog, and following this gesture by dog, should be recognized each time for its specificity, because it may be done for many reasons and under different circumstances, without taking the role of other. Partners do not have access to subjective meanings of others: “Indexical meanings, as opposed to lexical meanings, are observable *in situ*.” (p. 138) Mutual understanding is achieved locally. Inborn characteristics of the animals and mind or symbols are not directly observable. We should make research on practices that are observable and researchable, according to D. Goode.

The last chapter of the book is called “What we have learned” and it is a summary of the research and critical estimation of other researches from the position of Goode’s investigations and findings. I will not repeat this summary in this review, however

I can answer what I have learned from the book as a researcher of human animals – not human animals interactions. I have learned that it is not possible to understand meanings or interactions without observing them as they are produced locally. I did many times, as other researchers inspired by symbolic interactionists, investigations on interactions using the interviews and participant observations. However it is not enough to be close to the situations of actions and even to achieve, so highly valued by us, “intimate familiarity” that is, from ethnomethodological perspective, a naïve postulate. Situations of actions should be analyzed in details and observed together with recordable and presentable fashion. Visual records give us an advantage of being scrupulous and having access to, not always, remarkable habits.

I have learned also that intersubjective orderliness could be explained by other terms than mutually shared symbols, that is only by language as it is assumed in symbolic interactionism. The central role in understanding each other in play have **bodily gestures** and vocalizations that are produced by practices in locally organized way. I understand that all social events should be thought of as contextual productions and it is difficult to make an average approach to different forms of human – animals interactions. Using situational anthropomorphisations is justifiable way of “understanding of other” in just the context, in just this time and space. Understanding emotions of animals (e.g. that they are angry, happy) is possible because of the situational conventions associating some gestures with the inner psychic states (growling, barking and snarling with anger), that we were taught during a process of socialization. The biggest lesson for me is the one about social order, how it is understood in ethnomethodology that could be summarized in the sentence written by author: “If there is order ‘at all points’, then the study of any instance will reveal that order” (p. 156).

Purely ethnographically gathered data need careful elaboration and epistemological reflection. Goode does it in every moment of his analysis. He does not treat data as found and not constructed. (pp. 128, 154, 196 - 197). The camera was usually unmanned and this could have an influence on covering only some part of the play situations. The unmanned camera structured the play, because David was aware of it and sometimes behaved as an actor and he also chose some games to be recorded, and some of them preferably suited less to recording by Goode.

Critique

One of the inputs of the book to the scientific corpus of knowledge about human – animals interactions is: „making problematic the assumed and unrecognized epistemological commitments of previous research studies” (p. 16). It is not much, I would say. The reason is that many researchers have methodological and epistemological awareness about what they do and they show it in methodological chapters and sections of books and papers (Sanders 1999; K. Shapiro 1990; R.W. Mitchell and N.S Thompson 1991, and many others). Although we must say that Goode is very thorough in his examinations of the assumptions of the researches.

Goode tries to use a policy of being “ethnomethodological indifferent” as a researcher. The policy is connected with analyzing the incidents (play) in intrinsic terms to the play contexts and with trying not to use external theories to the actual analysis. It is a very similar position to grounded theory methodology that suggests not using *a priori* theories to explain phenomena observed and researched *in situ*, and not to take earlier assumptions associated with the phenomena (Glaser 1978; Strauss, Corbin 1990; Charmaz 2006). Goode makes no references to this tradition of methodology of social research, although methodically it is strikingly similar.

However it is difficult to have “clear minds” even if this is connected only with the subject of the study and not with epistemological assumptions. We know a lot about biology and psychology of animals from the primary or secondary school, from mass – media and from anywhere. We are not “empty minded” (even theoretically, often we know theory of evolution) before observation and description of the animals behaviors. Ethnomethodological indifference seems to be the correct postulate, however it should be controlled and testified by showing the biographically achieved knowledge on the subject of study by the researcher. What we can control is only the

literature that is located in scientific libraries that we do not read before finishing the study (as Goode did). However, a better solution would be to show the interaction of the read literature and the ideas included in it, during the research, and how the ideas were used in our empirical investigation and analysis. This interaction is shown in the post – research period of Goode’s analysis, during writing a report of research that became finally the book. When the research was finished, however the analysis could still be done during writing the book concerning what was read after the research. We see the interaction and the defending position taken by Goode, because it was impossible to change anything in the research project that had been finished before reading the literature on the investigated subject. Some books could inspire him to observe something different or analyze other aspects of play. Ethnomethodological indifference is a stipulation that inhibits the interaction with the cumulatively produced science before and during research, and this forces the researcher to defend position connected with gathered data and conclusions elaborated in singularly and personally produced research and data.

The animal that Goode is after is “the social order” that exists everywhere and is reconstructed by ethnomethodological investigations: “there is order at all points” (see p. 187). However I think, that we are also able to see that “disorder is at all points” and we should describe the disorder and search for the articulation process of producing order from disorder. First is disorder and discrepancies, later is a harmonizing process. If we look for order everywhere we will find it, even in play. If we are looking for disorders we find them too, even if we concentrate on haecceities - “just – thisness” of the events happening in concrete situations and with concrete people. The play could be looked at as “disorderly ordered” event, where some innovations are always possible and “processual ordering” is always going on.

I had a lot of reflections based on reading the book; it inspired me to think about my data more critically. I also found a lot of similarities with conclusions from my research on human – animals interactions, but also a lot of differences, especially of theoretical character, however not descriptive ones. The book by Goode is one of the most important books in the field of human – animals interaction I have ever read. Excellent in every dimension of the scientific analysis!

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Citation

- Konecki, Krzysztof T. (2007) "Book Review: Playing With My Dog Katie. An Ethnomethodological Study of Dog – Human Interaction." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year
(http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)



Qualitative Sociology Review Book Reviews

Volume III, Issue 3 – December 2007

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8077.3.3.12>

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Book Review:

Memories of Branch Davidians. The Autobiography of David Koresh's
Mother

by Bonnie Haldeman and Catherine Wessinger, Baylor University
Press, 2007, 199 pp.

February the 28th, 1993, Waco, Texas. An event which took place that day, attracted the world's attention. It started with the visit of the ATF agents (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms) who showed on the Branch Davidians farm with the search warrant. The leader of this religious group, David Koresh, was suspected of the illegal traffic in arms. It was the first day of a siege, which had been lasting approximately 51 days. When the negotiations with the community leaders were giving no satisfactory results, the authorities decided to use force. They tried to compel the members of the Branch Davidians to leave the ranch. Different techniques were used to do so, such as pointing searchlights to the farm in the night and playing loud noise through the speakers. When these methods had failed the ATF and FBI decided to carry out an assault. The consequences of the occurrence were tragic. As a result of the shooting and raging fire, 76 members of Branch Davidians and 6 FBI agents were killed (Moore 1994).

The Branch Davidians case and the assault carried on by the authorities is interesting for the social scientists and practitioners in two aspects. On one side, one can examine the mechanism or a set of mechanisms that lead a group of religious people conducted by an authoritative individual to form a sect. How these mechanisms change one's perception of the surroundings and the group definition of situation so that ordinary people change into a group eager to sacrifice it's members' lives in the name of the professed beliefs? The crucial part of that analysis is to examine thoroughly the process of creating the leader of such a sect – a charismatic individual who spread his or her perception of reality into the minds of the followers.

On the other side, social scientists can inspect the attack itself. It is a matter of reservation for those involved in the occurrence both as the representatives of the authorities, the Branch Davidians community as well as the observers worldwide. The civil and criminal trials lasting for several years show how complicate this case was. President Clinton himself confessed that the ATF raid on Mount Carmel Ranch was one of the biggest failures of his presidency (Haldeman, Wessinger 2007: 169). It is worth looking at the assault from the sociological point of view. How the definition of the situation was created by the sides of the conflict? What kind of interactions occurred before, during and after the attack? What symbols were used by both sides to justify undertaken actions and to disparage the antagonist? These are just few of the countless questions that emerged during and after the Waco incident.

Many publications have been released since the siege (see: Breault M, King M 1993; Docherty 2001; Faubion 2001; Reavis 1995; Wessinger 2000 and others). One recently published is the book entitled "Memories of the Branch Davidians. The autobiography of David Koresh's mother." written by Cathrene Wessinger, Professor of Religious Studies, Loyola University, New Orleans. The inspiration for this work came from the author's meeting and the interview with Bonnie Haldeman, the mother of the Branch Davidians Leader. It consists of the recorded and edited interviews, which total length was 543 minutes, and the additional remarks made by Sheila Martin and Clive Doyle, two other Branch Davidians who survived the fire. The whole book, combined with the photographs from Bonnie Haldeman's archives and David Koresh's poems, is supposed to show the common life of the Branch Davidians, the background of and the inevitable path to the tragic events of the 28th Feb 1993. Author presented these contents on 199 pages. The book was published in 2007 by Taylor University Press, Waco, Texas.

The main aim of the book was: "to make people more aware of the true facts. I wanted to know what type of person David was, and what kind of people were at Mount Carmel." (Haldeman, Wessinger 2007: 1; words of Bonnie Haldeman). James Tabor, Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North California at Charlotte, pointed out that the publications concerning the Waco incident do not present the point of view of the victims themselves (Haldeman, Wessinger 2007, back cover). The reviewed book gives the opportunity to fill this gap by presenting the autobiography of the one involved in the Branch Davidians community – the mother of their leader.

The method of collecting the empirical data for the book seems the most appropriate for the aim presented above. By using the narrative interview the writer is able to present the world view with eyes of Bonnie Haldeman and the Branch Davidians. Therefore she is able to discern the complexity of their reality which would not be possible if the structured interview was used. By using different pre - categories the ethnography would be meager by the lack of these elusive details (see: Fontana, Frey 2000). Despite focusing on collecting the life history of Bonnie Haldeman only, analyzing other sources of data such as numerous publications available in press, TV and the Internet (e.g. Culp 2006; Dratt, Goldstone 2003; and others) and additional remarks made by two other Branch Davidians survivors enabled the context of the tragedy to be captured, alongside with the cultural, social and religious conditions of the community existence (see: Tedlock 2000).

The book is divided into three main parts. The first one presents Bonnie Haldeman's story about the time before the assault, the assault itself and its consequences. This part is told in the first person perspective so that reader gets the impression of listening to Bonnie. The narration is a combination of her story and additional remarks by Clive Doyle and Sheila Martin. The two other Branch Davidians add those facts that Bonnie could not know. Wessinger tried to capture the character of the tale by conveying the specific Texas accent which Bonnie had been using. The facts, characters and plots that seems to be explained not enough are described by footnotes, which are limited to providing some important facts, not the comments on them.

The second part of the book presents David Koresh's poems written in different parts of his life. They are presented with the information about the period of his life when they were created and their content. The third part consists of the photographs from Bonnie Haldeman's archives which gives the impression of David, Branch Davidians and the Mount Carmel ranch.

The most important feature of the book is the fact that the plot is presented without any comments or theoretical analysis from the author. This approach to the empirical data has advantages and disadvantages. The main plus is the presentation of the unbiased narration. The reader can thoroughly examine and interpret the words of Bonnie Haldeman. It was crucial to conveying the perception of reality of Branch Davidians. On the other hand the lack of scientific commentary or analysis of any kind results in a difficulty in grasping the context of the life and fall of Branch Davidians. The reader can put his or her own theoretical frame on the data presented in the book but it would be interesting to know the author's approach to it. Especially the author is a specialist in religious sciences.

The autobiographical part is also divided into parts which undertake different aspects of Branch Davidians' and Bonnie Haldeman's lives. In the first part the narrator gives an account of David Koresh's life, his fascination with religious movement and the very beginning of forming the community under his leadership. It also gives the background of Bonnie's joining the group. The picture of an everyday life of Branch Davidians gives an impression of a group of normal people living in a selected and limited environment, sharing the same interests and hobbies and spending time together. The description lacks in parts showing the religious practices, which does not affect the quality of the book. Bonnie only mentions there were some meetings and collective Bible studies, but does not deepen into the details.

The second part of the narration touches the issue of the siege, the assault and the fire during the first part of 1993. The occurrence is described on 5 pages only, which is just a minor part of the book. Author added numerous and extensive footnotes here. They are a report from the site of events rather than a scientific analysis of them. The narrator focuses on her feelings and gives the account from her point of view so these additional information help placing the events in the correct time order and places.

Such an approach to the events of 1993 results in focusing on other issues of life of the Branch Davidians community rather than on the Waco incident. One who seeks the extensive relation from Mount Carmel both from the inside and from the outside when the siege was lasting might feel a little disappointed but publishing another specific plan of the 51 days of the ATF raid was not the goal of this book. Thus it is definitely not the flaw of Wessinger's work.

The lack of description of the siege and the fire from Bonnie Haldeman reveals how hard times had she got to go through in 1993. Nevertheless it has been a breakthrough in her life and the lives of the survivors which is conveyed properly in the book. The narration itself changes from precise descriptions of the community everyday existence to more thoughtful reminiscence of friends and members of her family who died in the fire. Bonnie gives an emphasis on the fact that she treated Branch Davidians as a "big old extended family" (Haldeman, Wessinger 2007 p. 88). The members of this family are presented as individuals having their own problems, ways of living, hobbies and occupations rather than as the followers of a sect leader who were attacked on their ranch by the evil forces.

As I emphasized earlier, Cathrene Wessinger's book gives a fresh and interesting point of view on Branch Davidians. It is one of a few works where the community members themselves might express their opinion on the siege and change the stereotypical and false group image. As Bonnie admits "He (David) wasn't the person the media say He was. (...) There hasn't been too much human side put to David or most of the other people at Mount Carmel" (Haldeman,

Wessinger 2007: 1) This book is a vital part of the process of changing the common perception of Branch Davidians and their leader as a violent sect.

The absence of theoretical analysis or comments is a weak point of his book. I assume the reason for that was making the interview with one person the basis for the book. The author might have thought that even though the interview was rich in details and saturated with data, it would have been insufficient for the theoretical analysis. The second reason is probably the idea of giving the opportunity to tell the story by one of the Branch Davidians and therefore resignation of any comments in order to avoid any bias. Though, it would be interesting to find the interview analyzed from, for example, symbolic interactionism point of view. To look for example on the process of developing the group identity and examine the occurrence of 1993 by finding the rules of negotiation of the symbols and meanings.

The disadvantage mentioned above does not affect the general impression of the book. It is definitely worth reading and I recommend it. It is an informative and interesting presentation of a religious community which was wiped out in an unprecedented confrontation with the state and federal authorities. It presents important facts for description of the Waco incident. Leaving the collected data without the theoretical comment gives the reader the opportunity to look at the autobiography with his or her own theoretical frames. Therefore the book will be interesting for sociologists as well as psychologists, religious studies specialists as well as a regular reader. It is simply universal.

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Citation

- Skomorowski, Marek (2007) "Book Review: Memories of Branch Davidians. The Autobiography of David Koresh's Mother." *Qualitative Sociology Review*, Vol. III Issue 3. Retrieved Month, Year
(http://www.qualitativesociologyreview.org/ENG/archive_eng.php)

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and shows how these studios have elaborated alternative models to those commonly at work in film studio organisations. Emmanuel Grimaud has also published a portrait of a Mahatma Gandhi's duplicate (*Le sosie de Gandhi ou l'incroyable histoire de Ram Dayal Srivastava*, Paris: CNRS Editions, 2007) and his third book deals with the world of studio machineries, special effects supervisors and religious robotic theatres in Bombay (*Cosmic City*, Paris: L'Archange Minotaure, 2007, under press).

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Celia Bense Ferreira Alves (PhD) is associate professor in the English Department at Paris 8 University where she teaches classes on the US Industrial and Service Relations, Methodology, Translation and, US sociologists. She is also a researcher of the GETI (a research group specialized in School, Work and Institutions) and her interests include the study of work relations in theater activity and service occupations. She has launched a collective study on the perspectives of the non-acting theater personnel in institutions of higher education to be started in fall 2008 and is currently working on translating Elliot Liebow's *Tally's Corner*.

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Erin O'Connor, a Ph.D. candidate at the New School for Social Research in New York City, will defend her dissertation, "The Matter of Culture: An Ethnography of Embodied Knowledge in Glassblowing" in May 2008. Committed to theorizing from the body rather than of the body, she conducts *in situ* ethnographic research in the fields of knowledge, culture, and the arts. Drawing from her four years of fieldwork in a glassblowing studio, she has published on the modalities of embodied knowledge, relations of maker, tools and material, the significance of matter in language and social worlds, and imagination in *Ethnography* and *Qualitative Sociology*, as well as in the edited volumes, *Embodying Sociology: Retrospect, Progress, and Prospects* (2007) and *Practicing Culture* (2007). She also works as a qualitative researcher for a National Science Foundation study of interdisciplinary work among young scientists and is planning her next research project: an ethnography of the invisible, which will investigate processes of perception, specifically how the visible is implicated in the invisible, in both art and everyday life.

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Author-Supplied Abstracts & Keywords

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“Des personnages de si près tenus”, TV Fiction and Moral Consensus

How can we understand the adaptations of literary classics made for French television? We simultaneously analyzed the works and the context in which they were produced in order to relate the moral configurations that emerge in the stories to activities carried out by identifiable members of the production team, in specific, empirically observable circumstances. This empirical approach to the constitution of the moral panorama in which characters evolve rejects the idea of the pure autonomy of ideological contents, suggesting instead a study of the way normative demands and professional ethics are combined in practice, thus combining a sociology of characters and a sociology of professionals and showing how professional priorities influence production choices. This detaches the moral question from the philosophical horizon it is associated with in order to make it an object of empirical study. Adopting this perspective produces unexpected findings. Observation shows that the moral landscape in which characters are located is neither stable, autonomous, transparent, or consensual. It is instead caught up in material logics, constrained by temporal dynamics, and dependent on professional coordination. It is traversed by tensions between professional logics, and logics of regulation.

Keywords: Fiction; Television; Literary adaptations; Moral sociology; Television production ethnography; Characters and moral life

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Tracing the Action of Technical Objects in an Ethnography: Vinyls in Beijing

To do ethnography of artistic work implies dealing with the agency of technical objects. The aim of this paper is to share a few ideas on how to tackle the one of vinyls in the particular activity that is the *mix* of a disc jockey. To do so, I first provide a general picture of the work of Xiao Deng, a Chinese disc jockey I observed in Beijing between 2003 and 2004. Then I present three observations of specific events that occurred during that period which, I believe, bring into light not only some specificities of the agency of the technical object “vinyl” but also useful information about how one can take into account the agency of objects when doing ethnography.

Keywords: Technical objects; Technology; Agency; Ethnography; Music; Vinyls; Disc Jockey; China; Beijing

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Contributions of Ethnography to Gendered Sociology: the French Jazz World

In the last few years a number of studies have explored the epistemological uses of the ethnographer's gender in sociological research and the effects of gender on research results. These studies aim either to analyze how ethnographers can use their "gender" to open up observational possibilities, or to analyze observations made while maintaining as much control as possible over the conditions of their sociological interpretation. But relatively few papers discuss using ethnography to study gendered social relations. This article applies that approach to the observations made in my field study of the "world" of French jazz. We present here three of the main ways that the epistemological enrichment offered by ethnography may in turn enrich analysis of gender relations: access to "invisible" practices, analysis in terms of *"the arrangement between the sexes,"* the possibility of generalization.

Keywords: Ethnography; Gender; Art; Jazz; Music; Work; Ethnography; Epistemology

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The Film in Hand. Modes of Coordination and Assisted Virtuosity in the Bombay Film Studios

Less has been said about the hand movements of the film makers, their cultural dimension and the place of this "corporate language" in the film making process, probably because this object is difficult to capture even with a diary. Gestures go too fast to be sketched on the spot and often faster than the perception of the ethnographer. Some of these gestures are made to stabilize the frame or simulate the camera movement but lots of them are difficult to classify and don't fall into this category, like the ones which are produced to accompany the actors' action or to invite him to perform a certain action and which have more to do with a mode of demonstration involving the entire body. This article, mostly based on videos of Bombay film makers at work, tries to identify the specificity of these gestures in terms of communication or interaction and their potential of coordination in the film set dynamics.

Keywords: Gesture; Demonstration; Film set; Shooting; Bombay; Ethno(video)graphy

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Staging the Social Drama of Work: Ethnography of a Theater Company as a Means of Analyzing Theater Activity

This paper shows how conducting the ethnographic study of a theater hall and company can help define theater activity. Once the aesthetic of the social organization is set apart from the proper division of labor, theater appears as a collective activity which requires the cooperation of eight groups playing different social roles. The cooperation modes rest on a meshing of direct or indirect services for the actors who carry out the core task of performing. This specific organization of work around a central group is what makes the activity artistic. Simultaneously, the service relation offers the possibility for some categories to bring their relationship with actors closer to a state of symmetry and sometimes reverse asymmetry. As

a status enhancing opportunity, service relationship for actors also directly or indirectly provide the grounds for participant commitment and thus guarantee long-lasting operation for the theatrical organization.

Keywords: Theater ethnography; Collective activity; Division of labor; Tasks; Social roles; Service relationship; Commitment

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The intricacies of Being Israeli and Yemenite. An Ethnographic Study of Yemenite “Ethnic” Dance Companies in Israel

Focusing on the work of Yemenite “ethnic” dance companies in Israel, this article aims to understand how issues such as a shift in collective representations come to be invested into dance practices. In other words, it discusses how artistic creation and identity reconfigurations happen to associate in a dance form, and how an ethnographic study of dance practices and their contexts of performance may be a valuable way of accessing the dynamics of self-positioning of a group within the surrounding society. Linking together “classical” ethnography, formal analysis of dance products presented to the audience, and socio-political contextualisation, the present analysis shows that the articulation of two apparently contradictory ways of building these companies’ repertoire allows Yemenite dancers, choreographers, and also internal audience, to assume in one single dance form a sense of “being Yemenite” whilst not giving up the national dimension of their Israeli identity.

Keywords: Asymmetric ethnicity; Artistic creation; Cultural representation; Dance Company; Dance; Politics; Ethnography

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The Centripetal Force of Expression: Drawing Embodied Histories into Glassblowing

Getting at the tacit understandings of an artful practice is critical in coming to understand the processes of creativity. To achieve this, the researcher, specifically the ethnographer, must place herself in the position of the maker, that is she must herself, make and create. This article provides an account of arriving at the methodological imperative of *in situ* ethnographic research through actual ethnographic research on the relation of maker and material. From an *in situ* position, it theorizes the modalities of expression in practice, from problem-solving, to personal style, to the intentional drawing in of embodied histories in practice. This incorporation of varying embodied histories into a current practice is then explored as the possibility for affecting what is recognized in the field as “new” or “innovative”. We will see, however, that affect is grounded more in the corporeal revealing of unexpected aspects of the material worked up.

Keywords: Embodiment; Expression; Practical knowledge; Art; Glassblowing; Epistemology; Ethnography; Phenomenology; Materiality; Innovation

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“Ethnographies of Artistic Work”

Volume III ~ Issue 3

December 30, 2007

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ISSN: 1733-8077

