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THE STORIES THAT I WROTE/ THE I THAT STORIES WROTE

Gaurish Chawla

Submitted towards fulfilment of the requirements for Doctor of Philosophy at Durham University

Durham University Business School
Department of Management

The stories that I wrote/
The I that Stories wrote

Abstract

"It becomes ruthlessly apparent that unless we are able to speak and write in different voices there is no way to convey across borders, to speak to and with diverse communities" (bell hooks, p41, 1999).

This thesis is a compendium of stories of a few NHS workers and their everyday lives, the traumas they face, the feelings they sublimate and suppress and the impact they had on me; a heartfelt autoethnography (Ellis, 1999) of the I who interviewed them and got displaced in the process, and the theoretical constructs that underpin both these stories and the storyteller.

In my indigenous system of knowledge (Jnana Yoga), knowledge is tripartite. The first facet is that of the (hearing of the) subject: The Other from which we seek to learn and understand (in my case the interviewees). The second facet is that of (thinking) formulating theorisations that you hold true- the underpinning assumptions of the knowledge. The third facet is (meditation) the reflections upon the transformation of the I who is creating the knowledge, its beliefs, emotions and identities, and the shifts that occurred in the process of knowledge creation (see Rao and Paranjpe, 2016; Grimes, 1996, pp 98-99). The three occur together and form jnana (knowledge/wisdom).

The work I present to you for my Doctoral examination is structured in the tradition of this trinity.

This thesis is organised in six sections.

In Contexts, I introduce this work and the intersections it inhabits: introducing themes such as Queer Writing, Prose Poetry and their place in Critical research.

In Theories and Definitions, I write of the world view I and this work have come to inhabit through the studies and meditations I have been through. This addresses themes of Ideology, Hermeneutics of Suspicion, Psychodynamics and a Marxist critique of it, Language and Trauma.

In Methods, I speak of the various I's that inhabit me, as well as the processes of interviewing and that of knowledge production. The former is expressed through Heartful Autoethnographic (Ellis 1999) work, and the latter takes form of discussing Free Association Narrative Interviews (Hollway and Jefferson, 2008) and my method of interpretation/meaning creation. I also explain how I started from the latter and continued with the former.

In Seeing Comes Before Words (After Berger, 2008), I write of the interview process viewed through psychodynamics- e.g. How the interviewees' narrative exhibits Free Association, Repression and Defence Mechanisms and so on. I explain the decisions I made in this process of knowledge creation.

In Stories from Empirical Work/Brief Interviews with Non-Hideous Women/Men (after Wallace, 2012), I write of the stories told to me by the interviewees. I spoke with seven people at length, and viewed our interactions through a psychodynamic lens. My interpretation of these interactions, a psychopathology of everyday working life, cover themes such as Power, Privilege, Politics, Oppression and Trauma, and the impacts of work on their selves. These are presented in stories of various length.

Once the knowledge is created, comes the question of form: what aesthetics convey this trinity of knowledge best.

Rather than reduce the above themes to abstract, distant concepts, I connect with my own traumas, my own otherness to write of these in an evocative manner- my writing perhaps best described as “queer” (see Barker 2020), a hybrid of prose and prose poetry (see Heatherington and Atherton, 2020 or for a quick summary, Poetry Foundation (2021)).

Through my writing style, I attempt to evoke the same feelings in the reader as I felt during the process.

This work sits within the tradition of Critical Management Studies (Alvesson, Bridgman and Willmott, 2009).

Sympathisers of Helen Johnson’s “Ten Incitements to Rebellion” (2021) will resonate with this work.

Let’s begin.

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Statement of Copyright

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Acknowledgements

To the domestic/ the carer/the cleaner.

I have met all of you, and I have been all of you for a brief, but important chapter of my life.

This work acknowledges the impact you have all had on me and my life. Hope this resonates.

She works 3 jobs
to feed the hungry mouths.
The coordinators barely pay her petrol
Her hours go missing, timesheets play tricks on her.
It only takes an hour to clean up all this mess. Yeah right.

She works twice as long, for free,

for she longs for the peaceful company

of the mop bucket

the old person

the poop and the pee are her only friends.

At least they don't fire back words of hurt.

The abusive husband at home is too much.

Sleep? She has to get up

to get back to cleaning the poop

of the rich people who won't pay her.

Stuck in Zero-hour contract.

The BOSS/LANDLORD/TAXMAN/DEBT COLLECTOR

has her on a leash.

And she does,

for the children

need food.

Of course, she can leave, get “another job”.

For this to happen all over again.

It is inequality only in academic papers.

To those who live it,

it is violent oppression of the totalitarian state.

To the academic it is inequality.

To the sufferer it is trauma.

An existential crisis.

The cleaner the precarious worker the immigrant the carer

different labels hide away the same pain.

You can’t do anything about it, I hear. Of course, you can’t.

You can’t write a letter, you can’t afford to displease your Lords. Of course.

Please do write your next paper and tell me how it is so bad that inequality exists while she cleans the carpet that you rub your shoes on as you write that paper.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to those seeking to rebel, to transform from within. I connect with you. This is for you.

Ten Incitements to Rebellion

All quotes below from (Johnson, 2021).

> "Incitement One: In a research landscape dominated by a two-paradigm model …
>
> … stage your rebellion through a third paradigm of **arts-based research**."

> "Incitement Two: In a context where researchers' positionality is viewed as contaminant …
>
> … stage your rebellion by **mobilising subjectivity** as a tool of inquiry."

> "Incitement Three: In the face of epistemologies based on what can be explicitly demarcated and delineated …
>
> … stage your rebellion in **liminality, silence, metaphor and imagery**."

> "Incitement Four: In societies where power rests with the (predominantly white, male, middle-class) academy …
>
> … stage your rebellion by **listening to, and learning from, marginalised voices**."

> "Incitement Five: In a realm where knowledge is presented as singular, fixed and impersonal …
>
> … stage your rebellion by **embracing the performative, dynamic and inter-subjective**. … by becoming a **co-conspirator in the pursuit of social justice**."

> "Incitement Six: In a world where North American and European values are paraded as truth …
>
> … stage your rebellion by striving to **decolonise art, research, knowledge**."

> “Incitement Seven: In a territory where the researcher is king …
>
> … stage your rebellion **by yielding control** to artists, educators and community practitioners.”
>
> “Incitement Eight: In a neoliberal system dominated by productivity, competitiveness and individual performance …
>
> … stage your rebellion **by taking time, valuing process over product** … by confronting neoliberal ideology through critical resilience, collaboration and community.”
>
> “Incitement Nine: In a field where few are prepared to confront the radical, transformative potential of the arts for research …
>
> … stage your rebellion through **a research model that integrates the arts at all stages** … through an **openness to new forms of knowledge and new ways of writing**.”
>
> “Incitement Ten: In a market-driven model focused on short-term cost–benefit analyses …
>
> … stage your rebellion by taking time … by **making space for the intangible**.”

(Johnson, 2021 pp 4-16) My Emphasis.

Some of these, this work aspires to.

Some of these, I carry as aspirations for the future….

Chapter 1: Preface

Beginnings

> "Beginnings are a problem. They're difficult to locate; they're hard to decide on. How does one start? Where does one start?
>
> Perhaps surprisingly, the psychoanalyst's answer to this question is: anywhere. Psychoanalysts start with something arbitrary. They first of all ask their patients – or 'analysands' – to say the first thing that comes to mind. Being unpremeditated, and hence uncontrolled, this first thing might be something unexpected. Yet it might also imply something else. To start this process off, of course, one would have to say something random, that is say the first thing that comes to mind. Just as much as anything else, this might be vinegar." (Murray, 2015 p7)

Vinegar.

Creative Activism in Academia

Harrebye offers a succinct definition of Creative Activism as a form of "meta activism that facilitates the engagement of active citizens in temporary, strategically manufactured, transformative interventions in order to change society for the better by communicating conflicts and/or solutions where no one else can or will in order to provoke reflection (and consequent behavioural changes) in an attempt to revitalize the political imagination." (Harrebye, 2016, p25).

This thesis is an embodiment of Creative Activism in academia. Through this work, I highlight several conflicts, issues and potential solutions which I felt needed drawing attention to. As I show through the autoethnographic Identity work in subsequent chapters, I am uniquely positioned to witness the interplay between race, class, academic structures, our relationship with those we call 'Immigrants', parenthood, and my own privileges as a man and academic myself. This unique intersection, as I discuss later on, is not well represented in academia so my account herein is an important contribution.

Similarly, as a researcher and a theorist who finds himself at the intersection of decolonial, feminist aspirations of Critical Management Studies and the capitalist neoliberal system it is situated 'within and against' (I explore this concept of being within and against at length in the section on Queering the Thesis), I notice some ideological conflicts. I am of course not the first one or the only one to notice these- indeed some of these perspectives have been reviewed in 'Textual Turn in CMS' section. An example of this conflict that I witness is that around grammar. The academy wants to capture what happens when grammar fails (Pullen

and Rhodes 2016) and yet finds itself constricted by its own reified rules around grammar and writing conventions, to restrict its own progress. Going back to Harrebye's definition above and applying it here- I position myself as an individual who wants to find a solution, as Harrebye puts it, to what to do when grammar fails. What, and how to write when you are absolutely terrified of what you have seen, and it haunts your words? How then to find a way out of there? And then, how to bring it to the academy so that the academy accepts this work as a solution to its own stated problems- or, as Harrebye puts it, change society for the better.

As an interviewer, similarly, I found myself at a nexus where individuals told me their everyday stories. The everyday, mundane stories carry with them the weight of the various ideological truths that govern our society. Everyday sexism, everyday power relations, stories of leading, of following, stories of resisting. Once again, as an interviewer, I found myself at a nexus where I was able to witness conflicts and issues where not many can. It became my sincere responsibility to represent all of this knowledge, and learning, in a way that is accessible and resonant with you, the reader.

This thesis, then, imagines itself to be a kind of , to use Harrebye's words from above, strategically manufactured intervention that aims to communicate these conflicts and some potential solutions in order to encourage reflection and revitalise our political imagination. Of course, in chapter 1 I also cover why such an intervention is important, timely and necessary. Why did it need to come from me? Partly because of my own unique intersection- not many who see what I have seen get a chance to enter their account in the annals of history. I know many self-funded students who have been unable to complete

their PhD's due to the pressure of COVID, or due to their parental responsibilities. When I was a wee boy, my mum toilet trained me by singing a song that effectively taught me to use the open drain outside our house as a toilet. Somehow, by tricks of fate, I find myself in this position- holding this pen, nearing the end of this PhD.

And it is a trick of fate. Consider these headlines- both in the BBC, two years apart:

"Students 'may have been unfairly deported' over English test cheat claims" (BBC News, 2019)

And,

"The English Test that ruined thousands of lives" (Main and Watson, 2022)

These headlines concern several thousand international students accused by the Home Office of cheating in their English Language tests. The stories highlight accounts of students deported, losing their livelihoods, and in some cases, spending a substantial amount of money and time trying to clear their names. People speak of ruined reputations, paying substantial amounts on legal fees- all because of the Home Office accusations of cheating in language tests. As the BBC investigation in 2022 (Main and Watson, 2022) has revealed, it is almost certain that these accusations were wrongful, and they have resulted in catastrophic consequences for a lot of people. After a long process of struggles that came at personal cost to a lot of people, finally the Home Office accepted the error, as Main and Watson (2022) report.

In this instance, there are three things worth highlighting for us. Firstly, that this violence has happened in the name of accuracy of language, within the context of Higher Education-Home Office relations. Accuracy in language has been wielded as a weapon to destabilise individuals who were students, and later on working. One point here is that they had not cheated, so didn't deserve this punishment. The other point is, that even if they had, did that really warrant the kind of punishment that would ruin lives? Is it really right to put grammar on such a pedestal? And if this is what's happening in the name of language to fellow Higher Education Students, like me, what form could and should my non- violent resistance take? And if Critical Management Studies, as I discuss later, is for egalitarianism, how should or could it incorporate, amplify and channel the energies of this work? I discuss language further in Queering the Thesis.

Secondly, as there was not much basis for this allegation, I have to bear the thought that on a different day, in a different time, it could have been me. I took an English language test, did rather well on it actually, before the start of this degree. But when the power comes for you, it comes for you. Morality of right and wrong is only applicable when oppression is being enforced- power is seldom held accountable- barring for a significant personal risk and effort by people like those whose testimony Main and Watson (2022) cover.

The third thing, reader, is that as horrific as this scandal is, it is an extension of our normal attitudes and our normal society. These exceptional situations are when we are alerted to the horrors of the ideologies that run beneath the surface in our society. And for me, for this thesis, it is this 'normal' that needs to be examined rather than focus too much on the scandals. And that attitude is what informs my analysis in chapter 6.

In that context, my creative activism involves highlighting the violence that happens in the everyday in the name of language. I discuss that in Queering the Thesis. Going back to Harrebye's definition of cultural activism, I am an individual at a unique intersection- where I have felt the fear of something like that happening to me, but somehow find myself relatively safe. So I use this pen to highlight these issues. Through autoethnographic undressing, I situate myself into a world of struggle between coloniality and decoloniality, researcher and researched, prose and poetry, writer and painter, author and painter, academic and artist, right and wrong, normal and abnormal, within and against. I must bring all of me with me, and that's what I try to do in the forthcoming pages- as they say- warts and all. My aim with this intervention, to continue with Harrebye's definition, is to enrich our collective knowledge and political imagination and show some potential ways past our current conundrums. Similarly, I present the interviews of the researched in a way that I resonate with them- their words and their emotions.

Of course, it would be naïve to not acknowledge that my own work here is supported by and situated within a wider context. I draw on some of these sources as I talk about language, autoethnography, psychodynamics and work. Here though, I want to highlight some other creative activism within the academy. Adler (2002) writes about creative activism for social justice in academia. Adler's intervention takes the shape of a creative writing programme set up to explore issues of social justice as experienced by students. Adler writes that even though she learnt Creative Writing and Poetry in the traditional way, learning about meters, rhythms, metaphor, for instance, but these are not enough to open up the space, to "peel away the constructed silencings… gender class and race issues that bind the tongue (Adler, 2002 p138)'. Adler talks about moving away from these rules, these

reified conventions, and teaching students to write in a way that "feels right" (Adler, 2002 p138). Adler's creative activism has been to set up this programme as a space for innovation. As you work through the pages, you will notice that I empathise with this position and this thesis aims to bring some of that creative inventiveness into the study of work. Note also, the word silencings- as used by Adler. Adler is credited as Associate Professor at California State University in the introduction (Adler, 2002 p136). Silencings is a misspelling, it is highlighted by my MS Word Software as a wrong spelling. Adler has yet, used this, perhaps deliberately, to drive the point about innovation, and I empathise with that position, as we shall see further on. In the world of creative innovation for some- a different kind of accuracy becomes important- the accuracy of capturing the exact moment, rather than producing a work that serves a particular ideology. Along similar lines, an instance of using Zine making has been recounted by (Gray, Pollitt and Blaise, 2021) as a feminist response to COVID-19. Gray, Pollitt and Blaise (ibid.) argue that "a type of feminist work exists between academia and activism that subverts institutional definitions of productivity, collaboration and output" and it is my intention to explore that/carve out that landscape in the middle.

Volcanoes explode, create new land

Couture (2017) writes autoethnographically about their experience of activism and academia, meditating on how and where they mix (or don't). This is an important issue to think about- Why Creative Activism as an academic? Couture (2017, p 145) talks about the challenge that academics face in trying to keep careers alive in a publish or perish culture, and balancing that with activism. I can empathise with the problem and sometimes

compromises and sacrifices need to be made. But we also have to push forward the argument that social justice is a defined and well-established aspect of academic work, indeed perhaps this is or should be, the most important purpose of academic's work- so we must chip away at this boundary between activism and academia. There are plenty of academics doing that, and some of them are cited as we go along. A useful reference point could be Gandhi's talisman. Gandhi offered this thought experiment as a question to ask yourself, if you ever wonder about the significance of your work:

> "I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man [woman] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him [her]" (Pyarelal, 1958 p65). (For a full pictorial representation, see Appendix 3).

Gandhi's talisman was printed on the inside margins of national curriculum books when I was growing up, and it continues to be a useful litmus test when confronted with the question- who do your words work for.

When talking about creativity, activism and academy, I also want to talk about Derrida. I had just submitted the thesis for examination and started reading a biography of Derrida: 'An Event, Perhaps' (Salmon 2021) that had just come out in paperback. As I read it I recognised the similarities in Derrida's work and this work.

Derrida claimed “I too would like to write like a woman. I try (Salmon, 2021, p. 31) …”. In this phrase one can begin to see similarities between Derrida’s intentions and mine. What Derrida was highlighting, as I am in the forthcoming pages, is an exploration of the question Nietzsche asked: “Supposing truth is a woman. What then?” (Nietzsche, 2014).

Nietzsche’s question is directed at philosophers who have been trying to understand the world within the masculine framework of rationality. Nietzsche provokes and challenges a philosopher who accepts and reproduces dogma without thinking critically about it. One might argue that Derrida’s claim to try to write like a woman is an acknowledgement of the rational framework of truth and also a testament to his intentions to diversify knowledge. Salmon recounts how Derrida, both through his writing (which I find creative- considering his neologisms and playful subversions) and activism, attempted to open up academy and its role in the society. Note this statement here:

> “Derrida cleared spaces that looked like obstacle courses for anyone who did not fit the professorial profile at the time. He practiced, whether consciously or not, a politics of contamination … Derrida blew into our town-and-gown groves with protofeminist energy, often, and at great cost to the protocols of philosophical gravity, passing as a woman.” (Salmon, 2021. p69).

Derrida, through his politics of contamination, was bridging the gaps, was breaking the boundaries through his creative activism. This work aims something similar, as you will see. And it is important to pursue this aim, for the sake of Critical Management Studies. I discuss Critical Management Studies in Chapter 2- it’s egalitarian aspirations, it’s aims to

incorporate critical theory into the study of work. Therefore, this work, as a piece of Creative Activism, sits well within the realm of Critical Management Studies.

Finally, as Audre Lorde puts it, “Change is the immediate responsibility of each of us, wherever and however we are standing, in whatever arena we choose”. (Lorde 2013, p21). With that in mind, this thesis decides that it is in the here and now, it is in its own medium, it will push for an alternative reality to be actualised.

Here’s to new.

Arts Based Research

Leavy writes in what is (Leavy, 2017 p4) one of the first text books of Arts Based Research in the UK, that Arts Based Research, as the name suggests, combines the creative energy of 'arts' with the enquiry of 'research'. Leavy summarises various names it is known with, such as Art Based Inquiry, Arts Informed Inquiry, Research based Art, and various other permutations and combinations. The essence, as Leavy summarises, is that this is a paradigm or way of working that seeks to transcend the somewhat artificial divide between the 'arts' and 'research'. I say the divide is somewhat artificial, because, once we reflect, pieces of artistic creation often- if not always- contain social commentary and reflexivity. Similarly, writing research is also, one might argue, an art.

There is a risk that by defining 'Arts Based Research' we distance it from both arts and research: nevertheless the term is a useful one. For one, with definition comes validation. It allows for students and practitioners to find an epistemological home. As Leavy (2017, p6) summarises, there are plenty of ways of integrating arts and research- use of photos, paintings, poetry, music and dance- or indeed any other forms of 'art' to add to the meaning that the researcher is trying to convey can be powerful. Of course, underpinning Arts Based Research is the epistemological belief that emotional knowledge is knowledge, and a work seeks to not just convey 'rational thought' but also 'move emotionally'. As you will notice, I have used several aspects of Arts Based Research in this thesis. The theory around reworking of Freudian iceberg model of subconscious has been represented with a painting. The emotional aspects of certain key points have been conveyed through poetry and prose poetry. The structure is a nod to Queer writing. The photo- elicitation based free association

interviews could also be thought of as art- initiated- inquiry. One contribution of this work then, is to firm up Arts Based Research and its presence in Critical Management Studies.

Poetic Enquiry

Faulkner presents an important analysis of poetic enquiry and writes about the various ways in which poetic enquiry is used in academic work (Faulkner 2017, p210). Faulkner describes how poetic enquiry in research, essentially, uses poetic work as a part of academic work- this could mean use of poetry before analysis, such as part of a research method, during analysis, or after analysis, e.g. in the writing of the work. In my case, poetry has been used to emphasise certain points of significance- to capture the emotional burden of the thought being articulated. As Faulkner writes (ibid.) poetry's use in research brings together the writing genres of 'literature' and 'social sciences'. Through the scope of representation it allows, poetry allows the author to, as Faulkner writes elsewhere, negotiate fluidity in identity (Faulkner 2006), represent marginalised voices (Faulkner and Nicole 2016) and effect social change (Faulkner 2018). It is a way to "tap into universality and radical subjectivity" (Faulkner 2017, p210).

I explore this potential of Poetic Enquiry within this work. For this work, poetic writing, poetry and prose poetry have been incorporated as a necessary part of including the emotive element of discourse. It was felt necessary to capture these sentiments in order to push the boundaries of reflexivity and what is deemed possible within organisational research writing. As Faulkner writes, the use of poetic enquiry brings together literature and social sciences.

Lyric Enquiry

In Arts Based Research, the term Lyric Enquiry is also sometimes used to speak of poetic Enquiry, so it merits a brief discussion here. Lyric Inquiry can be defined as using poetry and prose to tell stories and offer perceptions from our experience (Arrows 2008, p107). It forces one to consider the story and the aesthetics of the telling. It unites lyrical expression with creation of knowledge. Lyric enquiry is underpinned by "the processes and demands, as well as the tropes, conventions, semiotic and sensory interplay involved in the creation of an aesthetic work". (Arrows 2008, p107). The author goes on to explain how then, lyric enquiry (the term poetic enquiry is often used as well to convey a similar meaning) incorporates various non-rationalist ways of writing- be it stories, poetry, fiction and non-fiction, prose poetry, dialogue etc. As a writing practice, lyric enquiry aims to embrace "ambiguity, metaphor, recursiveness, silence, sensory immersion, and resonance" (Arrows, 2008 p108). As the reader will notice, my work is a form of lyric enquiry.

I make use of poetry, stories, prose poetry extensively through the thesis. Where I write prose, I structure it in a way that is different to traditional written work, but in a way that is inspired from the genre of writing that is Queer Writing. I explore prose poetry and queer writing in chapter 1. A major contribution of this work is to bring these forms of writing into the study of work, into CMS in an answer to the question posed by Pullen and Rhodes (2015)- how does one write when grammar fails.

As you work through this thesis, you will encounter poems, prose poetry, and prose written in a poetic manner. This work brings to bear a different way of writing that, by its existence,

subverts the 'normal' way of writing in the academy. There is a growing recognition of importance of aesthetics of writing within the Critical Management Studies, and I cover relevant literature in chapter two. However, the different way of writing this, most importantly, was felt necessary to fully convey the everyday rebellions of my interviewees, the resistance beneath the surface they routinely portrayed. In order to be sincere to my participants, that resistance needed to be captured and conveyed (rather than, say, steamrolled into a neat positivist executive summary) to the reader and I fell towards a poetic form of writing as something that I felt allowed me to do that.

Queering the Thesis

> "It seems to me that if qualitative social research is to rediscover its social meaning and purpose, it must move swiftly away from the arid, unimaginative and formulaic pattern represented by the Standard Qualitative Doctoral Thesis. This calls for courage and imagination from students, supervisors and examiners as well ..." (Gabriel, 2005, p4)

The purpose of this chapter is to guide you, the reader, into the document that is in front of you. While the academy often detests the Standard Qualitative Doctoral Thesis (henceforth SQDT) (Gabriel 2005), its anxiety when faced with someone/thing not so standard is sometimes palpable. Where is the contribution? How can this be graded? How do we make sure this is not 'bad work'? Are questions that I fear. Does that signal my inadequacies or, how little the academy has moved forward in its practice of inclusion of varying

epistemologies and varying ways of knowing, despite its rhetoric of “Equality and Diversity”? You judge.

I intend to provide a defence of presenting my work to you in this way; as well as a way within, to you, the reader into the doctoral dissertation that follows. As you will see from what follows, I wrote this project under some duress. State Violence, Racial violence, my own ‘mental illness’/deviation from ‘normality’ and the implications of not coming from a highly privileged background, the disability/learning difficulty/neurodivergence/’being different’ of my wife and the duress she faces and consequently the support (I HATE THAT WORD IN THIS CONTEXT, I love her, that’s what we do, she supports me in many ways too, but this is the neoliberal language so keep my secret within these brackets, for outside of this bracket I go with it) and us both learning to manage that, birth of our first child, the neo-colonial condition of being an immigrant, my own mental illness and that of my wife (it occurred many times so I say it one more time), and then, our shared trauma that has been this global pandemic- not to mention witnessing events such as Grenfell, Windrush, events in Afghanistan and so on, which evoke a sense of anger, rage, empathy and helplessness.

All of these influenced how and what I wrote, because, they influenced me- they influenced the I who wrote, as well as provided the context within which I wrote. At one point I did seek to interrupt but through a mistake, I was not able to take that opportunity (no hard feelings) so I wrote through what I lived through, sublimating the world around me. Writing as therapy? Perhaps. This writing became a place where things which were not allowed to exist could seek refuge.

I wrote what I wrote, and how I wrote- and more on this will continue to emerge in this chapter as well as throughout the thesis, but as time came to present this work to you, the anxiety that this work may be too far out of the margins of 'normal' to be perceived with any sort of kindness takes over me and those who care for me. So, I 'corrected' it, 'compromised', edited myself.

However, as I was trying to write reflexively, write autoethnographically, write in a constructionist manner, the I was always implicated within, intertwined with, what I was writing. As the I was writing the work, the work was writing the I. By the end of it all, we both ended up in someplace unexpected, a place foreign. Now the anxiety is that this work/I are too foreign for what is acceptable as doctoral work in the academy, so I am now, yet again, having to map out this work/myself to quell the anxieties of the powers that be.

The anxiety is justified as in addition to the part of me that is upset, angry at many things in the wider world as well as within academia, there is also the part of me that draws a living and feeds his child through the same institution. A sort of within and against situation, as Holloway describes in Crack Capitalism (Holloway, 2010). This chapter then is a sort of academic equivalent of a Home Office Interview. Necessary, although part of me wishes it was unnecessary. But the only way through this situation for me, the only way to assert my humanity was through that interview: if I sidestepped it, I would have perhaps been:

detained/kicked out/separated from me to be wife/my child who I love with all my being would not be

Similarly, if I don't explain myself here, I am told, my work is too risky, too out there, too unconventional that I may be kicked out. So here I am, explaining myself yet again.

Sigh

This anxiety necessitated writing of this work in which I explain my position a little bit, and help you into what's coming. This chapter addresses the following points, in that order:

- Criticisms of the Standard Qualitative Doctoral Theses (SQDT)
    - In Critical Management Studies
    - Postcolonial perspective
    - Queer Theory and writing Queer

- Finding my Epistemological Fragments
- Mapping my thesis on to the SQDT
- In defence of the personal/confessional

First, I want to share some thoughts on a PhD thesis that attempts to write differently, and in my view, does an exceptional work of it. Weatherall (2018) in her PhD thesis, deviates from the SQDT and presents her work in a "rhizomatic" fashion. Weatherall makes it clear that her background in literature, i.e. another part of her identity, was an important influence in her coming up with the structure and presentation of her approach. I do something similar, as shall become apparent.

I will continue to go back to Weatherall's work (2018), particularly in this chapter, for it is a great inspiration and a stellar piece of doctoral thesis writing in 'management setting'. While those of you that resonate well with creative approaches to research may think this explanation is unnecessary, I have been reminded that this thesis started within a business school, within Critical Management Studies, and that's where it is being submitted, so I have to do the necessary work of fitting in.

While I don't write in a rhizomatic fashion (hence won't go into details of that), the point of learning here is that it is possible to bring in other ways of writing, other ways of asserting yourself into management education and research, and this is the possibility this work explores further.

Similar to Weatherall above, I was also undone by the people I interviewed, and the process of reading, writing, along with the context I was in. Like Weatherall, I decided to let the undoing and rehashing be a part of the process instead of writing it out. Like Weatherall, I bring other aspects of my identity into this work- the events and situations I have hinted about previously, and will let you in on at various points throughout the thesis. I refer to Weatherall's work extensively in this chapter to assert the possibility of doing doctoral work differently and being accepted for it.

Criticisms of the Standard Qualitative Doctoral Thesis

Starting from where it all started for me, Gabriel's writing on Standard Qualitative Doctoral Thesis (2005) which critiques the formulaic nature of a lot of qualitative doctoral work submitted in English Language Academia.

Gabriel writes, in criticism of the SQDT-

> "One of the trends I have noticed in recent years as an examiner, a doctoral supervisor and a doctoral instructor has been the emergence of the 'standard qualitative doctoral thesis' (SQDT). This is a trend that parallels the increasingly formulaic qualities of published articles but may be, if anything, even more damaging since it traps young minds into ways of doing research that become impossible to shake off later on.
>
> The SQDT is now firmly established, first, as the starting point of an academic career, second, as the inspiration for innumerable qualitative articles published jointly by younger scholars and their supervisors, and, thirdly, as the exemplar for qualitative research against which other outputs are frequently measured...
>
> The 'standard qualitative doctoral thesis' starts with vacuum cleaning every single article published in the last fifteen years or so with the words X, Y and Z in the keywords field. You can choose any X, Y and Z you please, so long as they are not

regular bedfellows. This is said to lead to an identification of a ‘gap’ in the literature and a potential for contribution.

This, in turn, is succeeded by a methodology section which, following various pious and half-digested platitudes about ontology and epistemology, justifies the use of some 45-50 interviews, sometimes supplemented by some observations, to address the gap.

Data is then diligently collected and processed through a carefully detailed coding procedure usually involving an electronic resource like NVivo. This has now become highly mechanized and can be viewed as the qualitative equivalent of number-crunching in quantitative research. It leads predictably and unproblematically to a findings section involving a variety of verbatim quotes from the interviews, often summarized in a number of tables.

The standard qualitative doctoral thesis then concludes with a discussion and a concluding section, in which claims are made about having filled the gap, having identified some further gaps and acknowledging certain shortcomings in the research, especially the methodology section. Various sins of commission and omission are duly acknowledged which do not alter the author's fundamental belief that the gap has now been filled for good and all. (The commonest sin is not having done more interviews, a sin of quantity in qualitative research). ”

This passage really underlines the frustration I feel with the way a lot of qualitative work is composed. My thesis- the way I did the work as well as the way I am presenting it- is a response to this call for different work. In this section, I will expand a little bit on some of the issues raised above, which should go some way into explaining why it is important for me/this work to be accepted within the academy as a work of value, before offering a guide to reading the thesis.

Criticism of SQDT within CMS

The body of work loosely grouped in the discipline of Critical Management Studies aims to critique mainstream organisational studies and the practice of 'management' which adds to/creates suffering in our society, particularly of those who live beyond the margins (Parker, 2001). Readers may be familiar with the againstness that is contained within the 'critical' of Critical management Studies[1]- againstness against capitalism, knowledge hoarding, racism/sexism/homophobia/disability discrimination, eco-destruction already: see for example (Pullen, Harding, et al., 2017a), and, as some of the critiques of CMS from within CMS indicate, an againstness against itself as well (ibid.). The knife of critique that it wields around, it wields upon itself too- and rightly so, in my opinion ((see for example Pullen, Harding, et al., (2017b), who write about how CMS can reproduce

[1] For some examples of texts contained within CMS- see Alvesson et al., (2011); Malin, Murphy, & Siltaoja, (2013); Prasad & Mills, (2015); Pullen, Harding, & Phillips, (2017b).

racial/gender/colonial hierarchies itself). To stay relevant, the rebellion must resist becoming the tradition. A self-critique, self-annihilation and rebirth is essential.

This againstness inherent within Critical Management Studies targets not just management and its propagation through business schools, but creation of knowledge within these schools. Situated within this context are calls to produce different works- works that can destabilise the neoliberal rhetoric rather than reify it. See for example: Alvesson and Willmott, 1992; Hart and Whatman, 1998; Adler, 2002; Ford, 2005; Grey and Sinclair, 2006; Banerjee and Prasad, 2008; Scherer, 2008; Sheridan, Pringle and Strachan, 2009; Spicer, Alvesson and Kärreman, 2009, 2016; Thomas, 2009; Brun and Lund, 2010; Ford, Harding and Learmonth, 2010; Foster and Wiebe, 2010; Hassard and Rowlinson, 2011; Khan and Koshul, 2011; Brownlie and Hewer, 2012; Mavin and Grandy, 2012; Ruggunan, 2016; Tourish, 2017, 2020; Arday and Mirza, 2018; Parker, 2018; Gilmore et al., 2019; Weatherall, 2019; Beavan 2020; Pullen, Helin and Harding 2020; Banerjee, 2021; Boncori, 2021).

In that context, the work of doctoral thesis production has been somewhat ignored (Weatherall 2019). As Weatherall writes in her thesis:

> "Writing is a central concept to the PhD thesis, as Kamler and Thomson (2006) note: What writing [a thesis] creates is a **particular representation of reality**. Data is produced in writing, not found." (Weatherall, 2018)

Similarly, my interest in writing differently to that SQDT format is strong and influenced by my background and my own context, and other aspects of my identity. I do not have

qualifications in English Literature, but I have plenty of education in (as the cliché goes, from the University of Life!) existing within and beyond the margins- of being within and outside, as will become clearer going forward. I also have plenty of experience of living through pain, writing through trauma, and I bring all of that into this thesis (see forthcoming sections on Autoethnography and Reflection, Trauma and Self). I am not unaware of my privileges either, as a man, as a holder of a pen (or a tapper of the keyboard), living a relatively comfortable life in the 'west' and I bring those privileges in with me as well.

If the subject of qualitative inquiry is to understand the human experience, the subjectivities of individuals and the meaning of human life, then all of that is no less important than, say, happiness, comfort, stodginess, calm and linearity. Plenty of us get stuck in circular inner thoughts, subconscious patterns of thinking and being, so hopefully some of this/me will resonate with you.

Abandon all hope, all ye who enter here- Dante, Inferno

Weatherall cites the desire of the academy for 'more feminine writing', a desire that I strongly share (before you label me a pretentious man, allow me to explain using a few feminist arguments. Of course, you are still free to label me as a phony man, and at some level, I am guilty as charged).

In the thesis, I cite some quotes from the Journal *Management Learning* special issue on Writing Differently (Gilmore et al, 2019) to further speak to this topic, but it is within this

genre of ‘different writing’, feminine writing, decolonial writing, queer writing that I situate the writing of this thesis.

This is in keeping with the psychodynamic content of the thesis- as I shall explain- that the politics of psychodynamics has been anti-establishment itself, so to me this style of writing feels naturally consistent with the subject matter. Even if it were not, most importantly, this writing style is me. And I have a right to exist, to be validated. I speak more on queer writing in a little bit, but first, a return to Weatherall’s work on her approaches.

Weatherall continues (p14),

> “The first key writing strategy is to write in, rather than out, the emotional dimensions…maintain a personal tone…
>
> Secondly, I have reshaped the structure of the thesis (discussed below) to emphasise that knowledge is not total, linear, or neatly ordered. Writing in this way helps to counter the feeling of deadlock in specific ways of knowing (Steyaert, 2015).”

And further (p15),

> “My final writing strategy aims to recreate the textures of our experiences and our lives in ways that are consistent with our complexities as people (Lorde, 2007). The writing and structure of my thesis works with, rather than against, the emotional, messy, and complex experiences of fieldwork and research.”

My writing strategies are not too dissimilar to the above. I have to bring in the above for my defence as without it, I feel/have been vulnerable. Things have been said that I can't unhear.

Firstly, like Weatherall (ibid.), I am open and lay bare the emotions, the confessions, the personhood of myself- not only is it important from an autoethnographic point of view (see section on Evocative Autoethnography), a queer writing point of view, but important from a postcolonial point of view. I discuss these points below.

From an autoethnographic perspective, my experience of living through the times, living through the conditions that I have lived through is an important contribution. You get an insight into what it's like to undergo this process if you come from the background that I come from, and writing in the context in which I did. I am not a 'typical', 'average' doctoral student who passes through English language academia, and how I experience it is scarcely reflected in the literature. Hence the autoethnographic content is important. An example of this comes from the PhD thesis of Short (2010) submitted to University of Brighton, where Short writes (p4)

> "This work grew out of a need to try to understand **my often experienced sense of being misunderstood, misrepresented and marginalised**. A prerequisite to helping others in mental health nursing is arguably some requirement to understand one's self. But who is the self? In this thesis I use an autoethnographic approach to examine **how the self, multiple selves and identity formation is socially**

> **constructed**… this evocative autoethnography has been written in the first person **displaying my multiple layers**, connecting my selves to the cultures I inhabit." (My emphasis).

Short writes about becoming a mental health professional, but we should be able to agree that understanding of one's self is equally important when you are becoming a researcher, when you are working with the delicate material that is other people's stories. In that vein, the confessional, autoethnographic content in the thesis helps me theorise myself, and show you where that self is theorised from. In a similar vein to Short (2010) above, I also later on speak of my multiple socially constructed identities, my multiple layers. You will meet the many Is in the 'Method' chapter.

From a postcolonial[2] perspective

That colonialism has ended and we are in a postcolonial period is, itself, in many ways a fantasy (Ahmed, 2017; Andrews, 2021; Sanghera, 2021). Hickel (2018) writes of the systemic, ongoing economic exploitation of the 'Global South' by the 'West'. As per Hickel's calculations, for every $1 of 'aid' sent from the countries rich mostly on the back of colonial exploitation, $24 comes back through exploitation in various guises. There is also the

[2] The September 2021 issue of 'Organisation' is a special issue on Decolonising Management and Organisational knowledge, suggesting this is the direction academy wishes to move to.

seminal work of Walter Rodney- How Europe Underdeveloped Africa (2018), Tharoor's Inglorious Empire (2017) and activism e.g. (bpornotbp, 2021).

In Black Radical literature, there is plenty of further evidence and critique of the current colonial structures. For example, see Andrews, (2019) who describes psychosis of whiteness and how the structures of University- from the buildings to the processes to the conventions- are there to reproduce a certain level of privilege, and that due to that 'Decolonising the University' may not be possible.

> "The linguistic practice of much postcolonial theory, which only speaks in the language of the metropolis, is thus complicit in sustaining the political domination, economic power, and institutionalized racism that privilege certain groups of people and disempower others**. A critical step forward in the decolonization process is to address this linguistic blindness of postcolonial studies. Language learning then becomes an effective means of resistance to mental colonization and its epistemic violence**." (Rettova, 2017) My emphasis.

Rettova makes an important point that even though we have a lot of post-colonial stuff, if it continues to be written in colonial frameworks, and therefore it is incomplete. To realise the potential for language, a step forward would be to invent and work with newer forms of doing language work. Creating my own way of doing language, in other words, is integral to mental colonisation and epistemic violence.

But of course, we needn't look through books- a cursory look around the world should suffice. If you walk with me, accompany me in my psychogeography (Bridger 2013, Self and Steadman, 2016) through this work, you'll see. If not, just have a google search for 'Hostile Environment' and its impacts/human right contraventions/mental health impacts/ lives lost due to it.

The indigenous are still struggling to take back what has been looted from them. The struggle to reclaim who gets to name their own name (Holligan, 2021), and the power to name oneself is ongoing. While there are many arguments to resist these colonial forces, in this section I want to focus on us and our role in these dynamics, the role of UK English Language Higher Education Academia (UKHE henceforth), specifically within the UK.

For good reason, there are increasingly stronger calls to release the stronghold of a narrow group of people on what knowledge is legitimised. The international student/immigrant who makes the UK a substantial amount of money is a major vehicle of this siphoning off of the money from the Global South- despite this, suffers from everyday racism and a Hostile Environment (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020). There is something deeper at play too. Often, this student is forced to abandon their indigenous systems of knowledge in favour of the more powerful system of English Language/ Western Academia, because that is just how they can be legitimised in the world arena of knowledge production. The UK HE is increasingly aware of these neo-colonial implications hence the calls to Decolonise the academy are growing and hopefully continue to do so. But the progress is

Slooooooooooooooooooooooow.

A good point of reference re: this section would be the book “Geopolitics of Academic Writing” (Canagarajah, 2002). In this work Canagarajah systematically explores how the systems of academic production privilege a certain narrow group of people/epistemologies/ways of seeing. He writes of how the system of academic writing and publishing are seated deep within capitalist/colonial ideologies. For example:

> “These [publishing] conventions now control the content that can get published, excluding writing that doesn’t share the brand of discourse that is currently accepted in a field…such requirements and conventions are not merely matters of form but integral to the knowledge that gets represented in the writing.
>
> If publishing conventions have such gatekeeping potential for knowledge construction, they raise concerns about the hidden interests they may harbour. From this perspective, the fact that they are set by scholars of narrow cultural/linguistic groups, and the fact that the journals themselves are based in narrowly circumscribed regions of the developed world, appear troubling.”

Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes that “Research is a dirty word” (2012, p2). Re-search to search again, to mine the people for knowledge, is something that we privilege in our academic systems but those whose knowledges and knowledge production systems have been alienated and obliterated by this would see our systems as nothing but oppressive, exploitative. I inhabit both these worlds. I come from a rural part of India, my grandfather a subject of the crown, my family lost everything during the partition. A reminder of how re-

search was used to commodify my ancestors still lives in all these 'Equality and Diversity' forms, all the places where you have to indicate your racial whiteness or otherness.

But now, I am here, in this place, writing this work, at this University. Do I wash the dirt[3] off of me, or do I keep it as a sense of pride?

In the study of organisation and work, in CMS, there is acknowledgement to this. There are calls to decolonise, to celebrate diversity, to allow in different. But the action, as it often does, falls a fair few steps behind the rhetoric. Change your self/work to fit in, is sadly, a call people like me face everyday. It does have its impact (Arday and Mirza 2018). If you are a person of colour, the attritional impact of trying to find a (Bhabha, 2004 p37) belonging in the academe takes its toll. Still, we mustn't be ungrateful. Amen.

My position in this regard is complicated. When I started this work, I started wanting to write a 'standard', 'Good' work. You can see, for example, the research proposal and some of the early writing. I would have perhaps written a neat literature review and a 'solid'/conformative qualitative work. Many years ago, now, but my essay on research methods for my Masters received 85%. I received a distinction for my MSc dissertation that was a literature review. It would have been easy, straightforward to continue.

Except I couldn't. I just couldn't.

[3] The dirt metaphor is deliberate. One of my participants called a photo 'dirty' and I thought that was interesting. I explore this in chapter 'Stories'.

When I started reading Freudian work and Marxist critiques of Freud, when I started reading decolonial literature, when I started feeling alienated in the theatre of privilege that some academic conferences can be, when I started feeling left to a side by the 'mainstream academia', when I was encouraged to do radical, interesting work, when I spoke with my interviewees and they told me stories of trauma, of difficulty, of oppression, of difficult situations, when I was subject to surveillance and oppression by the Home Office despite being someone who is bringing in money and labour, when events gave me post-traumatic stress, when anxiety and depression began to take hold, when I saw how we alienate and call those who don't fit in 'abnormal', when I saw how much privilege I carry as a man compared to my wife, when I saw how she is called 'dyspraxic' and the way her brain works is often labelled a 'mistake' she has to incessantly correct, when I saw the tentacles of capitalist oppression with my own eyes, when I saw how the cleaners were treated when I studied in the day and cleaned toilets in the evening, I just couldn't.

In qualitative work, we are encouraged to reflect, we are encouraged to be subjective. Not wishing to engage in selective reporting, 'smoothing things over', suppressing these elements as undesirable, I bring those in to the subject, I bring those into the way of writing.

From a queer writing perspective

> "For queer readers, the book's disjointed structure and indefinable genre were immediately recognizable as reflections of our own experience" (Duncan, 2018, in reference to the book 'Bluets')

> "My writing, in a way, is a way of facing that trauma and declaring that I will not back down" (Franklin et al, 1996, p69)

> "Anything and anyone could be queer – gay, straight, male or female. Queer was a way of interpreting the world, an alternative perspective open to all." (Burston, 2019)

> "The original meaning of queer from the 16th century was of something strange or illegitimate." (Barker, 2020)

> "There is also something inherently queer — both strange or unexpected and homosexual — about a form that subverts the established narrative tradition." (Duncan, 2018)

When I wrote this work, I wrote it in the only way I knew how. When it came time to present this work, I had to find a home for it. As I read more about writing, I discovered the genre labelled as queer writing and the desire of the management academy to engage with queer theory (Parker, 2002): a call perhaps falling on deaf ears as Rumens (2013) wrote a

decade later that “Organisational studies: not nearly “queer enough””. The academy’s stodginess in this aspect reminds me of the decolonial struggle of my ancestors when they sent their soldiers to help the Empire in the second world war, promising sovereignty to India, but then, when the war was won, it was all just shrugged off. Not only that, the contribution of these soldiers was erased from popular consciousness (Khan, 2016).

Nancy (2016) writes of Queerness in academic writing, and for further explanation of associated anti-oppressive politics- see Kumashiro (2002). The quotations above capture eloquently my positioning and rationale for privileging a different style of writing. In terms of the writing of this thesis, this is where I suppose this work sits. Let me explain why.

Just as a lot of humanity, there are several facets to my identity- my narrative I. There’s the privileged academic who wields the pen, and in context of global humanity, leads a fairly comfortable life. The able-bodied man, for example, who doesn’t have to contend with the geographies of the world skewed so heavily in his favour (See Feminist City (Kern, 2021) for how the spaces we walk through privilege people like me heavily). There is also the immigrant, the mentally ill, the parent, the feminine man (‘We should all be Feminists’- writes, Adichie, 2014), if you will.

I am not claiming uniqueness, I am aware a lot of us inhabit complicated intersectional (after Kimberley Crenshaw, cited in Adewunmi, (2014)) spaces and there are many like me (as I posit later on, individuality is a myth and we are all connected). The trouble is that this is my writing consciousness that, to quote Tuhiwai-Smith (2012 p2), I “seek to privilege”; to

decolonise, to diversity the academy, to make it my own and open it to those like me, if you'd forgive the self-aggrandisation.

The intersection I am seeking to privilege in this thesis is relatively unique to academic work on work, and important. I am not trying to hide behind the defence mechanisms of processes, scientificalisms or suppress the 'undesirable' parts of my identity and privilege the 'desirable'/acceptable/mainstream parts of my identity. I am trying to privilege the othered Self within me: trying for the privileged Self to carry the Othered Self out of oblivion.

It wouldn't make sense otherwise, because it will go against the teachings of the subject area. Psychodynamics teaches us (Gabriel and Carr, 2002 p348)that all parts of our identity are 'normal', all emotions are valid, and further still, attempts to defend/hide parts of identity are not that successful because the reader/ the listener will find out (just like I 'found out' with those I interviewed) and/or interpret me through their own lens, so they will inadvertently impose themselves on to the story I am telling.

You think therefore I am So I might as well be me

In order to convey otherness, the aesthetics of critique (Adorno *et al.*, 2007) become important. It becomes important to think about who thinks of this work as 'their own' when they read it. It becomes important to think about vocabulary, about structure, about gaps. It becomes important to, as Duncan says (2018), subvert the narrative tradition.

CMS is empathetic to queer theory and by extension queer writing, but there are scant few works in this genre- reflecting the heteronormativity of our structures. As one of the stated aims of the academy, particularly of CMS is to be more inclusive of difference, this work hopefully is seen as a contribution in terms of its form of writing. There are some examples of writing I would call queer, in organisational studies. There's the collection of things 'written differently', and there is the work Pandemonium (Burrell, 1997).

Pandemonium is a beautiful work, written in, as Duncan says above (2018), an indefinable structure and in a fragmented form. In creative genres of writing, there are many more examples and if I understand correctly, CMS yearns to expand more in the creative writing department (Gilmore et al, 2019). A critique of Pandemonium comes from Perriton (2001) that I discuss later.

Queer writing outside of organisational studies can be seen widely in 'literature' (in many ways literature is social studies and vice versa). Authors such as Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, Eimear McBride instantly come to mind. In critical management studies, we often work closely with the world of literature (see for example Steyaert 2015), indeed the critical theory we seek to bring to management discourse operates within the realms of social studies as well as literature.

Altering the form is an important aspect of queer writing. Going back to Duncan (2018)

> "Queer authors are doing something complicated with form, something inseparable from our history of being told that we cannot — and thus, do not — exist

> in certain physical and ideological capacities. While operating in a culture that necessarily subverts what is "traditional," queer authors must find forms other than the perfectly resolved traditional novel, other than the narrative memoir, to tell their stories. These fragmented forms and unique structures allow queer authors to replicate what it's like to exist outside of the "traditional narrative." Much in the way that queer people have been forced to create spaces for themselves and codes of behaviour when out in the world, queer authors have similarly carved out and utilized new forms for their work, perhaps **not by choice, but out of necessity**, in order to tell their stories and reflect worldviews that have been informed by their queerness. (Duncan 2018)" (My emphasis).

I may be an immigrant to the academy but I am home I am home I am home in this quote

During the course of this thesis, I have inhabited the hostile environment where I have been under constant state surveillance (not because I have done anything 'bad', that is the system) as a student and as an employee, as a husband and as a father, as a person of colour in academia. I have been othered due to my mental illness, and trying to be a caring, feminine man. I have inhabited other spaces too some of them are incredibly privileged, and that shows in the writing too. The difference I suppose is that for this work the former intersections are not undesirable and so I don't suppress them.

The former, othered spaces are important to privilege because that reflects a more complete picture of human existence- something we as social studies students and authors seek to achieve. Another reason for privileging these othered voices is because when I

spoke to the interviewees, they often spoke from a place of trauma, from a place of otherness. To reflect that sentiment, I was drawn to privilege my otherness. That was helped by the circumstances, which were forcing me to consider and justify myself. That's why when I think of those times, and think of the 'mitigating circumstances', I hesitate calling them 'mitigating'- yes things hurt me but the pain is the font I dip my pen in to write, so can I really complain? Michaela Coel says something similar (Sawyer, 2021). Rebellious research (Suoranta, 2015) has to hurt.

As Barker (2020) writes, this is one of the aims of queer theory and queer writing, "to centre the voices of marginalised, rather than trying to present queers in as normative ways as possible in order to gain acceptance to normativity." Addressing trauma and violence is one of the core agendas of queer theory and queer writing, and in that this style of writing is consistent with the content of this thesis.

The content necessitates the form

Architect and writer Kyna Leski writes of queer writing, that it seeks to, and is a result of 'displacement and destabilisation' of what you think you know (Leski and Maeda, 2015). Thus, the section on theories and definitions aims to force a rethink around common myths around individuality, personhood and what and who we think we are. The section on methods (Chapter 4) forces a rethink of the received wisdom of methods of knowledge creation and challenges it with an alternative. The section "Seeing Comes Before Words" forces a rethink of our human interactions, forces us to look beneath, alerts us to cues and signals we constantly push away. The section on Empirical stories forces us to rethink what

we know the world of work is like, and our perception of what working is like. The section on discussions and reflections forces a rethink of implications of doing this work.

Prose Poetry

Prose poetry, as the name suggests, is neither prose nor poetry, it is both/neither. To the uninitiated, it can look like dirty/bad writing- the mind who instinctively wishes to categorise all writing it sees struggles to respond to it, constructs its own defence mechanisms- e.g. denial (this is not good writing). I am heavily influenced by this form of writing- my wife who was writing her MA dissertation and using prose poetry at the time I was writing this work, receives the credit for introducing me to this splendid form. I am also highly influenced by her as a spoken word artist, and the genre of spoken word as a whole- indeed in the pre covid times, I was attending a fair few poetry slams and learning about Prose Poetry as well. Below, I will introduce what it is, how I am influenced by it, and why it is important that it finds a home in CMS.

Carrying our new born, listening to my wife and her colleagues, I was in love

To borrow from "The Poetry Foundation" (2021), prose poetry is a form of writing that, while not broken down into verse, exhibits other qualities of poetry such as metaphors, symbols, other figures of speech such as tropes- e.g., hyperbole, irony, simile, and schemes-

e.g. anaphora[4], antithesis[5], and chiasmus[6]. Often these don't contain punctuation, or contain punctuation for a creative effect, evocative effect rather than to subscribe to 'prose' conventions.

Why prose poetry

> "Freud made his discoveries poetically, by intuition and metaphoric analogy, rather than logic" (Thomas, 1985)

When, as an immigrant, you listen to certain things- like go back to where you came from[7], a lot of times, repeated through the mainstream media and in the street, then it creates its own anaphora in my head/heads of people traumatised by this narrative. That then shapes the way we think, it shapes the way I thought at the time- through the traumatic period. Similarly, hyperbole, antithesis, and chiasmus etc all figures of speech can be identified in the popular narrative about people like me- especially in the pre Covid- time, during the Brexit years, during the Theresa May years. So, in one way I used that kind of writing, because I had no choice- that was what was being thrown at me and it moulded the way my

[4] Repetition of a key phrase to create a sonic effect for evocative impact. For example, Martin Luther King's I Have a Dream Speech.

[5] Combining two contrasting terms/phrases with apparently opposite meanings.

[6] Repeating any group of verse elements, including rhyme and grammatical structure, in reverse order. For example, the title of the abstract of this thesis.
All definitions adapted from The Poetry Foundation (2021).

[7] ***Centuries of erasure… centuries of violence… destruction of knowledge… of identities… of bodies… where do I go back to? What is left that is not in your museums? I have to create something new with whatever I have got….***

brain thought. There is a diagnosis letter (Appendix 4) that identifies the traumatic impact of some of those events on me, so you know I am not making this up. And the explanation of this comes from trauma theory, I discuss that in Theories (Chapter 3). A traumatised, fragmented mind can only think a certain way. Unfortunately, the bourgeois definition of trauma doesn't quite cover it- for example- some believe only in that masculine definition of trauma that you can't have (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)/ trauma) if you haven't been to a war (Williams, 2021).

And this links to the origins of prose poetry. Prose poetry has a long-standing tradition. In the west, it is contended that the origins of prose poetry lie in a rebellion against the traditional verse forms popular at the time, of 18th-19th century (Lowenstein 2007).

However, in the wider world, prose poetry has been written and published prior to that too. For example, Lowenstein (2007) writes of the author "Matsuo Bashō, who originated haibun, a form of prose poetry combining haiku with prose." Lowenstein (ibid) also tells us that Marrash-al-Habibi, a Syrian poet famous in Arabic literature made extensive use of the form in the mid-19th century.

The current prose poetry movement comes on the back of authors such as Gertrude Stein and Charles Simic, amongst others. Simic won a Pulitzer for a work written in prose poetry[8]. In the UK, Prose poetry has gained traction and one of the first collections of essays on the form to be published was Monson (2018) 'British Prose Poetry: The Poems Without Lines'. I

[8] Simic drew on his memories of a childhood lived through World War 2 Belgrade. Here's one- "I was stolen from the gypsies. My parents stole me right back. This went on for some time."

was reading this at the time when some adverse events were happening, so it was a natural refuge for my words.

So, prose poetry that I happened to come across- through my wife's work- felt the only recourse to writing. Subsequently, I converted some of that to 'better' prose, but I am not sure to what extent. The issue is that this is how I write now, after the trauma, of the trauma, within the trauma (as my Healthcare professional said- fundamental ways of seeing have been altered- see Appendix 4). I have tried to change it as I have been told to compromise, lineate, to conform to certain conventions, so hopefully I have done enough to fit in.

Through this work, I make a contention for Prose Poetry to be included within Critical Management Studies writing as a form. From the "Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies"

> "CMS … questions the authority and relevance of mainstream thinking and practice. Critical of established social practices and institutional arrangements, **it challenges prevailing systems of domination and promotes the development of alternatives** to them. CMS draws upon …Frankfurt School of Critical Theory. From these foundations, CMS has grown into a pluralistic and inclusive movement incorporating a diverse range of perspectives ranging from labour-process theory to radical feminism." (p3, Alvesson, Bridgman, Wilmott 2009)

As you can appreciate from this definition, CMS seeks to privilege a diverse range of perspectives such as radical feminism, and challenge the status quo. For the sake of this thesis, I am the knowledge worker and so it is well within my ethics to deploy a form that challenges conventions and by being Other, brings out the conventions for what they are- reified beliefs of a select few.

Prose poetry takes origins from critical theory. Prose poetry, writes Noel-Tod "drives the reading mind beyond the city limits" (Noel-Tod, 2018) which is what we intend to do in CMS too.

Lehman (2008, p12) writes that it is possible to read Simic's prose poems as dream narratives. This has specific significance for me and my work. As I shall discuss further on, Theory, psychodynamically speaking, is a dream. Indeed, by the use of free association, the interviewees that I spoke with entered a dream like state- as I discuss further. Due to the trauma and my own illnesses, while writing this work, I was existing in a dream like psychotic state myself. In order to capture that subjectivity, that dream like state, prose poetry is a fitting vehicle.

Lehman writes that prose poem-

> "It is a form that sets store by its use of the demotic, its willingness to locate the sources of poetry defiantly far from the spring on Mount Helicon sacred to the muses. It is an insistently modern form. Some would argue further that it is, or was, an inherently subversive one. Marguerite Murphy's A tradition of Subversion (1992)

> contends that an adversarial streak characterizes the genre. Others are drawn to the allegorical formula that would align the prose poem with "Working class discourse" undermining the lyric structure of the upper bourgeois…. commentators have begun to stress the inclusiveness of the genre and not its putatively subversive properties…. The prose poem is a hybrid form, an anomaly, if not a paradox or oxymoron. It offers the enchantment of escape whether from the invisible chains of the superego, or from the oppressive reign of the alexandrine line…" (Lehman 2008, p13).

CMS readers will empathise with the anti-establishment values of prose poetry and the subversion of capitalistic reductionist values are something that is common to CMS and prose poetry. It is a form befitting the thoughts and feelings it seeks to express.

In music, we know that the evocative pieces match the instrumentation and the tune to the lyric and the mood, otherwise it just sounds silly, ironic. The attempt here, for me, is to match the sentiment to the writing and the form, in what David Foster Wallace might call a radically sincere/new sincerity tradition[9]. And of course, I later on discuss the againstness inherent within psychodynamics, as well as the oppression and everyday rebellions of my interviewees, as well as my own- all of which extends this line of sincerely matching the tone to the content.

[9] According to Moats (2012), "Infinite Jest is Wallace's attempt to both manifest and dramatize a revolutionary fiction style that he called for in his essay "E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S. Fiction." The style is one in which a new sincerity will overturn the ironic detachment that hollowed out contemporary fiction towards the end of the 20th century. Wallace was trying to write an antidote to the cynicism that had pervaded and saddened so much of American culture in his lifetime. He was trying to create an entertainment that would get us talking again." I am no Foster Wallace, but I am manifesting something because I want us to talk about these things, you know?

“It is not just a question of being as competent, it is also a question of being authentic.” (Firestone, 2015 p345, my emphasis).

Lehman continues

> “The words poetry and prose seem to be natural antagonists… The form of a prose poem is not an absence of form…there are fewer rules and governing traditions to observer, or different ones, because the prose poem has a relatively short history and has enjoyed outsider status for most of that time. Writing a prose poem can therefore seem like accepting a dare to be unconventional.” (Lehman, 2008, p14)

There is also a sentiment of “breaking down walls” rather than “finding the gaps” that this thesis seeks to put forth. Breaking down the walls between art and research, between legitimate and illegitimate knowledge, between normality and madness (Gruen 2007 discusses “The Insanity of Normality”), and to use a form that breaks down walls between prose and poetry seems to be the most fitting vehicle for that.

The dare that Lehman outlines, I accepted when I was urged me to write something different, and to be radical. This is then, the result.

Textual turn in CMS

There has been increasing attention paid to writing differently in CMS as Weatherall (2018) touches upon that in her thesis. Perriton (2001) writes about this textual turn and echoes the sentiment Gabriel (2005) has expressed above. Perriton discusses the emergence of "Business Schools" as hubs of certain kinds of knowledge- a knowledge that conforms to and supports "Business applicability" (March 2000, cited in Perriton 2001). As Perriton writes, in Business Schools, such as the one where I am submitting this work, "Reflexive or critical perspectives get marginalized even further—flourishing in small scale projects, PhD research and other 'labours of love'." Pointing to how critical and reflexive works get marginalised, and in many ways get confined only to PhD research and other 'labours of love' rather than your 'main job'.

I may not live again
but in this thesis,
I am alive,
even if for once only.

Perriton (2001) then goes on to recount how subjective and reflexive work is viewed in the eyes of the funding organisations, who seek to discredit and dismiss such work. Any work that doesn't exploit the Other is deemed useless. Perriton write how there is a textual form of civil disobedience: the "seemingly accidental, benign, the methodology chapter, textual guerrilla warfare, and socio-political".

In the benign, the seemingly accidental reflexivity is positioned as a sort of mea-culpa, a sort of 'I am sorry I accidentally left it there.' That this work is not.

I am done saying sorry I am done stepping out of your way on the pavement I am done apologising for my name being difficult I am done

The benign is particularly problematic to me- it reeks of the pseudo-leftism, the 'moderate' political values that do nothing to subvert the power and are more interested in maintaining the status quo than justice. A good example of this benign-ness is given by Martin Luther King Junior in his letter from Birmingham Jail (King, 1963)- where he calls out the moderate nice white people for their conflict avoidance. Also, see 'White Rage' (Anderson, 2016) and DiAngelo's work on White Fragility (2019) and Nice Racism (2021)[10].

Perriton recognises this- she writes,

> "Benign reflexivity contains the greatest potential for 'pseudo' reflexivity…Benign reflexivity can often ape awareness of difference without actually engaging with it. …the reflexive account often finds itself being expressed as a complementary exercise…safely detached from the validity tale of the main report and published separately to contain any perceived validity threat to the main body of work."

[10] And thank God for these publications, I was finding it very hard to articulate my experiences through 2017-2019, but these recent works made it easier.

The benign reflexive, the moderate, want to be reflexive, but in a way that it is neatly cordoned off, separated from the 'main work'[11].

This work fits more with what Perriton calls the "Textual Guerrilla Warfare" although I do not like the metaphor of war at all here. I am not at war, I am trying to explain how the purpose of this work is a kind of radical sincerity- where the method of knowledge production and knowledge dissemination are consistent in their ethics, and the I who is engaging with those is the same.

Anyway, there is merit in considering the war metaphor as, even though it is not my intention, to those whose privilege this work calls into question, this work may well appear as a war on their academy.

Perriton (2001, p71) writes-

> "The textual strategy is to test what we understand to be 'normal', dispassionate academic texts by incorporating textual conventions from outside of the academic tradition. Such writing may include established literary forms such as poems, dramatic dialogue, stage directions and imagined dialogue between author

[11] Another way to interpret this could be, that the forces against which the reflexivity is positioned, push the reflexive into the margins. In other words, perhaps the authors sometimes have no choice but to push their rebellions into the margins- and a being that understands this, looks for the rebellions in the marginalia, the appendices…. 😉 2022 update- some of that content has now been moved to the main body at the request of the examiners.

and reader, allowing different subject positions and viewpoints to be revealed and explored.

The appearance and modest spread of this type of research writing—at the moment predominantly in research by feminists—seems to work because the text is fractured with different modes of writing appealing to a section of a diverse academic audience. One section of the audience will be searching for the victory over the Other and another will be searching for signs that this 'victory' is recognized by the author as partial and context bound. Each audience will find what they are looking for and this enables the 'risk rating' on this type of writing to be kept within acceptable boundaries."

The above would be a good critique of how I have ended up shaping up my thesis. There is definitely a fractured approach, and there are different modes of writing. As you would have discerned from the abstract, there is the exploration of the other, although I don't think there's a sense of victory in the writing- but I am aware that any defence I offer here to that effect can be deemed ironical.

You think therefore I am

As Perriton goes on to say, I would recognise the limitations and contexts of that victory, so no matter how much I defend myself, the criticism still applies. Then there is the exploration of the self, the heartful autoethnography (Ellis 1999), and there is the theories section to replace a literature review. Something for everyone, as Perriton says, keeping the risk within acceptable levels.

Time goes on, each time I slash a bit of me out, I cut out a part of me and replace it with something more palatable

Crucially, there is discussion of how I arrived at the transition. The transition from the exploration of the other to the exploration of the self was a personal one, influenced by what was happening in my life. Later on, I could situate my empathy for exploring the self within autoethnography (see Grant, 2014).

I can see my work in Perriton's language. For me, the exploration of the other through free association narrative interviews and a psychodynamic informed approach was the thing that I started the 'empirical' work with. As I explain during the thesis, during the course of these interviews, I realised the colonial and exploratory nature of this endeavour and I stopped.

The events of the time were a significant factor in me realising that, so these events need to come into the thesis too.

Once I realised, I turned within and the result was what Ellis would call a Heartful Autoethnography (1999) of me as a troubled researcher exploring the self. Therefore, this work is not, and cannot, just be a story of the exploration of the other- these events and these decisions are integral to my becoming a researcher and academic.

I also couldn't completely overlook the interviews I did do- i.e. I could have just written an autoethnography and binned the interviews I did do, but that felt really wrong and

neglectful of the time and energy people gave me. They trusted me with their stories knowing that they would be told, and I had to tell them. In order for me to feel that I have done justice to them, I had to comb through the beaches of theory to find the right pebbles upon which to hinge these stories, and the right language to capture their pain and revolts. I tried to do that to the best of my abilities.

Tell the story of trauma through trauma, the story of rebellion through rebellion; don't put a fullstop yet the story is not done

Perriton continues,

> "with more examiners willing to judge this sort of writing on its multiple facets and levels it is perhaps an area where we shall see more experimentation, rather than less, in the future." (Perriton 2001, p72).

The future is now

New is risky. Risk is another of those neoliberal terms we have been trained to think about when exploring new. PhD, knowledge, research is about creating new, learning new, becoming new, birthing new. Risk is just a defensive term we attach to our anxiety with new. This approach is risky. That immigrant is risky because of how they look… our way of relating with each other and with nature has become toxified by this language of 'risk' as if the new/the native/the immigrant/the foreign will destroy us- that is the underpinning

assumption in this notion of risk. We don't stop to think that this new medicine might just be the cure for the ill academy.

Perriton cites Gibson Burrell's Pandemonium[12] (1997), which is a good example of (as Perriton calls it) guerrilla warfare on textual conventions of academic work. Pandemonium is a great book, an excellent labour of love. It has multiple narratives, and the prose is akin to prose poetry in places. Again, I do not at all like these war metaphors that Perriton has used. For me, Pandemonium is more of a **queer writing** work, a work of a soul that desperately loves their scholarship and unable to voice their frustration with the way things are going, had to resort to a fractured way of writing.

I think in CMS we lag a bit behind fields like literature and sociology in application of critical theory to our ways of working, but your opinion on this may differ- although Pullen and Rhodes (2015) seemed to agree when they wrote that

> "Thirty years have passed since French feminist writers such as Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray began making their contributions to feminist writing and thinking. Writers as diverse as Avital Ronell, Shoshana Felman, Adriana Cavavero and Silvia Montiglio have further developed this kind of research. The political possibilities made possible by these writers have barely materialized in organization studies.".

[12] Thanks Mark for, amongst other things, introducing me to this work.

I am trying to materialise something here, forgive. Midwife at work. Birthing in progress.

CMS has started to catch up perhaps? There is some interesting work of note, and I bring in some of that 'differently written work' below. The need for different work stems from the recognition that writing is not neutral.

Pullen and Rhodes (2015) shine a light on

> "how genre and gender are implicated in academic writing about work organizations, noting that masterful, rational and penetrating masculine forms have long been dominant. The result is the privileging of a masculine style of writing that has come to be seen both as gender neutral and mandatory. This has served both to marginalize women's writing and to disable men's femininity."

Through my interactions within the academy between starting this work and getting this work through to you, I definitely feel that the institutional whiteness/cis-hetero normative standards mean that the system seems to always want to disable my colour and femininity. I find myself working against the grain rather than supported by the systems, at times. Readers of this chapter and subsequent work will hopefully conclude that my position on writing as well as my writing itself are both an attempt to explore such a possibility for myself.

The question then becomes that what is this feminine writing. In subversion to reified structures of masculinity that afford the SQDT its certainty, one might argue that feminine

writing is uncertain. In face of the neurotic obsession with accuracy, one might argue that feminine writing is full of mistakes, or as I like to call it, a personalised patina. A signature fade on a pair of jeans.

I wear my scars with pride

A sign of battles lived

These are not scabs

Victory insignia.

Crucially, feminine writing defines itself rather than in reference to masculine writing. As Pullen and Rhodes (2015) continue:

> "We understand feminine writing as comprising a plurality of particularities, rather than as a set of generic rules that are to be followed… Such work exemplifies the possibilities within our field to contest what can at times seem like an overwhelming dominance of the masculine-rational text…"

This paragraph captures the diversity of forms of writing that were represented in that special issue. It ranges from "crafting, poetry, writing with dirt and bisexual writing". It is within this context that I want to situate this thesis. Writing is sexual (Foster 1997) and my gendered practice and subjectivity sit within my writing and my work (Höpfl, 2000; Pullen, 2006), as I am trying to explain.

For ease of reference, let me put some examples of/about this different writing in Management Education in this table below:

Citation	**Title**	**Key points**	**Relevance to my work here**
Rumens (2013)	Organisational Studies not nearly queer enough	Rumens calls out the embedded cis-hetero-whiteness embedded within our academic structures and calls for more queer representation within Organisational studies.	I should hope that my work answers this call, in whatever small way.
Pullen and Rhodes (2015)	Writing the Feminine and Organisation	Points squarely to the sacrifices in meanings made in following the standard writing and editing processes. Frame these acts as acts of violence.	My work, in the context of this framing of these practises as violence, is akin to a non-violent resistance, a form of cultural activism.
Rhodes (2019)	Sense-ational organization theory! Practices of democratic scriptology	Presents a review of "non-conventional writing in organization studies from the 1980s to the present day as it relates to the relationship	This piece strengthens my belief that there is space for my work in the academy, and that there is ever increasing recognition of the

		between freedom, politics and theory."	limitations of the 'standard' ways of producing text.
O'Shea (2019)	My dysphoria blues: Or why I cannot write an autoethnography	O'Shea puts forth a strong argument that even though the writing she produces is 'bad writing' it still deserves to be read. O'Shea highlights how the academic obsession with style, accuracy and rigour are exclusionary to the extent that these can prevent voices like O'Shea's being heard in the academy. In the author's own words- "My writing is 'bad writing' but what should become of it? Does a concern with style, whether or not over content, based on	I agree with O'Shea when she says that writing (and consequently the academy) is not just for writers who 'write well'. My hope with you, reader, is that you do too. In this thesis I am making the same contention as O'Shea. You may deem my writing to be inconsistent, unclear, bad, but, as O'Shea says, it still deserves to be read. All the traumas locked within it are worthy of air-

		taste preclude some stories and different ways of writing? Should I be excluded from academe and silenced, or can room be found for a tasteless account like mine?" O'Shea continues, "For Anzaldúa (1981, 1987) writing about difference, or rather writing difference, is not just for those able to write well, different voices, particularly those so often silenced by the demands of academic writing, must also be heard."	space. My three sentence paragraphs deserve to be understood. And further-more, as the academy is constantly calling for difference, for diversity, writings like mine ought to be seen as the solution- the answer to these calls.
Biehl-Missal (2015)	'I Write Like a Painter': Feminine Creation with Arts-Based Methods in	From the abstract: "Feminine writing and organizational aesthetics are brought together in this paper to sketch a **different form of academic production in organizational research that**	The paper focuses on a new method of knowledge creation- arts based, feminine creation- which is something this thesis empathises with. By

	Organizational Research	**involves arts-based methods ('feminine creation')**. Feminine creation relates to écriture féminine (Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva) and also to peinture féminine (Nancy Spero) and modern choreography (Trisha Brown). Feminine creation responds to the feminist and the aesthetic critique of conventional academic writing and has the potential to challenge its masculine stereotypes of rationality, rigorous method and explicit knowledge production. The paper discusses the practices of poetic writing, painting and dance that are used to present academic research." (My emphasis).	way of this thesis, I offer a different approach than conventional academic writing: one that is emotive, vulnerable and forceful at the same time. By envisioning and enacting this different work, I challenge the masculinity contained within rationality and rigour within writing. Biehl-Missal's paper brings in poetry, painting and dance. You have already read about my sympathies for poetry. Later on, I will share a painting that forms part of my theoretical work. I can

			dance for you if you like as well!
Kociatkiewicz and Kostera (2019)	The body in the library: An investigative celebration of deviation, hesitation, and lack of closure	This paper uses the structure of an Agatha Christie 'whodunnit' story line to investigate who has killed "Ms Knowledge?" They use this 'different' structure and style of writing to assert the importance of story-telling (as well as literature and fiction) to social sciences.	This has resonance with my work, as the way I am presenting my own learning is as a story of my own evolution, and the way I am presenting the 'empirical' work is as stories from the narratives of interviewees.
Katila (2019)	The mothers in me	This paper is an autoethnographic telling of the author's experience of sudden trauma. To quote from the paper's abstract, "The paper **aims to evoke readers' reflective and affective capacities** and thereby facilitate	I feel a strong sense of belonging in this self-appraisal by the author of their work. Note how the author is using an autoethnographic method to describe traumatic experiences. Also note the multiplicity of the I, a

		understanding of the multisensorial, affective, and relational nature of knowing and becoming. It highlights the **role of embodied knowing in becoming** by following the **journey of an individual faced with sudden trauma**. It describes the affective energies crossing time and space in the continuously changing sociomaterial networks of relationships encountered in different organizational settings, be they in academia, health and social services, family, or otherwise. The paper is based on an **auto-ethnographic** narrative of becoming a mother that connects **individual experiences with cultural understandings**. The narrative	"diffractive analysis" of becoming- this resonates with the multiple I's I describe in the paper. I wrote that chapter after a sudden trauma too, so I can resonate with the sense of displacement, of a psychosis it can bring about. The goals the author states- I share in this work- that of showing/capturing the entanglement of mind/body, reality and dream, public/private, reason/emotion, art/research. Breaking of these false dichotomies makes it possible to radically shift our understanding

		is an outcome of a **diffractive analysis of becoming**; knowing emerges during the course of **a writing process in which theoretical understandings, emotions, concepts, discourses, embodied experiences, and affects come together.** The paper brings out the **multiplicity of contradictory discourses involved in knowing and becoming**. In so doing, it highlights the **entangled coexistence of body and mind, reality and imagination, public and private, reason and emotion**, as well as past, present, and future." (my emphasis).	of ourselves and what lies around us. What is also important is that the author writes this piece in the Journal in a Prose poetry form. They don't name it as such (my guess is that Prose Poetry as a term is not widely known yet, hence why), but the text follows a poetic rhythm and uses poetic devices aplenty. This is quite a moving paper. And the moving it creates in the reader are a direct result of the style of writing. The stated aim of the paper- "to evoke readers' reflective and

			affective capacities" necessitates this form.
Gilmore et al. (2019)	Writing Differently	This particular quote is important to me- "in order to develop radically new insights about working life, organisation and learning… there is a need to change current norms as these norms directly influence what we think of as possible to write: '**Norms write themselves on my body** through their conduits – reviewers, editors – us. After recent experiences, I keep asking, **"Why do we tolerate such violation?" "Why do we reproduce such violence to each other**?"' (Pullen, 2017: 124) (My emphasis)."	This is an introduction to another special issue of a Management Journal (Management Learning) dedicated to writing differently. The timing is crucial as this came out around the time of when I was writing my thesis, as well as living through the after effects of certain Hostile Environment issues. This paper summarises some of the work in the genre of 'different writing' that has gone before, and introduces some newer work

		The need to develop “radically new insights” necessitates new norms of writing. This validates the pursuit of writing differently. I also empathise with the notion of the violence that we do to ourselves to conform to these standards, and you know, after a while, these violences become too much to bear. In 2019, I was reeling with traumas from state led violences on my being, and the violence of ‘compromising’ how I write may have been easy to bear another day, another place, but in 2019-2021, it was too much. Another excerpt from this paper resonates-	(some of those are in this list itself). To develop radically new insights necessitates radical new ways of envisioning and writing research. The writing of this thesis is one such envisioning, creation of something new. And further on, is the strong statement- how can we write when grammar fails us? When accuracy ceases to matter? I am adding this phrase on 01/03/2022. There is a war raging in Ukraine, on top of other

		"how, then, to write? What does writing do to us?...**How can we write when grammar fails us, or when our writing refuses to let us complete it? Can we develop different genres of writing in Management Learning that carry passion and desire, replacing authorial primacy with relationships between writer and reader that are fluid, dynamic and unconstrained?** In short, how can we write with resonance (Meier and Wegener, 2016)?"	humanity's plight. Several personal tragedies have recently occurred. Somehow what I am doing here feels pointless. Chronicling grief, anger and pain, as I am trying to do here, is one instance one might argue that grammar should be allowed to fail.
Dickson (2015)	"Hysterical Blokes and the Other's Jouissance"	This paper "represents an attempt by a man to practise the feminine writing of organization."	This is a position I sympathise with, as a man, trying to write in a non- masculine way.
Steyaert (2015)	Three Women. A Kiss. A Life. On	Uses a "triptych" structure of writing. Draws on works of	This paper experiments with structure. Varying

	the Queer Writing of Time in Organization.	Virginia Woolf, Michael Cunningham, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to “indicate that queer writing can help to re-imagine new possibilities for (work) life” The author explains that the way the paper is structured “is like wandering through a hall of mirrors”.	length of paragraphs, text alignment and other reified rules of writing are challenged by way of producing something different. I also liked the notion of wandering through the halls of mirror and inspired by it, I imagined what would it be like for a consciousness to wanted along the halls contained within these pages. I positioned quotes that inspired me through this book as if they were ‘paintings’ hanging. The metaphor, you will note, of consciousness

			being akin to a gaze on paper is something I have developed through my painting that I share with you later on.
Rippin (2015)	Feminine Writing: Text as Dolls, Drag and Ventriloquism	Creation of texts as three rag dolls, who are then (fictionally) interviewed about their experience of organisations. Challenges what is acceptable as 'data' and positions 'fictionalised truth' as a way of writing. To quote Rippin, the work "troubles or queers conventional academic writing by producing a text (the dolls and the fiction) which is rich in embodiment and affect, and which has a feminist project: that of exposing the myriad ways in which women and organizations may be seen (and	I have created/brought in several straw persons in this thesis. One is, for example, the Standard Qualitative Doctoral Thesis. Not all theses are the same, but this straw person that Gabriel creates captures the essence of a lot of work. Similarly, I have multiple straw persons- 'the boss' when I want to refer to the power, the 'academy' when I want to refer to the cis-het-

		are seen in this article) as incompatible."	white masculine colonial consciousness of the academy, the "Home Office" when I want to capture the oppressive regime, and so on. **These are not real people, but ideologies I ascribe a name to. For a bit of these ideologies live in all of us, perhaps.**
Weatherall (2019)	Writing the doctoral thesis differently	Weatherall reflects upon her experience of writing a doctoral thesis in a 'different' fashion. This article is based on her PhD writing experience- and I have engaged with this source separately in this chapter.	I was writing at the time this paper had just come out, and it encouraged me to keep following the path I was on. Weatherall reflects on her own experience and other aspects of her identity- how those could be brought into her work, and I am

			doing something similar.
Vachhani, (2015)	Organizing Love- Thoughts on the Transformative and Activist Potential of Feminine Writing	This work "breaks the rationality and order of the 'masterful' text and alters gendered academic writing" Vachhani states that the "project of feminine writing is a means of representing the unrepresentable…"	This is of special significance for me. As I write later on, trauma, if one dares to step away from the masculine, macho definition of trauma, is unwritable in the sense that a trauma is a break. And by consequence, a gap- and if one wants to evoke a sense of that gap, one has to write in a 'different' way.
Vacchani, (2019)	Rethinking the politics of writing differently through écriture féminine	Explores "the politics of writing differently for researching, teaching and writing about organisations, the need to expose the effects of a	This paper builds on the one above and explores how sticking to the singularity, masculinity of writing leads to creation of

		masculine singularity in writing…"	authors and researchers that follow this pattern of thought. Writing is not merely representing an event, it is a creation and through writing we bring ideas into reality. What kind of ideas and who they will work for, need to be critically thought about.
Vickers, (2015)	Stories, Disability, and "Dirty" Workers: Creative Writing to Go Beyond Too Few Words	Uses "Creative Writing" to explore working lives of people with Multiple Sclerosis.	In the writing, the content is multi-toned- there are dialogues, conversations, narratives and autoethnographic accounts. There relevance to my work here is that I too use a multi-layered approach. There are

			autoethnographic passages, poetry, analysis, discussion etc.
Beavan, (2019)	(Re)writing woman: Unshaming shame with Cixous	The work speaks of fragmented being, speaks of trauma, and does so in a way that the form captures the content beautifully. Here's an excerpt, preserving the structure as it appears in the original: "You my readers must deal with histories of my body (and my shames) with histories of your bodies (and your shames)"	The abstract is a poem. The structure is fragmented, that of a multi act play, with text interspersed with poems interspersed with prose poetry. Notice the use of spacing, brackets and how the sentence is spread over several lines to create an emotive effect. The form is important- the author could have easily chosen to write the adjoining poem as a linear sentence; but they have chosen not

			to. The use of smaller paragraphs, brackets, spreading out the text over several lines, creates an emotional impact that's not possible if the same words are presented as a sentence. This is what I try to do in the thesis as well, sometimes, to stress the importance of a point emotionally, I leave it in a small paragraph.
Boncori and Smith, (2019)	I lost my baby today: Embodied writing and learning in organizations	Focuses on one of the authors' experience of undergoing the trauma of a miscarriage and sharing of intimate details and information as a resistance to patriarchal structures of academia. It uses "multi-voice	The content is evocative and the style goes "beyond traditional structures to foster personal, fragile and reflexive narratives that can enhance the

		autoethnography" as its mode of presentation.	understanding of lived experiences in organizations". My work continues in the same tradition.
Brewis and Williams, (2019)	Writing as skin: Negotiating the body in(to) learning about the managed self	Uses the metaphor of Skin to explore writing- and in that, is poetic in its essence.	Critiques normalised 'scientific' writing in sociological fields and reflects upon writing and how it impacts representation of experience.
Grey and Sinclair, (2006)	Writing Differently	Offer stories about writing critically to: "beguile you and make you laugh. But we also want to provoke you to think about how and why you write. Interspersed are short, unashamedly idiosyncratic statements about what we think is wrong with much of the	Apart from the subject matter, what is of note is also the conversational tone. Just like I am writing to you, Grey and Sinclair write to 'you' too. Just like the authors here, one of the tasks I have set this piece is to

		writing that goes on in the field, and why we think writing matters."	move you to interact with it and grow with it.
Burford, (2017)	Not writing, and giving 'zero-f**ks' about it: queer(y)ing doctoral 'failure'	Explores how "recognize 'writing failures' as possible modes of being and becoming doctoral".	Offers how mistakes/failures can be theorised as another way of being, rather than 'something to avoid'. Mistakes have a socio-cultural-political meaning. What counts as an error and what doesn't, is significant. I discuss this separately further on. In this article, the author makes the argument that mistakes can been seen not as offences against a 'true' interpretation of

			reality (for does such a thing even exist) but a way of being that embodies and brings 'in' all one's imperfections, rather than create the fantasy of an orderly, 'clean and clear' humanity. We are complicated and full of errors, mistakes, contradictions- why should we pretend otherwise when we write?

I want to go back to the phrase "**How can we write when grammar fails us, or when our writing refuses to let us complete it**". This is the problem that for me, writing in a way that amalgamates prose, prose poetry, poetry solves. A researcher who creates lyric forms to communicate to readers such engagements emphasizes concrete, specific, located language; concise, artful word choice; and metaphorical, allegorical, or analogical approaches. She emphasizes language that aims to create an aesthetic experience,

transporting a reader into a world, a mind, a voice (her own, or others') in the same way as does a fiction writer, a songwriter, or a poet (Arrows, 2008 p108).

Shahvisi (2021) writes how bringing down of colonial monuments can be seen as slurring speech acts. In the context of writing, the slurring of my speech brings monuments in the structure of writing down. In the below paragraphs, I will discuss the analysis presented in the table above. Let's begin with language. Language contains the consciousness of civilisation, so to alter the civilisation, a new language is necessary. To challenge prevalent hegemonies, language must be challenged too.

> "The invasion of one's mind by ready-made phrases … can only be prevented if one is constantly on guard against them, and every such phrase anaesthetizes a portion of one's brain." George Orwell in 'Politics and the English Language' (1946, p47)

By surrounding the oppressed with language of their own choice, the oppressor removes the language that the oppressed can use to express how they feel, and thereby make it wrong to not be oppressed. If an experience can't exist in language, it can't be articulated, it can't be brought to bear. When that happens, one is left loaded with a sense of anxiety that one doesn't know how or where to sublimate. Not only is the oppressed left oppressed, but worse still, she is unable to articulate feeling oppressed because she's not got the language to do that.

Rebellion then, often takes the shape of changing the language.

The papers summarised in the table above do exactly that. By working through the reified rules of language, they construct and bring to bear an alternative reality. This alternative reality, the authors in the above table argue, is not represented effectively in academic work to a sufficient extent and therefore there is a need to open up the rules of language to allow these alternative realities in.

Looking back at the table, there are a few papers that have called out the cis-het-whiteness embedded within our academic structures, such as, but not limited to, reified writing conventions. Rumens (2013) calls these out and asks for more queer representation with academy. Pullen and Rhodes (2015) explore this limitation of academic writing and academic work further. They point out how, while following the path of writing to editing to publication, authors make a series of decisions. These decisions are, to Pullen and Rhodes, acts of violence that distort, break and torture the story into a shape that is deemed 'proper'.

I do have to say that I resent having tabulated all the ‘different’ papers together in a table like that- segregating the ‘differents’. However, I suppose, there is merit in quickly pointing out towards the giants upon whose shoulders I intend to stand. On a cursory look, this might be a table, but to me, these are pillars that prop me up when my legs fall away.

Hopefully you can see the tradition of work within which I am trying to situate this work. Some of this work writes about writing differently, but are itself written in a standard prose. Some of these works (e.g. Katila 2019) are very evocative, written in a way that is more like

prose poetry, includes autoethnographic/confessional writing and (for the quantitively minded, who judge the quality of a work by the number of citations[13]) has considerably fewer citations than a standard journal article in the same journal. Katila (ibid.) speaks of trauma, pain, and writes in a fragmented way- this is very much what I am doing here. No wonder our writings look similar.

When the rebellion

becomes tradition

reinvent.

Different people above have written differently to attend to their positionalities and politics. For me, in speaking of free association, it feels appropriate to write in a freely associated manner. In speaking of rebellions, it felt appropriate to write in a rebellious manner. If I don't, I will feel like a phony, like I am not empathising with the people who I interviewed if I don't express their rebellion through a rebellious writing form. It is not about rebelling against you, reader- it is about being sincere to those who gave me their time and stories. My worst fear is that I am not doing justice to the anger and pain conveyed to me.

I try to write with urgency- as Clément writes (2015, p80), **Activism means, still more, a desire to transmit fast, fast, in a state of urgency constantly overtaken by reality**." (my emphasis). I summarise my poetic devices below:

[13] Indeed, as Richardson (1997: 705) contends, that "references are authority moves; disruptions; invite the reader to disengage from the text, like answering the doorbell in the middle of a lively conversation."

Trope Used	Comments
Text alignment	Any quotation that occupies more than two lines is justified to clearly indicate that it is a direct quote. In places, poetry is written in a justified manner to evoke imagery of a painting (See 'I write like a painter' (Biehl-Missal 2015) in the table above), for an evocative effect.
Capitalisation	Certain words and phrases are capitalised to capture the reader's gaze and attention. Think of these as deeper brush strokes, if writing was like painting, following on from above.
Use of contractions	Contractions are commonly used in speech and informal language. I use them here to evoke a feeling of an intimate conversation rather than the reader experiencing a dry paper.
Use of We when not writing of personal experiences	Sometimes where I empathise with the interviewee and have experienced something similar, I use 'We' to convey that I have experienced something similar but I am not going into detail of that to keep the narrative focussed on the interviewee.
Use of short paragraphs	For evocative effect, I vary the length of the paragraph. As Rosen (2014) and Watson (2019) have written, there's no set rules around these conventions- these just represent reified power.
Starting sentences with And	I am inspired by Queer writing, prose poetry, work of Eimear McBride, and Joyce's work Finnegans Wake (Joyce and Dean 2015) which starts with 'riverrun' and ends with 'the'. Amongst other things this work accomplishes, one of its feats is that it demonstrates that grammar is a convention and alternative conventions exist or can be brought to bear.
Use of playful subversions	Playful subversions are used for emotive impact, and are based on the notion of selfhood and theory as fantasy. Freud used playful writing aplenty (see next section) and I have discussed humour in psychodynamics in the theory. It was important to reflect the playful subversions my interviewees made to me. I

	believe if I hadn't done that, I wouldn't be being faithful to the accounts my interviewees gave me- so my playful subversions are there to convey to the reader what I have learnt from doing the interviews.

Do I put a dot and end it. Sentence this sentence to a sentence.

Or do I put three, and set it free…

Decisions.

Finding my Epistemological fragments

> "Form was important to Freud. He had doubts about his dream-book because of 'a feeling for form, an appreciation of beauty' in him; he thought the book's tortuous style indicated that he'd not completely mastered the material." (Glenn, 1986)

Similar to Weatherall (2018), I present this work in a reshaped way. I want to preserve the fragility and fragmentation, because it is an important contribution to allow the reader into this world. Now I know that my writing has a home in queer writing. I couldn't write any other way at the time, and it's important to situate that writing within academia as a nod to my difference, something the Academy quite loudly craves for when it seeks 'Equality and Diversity'.

I go back to Weatherall's thesis here-

> "How we write is just as important as what we write for becoming the type of ~~management~~ researcher we wish to be, whether that be a feminist, mainstream, queer, Marxist, traditional, critical, postcolonial, or other type of ~~management~~ researcher (Grey and Sinclair, 2006; Pullen, 2018). …the processes of doctoral writing rarely discussed in organisational studies (Weatherall 2018)." (my de-emphasis/crossouts).

I agree with Weatherall here. I am creating a straw-person: not all theses are samey, but the straw person is important to bring into being the general state of affairs that a lot of us feel. As per Rippin (2015) above, it is a "fictionalised truth".

We write how we are, and we become how we write. In my opinion, in a psychodynamic sense, writing is a birth- not of the, or at least not just of the document that is being written, but of the author herself. If one wants to be, or is forced to be, say a feminist/queer/decolonial researcher of the world of work, then it is only to be expected that they write in a way that fosters those values, adapt to those structures/step away from structures that do not support their values, and innovate where necessary.

The purpose of writing is not just to communicate a sterile idea, but also to convey to the reader an emotion- to evoke a sense of empathy with the author, the reader must come on the journey with the reader.

I submit the thesis/I submit myself/I resign.

To put it another way, in the battle between the rebellious I and conformative I, the latter should win in order for me to gain this qualification. But hopefully the battle is a close one, and the victory is only just.

Some measures of quality come from discussions on autoethnography. For example, Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) mention regarding autoethnographic works-

> "What matters is the way in which the story enables the reader to enter the subjective world of the teller—to see the world from her or his point of view, even if this world does not 'match reality'" (Plummer, 2001, p.401 in Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011).

It has to be added that part of my work is autoethnography- and like a shell, it wraps around theories, and crucially, the stories I was told through free association narrative interviews I conducted. I have said previously how I decided to abandon the colonial exploitation of the other and gaze within, as I became aware of colonial ideologies and colonial exploitation and how it works, when I got hit by the Home Office bus in my face. I touch upon that again in Methods.

I cite from Lynne Segal, that

> “Radical politics is about being happy, not about being good’; ‘Feminism is a vision of active freedom, of fulfilled desire, or it is nothing.’ In the same era, black American feminist Audre Lorde wrote in Sister Outsider: ‘The sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference.’” (p60, Segal, 2018: we revisit this at the end of this thesis).

Maybe, then, through my work and my politics, it’s not a morality I seek, but a happiness, a belonging.

Mapping

This work is structured in 6 parts:

Contexts

Theories and Definitions

Methods

Seeing Comes Before Words

Stories from the Empirical Work

Conclusion/Epilogue

The first chapter, Contexts, sets out the various situations of this work. The next chapter- Theories and Definitions contains the most pertinent theoretical constructs that I need to make you aware of, before we get to discussing the empirical work. This is akin to a literature review, except it is not systematic, but more like a collection of things I have combed on a beach. The chapter "Seeing Comes Before Words" is my pride and joy- in that I draw your attention to the minutiae of lingual utterances and try to take you beneath the personal to the social and political with me through deconstructing language. Chapter six tells the stories told to me by the people I interviewed. So, as you can see, while at first glance this work may look queer/different/immigrant/other/alien, it is, beneath, quite the same as what you'd expect from a doctoral work.

We are all only human

While the work is presented as such, it was not written in this order. It was written in the reverse order. The first 'literature review' and 'method' chapters I wrote, I discarded. Based on those, and my learnings, I wrote the 'Stories' and 'Seeing Comes Before Words' sections first and second. After writing these chapters, I was inspired by the language used by my interviewees and tried to write the subsequent chapters embodying that conversational tone. For example, I refer to celebrated figures within CMS as 'Gods' because my interviewees referred to certain employees as Gods. When my interviewees spoke of Consultants within the NHS (English National Health Service) as Gods, I asked the question: wait a minute, I am a worker in this system too- who are my Gods?

Third, I rewrote the methods chapter. During the analysis of the empirical data, I had to ask myself questions, and reflect upon my own identities and positionalities. I felt that these offer insight into the analytical process, and included them within the section on methods (Chapter 4). I have had multiple breakdowns, panic attacks, and various other ~~adverse~~ events, as well as various beautiful and kind events during the course of writing this work, and this thesis, embraces my (in the traditional sense) femininity and therefore the impact of those events.

After that, I looked through my multiple literature reviews and notes on theory to seek out what theory and definitions are relevant and important to make sense of the empirical work for the reader, including myself. For this, I had to leave the work for a period of time and approach it again.

Last of all, I wrote this chapter as a sort of prefix to it all.

It is important to tell you of this order, because this makes clearer why certain sections are written ‘normal’ and certain sections are written ‘different’. In places, I use ‘/’ to list multiple words that broadly mean the same- however the meanings are different and each word pertains to a different world view, a different way of seeing.

While in a truly free-associated writing, there would be no correction of spelling errors and grammar mistakes (because these are also full of meaning, we discuss that later) but here, I have endeavoured to correct these. Any poetry/prose poetry occurs in italics and bold. However, as you can glean already, the thesis is poetic in its aspiration so even the prose is more prose poetry than prose.

Virginia Woolf writes about the importance of “A room of one’s own” for writing (Woolf, 2002). I have rarely had that: not that I mind. Half of it I wrote looking after my pregnant wife. Some of it I wrote with a little one on my arms, speech to text. Whatever space I did have was taken over by COVID- we have all been working from home, with little or no boundaries, whether or not the time is there or not, space is there or not. My position on that now is, that if there is no room of one’s own, the work is still beautiful, albeit differently. It was only last month (Aug 16, 2021) that the threat of COVID and isolation for me and my family reduced and I could safely step out into a library to edit this work.

In that vein, there are parts of this thesis where I have left some ‘mistakes’ in. For example, I dictated using speech to text to the computer, while soothing my child. So, sometimes, when the baby stirred, I would quickly go from speaking the thesis content to singing a

lullaby. The speech engine would capture it and add it to the content. Some of them I removed, but one, I turned into a poem and left it in there. I can't erase them all, it feels too violent. They contain memory of my child. And I guess to the reader, they represent the reality of writing when there isn't a room of one's own.

I don't see it as a limitation or bad writing, I see this as an accurate reflection of my writing world. There might be other mistakes too, that capture the state I am in. 'Mistakes' that refuse to come out as an act of solidarity with those who are labelled dyspraxic/dyslexic/neurodiverse/mentally ill/unable to 'write academically'. They are an apology from people like me who take things for granted often. They are a tribute to my wife. They are an act of solidarity with all those like me- the foreign English language speakers, who erase their identities, write a thesis like this in their third language, and yet are scared that they might be perceived as if they don't know what they are doing by the institutions. They are an act of solidarity with those who can't enter academia because our neurotic obsession with 'accuracy' rather than 'emancipation' has turned it largely into a performative field of a weird psychodrama rather than meaningful work. This is certainly not true of everyone everywhere, but it must take some disappointment for stalwarts of academy to shun itself, e.g. Gabriel (2021) writing about destroying 80% of publications about management/ work. Parker (2018) asks to 'Shut Down the Business School'.

Mistakes?

human artefacts.

change the language to take power.

These ‘human artefacts’ are also a protest against Saul Bellow’s Thingism (Bellow and Bradbury, 2001). If I wanted to, I could run this work through a software like Grammarly which would automatically ‘correct’ the language. But in doing so, it will whitewash this work, machinise it make it what it wants to not be. And these writing software too, reproduce gendered norms of writing (Muhr and Rehn, 2015), so why bother? This is ‘handmade’, ‘Unique’, ‘Organic’ writing. Consider it Posh!

In places, the grammar and the structure fizzle out. Some of these, I have corrected, some of these, I can’t see anymore. Some of these are important. Small paragraphs are important for evocation, emotiveness. They help me maintain a sense of rhythm, an urgency to the work. Spaced out writing makes sure that if you are reading on a screen (the University asks us to submit an online copy and I have no reason to presume that you’ll print it), it is easier on the eye. Most of this work has been composed on 10-12 inches screens- I find spaced out writing accessible. I am sorry if this breaks an unwritten convention. Yellow backgrounds are more accessible, and easier on the eye, but I have been questioned when I sent work on yellow background before, so now I am scared and submit this in white background. Let me know if you’d like a copy with yellow background, or perhaps another font or formatting.

Perhaps because these are important mementos of battles hard fought, time lived under duress, and my mind subconsciously wants to keep these structures, these artefacts. Or, because I find it easier to write in this zone. As I say in Epilogue, it’s not against University rules. Think of these as examples of my own ‘dirty writing’ (Pullen and Rhodes, 2008). After all, what are norms but violence:

> "…there is a need to change current norms as these norms directly influence what we think of as possible to write: 'Norms write themselves on my body through their conduits – reviewers, editors – us. After recent experiences, I keep asking, "Why do we tolerate such violation?" "Why do we reproduce such violence to each other?"' (Pullen, 2017: 124, in Gilmore et al, 2019)"

Why do I want to keep doing this violence to myself? For the qualification, for that other I, for that bit of me that feels like he deserves it, from that part of me who needs it to play the game that is neoliberal academia. I don't have much in the name of wealth, I need to raise my kid somehow and I keep getting told that without this qualification, I am not as secure as I should be. I fear too.

So, when you encounter dirty or bad writing, I want you to not react in disgust but find an empathy within you to ask yourself the following questions-

Which rules[14] are being broken

Why are those rules important

What happens now that someone has broken these rules

Which ideology do these rules belong to

What is my stance in relation to this ideology

Why am I reacting the way I am to these rules being broken

[14] Although, a question is- have I actually broken any rules? See Epilogue at the end.

Parts of it incorporate creative writing such as poetry/ prose poetry and therefore it sits at the intersection of creative writing/writing about organisations/reflecting upon myself/relevant theoretical truths.

Because voices on fringes are by default, unpopular and rare, because a big fear of existing within the fringes is that of being misunderstood, I quote often, rather than 'trying to write it in my own words'. I fear that if I write it in my own words, some things are too deviant for people to believe me. You may think this is silly- but fear often is irrational. To be irrational is to be human. There's also the point of cost. This thesis will be free to download around the world. People 'back home' can read the work contained in it and through the quotes can learn the theory building. A lot of the books I have used in here are costly. I think back to my old self, growing up where I did- I wouldn't have been able to afford a lot of this knowledge that I can now.

A final word on 'mistakes'. With the ambition of this work to be deviant, where is the line between queerness and mistakes? The truth is I don't know where my writing stops being queer and where it starts being 'wrong'. For some reason, it seems to matter.

On mistakes.

As life has panned out, I have acknowledged, my rebellion in this thesis is not a complete rebellion because I am *submitting*- both the thesis in a literal sense and metaphorically. In keeping with that submission I have gratefully received feedback from supervisors and

examiners alike and issues pointed out have been attended to carefully. No one can ever guarantee anything like 100% accuracy, of course, but I am doing my best.
But the question I did want to raise regarding 'mistakes' stands for the CMS community. There are several aspects to this question.

1. Power.

   Does CMS punch up with equal ferociousness as it punches down? I have given account of my traumas and illnesses and how it made me see things differently, and how mistakes are inevitable when you are trying to write emotively- because your allegiance is not to the patriarchal structures and power of grammar, your allegiance is to the feminine call to make sure the feelings get wrapped up within the narrative as accurately as possible.

   But what about the errors of the powers that be? I have recounted injustices in this thesis- be it to the workers by the neoliberal capitalist structures, or be it to myself, by the same structures. The question we must constantly ask ourselves is what has CMS got to say amidst all of this? That's not to say CMS is not doing anything- there are works I have drawn from, and there is a growing community of academic activists. The reason I raise this is that it is a question that must always be raised. Is CMS just punching down, or is it punching up? CMS must continue to be self-critical.

2. Allyship with those deemed inferior because of their perceived inadequacies in 'academic' English language

“I was always the reader, never the page” writes my friend in the Guardian (Singh 2020). Singh is talking not about literature, not about being queer, but about the injustice that is inflicted upon bodies of colour by virtue of their omission in dermatology textbooks. The same error of omission occurs in different medical sciences- amounting to earlier deaths and poorer life outcomes, which is, in the most part, directly proportional to the melanin in your skin as Singh goes on to discuss. The first book I picked up after submission of this thesis was Inflamed (Marya and Patel, 2021) who very eloquently transcend subject boundaries and connect cultural erasure to ill health; inequality to disease. They go one step further, they outline how the inequality gets absorbed into the body through what it is exposed to, i.e. the ‘exposome’. (Marya and Patel 2021, p74).

Similar phenomena happen for a lot of people when confronted with academic literature. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds due to various reasons may not see themselves represented and recognised in academic literature. It is widely acknowledged that academia has an elitist history and present. The existence of ‘learning support plans’ for neurodiverse people, people who were previously labelled as having ‘learning difficulties’, are an acknowledgement from the academy that our structures and cultures alienate people them. And then, there’s the question of elitism that manifests itself through ‘properness of language.’ When I walk around, I sometimes get told that my English is so good no one would have guessed I am not from around here. What does that mean? Am I, through my excellence in language, now beginning to erase a part of my identity? Am I seen as doing that by those around me? Does that mean that if those from the ‘Third World’ that might read my thesis then fail to see themselves in this work because the work is ‘so good they

could never do it'? Or, do I, through loosening my own language declare allyship with those that are alienated by the 'tyranny of merit' (Sandel 2021)? And if I do that, where does CMS and activists of academy stand on that?

English language is prominent like it is due to colonialism, in a large part, and that is a global injustice. And one doesn't have to look at people who come from afar to see this injustice. The near erasure of Scots language (there are efforts to revive it) speaks to the phenomenon that I am talking about. Erasing the language amounts to erasure of the people. If I want to spell home as hame in honour of my Scottish wife and my part Scottish daughter, and if I get inspired by this and want to spell several other words differently in a bid to decolonise the English language that has originated through systematic erasure of other languages, where does CMS stand on that? It calls for anarchy, but then, it has to give up some of its obsession with accuracy. If I extend the queer writing ambition to mould the language to suit me rather than mould myself to fit the language, why is what I am doing not labelled an innovation? I don't see anyone accusing A.A. Milne of corrupting children's' language by spelling Honey as 'Hunny'.

You may disagree with my Allyship, reader, but I leave you with this as a word of warning-

"First they came for the Communists

And I did not speak out

Because I was not a Communist

Then they came for the Socialists

And I did not speak out

Because I was not a Socialist

Then they came for the trade unionists

And I did not speak out

Because I was not a trade unionist

Then they came for the Jews

And I did not speak out

Because I was not a Jew

Then they came for me

And there was no one left

To speak out for me."

(Poem by Niemöller, 1946)

Indeed, various warnings of harm done to people of colour by the Hostile Environment, if they had been heeded, we wouldn't be where we are in 2022 where there is a war in Ukraine and as (Jenkins 2022) writes, refugees from Ukraine are being turned away for lack of paperwork. Writes Jenkins- "The obsession with halting migration has entered the Home Office soul, a department now institutionally xenophobic. By the weekend it emerged that of 5,535 laboriously completed online applications, just 50 had been granted. More than 1,000 have already entered the much smaller Republic of Ireland. It is obscene". Reader, you can't say the warning signs weren't there.

3. Critical Performativity

But then, if we ease off the accuracy, how do we judge who has done enough to gain a qualification. Maybe we start asking for art. It took me a long time to paint the painting, and it was definitely not in the PhD brief. We talk about egalitarian modes of assessment in academia, but authorship of long form prose is not very egalitarian. What if we start asking for reflective pieces on contribution to society as parts of qualification. I am not asking for people to get on the street and stop traffic. I am asking for aspiring CMS colleagues to maintain a journal- the conversations smaller and bigger, the letter to MP, the public awareness, whatever they did, that they think contributes to the common good. Those academics who CMS looks at in awe- tended to place a high value on critical performativity.

As Marx famously said- the point of the work is to change the world. Should we ask about this reflective journal in attainment of qualification? I can hear some people saying it won't work- but then we ask for 'application to practice' in so many of our courses- why not CMS? Is there an opportunity here to reassess how CMS assesses it's doctoral candidates? Was Boris Johnson at a party or a gathering? Language is altered to serve interests all the time, why can't I fight fire with fire?

4. Against Positivism

And lastly, what if, what we consider the right way to do work, is, you know, wrong? Polanyi (Nye 2017) has been perhaps one of the most famous critics of positivism and positivist notion of knowledge as linear, systematic and orderly. Polanyi (ibid.) effectively argued that positivism inculcates a false sense of knowing in pursuit of order, and this privileging of order subverts knowledge itself and consequently our greatest achievements. In other words, when we seek order and correctness in service of positivism, not only do we misrepresent our knowledge, we also do a disservice to humanity itself. It is worth mentioning here that Polanyi was a rigorous chemist and economist, so understood science from 'within'.

A prose poetry rendering of this contention is as follows:

What if truth is a woman what then? What if we all ticked Other Mixed boxes on ethnicity surveys what then? What if we all sat down to pee what then? What if there were learning support plans for race class gender previous traumatic history what then? What if there were no stairs and all spaces were accessible by default what then? What if the right way to be is the wrong way, what then? What if truth is a woman what then? What if we have got it all wrong what then?

Language does change- it just takes enough power and push. As we shall see in chapter two, language carries the consciousness of society. Language carries identity and erasure of language alienates people. As has been shown repeatedly in Marxist works, and as Marya and Patel explain how (2021), alienation leads to poorer life outcomes.

The correctness of language is not a question of representing accurately a universal truth. It is a question of power. Power shapes our consciousness through language and moulds a fantasy of selfhood, as we have seen in this work. In other words, I think of me as me in language, and that lingual framework is supplied by power.

Whether you call it Turtle Island or North America, depends on whether your sympathies lie with the coloniser (knowingly or unknowingly), or with those indigenous people who have been fighting for their land and their lives. Decolonisation happens through changing the language- whether it be Bombay to Mumbai, Bangalore to Bengaluru, or, more recently, Kiev to Kyiv. As I write this, Russia is waging war over Ukraine. As King (2022) investigates, almost overnight, the correct way to spell the capital city of Ukraine has changed from Kiev to Kyiv. People have realised that 'Kiev' was based on Russian interpretation of the name and quickly abandoned it to declare their allegiances. One might say that the war has shaken people out of their indifference. Spelling is important. Rebellion can happen through spelling.

Similarly, punctuation is arbitrary. Some people use the so called Oxford Comma, some don't. Whether they do or don't depends on a variety of factors, as you can imagine. But what about the other punctuations? Watson (2019) in book Semicolon charts the history of punctuation and power. I have drawn on this resource elsewhere as well. Watson writes of her experience of teaching English. She says that she realised that "strict rules aren't always the best way of teaching people how to make words say what they want them to; that they are even, sometimes, best ignored… Forget the rules; you're in charge. It's time to make language do what you want it to." (Watson 2019, p31). Now, Watson, an English teacher, an

author, a recipient of a Doctorate in History of Science from University of Chicago, has argued against grammar rules- how they restrict the voice of the author. Watson of course is not alone in this- she has drawn heavily on authors gone before.

The argument is not new, of course. Elsewhere, I want to point out to Irish author James Joyce's landmark work Finnegans Wake (Joyce and Dean, 2015). Widely hailed as one of the most daring works in English language, a masterpiece, has its own grammar. It starts with the word 'riverrun' and ends in a 'the': no full stop at the end. An extended critique is beyond the scope of my work here, but it's worth pointing out that this work follows its own laws in capitalisation, spelling and punctuation. It is celebrated not for its 'accuracy' but because the author created a whole new system of language to manifest this book in.
In my work, I have explored the creative potential of these ideas for CMS. CMS is vocally critical of power, it is self admittedly feminist, decolonial and anarchist. There is, as per its own definition, no right way to do CMS (Alvesson et al, 2009). It is only a logical extension then, in light of the above arguments, that there is no right way to write CMS.

Thomas (2015) explains how prescriptive teaching of English language is problematic to linguists. Firstly, this is because such a teaching posits that "some language is inherently superior to other" (Thomas 2015, p3), and, secondly, because this contradicts the reality that "all language usage evolves, changes" (Thomas 2015, p4) and therefore to stop it doing that is to arrest the flow of language- to prevent the language from evolving and changing is to misunderstand the language. I have discussed my reflections on these notions in this chapter. The question this thesis has asked is, that given the values CMS seeks to embody, it should naturally lend itself to a model of language that imbibes fluency, fluidity, emotion

and authenticity. To privilege a model of language that serves the very power CMS seeks to work against would be counterproductive.

Butler has analysed speech and how it reifies and deconstructs our social structures in 'Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative' (Butler 1997). Butler demonstrates how the subversive power of language resides in its ability to break free from rules and conventions, and in its dynamism. Based on that, an argument can be made that to explore the subversive, critical aspect of language would be to embrace the dynamism of language- the kind of dynamism that acknowledges, as Thomas (2015) writes above, that there is no right way to language.

Thomas (2014) writes, "Grammar is not about correctness in English class. It is about values." Thomas is discussing bad grammar and Michael Gove. What do the two have in common, I hear you ask. Well, as Thomas recounts Gove's endorsement of 'bad grammar' awards and endorsement of 'Gwynne's Grammar' and, to use Thomas's words- "The horribly right-wing and entirely wrong-headed prejudices behind the book" (Thomas 2014, p4). Michael Rosen, the very same who has brought joy to countless children through his stories, issued a swift rebuttal: "Sorry there's no such thing as correct grammar." (Rosen, 2012). Now in this conversation, reader, would you like to stand beside Gove, or Rosen? And where do we think CMS should stand? It's not that hard a choice, is it?

I end this discussion with the same argument that the notable civil rights activist and author, James Baldwin made in 1979. Baldwin writes that language testifies to power. Baldwin speaks of language and race relations in America. Baldwin discusses that the African-

American people of the Southern American States are often deemed to have not good language. Baldwin writes that he doesn't agree with this assessment- he describes how young people are experimenting with poetry, and their wordplay would make some modern poets "green with envy." (Baldwin 1979, p12).

> "I'm fascinated by this whole question of language because when you get people who come from a Southern background, where language is manipulated with great skill and verve, and who upon coming north become inarticulate, then you know that the proper function of language is being frustrated." (Baldwin 1979, p12).

Baldwin writes that the proper function of language is not to be proper, but to do the work of culture- the work of staving off death. If the language doesn't work for the individual, it means the individual can't bring the world around them to bear and thereby, that language is useless.

As Baldwin explains, the argument often given in the name of homogeneity of language and homogeneity of grammar is that if we could somehow standardise language and grammar, we could all understand what the other is saying, that a notion of pure truth could somehow be communicated across different human beings in an exacting manner. Throughout this work, I discuss works that argue precisely the opposite. Indeed, CMS knows the subjective nature of truth, the power of rhetoric, the fickleness of language. Instead, in this thesis, I ask you to ponder the same question that Baldwin asked nearly half a century ago. That if, even if two people use the same words and the same grammar, they do not say quite the same

thing, then what is being lost in the name of creation and maintenance of this common grammar? And who does this notion of accurate language serve?

It wouldn't take you long to identify that my sympathies lie with Rosen in the above discussion, rather than Gove. I stand in solidarity with Baldwin's arguments on 'Black English', and if we are to raise the points of Equality and Diversity and Representation in Academia, acceptance of 'different' language is an important aspect of that. Reader, you may agree with me- in which case you will empathise readily with this work. You may, on the other hand, decide that you want to support Gove's and not Rosen's arguments, in which case you shall be challenged by this work, but hopefully you can find the significance of this work in that it illuminates and warns against an uncritical acceptance of dogma, dogma that is 'accuracy of language'; and that would go against the principle of being an academic- as Nietzsche warned in 'Beyond Good and Evil' (2014). Now I have been asked to explain my grammars and structures because they are different, I only hope that you, reader, also question, with the same rigour, those who reproduce the structures without an examination.

I have tried to present this work the best way possible, but if 'mistakes' remain when it reaches your end, these could be interpreted as following. Either, as mistakes- which if you point out to me I will correct them, however you like. You can also see them as fragments of my fragmented being, as free associated- nuggets revealing my state of mind, my mental illnesses, evidence of traumas suffered by me, or my positionality of being a parent who is trying hard, a professional who is trying hard, a student who is trying hard. Trying hard to push the boundaries from within, to make possible something new. In a work of this nature,

there is often little help available- feedback is difficult to give for readers, and I feel like I can't awail of the usual avenues of support such as various University departments who usually help Doctoral Students 'improve their language'. So, errors are also a function of the size of the endeavour this thesis is for me. My memory of a supervisory meeting I had in early days is that I asked what kind of methodology to use to do a literature review for my thesis; and the response was that no one cares, just make it interesting. Interesting, I hope it is. It could also be seen as a remnant of trauma as held within my body- that physically impacts my ability to do certain things or say certain things- as the title goes- 'The body keeps the score' (Kolk, 2015).

Tell me what's wrong with me and I will fix me You think therefore I am

To summarise the essence of what I have said before, in the words of Maggie Nelson, (2016, p122)

> "What other reason is there for writing than to be traitor to one's own reign, traitor to one's own sex, one's own class, to one's majority? And to be traitor to writing?"

Maggie continues,

> "My writing is riddled with such tics of uncertainty. I have no excuse or solution, save to **allow myself the tremblings, then go back and later slash them out**. In this way, I edit **myself into a boldness that is neither native or foreign to me**.

> At times, I grow tired of this approach, and all its gendered baggage… **there are many speakers whom I like to see do more trembling, more unknowing, more apologising**." (Nelson, 2016 pp 122-123, my emphasis).

It's not me it's you

So, for me, why should I write except to discard that part of me that is already privileged and bring to light the minority within me? Why should I write, except to privilege the woman that I also am rather than the manhood I wield with so much privilege? And why shouldn't I write in a way that defies writing itself? That is, what we seek to do in CMS, don't we?

Where's the 'literature review'?

Speaking of literature, the theory and empirical material are intertwined to a certain degree. Instead of a traditional literature review that vacuums up some journals, I provide an extensive explanation of theory and definitions that are important and help you into my world view. Not everything I read has made it through to this chapter, and the aim of this section is not to 'find a gap and fill it' but to aim at the walls and break them down. I have had enough of some of them, haven't you, reader?

> "Avoiding this "'straightforward' track of the genre of linearity" (Steyaert, 2015, p. 164), can help us to open up the possibilities of thinking differently about theory, and about how we amalgamate theory to the lifeworlds of our participants, colleagues, friends, and family." (Weatherall 2018, p14)

I touch on this topic again in the thesis, with different arguments. For this work, there is no literature review chapter but there is literature throughout. In the first half particularly, I use extensive quotes with the anxiety that the theory I am citing is very far from mainstream and unless I quote it, no one will believe me. By its nature though, the theory on fringes can't be found through systematic reviews- methods which amplify privilege. Instead, the theory I quote and cite has been found through a process like:

combing the beach

picking up a rock

inspecting it

palpating it

percussing it

does it look pleasant

does its music resonate

if I hold it

do I feel free

do I feel like

descending down the steps

deep

within myself.

And if it did, that's what I have used.

Harry Wolcott took a, what some might call radical, view of the literature review in qualitative research:

> "I expect my students to know the relevant literature, but I do not want them to lump (dump?) it all into a chapter that remains unconnected to the rest of the study. I want them to draw upon the literature selectively and appropriately as needed in the telling of their story." (Wolcott 1990: 17)

As Wolcott writes above- it is neither the literature nor the structure- it is the telling of the story that takes precedence. The mythical 'literature' comes in as necessary, and the structure adapts to the story- not the other way around.

I use the language used by my interviewees where I could. I use phrases like 'Gods of CMS' to indicate our celebrated figures, because that's how some of my interviewees referred to those that they saw at helm. I decide to privilege their language rather than belittle it and coat it with some 'academic' non-sense.

There is autoethnographic content throughout, to make you aware of my condition and of the I that is doing the writing, maybe if you close your eyes you can imagine what it was like for me to live through this period.

Gabriel (2021) writes that

> "Imagine that 80% of all research outputs in the social sciences produced in the last five years was destroyed without trace. Would the world in any meaningful

> way be a worse place?... Would anybody care if all the thousands of research gaps that these articles claim to fill remained empty forever? …many academics would welcome the disappearance of 80% of all 'research papers' including in their own field, as being essentially meaningless clutter, beyond propping up academic careers and feeding various misleading and dysfunctional rankings."

With that in mind, what's the big deal about these rules I am supposedly breaking in this thesis anyway.

In Defence of the Personal/Confessional

> "I am implicated in what I write, so I may as well make myself part of the writing in a conscious and obvious way"
> (McWhorter xix, cited in (Sholock, 2007)

Knowledge creation, or more appropriately, if one believes, as I do, that as an author I am not creating knowledge, merely translating it from one world, the 'real' to an abstract world of 'writing', is an intensely personal experience. Decisions have to be made, trade-offs have to be made, because the 'real' just doesn't translate completely and accurately into the written.

Language is limited, and makes trade-offs every time it is used. And to use, in this context, is to reproduce, to birth. Every time I use a language, a portion of my identity produces, gives

birth to, privileges, certain ways of knowledge creation, which in turn connect to a particular ideology, a particular 'way of seeing' (after John Berger, 2008).

Writing about subconscious phenomena is even harder, because that urge, that subconscious drive, as soon as I translate it into words, I lose it, or at least I lose a portion of it. I offer some thought experiments later on in the thesis to this effect.

When I write 'scientifically[15]' I make trade-offs. I privilege that part of me that believes in 'reason' and holds that as a worthy aspect to reproduce, over, say emotion. Even further, when I do the aforementioned, I assert that such a dichotomy exists. In doing so, I privilege a paradigm, a 'way of seeing', a way of being. Even further, I privilege that particular way of being. I make trade-offs. I decide to do a 'systematic literature review'. I privilege knowledge published in a certain language, in a certain space. I legitimise certain ways of knowing. I reproduce the privilege to certain journals, certain publishers, certain people. Knowingly or unknowingly, I give over my allegiance to an ideology. I engage in certain geopolitics, a certain sociology of knowledge production by choosing to give my work to a certain school of thought.

At the end of this process, there is also an opportunity cost. For every work that is created in a particular geo-politico-socio-lingual space, something else could have been created but is not- be it because of the choice of the individual, or the power of the ideology behind that context.

[15] In this thesis, when I write about 'scientific writing', strictly speaking, I am writing about using 'scientific' ways to write about persons in sociological studies.

In legitimising one way of knowing, I also delegitimise many other ways of knowing. We all make trade-offs in knowledge production, whether we are aware of it or not, whether we like those or not.

To language is to compromise/to compromise is to language/words do no justice

In producing a standard qualitative doctoral thesis, in a UK Higher Education Institution, one makes a lot of trade-offs. One is choosing to privilege English as a language of scholarship, United Kingdom (UK) as a place to invest their labour in. But also, often enough, one is choosing to privilege 'journals' as legitimate source of information, a 'scientific' epistemology, a reductionist approach to inquiry translated into survey/interviews, a linear way of writing, a particular way of being.

And if the PhD is the creation of a thinker, one commits to being a particular kind of thinker. Forgive the generalisation, but after standard qualitative doctoral thesis, comes the standard qualitative doctoral researcher.

And there are repercussions of these trade-offs, of these decisions. Some of them serious. As Gabriel (2021) has written, one repercussion is that the knowledge that is created using this approach begins to lose its meaning- to the extent that if we destroy some of it or a lot of it, humanity will not be worse off. In other words, a lot of us researchers could stop working now and humanity will not be worse off. What a sobering thought. If that is indeed the case, then we have two issues.

One is, for qualitative inquiry to have a meaning, we must step away from this formula. That mind, is no guarantee that work that doesn't subscribe to this formula will be useful, emancipatory, but we have to try. The second issue is, that if these PhDs, if these works are not creating meaning and carry little emancipatory potential, what are they for. We have to ask, is it that what these works reproduce is power and privilege? They strengthen the ideology they belong to? They keep the industry going?

I am making trade-offs too. In this work, I make trade-offs, these just happen to be different trade-offs to an SQDT. Instead of choosing to privilege a systematic literature review which will privilege the mainstream, I present a section on relevant concepts and theories, that will inform you of where the empirical work I have done sits. Instead of using science, I use psychodynamics. Instead of a survey, I have done free association narrative interviews. Instead of being reductive, I have tried to be wholesome. Instead of some arbitrary 'inclusion and exclusion criteria' codified by someone at some point and privileged by a few of us, I tell you why I have made certain decisions in creation of this knowledge.

For example, I tell you why I start with psychodynamics. Why I engage with Marxist critique of Freud. Why I start doing interviews and why I stop. There is no formula I have followed in that, except for translating how and why I have felt about those decisions at the time I have made them, and I have articulated those. Since the formula is me, I have felt compelled to provide my confessions alongside, particularly in the second part (the methods section, if you will) so that you understand the framework and the context.

I offer an autoethnographical account of me doing the research as well as the research itself. I offer a psychogeography (Bridger, 2013; Self and Steadman, 2016) of the mind that makes the decisions, the result of which are in front of you. This compulsion is not unique to me- see for example Short (2010) in their thesis writing about being misunderstood, or Sholock (2007) writing about writing openly.

And of course, going back to Durkheim's work on suicide (2013), and within feminist works, we know that personal is political (Hanisch, 1969). Further, as I write in the first chapter, individuality is a myth (more prevalent in the 'west' than elsewhere) so in many ways what is my personal is not mine alone anyway, and I have made peace with that. But of course, the system I sit within, I have to sometimes use an I- e.g. the 'autoethnography' is only 'auto' if you believe in selfhood being real. If you don't, autoethnography is just ethnography. I speak within a world where auto- exists- but by the end, hopefully, I ceases to be important.

In choosing to present the discussion and results in a free association way, I celebrate a different way of knowing that is more governed by the subconscious processes than by a structure chosen by someone else. My allegiance lies with queer writing, in that manner.

But of course, I also make a trade-off in submitting this work for examination, I accept that somewhere, this work has to conform to certain standards too. I have provided a mapping of this work to the standard work, an explanation, however insufficient, of my positionalities. Even though referencing systems are fraught with issues, it is not my intention for this work to forego referencing conventions as prescribed by the university.

And this gives rise to paradoxes. Some parts of this thesis are written in a more standard way than the others. The decision of which parts these are has been made for me, as in the deviation of the section, of the part, reflect the duress I was in at the time of writing it, the context I was in, the situation I found myself in. I sublimated what I had into what I was producing. Parts that I wrote when I had just started the process are a lot more 'conventional'. You can see through my submissions for year 1, 2 and 3 reviews and you can see the first research proposal that I submitted to embark on this journey- they look nothing like this work, and yet there are clear blood lines of evolution.

Just as a baby born inherits whatever state of affairs the parents are in at the time of birth, so did my work. At the time of examination, I have dressed this baby up a little bit, I do want this baby to get accepted, but surely I can't hide away everything or it won't be my baby anymore.

These trade-offs imply two things. One is that there is risk. Risk for me that I may not be accepted. But risk for you too, for you must make this decision and bear some weight of it. I can only apologise for putting you in that position. The other implication is, that of an opportunity. We have, in our hands, opportunity to legitimise something new, unique and different. The ethics of CMS dictate that we mustn't squander it. The ethics of the neoliberal aspect of the academy mean this work must be changed.

Much like those forced to undergo sexual correction therapy in the days gone not so long ago, I will also correct myself/this work to fit in, even if, only just. Do we decide to privilege

heteronormative, colonialist writing/structures or do we have the courage, the courage that Gabriel speaks of, to accept something else, is the question.

Classical music is music. Disco music is music. Pop music is music. Jazz music is music. Rap music is music.

So also is Ambient music so also is Avant Garde so also is noise music.

We may not understand all these musics, we may not be able to play all these musics, but we mustn't scoff at musics that are alien to us and call them non-musics. Within CMS that intends to celebrate difference and individuality, hopefully there is space for all kinds of musics.

It is important to convey these emotions because that's what was conveyed to me. It is important to write in a free-er/different manner because that's how I was spoken to. It is important to connect with my traumas to write this work because that's what the people who I interviewed connected with when I spoke with them. This is not about being rebellious researcher, this is about being a sincere one.

To quote Audre Lorde,

> "Once we begin to feel deeply all the aspects of our lives, we begin to demand from ourselves and from our life-pursuits that they feel in accordance with that joy which we know ourselves to be capable of… This is a grave responsibility…

not to settle for the convenient, the shoddy, the conventionally expected, nor the merely safe." (Lorde 2013, p6)

Chapter 2: Context

Phew.

Good that we got that out of the way.

Thank you for your attention.

With your permission, I will now speak.

My name is Gaurish Chawla and the work that you hold in your hands is a compilation of stories I have reflected upon in the last few years, as a part of the UK Higher Education institution of PhD. There are stories about abstract ideas, stories of people who gave me their time, stories of the I who fell apart and regrouped many times through this work. These stories carry anger, pain, trauma, discontent, rebellion, that bubble beneath the surface of our everyday working lives, and the defences to keep all of these things neatly below the surface. Tasked to carry all this weight, this work has taken a queer shape. Whilst some of it was deliberate on my part, to depart from what Gabriel has called a SQDT, a large chunk of the 'difference' of this work can be attributed to two factors.

Firstly, through this work, I redefined my positioning in this world- so some of the difference this work carries is a sublimation of this difference that for me, is a result of this PhD process itself- and hence it would be unfair to try and keep it out of this work.

I started off as a student from India enrolling into a PhD in management, seduced by the leadership industry and its potential to solve the "challenges of the modern world" (Bennis 2007), my desire occupied by the neo-colonial shaped notions of 'doing well in the UK', as well as my rebellion against medicine, forced upon me by my family- themselves steeped in traumas of colonial violence, and living in a nation only now beginning to address its colonial history of subjugation.

Through the PhD, I uncovered traumas within my self-identity, made peace with some, worked back from personal traumas through to their political roots (and hence moved from Freudianism to a Marxist critique of Freud), all the while redefining my identity from an international student, to immigrant worker, to sociological successor of the coolie, to an aspiring 'black/brown/decolonial radical'.

The researcher worked on the thesis, the thesis works on them.

The I wrote the stories, the stories wrote the I.

They got so entangled I don't know what is they and what is I.

Hence this evolution is an important part of the results and these are reflected partly in my reflections, and partly how I write them. In other words, there is meaning not just in the content, but also the aesthetics of the piece.

Secondly, the stories that this work carry were given to me with great trust and emotion. Understanding the contribution of aesthetics of writing to its emotional impact, as well as to

its politics, I began experimenting to find a way of writing that could reflect as accurately as possible the feelings that stories should carry.

Amongst many things I am also informed by David Foster Wallace's Radical Sincerity (Moats (2012), and tried to imagine it in form. Stories of rebellion when written in perfect/sedate/stodgy Rees-Moggian prose sound, at best ironical, at worse, insulting. Stories of rebellion written by rebelling against the rules of prose, not just tell you of rebellion, but evoke feelings of rebellion too (recall section on Poetic/Lyric Enquiry).

Stories that carry trauma and rebellion often do distort the form of prose. They have to, there is no choice. The 'linear' narrative arc is not available to a traumatised mind. But does the traumatised mind not have a right to speak? Frantz Fanon's Black Skin White Masks (Fanon, 2008) is my inspiration here.

One last thing. I wrote this work through mental illness, incredible stress due to many things- pre-covid and post-covid. Anxiety, depression have been my long-standing friends. Events such as Hostile Environment only add on to the pain. And then COVID hit, and things continued to become more and more difficult. Just pre-covid, I had had a knee surgery and was almost housebound for a month. Then as COVID hit, I had to manage the rest of the recovery on my own. My mental health treatment was put on hold. My wife worked for the NHS in an administrative role (until Sept 2020) and we had a one-year old who had just started nursery. As nurseries closed, I was juggling my job, the work load and emotion of the fact that my wife was working in the pandemic, and we were sharing childcare. Time for everything became scarce, and like many of us, the resilience wore thin. My parents live in

India who I couldn't see due to the pandemic, travel restrictions and family responsibilities, they've been through their own share of illness and stress and it was painful to not be able to be there for them. I got a year added to this project for 'COVID reasons' but COVID has been the gift that keeps on giving for us. It took away a space for work, time to work, and it took away the boundaries that are essential between work and home. And then of course, recently (Aug 2021) I have had two bereavements in the family, one funeral I couldn't go to and one I am hoping to go to next week- hopefully I can cry for both lost souls. Life didn't stop there, my wife has struggled with her own mental illnesses after the birth of our child, and her dyspraxia makes this world a weird place for her at times. And of course, the thing about children is that, they are beautiful, but they fall ill a fair bit and need parents to step up. As I write this, I am on new mental health medication and back in mental health treatment, having had a complete breakdown a few days ago. There's a thing in my eye, hopefully nothing but it worries me because it could be something serious, and as with the having waited 6 months for treatment for my arm, I'll have to wait another few months after assessment.

***Sigh* Mitigating Circumstances? Empowering Circumstances? Whatever.**

So.

If some of the stress I am trying to contain shows in this work, do forgive me. Even editing this is hard, it brings back pain and panic. Getting out of bed has been hard on many days. I tell you this, because this is my reality and affects my work. But I also tell you this that this is the reality for a lot of humanity, and it keeps them away from academic work. I came close to quitting several times. I don't claim to speak for them, but I do hope that through the representations I make within, more of humanity can see themselves in the academy.

There is no such thing as individual.

The pen writes the pain of all of us.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography is defined as a mode of enquiry where a researcher reflexively investigates their experiences and how they situate within the wider context. (Arrows, 2008 p190).

Perhaps 'Heartful autoethnography' as described by Ellis is something this work could be identified as my work fits the following definition very well:

> "includes researchers' vulnerable selves, emotions, bodies, and spirits; produces evocative stories that create the effect of reality; celebrates concrete

> experience and intimate detail; examines how human experience is endowed with meaning; is concerned with moral, ethical, and political consequences; encourages compassion and empathy; helps us know how to live and cope; features multiple voices and repositions readers and "subjects" as coparticipants in dialogue; seeks a fusion between social science and literature…"
>
> (Ellis 1999, p21)

This definition of heartful autoethnography fits my work. As I work through exploring my vulnerabilities as well as my own positional privilege, in intimate detail, I create links throughout between individual and political in a bid to encourage compassion and empathy. I position my interviewee voices interspersed with my own, in Chapter 6, so you see our dialogue. In this manner, this work is a Heartful Autoethnography.

Autoethnography

The immigrant of the social sciences.

You can't live with it, can't live without it.

Detest it, but need it to bring you fuel/run your hospitals/fill your coffers with £££.

Use it, but speak ill of it.

In the world of colonialism

No wonder exploitation of other is seen as standard and

Meditation within, a rebellion.

Furthermore, Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) write about the criticism autoethnography often receives and defend against it-

> "…autoethnography is dismissed for social scientific standards as being insufficiently rigorous, theoretical, and analytical, and too aesthetic, emotional, and therapeutic… Autoethnography, as method, attempts to disrupt the binary of science and art. Autoethnographers believe research can be rigorous, theoretical, and analytical and emotional, therapeutic, and inclusive of personal and social phenomena. **Autoethnographers also value the need to write and represent research in evocative, aesthetic ways**…The questions most important to autoethnographers are: **who reads our work, how are they affected by it, and how does it keep a conversation going?**
>
> **Autoethnographers view research and writing as socially-just acts; rather than a preoccupation with accuracy, the goal is to produce analytical, accessible texts that change us and the world we live in…**[16]"

(Ellis, Adams and Bochner, p76) My emphasis.

Linking this to the earlier discussion on Creative Activism, Lyric Enquiry and Arts Based Research, parallels can be drawn. Autoethnographic work is often criticised for being too personal, not enough research, despite how much qualitative enquiry owes to such subjectivism (Grant 2014). Grant defends autoethnography and indeed reciprocates the allegation to the other obsessed academy, of pursuing a colonial mining of data from the other. Autoethnographic work has been used within CMS (Maréchal 2010, Learmonth and

[16] They go on to say "for the better" but I leave it out…

Humphreys, 2012) and yet, as Grant (2014) writes, criticism from 'Other-exploiters' will never stop- they have to project their anxiety somewhere, and they direct it upon that that they fear.

IN DEFENCE OF A 'POLEMIC'

A lot of my anxiousness with this work comes from a fear that the academy may deem this work as too confessional, a personal polemic, containing 'not enough'[17] research. This is often the experience of autoethnographers. And it hurts when writing contained within this

[17] This concept of quantifying how 'much' social science is in there is interesting. It points to the positivist subconscious of the organisation. But still, I fear the question and will provide an answer. The contributions of this work are as follows. Firstly, a theoretical re-interpretation of some key concepts of Psychoanalysis using art- based research. Secondly, an innovative, multi-layered methodology that encapsulates free association narrative interviews within a shell of heartful autoethnography. Thirdly, a contribution towards making critical management studies more critical by writing this work in a queer manner. Fourthly, decolonising the academy by not merely reproducing pale male stale work (to paraphrase Meghan Markle (Stevenson, 2019) but by bringing in work from the margins. Fifthly, I know I have, particularly in the initial third, cited a lot of sources with long quotes (to meet the fourth objective above). But don't let that create the illusion that I am cutting corners, or haven't 'done enough'. This thesis has a lot of original work and writing to meet Doctoral requirements. In addition, there is art-based research, there is poetry. Compare that to, say, Spellman (2021) who has written summaries of each chapter, introductions to each chapter, and integrated field notes within the main text- all this writing doesn't necessarily take our consciousness further, but counts to the word count by repetition. I am not saying Spellman's work is bad- I am saying that by that yardstick, there is plenty of blood, sweat and tears I have poured in this as well. Spellman's or Moffat's work, or Weatherall's (all PhDs cited in here) are all good, and very different to each other. Sixthly, I point to how it is to write and belong in an institutionally racist academy that is struggling with its white fragility. The academy seems keen to learn, I am happy to oblige by sharing how and where it hurts. And lastly, if you are so minded (not you, examiner- but the academy at large) and really want to know that I have sufficiently exploited the other/relied on knowledge existing around me, then you'll be pleased to know that I have engaged with and cited nearly 450 sources. Moffat (2018) wrote a PhD for University of Edinburgh that was part autoethnography, part Bourdieusian analysis, and cites close to 250 citations. So, there's enough 'literature' in here.

is referred to as personal, or polemical. It hurts because the use of 'political' as an adjective here seems to suggest that

a. Any work is non-political, and

b. That my politics is different to yours means I somehow don't have a right to express it.

Autoethnographers often resort to autoethnography because they don't see themselves in what they read, so they have to chop their own selves and put that into paper. Edward Said comes to my defence:

> "What I am interested in doing now is suggesting how the general liberal consensus that 'true' knowledge is fundamentally non-political (and conversely, that overtly political knowledge is not 'true' knowledge) obscures the highly if obscurely organized political circumstances obtaining when knowledge is produced. No one is helped in understanding this today when the adjective 'political' is used as a label to discredit any work for daring to violate the protocol of pretended suprapolitical objectivity." (Edward W Said, writing in Orientalism, 1978, p71).

There is a risk though, a grave risk, that you see what you want to see rather than what I am trying to reveal. The risk being that what, through my heartful attempt at autoethnographic writing, I am trying really hard to reveal, to make visible, remains invisible. After Lacan,

> "In a more purely Lacanian sense, the unconscious is sometimes not seen even when it is visible. This is why Lacan was so interested in 'scotomisation' that process by which something remains invisible even though it is in 'plain sight'." (Murray, 2015, p31).

I am "Leaving The Blood In" in places (Moriarty, 2013) but you may just see red stains. That is a risk we just have to take. I know that no matter what I try, if you don't empathise with me, you will find a way to criticise this work, you'll find a name to call me. That's just the nature of things. But that is equally true if I don't tell you any autoethnographic stories.

In any case, that any act is without risk is a defence mechanism we use to allow us to get by without feeling pain. If you think about it, there is risk in crossing the road—but there is also risk in not crossing the road. There is a risk in challenging the status quo- but there is also a great, great risk in not challenging it as well.

Anger?

In Change the World Without Taking Power, Holloway (2019) writes

> "In the beginning is the scream. We scream. When we write or when we read, it is easy to forget that the beginning is not the word, but the scream. Faced with the mutilation of human lives by capitalism, a scream of sadness, a scream of horror, a scream of anger, a scream of refusal: NO.

> The starting point of theoretical reflection is opposition, negativity, struggle. It is from rage that thought is born, not from the pose of reason, not from the reasoned-sitting-back-and-reflecting-on-the-mysteries-of-existence that is the conventional image of 'the thinker'. …
>
> Our dissonance comes from our experience, but that experience varies. Sometimes it is the direct experience of exploitation in the factory, or of oppression in the home, of stress in the office, of hunger and poverty, or of state violence or discrimination.
>
> Sometimes it is the less direct experience through television, newspapers or books that moves us to rage. Millions of children live on the streets of the world. In some cities, street children are systematically murdered as the only way of enforcing respect for private property. In 1998 the assets of the 358 richest people were worth more than the total annual income of 45 per cent of the world's people (over 2.5 billion). The gap between rich and poor is growing, not just between countries but within countries. …It is impossible to read a newspaper without feeling rage, without feeling pain."

I feel this anger. There are more refugees today in the world then after second world war (Refugee Council, 2020). How can we sit around? We can be so deeply mired within our individuality that we can easily suppress the pain of the fellow human.

If this is your normal I don't want it if this is your normal I don't want it if this is your normal I want madness give me madness madness give me madness instead

Oppression, stress, state violence, discrimination, poverty, I have lived through all of these and I have witnessed these around me. Even now that my life has been relatively comfortable, the guilt over availing those comforts while some of humanity starves is debilitating. What do I do with this anger? It just comes through in everything I do- including this work. Anger distorts reality, and if the reality of text is its form, then anger distorts form. Maybe you catch a glimpse of some of my anger, maybe you don't.

I say this because some early readers of some of the chapters opined that this work is angry. Personally, I have not seen it this way. For me it has been a sublimation of the fragmentation I have received as a part of this learning, the pain I have both endured and uncovered as a result of the learning through the PhD. For me, writing through pain means some of it gets locked into the language I write, and then when the reader reads it, reading the unwritable makes them anxious and this anxiety they project on to the work, calling it angry. Readers may have to work through this anxiety to find the empathy that I aspire to evoke. Still, I am aware that it doesn't matter what my defence of the anger is- the reader might just as well say that the above paragraph is a denial, so here are a few reasons for the work being (if I were to elevate the reader's opinion to the status of truth) 'angry'.

Firstly, there is a call for work in critical studies of work that sublimate, express, evoke righteous anger. See for example Lindebaum and Gabriel (2016). There are calls to make

CMS (Critical Management Studies) more critical (Parker 1995), calls to make business schools more critical (Ford, Harding and Learmonth, 2010). If the content has to become 'more critical' it inevitably has to carry some anger within it- the Victorian stodginess with which a lot of critical management content is written is a severely limited form in conveying emotions such as anger- indeed the form's purpose in these cases seems to be to suppress emotions- to convert angry screams into soft middle class tuts.

This is not Radio 4. This is punk. This is not Perry Como. This is We are Lady Parts[18]. There will be shouting there will be swearing there will be anger there will be disgust there will be flow there will be rage against the machine there will be…. Of course I rant rant is in my name immigrant

Rants are important (Al-Kassim, 2010).

Secondly, there are implicit calls for work that energises, reinvigorates and gets us away from the unemotive way most academic work is written in (Gilmore et al, 2019). This overarching point covers the calls to make work and writing in CMS more emotive, to bridge the gap between academic and non-academic writing (ibid.), as we shall see. For me, they fit within the wider call to bridge the gap between art and research (McNiff, 2009; Sullivan, 2010; McNiff, 2013; Rose, 2016) and hopefully a move towards art-based research can be seen in this work.

[18] A Channel 4 programme.

In my personal experience, the emotive, different voices are romanticised about and invited in- a sort of romance of the exotic- but then the difference that they carry and the emotions they provoke often create too much anxiety, demand too much learning on part of the academy and are ultimately discarded as they inevitably fall short of one or the other 'rules'[19].

Augé's (2015) writes about a radical re-envisioning of the future- where he says that our visions and anticipations of future are based on our present anxieties and romanticisms. We want a future, but we let our present fears and anxieties govern what kind of future we want. The challenge is, to see if we can let go of our present fears and anxieties and let the future that is coming, to wash over.

I hope, reader, you bring your personhood and anxieties too, and embrace this work in all its humanity and together we can co-construct a new reality.

CMS: Graffiti on the walls of Organisational studies- A story[20]

Graffiti: paintings and slogans emerging overnight in common places were an act of rebellion- not only in what they said, but in the way that the way they appeared on walls

[19]Did you hear about the person who made a speech about 'keeping our borders secure' because there's 'too many outsiders here' and 'I can't even enjoy my curry in peace'. He wanted the curry, but not the people. The academy can sometimes be like that.

[20] This story was a vision statement for me, when I wrote in 2016. It also serves as a conclusion, perhaps you'd like to read it again at the end.

and properties with utter disregard to the rules and regulations, gave immense satisfaction to a lot of people- it voiced their dissent.

It was the sort of thing that no one knew they needed to see, but as soon as it appeared, it made people stop and think, and realise this is what they wanted to say for a long time but were unable to voice it.

Neither had they the words to voice those feelings of dissent, nor did they know where to express those words. Indeed, the lack of the words and the space were interrelated.

The oppressive system had sucked out not just the vocabulary for disagreeing with the capitalist, neoliberal systems, but also, by systematically expanding their ownership of the space around the people, there was nowhere left to explore these feelings of dissent either.

Lukes' ideological power (Lukes, 2004) comes to mind- power that permeates the fabric of the system to such an extent that the influencer is all but absent from the gaze of the oppressed. The appearance of Graffiti on the walls is like breaking the spell of this power and calling attention of the society to it. By the act of throwing colour on the wall where it wasn't supposed to be, the artist makes us aware not just of the issue raised, but also that this wall exists, and we stop to question; if that wall exists, who put it there? Why is the society around me the way it is?

By making us stop and think, the Graffiti artist has done her job- she has made us aware of the feelings of dissent. Even if we cannot relate to the actual slogan, or the method of

painting- the font, the colour, the style, vocabulary, even if we scoff at the spelling errors; the feeling of dissent remains: or rather, we are made aware of the feeling of dissent that exists beneath the surface, but is lost somewhere due to the daily humdrum of our lives; and we are more likely to be critical of the social structure around us.

Graffiti doesn't seek admiration or agreement. In being noticed, it has already done its job- whether the observer chuckles or gets angry are both good results for the graffiti artist.

The impact of graffiti was such that it makes the powerful and the oppressive feel threatened. Bans on graffiti, oppressive police: work to quell graffiti- but merely prove the point of the graffiti artist.

Nothing works, until the capitalist powers wallop graffiti into their amoeba like appendages by legitimising, romanticising it. Suddenly, you see walls that on which you are 'allowed to graffiti'. Graffiti pieces are removed and put in museums, where the 'public can enjoy them'. The wave of capitalism engulfs graffiti as it becomes fashionable to sell postcards, design hotels and commercial products that incorporate graffiti designs.

In this celebration of graffiti as an 'art form' is also the death of graffiti as the voice of dissent. When the mainstream swallows the methods of graffiti, it also reduces graffiti to merely a collection of colours, and strips off its political and epistemological meaning, as well as removes the dissent attached to it. Somehow the unrest of looking at a Banksy that suddenly appeared on a Bristol wall, as you walk past it on your commute to work in a most likely capitalist/ neoliberal institution, is not captured by looking at the same thing in an air

conditioned, beautifully decorated white building owned by the very system the art work meant to protest against.

When the rebellion

becomes tradition

Reinvent.

Burn

Be born

Phoenix.

Critical management studies then, for me, is like graffiti, and if not already, is at risk of being walled by the systems it means to critique.

> "Critical Management Studies (CMS) is a largely left-wing and theoretically informed approach to management and organisation studies. It challenges the prevailing conventional understanding of management and organisations. CMS provides a platform for debating radical alternatives whilst interrogating the established relations of power, control, domination and ideology as well as the relations among organisations, society and people.
>
> As an umbrella research orientation CMS embraces various theoretical traditions including anarchism, critical theory, feminism, Marxism, post-structuralism, postmodernism, postcolonialism and psychoanalysis, representing a pluralistic, multidisciplinary field. Having been associated mainly with

> business/management schools in the United Kingdom and Scandinavia earlier, CMS as a research approach has presence all over the world and is not confined to management/business schools. This suggests that CMS is an approach to doing research rather than a school or tradition, and there is no particular 'right' way of doing CMS…
>
> (Critical Management Studies web portal as reproduced in (Calvard, 2020) p65)

These are bold demands, and much needed ones. CMS aims to critique organisational structures that govern the way we do work, and what lies beneath these structures: the power relations- current and historic, that have shaped our world of work by shaping what is acceptable and what isn't. However, looking closely at work that often falls into critical management studies, one can't help but sympathise with the commentators who scream "Is critical management studies critical enough?" (Rigg and Trehan, 1999)

Every compromise to fit in means that CMS falls short of its objectives. And anything but the strongest critique often ends up as a mere legitimisation. Now, some might question whether CMS needs to be highly radical. What's wrong with a softly critical approach? Iron out a wrinkle here, touch up a blob there- why demolish the whole building? They may well be right, but the danger is that CMS is reproducing structures it seeks to critique (Pullen and Rhodes, 2015) and is becoming a "First world CMS industry, exactly the kind of institution it set out to critique." (Prasad 2014)

Reclaim the rebellion

The job is not done

So, to say that I think CMS needs to be more critical, is an understatement. If CMS has to be revolutionary, it has to become bolder, and answer its own call to reflect upon itself. It needs to recognise the important questions that need to be asked, not the ones that are safe to ask.

This work then holds CMS to its vision statement- that there is no right way to do CMS. This is not to criticise the work that has gone before- after all, I stand on the shoulders of these giants. This is a call to my colleagues to build fiercer, more sincere, honest version of CMS going forward. They have opened the door for us. We must push it further.

CMS aspires to "…anarchism, critical theory, feminism, Marxism, post-structuralism, postmodernism, postcolonialism and psychoanalysis" (Calvard 2020, as above). My work ticks these boxes.

This thesis then, is like graffiti on the walls of organisational studies. My aim is not for the reader to be convinced that psychodynamics is the answer to resolving worker's issues. My argument is that if CMS wishes to achieve its objectives, it needs to resist falling into any kind of orthodoxy- make it stronger, more critical, more rebellious, even revolutionary; we need to start by critiquing CMS itself and repositioning it within the knowledge landscape. If CMS argues that management is a neoliberal tool of oppression, and an unfair one at that, CMS can't sit and wait while neoliberalism goes about with its business. We had Donald Trump governing the most powerful country in the world, Theresa May doling out Hostile Environment, and, I stress again, more refugees than there were after second world war

(Refugee Council, 2020). CMS needs to step up, shake off the shackles of received wisdom, and get to work.

While some authors would cite 'denaturalisation', 'non-performativity' and reflexivity as hallmarks of CMS work (Fournier and Grey 2000), some others would go further and impose a requirement of Critical Performativity as well (Spicer, Alvesson and Kärreman, 2009).

With that in mind, where within this mesh of labels and descriptors do I sit, and this work sits, is ultimately to be decided by the reader. And indeed, this inference may change in future. My sympathies are indeed with Spicer, Alvesson and Kärreman above about the importance of critical performativity.

What kind of academic am I?

What kind of academic am I going to be?

Questions needed answers

URGENTLY.

Setting of this work

This work tells the story of the trauma, pain, anger and discontent as revealed to me during psychoanalytic free association interviews (see Chapter 4 for a discussion) by seven individuals from the NHS. I asked people to look at a selection of randomly selected images and to share stories of working in the NHS that they were reminded of. I used

psychoanalytic method of free association to allow the stories to build, and in this thesis, report the stories that I received.

Following on from that, the reader will note a few things. Firstly, pain, anger and discontent don't just form contents of this thesis, they inform the aesthetics of it as well. I would have written the whole thing as a long epic poem shattering the laws of grammar and prose that imprison the free narrative, but that, I have been told, wouldn't get me a PhD. Maybe if/when I become a professor (Professor of Bad Research and Dirty Writing, maybe? Better that then Dirty Professor of Writing Bad Research!), I'll be able to launch a PhD programme that changes that. Maybe. Or maybe, I'll be able to make a statement, like Shukla did refusing his MBE (Shukla, 2021). Or maybe, I will take it, keep it, and when I am done with it, give it back, like the Jesus College at Cambridge returning a Benin Bronze (Khomami, 2021) after all this time.

The reader will also notice that while the parts have arbitrarily separated, they are interlinked. When I am talking about the concepts, I bring in some of the anecdotes from the interviewees as well. Similarly, when I am talking about the interviewees, frequently they will speak about something that needs defining, explaining for the reader- and I try to do so. So, if a reader looking at it from a positivist lens does happen to question, there were multiple literature reviews conducted, on power, on politics, on psychoanalysis, on language, on colonisation and decolonisation, on trauma, on self as fantasy and theory as fantasy- and I let the narratives decide what theory gets included or not. The reader may find more value in reading this work multiple times, as due to the above, the work has a circular flow to it

theory informed the method informed the stories informed the theory informed the method informed the stories informed the method informed the theory informed the

and I didn't want to lose this trinity of knowledge (as I highlighted in the abstract) that was beautifully emerging.

This work is a product of a fragmented being. Without an elite status in the academy, without the right skin colour, the right funding, with a whole host of precarious jobs one after the other (until very recently), moving from place to place- different rentals, different cities numerous times, as you can imagine, left its mark on I/this work[21].

As Spivak says (Spivak 2003 in (Keucheyan and Elliott, 2014) p77, "personal travels provided an opportunity for theoretical travels"). Add to that the time during which this work was created- this work has seen BREXIT, 3 different prime ministers, Grenfell, Hostile Environment, Windrush, COVID, Theresa May wearing a 'I am a Feminist' T shirt made by poor women in my neck of the woods, barely paid living wage to make it, Afghanistan, War in Ukraine, Michael Holding's racism speech- all of which impacted me as well as the knowledge of my time. All of these leave a mark on this work- marks I refuse to/feel incapable to erase. This work inherits the anger of the hungry mouths and enraged souls that have worked collectively to put me- a small town boy from the streets of Panipat raised on barely enough, a grandchild of refugees of colonial trauma that was the partition of India who had barely enough to eat- against all odds, in a place where I have this pen. And it will

[21] I am good at self-pity. Perhaps I should put that on my CV?

write, even if it is the last time it does. It is important to chronicle it in the annals of the University eTheses servers, because they will keep it there forever.

The pain hasn't disappeared.

And that's not merely a metaphor- it doesn't- as we'll later discuss later- subconscious drives stay hidden, but maintain full force until they get a chance to manifest through structures. They transcend generations through intergenerational traumas (discussed later). That's what's happening. The consciousness of this thesis is telling you a story, but the subconscious is painting pictures on its structures.

Chapter 3: Theories and Definitions

> "I am actually not a man of science at all. . .. I am nothing but a conquistador by temperament, an adventurer." (Sigmund Freud, letter to Fleiss, 1900; in (Glenn, 1986))

In this section, I want to lay out my reflection on certain theoretical constructs that form a foundation of the empirical interpretive work that follows. These are the working truths of this thesis, (and me), at the time of writing which guide the reader into my world from within which you can empathise with the stories of interviewees that follow. They are not the same working truths as what I started with, and in some distant future, they may not remain the same.

The 'standard' systems of literature review privileges certain kinds of knowledge above others, so it's best to stay away from them for this work. I am not building upon the walls that exist and hold these fantasies up, I am attempting to break these down. If the reader gets anything out of it, it will probably be more unlearning than learning, and that's a good thing (Reid, 2021).

To try and give equal weightage to everything that is published would be to propagate the power structures that I wish to challenge, so I deliberately indulge in a kind of politics of referencing- politics of reproducing the knowledge that I feel empathetic for. Ideas don't exist in a vacuum, and it is quite possible that some of the things I write about, many others

have written about in a similar or different manner. My job here is not to highlight all those multiple thought publications. Ideas are myths, theories are fantasies, and it doesn't matter which nominal individual uttered them.

For this reason, and for the reason that one of the gurus of CMS, Foucault himself was about democratising knowledge (Dean, 2009), (CMS, aiming for incorporating anarchy, shouldn't care about referencing that much anyway), and for two, perhaps it wouldn't be Foucauldian to cite Foucault (for his stand for democratisation (Dean, 2009) of knowledge[22]). Still, I have been told, in no uncertain terms the context of this work and will try to follow the referencing conventions as best as possible.

This is after all, a submission

Emancipatory potential and Praxis are what's important, as Marx said (Balibar, 2017), as Foucault demonstrated (Isin, 2015). What matters to me, and hopefully to you, is what we both do on the back of what's in these pages, and not debate too much about who said what. Knowledge belongs to all of us. Action is the responsibility of all of us.

[22] To plagiarise would be *Lacanian? See this from Voloshinov (2013,p76) "Sometimes Lacan avowed the origins of his ideas, yet sometimes he didn't. Henri Wallon, for example, discovered and named both 'The Mirror Stage' and 'The Imaginary'. Lacan consistently presented both of these notions as his own and didn't directly cite Wallon as the source of them. They're among the best-known and most studied 'Lacanian' concepts.*
This omission not only raises the question of originality, but also of authenticity and even of plagiarism." I am trying not to plagiarise. I guess I am not *that* Lacanian yet.

No such thing as a human being

> "The abstract biological person, biological individual—that which has become the alpha and omega of modern ideology—does not exist at all. It is an improper abstraction. Outside society and, consequently, outside objective socioeconomic conditions, there is no such thing as a human being. (Voloshinov, 2014 p. 15)"[23]

Voloshinov, a member of the infamous Bakhtin circle, calls into question this idea of an individual human being, which is central to the current capitalist ideology.

Within our society, we treat ourselves as individuals, supporting this notion with the fantasy of free will (authors such as Harari (2015), etc question this), but this notion is essential to create a sense of competition upon which capitalism is based. Who has better cars, better houses, better jobs, better skin- all the while subjects are consumed by individual fantasies and struggles- projecting their anxieties on to each other. It is really interesting writing this in the COVID world- where the limitations of individualism have been laid bare for us all to see. In a country like the UK, steeped in neoliberal individualism, it is quite ironical to see people scoffing at others for 'taking too much toilet paper' and for 'panic buying fuel'; and

[23] Voloshinov's Marxist Critique of Freudianism is where many of this work's home truths lie currently. However, English translations of Voloshinov's work are hard to find (22,500 altogether on Google scholar on 6/10/21, with the 'most relevant' work written in 1986). Perhaps no accident that a Freudo-Marxist gets rendered irrelevant in English language around the same time as Thatcherism takes hold. However, as Marxism (Jeffries, 2012; Sampson, 2020) and Freudianism (Maness, 2017; Menand, 2017) are having a rapid resurgence in current times, I believe Voloshinov's work is hugely relevant and deserves reconstructing. Pardon me, I cite Voloshinov about 50 times for these reasons. But there are other works too, including a 'review' of some psychoanalytic work in Organisational Studies. My nickname for Voloshinov is Voloshiraptor.

to see politicians asking people to 'only take the necessary'. Suddenly, staunch capitalists are blowing the horn of socialism!

Anyway, Voloshinov's words are in line with the working truths of Marx (Balibar, 2017):

Voloshinov reports-(2014, P61)

> "But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations' (in a sort of mixture of French and German, Marx writes das Ensemble der gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse)[24]:"

We are all connected. Like bacteria in gut. Maybe that's why we like gigs, festivals.

While there is plenty of critique of individuality within what we often call the 'western' mythology, I want to mention a couple of other connections from 'non-traditional' literature that I found that members of the western academy would perhaps not typically encounter[25].

In cross cultural studies, the problems of this individualism are easier to see. The use of first-person singular is directly related to level of individualism in a society. In some societies, the words for 'mine' and 'yours' are the same, and in some others, the first person

[24] I will take this opportunity to remind the reader how the Gods that we fetishize in CMS broke the rules of writing too. Writing in multiple languages at the same time, writing and owning their mistakes- as Freud did (discussed later). As you shall see, I am following in the footsteps. Closely.
[25] In a way, this practice- to find *different, to cite different,* even if the same is available easily, is a deliberate political position to decolonise my own knowledge, and this thesis as I write it.

singular barely exists (Na and Choi, 2009; Uz, 2014). In a decolonised space then, the questions such as 'is it autoethnography or re-search', or 'why are you writing personal stuff' become redundant. More important becomes the emancipatory potential of the knowledge. This work is situated in a colonial space, a colonial academy that yearns for decolonisation- and it's in this in-between space that this work exists. Sometimes I write as an I, because that's what's required of me. Hopefully, one day that convention will change too.

A useful comparative source was the work "Anthropology of Self" (Morris 2015), which speaks of 'Selfhood' as understood by different cultures and societies around the world. There is a chapter on "People as Social Beings: Conceptions of the Person in Oceania and Melanesia', from which I borrow the following-

> (as per the Oceanic cultures) "…human thought is consummately social: social in its origins, social in its functions, social in its forms, social in its applications. At base, thinking is a public activity – its natural habitat is the houseyard, the marketplace, and the town square."

It continues-

> "For the legacy of both the Enlightenment and Kant was indeed a dualistic metaphysic that separated the human subject from the world, thus positing an 'individuated' self and 'thought' and 'emotions' as the property of individuals.

> Many theoretical tendencies over the past century have offered critiques of the 'individualism' of the Western tradition and thus come to emphasise the inherent social nature of thought and human subjectivity." (Morris, 2015 p309)

The 'individualism' that is so central to our thoughts and processes and ways of seeing today, is not a truth, a normative position- these are reified 'Enlightenment' and Kantian ideas.

So, we can begin to see the parallels between different bodies of thoughts- about the 'human being' being inherently social, casting doubt on our popular working truths of individualism. What I am, is a product of my sociocultural milieu, and so are you- and so is this thesis. You as much as I as much as this thesis, belong to everyone.

Going back to what Marx said, the human essence is not contained within an individual, it lies within our social interactions (Balibar, 2017). And this is quite an important point, and in that, a justification for the writing and inclusion of the chapter "Seeing comes before words". In that chapter, as I later describe, I am writing of me and my interviewees' interactions, how meaning got constructed. It's not merely a 'research chapter'. That chapter is human- it exists only because of our interactions.

Humanity

Is not in me

Is not in you

It's between.

It's among us.

Not on the previous page, or on this. Inbetween. In the border you've just crossed.

It is not I nor you.

It is us.

Psychodynamically speaking, we can argue that individuality expresses itself as consciousness formed through and within language (as Lacan would say, consciousness **Is** language- Murray, 2015 p329). This would imply that individuality makes individual consciousness, and secondly, that individual language carries a subconscious within, the subconsciousness of the society. For the individual, to create an individual consciousness fantasy, has to suppress elements of the collective being-ness.

We can extend the argument to articulate that individual consciousness is a fantasy. Indeed, if we examine the development of individual consciousness from when the child is born and as the human being grows, we recognise that the consciousness is a product of the socio-cultural milieu, as inhabited by the individual through language.

In other words, contents of consciousness are dictated by the popular socio-cultural mythology in which the consciousness is formed: content of consciousness is ideology.
For as we begin to speak, our caregivers impart language unto us- who themselves are deeply seated within the prevalent ideology as some kind of workers (I use worker as a term in its broadest, psychodynamic sense- work is any activity to stave off death- any kind of performativity. So, I work, those deemed 'jobless' work too, the queen works her queen-

iness, and so on. To be alive is to work.) and as they impart language unto us, they impart not just the consciousness of the language, but also subconsciousness carried within it. We get indoctrinated as we begin to language.

Family, as is rightly said, is the first institution. Then comes school (again, school in its widest sense- not just our grammar or public schools, but the field is a school for the farmer's child who is going to learn farming) and through it, wider society- all the while imbibing language and through it, the ideology.

We may become cynical and learn to become critical of the ideology, but in being critical of it, we are still related to the ideology. Let's talk about that for a bit.

Ideology

Althusser, one of the founders of the critical school of thought (which has inspired critical management studies) and notable critique of the capitalist ideology, wrote in the classical collection of reflections "On Ideology" that

> "...Ideology is grounded in institutional practices and concrete social relationships – it does not float about in the ether, nor does ideology simply exist in people's heads (a notion that suggests we could reject/eject those ideas quite easily)." (Althusser 2020, p8)

Ideology lives through structures

Althusser refers to the institutional nature of ideology- that it is ingrained within the fabric of our social institutions, and is not merely 'something in our heads' (alluding to the popular derogatory colloquialism – 'it's not real, it's in your head').

If I may draw a parallel with the famous Shakespearean analogy- if the whole world is a stage and the people merely actors, ideology is the stage: it defines everything else- it goes beneath all else- never mind stories of team work, leadership and so on- ideology cuts beneath all of these and defines what is normal, what isn't. If how we spend our money, how we save it- if the stories of use of money that occupy our conscious imagination, if these could be regarded to be tertiary/higher order consciousness fantasies, then ideology is the idea of money as a cornerstone of our society[26]. Similarly, language- what is proper and what isn't, is ideologically defined. The idea of 'work' could be another example. We define work in our popular consciousness as what is done to partake in neoliberal capitalism and contribute to industry. But 'not working' can also be working when 'not working' amounts to resisting. Experts- forgive me, but for the novice reading this, this is a story that demonstrates ideology, if you care to indulge.

[26] A follow up idea to pursue there is that if we have to change society to become more 'green' we have to change our money. Money currently reflects privilege rather than environmental costs of products. How come a veggie burger and a triple beef burger cost similar £££? If money reflects real ecological cost of production, then we buy differently. (Cassidy, 2021)

This is the story of an experiment with monkeys where scientists put several monkeys in a cage. Within the cage hangs a bunch of bananas and a ladder leads up to it. Monkeys climb the ladder to get to the banana- but every time a monkey tries that, scientists torture all the monkeys by throwing cold water at them. After a few attempts, the monkeys eventually turn on each other- any attempt to climb the ladder is met with the other monkeys dragging the adventurous monkey down. After a while, the scientists replace monkeys one by one. Each new monkey tries to climb the ladder, faces strong resistance and abuse from the other monkeys who have been trained in the behaviour through trauma. The new monkey doesn't know why- he doesn't have the experience of the cold water being thrown at him. For him, the other monkeys are the villains- but he succumbs to the power of the mob and adjusts his behaviour. Every new monkey faces the same fate. Eventually, all the monkeys who knew about the cold water have been replaced, but the behaviour of the monkeys of punishing the one who climbs the ladder, like a contagion, has been transferred to the new ones. Now, no one knows why they don't go up the ladder, they just don't. The living beings get replaced but the ideology of not going up the ladder lives on. Eventually, it becomes normal, accepted, unquestionable unnoticeable part of existence.

The story is mostly fiction[27] ("That 'Five Monkeys Experiment' Never Happened," Throwcase, 2014), but I find it a useful tool to speak about ideology. Ideology is what remains even when individuals have been swapped over. We can consider easier examples- those of political parties, football clubs and so on- the people move on, the principles

[27] Like a lot of myths of organisational improvement, this story is often presented as 'based on research', which, as the cited article demonstrates, is not really true. This story is allegedly a corruption of (Stephenson, 1967).

evolve, but there is something that remains the same- the ideology. Harari (2015) gives an account of how powerful these ideologies, these stories are. Stories are everything, as discussed, a few times elsewhere.

Althusser's work on ideology is prominently known and I also found the book "Mapping the Ideology" helpful in giving language to my reflections about ideology as I perceived through my lived experience.

From Mapping Ideology (Žižek, 2012, p2014),

> "For Althusser, the imaginary characteristic of all ideologies was the way they construct subjects as autonomous, free agents, internally unified and operating in a more or less unified world (except for the presence of various 'others' who must be kept at bay or in check). **It was for this reason that ideology critique came to develop sophisticated decoding strategies that undermined the appearance of unity and seamless integration. For Althusser, the very activity of 'making sense' was constitutive of both subjectivity and ideology. This is true even if one responds negatively to a dominant discourse…** In other words, **for Althusser, there is no getting 'outside' ideology in general, although one might reject specific ideologies**.." (my emphasis)

I think the way to get outside ideology is to distort language.

As we see in the above, the power of the ideology is in constructing subjects as individuals with free will in conflict with the 'other', and even in responding- to- power, one doesn't necessarily step away from ideology as even a "negative response" to the dominant discourse acknowledges and empowers the ideology. To apply that to our beloved Critical Management Studies, if I am writing work that is Critical Management Studies, I am still privileging the idea of Management Studies in trying to reject it. In order to 'be more critical', as CMS demands, I have to write 'non-sense'.

The strategy to go against ideology is to undermine 'making sense'. Parker writes how Capitalism is portrayed as 'common sense' (Parker, 2018) (see Appendix 2).

While I started within the realm of positivist scientific episteme, moving over to the critical management studies, only to find that that is its own ideology (where ironies abound, for example calling Foucault 'orthodox'). At this point, my critique, or againstness, developed against againstness, or critique itself- against everything (Greif, 2017).

Existence

became difficult

until

freedom from

the compulsion

to fit in/make sense

was felt.

This passage also highlights the importance of critique. We build upon this later on, in discussing hermeneutics of suspicion, but as the author above writes about Althusser, that to deal with the all-encompassing nature of the ideology, critique needed to (develop a fantasy of?) develop sophisticated tools of decoding that go beneath the seamless integration. However, I am not fully convinced whether there is such a thing as absolute getting beneath the real. Am I getting beneath, or just creating a fantasy of doing so? Maybe either, maybe both.

Yes, self is a fantasy, so through psychoanalysis we can cut through to the bits that the self-fantasy carries but is not conscious of, but maybe we just form another fantasy of what we find beneath. The point then, is that again, it doesn't really matter, real or not- it forms our working truth, and allows us to find an anchoring in the world, and that's why it is as good as real therefore real.

Another way to understand ideology is to work through Power. Lukes' radical view on power (Lukes, 2004) is quite helpful in this regard, particularly his writing on ideological power.

Ideological Power

"We need to hoover the carpet!"

"I know, I know…."

The above is what I assume a fairly common example of a household exchange in Britain. Indeed, many of my wife's and my conversations begin (and end!) as above. But what this example illustrates is Lukes' ideological power (Lukes, 2004). The power of the brand Hoover is so ingrained within the popular discourse of the act of vacuum- suction- cleaning of carpets, that we use it as an ingrained truth. The noun becomes the verb.[28]

Lukes writes of ideological power, that

> "Ideological power allows one to influence people's wishes and thoughts, even making them want things opposed to their own self-interest." (Lukes, 2004, p41)

Ideological power decrees what our wishes and thoughts are. In other words, ideological power shapes consciousness- and it runs beneath other levels of power that Lukes describes- i.e. Decision-making power and Non-decision-making power.

[28] The Hoover metaphor is intentional of course- to remind you of what Gabriel (2005) wrote about literature reviews. This is an excellent metaphor to understand how the act of reading and thinking has been reified into a verb 'literature review' in our market capitalist temples of knowledge. The noun becomes the verb. Ideology is reified, structures are born.

Just on that power- an example of decision-making power being the person who decides your working pattern, while an example of the latter non-decision-making power being the decision of what is legitimate and worthy of discussion- e.g. deciding agendas of meeting and therefore shaping what gets talked about and what doesn't. These kinds of power are witnessable, they happen in an obvious manner, in the realm of conscious thought, with a clear subject. Information pertaining to these dimensions of power is what one is likely to speak about when one studies organisations through a typical survey, questionnaire or a structured interview. To speak about the Ideological Power, we need something else (Free Association Interviews, see Methods). But studying power at the first two levels- decision making and non-decision-making power, for this thesis, is not a concern.

***You and I don't exist*[29].**

Power is also apersonal- occupied by no one. Copjec writes on Foucault-

> "What exactly does Foucault say about this "no one" who occupies the place of power? **It does not matter who exercises power. Any individual, taken at random, can operate the machine.**… Similarly, it does not matter what motivates him: the curiosity of the indiscreet, the malice of a child, the thirst for knowledge of

[29] This is something Gemmill and Oakley (1992) discuss- where they borrow from Fromm and Laing (1998) as well, that self-consciousness is illusionary- more on that story later.

> a philosopher, or the perversity of those who take pleasure in spying or punishing." (Copjec, 2015 p14)

When we are talking about the collective subconscious of the organisation, our concern is ideological power that runs beneath the surface and manifests not through decision making by individuals at meetings, or by behind the scenes agenda setting, but by the assumed givens, the ideology that defines that 'meeting' is a thing we do to accomplish stuff in workplace.

If consciousness is shaped by ideology, then neoliberal capitalism shapes the current consciousness in our present popular context- whether in its complicitness or its againstness.

We study the neoliberal organisation's unconscious later, through worker stories in the 'Stories' section. Before we get there, it is important to clarify that despite the acknowledgements above, this thesis is concerned with manifestation of the capitalist ideology and its critique in multiple ways.

Firstly, it aims to articulate the stories of workers in the NHS (and therefore, contemporary 'workers' in general) as shaped by the neoliberal capitalist ideology (and in places, the againstness of workers to this ideology). This ideology is what connects stories that emerge from the narratives, that might be seemingly different on the surface. For example, this ideology of capitalistic exploitation of the 'other' is what connects the neo-colonialism that masquerades as 'equality and diversity' in one of the stories, with the story of divisions

within the workforce under the banner of 'employee vs agency workers'. On the surface, on the decisive and non-decisive levels of power, these are distant issues, as can be seen in the popular discussion around the topics- or indeed in the divisions of academic departments. Neo-colonialism often gets talked about in separate rooms from worker exploitation- different experts, different professors.

This thesis goes beneath and operates at the ideological level where the two issues, and indeed many others, are just different organs of the same monster. Interviewees at times make reference to power held by certain individuals (Consultants are Gods) by default, or power vested in certain objects (Lisa on why she didn't like the radio channel, but couldn't understand why she never thought to change it), different uniforms and the factions they created, unequal pay for equal work for bank and permanent staff; All of which are quite different stories that for a long time seemed unrelated to each other to me, until I worked through using critique to ideological level where the connections emerge.

Ideologeme

Jameson (Jameson, 2002) speaks about ideologeme- 'the smallest possible intelligible unit of ideology', which can be approached on the one hand as an opinion, and on the other hand as episteme. One might argue that the strands I speak about in the paragraph above and their different manifestations are smaller ideologemes, connected to the same ideology.

In addition to critiquing the neoliberal ideology as it manifests in the interviews, this thesis also critiques how it shapes itself- i.e. knowledge; its structure, its conventions; in institutions governed by the same ideology. Knowledge is capital, capital is power, so knowledge should be subject to the same critical thought as capitalism is, in critical management studies.

Often the critique that is applied to the object of critique is not applied to the subject (or critique itself); particularly within a tradition aiming to aspire to bring critical theory into discussion of management/work.

This work wrestles with the popular, ideologically-shaped conception of doctoral work, of research, of writing (and within that, of rules of structure, of content); as far as possible as it can- indeed it doesn't quite go far enough: indeed, my submission of the thesis is a submission, in contrast to what would be resistance- (e.g. Indiana Seresin, who resigned from Cambridge PhD because of systemic racism (Pells, 2019)). Having explored what lies further afield within the zone of madness, this thesis operates in quite a safe zone. Foucault famously critiqued Normality (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 2014; Isin, 2015; Zamora and Behrent, 2016), and so did Fromm (2011). I am just following in the footsteps.

If Ideology defines normality, then the madness is its critique. This thesis then, is only a little mad- one could say it is liminal, much like an immigrant is, or indeed is psychodynamics itself.

If

Your normal is

People dying of hunger while food wastes away on shelves of homes lying empty when humanity freezes to death

If your normal is

People dying to uphold artificial lines people drowning in oceans and us burning away the surface of our planet

If your normal is this

Give me Madness Any Day Instead.

If you think about it, normality is pretty mad itself.

Lastly, the critique of the neoliberal ideology informs my own positioning as well- my own self fantasy. The knife of critique wasn't just applied to the narratives of the people I interviewed, but also to my own self[30], and then when the time came to articulate the results, it was applied to the form as well.

School of suspicion/ Hermeneutics of suspicion

Ideological power then, runs beneath the surface in organisations. It runs in how spaces are organised, how people are clothed, how people are allowed in, who gets to stay in, who gets downsized, which landmass's trees are cut to fuel the operations, who supplies the

[30] See Appendix 4- Send off.

people and how these people are treated; but also, crucially for this project- ideological power shapes our conscious selves.

The fantasy of first person singular that we live, is deterministic and shaped by the ideological power. The ideological power is totalitarian. The selfhood remains oblivious to it because it shapes the consciousness from the beginning: how parents are told to parent, how teachers are taught to teach, what indoctrination is doled out in the name of higher education, and how these indoctrinated individuals are exploited in the name of 'work'. To get beneath the all-encompassing ideology, as we discussed earlier, requires sophisticated tools that can speak around the context and read between the lines.

As I became interested in Psychodynamics, mostly due to 'personal curiosity' (more on this in Methods), I was fascinated by critique and psychodynamics within it for its ability to help me understand oppressive 'family' and personal relationships (it will take me longer to connect the personal and political) and I began to think about its application in work (again, it would take me a bit longer to blur the boundaries between personal and work worlds). I stumbled upon what is called the Hermeneutics of Suspicion- looking beneath the surface (Josselson 2004). We discuss this below: this forms the core theoretical underpinning of the interpretive work.

The sociological and philosophical aspects of Freudian thought are often forgotten (Levy, 1996) as the critics grapple with his psychological thoughts. Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) note that Freudian id, ego and super ego are best thought of as interpretations, as

metaphors: ‘the unconscious becomes something that does not really exist, but is an ascribed meaning’ (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000:95).

They further speak of the Hermeneutics of Suspicion:

> “Psychoanalysis can be seen as belonging to the hermeneutics of suspicion which apart from Freud is also represented by Marx and Nietzsche. All three have probed behind what they conceived as an illusionary self-consciousness to a deeper-lying, more unpleasant or shameful one. In Freud, the latter appears as libido, in Marx as the economic interest, and in Nietzsche the will to power.” (ibid)

While I am not convinced about the existence of any ‘real’ (while at the same time we have to arrive at a definition of one to stay alive), what can be taken from the above is the introduction of Hermeneutics of Suspicion to CMS by Alvesson and Skoldberg. Spurred on from this, let’s look at the Hermeneutics of Suspicion and its origins.

School of suspicion

To paraphrase (Bouchard and Jasper 2009, p27), the school of suspicion

> “…began with the work of Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud. Though radically diverse in their interpretations of Western culture, these three "masters of suspicion" argued for a totalizing, systematic theory that probed below

the surface of culture to locate deeper structural truths" (Bouchard and Jasper, 2009, p27).

Hermeneutics of Suspicion, " is a distinctively modern style of interpretation that circumvents obvious or self-evident meanings in order to draw out less visible and less flattering truths" (Felski, 2012). School of suspicion sits within 'post critique', which 'goes beyond critical' (Honestly, my head hurts now!). Post critique looks beneath, in an almost "Paranoid" way (Anker and Felski, 2017), citing Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, writing in her Essay "…You're So Paranoid You Probably Think This Essay Is About You") (Sedgewick, 1997).

From a theoretical perspective, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud (bodies of work, not actual people) all have their own importance. For me, as I said previously, I turned to psychoanalysis partly due to my childhood curiosity about Freud, who I couldn't study at the time, and due to the Freudian nature of some self-help books and therapy books that I was inhaling at the time, 3-4 years ago. Let's see Psychodynamics now.

Psychodynamics

Let's start this section where I started almost five years ago, with Gabriel's blog where he explains psychodynamics clearly (Gabriel, 2020). The post is adapted from a book chapter, but since the website is more accessible, I use that.

> "the expectation that every neurotic phenomenon can be cured may, I suspect, be derived from the layman's belief that the neuroses are something quite unnecessary which have no right to exist" (Freud, 1933/1988: 189). ..the language of psychodynamics can often give off the impression that neuroses are diseases and therefore be cured, that is not the case.
>
> These neuroses, pathologies are perhaps better understood as inevitable features. These features, are though, due to the nature of world we live in, are perhaps suppressed and deemed undesirable**. By constantly trying to make ourselves into a more 'desirable' version of us, by constantly making up a selfhood where we privilege the 'good' and desirable aspects and suppress the bad aspects, we engage in the work of creating a sense of fantasy self**."
>
> (Gabriel 2020, my emphasis)

The role of psychodynamics is to allow us to get beneath. The cure for the ills that reveals, i.e. the traumas of the racial capitalist system, comes from Feminism.

Self as a fantasy

Before we proceed further, the one working truth that we need to agree upon is the existence of the subconsciousness. You may think it is real or ideological or metaphorical or physical, but to keep having this conversation, we need to agree that there is such a thing as subconscious. I will offer you my thoughts on that in a bit, but first I would encourage you to write your definition of Subconscious here:

……

……..

My position is that the psyche has a narrative self, and a subconscious- the part of selfhood that isn't conscious. This consciousness, this self, is a fantasy (Grossman, 1982). By which I mean that it is not real, it is illusionary (Gemmill and Oakley, (1992), quoting Fromm (2011)). That's not to say there is no such a thing as consciousness, but what that means to me is that if the consciousness evolved in a different socio-cultural milieu, it could have presented different. If I grew up in a different context, I would be sublimating my drives differently. Again, various people have written about this notion, directly or indirectly. Before I regurgitate any of that, I will offer a thought experiment[31].

[31] I will let you in on an embarrassing story. I thought of this one day and I was quite proud, using this as a party trick to amuse friends. Little did I know that this is an issue written about as the mindbody problem- discussed in philosophy for centuries!

Consider the notion- I am the body and I have the body. Which one is it? Which one are you? Are you the being that has the body? Or are you the body? If you are the being that has the body, then if I destroy the body, does the I remain?

What is the I, then; if not a fantasy?

That the self is a narrative, a story (and by extension, we may argue, psychodynamically a fantasy) has been written about widely in multiple disciplines. Here's one-

> "The theory of narrative identity postulates that individuals form an identity by integrating their life experiences into an internalized, evolving story of the self that provides the individual with a sense of unity and purpose in life. This life narrative integrates one's reconstructed past, perceived present, and imagined future. Furthermore, this narrative is a story - it has characters, episodes, imagery, a setting, plots, and themes and often follows the traditional model of a story, having a beginning (initiating event), middle (an attempt and a consequence), and an end (denouement)." (McAdams, 2001 p107)

Interpreting the narrative self through psychodynamics, one can regard the narrative self as a fantasy that has 'chapters', characters and plots. In between the lines of the self as fantasy is hidden the subconscious.

This narrative self-fantasy, on account of it being a narrative, exists through, and within lingual framework.

We produce our self through language.

Voloshinov writes how the speaking subject- the narrative self, is therefore a slave to the language and is recruited in the system from birth- when the child receives a name.

> "The speaking subject, if he seems to be thus a slave of language, is all the more so of a discourse in the universal moment of which he finds himself at birth, even if only by dint of his proper name." (Voloshinov, 2014 p44)[32]

Further, consciousness is wrapped within language- it is language.

> "Lacan claims that the differentiation of the self as the subject of consciousness from the self as an object of consciousness—for "oneself and for others—as well as the recognition of others, follow the laws of language because it is language. As such, he declares language to be the object of study of phenomenology (the nature of consciousness and its objects) in the same way that Voloshinov, through "inner speech," did for psychoanalysis." (Tomšič, 2015, p. 256.).

[32] Alyssia tells me this could be related to Caliban's opinion of Language in The Tempest where his master Prospero teaches him to speak his language and thus teaches Caliban how to hate. Caliban becomes a slave to the language and the person.

It follows then, that my consciousness (dictated by the prevalent ideology) moulds my language, consciousness is selfhood, and therefore consciousness is my language; and so is yours.

I don't write language. I exist through language.

Ideology creates consciousness creates language creates fantasy creates self

So, if my consciousness is conformative and normal, so is my language; and vice versa.

If my consciousness is abnormal/different, my language is different.

If I try to write my abnormal/different consciousness in normal/conformist language, my consciousness will have to become conformist and normal. Which is something we don't want to happen.

Perhaps that's why all academic work is samey, done by samey people. We don't allow other language in.

This is why, unless and until we let people use different languages in academia, the rhetoric of Equality and Diversity will never reach its sublime object.

This self-fantasy, creates its identity that hinges on certain descriptors (or 'essences') which are themselves stories. About Gayatri Spivak, it is written in the book The Left Hemisphere, that

> "One of her concepts, which has prompted a number of debates in postcolonial studies, as well as among feminists, is strategic essentialism. The critique of essentialism is ubiquitous in contemporary critical thought. It maintains that all identities, whether of gender, class or ethnicity, are socially constructed and consequently contingent. In other words, they do not refer to anything objective or substantive. The concept of strategic essentialism derives from this critique. It agrees that **there are no essences in the social world. However, it draws attention to the fact that in everyday life and social struggles individuals frequently refer to such essences, to the extent that they seem difficult to remove**." (Spivak (2003), in (Keucheyan and Elliott, 2014), p78).

There are no essences in the social world, but these essences are often referred to in daily life. Spivak's essences could probably be described as Freudian defence mechanisms. These are frameworks that are arbitrary, but necessary for social functioning. Try to remove them, and you run into an emptiness through which existential anxiety stares at you. We end up replacing one with another.

When

the rebellion becomes the tradition

reinvent.

Self

This notion of the self not existing (Ananthaswamy, 2013) or not being important is not new. In an act of going back to where I came from, I borrow from ancient Hindu systems of philosophy.

As Bharati writes:

> "...When any of the Hindu traditions speak about what might look like the individual, like an empirical self, it is not to analyse it but to denigrate it … **the self as the basis of such important human achievements as scholarship, artistic skill, technological invention, etc. is totally ignored in the Indian philosophical texts**. (1985:89)" (my emphasis)

Bharati is referring to how the selfhoods are not given importance in human achievements in the Hindu philosophical system; unlike our neoliberal capitalist systems of knowledge where references are heralded as currencies. To decolonise higher education then, would be to allow different wisdom in. Foucault might agree.

To recap: the narrative self is a fantasy. A fantasy that is to compliment the fantasy that life is a journey and the narrative self is on this journey to achieve an objective. However, if one is to work through the layers of this illusion, one may arrive at the conclusion that aside from the vantage point of conscious observations that sits within the narrative self, being alive is a series of random events that our senses perceive a fraction of, and the conscious

self creates a narrative with. Therefore, if multiple realities can exist, multiple consciousnesses can exist concurrently.

Lacan alluded to it, as well as Laing- in The Divided Self (1998). Why this happens, the conscious self can never know- because it will be the conscious self that constructs this answer. For example, it has been posited that the conscious self creates these narratives to free itself from the existential pain, the pain and angst of the psychosis that will result if one even attempts to begin to believe in plurality of reality (because how will you speak when you know there are an infinite ways to describe a particular event!)- the fear of not knowing what's to come- the inability to accept the randomness of all existence- it is easier to believe that there's a purpose to life than to submit to the randomness of the Universe that implies a great helplessness[33].

Consciousness

From Voloshinov (2014, p87):

> "Consciousness is in fact that commentary which every adult human being brings to bear on every instance of his behaviour. According to Freud**, this**

[33] But it will be a conscious narrative self that posits the above notion, so how can I prove that this explanation itself has not been created to fulfil the need for an explanation, let's say because not having an explanation for this (what some might call, disturbing) thought pattern would be unsettling? It seems like an endless loop.

> **commentary is invalid; any psychology that takes such commentary as its basis is likewise invalid**."

(We can indeed replace psychology with sociology here as well)

Continues,

> "The Freudian definition of consciousness as that which arises instead of a memory trace, and thus as a protective shield against trauma, is often understood sociologically, even by Freud himself. That is, consciousness, "immediately abutting as it does on the external world" (Freud (2003 p26, cited in (Copjec, 2015)).

Consciousness here is seen as a shield against shocks produced by this external world. Consciousness itself is a defence mechanism. However, going back to hermeneutics of suspicion- we mustn't believe our own consciousness.

Lies Lies Lies we tell ourselves each other it's all lies

> "A sceptical attitude toward consciousness is an ever-present accompaniment to the development of Freud's basic theme". (Copjec, 2015)

Scepticism of consciousness is prevalent in not just the body of work popularly known as psychodynamics, but also in wider literature- specifically, but not exclusively, in critical

theory. Gemmill and Oakley (1992) talk about the illusionary nature of self-consciousness. Freud for example, was trying to 'make the subconscious conscious' (Gabriel 2020) and therefore the Freudian process of talking in freely associated manner (upon which a lot of our talking therapies are based today) is underpinned by the working truth that the consciousness is illusionary[34].

The notion of illusionary self-consciousness- if one is convinced to make this their working truth, can be hard to digest. One of the earliest defences of the self is to fight back- "well surely that doesn't mean everything 'I' am is a lie!" The discomfort of having your grounding realities shaken up can soon give way to existential issues (if everything is a lie then what's the point?) until one crafts another self-fantasy that serves as an anchoring.

The biggest question then indeed, is why to live.

For me, the justification for illusionary self-consciousness can be found within our fascination with literature popularly called 'fiction' where the popularity of it is perhaps a result of the reader being able to project themselves onto a character and thereby live an alternative fantasy, therefore seeking satisfaction of their subconscious drives in a way that may be deemed unpopular in the 'real' world. Or, in our collective fascination with works of art which are often products of very 'abnormal' minds.

[34] As I will discuss later, this was the underpinning truth for Hollway and Jefferson in their work on Free Association Narrative Interviews (2008)- where they question interview as a methodology. My interview method was akin to these Free Association Narrative Interviews.

We are peculiar, demonising mental 'abnormal' but fetishizing its products. This dissonance to me can only be explained by the notion that the mentally abnormal are merely the suppressed, unwanted, and their products fascinate us because they give us a window into our own subconscious and alternative realities from a safe vantage point.

I will perhaps lose the most unsympathetic readers here, but since this is being written for a PhD examination, I must spur on to the next point. Which is to ask the question that if the consciousness is illusionary, what is it made of?

This is an important question as illusionary consciousness is the working reality. To act in the world, to be human and part of society is to have an illusionary self-consciousness. The use of the term illusionary doesn't imply you can develop any real consciousness, but to instruct us in empathy- that everyone is living a role, and so we are all fighting the same existential battle.

All the world's a stage….

More on this at the end, but first, let's talk about what is the content of this illusionary self-consciousness for me and for this thesis- it is 'Ideology'.

Consciousness as Ideology

Going back to Althusser as cited by Jameson (2019, p34)

> "We must credit Louis Althusser for…his notion of **ideology as a mechanism whereby the conscious (and unconscious) individual biological subject situates himself or herself within the collective social structure...**" (my emphasis).

Althusser, as reported above, writes vividly about how the consciousness comes into existence through the mechanism of ideology. Ideology is how the being takes shape, and as Lacan would contend- this ideology is not just carried within language, ideology is language. In a point of departure from Freud perhaps, but the understanding of this work is that the unconsciousness, as well, is influenced by the socio-cultural.

I started within orthodox Freudianism, where I held individualised subconsciousness and Oedipal struggles as my truths. While they were helpful in making sense of the world at the time, I ran into a stumbling block as I was exploring in my own mind my oedipal struggles, my relationship with my own father.

The stumbling block was the understanding of his own pained childhood, rooted in the trauma doled out by the partition of Punjab in the aftermath of colonial rule of what will later on come to be known as India (contrary to popular belief- India wasn't colonised- many states were colonised and then when the colonial powers left, the only option for these states was to bundle themselves up into a nation called India to avoid future

annexation). I began to understand the trauma my grandparents and my parents faced. The trauma of not having enough to eat, to leave the land where your ancestors have lived for about 2000 years, to leave it all behind. The trauma of being a refugee in your own land. I began to empathise that this is the trauma that got projected onto me, which led me to go beyond my own traumas into understanding intergenerational trauma[35] (See Dekel and Goldblatt, 2008; Carey, 2018; Halloran, 2019; The Korean Society, 2019). Through that, I found an empathy for my father and began to see him not as an oppressor but as a fellow victim. That was emancipatory, so I adopted that as a working truth for myself.

At the time, a couple of years ago (2018-19), I began to develop notions which I now know sit within the Marxist Critique of Freudianism: underpinning the unconsciousness is the sociocultural context, and so the subconscious, much like the conscious, is also political and shaped by the ideology.

Voloshinov (2014, p98) writes much more eloquently,

[35] Intergenerational trauma is understood to be the propagation of trauma across generations when a whole society undergoes a major traumatic experience together. For example, Halloran, (2019) writes of how Slavery has left an intergenerational trauma on descendants of enslaved people. Carey (2018) above reviews literature that debates whether this generational trauma is carried over sociologically only, or also genetically- i.e. there are theories that trauma can even cause genetic alterations and can lead to illnesses along the way. The Korean Society (2019) explains the concept of 'Han'- something that, they explain, doesn't really translate to English. The closest they can come to, is 'deep sorrow' to depict the intergenerational trauma. But, crucially, there is a name for intergenerational trauma in Korean- it is in the consciousness- it is being processed through art and writing of Han. But when this concept doesn't translate into English, the kernel that needs to be conveyed becomes subconscious in the translation. And hence, to try and bring it to bear in a language in which it doesn't exist, the language's structures have to distort. Or, to 'birth' a new idea, the language has to 'dilate' (my wife is training to be a midwife).

"A person's conscious motivation of his actions is certainly in no instance to be taken as a scientific explanation of his behaviour. But we go further than that: **Neither do the motives of the unconscious explain his behaviour in the least, for, as we have seen, the Freudian unconscious does not fundamentally differ from consciousness; it is only another form of consciousness, only an ideologically different expression of it.**"

(My emphasis)

Voloshinov's writing above suggests that while it is right to assume there is a subconscious, it is not a Freudian subconscious. A Freudian unconsciousness is another fantasy of oneself, and it is not the unconsciousness because a Freudian unconsciousness is also individualistic. It is merely a different way of expressing the same fantasy. For it to be subconsciousness, it has to move beyond individualism[36]. I think.

We have until now looked at how Self-hood is articulated in language and this language is informed by socio-cultural milieu. Let's look at this latter point further.

[36] At this point, we are now entering Freudo- Marxism, a lively debate between the disciplines started after these two thinkers. This thesis, in its constant flux, situates itself between the two doctrines.

Language as a Social Phenomenon

In Freudianism, a Marxist Critique, Voloshinov and Bruss, (2014 p50) write that-

> **"Freud fell into a dichotomy between individual and social phenomena in psychoanalysis, a paradoxical and problematic conceptualization from which psychoanalysis has yet fully to recover**. In Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego (1921) he distinguished between the "social phenomena" of the **transference** neuroses, such as "the relations of an individual to his parents and to his brothers and sisters, to the object of his love, and to his physician," and individual, "'narcissistic' processes … in which the satisfaction of his instincts is partially or totally withdrawn from the influence of other people." As Voloshinov would have expected, the locus of the difficulty in this dichotomy was in explaining the second, individual type.
>
> Freud[37] himself was sufficiently aware of the social context of language use to realize the paradoxical nature of a body of symbolic structures whose articulation was for no audience." (Voloshinov and Bruss, 2014)

Voloshinov continues,

[37] I do have to offer a qualifier. Use of Freudian ideas is not an endorsement of Freud as a person. As I said before, knowledge is collective. I am forced to use terms like 'Freudian' knowledge as a shorthand for 'knowledge typically seen as deriving from Freud'.

> "Thus, at this point **Freud connected language to society through a Romantic, evolutionary hypothesis**… Freud used the dreams, misunderstandings, and commonplace utterances of children as basic data; the case study of "Little Hans," despite the sketchiness of some of the material, was perhaps his most important analysis.
>
> Freud's conclusion was that the ancient people who spoke archaic language were more childlike than modern man, that the unconscious itself constituted a sanctuary for more infantile elements of the psyche." (Voloshinov and Bruss, 2014, p244).

Of interest in the above is how as the consciousness begins to form in a child, so does language. Indeed, both form through each other. As the child grows within a socio-cultural milieu, their consciousness and language are influenced and created by that milieu. Language is socially constructed, and so is consciousness. Beneath the layers, the consciousness and its perceptions are a myth. These perceptions are different for different observers.

Saari tells us

> "Current, postmodern ideas tell us not only that human perception is not accurate, but also that there is no one truth about any event; that instead there are **many potential truths** about even the simplest of events. In fact, postmodern theory gives us a new view of the unconscious, one that says that much of what we are

unaware **of consists of the infinite number of ways we could but have not yet thought about something**.

…**not only that perception is not accurate, but that perception, affect, and cognition are not separate processes and occur simultaneously in one single process**, what Bruner (1986) has called ‘‘perfink’’ (p. 118).” (Saari, 2008).

Saari’s ideas have had an impact on this study. If there are many potential truths, it would imply that there are many potential consciousnesses that hold these truths. If these could be infinite, then which one to choose? Which reality to live? Sartre is laughing at me now.

This further adds to our rationale for mistrust of consciousness- of who we speak to in the interviews but also our own.

If it’s in clear/concise/formed language, it’s a lie. Do not trust the smooth talker.

Further, this also makes me question the notion of thoughts and feelings- we speak about them separately, but as Saari writes above, this distinction is mythical. In places, henceforth, therefore, I use the composite word **Theelings**.

Reading Saari (2008) further,

“We cannot, this theory tells us, know the meaning of any single sentence or any single act if we do not know the context in which it occurs. We could also argue

vice versa- **the context in which the event occurs influences the event itself and the meaning of it. If writing is an event, then so it applies to writing as well**."

The reasons to bring this up are several. Firstly, you will see that when I write the stories, I give, in tables, the context of when the interviewee told me what they did. This context, although incomplete, is still something- is still intended to be helpful (compared to, say giving you wry numbers coded through software like NVIVO). Plus, I want to make the point that I am taking their voice, not, as the researcher cliché goes 'giving them voice'.

They prop me up, not the other way around

Secondly, to give you the rationale for including my 'personal' or 'confessional' contexts. I am trying to reach out. Humanity is not happening in utterances of either my interviewees or mine- it is in the exchange- so instead of a 'he said she said they said' I am trying to give you a 'picture' of the space-time nexus in which the exchange occurred.

To recap, individuality is a lie, selfhood is a fantasy, this fantasy is consciousness, consciousness is created in language, this language is sociological and ideological, and we mustn't trust it, we must try to get around this ideological self to communicate through and with subconscious.

If the subconscious communicates through (what we call) ‘art’, art is the only ‘truth’. If language is consciousness, subconsciousness is art.

To speak of subconsciousness, we must resort to art. If to create knowledge is to research, to speak of subconscious knowledge (the ‘true knowledge’) we must engage in ‘art as research’. Let’s talk of subconscious now.

Subconscious

I will start this section by going over the popular theories of Subconscious. I did not feel satisfied with them so one morning in 2018 I tried to paint subconsciousness (as I said above, subconsciousness is art), which has been photographed and included in this section towards the end.

The popular conception of subconscious was popularised by adopters of Freudian work. The term in western literature however predates Freud, going back to William James who used ‘subconscious mind’ (in his study The Principles of Psychology) (cited in (Kipman, 2006)). This work formed foundation of Freud’s work (I discuss the iceberg model of subconscious later).

In today’s mythologies, perhaps the subconscious is best understood as an English translation of Pierre Janet’s ‘subconscient’ (Janet, 1899, cited in (Walusinski and Bogousslavsky, 2020)) in their doctorate thesis. Janet argued that

> "underneath the layers of critical thought functions of conscious mind lay a powerful awareness called subconscious mind…
>
> For Jung, consciousness is perhaps more like a repository. …since there is a limit to what can be held in conscious focal awareness, an alternative storehouse of one's knowledge and prior experience is needed (this is the subconscious)."
>
> (Janet, 1899 p74)

Jung however, seemed to posit that the 'collective unconsciousness' is genetically determined (Jung 1936), something I disagree with here. Instead, I argue here that the collective unconsciousness is sociologically determined. Nevertheless, Jung's belief, that insight into collective unconscious could be gleaned from dreams, and from an active imagination, a 'waking exploration of fantasy' is something I sympathise with (Jung, 1936). This has bearings for my thesis and my 'methods'. As I explain in methods, I interviewed seven people through free association narrative interviews. These individuals, as I explain, to me, explored their organisation through a waking dream, through a dream like state. In this state, they drew upon stories that offer us insight into the collective unconsciousness of the organisation (NHS).

At the moment, I want to speak a little bit of Freud and subconscious a little more.

Freudian position on subconsciousness (he abandoned the term subconscious and favoured unconsciousness later on, I stick with subconscious- this is an arbitrary decision for me) "All

our knowledge is invariably bound up with consciousness. We can come to know the unconscious only by making it conscious" (Freud 1975, p11).

My point of contention with Freud here is that while Freud's statement implies that subconscious can be made conscious, I believe that the closest I can ever come to that is to create a fantasy of achieving the said act, in line with Voloshinov (2013). This is important because Freud's contention relates to his aspirations to frame psychodynamics as a science that subscribed to individualism and organic causes. Indeed, the term psychodynamics was favoured by Freud because it was inspired by thermodynamics- the study of flow of energy in the universe, (Freud,1975 p31).

This thesis sits beyond that, more towards a Marxist critique of Freud, and so I don't believe that one can objectively, scientifically 'make subconscious, conscious'. One can certainly form a fantasy of achieving the same- however my argument in that situation is that if one makes something that is subconscious, conscious, then how's one to know if something else is still not subconscious (similar to Jung's thoughts above)?

A metaphor to help me convey this point is that of shining light in a dark room. You shine it in one corner, illuminate it, but the darkness moves into another corner, the opposite corner to where the light goes.

The iceberg model of the subconscious?

Freud, through analysis of his own subconscious (or so he claimed reportedly), arrived at the interpretation of dreams, and concepts such as the iceberg model of subconscious or Oedipus complex. I found psychoanalytic concepts so fascinating and therapeutic that I couldn't stop myself conjuring up my own meanings and fantasies as well.

> "I have found, in my own case too, [the phenomenon of] being in love with my mother and jealous of my father, and I now consider it a universal event in early childhood, even if not so early as in children who have been made hysterical." (Kanzer and Glenn, 1977- p31)

So, one might argue that Freudian Oedipal complex says more about Freud the person than humanity in general. Maybe, Freud, in order to make his 'weirdness' acceptable, tried to posit it as universal? Who knows. The same criticism can be put to me, and I will be guilty as charged. However, in a bid to defend myself against that, I have tried to make my work personal and not universal.

In psychoanalytic theory, the three levels of consciousness as outlined by Sigmund Freud are the conscious, preconscious and unconscious minds. Freud likened this theory to an iceberg with a visible tip, the conscious mind; an obscured but visible middle, the preconscious; and a bulk hidden beneath the water, the unconscious (Freud 1915).

Freudian theory once again sticks to individuality of consciousness: projecting it to an individual iceberg capturing the intelligentsia of the time and beyond.

Freud did this comparison in 1900-1920s, and ruffled a few feathers in the intelligentsia of the time- the popular myths of the time being firmly rooted in (western European) humanity's reason and its supremacy (that was a rationalism for colonialism as well). But often what we don't look at, is how Freud may have chosen the iceberg as the model.

During that time, long sea voyages captured popular imagination in Freud's sociocultural milieu. Who can forget the 1912 sinking of the Titanic, and many other similar events at the time. A look through newspaper archives of the time at a local library can remind us of how, at that time, the collective imagination of the world of which Freud was a part of, was captured by oceans, voyages, and icebergs.

Freud, himself, after all, was susceptible to the workings of his own subconscious- to describe the indescribable:

(subconscious is beneath consciousness

consciousness is language

language is consciousness

to describe subconscious means to attempt to put it in language

something that can't be done)

He projected his theory (see section on theory as fantasy later) as he saw it on to one of the most fascinating and enigmatic images of the time. Consciousness or subconsciousness may have been theoretical, distant topics, but icebergs were popular, elusive and captured imaginations. Using this metaphor was almost certain to help him convey his theory to others.

I have to confess that I fail to see how the subconscious might be like an iceberg. The iceberg model was written about by Freud whereby the conscious processes happen above the surface and subconscious happen below. This model has been discussed and cited widely (Freud 1905). However, in my experiments with psychodynamic exploration of this narrative self, I found that it is not consistent with my understanding of the subconscious.

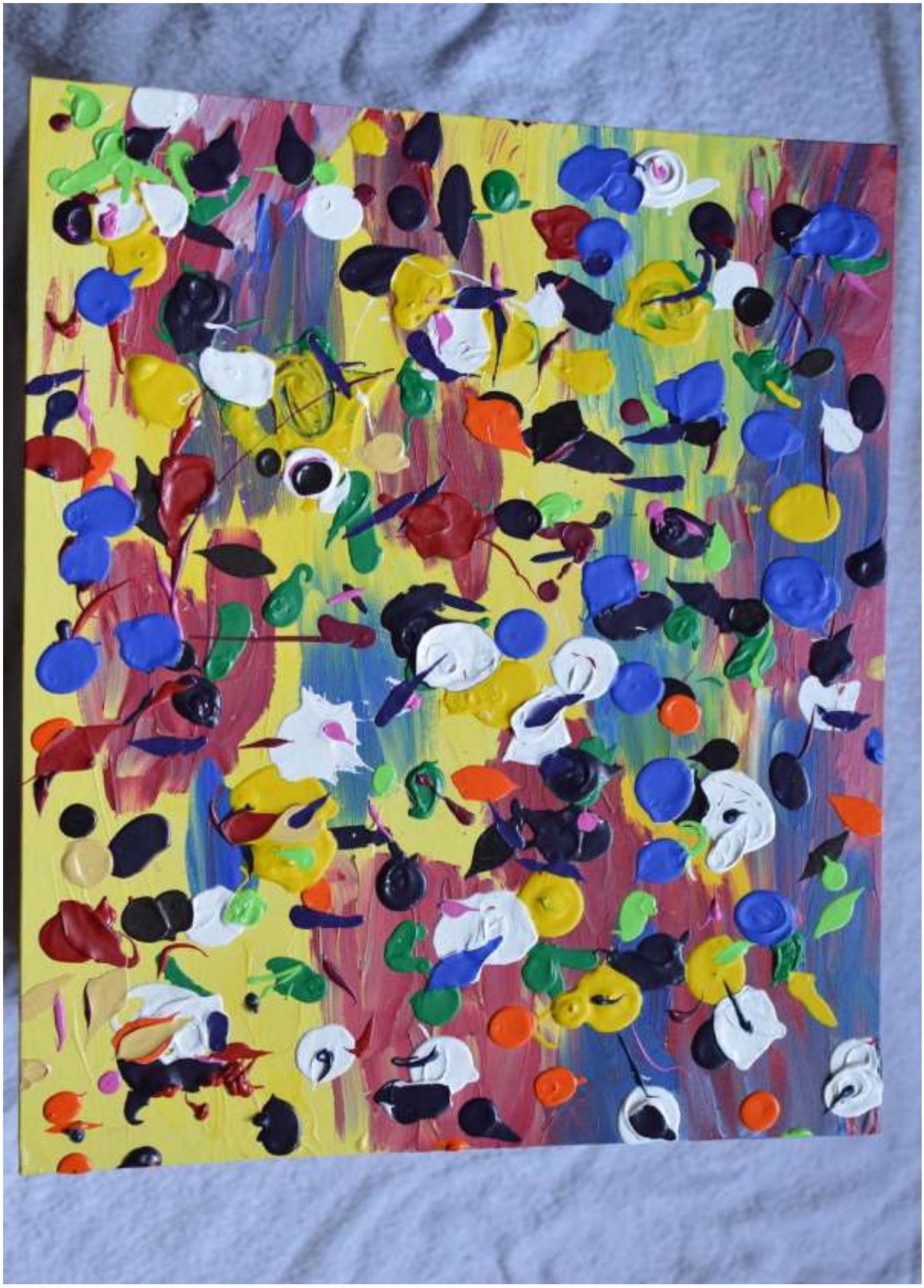
To me, the subconscious is not the bottom 4/5th of the iceberg. It is an infinite Russian doll. Iceberg metaphor suggests that what lies beneath is finite and measurable. But exploring subconscious is like shining a light in a Harry Potter-esque ever changing dark room- whilst you're consciously looking in one corner, things exist in the other corner even if you are not aware of them. And not only do they exist in other corners, they are also ever changing so that shining the light in the same corner twice will not lead to the same result.

The narrative self is constructing a narrative constantly- not just about the moments it is living, but also its memories of moments that have 'gone by' and the myths and fantasies that surround it.

Unlike Freud who wished to explore childhood memories (and seemed to believe in a static memory), I am not a believer of static memories- memories are fluid fantasies that are reconstructed each time they are elicited (Nash 2019). Therefore, the quest to explore the depths of subconscious is an endless quest.

It is for me, anyway: your mileage may vary. I can only speculate that the privilege that Freud held in his society must have facilitated his thought journey from 'This is what I just thought' to 'It must be ubiquitous'. I feel unable to make that journey and enforce my world view upon you.

I leave you with this image that I painted while thinking, dreaming of theoretical constructs in 2019.



This is an image created on a canvas by dropping blobs of colour: some blobs bigger, some smaller, some blobs go on top of each other. I find this a useful metaphor for psyche- a sort of topography of psyche. Each blob representing a theeling (intertwined thought and feeling)- and memories, fantasies, all are made up of a complicated conjecture and overlapping of different blobs/theelings. The section of the image that one is looking at- (imagine staring at a small part of it from really close by) is the conscious surface (a bit like what Jung (1936) said).

The blobs that fell long ago, become subconscious. They get buried under newer experiences, newer blobs- their presence merely visible as a rise in the surface.

If you, 'scratch the surface' of the present experience/blob, with the appropriate tool/question, you could find the previous experience and the thoughts/feelings associated with it.

Beneath the surface, thus, is subconsciousness, but there are a whole host of other realities represented in the rest of the board- upon which if one was to place one's gaze, that will become the consciousness- but again, beneath this new surface will be another subconsciousness.

An example of this could be the act of reflection- which could be described as subverting the conscious gaze from one place to another on the board of psyche, and even though we may think we are gazing into the subconscious, we really are just looking at another bit of the consciousness- perhaps not akin to Voloshinov's unofficial consciousness, or even Freud's unconsciousness, or Saari's ideas- all discussed earlier.

Instincts

Whether accessible or inaccessible, the subconscious has its instincts or drives. Different authors have given these drives different names, but I would find it hard to not call these drives projections of the subconscious of the authors themselves.

Freud[38], for instance, divides all instincts into two sets according to their aims and somatic source: Sexual instincts, the aim of which is the continuation of the species even at the cost of the individual's life; Personal or ego instincts (Ich-triebe), the aim of which is individual self-preservation. Neither of these two sets is reducible to the other, and they often enter into mutual conflicts of various kinds.

These could be described as modelling of the fight or flight behaviour, that is now popular description of human instinct. Or life or death drives; alternatively, these could be described as sociologically shaped psychic forces.

Freudian theory would state that these instincts guide and shape our behaviour. Crucially for this thesis, Freud would write (Freud, 1900) how not all of these instincts can be exercised into practice all the time. Society demands that some of these instincts be put into action or sublimated while others repressed.

[38] Freud was very binary, sometimes. Conscious/subconscious, above/below…. Is there something in that? As above, so below, so the dictum goes, but what about the boundary? The boundary is what I am exploring in this thesis.

These repressed instincts and desires then either express themselves through proxy in creative endeavours, or emerge in dreams through dream work.

Repression

The unconscious is made up of the repressed.

It was a radical idea at the time it was proposed (a bit like writing a PhD thesis in prose poetry seems now) but is now widely discussed and written about. Freudian idea of a repressed unconscious forms part of popular language now, so I will just present a brief comment.

As per Freudian thought, the psyche, initially, is driven solely by 'pleasure principle'- the sublime object of the psyche is to seek pleasure (Mannoni 2015, pp51-53). Through the psych's sociocultural milieu, the psyche learns how pleasure can and can't be sought in a society- this becomes the 'reality principle'.

Now, all psychic events must be measured against the pleasure principle and the reality principle. If it is something that is pleasurable, but can't be enacted in real world, it must be suppressed. This act of suppression ('censorship') happens without the knowledge of the consciousness (recall what I was saying about how the image changes when the light is not shining on it) (Mannoni 2015, pp10-12). Because these events do not pass the test of the

reality principle, they are often associated with fear and shame- our reality/society tells us that these thoughts/psychic events are unacceptable.

What becomes conscious, is sublimated through speech or actions. What can't be made conscious, can't be made into words.

> "Indeed, a feeling or desire can only be "lived out" and gotten rid of through the conscious and through the actions and behaviour it controls—above all, human speech. **The unconscious is nonverbal; it abhors words**. We cannot acknowledge our unconscious desires even to ourselves in inner speech. Consequently, **these desires have no way out; they cannot be worked through**, and, therefore, they go on living in our psyche with their full power and vitality unimpaired." (Mannoni (2015) p13, my emphasis)

This brings us to the point of trauma and pain. The censorship's object is to keep the psyche moving towards pleasure principle, in a way that checks out with reality principle. When the psyche undergoes events that are traumatic and painful, the psyche processes these similarly- an aspect of trauma can be articulated, but the deeper, more shameful, the pain of trauma sometimes can't be sublimated and the individual locks it away in the subconscious.

This trauma can't be described. It defies language. It is important to make a distinction between different definitions of trauma. When I speak of trauma, I don't speak of the bourgeois middle class trauma. I speak of the trauma that like Voldemort must not be

named. Because if you name it, it appears. If it appears, you get traumatised again. Let me introduce you to my partner who will explain.

Trauma

Allow me to quote from an MA dissertation on by Alyssia MacAlister[39], MA Creative Writing, University of Durham, 2017.

> ""To steal from Stein, from Gertrude Stein, a trauma is not a trauma is not a trauma.
>
> As with Stein's rose, the first time a concept is claimed it is so, but claimed often enough it ceases to become itself and is a representation of itself."
>
> Brown writes that in some trials where she acted as a professional witness, attorneys would attempt to refute her clients' complaints by claiming that they were not really traumatised. That what had been suffered by the victim was not trauma, because the events (sexual abuse and abuse at work, to name two) were not statistically uncommon. Attorneys claimed that events like these happen too often to be considered traumatic. Women's traumas, because of the closed spaces they occur in, and society's 'maintenance of the myth of the willing victim of interpersonal

[39] Very grateful that Alyssia would, later that year, accept my request to marry. She doesn't put toothpaste on my brush, although perhaps wishes I brushed my teeth more often.

violence', become 'secret traumas', to use the term Brown borrowed from Diana Russell. Real trauma was originally that which is experienced by the dominant class: 'white, young, able-bodied, educated, middle-class, Christian men.' Their version of human experience is an immediate one, often physical and public: crashes; wars; natural disasters, etc. Therefore, the trauma theory written in the 1980s, '90s and early 2000s gravitated towards narratives which accommodated this classification, narratives which the dominant class could empathise with being the victim of. They are the kinds of traumas where one's experience is inextricably linked to the traumas of other individuals, which in turn is tied to history. Therefore, trauma is a word which, Avril Horner claims 'endows the modern subject with a mark of authenticity', and is used with 'impunity', often with inaccuracy. However, as Jenny Edkins points out, traumas, by definition, are events incapable of, or at the very least resist to, narration or integration into homogenous linear time. Trauma is not experienced in linear time; there are no words, no language, through which such an experience could take place.

This makes placing a trauma in both the receiver's history and history at large impossible. The trauma exists separate to historical order and lives in its own present. Yet history and trauma are intertwined, for trauma is never simply one's own, that history [which created the trauma] is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas.

In the past twenty years, the work of Brown and other feminists and trauma theorists has led to an expansion of the term PTSD. The most current DSM-5[40] definition is:

[40] Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition.

a psychiatric disorder that can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, a terrorist act, war/combat, rape or other violent personal assault.

…a point which must be made is that the major definitions of psychiatry come from the APA[41]. The dominance of American culture in psychiatry is problematic, as the western influences on terms and practices cannot be smoothly translated over into other cultures. Trauma is a product but not always a commodity that can be traded. By placing trauma in its American psychiatric context, it lends itself to forms which developed in time with the understanding of PTSD, such as the poetic form of the prose poem. However, literary understandings of trauma and PTSD are Americanised and…even if the DSM-5 definition states that PTSD 'can occur in all people, in people of any ethnicity, nationality or culture, and any age', the dominant class of Brown's contention remains.

The Holocaust is the most well-documented and researched period of trauma. However, the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, only two years after the end of Holocaust, equal in its crimes against humanity, has been delayed in the telling of its traumas[42]. Theorists and critics tend to take the method used to discuss the Holocaust and process Partition through it. The majority of those who documented the post-

[41] American Psychiatric Association.

[42] Only now, post 2015 onwards, are books and scholarship in this area gaining strength. See for example (Bharadwaj and Mirza, 2016; Didur, 2016; Stuenkel, 2016; Butalia, 2017; Aguilar, 2018; Roy, 2018; Pardesi and Ganguly, 2019; Shahani, 2019; Azhar, 2020; Srivastava, 2021)

trauma of the Holocaust deviate from the dominant class only in that they were Jewish. On the 70th anniversary of Partition, western media used photographs taken by Margaret Bourke-White to accompany memorial articles and took accounts from South Asian writers who write predominantly in English. **It seems impossible for the West to look at atrocity with any other eyes but its own**. Cathy Caruth's popular example is the film Hiroshima mon amour. A story of a Franco-Japanese couple, which Caruth claims as an example of cross-cultural trauma representation, is not so, according to Stef Craps, because the narrative is carried by and about the French woman, not the Japanese man. The cross-cultural transaction of trauma, therefore, is that of a one-way bridge, which Renais decided to make instead of a documentary because he felt he was at risk of making the same film about Hiroshima as he did for the German concentration camps. The French woman deviates from the dominant class only by being a woman, whereas the Japanese man falls just short of the flexibility of the criteria to be given a balanced share of the narrative. This imbalance goes beyond the screen in the case of Hiroshima mon amour, for the actor, Eiji Okada, did not speak French; his parts were learnt and delivered phonetically with understanding of the script coming from an on-set translator, and so could never fully integrate with his co-actor the way they did in character." (MacAlister, 2017) My emphasis and footnotes.

Alyssia continues on p20

"The prose poem as a vehicle of trauma from the early twentieth century has developed into an object of its own, containing either image, object or fabulist poetry,

> or a combination of these kinds. **Prose poems allow traumatic or post-traumatic experiences to exist as they do in the mind, as moments which exist outside or alongside linear, operational time and can be written by, for or about persons who do not or cannot conform to their roles within society, can be considered 'missing' in those traumatic experiences. Trauma prose poems can depict the fragmentation of consciousness**, as in Eliot's 'Hysteria' and Dinh's 'An Odd Sensation' and how the mind can project its wounds onto the external world, such as in 'Red Slippers' by Lowell. (MacAlister, 2017) My emphasis and footnotes.

There are a few things in the above passage that influence me and this work, that I want to draw your attention to:

It is hard to speak of trauma- what we do when we speak of trauma is we speak of a representation of the trauma. The trauma is a break in consciousness, creates a void, and therefore is indescribable. We have to use metaphors, learned language clichés, drawings, 'creativity' to represent trauma. Trauma is medicalised- you have to fight hard to experience trauma in a way that it is not a disease. By imposing a definition, American Psychiatry Association imposes a meaning to trauma: it makes a distinction into what is trauma and what isn't. And of course, it values the traumas of the dominant class but of no one else. You can have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder if you went to war- but if you suffer due to the incessant daily normalised violence against you as a woman in the patriarchal society, you are 'hysterical', 'moody', 'overreacting' etc. If you are BAME in current UK, your racial struggles and everyday attritional impacts of it are suppressed.

To express trauma, to express a traumatic experience, or to express whilst having a traumatic experience, you need to break down barriers of grammar (MacLure 2009), of prose and poetry, and that's how prose poetry was born. The restrictions of narrative imposed on the writer due to the structure of language imposed on us by the 17th-19th century bourgeoise is an oppression of its own- rendered even more severe for me as an immigrant, writing in a second language to gain a qualification which seems a necessary sacrifice to make to be heard.

The trauma of people like me, affected by partition, carrying intergenerational trauma, can be hard for a person situated in 'the west' to understand because of the different realities of our lives. For someone in the UK, a crowded bus is a bus with 20 people in it. Where I grew up, a bus, even if there's twice as many people within it and about 50 people on its roof, even then the bus is not crowded. Hopefully that helps.

It is important to understand what I mean when I talk about trauma in this thesis, because I come from a place that is quite likely very different from yours, so while we try to communicate across a boundary, a gulf exists. That's not to say I don't value your time and the opportunity to have a conversation, we just need to acknowledge the limits of our exchange- as it will happen within parameters of language.

It is also important to recognise the passages when I deviate from a way of writing as you know it, where I discard punctuation, grammar rules, rules of PhD manuscript writing, that

it's not because 'I don't care' or I am writing in a second language or because of any presumptuous cliché that might elicit in you, it is because I am trying to not inhibit the expression of trauma that I have suffered during the writing of this- by the act of writing itself and by the institution that is the UK Higher Edu-Immigration complex[43].

That is a vital part of my identity, my otherness as I have been made to experience. And if the University is true to its rhetoric of Equality and Diversity, it must accept it as a necessary intervention.

So, what I am trying to say is that when my interviewees spoke of their traumas, I resonated with it in a way that is perhaps likely to be different to the way someone who identifies as 'from the west' might have done.

Trauma in Freudianism

> "The entire life of a man and all his cultural creativity amount for Rank to nothing more or less than his living out and overcoming, in various ways and with the help of various means, the trauma of birth.

[43] The international student experiences the UK University as not just a space of learning, but also of neo-colonial power. Immigration rules, Hostile Environment, go hand in hand with the University business- even though they are not strictly speaking the business of the University. However, to an international student, the experiences can't be separated. If you do a PhD, you have to report attendance, if you work, you have to report attendance and there are restrictions on what you can and can't do outside of work. If you marry, you have to justify your feelings and prove your relationships. See Skilled Worker Visa (no date) and Student Visa (no date) by the Home Office. You have to stay ultravigilant so you don't fall foul of the law by accident. The Big brother is always watching you. Also, see "When protesting can affect your immigration status, who really gets to have a voice?" (nnull, 2021). I am exercising my freedom of speech here (Adams 2021b), please don't call PREVENT on me (see Taylor 2021).

> A man's birth into the world is traumatic: The organism, ejected from inside the mother's womb by the process of labour, experiences a terrible and excruciating shock the like of which will only come again with the shock of death. The horror and pain of the trauma are what initiated the human psyche; the trauma forms the bottom of the human soul. The terror of birth becomes the first experience to be repressed and the one onto which all subsequent repressions will be drawn from then on. The trauma of birth is the root of the unconscious and of the psychical in general. Throughout the rest of his life a man can never entirely be rid of the terror experienced at birth.
>
> But together with this feeling of terror an urge to go back is engendered—an urge to return to the paradise experienced in the intrauterine state. This longing to return and this sense of horror constitute the basis […]" (Voloshinov. 2013, p138, who is citing from Otto Rank's iconic The Trauma of Birth (1999).")

It follows from above that all trauma experienced is traumatic as it evokes the original trauma, the trauma of birth. This is when the being learns to repress, a subconscious is born, but this trauma that the being so resents, is also the root of all creative undertaking. For that reason, the individual remains in a conflicting relationship with the representation of trauma. On one hand, it is painful- on the other hand, it becomes the font you dip your ink in. As true for me and this work, as for many others. That's why I don't like calling the circumstances I wrote this work in as 'mitigating'- they were in a sense, but, they were also

the source of blood I filled my pen with to write this. In a weird way, I am grateful for the pain.

Reflection, Trauma and Self

Before I go on to share my reflections, I should perhaps highlight some of the prevalent literature on which the notion of reflection is based. However, as Clara (2015) notes in her literature review of 'reflection', the idea of reflection is ambiguous and not clear- even to practitioners of 'reflection' themselves. Indeed, Clara's work supports the argument of Ixer (1999), that "there is no such thing as reflection" (Ixer 1999, p513).

As Clara (2015) recounts, most of the work on reflection in social studies is based on work of theorists such as Dewey (1978), Schon (1987) and Kolb (1984). Dewey's ideas were centred around meditating around a belief- what has given cause to it and where it leads (Dewey 1978). Schon's (1987) work built on Dewey's work and put forth the notions of reflection-in- action, and reflection-on-action: with the assumption that the individual could be reflecting when the 'event' is happening, or after it has 'ended'. Kolb's (1984) work puts this process in a circular format- we experience, we learn, we move on and experience still more. However, as Clara (2015) and Ixer (1999) point out, the academic community is not entirely convinced. With the literature on reflection so conflicted, let me offer you my two Paise (cent equivalent of Indian Rupee).

Freud's theory of mind and subconscious is reliant on the singularity of the self and aspires to it. Selfhood is only singular if it is privileged enough to be traumafree, or maintains a fantasy to that effect.

Consider this- the self is a conscious fantasy. The preconscious- id and ego and superego are projections in relation to that self-fantasy. The singularity of self is dependent upon, deterministically, the individual living a safe, singular life. The singularity of ego and super ego, therefore, is dependent on one's existential anchorings. In other words, if you haven't suffered, you haven't got a fragmented self. If you haven't got a fragmented self, you don't doubt yourself. Privilege begets privilege.

Through severe, multiple traumatic events that can dislodge the individual's anchoring, the individual's self can become fractured- to the extent that there are different selves that live within. Each of these personalities have their own distinct selves, egos and super egos. If the person with these multiple personalities continues to be hurt and feels traumatized, these different self-fantasies may then 'forge' themselves and therefore it might become difficult for the person to navigate through them.

When this person with these forged multiple selves encounters the powerful gaze of medicine they might be diagnosed with 'multiple personality disorder' or something like that. When I was writing this work, it is a possibility that that could have been my diagnosis (it wasn't) as my sense of self was fragmented.

The 'normal' individuals have the luxury of seeing the self as singular. As soon as one begins to slash through the normality, one begins to then appreciate the different ways an event

could be described. In doing so, one begins to do the fantasy work of reflecting through a lens[44] of a theoretical construct to come up with alternative explanations of reality.

So, for example this could be how the fantasy of self evolves:

Singular self- I ate a banana.

Reflective self- I ate a banana. I have the luxury of eating a banana. I am lucky. Other people may not have that luxury.

Here the fantasy work of reflection involves adopting a framework of theory as fantasy, as a lens. So 'I ate a banana' has a different reflective meaning if I think of its implications from a socioeconomic standpoint (as above) or ecofeminist standpoint (how much resource was spent getting the banana to me?) or a decolonial lens (How come I am able to eat a banana for the money that I earn for 5 minutes worth of my time, 4000 miles from where it was produced, whereas the person who produced it, for 5 minutes of their time, can't eat an apple I might grow) and so on.

To reflect, then, is to reinterpret the understanding of an event through a different self- a self that may be the one that the individual hasn't constructed out of their lived experience, but constructed out of a (fantasy of) theory. The 'I' that is reflecting, is therefore, an as yet unnamed I.

A new identity (or fantasy thereof) is created through this lens of reflecting (remember Saari earlier).

[44] As you will see in *Stories,* the metaphor of lens was given to me by one of my interviewees. As I said previously, I rewrote the first half in light of what the interviewees told me and how they told me.

The more lenses one accumulates, the more theoretical frameworks, the more reflections they can produce. The more that happens, the more an individual becomes a deep thinker. Every event can, to them, be described in multiple ways. The 'multiple ways' of talking are different selves talking, but to suppress the trauma of the fracturing of the self, the individual makes sense of this situation, when they talk about these reflective, thinking, 'lens wearing' self-fantasies as 'parts' of 'me' e.g. "part of me wants to do this, part of me wants to do that…" The fantasy of 'part of me' suppresses the pain of multiple selves created out of a broken 'whole'.

As said previously, then through severe, multiple traumatic events that can dislodge the individual's anchoring, the individual's self can become fractured- to the extent that these parts then become different selves that live within. Since each of these parts is now a whole self, each can have their own superego[45]. This enables us to answer the Kantian question of who is the self who is doing the reflecting: by framing self as a fantasy and the individual as a possible collection of multiple fantasies.

So, for example, for me, there are multiple selves. These are fantasies, of course, but had to be created to understand why there are multiple, very different thoughts about the same event- in this case, about the research interviews. These different thoughts are of different selves and aspire to a different super ego.

So, for example, the researcher I- superego- wants to do 'good' work that makes the academy happy- for him, the ego ideal is successful PhD. Decolonial I/ Indigenous I- wants to

[45] Super Ego- The aspirational ideal of an identity.

reform the neoliberal destructive Anglosphere. Father I- wants to make a living and avoid any hassle. All of these selves have distinct superegos, and distinct ego ideals.

The action that is exercised through me is a consequence of which of these parts gets to dominate deterministically. If, for example, in the context of this PhD, someone tells me that this work is garbage, the father I is scared. His priority is to keep his household steady and to feed his child. This father I then shushes the decolonial I who wants to rebel against the institution of the PhD.

You think, therefore I am

Just like each word triggers a thought and emotion in your and my brain, each individual situation privileges a self over another.

If one buys into the theory of multiplicity of the selves and buys that these selves can have individual super egos, then I contend that the confusion between these is a moment of existential crisis. What we call 'anxiety' is a 'mini existential crisis'- these are moments where individual questions everything including their own being because, multiple selves are in a locked horn position.

Events such as 'confusion' are the conscious manifestations of these subconscious struggles between different selves created due to traumas. The consciousness finds it hard which self to privilege or which super ego to please.

Confusion, therefore, is a result of divisions in self-caused by trauma. Confidence is the absence of divided self. That's why, if I were to be crass and rash with my analysis, if I were to rant, I would say that the rich upper classes tend to be confident, write clearly, speak emphatically. They haven't a divided self. (I generalise and exaggerate for comic effect here, this is not entirely true. Confidence can come through other forms of privilege, or through work, e.g. knowing and developing your ideas).

Conscious thought in an individual with divided selves is grappling with different selves, different egos and different superegos, constantly looking for clues in the environment as to what self to privilege, what ego ideal to strive for. It takes us longer to do things, it takes us longer to decide what to eat off a menu, what to wear, what route to take to work, what job to do (e.g. I have held 4-6 different kinds of jobs already, not even reached half of my working age yet).

One way to explain this is through the following metaphor. Imagine the painting I shared earlier as an epistemic landscape upon which there is a tiny traveller that walks around in response to what the outside world needs them to do. Imagine yourself as a tiny person on this painting- which is in a way, your part of the Shakespearean stage.

Now you will notice a few things on the painting:

Different colours. Imagine these different colours represent different emotions.

Different depths and heights of blobs of colour. Each of these blobs of colour represent a memory of experience that 'left a mark'.

Where the experiences that relate to previous experiences in the fantasy of the self, occur repeatedly, there is **piling of blobs over blobs over blobs**. This then becomes one Freudian

iceberg. My iceberg has one colour on top, and it can have many colours underneath or just one colour underneath. It is not binary, it is fluid.

The environment pushes the conscious gaze on to a specific place on this board. The conscious gaze then must draw and respond to the environment from (in form of language or 'action' or 'inaction') this place. If the experience makes one happy, let's say happiness is green- my conscious thought that goes to seek green blobs. Where the green blobs are on surface, i.e. my most recent memory of an experience is happy, that will be reminded to my conscious thought when I am happy. If, where I am, the green happy blobs are far away, I will sort of become happy, but not quite. The further I am from a green blob on the surface, the more it needs to make me happy.

Sometimes the green blob is situated upon an iceberg. If beneath that green blob, in that iceberg, is a lot of red sadness, even when I get to the green blob of happiness, I will feel the height of the blob and what lies beneath- so the happiness will not be the same as if it was a green blob through and through. So, in this case, the happiness will remind me of the subconscious pain.

Tum itna jo muskura rahe ho, kya gham hai jisko chhupa rahe ho

You seem to be smiling a lot- what is the sorrow that you are trying to hide

Lyrics and performed by- Jagjit Singh, 1982

Part of Hindi film Arth (translation- Meaning)

My translation.

For example, if one reconciles with an estranged parent. There is surface happiness, but underneath lie a bunch of stuff that the individual doesn't want to pick up on to maintain their pleasure pain principle.

Trauma then, is like a fracture on the board. A fault-line. The conscious gaze can't really go and stand upon it, for trauma is a void- a rabbit hole that doesn't end.

After experiencing the trauma, the conscious gaze is shuddered. This is seen as the numbness of the individual. In work context, this can be seen as automatic following of the rules.

The conscious gaze can go around on the board haphazardly- this appears as anxiety. In work context, this can be seen as 'confusion.'

The conscious gaze knows a fault line exists, so it tries to avoid it. This becomes denial. In a work context, this becomes denial of 'bad' behaviours that, when surface, become 'scandals'. The conscious gaze, through experimentation, finds the safe icebergs to hide behind- these icebergs become anchoring points- or obsessive-compulsive behaviours. (Audits at work).

In all of these behaviours, the individual is not talking about trauma, but implicit in all these behaviours is an awareness of it and therefore the impact of trauma. (Risk Management at work).

When the environment tries to heal/ talk about trauma with the individual, the individual's gaze goes around and around the fault line. This is what happens in counselling- or when the individual sort of runs around in circular compulsive thoughts. (At work: appraisals).

Through provocative questioning, the environment can push the individual closer to the fault line. (At work-coaching/mentorship). This can provoke anxieties in the traumatized self, who can project it back to the environment (e.g. turn away from Therapy, or at work, labelling of workplace as bad and going elsewhere).

If, however, the traumatized individual has become trusting of the environment (let's say a therapist who has worked to get the trust of the individual) then the conscious gaze of the traumatized individual will perhaps not shy away from unpicking the pain of the trauma and allowing it to be expressed in some way. At work, this is like loyalty.

Psychodynamics and language

Now that we have discussed trauma (and how it looks at work) let me go back to language. A significant issue one faces in talking about subconscious drives and phenomena through language, is that language itself is a conscious construct. To try and explain subconscious phenomena through language is an endeavour that can never fully succeed, for when I speak words through my self fantasy in response to my interpretation of events, you will interpret them through your own self fantasy, and so will conjure up meaning for yourself according to what these words mean to you.

In that, my subconscious drives may dictate my language, but it isn't my language but your subconscious drives that dictate the result. For example, if I say water is too hot- what I mean when I say it, is most likely going to be different to what you perceive it to be.

A positivist might pose a scientific fact challenge to this- by saying that if one says water is 25 degrees, surely the listener also receives it as such. On surface yes, but what that 25 degree means for the scientist and the listener would most likely be different. I offer you an empirical thought experiment, which you can carry out from the safety of your home. At a distance of two metres from the nearest human. Let me borrow from a popular thought experiment. Please indulge me by reading the following aloud-

DO NOT THINK OF A PINK ELEPHANT

Reading this statement a few times, one realises how difficult it is to receive the meaning from language. The sentence asks the reader to not think of a pink elephant- but the conscious thought can't process it- it has to conjure up an image of a pink elephant in order to then consciously reject it. So even though the conscious mind knows not to think of a pink elephant, the subconscious is already underway fantasising about pink elephants.

There is a mismatch between how we think and how we think we think. In a rational world, we think that we think through language. In the world where I belong, where psychoanalytic notions are the truths about subconscious, where individualism is a lie, where time is a metaphor, the way language and subconscious response to it, differs.

Words- in themselves are images- they trigger subconscious, and they trigger a mixture of images, emotions, and theelings. Some of these, we fantasise and call memories. Some of these we sublimate, some others we repress because they recall painful stuff.

This is the reason why a toddler when instructed not to touch a hot pan will probably end up doing exactly that. The words touch and pan in the subconscious of the toddler conjure up images of touching the pan. These images than make the child think about what it might be like to realise this fantasy[46].

This is also the reason why negative instructions found within our society do not always work, and, one is forced to conclude that these are acts of oppression and control rather than of benevolence of the elite. Do not smoke, do not sit like this, do not do drugs- all of these are not benevolent, kind messages, but riddled with authority and the assumption that free will exists, and can be exercised to follow the warnings, and to use negatives in a sentence is an effective way of control. What these instructions do not take in to account is the suggestive nature of the words used in these phrases.

There are interesting conversations about language and Psychodynamics in literature. Firstly, there is the debate about how much Freud was aware of the role of language and what was his theory of language- given so much of the talking cure, the free association- happens through language. Psychoanalysis operates through the medium of language.

[46] No toddlers were harmed in the creation of this thought.

> "In his thoroughly neurological monograph, the young Freud went so far as to supply a theory of language. "Word-presentations" were claimed to be linked in the mind by "association" to "object-associations." **A normal person's acquisition of speech, spelling, reading, and writing was explained as developments of associative channels from the mental "images" of word-presentations to the specific organs of the body that affect them in behaviour**," (Mannoni 2015, pp61-62, my emphasis)

The above summarises how Freudian psychoanalysis begins to theorise language. The subconscious is full of images and associated sensations (see next section psychoanalysis and image) and to learn a language means development of channels that carry those object associations in the mind to organs in the body to carry out the tasks that would become speaking, reading, writing etc.

Done over and over again, this becomes language.

Language is nothing more than codified, learned utterances we train ourselves to utter to sublimate certain subconscious drives.

With that in mind, for psychoanalysis, the distinction between images and language is a rather arbitrary one[47]- the latter being a result of repeated use of a selection of symbols or

[47] Going back to what I said about graffiti, and the work of Steyaert (2015) on creating text that's like a hall of mirrors, I position these quotes as illustrations that are more like graffiti that your gaze encounters rather than literature that I quote. Some work is rare, but work such as Weatherall (2018), or MacAlister (2017) dissertation, are not so 'important' for the academy which privileges rankings and impact factors, so I don't expect the reader to have read it- but they are necessary to

utterances governed by arbitrary rules under the impression that these rules allow standardised communication across different people- (it doesn't).

For that reason, the distinction between art and research is a non- natural one, at least for psychodynamics.

Freud spoke about language early on. Note the following from Voloshinov (2013, pp18-19)-

> "In fact, Freud's first psychoanalytic statements were earlier yet, in On Aphasia (1891), statements about language rather than about the unconscious. Previously Freud has evident success in the conventional neurological investigation of the nervous system of eels (1877) and a discovery and application of cocaine as an anaesthetic (1884). On Aphasia, however, contains the keystone revelation of the young neurologist, that verbal slips and "mistakes" virtually identical to those made routinely by the brain-damaged could be found in the speech of healthy persons. These verbal errors were "psychopathologies of everyday life," the objective data that in the first great years of Freud's work would constitute, after dreams, the basis for psychoanalytic investigation." (Voloshinov and Bruss, 2014, p54)

Indeed, Voloshinov traces the development of Freud's thought on language as it occurs throughout his development of his theory of subconscious and other psychoanalytic concepts.

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be read. Weatherall writes of domestic violence and I grew up seeing my mum beaten up (who hasn't?), so her work, as far as I am concerned, has a very high 'impact factor'.

> "Freud's most powerful evocation of a modern theory of language was his use of what 50 years later would be Chomsky's "linguistic transformation" (Freud, "Verwandlung") as the chief explanatory tool in the analysis of paranoia for one of his most important case studies, Psycho-Analytic Notes upon an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides). He presented detailed, principled, sentence-by-sentence derivations of each of the four forms of paranoia from a single underlying sentence, "'I love him.'" **Each of the four were argued to represent a specific option of negation furnished by the very grammar of the underlying sentence:**
>
> Delusions of jealousy contradict the subject, delusions of persecution contradict the verb, … erotomania contradicts the objects … a fourth kind of contradiction [megalomania] … rejects the proposition as a whole." (Voloshinov, 2013, p244, my emphasis)

Since each sentence can be interpreted in many ways, and there can be infinite ways of reflecting on a single occurrence, I ran into a problem. How do I choose which one to write? And, how do you know 'where I am coming from?' That necessitates the heartful autoethnographic content.

However, continuing the tension between Freud and Marx, Voloshinov speaks that it is not the subconscious that forms the language, it is determined by the socio- cultural context.

> "The verbal component of behaviour is determined in all the fundamentals and essentials of its content by objective-social factors. The **social environment is what has given a person words and what has joined words with specific meanings and value judgements**; the same environment continues ceaselessly to determine and control a person's verbal reactions throughout his entire life. Therefore, nothing verbal in human behaviour (inner and outward speech equally) can under any circumstances be reckoned to the account of the individual subject in isolation; the **verbal is not his property but the property of his social group (his social milieu)**." (Voloshinov and Bruss, 2014, p244, my emphasis).

The verbal is not of the individual, but of the society around them. Language is ideology. The words written by an academic are not theirs but of the society.

Lacan helped bring out the linguistics in Freud's work. He caused 'an upheaval' in the French psychoanalytic circles "with the discovery that Freudian texts were structural analyses of an aspect of language, and that they anticipated some of Saussure's own first principles." (Cole, 2014, p108)

Voloshinov, one of the earlier critics of Freudianism, thought differently. His opinion was that Freud was too busy developing his work as a science and a curative methodology and didn't pay due attention to psychoanalysis and language: but acknowledges the role of Jung in developing word association test (Jung, 1964) (the basis of free association).

> "there is no evidence that Freud self-consciously identified his treatment of language as even a secondary aspect of his work. There are excuses for Freud's failure to see his own linguistic bent: his preoccupation with administering a new therapeutic establishment and his polemical defence of the theory of sexuality against the revisions of his own students and the outrage of laypersons. Nonetheless, language is not discussed in any of Freud's correspondence with psychoanalytic colleagues, nor does it appear in the work of any of Freud's successors, except as the early discovery by C. G. Jung of the word association test, which passed out of Jung's work after his break with Freud." (Voloshinov and Bruss, 2014, p5-6)

However, this criticism by Voloshinov contributed to the development of a psychodynamic theory of language- and hence it is important to note that

> "Voloshinov contributed to the reversal of his own judgment against Freud. He was a direct influence on Prague School structuralist research on language and culture which, through the work of Roman Jakobson, profoundly influenced the anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss—who in turn influenced Lacan. Thus, it is not strange that the discourse model with which Voloshinov assessed Freud's shortcomings was essentially the same as that with which Lacan constructed the epistemology that demonstrated Freud's structural significance" (Voloshinov and Bruss, 2014), p199).

The same myths circulate in different individuals- in citing Voloshinov, maybe I also cite Roman, Claude, Sigmund and Jacques.

What goes around comes around

The author (Bruss specifically) above (ibid.) writes that Freud does begin to talk about language in his early works. Hopefully, the above dialogues give the reader some insight into the contests that have existed within the field of psychodynamics and language. In this work, I am trying to bring out this inbetween-ness rather than subscribe to one particular 'person'.

From (Voloshinov and Bruss, 2014, p202),

"a theory {of language} exists in Freud's earliest and most important work. It has a specific locus, the concepts of "condensation" and "displacement," the two structural modes of dream construction discussed at length in The Interpretation of Dreams (1900). Indeed, they may be the fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis."

Perhaps it is then fair to say that psychodynamics has sometimes explored language, sometimes struggled with it- and it is for this reason perhaps that psychodynamic works bring in other modes of communication often, such as 'arts'- be it arts of the pen- drawing, painting, or arts of utterances- poetry, spoken word. Anyway, the concepts of condensation and displacement are crucial for us to understand here.

> "As Freud stated it, condensation and displacement are the two means by which wishes otherwise unacceptable to a person can gain a degree of distortion and camouflage that allows them to be partially expressed. In **condensation**, one or more elements of the underlying wish ("latent dream thought") are represented by one of their parts or properties, which serves as its "condensed substitute." Thus, in the dream itself ("manifest dream content") a person might be condensed into one of his possessions or a phrase that he or she utters; two or more different persons might be represented by a single individual with a property common to them all, such as sex, age, or a feature of physiognomy. In the manifest dream itself, the condensation represents the full element of the underlying wish. **In displacement, an element of the underlying wish was represented by some other thing** to which—at least for the dreamer—it bore a resemblance, for example, as in one of Freud's patient's dreams, when climbing down the stairs represented engaging in sexual intercourse with a person of a lower socioeconomic class. (Voloshinov and Bruss, 2014, pp. 238–240)"

I read the condensation and displacement as described above as **content and structure- or content and process- of fantasy articulation**. Condensation is when things come through, displacement is things that can't make through the reality principle and therefore must be altered, presented in a codified manner.

In other words, in articulated fantasy (such as what my interviewees say) as in a Freudian interpretation of dreams, the matter of concern is not merely the content, but also the structure of the presentation. We will pick this up in the next chapter.

Similarly, I am trying to convey the content, but also trying to create an illusionary subconscious of this thesis, through its structure and representation.

These notions have over time made their way into literature, sociology and the world of academic study of work. For example, Parker (1997) writes about how “psychoanalysis attempts to theorise/ construct (note- not 'discover') subconscious thought that lies within those words” (my clarification within brackets).

Parker further comments on the role of language in this- that people use language

> “that is already existing. They cannot invent words and phrases for each occasion, they use the discourse that is already available to describe their experience of the world as well as their internal mental states.” (Parker, 2005 p41)

The above is an example of how psychodynamics theory has filtered into CMS language.

By using language around us, therefore, we end up propagating the ideology inherent in the language.

By disrupting language, we disrupt ideology.

To disrupt ideology, we must disrupt language.

If language is disrupted, the ideology shudders.

To critique, we must distort language.

It is not Critical Management Studies if it is written in the language of Management Studies.

In this thesis, by using photos to ask the questions (as explained later), I attempted to circumvent the consciousness as ideology. I speak through images; the interviewee speaks through metaphors. This way, challenging the accepted doctrine of what 'language' is and countering the myth that language is different to 'art' or images.

This is why I was keen to not have questions to start with, in my interviews. This is why Freud wouldn't have questions but start from the individual. But still, I did have to use some language, as that is the limitation of the context in which I am operating in.

I am sure the language of the consent note that I sent to recruit interviewees, the power markers contained within that email as well as the words would have cast some influence on the participants, as well as my words within the interview context. This is not something I could get away from.

For this reason, instead of just presenting a dense analysis, I present a live/open analysis in the upcoming chapters- every anecdote I analyse I present a wider story around the anecdote as well as, crucially, my words that appeared immediately before. I put the interview exchange in a table, distinct from my analysis.

On occasions, non- verbal language played a big part in my understanding and interpretation, and in these, I have tried to offer some comments about the body language of the interviewees that informed my listening.

Psychodynamics and images

By this point, hopefully the reader will see the artificial distinction between language and image as redundant. Both are communicative devices for the subconscious and are made up of each other. We have made the journey from self to language, and looked at how language is just imagery repeated, codified.

The subconscious mind deals with and in images. Seeing comes before words (Berger, 2008). Indeed, what we call words are images with a meaning attached- and in common, positivist mythology, we function as if the meaning to the words is the same for everyone. It isn't.

As said in the previous section, the psyche thinks in images and uses lingual apparatus to convey these images to another person, who then constructs their own image based on these hearings.

To remind us, Voloshinov agreed that "The unconscious is nonverbal, it abhors words" (Voloshinov, 2013 p.37); and Lacan states, in a slogan that might be an anthem of French

structuralism, “the unconscious is structured like a language.” (Voloshinov and Brauss, 2014, p208). To be a post-structalist then, is to go beyond language.

Metaphors

Lacan writes, "in the case of Verschiebung, 'displacement', the German term is closer to the idea of that veering off of signification that we see in metonymy, and which from its first appearance in Freud is represented as the most appropriate means used by the unconscious to foil censorship” (Lacan 1997). The connection between psychodynamics, poetry, imagery and metaphor is a deep, raw connection. Displacement acts a bit like metaphors do in language. Metaphors is a poetic device. It can be then argued that prose poetry/poetry represents displacements of the individual. By not following the ‘standard’ structure, we are all resisting the reproduction of a certain subconscious. We are attempting to interrupt white cis-het masculinity of knowledge, and making a space for us.

If all language is approximate, then it follows that all language and all communication is a metaphor. If the psyche holds information in form of imagery bound up with sensations that cannot be described through conscious construct of language, then all language is a metaphor. Indeed,

> “All culture and industry are symbolic. We live in a world of symbols, all of which, in the final analysis, signify one thing—the mother’s womb (more strictly, the uterus) and the accesses to it. What is the cave that primeval man sought refuge in?

> What is the room that we feel cosy in? What is homeland, state, etc.? They are all only surrogates for the mother's protective womb" (Voloshinov 2013, p63).

My interviewees, when confronted with the language of imagery, often resorted to speaking through visual metaphors. Influenced and coloured heavily by what I studied and the people who offered me their stories, I too began writing in a way that embraces metaphor: for if all is metaphor then I must exercise freedom in choosing the one that soothes me, or freely oozes out of me.

Metaphor is not the only way in which displacement happens- some others are humour, aberrations ('Freudian slips'). Let's look at these briefly.

Humour

> "Thus, a joke, too, is only a safety valve for pent-up energies in the unconscious; it, too, in the final analysis, serves the unconscious and is governed by it. The needs of the unconscious are what create the form and content of jokes." (Voloshinov 2013, p59)

Freud writes extensively about jokes and their role in releasing subconscious anxiety by expressing in a socially acceptable format what would not be acceptable otherwise. Humour is important here to note as I use it as a marker of points of interest in the analysis of

interviews. When an interviewee laughed, when I laughed, I thought of that point as a point of interest.

In Freud's work (Freud and Carey, 2002), jokes and humour follow the same structure as dream images- in other words- jokes are a bit like day dreams- using various mechanisms to express fantasies.

> "The forms of jokes are governed by the same laws that provide the formal structure of dream images, that is, the laws for the formation of substitute presentations with the same mechanism for bypassing the legal conscious through such devices as coalescence of words or images, substitution of images, verbal ambiguity, transference of meaning from one level to another, displacement of emotions, and so on.
>
> Jokes and witticisms have the tendency to bypass reality, to provide relief from the seriousness of life, and to secure an outlet for repressed infantile impulses, whether sexual or aggressive. Sexual jokes are the offspring of obscenity and are engendered as its aesthetic substitute. But what is obscenity? Obscenity is a surrogate for sexual performance, sexual satisfaction." (Freud and Carey (2002) p61)

Jokes allow release of subconscious drives that would not pass the test of reality principle. But important in understanding of humour is also the role of the listener. The joke, the laughter is not just a release of anxiety, it also is an attempt to connect with the subconscious of the listener.

The consciousnesses are trading language, the subconsciouses are trading structures.

> "A good joke needs a listener; its aim is not only to bypass a prohibition but also to implicate the listener via laughter, to make the laughing listener an accomplice and, thereby, as it were, socialize the transgression.
>
> In jokes of the aggressive sort, under cover of artistic form, free expression is given to infantile hostility toward any law, regulation, or national or social institution to which the unconscious attitude toward the father and the father's authority (Oedipus complex) or hostility toward any person not oneself (infantile self-centeredness) has been transferred."

If we expand the above with a Marxist critique of Freudianism, we can draw a conclusion that jokes contain a hostility towards not the 'real' father, but the 'metaphorical' father, the powers that be, the 'boss man' as we call it. As we will see in the interviews, and later on in 'Resistance below the surface' in Chapter 6, I will discuss that sometimes, jokes are not an attempt to be funny, in a work context, they can also be a codified rebellion of the worker.

Later on, we see the importance of this in our discussion of anecdotes from Vick and Lisa. But first, a word about free association and aberrations.

Free associations

If the consciousness is ideological and the repressed is subconscious, how does one delve into the subconscious- or indeed bypass, as Lacan would say the 'censorship' (Lacan). Whether the subconscious be full of personal, individualistic latent dreams and fantasies or full of socio- culturally acquired fantasies, how does one get to communicate with these? We have to learn to speak in metaphors, in poetry, in humour, without the rules of grammar (I remind you of something we discussed in the beginning- Pullen and Rhodes (2015) speaking of CMS needing to think about what to do when grammar fails- here's a solution from me).

> "For this purpose, Freud proposed the method of "free fantasizing" (freie Einfälle) or "free association" freie Assoziation) apropos the manifest images of the dream under scrutiny. Free rein must be given to the psyche and, all the restraining and critical faculties of consciousness must be relaxed; one must allow anything at all to come to mind, even the most outlandish thoughts and images that have no apparent relevance to the dream being analysed; one must become completely passive and allow free access to whatever comes to consciousness, even if it seem senseless, meaningless, with no connection to the matter at hand; one must endeavour only to be attentive to whatever involuntarily arises in the psyche." (Voloshinov 2013, p50).

But is there such a thing as completely free association? As with anything, this aspect of Freudian theory is also contested- as Voloshinov writes that

> "Freud had not found direct and unmediated access to the unconscious but had learned about it through the conscious of the patient himself." (Voloshinov 2013, p65)

Voloshinov is arguing that because the insight free association has brought to the patient is then articulated and filtered through conscious construct of language, it is not really subconscious: as the act of making it conscious shifts the subconscious- something I want to agree with. Therefore, Voloshinov construes, that what Freud is accessing is not really the subconscious, but a kind of unofficial conscious that is created as a function of sociological milieu inhabited by the person.

Whether accessing Freudian subconscious or Voloshinovian unofficial subconscious- one thing that can be established at this stage is that the free association does help the speaking selfhood get aside from the ideological-speak that consciousness inherits. So, while I do not want to contend that I, in my interviews was able to access subconscious (I don't think anyone can make that claim) I can safely contend that by changing the language of questioning, the language of answers was changed too. We were able to have a different conversation, I think that is a safe claim.

If conscious use of language is ideology, then it follows that education is indoctrination and anything that deviates from free association is ideological oppression. I think that is the thrill of prose poetry and spoken word artist- in that moment, in that blip, the consciousness experiences 'freedom'.

Removing the questioning that happens in a 'normal' conversation or a 'normal' interview allowed my interviews to evolve in a free manner.

Another thing for me is as I began to understand the Foucauldian questioning of the 'Normal', and how free association was received as therapeutic by my interviewees, a desire to freely associate my own narratives also influenced my own thinking and how I read, think and write.

In Freudian terms, the pathways and structures that carry my mental imagery to paper are forever changed- and so I do ask the reader to bear with me through this work.

Free association is drummed out of our psyche as we receive ideology through language. Therefore, when we try and free associate again,

> "we immediately become aware that our efforts meet with strong resistance on the part of our conscious; a kind of inner protest is generated against our interpreting our dream" (Hollway and Jefferson, 2008)

This inner 'protest' can be described in several ways. It could be that the repressed is bound up with sensations of guilt, fear, pain, trauma- all of these sensations and the consciousness doesn't want to bear the weight of the pain. Or it could be that the self-narrative is structured in a nice, smooth manner and unearthing the repressed will create an upheaval that will (literally) break the ground on which the self-fantasy stands on.

It could also be that the oppression that the self has accepted as part of social structure and therefore as a truth- is wrapped up within these repressed thoughts, and to unearth the slept demons would mean to remind one's self of the unfairness and violent nature of society: a realisation that leads to either revolt or, failure to do so, an even more depressed outlook on life (because you can't even revolt for fear of repercussions against the family, or so on. Interesting to read about the fate of the radical individuals like Walter Rodney- assassinated, Voloshinov- disappeared, Chomsky- most wanted, Mandela- most wanted and imprisoned for 40 years and so on. Pursuit of 'Freedom' comes at a severe cost).

So, if the 'normal' individual consciousness presents a deep resistance to free association- it is for good reason- on the other side lies a kind of psychosis- and not everyone wants to subscribe to cocaine like Freud (or has their wives putting toothpaste on their toothbrushes)[48]. Indeed, trudging the boundary of normality has severe consequences because the body still has to exist in the world the mind wants to leave behind, as I have felt.

In an attempt to connect what we've discussed earlier, I want to share the example of Freud borrowing his metaphor from his own sociological milieu. Freud

[48] It is worth noting that I have never taken any alcohol, tobacco or any drugs. This is purely a rhetorical sentence! Although, in 200 years, our caffeine intake will be judged as harshly as we judge Cocaine intake of 70 years ago. Then, I'll be guilty as charged. My mythical future great-grandchild is already hating me.

> "...compared his method of treating hysteria with the confession in the Catholic church. At confession, a believer really does obtain relief and purification thanks to his telling another person, in this case, the priest, about thoughts and acts that he himself considers sinful and that he could not, under other circumstances, have told to anyone. In this way he gives verbal expression and verbal outlet to what was bottled up inside and isolated in his psyche and had been oppressing it. Therein lies the cleansing power of speech". (Bollas, 2002, p17)

So, this gives some weight to my claims earlier about the iceberg model of Freud- and how he pulled it out of his own socio-cultural milieu. I have done the same, pulled this thesis from around me.

Free association is the normal, natural for the subconscious. Free association can exhibit itself through all senses- a mixture of writing, speaking, drawing, dancing- all or none. Language brings ideology and creates repression. The rules of language are oppression forcing repression. Like most other things to understand oppression, one has to ask the oppressed- to understand the tyranny of language, one only need ask people who are deemed to be neurodivergent- the ones labelled with dyslexia or dyspraxia. Even the white background of this page alienates the neurodiverse- it should be yellow. We may think of free association as the outlier, but that is only a product of ideology received through indoctrination/education. This philosophy drives not just the interview process and interpretive work but also the work of being and writing.

Aberrations/ Freudian slips

These terms are in common usage now so I rest their definition on the following-

> "… the unconscious is precluded from direct access to the conscious and to the pre-conscious, at the threshold of which the censorship operates. However…, **all repressed impulses retain their energy and, therefore, constantly strive to break through into consciousness**.
>
> They **can do this (only partially) with the help of compromises and distortions that deceive the censorship and circumvent its vigilance**. This distortion and disguising of repressed impulses occurs, of course, in the region of the unconscious, and it is from there, once having deceived the censorship, that they penetrate into the conscious, where they remain unrecognized. **It is here, in the conscious, that the investigator finds them and subjects them to analysis.**
>
> All these compromise formations fall into one or the other of two sets:
>
> Pathological formations—symptoms of hysteria, obsessions, phobias, and also such pathological phenomena of everyday life as the forgetting of names, **slips of the tongue and pen**, and the like;

> Normal formations—**dreams, myths, and the images** of creative art, philosophical, social, and even political ideas, in fact, **the whole domain of human ideological creativity**."
>
> (Voloshinov and Bruss, 2014, my emphasis).

To capture from above- the repressed impulses retain their energy and stay within the subconscious- they filter through to the consciousness through 'mistakes' or 'creativity'. So, when I am listening to my interviewees, I am trying to listen in for both.
I felt quite close to the interviewees, I felt that I can see more than what they think I can see. As I became aware of the colonial, other- exploitative nature of this endeavour, I looked for reconciliation- the only way I have found is that in this thesis, as a sort of reciprocity, I leave out parts of me within. Some creativity, some mistakes.
To expand on these aberrations, let's hear from Freud-

Freud himself writes,

> "In the same way that psycho-analysis makes use of dream interpretation, it also profits by the study of the numerous little slips and mistakes which people make—symptomatic actions, as they are called …these phenomena are not accidental, that they require more than physiological explanations, that they have a meaning and can be interpreted, and that one is justified in inferring from them the presence of restrained or repressed impulses and intentions. [Freud, An Autobiographical Study (1925)", in (Mannoni, 2015).

I interpret the interviewees. You interpret me. Simples.

Defence mechanisms

A summary as I wrote on, Sat 10 Dec 2016 00:47:14 GMT should suffice here-

Defence Mechanism	Explanation	Examples
Repression	Subconscious activity whereby unpleasant thoughts are kept away from the conscious thought, because consciously thinking about them is painful to the individual	E.g. When things in the workplace keep getting postponed
Regression	Subconsciously behaving in a psychologically- regressive manner	"Acting like a child"; withdrawing from

	when faced with anxiety provoking situations	conversations, doodling in meetings, getting "hung up" on seemingly minor demands
Denial	Blocking out anxiety provoking events/ memories from conscious thought so as to not suffer the emotional impact of it	Not changing organisational policies until too late, convincing oneself that "I am fine and this is just temporary job-related pressure that will ease off soon"
Projection	Individuals attributing their own unacceptable thoughts and feelings on to others	My colleagues don't like me/ My boss doesn't like me/ My job is too demanding (as opposed to I don't impose clear work- life boundaries)

Displacement	Satisfying an impulse/ need by releasing it onto an agent that is not the source (but one feels more control over).	"Taking it out on someone else"; Being upset with the boss but releasing it on one's partner/ dog/ punching bag…
Sublimation	Satisfying an impulse/ need by releasing it on to an agent that is not the source, but in a more socially acceptable manner.	'Venting' aggression in sports- as a participant or as a spectator; Converting libidinal feelings into being excessively 'nice' to a colleague...

Rationalisation	Presenting (to oneself as much as to others) 'facts' of a situation in such a way that justify the action that one already, impulsively felt like taking	I want to do this because it is "more beneficial for the company"
Reaction formation	Acting in a way that is opposite to the way one feels subconsciously, in an attempt to hide that subconscious feeling	Feeling hatred towards the boss but acting like a 'good follower'
Splitting	Labelling certain things 'good' and 'bad' based on only selective attributes of them.	Good boss, bad boss; good employees, bad employees; good public servants, bad politicians…

Myths

We are moving from the 'individual' to the collective now. As I have said, individuality is a myth- a lot of the literature I have cited above is written in the mythology of the individual so while it is necessary to bring it in, it is also necessary to now elevate above that individuality.

"Myth is the collective dream of a community. The images in myths are substitute symbols of repressed unconscious instincts." (Mannoni, 2015 p89)

In other words, as ideological consciousnesses come together, there emerges certain 'working truths' or dreams that the community believes in and uses them as operative truths. These operating truths become the myths. If the powers that be codify them, they become our rules. Like double yellow lines. Like the dot at the end of this sentence.

Do I put a dot and end it.

Do I put three, and be free…

Freudianism vs Feminism

No knowledge, as I have discussed earlier, is apolitical. I want to pick on a couple of debates about psychodynamics itself- by examining the debates between Freudianism and Feminism, Freudianism and its Anti-sciencism and Freudianism vs Marxism.

From The Dialectics of Sex, (Firestone, S., 1970, republished in 2015 which I refer to here)

> "It has long been recognised, if only implicitly, that the works of the leading figures of Western philosophy are filled with misogynist statements and sentiments…. But although the androcentrism and misogyny of the classical scholars has sometimes been acknowledged it has tended to be viewed as a personal matter. It was seen as a personal quirk of the philosopher or scientist that had little connection with the theories that they espoused. Thus philosophy, and more especially science, continued to be seen as a value-free enterprise, and such concepts as 'reason' and 'person' as essentially neutral concepts."

Firestone continues,

> "Recent feminist philosophy, however, has been critical not only for the fact that much philosophy and social science has ignored or marginalised some of the central concerns of human life – those concerns, such as childbearing, that are specifically associated with women – but in its theories and concepts it has consistently expressed an androcentric orientation. Concepts such as 'rationality' and 'person' are therefore seen as intrinsically expressing a masculine perspective. The concept of person, which is central to philosophy, is generally treated as without gender bias, and as referring to both men and women. Thus, in such historical claims as 'man is a rational animal' it is seen as only a simple matter of substituting 'person' for 'man' implying that this does not change its essential meaning." (Firestone 2015, pp 39-42).

Knowledge is gendered, political.

If ethics of knowledge are up for question, all knowledge of the past and present is up for questioning. Afterall, if knowledge is capital, much like CMS asks of capital how it has been garnered, the same questions ought to be answered for the body of knowledge itself too. If all knowledge is up for questioning, all thoughts are up for retelling.

Freud himself, one can argue, was able to articulate his theory and do his business because of the leisurely time he was afforded by his wife doing house chores for him, including putting toothpaste on the toothbrush (Currey, 2013) Where does this leave Freudianism then? There is certainly a case for abandoning it all altogether-- and indeed that is one of the justifications of doing newer work that rethinks psychodynamics, such as this (With the caveat that I will let my wife and other women I know judge how much of a sexist I am, rather than cry out that I am not one). But can older work be abandoned altogether? Where would I start, if I had abandoned it altogether? I have no answers. In this thesis, I have reproduced some work in the knowledge that the beings that produced it would not do well if we were to question their morality. Higher Education of today would be similar, a lot of Higher Education thinkers and writers perhaps would be questionable. There is widespread issue of racism/sexism/homophobia in Higher Education today as well. I lay no claims to being a better person either. I have tried to go beyond and cite different works, but have I done enough. I personally don't think so.

Truth is, I have no answers.

In Hindi, we have a saying “Deeye tale andhera”- translated as ‘the darkest shadow is immediately underneath the flame’.

Firestone, offering some hope, positions feminism as the link between Freud and Marx. Hopefully you’ll see a similar journey in this work. She continues to write in the ground-breaking work, that

> “Freudianism and feminism grew from the same soil. It is no accident that Freud began his work at the height of the early feminist movement.” (Firestone 2015, p92)

Firestone gives us a helpful context in which Freudianism brewed-

> “We underestimate today how important feminist ideas were at the time. The parlour conversations about the nature of men and women, the possibility of artificial reproduction (babies in glass bottles) recorded in D. H. Lawrence’s Lady Chatterley’s Lover were not imaginary. Sexism was the hottest topic of the day: Lawrence was merely picking up on it, adding his own views. Sexism also determined nearly the whole of G. B. Shaw’s material. Ibsen’s Nora in The Doll’s House was no freak: such arguments were splitting up many real-life marriages. Henry James’s nasty description of feminist women in The Bostonians and Virginia Woolf’s more sympathetic ones in The Years and Night and Day were drawn from real life. The culture reflected prevailing attitudes and concerns: feminism was an important

> literary theme because it was then a vital problem. For writers wrote about what they saw: they described the cultural milieu around them. And in this milieu, there was concern for the issues of feminism. The question of the emancipation of women affected every woman, whether she developed through the new ideas or fought them desperately. Old films of the time show the growing solidarity of women, reflecting their unpredictable behaviour "their terrifying and often disastrous testing of sex roles. No one remained untouched by the upheaval. And this was not only in the West: Russia at this time was experimenting at doing away with the family." (Firestone 2015, p94-95)

Firestone then goes on to examine Freudian constructs through the lens of feminism- the ideology whose goal, for me is summed up by not merely the equality for all, but in the words of Simone De Beauvoir, "the objective of feminism is not to put women in power, it is to do away with the notions of power altogether", (Beauvoir 1997, p36) a call echoed loudly in "Feminism for the 99 percent" (Fraser, Bhattacharya and Arruzza, 2019). I will bring forward a few examples from Firestone's argument.

Firstly, Firestone asks us to revise the whole phallic envy construct, and says that the phallus is simply a symbol of patriarchal power, an idea echoed also in Lacanian work.

In Murray (2015), it is written of Lacanian work that-

> "phallus is not the penis, but might be described as what the penis symbolises (which might be something like power or authority). Indeed, Lacan even

claimed that the penis is a phallic symbol and is thus only a symbol (of potency, or whatever) and is not significant in itself at all. If it has come to stand for something significant (notably power) this is only by accident and because it has been 'chosen as what stands out as most easily seized upon in the real of sexual copulation." (Murray, 2015, pp67)

Compare this to what Firestone writes, and the parallels are easier to see

"As for the 'penis envy', again it is safer to view this as a metaphor." (Firestone, 2015)

Firestone goes on to critique other notions of Freudianism through a feminist gaze, for example;

"I submit that the only way that the Oedipus Complex can make full sense is in terms of power. We must keep in mind that Freud observed this complex as common to every normal individual who grows up in the nuclear family of a patriarchal society, a form of social organization that intensifies the worst effects "of the inequalities inherent in the biological family itself. There is some evidence to prove that the effects of the Oedipus Complex decrease in societies where males hold less power, and that the weakening of patriarchalism produces many cultural changes that perhaps can be traced to this relaxation." (Firestone, 2015)

Firestone goes on to argue that both Freud and Feminism put sexuality at the heart of discourse, and in that they were similar (indeed Firestone calls Freudianism the misguided Feminism) and that Freud was a diagnostician for what feminism would cure: a line of argument this thesis subscribes to (i.e. that the oppression of the workers is brought forward by Freudian method but the cure is through feminism- i.e. doing away with power structures and replacing them with empathy).

I maybe wrong in this interpretation- but it seems to me that by expanding Freudianism beyond the Freudian interpretations, Firestone has done us/this thesis a great service.

Psychoanalysis and anti-scienceism

Mannoni (2015) writes that a key aspect of ethics of psychodynamics that is often repressed is its anti-establishment ethics. A young Freud was a medical doctor but wanted to engage in scholarly activities in higher education. The antisemitism that he encountered turned him against the prevalent ideologies of his contemporary times. He wanted to sublimate this anti-establishment instinct into his work. I regard this as the primary driver behind him wanting Psychoanalysis to succeed as a scientific psychology- because he was projecting his own desire to be recognised as an equal, on to his work.

Psychoanalysis is regarded as a Foucauldian anti-science, it is philosophical, irrational, unsystemic, free (Mannoni, 2015). It is free from traditional categories we ascribe to knowledge, it is free from labels such as art or research- if it is anything, it is the restorative

tool for the selfhood. Because it aims to work through free association and set the self-fantasy free, it abhors any categorisation, sense of order- because any sense of order is a defence mechanism and its imposition an act of violence. For example,

"Psychoanalysis has an anti-scientific aspect to it" (Mannoni, 2015, p71)

Or,

"the rigor and exactness of the natural sciences are impossible within the domain of ideological study due to the very nature of what it studies." (Mannoni, 2015, p86)

All of this means that approaching people with 'psychodynamics inspired' methodologies and narrow focuses, conducting 'systematic reviews' of psychodynamics is appropriation and corruption of psychodynamics, one might argue. Clément (2015) would agree. Something that Mannoni warns, is more harmful to psychodynamics than criticism. An example of this is the creation of Myers Briggs Type Indicator tests from Jungian work, which Jung perhaps wouldn't have approved of (Hunt, 2021).

More importantly, it means that in our world where scientific cause and effect have become synonymous with knowledge, where never mind quantitative, positivist disciplines; supposed qualitative, interpretive work has become systematic as well, psychoanalysis offers a crucial antidote.

But we have to be careful, a Foucauldian anti-science can easily become anti-Foucauldian method of oppression if its gaze continues to fall on oppressed, and not on the powerful

gods. There have been, and I anticipate, continue to be, psychoanalysis of vulnerable people who, after giving up their homes and livelihoods, must also now give their knowledge.

Freud and Marx

Žižek (2009, p34) draws some interesting parallels:

> "there is a fundamental homology between the interpretative procedure of Marx and Freud – more precisely, between their analysis of commodity and of dreams. In both cases the point is to avoid the properly fetishistic fascination of the 'content' supposedly hidden behind the form: the 'secret' to be unveiled through analysis is not the content hidden by the form (the form of commodities, the form of dreams) but, on the contrary, the 'secret' of this form itself. The theoretical intelligence of the form of dreams does not consist in penetrating from the manifest content to its 'hidden kernel', to the latent dream-thoughts; i**t consists in the answer to the question: why have the latent dream-thoughts assumed such a form, why were they transposed into the form of a dream?** It is the same with commodities: the real problem is not to penetrate to the 'hidden kernel' of the commodity – the determination of its value by the quantity of the work consumed in its production – but to explain why work assumed the form of the value of a commodity, why it can affirm its social character only in the commodity-form of its product." (My emphasis)

In other words, as Žižek would further explain, the objective of psychoanalysis is **not to go beneath to see what is hidden and to unearth it- it is in asking the question- why has the repressed become such, and then maybe to set it free** (Žižek 2012).

This relates to what Firestone writes- **Psychoanalysis is merely a diagnostic tool, feminism is the cure** (although Firestone would point out that Marxism and Feminism are different in their scope and ambitions).

From (Timpanaro, 2011 p13):

> "For example, it [psychodynamics] abstracts what truth there is in the notion of hatred of the father from an authoritarian structure of the family, which remains transient even if slow to pass away, and transforms it into a sort of eternal destiny of mankind. In this sense, then, psychoanalysis is too naturalistic. Yet, in another sense, it remains suspended in a limbo between the biological and the social, rejecting contact with the one no less than with the other."

Timpanaro is writing of the tension within psychoanalysis- whether it is aimed at individual cure (the biological) or a sociological emancipatory tool (the social) and says that it is concerned with both.

Timpanaro continues-

> "That the Oedipus complex must be taken as a historical and relative formation has been demonstrated time and time again. It is well known that study of non-monogamous and non-patriarchal family structures, past or present, has made a decisive contribution in this respect. **Freud's mistake in taking a psychological situation associated with monogamy and paternal authority as an absolute condition is strikingly similar to the error made by classical bourgeois economics and its successors in their eternalisation of capitalist relations of production**." (Timpanaro, 2011 p15, my emphasis)

I agree with Timpanaro here, and in my analysis, you will see that. When people poke fun at the boss, my analysis is not that they are being Oedipal and hating their father, my interpretation is that they are engaging in a rebellion against the power.

And finally, Timpanaro says,

> "Psychoanalysis was gradually transformed into a general theory of humanity and civilization with a distinctly Schopenhauerian and metaphysical hue," (Timpanaro, 2011 p18).

In the above, Timpanaro critiques the Freudian concept of Oedipal complex and says that Freud, situated within the medical system, saw the Oedipal complex as perhaps a biological phenomenon whereas it can be seen through studies of other cultures that it is not so. The Oedipal complex, for Timpanaro as well as for I, is a metaphor for capitalist power, and in

that vein, this work although starts with Freudianism, ends up within Firestone-ism. Hopefully that means this work can lay a claim to be an aspirational feminist work.

Theory as Dream

As mentioned previously, all culture and industry are symbolic, they are all metaphors, they are all dreams of consciousness, articulated through language (Voloshinov 2013). In that vein then, Theory in psychoanalytic terms is apt to be described as a dream of a psyche.

There is work that is interested in allowing 'emotional dimensions' into theory building in CMS see for example Clancy and Vince (2019, p123) where they posit the argument that "Theory building can be improved by engaging directly with emotions and in particular with fantasies created by the researcher". This article is symbolic of a very tentative step from the academy into allowing more feminine kinds of knowledge- emotions, into its framework. This section builds on the above.

The theory building that occurs without emotional work, the kind that the above statement fantasises of distancing itself from, in itself contains a certain emotion which I call a **stodginess**. That it isn't named, is because the patriarchal power that it represents wouldn't direct its own gaze sufficiently inwards (Think back to what Maggie Nelson wrote, in first chapter-, **there are many speakers whom I like to see do more trembling, more unknowing, more apologising**).

All theory

contains emotions

is driven by emotion

All theory is a fantasy.

Even the most 'scientific' theories are revised, changed, proven wrong. Even the most revered scientific of disciplines- medicine- is not perfect science (as one interviewee told me). Indeed, just as we look at medical practices of 200 years ago and scoff, I am sure the same will be done to some of our practice of medicine today.

This work then, is literally a dream. Meaning is contained not just within its content, but also in its structure. As Freud would write about his work on psychopathology of everyday life, mistakes carry a meaning- and my own 'mistakes' would tell about me- and the not hiding of them is an act of courage and extreme emotional labour taken in the interest of carrying meaning to the reader.

Reflections- Psychodynamics and its use to study work

Any theory of psychodynamics is based upon, explicit or implicit, assumptions about the world, reality and nature of interpretation. Any given 'event' can be described in multiple ways. In other words, multiple realities exist concurrently- depending upon the self who is observing them. However, as I have learnt through reflection, the self doesn't translate

these observations and sensations into a form of 'language' until it is forced to do so by another agency that exists outside of the self. Until I respond to a real or mythical object, I could argue that I don't have a reason to ascribe language to my drives. This translation is processed through conscious thought- and the conscious thought is a representation of what is not just acceptable, but possible, in the socio-cultural- linguistic environment that the self perceives.

Therefore, the conscious thought itself is a defence mechanism to defend from the schizoid state that we would all have to exist in otherwise in acceptance of the plurality of reality. Upon that defence mechanism of the singularity of reality (and therefore singularity of self) are founded other defence mechanisms- which operate to push away/ suppress things, in response to what is possible in the environment.

Let's move towards situating this within a work, a CMS context. To revisit, psychodynamics is a theoretical framework to explore and theorise about the thought processes that may occur without our awareness and yet, influence our actions.

Based upon Gabriel and Carr (2002, P354), psychodynamics assumes that people are emotional beings. This is as true inside organisational context as it is outside organisational contexts. These emotions fuel their actions. The origin of these emotions, however (at least to some extent) lies within the unconscious needs, desires, anxieties and fears. Comparing it to Morgan's (1997) metaphors of organisation as an organism or a machine, psychodynamics as I understand and hope to utilise it, views organisations as

playgrounds of emotions (e.g. Hochschild 1983) and unconscious desires, much like the rest of societal contexts.

This leads to the second core idea, People work to reach their 'ego-ideal'. How people behave at work is coloured by their unconscious desires. People's desires aren't organised in a step ladder fashion (see Maslow's hierarchy of needs in Bridgman, Cummings and Ballard, 2018) nor do they follow a systematic pattern. They are messy, complicated, and not easily understood.

Antonacopoulou and Gabriel (2001) further write how psychodynamic approach to emotion contributes to our understanding of emotion in the work place in several ways: Psychodynamics argues that rationalisation is (at least sometimes), a defence mechanism used to justify emotional drives and motivations. Psychodynamics classes emotions as fluid and changing- anger changing into guilt, etc. Psychodynamics questions the ability to capture emotions as a steady state and as a benchmark (e.g. Psychodynamics will problematize the concept of "job satisfaction"). Psychodynamics embraces ambivalence of emotions: satisfaction is not unaccompanied by dissatisfaction, admiration by jealousy, and so on.

They further discuss (borrowing from (Fineman and Gabriel, 2000)) that psychodynamics resists the pressure to quantify emotion and focuses on how emotion is discharged/ released: through unconscious behaviours, suppression, or execution of the emotion as action. As Putnam and Mumby (1993) write- rationality in organisations is a myth- organisations are emotional spaces (Fineman 1993).

Therefore, psychodynamics presents us with a picture of organisations that is alternative to the mainstream, popular organisational literature. Such use has a strong tradition (for some classic studies, see Menzies Lyth, 1960; Carr, 1998; Carr, 2002; Diamond, 1993; Gabriel, 1998 and 1999; Kets de Vries, 1988, Fotaki, Long and Schwartz, 2012, Levinson 1972, Levinson 1976, Board, 2014).

Menzies Lyth (1988, p10) writes in justification of use of psychodynamics for organisational studies: "It may be too hard for workers to focus on the basic problem, and they pick the ambience of the job as a means of expressing something of their discontents…"

I believe what she means is that often the basic problem raises anxieties within the organisational employees and as a defence, they, instead of focusing on the issue at hand, the workers project the anxiety on to something else on the job. For example, Fotaki (2006) writes how "promoting patient choice" may be seen as a projection of other issues, (such as misalignment of political aims with the needs of the street level workers), being faced by the healthcare organisation.

Clancy, Vince and Gabriel (2012) reposition disappointment within organisations as an emotion intricately important for organisational learning- as opposed to more popular considerations of organisational learning based on 'rationality'. Hoyer and Steyaert (2015) for example, study identity construction through self-narrative in management consultants by applying a psychodynamic framework. Hoyer and Steyaert provide a psychodynamic exploration of how during times of career change, ex-management consultants work with

conflicting sub-conscious desires for 'self- continuity' (their term for 'wanting to maintain the old identity', manifested by behaviours such as ignoring the change, admitting the ambiguity and depicting a wishful future and driven by ego-defences of denial, rationalisation and sublimation, respectively) while trying to be open to the new prospects a career change might bring.

Gabriel and Carr (2002, p348) write, that psychodynamics offers original insights and explanations and helps move away from the organisational theory that is "centred on rationality, hierarchy and authority and become more interested in symbolic, irrational, emotional and discursive dimensions of organisational life". See also De Board's (2014) extensive work on Psychoanalysis of organisations.

Whether Clément (2015) would approve of these works/my work or not, I don't know. What I do know, is that we are very good at appropriating ironically. Why else, would there be calls to decolonise the decolonisation discourse (Opara 2021)? Why else, would we have White Feminism (Beck 2021)? Why else, reader, would we turn Yoga- something that is meant to be a reflective, meditative practice of finding deeper meaning within, into a capitalist lycra fest? This is the age of irony and what it needs is perhaps a measure of radical sincerity.

Chapter 4: Methods

Improvisation is hard to do. – Derrida (1978)

First, a note on our questionnaire obsessed world-

> "The questionnaire is cheap, easy, and mechanical. The study of human behaviour is time consuming, intellectually fatiguing, and depends for its success upon the ability of the investigator. The former method gives quantitative results, the latter mainly qualitative. Quantitative measurements are quantitatively accurate; qualitative evaluations are always subject to the errors of human judgement. Yet it would seem far more worthwhile to make a shrewd guess regarding that which is essential than to accurately measure that which is likely to prove quite irrelevant." (LaPiere, 1934, pp 234-35)

The inspiration, I guess, for me, was to go as far away from the above as possible. I make errors in my method, sure I do, and all 'results' are guesses. But, for me (the funder of the study!), the questions are relevant.

The methodology and methods

Well, there aren't any.

Scientific

consistent

nice shiny smooth linear

systemic lies/narratives

that may look all polished

and smooth on the surface

but are often meaningless- if I am being harsh

limited in their meaning- if I am to be measured.

There's none of that here.

Move along, nothing to see.

This chapter lays out the method I used to collect data/stories, and their underpinning working truths. The previous chapter laid out the truths of this thesis, this chapter bridges the gap between them, and the next chapter- where you will see these fantasies come alive.

Against method

Of course, there is a method- but perhaps not like what you'd find in typical 'academic writing' manuals (e.g. Trzeciak and KacKay, 1994). There is always a method to creation of knowledge, explicit or implicit. By claiming there isn't a method, what I mean is that there isn't what we commonly call as method- scientific, smooth, systemic, well defined. The

method I have used in creating knowledge contained in these pages, I can only articulate after having undergone several cyclical iterations- I can only offer a fantasy of connecting the dots looking back. I touched upon the againstness of method and anti-science-ness of psychodynamics in the previous chapter. I build upon it here, strictly talking about the methods of knowledge creation.

Psychoanalysis is fundamentally broad and unmethodical.

Freud quickly learnt that the best way to approach his consultations was to tell the patient to begin wherever they'd like. This non-systemic ethos, for me, defines psychodynamics.

> "The unfalsifiability and therefore nonscientificity of the Freudian method of interpretation of slips, dreams and neurotic symptoms lends itself to a distinct, non-systematic, anti-scientific epistemology- a Foucauldian anti-science". (Timpanaro, 2010 p61)

In our contemporary ideology where positivism is the new Church (indulge me in this fantasy for a moment), this poses the writer and reader some serious problems. The lingual framework available to the author self-fantasy, much like the reader, was decidedly positivist, science infused. Through work on this project, I have begun to distance myself from it a little bit, but this has been a long, arduous, painful, emotionally exhausting journey.

To ask the reader

to follow

in my footsteps

after just

several hours or less

of reading

is a huge ask.

But, as the reader goes along

I do request you to.

Before you convert your discomfort into words

and project that onto this work

and call it any name, reader;

question where your question is coming from.

As Timpanaro says:

> "it would be entirely wrong to measure psychoanalysis (and by implication) other human sciences or those whose object falls between the natural and the sociohistorical) against any ideal of absolute scientific rigour and to use that as the criterion for pronouncing it non-scientific." (Timpanaro, 2011, p19).

I do feel sympathetic for Freud's attempts to get psychoanalysis recognised as science. As I have said before in my opinion he was projecting his own desire to feel not discriminated against, and to be considered an equal, on to his work- and with science being the doctrine

of the day, he of course wanted to be known as a scientist. The intelligentsia was, still is, deep in the hegemony of science as the ultimate ideal, and Freud wanted to be respected.

I go back to Timpanaro, who critiques science (Timpanaro, 2011, p215)- in particular its false neutrality and by extension its myth of objectivity. I am hoping that the reader is by now sympathetic to alternative non-scientific epistemologies, particularly psychodynamics.

This unapologetic subjectivity can be seen in psychodynamics in many places- for example in the landmark work of Rank (one of Freud's prominent disciples) on the trauma of birth:

> "The methods Rank used in his work were completely subjective. He attempted no objective, physiological analysis of the trauma of birth and its possible effect on the subsequent life of the organism. He only sought to find reminiscences of the trauma in dreams, in pathological symptoms, in myths, art, and philosophy." (Timpanaro, 2011).

Further,

Rationalism is already dangerous, since it "paralyses our judgment" and is invested with "an almost superhuman authority" (Timpanaro, 2011, p. 89)

Not only is fake scientific-ism not real, it is also dangerous- it makes us feel like we are some kind of God. A bit more on the critique of rationality and reason in 'Research Methods'.

Critique of 'rational'

With this antiscientific stance, this work can perhaps be described more as art, rather than science, and the contents of it as, simply stories. Similarly, the writing of it is more like an epic poem, rather than linear prose[49]. This also means that in the writing, I do away with tropes typical of SQDT (Standard Qualitative Doctoral Thesis), such as telling you repeatedly what the contribution of this work is- much like any other art work, the contribution of this work will vary for each reader. Having said that, I shall passionately defend against any allegation of this work being inferior to an SQDT.

Different, yes. Inferior, No.

Critique of Reason

> "However, the challenge to the Enlightenment, and the theory of the subject accompanying it, took a new turn after the Second World War. The atrocities it witnessed were related to modernity itself. The representatives of the Frankfurt School – Adorno and Horkheimer at their head – thus regarded the gas chambers as the ultimate expression of modern 'instrumental' rationality. Having once served emancipation, reason had backfired and rendered itself complicit with the worst

[49] If I could, I would write it all as a prose poem. Maybe next time.

> crimes against humanity. Structuralism and poststructuralism, although not (or scarcely) thematizing 'modern barbarism', also developed a critique of humanism. Althusser's 'theoretical anti-humanism', or the 'death of man' prophesied by Foucault, are expressions of it. The poststructuralist viewpoint that dominates 'western academia' (to employ Žižek's term) regards the subject as a 'decentred' entity. In this perspective, an irreducible multiplicity of subjective positions exists, which no 'centre' unifies. The cogito has literally disintegrated. Freud's 'discovery' of the unconscious, and the importance assigned to language in philosophy in the second half of the twentieth century, have consolidated this trend. To borrow a formula from Derrida, the **subject is now perceived as a 'function of language'"** (Keucheyan, 2014 p37 My emphasis).

Kuecheyan describes how the Second World War was, amongst other things, a crisis of modernity. The atrocities of the War, for the Frankfurt School, were proof enough that instrumental rationality "had backfired". And, how the subject becomes a function of language contemporaneously as rationality hits its limits. Continues,

> "The erroneous belief that only what can be rationally grasped or even what can be proved in a scientific way constitutes the solid knowledge of mankind has disastrous consequences. It prompts the 'scientifically enlightened' younger generation to discard the immense treasures of knowledge and wisdom that are contained in the traditions of every ancient culture and in the teachings of the great world religions. Whoever thinks that all this is without significance, naturally succumbs to another, equally pernicious mistake, living in the conviction that science

is able, as a matter of course, to create from nothing, and in a rational way, an entire culture with all its ingredients" (Kuecheyan, p70)

I sympathise with the above viewpoint. Privileging scientific viewpoint over and above subjective, creative knowledge is not only erroneous, it can be disastrous. We are at risk of losing so much wisdom.

Needham (1986, p31) speaks of "'scientific opium'- the blindness of science and technology to the suffering of others." From which it follows that to be open and alert to the suffering of one's self and of others, a scientific approach must be abandoned as it is grossly inadequate. Not only is science-ism dangerous, disastrous, it is a drug that alters humanity's consciousness.

What do I replace this rational reason with? Stories.

Stories and their importance

"Stories are the means by which we navigate the world. They allow us to interpret its complex and contradictory signals. We all possess a narrative instinct: an innate disposition to listen for an account of who we are and where we stand. … People may hold information in the form of data and figures, but their beliefs about it are held entirely in the form of stories.' **When we encounter a complex issue and**

> **try to understand it, what we look for is not consistent and reliable facts but a consistent and comprehensible story. When we ask ourselves whether something 'makes sense', the 'sense' we seek is not rationality, as scientists and philosophers perceive it, but narrative fidelity**. **Does what we are hearing reflect the way we expect humans and the world to behave?"** (Monbiot, 2017, pp1-2. My emphasis).

Monbiot, in their work talking about the climate emergency we are facing today, talks about the importance of stories, as above. He puts a convincing argument that rationality, logic, science aside, humans are creatures of stories.

It is easy to be convinced by this argument in light of what we have studied earlier about selfhood being a narrative fantasy- when I am but a story, I work in and through stories. Of course, some recent examples of how stories trump everything is seen in populism, the rise of Trump and fake news, the stories around immigration and Brexit and how they gripped Europe, etc. Luckily for me, these events make it easy to convince you, the reader, of the power of stories.

Stories are, psychodynamically speaking, articulated fantasies, and as inspired through the subconscious, often transcend cultures and languages. Levi Strauss has done significant work on how myth travels through structure of stories and language, and Monbiot (2017) recalls as such:

> "Certain **stories are repeated across history and through different cultures**. For example, the story of the hero setting out on a quest, encountering great hazard (often in the form of a monster), conquering it in the face of overwhelming odds, and gaining prestige, power or insight is **common to cultures all over the world, some of which had no possible contact with each other**. Ulysses, Beowulf, Sinbad, Sigurd, Cú Chulainn, Arjuna, St George, Lạc Long Quân and Glooskap are all variants of this universal hero. **Our minds appear to be attuned not only to stories in general, but to particular stories that follow consistent patterns.**" (Monbiot 2017, pp3-4. My emphasis).

Stories trump everything- stories are everything. Whatever we are trying to capture, communicate, stories are what makes us resonate with each other. My method of presenting this work therefore, is in what I regard as the basic kernel of communicating our myths, that are stories. First, I present my stories- below- the stories of the I. Then I present a story of how the interviews were conducted, knowledge created. Then I present stories from the anecdotes the interviewees told me.

The I

> "We shall never reach the real, substantive roots of any given single utterance if we look for them within the confines of the single, individual organism, even when that utterance concerns what appears to be the most private and most intimate side of a person's life. Any motivation of one's behaviour, any instance of

> self-awareness (for self-awareness is always verbal, always a matter of finding some specifically suitable verbal complex) is an act of gauging oneself against some social norm, social evaluation—is, so to speak, the socialization of oneself and one's behaviour. In becoming aware of myself, I attempt to look at myself, as it were, through the eyes of another person, another representative of my social group, my class. Thus, self-consciousness, in the final analysis, always leads us to class consciousness, the reflection and specification of which it is in all its fundamental and essential respects". (Timpanaro and Anderson, 2010 pp 31-32)

The I, is ultimately, the social. We have spoken about this a few times, and we continue on that here. An important result of this PhD process is my current identity and praxis as an 'academic' and I can't not include these 'findings'. I believe that a study that uses psychoanalysis must include a detailed reflective account by the researcher anyway. For me, it became important to articulate the I to try to redress the balance between the exploration of the other and the exploration of the I.

As you read the analysis in the 'Stories' chapter, there may be a question- how much **countertransference** (imposition of the interviewer's subconscious on the conversation; see transference earlier, also see (Gabriel, 2019)) is taking place (that the self most likely to concern themselves with the quantity of countertransference and the causality of thoughts is likely to be looking at it from a positivist, scientific lens, is another matter). That is your decision, reader. To help you make that decision, I feel that you need to be told about the I that has done the research as well as about the research that has been done by the I.

As I continued to investigate autoethnography, I was intrigued by the questions: Who speaks?; and On behalf of whom? (Arrows, 2008 p190). This led to the following analysis. My reflections on the I are based on my own trauma- informed approach to reflexivity, something I have outlined in the section 'Reflection, Trauma and Self' earlier (p219, this volume).

The Divided I Positionalities and identities

It gave me great pains to try and articulate who 'I' is, for as argued previously, I is a fantasy, and the individual is a capitalist construct. Having believed and said that, I also arrived at the conclusion that to avoid the constant psychosis (to stop going crazy!) in the society that I live in, I have no choice but to create a fantasy of the self, give its anchoring which defines its values and action, and aspirations. This/current identity is not the only one inhabited by me, there have been several through the course of this PhD work, and I will offer reflections into these for that will help the reader 'where I am coming from'- a metaphor I chose deliberately for my immigrant status. However, as we have seen, the concept of an individual is a problematic one- so these multiple identities, even though I present them here as my multiple personas, are more like different threads in the collective subconscious.

These different identities are like multiple threads woven together, every now and then my consciousness will tug at one or the other. I wanted to write this work indicating which Identity was at work (perhaps using post scripts over the I) but I decided against it for one, it

made the work clunky to read, and two, I thought the reader must be allowed the decision instead of me forcing it upon them.

These are the voices in my head/my self-fantasies that have evolved through/as a result of work in this PhD.

The man of science

The traumatised child/student/refugee

The Inquisitive Researcher/diagnostician

The Non-European in Europe

International Student

Immigrant

HE worker/sinner/Academic

Family person/ the victim

The angry Activist

The Father/Author

I.

I will now give a brief account of myself in which the reader will be able to see the above identities. Of course, as I discuss later- we are all kind to ourselves in our self-identities and we all love to play underdogs fighting a monster bigger than ourselves- so I am the same.

The reader may decide I am rather narcissistic, annoying, bigoted liar, and that's fine (I could argue that they're projecting their own image at me, but that gets us nowhere). All allegations laid upon this account are true in their own right, but that doesn't and shouldn't discount my thought process. You have the right to interpret me. I have the right to my story too.

Before the UK. I grew up in Panipat, Haryana (state), India. A few years ago, I would have left this sentence here, but today I can't (Because the decolonial I has been born and has impacted my self-narrative). Panipat is a city that has stood for several centuries and has seen three prominent wars that symbolise the advent of Moghuls into (what is now geopolitically known as) India (India is a creation of Colonialism, an outcome of random banter during a cricket match (for that's where the powers that be decided to make India.). Before Colonialism- Indian subcontinent existed more like the EU- different kingdoms existing together.). Panipat sits within what was the Province of Punjab.

Punjab got divided at the time of Partition of 1947. My grandfathers at the time lived in the part of Punjab that is now within modern day Pakistan and their families were one of the millions of refugees who had to go across the border. They settled in Panipat. My grandparents were a subject of the crown, refugees to the newly formed state of India. Left it all behind. My surname indicates that my people lived in the same area for over 2000 years. I can now not go back to even see that place. The importance of this came to my mind when my wife (Scottish) told me of the Glen Coe Massacres, and showed me the

graves of her ancestors going back to 12th- 13th century atop hills of Skye. Where are my graves? Littered through museums of the West.

The trauma of Partition is rarely spoken about. Only very recently have we started to speak about it. The trauma and the violence witnessed just too painful to bear. The Europeans compare this to the holocaust, but as my wife points out, there is a difference, and this comparison is another example of the Eurocentric delusional leftist fantasies of Europe. We've looked at that in 'Trauma').

My paternal grandfather died[50] before I could meet him, but it is clear from the few stories my dad has told us that their family was deeply affected by the ensuing poverty. Not the kind of poverty that you see in Britain (and there is a difference) the kind of poverty where hungry stomachs, unsanitary dwellings are the norm and frustration of these situations can cause severe psychological trauma. A sort of Complex PTSD (CPTSD).

It is within this kind of trauma that the dreams to see your child see better days are born, and this kind of dream was the collective dream of an entire post partition generation that my father and mother belonged to. Millions of people affected by the same trauma, driven by the pain of it and with the desire for their children to have a better life. That translated into driven parents/absent parents, parents with distinctive neuroses, one of which was to strongly project a desire to study for a secure job on to their children- medicine or engineering were the rage. There was a growing Indian middle class who needed their

[50] Another of my grandparents died while I was finishing this off, during COVID times. I couldn't be there. Now, was the reason COVID or colonialism? You decide.

bodies looked after. India at that time was undergoing a neo-colonial revolution- breeding engineers for the Silicon Valley elite, and creating doctors for the world.

I landed into studying medicine- familiar pressures (rooted in their own upbringing), parent's elitist fantasies (rooted in their own childhood experience of poverty), my own fantasies of a secure life (elitist view of other professions internalised). I then went to study medicine through State exam (but placed at a privately funded institution) to complete my MBBS. The University I went to; I and a lot of my friends didn't rate highly (I understand it is a lot better now) and so I never was confident in my ability to play God.

Soon after I finished, I took up post in one of the many 'hospitals for the rich' where I became first cognizant of the forces that led to this PhD. The discomfort I felt then but couldn't articulate then, sublimated in me wanting to study different. I wanted to understand what made the world of healthcare tick, because I was begging to see that medicine was only a small part of it.

The millions of 'Study in UK' posters would provoke my neo-colonial condition and sneak into the emptiness left by a dysfunctional, abusive family situation. Coming face to face with the Gods of today's world- consultants, witnessing who gets care and who doesn't, the working conditions of junior doctors like myself, increasingly prominent litigation culture of medicine gave birth to the idea of studying 'something else' and that something else, coupled with huge neo-colonial marketing, would become management of healthcare- management was such a cool buzzword at the time, maybe it still is in those circles- it must be, for how else would I get students now.

All of these conflated and culminated in studying of MSc at University of Manchester in 2010. This is where I first start to learn about NHS, its policies, its scandals (Midstaffordshire was still very fresh), coalition government was coming into power and Theresa May was taking up post.

In the above self-story, the account I present of myself is a decolonised one. If I'd written this 5 years ago, I would have said something like, with a lot of pride, that I used to be a doctor in India and then I came here to study Management and liked it so much I wanted to get into academia. But this latter account never satisfied me, that was one of the drives to study further in PhD: the former account satisfies me. Now I feel like I understand myself.
I tell you of this story, to claim my interpretation. In other words, when I critique Medicine, I want you to know I know what I am talking about. When I speak of decoloniality, I want you to see where and why I have claim to that label. There is trauma and pain I need to heal of. As Segal (2018) writes, it's not about morality, it's about happiness and healing.

2. After the Emigration to UK

When I started studying, it was 2010. Coalition government was coming into power. 2012 Olympics hadn't happened. The Hostile Environment policy hadn't come into effect. I studied for my MSc and worked in 'facilities'- sanitised term for cleaners/trolley pushers. I cleaned/pushed/supervised other cleaners/pushers.

I was fascinated by the prospect of studying for a PhD at the time, it was the cool thing to do in 2012-2013. The proposal at the time is an interesting read, because it gives you an insight into the forces at play around me at the time. If is important for me to tell you this, because when I speak of anti-science politics and when I speak of critiquing science, I want you to know that I have been within science, and I understand some of it. I am not just some uppity contrarian who wants to point finger for the sake of it.

During this time, I came of age, got married, became a father. Multiple events happened that offered me opportunities to reflect upon and those insights affected the directions and decisions of this work. Finding time and energy for this work also became increasingly difficult. During this time, immense growth happened for me. Growth is not strong enough a metaphor- perhaps better would be multiple births and deaths. Multiple undoings, as Weatherall (2018) writes that would alter my self fantasy- this means revisions of what one calls memories as well as revisions of values, ambitions etc. These multiple births became the identities that I speak of above, and inform this work and my life.

Diary entry

22 June 2018

International student

So today in coop while buying coffee it struck me how there was an international isle. However, the food and drinks on all the other shelves was also international- coffee, tea,

wine, a lot of fruit and veg- you name it- a significant proportion of stuff in there was 'international'.

It struck me then how international is used as a slang for 'Other'. This is the stuff of others.

Curry is not international- we have owned it, it's of our own.

That stuff over there in the international isle- we're sort of testing- maybe we'll let these others in, maybe we won't. Maybe we will give them visas, maybe we won't.

I am an international student. I am in this international aisle on this isle. In, but under scrutiny.

When I started this PhD, my self fantasy was that of a traumatised child, who wants to prove a point, do well. I didn't understand many things and sought refuge in PhD. I was clueless, but thankfully was in a safer space than what I had left behind.

My supervisors exposed me to works that begun to help me make sense of the world, and for that I will always be grateful.

Upheaval in 'personal' life meant I was curious to learn Freud, so when it came up at one of the meetings, I remember thinking that oh yes, I will read psychoanalysis if I can. The potential for 'personal' gain of this knowledge was intriguing.

I remember thinking I didn't think I could study Freud in a Management PhD… I suppose it was a function of my own being seated deep within positivist ideology that I didn't even

think that I could study Freudian work for my PhD. It could be compared to one of those moments in therapy where the analysand gains insight.

I started to read Freud and as I read and understood, the theory began to alter my self fantasy by changing the sense of my past for me, giving me a theory for why I was the way I was. In other words, it transformed me.

I have lost count of the aha moments during those times. This was the birth of the investigative Freudian identity. I applied it to myself and also thought of applying it to interview data. That's how this project was conceived.

Much later on, when I would conduct these interviews, I would feel the power imbalance that exists between the researcher and researched. Reading how coloniality progressed through research made me question my position.

During this time as well, I was deeply affected by the hostile[51] environment policy. I began to read up on my own condition- the condition of the non-European in the UK. I learnt about coolie trade (Dabydeen, Kaladeen and Ramnarine, 2018; Kaladeen and Dabydeen,

[51] I thoroughly recommend Hostile Environment (Goodfellow 2019)for an account of continuous surveillance, threat and fear we face. Of course, the book came out *after* the events happened for me and many like me. Still, it helps to be able to direct you to that source. I will mention that before I got married, my wife and I had to undergo a harrowing cross examination. I still haven't recovered from it. Every so often the University Immigration service emails us all to check our passports and visas, and the letters IMMIGRATION DO NOT IGNORE pop up on your screen when you're trying to go about your business. And of course, they are scary because you know what it means if you do not comply. I haven't done anything 'wrong' mind you, but I have seen the power and what it can do from up close and that in itself is enough to send chills down my spine. See (Taylor and Perraudin, 2019) for an account.

2021), the role of Indian soldiers in the wars (See Raghavan, 2016 and Khan, 2016). This was a painful process, but this led to the story that I have told you earlier. This story is important because this gave rise to my Marxist/decolonial critique of Freudian theory and is an important part of my identity and that is reflected in my work. This is why, I stopped after interviewing seven people. Not some random theoretical framework someone published. This is the reasoning why the empirical project stopped. When #BlackLivesMatter protests were happening, I realised that immigrants can't even legally protest. So I put my protest in here. I am not being a contrarian. I don't have a voice in other avenues. I am tied to my job, and there are limitations on what I can and can't do. Never mind work other than onto which my visa is tied to, I can't even volunteer to coach sports to kids. See these- (*Skilled Worker visa*, (no date); *Student visa*, (no date), The Lancet, (2015); Bozic, Barr and Noor, (2018); Cain, (2018); *Putting a price on love: the minimum income rule for spouse visas*, (2019). Perkins and Quinn, (2018) compared the Hostile Environment as reminiscent of the Nazi Germany, and not without reason.

The presence of Inquisitive researcher identity explains why I came to the UK, why I sought a PhD, why I did the interviews, why I read Freudian work. The process of the PhD gave birth to the decolonial I that understood power structures, and found anger. All of these transformations are important.

The othering and the painful experiences given to me by the home office gave birth to the activist I. Understanding the neo-colonial structures where the nice work of (UK- Higher Education-Home Office Complex) UK-HE-HO is done by the university but the dirty work is outsourced to the HO (Home Office), gave me the desire to challenge and transform from

within some of these structures within Higher Education- and from that desire comes my rebellion against existing power structures reproduced in this PhD work.

Understanding the role language plays in it, and having that anger at understanding the injustice and how the machine of the world works[52] to feed the European Anglo elite[53] gives me the drive to cleanse my language of elitism. But of course, I am an elite within an elite system myself. Forgive my contradictions. But do just let me have my conundrum.

Let me offer a reconciliation-

Holloway (2010) writes in "Crack Capitalism" about being "in and against" the system-

> "radical change can only come about through the creation, expansion and multiplication of 'cracks' in the capitalist system. These cracks are ordinary moments or spaces of rebellion in which we assert a different type of doing."
>
> (Holloway, 2010 p31)

I like to think that all of us that deploy Critical Theory- whether within CMS or within other forms of rebellious work, are chipping away from within. Like a plaque narrowing the artery that runs at the heart of the system. From within. The Hindu epic of Ramayana tells us that in the fight of the 'good' against that of 'evil', the role of the insider who can get within the 'enemy camp' is crucial.

[52] See Hickel (2018).
[53] I am aware I am fast becoming the same.

Then there is also the author I- the one who writes, who wants to tell you the story. The best analogy I can give of this identity is through my recently acquired fatherhood. Just as the father teaches, imparts, gives, so does the author. The child/ reader takes what they want and opines what they want. The child gives too, the child moulds the father too. My writing moulds me, we'll find out how.

So, reader, I hope the reasoning behind mutual contradictions contained within this work as well as between my work and my being are somewhat clearer. These contradictions are only 'contradictions' because a version of society teaches us that normality is the absence of these contradictions. This normality is pathological, as Foucault (1982) or Gruen (2007) or Fromm (2011) will tell you.

It is also important to define who you are to me. Either you are the PhD examiner, or the reader at large. The mythical PhD examiner I am thinking of is the person who holds the key to my qualification, and represents institutional power. You also, belong within and against. The reader at large is anyone with an interest in this work, with the acknowledgement that every reader is, an examiner in their own right as well: much as the examiner is also, first and foremost, a reader. In this thesis, at times I address the audience- and I use the moniker 'reader' to address all kinds of audience.

Of course, the examiner/reader is also likely to have contradictions within themselves. In places, my contradictions may feel like they violently clash against yours. I am sorry. I don't intend to cause you hurt. I intend to speak my story only. We come from very different

places. Our stories and working truths are bound to be different. I am obliged to tell you mine. You can tell me yours. I am sure our stories can co-exist.

Since I started this PhD, work has happened which helps me tell my story- a landmark book on Hostile Environment (Goodfellow 2020), change in discourse around race and immigration in Britain after Windrush (which reminded Britain that Windrush wasn't the first group of people to land here, see (Fryer, 1988, Sanghera 2021, Fryer, 1988; Dabydeen, Kaladeen and Ramnarine, 2018; Kaladeen and Dabydeen, 2021), Grenfell, #BlackLivesMatter protests and now COVID has meant rise and acceptance and relative mainstreaming of decolonisation and political blackness discourse. The shift means that there's work I can cite (e.g. Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020) without necessarily revealing my personal turmoil all the time (as I did at a conference in Durham in 2019), as well as feeling me and my work are more accepted- or at least some people in the academy are trying for it to be more accepted. After writing and keeping it hidden for a couple of years, I tentatively reveal this work to you.

Ultimately, what I am rests with the reader. The reader will view my words through their self-fantasy and whatever they decide I am, will be their truth. You think, therefore I am. All allegations gratefully received.

It felt crazy, unreal to articulate about the multiple selves. Indeed, having worked on the idea, I had almost abandoned it, thinking/being told it was too crazy. But I found some resonance in a similar way of thinking of himself by Lacan. Murray, (2015) writes:

"To say that Lacan was split is to say something complicated in a simple way. Splitting is complex. Schizophrenia – in which more than one 'personality' exists in 'one' person – is an example. What could be more complicated than one person being more than one? Yet the idea of this can be expressed simply – as 'schizophrenia'.

The term 'schizophrenia' can act as a good, initial summing up of a patient's condition. It can also be a 'starting point' and even a 'guiding thread' for the analysis of the condition (or a patient who has the condition) itself. All in all, it can both symbolise the condition and imply and accommodate its complexity and can also do so while allowing a description and an explanation of it that is clear.

Thus, saying that Lacan was split – like diagnosing and (properly) treating someone as schizophrenic – not only allows one to treat one's subject in terms of both his continuities and his paradoxes, but to consider both at the same time. This approach deals with 'schizophrenia' as well as its symptoms and 'splitting' as well as what it splits." (Murray, 2015 p329)

Continues later,

"If Lacan is split this means that there is more than one of him, or that he should be regarded in more than one way. Lacan is not best understood as a single, coherent and summarisable individual or 'person' (he's too secretive and contradictory for that). Neither is he entirely comprehensible through his work (it's

part-incomprehensible and contradictory too). Many aspects of Lacan: his behaviour, his writing, his influence, his legacy, his reputation – don't make sense in themselves. Yet they do make sense when they're considered together; when they're related to each other. This notion that there are a variety of dimensions of Lacan complements the sense of Lacan as split being put forward here." (ibid.)

If, like Lacan, I am that kind of Schizophrenic, do I not have the privilege of a voice?
If the events I received/lived through as a part of/during my PhD hinted above imply that my world view is now forever altered (Appendix[54] 4), and I cannot "go back to where I came from", do I not deserve to speak? Even if I speak differently? Can a non-European not think? (After Dabashi, 2015). For an alternative take on condition of people like me, see work of T.S Eliot prize winner, Bhanu Kapil- "Schizophrene" (Kapil, 2011).

To summarise, this section served as a counterpoint to the academic culture as included in Arrows (2008, p105):

> The academic culture of research, as I have found it, is more about control, about hiding ourselves behind belief systems we may not even, in our heart of hearts, understand or embrace; it is more about taking charge of data, following the dictums and assumptions of scientism (which I distinguish from science); it is more about managing material and people outside of ourselves.

[54] Fun fact: Appendix, the human organ, once thought to be useless, is now understood to be not. In that vein, there's some interesting stuff in the appendices that I would be honoured if you looked at. Thanks.

The above is a limitation to academic work that Arrows describes. Similar frustrations, as we have seen, have been expressed by Gabriel (2005). Arrows goes on to describe a contrary approach- that if one is to deviate from this way of doing academic work and being within academy, we must "figure ourselves out" (Arrows 2008, p106). It is this figuring out that I have attempted to do in the autoethnographic work. That work is central to answer the question, who is the I doing the research.

Politics of knowledge/this work

For the reader, my politics and that of this work would be clear by now, but I will quickly reiterate some of my current working truths that inform the analysis that is to follow. Let's start in the reverse order of the process of production of knowledge.

The writing

> "words presented on the page are not bound to that page, but retain a dynamic, intersubjective quality, as meaning is accomplished through interaction between author, page and audience" (Johnson 2021, building on Gregory 2012).

I have given account of relevant literature about writing in the Preface. Now that you have read my working truths and know of my identities, I elaborate a little bit further- recognising that no matter how much account I give, it will be incomplete and messy-

"I always speak the truth. Not the whole truth, because there's no way to say it all."

Lacan (in Murray, 2015)

"I believe that truth has only one face: that of a violent contradiction."

Bataille (in Murray, 2015)

Violent contradictions abound in lives including mine, and so also in this thesis. It's been difficult and draining to put them down here.

I do not claim to understand the truth, but for psychodynamics, a linear narrative would be a suppressed, beaten up narrative and cannot be achieved without repression and oppression. I am trying to not do that in so far as possible. Writing is not just writing, it is also becoming, as we have seen in the preface.

Catherine Clément is a psychoanalyst writer who inspires me. Her work attempts to restore psychoanalysis to its activist and feminist stance. She fiercely critiques 'mainstream' psychoanalysis (perhaps like Cluley (2008) and similar works?) for falling silent to people's socio-political concerns. Following is from the introduction (written by Ann Rosalind Jones) to/in Clément's work, "The Weary Sons of Freud" (Clément[55], 2015)-

[55] Took me a while to get the '*é*' in the name right. Do you know, reader, how many times the academy has 'accidentally' misspelled my name? It's there to be copy- pasted. But no. When do I start ignoring these 'mistakes' and start thinking of them as 'microaggressions'? How long till I wait until I start protesting with misspellings of my own?

> "…The Weary Sons of Freud may seem a rather startling text: slangy, often ironic and sarcastic, abrupt in its rhythms and truncated in its syntax, always sounding more spoken than written. Clément's deliberately anti-formal prose, like her allusions to French pop musicians and radio advice programmes, dramatizes the energetic, contemporary language that she believes a living, productive psychoanalysis requires." (Jones, writing in Clément, 2015, p35)

In a similar vein, I am progressing with this work in the language and style that I hope dramatizes the language- I believe a "living" psychoanalysis requires this. I hope Clément approves of this work.

And lastly, there is the point of conveying trauma. In normal sentence structure, the trauma cannot be conveyed. A good example of this would be the work of one of the greatest psychoanalysts of our time, Frantz Fanon. Fanon's Wretched of the Earth (2008) is written in a stream of consciousness way, much like this work is (or at least was before I edited it!), but that doesn't make it any less academic or important. It is the academy's whiteness that shies away from Fanon. Little known fact is that Fanon dictated this whole work, and didn't actually write it himself. The stodginess required to sit down and write perfect prose is not usually available to a soul empathetic with human suffering.

Politics of structure and language of grammar

Cecilia Watson (Watson, 2019) describes implicit classism, sexism and racism in grammar in her discussion of the 'semicolon'. She traces the history of punctuation and how elitism got embedded in its subconscious as printing press became more and more popular. That was the time that a lot of new punctuation marks got invented including the semicolon, but the grammarians of the 18th and 19th century then started to make rules about what goes and what doesn't go in the language. As these elitist white men made these rules, they began to reinforce a world view of what **good language looks like**, and expectedly, that good language was the language of elitist white male privilege.

In this period, Public education is beginning to take off and the grammarians are making the rules, rules that inherit their own subconscious. White upper-class man's English was correct English, and the anxiety to get the language wrong is one of the anxieties of a privilege system. This hasn't stopped. Booth (2021) writes of an elite school in the UK banning certain phrases in the name of accuracy (no prizes for guessing that the phrases they want to outlaw are mostly used by kids of Afro-Caribbean descent). Alex Scott was criticised (victim of a microaggression?) by Lord Digby Jones for her pronunciations while commentating at the Tokyo Olympics (Matchett, 2021). Scott's response (as in Matchett 2021)-

[Scott responded that] "she was proud of her upbringing and accent which was representative of her struggles and successes and encouraged youngsters who may not

“have a certain kind of privilege in life” to not let misplaced judgements on their accent or appearance hold them back.” (Matchett, 2021)

Now I resonate with Scott completely- this work is in solidarity with Scott.

See, I wouldn’t even have an issue with the elitism. It has existed for a long time, and there have been some indigenous systems of knowledge which used to thrive in a non-elitist way- they’ve been destroyed but they will be reincarnated.

The issue I have is when the mission statements of the UKHE- speak of anti-racism, of their desire to decolonise, to promote equality and diversity, but then tell people like me that this work doesn’t belong for (insert euphemism here). Make your mind up. Change that mission statement to ‘We only care for the top 1%. Rest of you go elsewhere’. Don’t gaslight me with your pretences. That’s my protest. Malik (2021) wrote a protest too, saying that imperfections are what keep the language alive.

Indeed, in a work about challenging ideology, it is only fair and expected that some of the ideological power embedded in the language is challenged and picked apart- one effective way of doing this being not obeying it. But of course, if I did not obey at all, I may not get the qualification! I am trying to push the boundaries of the format, so I tussle with some conventions, and explain how and where. The idea is to make it conscious that the way knowledge is structured needs to change for the academy to be ‘Equal and Diverse’.

The process of (Dirty) Research: Method[56]

With all that established, we now come to what I did for the 'empirical' project. I interviewed seven individuals (Dave, Henry, Lisa, Zoe, Romesh, Ralph, Vick: all pseudonyms) from across England, who work (5)/have worked (2) for the NHS in England in various roles. The interview took the shape of a photo-elicitation initiated free association interview. I discuss photo elicitation and free association in this chapter, after discussing the mechanics of the research process. Firstly, I would like to express a sincere thanks in particular to my supervisors for guiding me through the study design and ethical considerations.

The interviewees were selected on the basis of whoever I could contact- in other words, convenience sampling (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016). These spanned doctors, managers, ward workers, record clerks. This was pure accidental but I am glad I got to speak to people at a wide range of levels of hierarchy. Even if accidentally, but I avoided the shame of only targeting one group. Looking back today, five years on, I could say that maybe subconsciously, there may have been an element of purposive sampling (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016) to my decision making- that is to say, subconsciously, I may have leaned towards recruiting individuals 'different' from each other. I shared the call for interviews with friends, associates, whoever I felt could amplify. The individuals who came forward were then recruited. It was not a scientific method- I wasn't trying for it to. I was trying to

[56] Linda Tuhiwai Smith- "Research is a dirty word" in (Decolonising Methodologies, 2012). I am writing full name of the author because if I just cite it as "Smith 2012" I will have to erase 'Tuhiwai' which is another of those colonial erasures.

obtain some stories, I was not seeking for them to be representative of a particular profession, or a particular geographical area. I interviewed people with a range of experiences- some had been in service less than a year, some had experience of over a decade. I did not target a particular minority, for instance. Foucault has written how power makes subjects of us- the powerless keep getting first exploited by the capitalist, then researched by the knowledge capitalist (Foucault, 1982).

I explained at the time of recruitment that I will be showing them photos and use these to elicit stories about their experience of work. This conversation was repeated before the interview before obtaining signed informed consent. Consent specifically highlighted use of photos to elicit stories as well as my intention to audio record the stories and video record their interaction with the photos. During the consent process, it was also explained that they have the right to terminate the interview at any time and withdraw their contribution to the research a month after the interview has taken place. This gave them the option to redact their contribution, should, after reflecting on their interview, they felt like redacting anything. It was explained that the research is a part of my PhD at Durham University and they are welcome to complain to the University if they have any concerns, with contact details provided. I am pleased to report that several years have passed since the interviews and no issues have been raised by any interviewee.

I audio/video recorded these interviews. The video was aimed at the desk (not at the person's face, for instance) and was there to record the selection of the photos and how the individual worked with the photos. This afforded us the opportunity to look closely at how the person worked with the photos (this analysis would later on be captured in the chapter

Seeing Comes Before Words), whilst taking focus away from their identity, thereby making the data less personal. Further, I advised them not to reveal any identifying information (full name/job title/ place of work) once the recording started (I discuss this below further) to make sure the interview data was anonymous at the point of collection- thereby going above and beyond the usual levels of protection afforded to the interviewees. All interviews were between 30-50 minutes long.

In order to assure them that their anonymity is protected, I did not take their exact job titles and service particulars on record and therefore cannot reveal exact specifications of the individuals. I wanted individuals to feel assured that they were protected. To a positivist statistician it might feel that there are so many 'district nurses' in the NHS, that to ask and take their job title on record would have been probably okay, but I tried to see it from their perspective. An individual's job title is personal to them, and so the act of revealing it on record feels like a kind of undressing. I did not want to put the interviewees through that.

My method was all about humanising and I didn't want to start by dehumanising them into a label their work system had afforded them, or affirm to them that their worth is only measured by how many years they have worked for the system. I wanted them to think of themselves as themselves. Besides, issues such as everyday sexism, workplace dynamics between leaders and followers, the kind some of my interviewees described are equally relevant whether the employee is a grade 6 clerk or grade 10 consultant; whether it's their first day or last day in service. Therefore, depending on your perspective, it's either a limitation of my data (an empty box on a returned questionnaire, if you will) or a strength of my technique that allowed me to safeguard my interviewees and get interesting accounts in

a relatively short space of time. That was a decision I made so that the data I obtained was anonymous at the point of collection.

This anonymisation was further strengthened when I worked with the recordings- assigning an alphanumeric code to each interview that I later translated into names. The data was kept under secure password protection- later upgraded to two factor authentication. In line with the University policy and supervisors' advice, good data hygiene has been maintained- e.g. periodically changing passwords, backing up and archiving as necessary.

I selected 50 random images from Google, and had them printed out. I googled the phrase 'random image', with the setting set to Creative Commons license that allowed me to use the images for research. My intention was to pick the first 50 images, but I had to discard three out of the first 50 as I deemed them 'indecent' for research use. Excepting these three, I used the first fifty images. I printed them out (a collage of these images is in appendix 5).

In no particular order, I would spread them out in front of the individual and ask them to see if there was anything that reminded them of their time working within the NHS. After this initiation, I followed their lead in conversation, as I explain below. The interviews were few and far between, so I got an opportunity to reflect on these as I went along. I stopped at 7 because this was the time I was reading the book on decolonising research (Smith, 2012).

The author, Linda Tuhiwai Smith talks about how research is a dirty word and how exploitation is, and has been conducted in the name of research. Linda was initially talking

of the research of colonised people by the colonisers, but the parallels between the University researcher like myself and the NHS workers that I was interviewing, were all too clear. I stopped.

The above is an overview of the knowledge collection and interpretation method. To summarise, I conducted Photo-Elicitation driven Free Association Narrative Interviews. I recorded these interviews. I conducted an interpretive analysis of these interviews (in my own way, not in a formula prescribed by, e.g., Denzin 2001). And then, I wrote it all up. In the following pages, I therefore, expand on Photo-elicitation, Free Association, Interview Process and the Interpretive Process.

Photo-elicitation: Before the interviews

Visual methods of eliciting sub-conscious thoughts have found their use in various psychotherapeutic and organisational research contexts. There is a growing body of evidence that supports the use of visual elicitation in organisational studies (see Bell and Davison 2013 for a review). Photo-elicitation has also been used in combination with other qualitative research methods to enrich the data and access deeper, subconscious thoughts (Harper 2002, p23-24). Davison et al, (2012 p3-5) review the literature using visual research methods to explain the advantages of using such methods. They give the example of Slutskaya et al.'s exploration of 'dirty work' among butchers in the UK, which exemplifies how use of photographs helped elicit emotions and thoughts that may have been otherwise difficult to comprehend. Another example is provided by Warren (2012) in Armstrong's

(2007) study of the 'organisational mind'. This was sufficient rationale to pursue use of Photos to initiate the conversations. I have, in previous chapter, written of images as language and language as images. Photo-elicitation puts that theory into action.

Selecting the photos

Appendix 5 presents the pictures I have used for my interviews.

Selecting what photos to use to initiate the interview was a matter of debate. After reviewing the literature, several options were available. I settled on getting some random photos (50 in total) from a simple Google Image search, but there were other options.

For instance, I could ask the individual to search for a suitable photo online while I waited. I thought that might detract from the conversation. Also, it would mean that everyone would have different photos to work from. My guess here is that that would make the individual focus a bit too much on choosing 'the right' photo. While they did do some of that with the 50 I printed, they had only 50 to pick from- not infinite. I also wanted to see them interact with the photos. I said earlier I video recorded the interviews, but I only recorded what was happening on the table- not the individuals' faces. So, having a pre-determined set gave me an opportunity to see how the individual works through the photos, and sorts them out.

It was suggested to ask participants to take their own photos prior to the interview and bring them along. This might seem like an option that would enable individuals to

contribute more to the interview, but at the same time this had a key drawback- that allowing participants to take photos prior to the interview would have meant that they have time to think about what photos to take, and what to say about that. That would have meant that at the time of the interview, I'd be more likely to hear a consciously constructed coherent narrative that would probably not leave much opportunity for the messy, unclear and ill- formed (but incredibly valuable for my study) narratives that haven't been rehearsed, to come through. I wanted the ugly, I wanted the malformed.

For example, Shortt and Warren (2012) conducted a photo-elicitation based study of hairdressers and asked the hairdressers to take photographs "of objects and spaces that were 'meaningful' to them" (p22). While this may have been appropriate for their research which involved exploring consciously constructed identities, it may not be suitable for exploring subconscious thoughts as the photos individuals would take would be consistent with the meaning that they created for themselves.

In asking the individuals to pick a photo from a stack they have never seen before, as opposed to asking them to bring/ take photos, it becomes more likely that the individual will come up with disjointed anecdotes, half constructed narratives, confusing and contradictory statements- all of which are more valuable for a psychodynamic analysis than a carefully, consciously constructed narrative. I don't mean it to sound like I was trying to be unkind. I have tried to explain previously that consciousness is an ideological lie, and it is this lying I was trying to escape. More on this in the next section.

Secondly, I had the option to select the photos to reflect what I thought were interesting

photos- but I decided against it and select photos randomly. It was felt that selecting photos by myself, I'd have my own reasons to pick those- and therefore I'd be more likely to subconsciously attempt to sway the interviewee to provide the story that I want to hear- perhaps the story I conjured when I decided that a particular photo is interested thus potentially influencing the results in a more direct manner.

Therefore, I eventually decided to search for photos using the search term "random images" on Google image search, limiting the search to show images that were in the public domain and were free to use and share. I had also noted that using different synonyms for "random images", such as "random photos", "arbitrary photos" etc. would bring up different results- influenced by the words that I'd used- thus making it clear to me that whatever words I would have used, would have influenced the images in some manner. In that, the search for images had defined parameters.

I settled for "random images" arbitrarily: I recognised that this residual influence of language on the selection photos couldn't be avoided- much in the same way that a therapist can try to use open questions, but they have to submit to language eventually, they have to use some words to communicate their thoughts and take a risk that these words may influence the analysand. There is no escaping influence of language.

So what roles did the photos play in my interviews?

Thinking back to the interviewees, how little I was acquainted with them before the interviews, how little they knew me beforehand, and afterwards as well- I am not in contact

with them after the interviews happened. Looking at the richness of the content of the stories they told me on the basis of such short period of acquaintance, I think one important impact of the use of photos was that the individuals were able to get away from their self-narrative about themselves quickly. This is in line with the usefulness of the method that Holloway and Jefferson (2008) comment upon. The interviewees may have felt uncomfortable at first, being put in a position where they don't know how to respond to a non-question, but this discomfort created a chasm in the self-fantasy, allowing the individual to feel 'free'. It is hard to describe, it is almost as if one is about to play a new board game that they have just learnt the rules for.

When I listened to the interviews, I realised that images elicited images in their psyche- my explanation is that perhaps learned rhetorics had to be set aside, new words had to be found, metaphors had to be found. In continuation with this, the image provided a safe space, a sanctuary for the conscious to seek refuge while trying to conceptualise and describe the images that were elicited in their subconscious. They could project their subconscious imagery on to the image that was in front of them- and feel safe in the notion that they are describing the image in front of them and not the image that is elicited in their subconscious. They could feel safe that if they give 'the wrong answer', it is probably okay as the question is 'wrong' so it isn't 'their fault'. This allowed them to be free. Censorship was, at least for a brief moment, sidestepped.

It would have been a pity if I selected photos for a specific purpose or meaning, such as 'images of NHS' or 'images of doctors at work' etc. because that would have added a layer

of scientificism to this work. This decision, I think is the one that decisively led this work towards an antiscientific aim.

The images became abstract concepts in their own right for the interviewees. Subconscious thought is not dependent on any kind of specific imagery- the meaning is contained within the interviewee to begin with, and is not imparted by the image. The sensory input pricks the subconscious and the meaning comes pouring out. Language does the same, but we are

Diary

Photo elicitation- reflections, 2 years after conducting the study.

I did not anticipate this at the time of designing the study but I believe use of photos had another impact on the process. Because I used photos to ask the questions, I felt that it became easier for the individuals to project their thoughts on to the photo, rather than say, answering a question.

A question is often received as a challenge and can easily put the individual into a defensive position. Using photos, I was able to disappear into the background (literally, as I would sit away from the direct gaze of the interviewee, so that they could look at photos uninterruptedly) and the individuals were able to engage within their subconscious world of fantasies quickly- it was easy to disappear in this exotic world of random images.

They were not forced to make eye contact with me, something which can make the process of interviewing rather confrontational. The absence of questions allowed them to, in my opinion, engage with the process earnestly. In other words, photos elicited *dream like narratives from the interviewees.*

so used to it we don't question it. Different images might prick the vessel in different places,

but they do not control what comes out. The therapist can ask the same question to several different people, but the people would react differently to the question based on what is contained within. The most I do to facilitate the process is to provide the space and time.

Does it matter which images I used? Perhaps. Maybe at the material level, maybe at scientific level[57], but not on an ideological level. Sure, one might argue that different images under different circumstances may have led to different narratives, different results and so as a scientific experiment, my work is not valid- in a positivist world, this is not research.

But, dig deeper into the responses provided by each individual, look beyond the individual, the material meaning, and one begins to understand how the speaker may be an individual but they are drawing their experience form a collective organisational consciousness, and they represent something bigger than themselves. I have to keep repeating, that there is no such thing as individual- so these are stories drawn out of the collective consciousness of the organisation.

One of the first and common reactions I have had from people who have read this work- reviewed it for conferences, for example, has been to fixate on the decision making around images. Which images I used, what was the subject looking at when I interviewed them? What was it that I showed them? How did I choose them?

[57] But again- perhaps such an objection comes from a scientific subject, from within a positivist ideology? Sure, the story may look different in its material, but all it is different is in illuminating a different aspect of the monster, the monster that is enacting a particular ideology.

This fixation, although I satisfy above, by answering these questions, is missing the point of the exercise. My argument here, is that on an ideological level, what I showed them doesn't matter. Whether you agree with my approach or disagree with it, to fixate on it is to miss the point. You are not going deep enough. This fixation, again, comes from a scientific subject- who wants to ascertain the relationship between what I showed and what stories I received. We are obsessed with cause and effect. What I mean by that is, sure, different photos might have brought up stories that look different on the surface. But, they would still perhaps, be stories of being affected by, hurt by Capitalism, perhaps just in a different way. I think. Maybe not, but my point is, let's not fixate on that.

Even a snippet of a peak of the random nature of our world is uncomfortable- there is a refusal to accept the random, chaotic nature of the universe- there is a relentless search for cause and effect. They want to see whether the image elicits the same reaction in them or not- they want to see what role the image plays in this. My dissatisfaction is not related to whether or not the scientist subject finds a correlation or not, whether they accuse me of using leading images or not- my discontent is against the act of looking in this manner- it is not what they find, it's how they examine.

The point of the exercise is more perhaps, what I didn't show them, what I didn't ask them.

I did not ask them about their bosses, their conflicts, their traumas, their problems, their feelings, their guilts, angers, frustrations and joys. And yet they told me these things.

To interact in a manner in which the conscious ideological narratives loosen up, make way for the repressed personhood to appear, requires unlearning- in a moment of asking the non-question, the interviewee is forced to unlearn the social convention and this unlearning creates the rupture through which the repressed thoughts and emotions/theelings come out.

To communicate them to you forces me to unlearn writing as I know it.
To communicate their trauma, my writing fractures itself to carry the emotion to you.
I unlearn as I write and you unlearn as you read.

You must unlearn that this is 'bad writing' because only by shedding the comforting defence of splitting things into good and bad duality, will you be able to resonate with it and feel the pain and confusion and discomfort I am trying to relay to you. It may not happen the first time, do please read it twice.

Free association- or (Not so Free Association)

We touched upon this in the previous chapter as a part of wider truths, but I want to refocus the discussion specifically on free association here. After initiating the conversation through photos, after asking the interviewees to 'tell me if these photos bring anything about work' to their mind, I set the interview free. They told me something, I listened. The questions I asked were mostly to clarify, mostly to ask further. I tried not to change the direction of their story, merely to tell them to 'go on'. More on this in the section 'the

interviewer's role'. One might tell me that, if that's what I did, the work is not really truly 'free association', and they will be right. I am not going to say that that is an incorrect allegation. However, I would argue that there is no such thing as purely free association, or at least I don't trust that there is. Even Freud's interviewees would have been influenced by Freud's reputation, his prior work, his clinic, his setting, etc so on and so forth. There is no clean break from the external world, hence free association is never truly free.

Indeed, Timpanaro talks about Freud's suggestiveness in free association interviews. He says that the Freudian Free association is not so much free but (as Freud himself admits) 'aided' by Freud. He does appreciate Freud's honesty about reporting these suggestive contents, and indeed goes on to list some examples. (Timpanaro, 2011 p50).

See an example from Timpanaro of a Not-So-Free-Association-

> "For example, when the young Austrian says that he recalls a companion he encountered on a journey the previous week, by the name of Benedict, Freud intervenes to say that this name, like those previously recollected, Simon and Augustine, is that of a saint, and this puts the sequence of remembrance back on track from which it had threatened to go astray. Indeed, since this Benedict was described by the young man as ein wahrer Original (a real Original), Freud adds, with apparent indifference, that 'there was, I think, a church father called Origen… We have another suggestive intervention in the remark that both Augustinne and Gennaro are connected with the names of months. In other words, **so far from Freud's attention being suspended, we have a series of explicit interventions**,

thanks to which the analysis becomes not unlike the maieutic Socratic or Platonic dialogue…" (ibid. p61)

Timpanaro continues to describe the suggestiveness of the atmosphere from even before the interview starts. He describes how the reputation of Freud precedes him, that often his bourgeoise analysands have read his books. And, as Timpanaro writes (p52, Timpanaro 2011). "There seems to develop a fatalistic conviction- '**one cannot oppose Freud**'". Thus, the interviewees are inclined to agree with Freud's interventions. The Not So Free Association becomes Free Association.

So, what we call free association is often relative. As one of my interviewees described this process upon reflection, it is "more open than 'open'". Similarly, my claimed free association was also not free- it was merely more open than open, and as free as I could make it.

It is perhaps important to restate that what was important for me, in listening to the interviewees, was that nothing is unimportant. Not a word, not an utterance, nor a silence. Indeed, the sign of free association is when the individual is talking in a seemingly random manner. These points correlate well with the arguments I make in the chapter seeing comes before words. As Freud said "No connection was too loose, no joke too bad, to serve as a bridge from one thought to another"." (Voloshinov, 2013, p27).

As an example, Wainwright (2018) uses Free Association Narrative Interviews in their PhD to draw out narratives of loneliness. In their, as well as mine, transference and countertransference play an important role. Like this work, Wainwright uses psychoanalytic to get to social.

Free association narrative interview[58]

The interview is not an extraction. It is a birth.

> "Highly characteristic of Rank's approach is his conception of the psychoanalytical session as a recapitulation of the act of birth (the very period of psychoanalytical treatment is normally about nine months): At the start, the patient's libido is focused on the doctor; the doctor's office is kept semi-dark (only the patient is located in the illuminated portion of it, the doctor sits in the half-light) and this represents the mother's womb for the patient." (Voloshinov 2013- writing about Rank's work (Rank, 1999)).

In the introduction of their book 'doing qualitative research differently', Hollway and Jefferson (2000) ask the question right on the first page, after they describe a qualitative study design similar to what Gabriel has called the "Standard Qualitative Thesis".

[58] To illustrate how 'on the fringes' this method/this work is, consider this- a google scholar search with the term "free association narrative interviews" yielded 147 results, on 4 Oct, 2021. A similar search for the term "interviews" yielded 5,010, 000 results.

They ask provocatively about interviews as research methods:

> "Will you believe everything you are told? If not, how will you distinguish between truth and untruth? Even if you believe everything you are told, will you be satisfied that you have been told everything that is relevant? ... What do you assume about the effect of people's motivations and memory on what they tell you? What will you assume about your effect as an interviewer on the answers given?"

This demonstrates a limitation of a standard qualitative interview: it can potentially influence individual's opinion and choice of discourse. For example, Gordon et al (2015) asked 65 medical trainees in the UK about "their experiences of leadership and followership". It can be argued, that by asking them about their experience of leadership and followership, the interviewers may have subliminally encouraged the participants to make sense of their experience using the language of leadership and followership, which, if asked independently, the participants may or may not have chosen. Indeed, on page 1, Gordon et al acknowledge this limitation. Following on from Parker (1997), it can be deduced that the respondents have been provided with the discourse by the interviewer within which to construct their answers, hence influencing the results. As Freud said, any psychology (we can add sociology) that focuses on conscious thought alone is invalid.

In a study employing both standard interviews first and then free association interviews, Hollway and Jefferson (2000) illustrate (p300), that although their semi

structured questionnaire is directed at eliciting the same anxieties and fantasies (in their case fear of crime) as the (later conducted) Free Association Narrative Interview, asking "what's the crime you most fear" straightaway puts the research participant into a position of conscious alert and defence, as the topic is "introduced abruptly, devoid of context, and prior to the build-up of any rapport." They theorise that such an abstract and abrupt questioning is likely to be met with an "uncertain" disengaged answer.

In contrast (they continue on p309), using an approach similar to Freud (who allowed his patients to choose the topic they wanted to discuss, so that he started with whatever was presenting to the patient's subconscious at that moment) helped them gain access to participants' fears and concerns much more effectively. They (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000 P310) conclude that a semi structured interview primes the subject to offer a coherent narrative which again, forces the individual to indulge in critical conscious faculties instead of letting the researcher hear their unconscious thoughts.

Free association however, aims to minimise such requirement of coherence and welcomes incoherent, intra- contradictory stories as they indeed add richness to the account which is being sought.

Similarly, in another comparison, Menzies Lyth (1988, p117) writes that while understanding human behaviour, methods of obtaining information such as structured questionnaires are less useful as opposed to unstructured 'intensive' interviews with individuals.

She argues that adding 'structure' to interviews, by means of specifying questions, or

preceding them with questionnaires or surveys, can be suggestive to the individual and can influence their choice of the discourse that they might use for their narrative. This is likely to engage the conscious thinking of the individual and they are more likely to use the vocabulary and the kind of sentences that they might think are relevant for the kind of discussion they perceive, is about to happen. Keeping the questions open and as general as possible is a way to ask the individual to indulge in their sub-conscious thoughts and their fantasies as they begin to speak.

As Holmes (2013) illustrates, researchers have made attempts to mould free association interviews into research interviews previously (e.g. Clarke 2002; Hollway and Jefferson 2000, 2008); by encouraging narratives "structured by unconscious logic and following pathways defined by emotional motivations rather than rational intentions (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000: p37)".

Holmes writes that these can be interpreted into 'guidelines' for attempting to access participants' free associations:

- Ask open ended questions.
- Follow participant dialogue rather than having a list of predetermined questions;
- Strive for minimal intervention by the researcher.
- Respond in non-verbal ways if you can.
- Do not close off seemingly irrelevant topics.
- (When analysing the interview data) Think about answers beyond their face value.

Conducting a free association interview poses one challenge: how to initiate the conversation in a way in which the researcher impact on flow of conversation is minimal. Freud dealt with this by asking his patients to pick something to talk about and then keep going. Consultations would last for hours, and Freud would see his clients many times over a period of time. However, I learnt that over time, several different approaches to facilitating the free association interview evolved- one of them being visually- elicited free association. I have discussed this earlier.

By asking the respondent to speak what comes to their mind in whichever order it appears, the idea is to reduce the 'conscious control' over responses. Free association may include contradictions, expression of hesitation that may indicate avoidance, and the researcher gives appropriate significance to what is said, what is not said, what is said with hesitation, what kind of hesitation, etc.

The interview process

The interview takes place in a private room with a table to allow the individual to browse through the photos. I position myself such that I am to one side of the interviewee- neither directly opposite (arguably risking appearing too confrontational, reminding the individual of some of the instances where they may have been made uncomfortable by a person in power, being asked to defend/justify themselves), nor too far away from their field of vision. I am there if they want to look at me. Some did, occasionally, when seeking reaffirmations or having conversations with me. Easily avoidable if they don't want to feel

like there's another presence in the room- thereby facilitating their descent into their own dream like state.

The intention of this setting is that the photos capture the centre stage for the interviewee- they become the object of projection. Even though the interviewer, I can easily become part of the background, whilst still being accessible to them.

Before starting the recording, I once again go through the information and consent form with the interviewee; and seek their consent in the form of their signature. The recorders are then switched on and the photos are revealed.

The respondents are asked to select one or many from several (fifty in total) pictures and tell me the stories of their experiences of working within the organisation that these pictures evoke. And we go from there.

Different individuals responded differently to revealing of the photos and being asked this open question. Some attempted to look through all the photos, select a few to talk about, and then went on to talk about these. Others start talking about the photos as they're sifting through them and continue to build their narrative. We discuss this initial phase in the next chapter.

Once the interview started, it took a shape of its own for each individual. Individuals tended to start hesitantly, asking questions, seeking validations, but then as they feel secure, they enter a semi- dream like state where they narrate, with minimal intervention from me,

stories in the most vivid manner. Every interview was different in content, direction, kind of information- but structurally, the process for all had some interesting parallels. I discuss this in the next chapter "Seeing Comes Before Words" further.

The interviewer's role

Similar to Freud's analytic method (Levine 2002), I attempt to listen carefully for hesitations, repetitions, deviations, laughter, long pauses, or any similar aberration (See section on Pathological Formations earlier) where I feel there is an opportunity to explore the narrative further.

I mostly make remarks that are aimed at clarifying their stories (such as "Tell me more about that, any other example comes to mind? Etc."). If the interviewee finished their statement, I allowed for the silence to precipitate, and mostly, the individual will give up on the silence before me, and they will themselves ask for further guidance: but they tend to do it in a suggestive manner.

For example, commonly, the individual will themselves ask "Shall I pick more photos now?" (As opposed to 'what should I do next?') In which case I'd interpret this as a subconscious suggestion that they'd like to pick more photos, I duly oblige by encouraging them to do so.

I pay close attention to how the individual is interacting with the photos. If they seem to be mulling over a few, I ask them to talk me through what they are thinking. If I see them

‘narrow down’ their choices to a few and then prioritise the order to talk in, I ask them to clarify their decision-making process.

Sometimes, I noticed the individual mull over a photo and then proceed to talk about some other photo, in which cases I have tried to encourage them to go back to the original photo once their story with the other photo is finished. I am interested in what the story was they moved on from- because the act of moving on from the story tells me of the importance of this story and whether they might tell it to me if I ask.

In conversation, I follow the individuals’ narrative and encourage them to follow the train of their thought freely.

At times individuals would seek ‘permission’ to do so- I would look for any signs of what the individual would like to do in the language they use, take a guess and respond. For example, if they ask me “Shall I keep going?” I give them the reassurance they seek by responding something like “Yes please, if that’s okay.” Similarly, if they ask, “Is this the sort of thing you are looking for?” I would say, “Yes, this is perfect! Tell me more if you can.” I am trying to give them the power, if I can, where I can.

It is not their job to mould their story to my agenda, it is my story to mould my being to their story.

Although this scenario was never encountered, if a respondent were to suggest that none of the photographs agree with their perceived image of their organisation, and would

absolutely find nothing, I contemplated that I might ask them to draw something, or might even have to cancel the interview. But this never happened.

At the end of the interview, I also ask the individuals about their thoughts on participating in the process ("How was this interview process for you?") and I have had some useful feedback about the method itself. These comments reassured me that the respondents did draw some value from it too, however minute.

For instance, I received comments like "the photos help me remember things I wouldn't have thought about", "The questions are more open than open", etc which have encouraged me about the usefulness of the method. This had some intended and unintended effects, explored in the next chapter.

As described in the previous section, interviews are indeed anonymous and the participation remained voluntary. Also, individuals had the option to cancel their participation up to a month after they have been interviewed, as outlined in the information sheet. It's been five years and I haven't heard from anyone asking what became of the work, or that they'd like to see it. I am beginning to feel safe in the thought that people have moved on, even if a part of me is arrested in here. No names and identifying information will be revealed in the analysis, and non- specific pseudonyms will be used. In some cases, the 'genderedness' and 'racialness' of names has also been altered to add a layer of anonymity.

The 'data'

I conducted seven interviews with workers who had worked for the National Health Service in England or were working within the system at the time[59]. The 'data' was audio recordings of what was said (by them and I both) as well as video recordings of the way people interacted with the photos.

Where I have quoted from them in this thesis, my own questions and utterances are included as well, for they form an important part of the analysis- firstly you can see what I said and how it may have influenced the answer; secondly it is a window into my own subconscious and my researcher identity.

I transcribed the interviews to allow me to quote them in here, after I had listened to the interviews enough number of times that the voices would ring in my head when I would read the words. This is important- because even though you, the reader will see the words that were said, a lot will be lost as you won't be able to see or listen to the voices- much of the latent dream content would be lost. Ultimately, this helped me to consider the interviewees and how to write of them. Indeed, as Arrows writes of Levinas, that Levinas

[59] The interviews were conducted over 2016 and 2017, in case it's relevant. To me it isn't much relevant, because hopefully you'll agree that the stories are timeless. The same myths, the same structures live on. Bullying, sexual harassment, everyday sexism, etc, as I explore in relevant stories, are still, sadly, relevant points of discussion.

asks us to reconsider how we consider the Other: whether an authentic representation is possible at all (Arrows 2008, p109).

You don't know. You weren't there. In that interview room[60].

Autoethnographic anecdotes

Alongside the theory and analysis of interviewees, I used some autoethnographic anecdotes and analysis to highlight certain aspects of doing this work that I thought the reader ought to understand to empathise with this work better. It is worth mentioning here that as it is with autoethnography, often our significant others get drawn into the narrative. Similarly, you will see certain anecdotes where my wife is represented in this thesis. As my approach to autoethnography is heavily inspired by Ellis and Bochner's work on Evocative Autoethnography, I resort to their discussion of ethics of inclusion of significant others (Bochner and Ellis, 2016). Ellis and Bochner discuss that ideally, the significant others will be able to read about and affirm their representation in the written account. Ellis and Bochner also recount cases and examples where such an affirmation may not be possible, e.g. writing about someone who's passed away and how to make a judgement.

In my case, I can confirm that my wife's permission has been sought, so every time an anecdote that involves her appears, the reader can read that as 'communicated in private communication and reproduced with permission'. It's not been an instant decision either,

[60] Am I talking of the research interview that I did, or the Home Office Interview that I suffered through? I never know anymore.

these ethics need to, and rightly so, be revisited, which is something I have done over the past years with her. Being a postgraduate with Distinction, she very much understands the context of academic work, and has told me to reassure you, reader, “Not only have I permitted the use of these stories, but I have read every word.” As Ellis and Bochner explain, every method of research can have ethical contentions, and should be employed through an ethics of care. I feel like I have done that here.

But the academy wouldn’t be being fair if it asks the inclusion of significant others’ without questioning the exclusion of significant others as well. Indeed, when we see unreflective works that perhaps do not acknowledge the HERstory present within each HIStory, we must ask similar questions around ethics of exclusion. Indeed, as Salmon (2021) writes, celebrated philosophers are being questioned for their attitudes and working practises, placing ethics of a lot of knowledge we rely on under contention. For me, a cursory ‘thanks to my wife’ in the acknowledgements just didn’t cut it.

Interpretation: Using Hermeneutics of Suspicion to go beneath the surface of narratives

Lyric inquiry has an uneasy relationship with knowledge as product, commodity, or “trump card.” Knowing, instead, is an experience of immersion and expression rather than one of gathering data only to advance an argument. (Arrows, 2008 p108). My method, as discussed below, reflects that underpinning.

My analytical framework was psychodynamic theory- particularly the hermeneutics of suspicion as explained in Chapter three. I was looking beneath the surface, and after examination, I found threads of ideologies that govern our normal. I gained insight into how language works, how repression and defence mechanisms work, and how the self is constructed. The theories that underpinned my analysis have been covered in chapter three. The process of analysis is discussed below.

The interpretive process was an embodiment of hermeneutics of suspicion. I read and pursued Silverman (2000) for advice on how to analyse. Ultimately, I settled on my subjective process of deriving meaning from what was said, how it was said, and at times, what was not said; much as did Freud.

About Freud:

> "He does not take verbal utterances on trust—or any motivation or explanation that a person himself, on the basis of his own inner apprehension, might give his behaviour. He tries to discover the ~~objective~~ roots not only of a person's behaviour as a whole but of his verbal utterances, as well… They will be for him an accurate expression of ~~objective~~ conditions of behaviour—physiological and socioeconomic conditions." (My unemphasis/crossout). (Timpanaro and Anderson, 2010).

As discussed previously, the reason for distrusting the consciousness is that it is filled with the ideology received from power, and that's why it must be challenged, for otherwise it shall misguide you. A reminder-

> "What is the consciousness of an individual human being if not the ideology of his behaviour? In this respect we may certainly compare it with ideology in the strict sense—as the expression of class consciousness. But no ideology, whether of person or class, can be taken at its face value or at its word. An ideology will lead astray anyone who is incapable of penetrating beyond it into the hidden play of objective material forces that underlies it." (Mannoni, 2015)

To transcend the ideology, we must go beneath. When we go beneath, we are looking at the third component of the utterance as per below.

> "Verbal reaction is a phenomenon of the highest complexity. It consists of the following components: 1 The physical sound of articulated words; 2 Physiological processes in the nervous system and in the organs of speech and perception; 3 A special set of features and processes that correspond to the "meaning" of a verbal statement and the "understanding" of that meaning by another person or persons. This set is not subject to purely physiological interpretation, since the phenomena entailed transcend the limits of a single, isolated physiological organism and always involve the interaction of organisms**. This third component of verbal reaction is, thus, sociological in character**" (Timpanaro and Anderson, 2010. My emphasis).

The sociological element, is what I am looking to explore and this is where I use my own positioning in the system to draw inference. I belong/have belonged to the same systems as my interviewees- healthcare, medicine, NHS, academia- and consciously or subconsciously, I am certain it influences and shapes the sociological meaning I derive.

I have to in a paranoid way, read in the gaps, in the betweens as well as the words.

An example of this kind of reading between the lines is provided by Sebastiano Timpanaro in "The Freudian slip: Psychoanalysis and textual criticism" (2001, p53) where Freud analyses the meaning based on the stress placed on different words- in that case 'exoriare'. Freud is looking at the same word, but interprets different meaning due to the different emphases.

Sometimes, I have to interpret the opposite of what the individual says, based on how they say it. One very good example is when Lisa says that a photo could be someone's boss, but not my boss. I make the argument that this is a denial, using the evidence of how the words were said, and a description of the boss's actions.

I received a comment once asking how can they be sure that this is not my projection. Anticipating a similar comment in future, I will provide an answer that:

a. No one can be sure in any interpretation, that it is not their projection,

b. The question is moot for I am not claiming objectivity. I am saying it is my interpretation, and my interpretation is valid; and,

c. This is how it is supposed to work- as Freud says:

> "An unsolicited excuse is a manifest self-accusation. Every time, says Freud, that one of our patients for example declares: you ask who this person in the dream can have been. It was not my mother. We can be sure it's his mother." (ibid.)

This Freudian way of 'confessing what cannot be confessed by way of denying it' is further discussed by (Orlando and Timpanaro, 2001). They write how denial can be taken as a sign of confession, and, as Timpanaro argues (2001, p57), this mode of denial will go on as long as there are things which cannot be confessed to the person themselves or to others. That is, as long as there is repression, there will be denial.

Furthermore, I don't believe any of my 'jumps' is as big as Freud's, in analysis of little Hans-

> "Thus, for example, Freud's own conjecture on the meaning of a symptom as a condensation was proven incorrect by the free associations of one of his most famous patients, "Little Hans." Freud had guessed that a butterfly in one of the child's dreams symbolized a woman, through the condensation of the pattern of its wings from that of the woman's dress. The child's associations indicated, instead, that the slow movement of the insect's wings was a displacement from the movement of a woman's legs."
>
> (Voloshinov 2013, p217)

If Freud can argue that a butterfly in a child's dream symbolises a Woman, and the patterns of its wings is the woman's dress, and he can do so while claiming scientific objectivity, I do hope the reader cuts me some slack and gives me a little interpretive license.

While a psychoanalysis informed reader will appreciate that countertransference is something that can't really be defended against, I also offer a political defence of my countertransference or my own projection of meaning.

If I am a collection of self fantasies intertwined into the identity that I call ME, then it follows that these fantasies ALSO represent the ideologies that prevail within this world that we inhibit. I inhabit the same world as my researched- of being a worker within a neoliberal framework within western Europe, and the person who this work is for, the examiner, would most likely belong to the same context.

In that, it shouldn't matter for political praxis where the story in this work is coming from- the response of the academy, in my opinion, shouldn't be to adopt the defensive position of "well this is you/your confessional content and not the data" but rather face up to and see the trauma that inhabits the world of work. Our focus shouldn't be on who said what, but what do we do now that we know Capitalism is causing human suffering.

Further, one might argue that my interpretation is convenient and may not have been accepted by the speaker/interviewee: Afterall, they haven't verified my interpretation. Fair

enough. I agree with that criticism, that's why I give my own stories to tell you where my interpretation is coming from.

Freud answers such question himself by offering a provisional compromise. Timpanaro (2011) shares a story of Freud explaining to an audience member in a lecture what happens if this explanation of the slip is accepted/rejected by the analysand.

> "(Audience member asks Freud: "So that's your technique? When a person who has made a 'slip of the tongue' says something about it that suits you, you pronounce him to be the final authority on the subject. … But when what he says doesn't suit your book, then all at once you say he's of no importance- there's no need to believe him." Freud responds: "That is quite true.""
>
> (Timpanaro, 2011 p31)

In other words, Freud admits that the meaning he's giving to his analysand's narrative is subject to Freud's interpretation. Freud is acknowledging his power in meaning- creation. As researchers/autoethnographers/ethnographers, we do the same thing all the time.

Freud then goes on to offer an analogy with the 'judgement of the Freudian slip' to a 'court-room'. He says that when someone admits their guilt, we rarely put them on trial. But when they do not, evidence is used to make a judgement call.

After the interviews, while analysing, I got caught up in the hostile environment storm. As observed in Arrows (2008, p102), my voice became entangled within the text and with those of the interviewees. The one big happy ending of this whole debacle being, now I could be confident that I have suffered like my comrades, and on the basis of the shared trauma, I can draw upon my trauma to tell the tales of those who work within the NHS and suffer like me. I had a new-found empathy, which I began to put in use. These gaps served me well- for it meant that forgetfulness could do its work. Freud (1930) described how he would intentionally not take notes, and let his subconscious be the guide- what it wanted to forget, it forgot; what was essential would stay on. Unwittingly, I benefitted from the same process.

In the analysis then, I thought of my different identities, found my anger, my discontent, and dipped my pen in that to describe the stories. The world was not the same place as I knew it to be at the beginning of this thesis. I heard, clearer, the radical voices shouting their dissent at the politicians, expressing how the austerity had debilitated them- in 'art' spaces. Poetry, Spoken word events. Exhibitions. I was finding my language. This language would give me words for analysis. After listening several times, I transcribed the interviews with my thoughts and reflections alongside them (in a separate column) as well as any notes regarding what was being done with the photos (e.g. arranging, rearranging, pointing at a photo etc.). As the video was aimed squarely at the desk where photos were being worked with, the way they were interacting with the photos was the only nonverbal data. The way their interaction with the photos influenced my analysis has been captured in the chapter Seeing Comes Before Words. In that chapter, I discuss the flow of the interview and how the individuals interacted with photos, for example, at the beginning and through the interview.

For instance, I discuss how some individuals organised the photos, some jumped straight into talking about what was in front of them.

I don't think that any external person could identify the individuals interviewed (the NHS employs about 1.5 million people, very hard to identify specific individual without the actual job title and full name- which are not included in the thesis), but ideally, I don't want the reader to think that it is just the story of the people who I interviewed. If one looks closely, these are everyone's stories.

Then I wrote this thesis. After doing the individual analysis, I put them into some themes- these themes formed the topics of Chapter 6. These themes were apparent to me after listening and reading the interviews and looking at them through the lens of theory I have discussed before, paying attention to psychodynamics. I also reflected about how the I became the analytical framework- and those reflections formed the basis of the autoethnographic analysis.

After writing the chapter seeing comes before words, where I look at the structure of the interview (this can be compared to Freudian dream analysis, (Freud and Tridon, 2012)) thematic sections, I wrote the theory- for I wanted the stories to guide the theory, not the other way around.

The narratives I received from the interviews were like waking dreams (you may recall this from first chapter) and meaning is embedded in them in two ways.

One is the dream image- which is the image they describe to me, in other words, the content of the story.

The second is the latent thoughts- which is not contained within their words, but in the way, they tell me the story, the way the hands move, the way the voice changes, the wholeness of the experience.

Power as enacted in the interview room

Freud is largely silent on his positional power, but further critics have highlighted it. They have highlighted that the utterances of the individual interviewees weren't their own.

> "Intertwining with all this are other factors: Between doctor and patient there may be differences in sex, in age, in social standing, and, moreover, there is the difference of their professions. All these factors complicate their relationship and the struggle between them. And it is in the midst of this complex and very special social atmosphere that the verbal utterances are made—the patient's narratives and his statements in conversation with the doctor—utterances that Freud places squarely at the basis of his theory. Can we acknowledge these utterances as the expression of the patient's individual psyche? Not a single instance of verbal utterance can be reckoned exclusively to its utterer's account. Every utterance is the product of the interaction between speakers and the product of the broader context

of the whole complex social situation in which the utterance emerges." (Voloshinov, 2013 p26).

Of course, my own positional power was enacted before, during and after the interview. And I fully agree with the above, that the utterances I interpret were not utterances of the individuals, they were a product of the interaction. I have spoken previously about how language, meaning, humanity is in the exchange, not in the body. A similar thing happens at each interaction, each interview, but not always do researchers reflect upon it in depth.

Conversation? Existential Crisis. Everytime I open my mouth to speak.

A new identity will take form- but which one?

It's not a dialogue, it's a birthing.

The moment before the talk, an existential crisis.

What word to articulate?

What thought to sublimate?

What/who to bring into this world?

What/who to hide away?

Decisions.

Starting from the official looking email I sent asking for participation, using my position as a researcher at a popular University, adding the power of the insignia that represent the knowledge capital I have accumulated, and so on. Some of it is visible in how tentative the interviewees are early on and how relaxed they become later on. Even now, I hold the power of the pen and even though I feel like I am speaking for them, the jury on that will

always be out. The criticism that I exploited individuals for stories will always be valid, as for every piece of research, no matter how much I defend against it.

All the more important, therefore, to make sure you the reader, pay attention to my utterances as well, for the product of the interview is not just the interviewees' utterances, but the process of exchange. I am not extracting something from them, we are making something together. I am not a neutral entity. This is why, when I present the stories, I present, in a table/illustration, the exact moments of that exchange to give some context to where and how that exchange came about. Not enough information, but hopefully gives you some idea.

But this making together is operating in a context where the interviewee and I inhabit unequal power. When I did the interviews, I wasn't aware of it. When the Home Office interviewed me, I was aware of it. I couldn't undo the interviews I had done, so I have since then tried to write the stories given to me as sincerely as possible. That's all I can say.

Chapter 5: Seeing comes before words

"Seeing comes before words" is the opening sentence of John Berger's crucial work Ways of Seeing (2008). John wastes not a moment of the reader's gaze and starts writing the content right from the cover. There's no wait for frills and thrills, no pseudo-gratitudes, no names dropping, no nods to the author's individualism, no self-gratification. Seeing comes before words- the truth is enacted as well as written.

The urgency afforded to the prose by the aesthetics of the writing befits the radical content, and its emancipatory promise. Berger's work then, is not a work to be read with a cup of tea- it is to be read in a state of panic. Something this work aims to induce and work with: as Greta Thunberg says, I do not want your hope- give me your panic.

Seeing comes before words. As I witness my (at the time of writing this) 11-week 2-day old child grow, witness the world around them and ~~make wonderful 'noises'~~ speak their language (I imagine, from seeing her- seeing has come to her, but words- well, will come later), I appreciate the developmental implications of this sentence.

Reading Harari's Sapiens (2015) one begins to understand how language is a relatively recent phenomenon indeed, and that seeing, evolutionarily, does come way, way before words. These readings, then give me the confidence to assert that for my interviewees, when I showed them the photos, seeing to them must have come before the words. Much is lost, then, when the sole focus of comprehension and perception is shifted to the utterances of the vocal cords, rather than the communication of the whole being.

In reviewing the interviews- listening and relistening to the audio recordings, watching the videos of their hands interacting with the photos (and often carrying nonverbal 'language' and meaning), reading the transcripts, repeatedly, it begins to become clearer and clearer that seeing does come before words- in this case, to the interviewees.

Even though the participants knew that I was going to show them photos, they were slightly surprised. It's not too dissimilar to the opening of a standard interview- but I will reflect upon my interviews and this element of surprise here- even though it is not commonly done in academic work, I think. The impact of this surprise is manifest in various ways. The most obvious to me was the initial sense of confusion soon after I unpack my plastic wallet and spread the photos on a table in front of the participants. The interviewees were a bit surprised, yes- but my opinion is that their surprise was mostly because I was actually interested in what they wanted to say rather than enter the room with an agenda of my own. They knew I was going to show them pictures when they were recruited. When I met them, I explained the process- reminding them of their expertise in their own job and explaining that they are in the driver's seat in this interview. I explained that I will use a video camera but the camera will be positioned looking down at the table just to capture how they were interacting with the photos- I explained that I will not (and I did not) record their faces in order to protect their identity. I reminded them that they can choose to tell or not to tell any story. I also reminded them that if they reflect on their interview and decided to retract it, that can be done up-to a month after the interview. I reminded them that if they have any issues with my conduct they can contact the University (pleased to say that

it’s been several years since I interviewed my interviewees and no one has pursued this option) to report. So, the interviewees were well-informed.

All of this was explained before seeking signed informed consent. So, when I used the phrase confusion and bewilderment above, that's what I meant- the sort of bewilderment that comes when you're trying to play a new game. I explained to the interviewees that here are some randomly chosen photos that I would like them to look at and see if it reminds you of any experience from work e.g. of leading, following, working with other people, they all understood and enjoyed the interviews. I remind the reader that the interviewees went on for as long as they wanted to- once they indicated that they were finished, the interview finished.

All research methodologies carry with them an element of work on the part of the interviewee- when the agenda is set by the researcher tightly, e.g. in a questionnaire, the researched needs to understand the questions and do the work of figuring out how to fill that in. For example, often when you seek therapy, they start with these questionnaires e.g. GAD- which ask you to assign a numerical value to your anxiety. I have been on the receiving end of that, and can categorically say that these are also bewildering and render me helpless to a certain degree. So, all research carries with it an element of work that the researched need to do. That is why we are grateful for their contributions and some of us avow to do a fair justice to their narratives. Some readers may dispute this claim, but I like to think that I captured their rebellion in mine and in that went above and beyond the ‘normal’.

It is my understanding that the lack of a narrow, 'clear' survey questionnaire or a lack of pre-written interview questions makes the interviewee depart from their arsenal of tools (i.e. words) that they may have well-rehearsed in their work life through internalisation of our work discourse.

In a way this was a difficult process- this makes this interview process quite jagged, quite a lot more 'work'- cognitive and emotional- for the interviewee. This work is witnessed in both the words that they say (for example, "things like photos are a bit abstract", "nothing comes to mind", "I wouldn't have thought of this" etc.) but also in the manner things are said.

For example, often interviewees will begin a sentence, say a few words, revise the narrative, change the sentence, go in a different direction, after they start speaking. You can really see how the interviewee is, almost peeling off the layers of their narrative and constructing it as they go along. Not just that, but there are plenty of examples of use of visual metaphors.

Seeing comes before words: and when carefully rehearsed (maybe even force-fed) narratives were not an option, disrupted by the 'lack of a question', interviewees resorted to use of a lot of visual metaphor to describe their situation. Imagery was being evoked in their psyche, and no pre-prepared/conscious narratives were available readily.

Seeing comes before words, language is imagery and imagery is language. Visual metaphor is an important way to verbally describe the theelings of a person about a particular issue-

when they want not just to tell you the cognitive aspect of things, but also convey the emotive aspect of an event.

The latter is sometimes beaten out of organisational speak, through a process of 'training'/desensitising/dehumanising.

When we take away the narratives that are given to the individual worker, by the power that be, in other words, the language of contestation often manifests but it manifests in the form of visual metaphors and imagery. All of that happened in the hour we were together, and I want to explain how.

The start of the interview- the initial bit, the photo- elicitation…

Silence

For example, let's start with the first interview and Dave. Dave

spent about three minutes staring at the photos and not saying anything he was probably making sense of what had just happened and he saw me unravel the photographs in front of him and I must have felt that it was important to not disrupt that process that was going on inside his psyche as I did not interrupt that silence and so in the writing I did not disrupt this paragraph

Other interviewees were silent for variable amounts of time. My action in these moments of silence was always to hold the silence and try to not be uncomfortable by it. I let the interviewee restart the conversation, whenever they were ready.

Projection onto the photos

The second thing that you notice is some form of projection onto the photos. Going back to Dave's interview, after the initial period of silence he started to work through the photos. He starts by saying the photos are a bit too abstract. This is Dave projecting his discomfort with the process on to the photos. Similar examples will feature throughout the next chapter.

Wanting to gain a sense of control.

Henry took quite a different (on surface, but subconsciously/ structurally, quite similar) approach. There was the initial silence, that lasted about a minute and a half, during which he flicked through most photos. About 1.30min in to the video, he started his story with the prefix "...kind of want to have a look at everything before..." and then begins to talk about his first photo.

Here we see, beyond the silence, a desire to gain control- or rather- a subconscious fear of loss of a sense of control. Henry wants to see everything, regain control and start where Henry would like to start. We all do it. We like this illusion of control.

Permission seeking

As hinted above, several interviewees dealt with their anxieties by seeking a kind of permission. This usually came in the form of one or several clarifying questions- questions that, on surface, were about finding more details about what was expected of them in this interview. The deeper objective seemed to me to be to seek some kind of certainty, some kind of anchor.

For example, Henry asks, after a minute and half of silence, “How many of these do you want me to look at?” Similarly, Dave asked me, before starting his narrative, but after about two and half minutes of silence; “Do you want me to go through these individually?”

On surface these are clarifying questions about the process, seeking more detail so the individual can do the right thing. Notice how in both cases the sentence illustrates where (in their fantasy of the situation we are in) the locus of power lies. The power, according to them, is in my hand- what do I want?

Whereas in my head, I was worrying that they might storm out of the room at any stage!

This is interesting, as they have given their time voluntarily to me, and can withdraw that- and yet; and I don't know whether it is a subconscious altruism or gluttony for punishment that; they want to succumb to (what they believe) is my desire. They have made me the boss of the interaction. I went in worrying they were the boss, but the tables are quickly turned.

The notion of 'Want' is also important- the focus in both these sentences is on me 'wanting'. They don't ask, for example, 'how do **we** do this interview', or 'how do **I** approach this'. They want to know what I want. This demonstrates to me that they were, at the time, constructing or participating in a fantasy of the self, whereby they perhaps felt they had to please the person in power- which is me as I embodied the knowledge creator. I had to later on wonder why that was, and that's where the realisation of the power of the interviewer came to me. I have spoken about this power earlier.

We walk around

our workplaces

feeling helpless

a subject of power

But we have power too.

To be. To change. To decolonise. To be feminist. To envision.

This desire for direction, or certainty, may be described as a subconscious anxiety triggered to overcome the fear (fear of death, as Freud would perhaps say) of doing the 'wrong thing' and therefore upsetting the person in power (in this case me).

I believe this is a symptom of the learned helplessness that Gemmill and Oakley talk about (Gemmill and Oakley, 1992) that we inculcate in our organisations through discourses of 'Leadership'.

La La La la la (singing for my child while typing text to speech. she's on my shoulder, ssshh)

As Marx famously said that the workers are not 'proletariat', they need to be 'awakened', or enlightened in some way to embrace the proletariat position (Balibar, 2017). By default, we can all be helpless workers who fear embracing our power within our institutions because of our learned helplessness. This position benefits the powers that be, because the rebellion can't happen if the worker doesn't realise they can rebel.

At the time of starting these interviews, I wasn't aware of inhabiting a position of power myself- the self-fantasy that I was living placed me in a position where I was the victim of a doctoral process and who had to get this interview done. Self fantasies are often very kind to ourselves. I was being kind to myself, not recognising my own power.

This insight is quite crucial because I interviewed people who occupy some very privileged positions in the NHS, but they also were framing themselves as victims, and were arguably not aware of/trying to deny the power of position they occupy.

Humour

In addition to the above phenomena, some people exhibited the use of humour as a mechanism to deal with the anxiety provoked in the situation.

For example, Lisa starts by being silent for a couple of minutes, during which she doesn't really ask a question, but is carefully looking through photos, smiling and giggling at some of them. This happens intermittently throughout the process for Lisa, and on a few occasions, I pick up on this and ask her to talk in a bit more detail about what might be making her laugh, as we shall see later.

The role of humour in dealing with situations has been discussed earlier. One might even argue that the deeper the sense of anxiety and fear, the darker the humour can become. While for Lisa, the humour was light hearted, for Ralph, it was dark, deep, full of raw frustration.

In a similar vein, Romesh talks about use of humour in their department as a way to deal with the really uncomfortable feelings that consistently arise as they deal with the illnesses of the mind. He talks about how if someone from the outside came in and listened to some of their conversations, they may be appalled, but within their group, they have an internal code of conduct which involves crass, crude, deep, powerful humour- I think that's because they have to process a lot of grief and pain- of their own and of the patients who offload it on to them, in a short amount of time (and as Romesh explains it to me, often with limited

debriefing support). Indeed, as Dean and Major (2008) write, "Dark or gallows humour is common in areas where healthcare providers are continually exposed to critical incidents of emotional intensity and proximity to loss and grief." Similar observations were also made by Hassed (2001). I believe a similar phenomenon is being witnessed here.

Denial

Denial was a device Zoe ended up resorting to. The interview starts with me explaining and asking her to talk about "whatever comes to mind." This happens about 30 seconds in, and after about a minute of silence, Zoe says, "No. Nothing…. I wasn't expecting this (hinting that the photos are not what she was expecting)."

Zoe then carries on to talk about one photo which "looks like someone's been fixed" (alluding to, as I later learned, her background in orthopaedic nursing: as in someone has been mended, or fixed, as if the body were a piece of machinery- interesting use of metaphor here, perhaps to deal with seeing lots of human bodies cut into and tampered with…) and then carrying on to talk about the 'dinosaurs', like Ralph.

The way this device of denial vs expectation is used is interesting. The phrase "wasn't expecting this" denotes that when I had asked Zoe to participate in the research, the pre-interview exchanges must have led her to create an image of what the interview will be about.

Perhaps she called upon her experience of other research interviews (which were perhaps more structured), in which she may have spoken of some of her experiences. This is where, I believe, the sense of expectation comes from. Therefore, to note that this isn't what she expected is delightful for me- it means the work is 'different' for (at least) Zoe, but likely a lot of people who share the same threads of consciousness.

The denial, then, is not to tell me that my interview photos don't remind her of anything (for if that was the case, there would be no further conversation). As is later proven by her engagement for about an hour with the process, her denial is her telling herself that what she may have in her repository of consciousness will perhaps not work in this instance.

Discussion

In the previous few pages we have examined the very beginning of the interview. Although from a traditional qualitative interview perspective, this would not have been 'good data': because, the interview respondents are not actually talking about the topic they are asked about, there is no focus at all. This information would be discarded by most mainstream interviews, but for us, it is insightful as it shows us how the narrative self draws on the collective consciousness.

For me, this forms perhaps the most important part of the interview because it is in these few moments that the narrative self of the individual disengages from the pre-existing scripts and is forced to look elsewhere.

I have previously said how the interview was in a way cruel for the interviewees in that it forced them to really work, really find another language, but it was also nerve wracking for me. I had no idea what would happen.

Listening and relistening to each of these fellow humans grapple with the situation is a unique and intimate insight into how all of us deal with the uncertainty of everyday life and how our subconscious behaviours and tendencies govern our reactions; and how, even if these tropes only represent a few seconds of lives of a few people working in the NHS to a positivist and might therefore be almost worthless, to a psychodynamics informed worker, these are an invaluable window into how the self deals with situations that may be 'unexpected', 'unfamiliar', how power comes into play in micro transactions, and how, seeing comes before words.

Just as the interviewees were trumped by lack of a script for the act we were about to play, so was I. I had to be ready to accept the narrative in any way possible. And I had to prepare myself to somehow find a way to put all of those onto paper. I was lonely, no idea where to turn to, I just had to trust that something will happen.

Free Association Narratives, facilitated by Photos

Having looked at the initial few minutes of the interviews, we now look at how the narratives build. Once the individuals have settled into the process, how they progressed. I

discuss the content of the stories referenced in this section in the next chapter, but for now I focus on structural aspects of the interview.

Settling In

After the initial period of settling in, one or the other photo caught each interviewee's eye. In this section, I want to talk about those initial moments- the moments when the individuals prepared themselves to engage with the process.

After about 3 minutes spent in the initial period, Dave picked up the photo with the haphazard dots and begins talking about how it reminds him of patient treatment pathways. He begins his first story, pauses- as if to check with me if I'd be interested in hearing more about it. I help him along by asking how that might be relevant, and he talks about how patients (in theory) are on 'treatment pathways' but these "pathways don't always make sense."

Henry, after considering the task ahead for a couple of minutes, creates a story for himself:

> "So (you want to know about) my experience of working in this organisation through the lens of leadership… (silence from me) ... I could go through each one and could tell you how it relates to what I think about the world… (I nod) So the first one..." (2 min 17 sec in the recording).

In this anecdote, the content talks about the **lens of leadership**: a fascinating metaphor. We'll look at it again in the next chapter and you would have seen it cross referenced earlier. But for now, I draw attention to the process that is happening in this statement.

In the absence of any 'clear' guidance from me, Henry has formulated a script for himself, as to, how he's going to play this game. He articulates it to me, perhaps for an affirmation, and then proceeds to play it that way.

I can empathise that before he talks to me, he has to formulate a stage- it is essential for all of us to stay anchored to something to live out our stories- our fantasies- of the self. There's no escaping this human condition.

He then looks at me- perhaps for a nod of approval, or a nod of disapproval. I get the sense that at this stage Henry has understood that he has to make the rules (not I, although astute observers will note that even by 'not making' rules, I have made one), so he's beginning to do that; with caution, just leaving enough time for me to object, if I need to- much like a child slowly becoming independent- doesn't really seek permission, but often might check to see if a disapproving gesture from a parent is forthcoming or not.

On the other hand, Lisa approaches the task quite differently. Lisa sifts through all of the photos patiently, giggles occasionally and comes up with a shortlist. I can't help but wonder that Lisa, in this time, is doing the work of allowing the memories to come through, become conscious of them, and decide what she wants to vocalise. It is a bit like sorting through the laundry- what do I wash first?

She asks: “I only got three. Is that enough?.... They’re more about relationships and communications unlike anything I did on the job… is that ok?”

Me: “Yeah, yeah…”

She continues, “...so basically I worked in an office…” and goes on to tell her first story.

Here we see the exchange that happens after the initial sorting of the photos, just as Lisa is beginning to get started with her first story. Again, it is a fascinating thing to hear- that the photos are “more about relationships and communications unlike anything I did on the job”.

Important to discuss here also is the ‘shortlisting’ as a method of creating some order out of the chaos. The significance of the shortlisting isn’t just that, however: while the conscious brain is creating this list; subconsciously, Lisa is dealing with a cognitive dissonance of a sort (see Festinger 1962 for a classical discussion on cognitive dissonance and how it operates)- a denial that she’s overcoming within herself and the sorting outside gives her the time to do the sorting inside.

Her admission, that what she wants to talk about maybe isn’t something she did on the job, and yet she wants to talk about it (relationships and communications) when I ask about work, signifies internalised capitalist discourse about what counts as ‘work’ and what doesn’t (human interactions don’t).

The “relationships and communications” aren’t really a part of the job as defined by the received wisdom for Lisa, but; as soon as given some space to, she wants to talk about them- and this desire to talk about them is strong enough that it overcomes her conscious perception of what work is. She wants to talk about relationships, but she has been told by someone that that’s not work, so denial is the only way she can accomplish that.

DO NOT THINK OF A PINK ELEPHANT

Subconsciously she knows that it is relevant- important to her…she consciously believes that she shouldn't talk about this, but on a deeper level she is compelled to. Maybe this interview is a rare occasion when she has received the space to talk about something that’s important to her. Who knows how many conversations she has had about work where she has gotten to set the agenda.

In this exchange, the definition of ‘work’ for Lisa has been challenged. She has arrived at this realisation that the emotional work of relationships and communications was/is rarely counted as work by the superiors- and yet, that is the work that was perhaps most important for her- important enough that when given a free stage to perform an act to depict her stories of work, she picks the relationships and communications.
And in that choice, is her contestation of oppression, a mini rebellion, expressed in a way that is available to a worker who perhaps hasn’t the luxury to have read Marx or Freud or indeed a lot of content hidden behind academic/neoliberal paywalls. Given an opportunity, she breaks free.

Romesh does something similar- “Shall I just select one and tell you what it reminds me of?” he asks. One gets a sense that he’s already picked one photo that he wants to talk about, hence his suggestive question. I tell him, in my most meaninglessly diplomatic effort- one or many, it is up to you.

He starts talking about a “graphic image” that reminds him of “a gentleman...”. Similar phenomenon happens with Vick, Zoe and Ralph who, after the initial period of silence, comment that “this is a wide selection” and then “this is a good one to start with”, and start talking about the story of the student nurse who is ‘broken in’ to the system. Zoe, after her initial silence and denial, speaks of “someone’s been fixed” and of ‘dinosaurs’; whereas Ralph, after his dark humour (“good grief”), begins reflecting upon when he started working in the NHS and the “fuzziness” he felt.

You can sense
a similar trepidation
in this thesis
at the very beginning.
Did you notice?
The discomfort with beginning?
The defensiveness of the first few chapters
I was hiding behind lots of quotes
The flow increases as we get to here
And this chapter reveals it all
It flows
Long sentences
Just like they said to me
I say to you

I am alive

I told you so.

Developing a Story

As wouldn't be surprising, different people developed their stories in different manners. For Dave, the initial few stories were relatively shorter, and it appeared to me that he gradually shifted from a 'this is a dialogue/ consultation' mindset to presenting more of his monologues.

That is, initially, his sentences are shorter, he asks me questions as a way of seeking permission to develop his stories. The stories are also, factual, brisk, and in that, superficial. For example, let's look at the first story-

Dave 3:05 minutes into the conversation	"This one kind of illustrates pathways that **don't make sense**." (pointing at the haphazard linked dots) Pause
Gaurish:	Gaurish: "How is that relevant?" Dave: "so the patient could be seen as following pathways… but the **pathways don't always make sense...either to the patient or the clinician**..."

This passage ends at 3:40 minutes	hesitation… “errmmm...” continues “i**nformation flows around but not in a kind of sensible way**” Then moves on to pick another photo, that of a dice “There’s **a lot of chance involved**...” (continues about the dice)

Notice how the meaning is not Dave’s or mine. It is in between. It would be too simplistic to say Dave said x I said y. No. The humanity is in the interaction. In this exchange, note how the phrases (in bold) used are abstract (as opposed to visual, metaphorical), indicative (rather than richly detailed) and enigmatic. On the surface, it might sound as if he’s testing his content out with me. Or, maybe he’s testing how it sounds to himself, when he hears himself saying it out loud, when routed through his conscious lingual pathways.

The sentences are short and certain, which is indicative of conscious narrative (as we’ll see later, subconsciously rich narratives tend to be broken, visual, hesitant, with a lot of self correction midway through sentences.)- there aren’t verbal non-lingual aberrations.

He’s done this before.

Another discussion point here is about Dave's expectation of an interview. Dave, a doctor, is clearly indoctrinated in the medical consultant model of interview. He possesses the Foucauldian gaze in the contexts that he's in charge- i.e. during his medical consultation interviews: and he projects this possession of the gaze on to me by way of expecting me to possess a similarly powerful gaze. He looks at me, checks with me, keeps his answers short and 'to the point'. He expects me to conduct this interview in a way that he conducts his interviews- i.e. medical consultations. With GP consultations limited to 10- minute or less and specialist interviews often happening in a similar amount of time (or worse, often happening by the bedside- the patient stripped of all situational and societal power and symbols of civilisation such as clothes, made vulnerable due to none of kin being able to visit etc) while the doctor is literally the God (as Romesh talks about). I wonder what medicine would look like if the medical interview and diagnostic process shuns its fragmented approach and just lets a patient, you know, talk. Anyway, I digress.

Dave expects me to conduct the interview like he would, by assuming that I will fit into his projection of medical consultation. And not just Dave either. Henry, at the end of the interview, revealed how he was really anxious in the beginning by (what he perceived as my) lack of concern for time or direction of the interview. He craved a direction. After about 40 minutes of photo-based discussion, I asked what the process was like for him. Henry says:

My notes-	Henry says:

Notice the stresses, and how the language breaks. Stresses we place on language are important signifiers, as we have seen in Theory before.	"urrrmmm it was interesting that I thought you were going to be more structured with questions and that I could have an answer… I was really really conscious of time… not because there was none of it and not because it was too quick… but probably because I was trying to manage time boundary…and (stresses) you weren't…" (In an emphatic, surprised voice)

Similar to Dave, Henry expected me to be structured, prepared with direct questions that would be straightforward to answer. When he doesn't get that, he projects his anxiety at the 'time boundary' by being 'really really conscious' of time. Not only is he conscious of time, but really, really conscious of it.

This is interesting because you'd think that a top-level executive who has perhaps been indoctrinated in 'shared leadership' and "No more Heroes" (2011, King's Fund) and sharing of responsibility and power, would perhaps be less interested in controlling the boundaries of the meeting.

Of course, you may notice that quite interesting is the use of the metaphor of 'boundary' for time, as if time is a territory that can be controlled. This may be an indication to how the

colonial idea of private property ((Engels, 2012)) over land has become extended to time as well. Time itself is a relative entity (and if we are to go all quantum physics, there's no proof that time exists (Jaffe, 2018)).

It is interesting how in this context time is territory, whereas in some indigenous cultures around the world time is circular (See Rettová 2016's discussion on "African concept of time" theorised by Mbiti. Rettová writes how in Ujamaa literature, time is circular, whereas in Ndebele literature, time is linear. Time doesn't exist for 'science'. For a traumatised subconscious, a part gets arrested in trauma and in the act of memorising it, it relives it. For example, everytime I approach this work, I have panic attacks because they take me back to my CPTSD. Similar for some interviewees, they don't tell me of their experiences, they relive them). Perhaps in the former, it is an indication of a colonial way of thinking, in the latter it is an encouragement to be nice (what goes around comes around). I digress again.

Another important aspect is, how this 'leader' projected his anxiety on to me- in the same way the organisational anxiety gets projected upon the worker beneath- and these chains of oppression run through our organisations

From the 1% to the middle managers to the immigrant to those who die in quarries digging up precious earth that made this machine I type on and you read on… we read decoloniality on a machine made by colonial exploitation… irony is the tool of capitalism… when the capitalist shouts out of caring about worker well-being you know the language has reached its limits… a language that allows such lies to exist must be questioned…

Going back to Dave, later on, the stories are longer and deeper, as can be inferred by longer monologues, talk full of verbal non-lingual aberrations, and minimal involvement from me. For example, note this passage of the interview, 39 minutes, 28 seconds into the recording. Dave is beginning to tell me about some interpersonal problems he has encountered in his career in the NHS.

Beginning of anecdote- 39 min, 28 sec into our interview. Dave:	Dave: "So I suppose with… say … another team I can think of more recently… there was a team manager who… found the situation stressful… found the work stressful… her way of doing things was to blame things on team or on people…. Identify members of the nursing team.. who she would target and blame for things that have gone wrong and how other members were seen as her favourites…. Pretty corrosive… not as harmful as the previous one…. But still harmful… high sickness… high turnover… very difficult to bring about any change… because the team manager felt threatened by any suggestion… saw them as an attack… by what had been done before by her… so I think… that team still performed reasonably well… patients were treated….moved through the service… wasn't a massively bad place to work… but I think that person could benefit from leadership and management training… perhaps

Silence- time stamp 42:30- End.	some coaching to deal with situations… some work on reflective practice… to help her to see how her behaviour impacts her own and others… and others … she could have been supported in a better way… to overcome some of these problems... ”

While it is tempting to engage with the story and the metaphors revealed in this passage, I want to draw attention to how this passage of about 3 minutes is structured.

It is a monologue, interspersed with gaps and aberrations. This form of speaking, through the course of the project, I began to appreciate, was more of, what we might call “speaking from the heart” (what we often don’t acknowledge is that when we say speaking from the heart, it also means speaking to the heart- we feel the emotion and we project that feeling on to the speaker- we can’t even own our emotions), heart of course, a visual metaphorical symbol used to denote the subconscious of the self-hood, perhaps for its importance to life and vulnerability as well as it being something ticking in the background.

So the parts of narrative delivered in monologue forms were where I thought the subconscious is more engaged. I was drawn to them more. The aberrations in the monologue- I took them as helpful signs that the individual is thinking as they go along, sort of bringing their subconscious beliefs into their conscious mind as they speak them- in other words- the aberrations were happening because new language of self narrative was forming at the same time as it was being spoken- new knowledge was being created- both for the speaker and for me, and now, for you, the reader.

We were/are all making up as we go along

Also note that in this passage of three minutes, I do not utter a word- Dave has settled in, he wants to tell this story and either he has surrendered himself to the process, or has created a conscious story of what he now thinks I am looking for, and feels safe to reveal this story to me. He doesn't need my guidance or permission anymore.

And I have to try and completely let go of any preconceptions of how long this narrative may or may not last, and resist the urge to interrupt. I have to reign in my subconscious researcher who really wants to channel this conversation into something that might be easy to write.

I have only discussed Dave's monologue here as an example, but as you'll see when we discuss the content of the interviews later on, such monologues happen in most of the interviews, often several times.

Again here, I remind the reader of how difficult it might be to create a survey or interview to capture such an account- indeed most surveys and structured or semi structured interviews could be accused of projecting what the investigator already wants to find, on to the people they investigate. In trying to get beneath the surface, it is important to cut through these tools.

Transitioning

The photos provided a good holding environment for when one story finished, and both of us, the interviewee and interviewer had little idea where to go next. Often, the number of questions and permission seeking reduced as the interview progressed, and the interviewee would look around at other photos themselves. I think some of that behaviour might have been an outward behaviour while they took a break- a pause to allow themselves to soothe themselves perhaps, regather themselves after the violent process that is the telling of the story that they have just created anew. If you've been to therapy, as I have, you will appreciate how it felt for the interviewees- just like one feels at the end of a therapy session. Exhausting to speak in a world which doesn't really want to hear from us.

One sign of this feeling of depletion was, expression of a 'struggle' to find a relevant picture. For example, note this passage with Ralph

7min, 42 seconds in (after he's finished telling the story of 'Dinosaurs')

Ralph: “Struggling for pictures… do you normally get this?”

Me: (Thrown off) “ummmm….. different people do differently...”

He agrees. Pauses.

“Different responses...” nods.

Then 7 min 51 seconds in, he picks up his next photo and starts talking about it. The struggle didn’t last long, only 9 seconds in industrial time. But in psychic time, Ralph probably moved across (metaphorical) continents. If you remember the painting metaphor from the beginning, his consciousness has literally climbed mountains.

Another explanation of this struggle could also be a new way of telling was difficult. Improvisation is hard to do, as Derrida (1978) said (you may remember this from earlier) and the interviewee has done just that.

As the interview progresses, this way of telling story without questions becomes easier for the person.

Hopefully, by now it is easier for you to read this work.

Similarly, for Zoe, 39 min 23 seconds in, after a period of silence, I ask her if she’d like to take another look. She says “Nothing much”. She looks at a photo of computers and calls

out “Computers”, and then looks at another and starts telling a deeply touching story about death and how the workers dealt with having to coming across it every day (which may explain somewhat why Computers were an unexciting/unhuman subject to her! She’s seen humanity up close. Computers don’t fascinate her).

Zoe 40:15 min in, “looks like death… someone dying…. scary… we used to take people to the morgue...” (story continues)

After this story, Zoe again protests,

“I thought you’d want to show different things of the hospital”
I ask “What kinds of things were you hoping for”
“I dunno… I dunno what to expect…. So do you need to do any more… of these?”

She’s hinting at the whole interview- asking whether I am going to interview any more people… perhaps wondering how her own responses measure up against the others, or maybe empathising with me.

Me “I got to do a few…. but anyway… anything you want to add...”
Zoe: “Maternity- maternity was good…. they looked down on us… we were called the…. midwives...”

I am struck by the use of got to, rather than, perhaps, you want to, or you'd like to… it's "got to", perhaps empathising with how I am playing a part in the system, or maybe she's projecting relative lack of perceived autonomy in her own present/past work on to me).

Here, we see Zoe protesting that the photos are not what she expected, but when I ask her what she was expecting, she says she doesn't know. Zoe has had to resort to denial that photos are useless and projecting the difficulty in thinking, on to the photos, but she goes one further this time, by calling out that this is, in fact, an artificial stage set and she is one performer, and expects there to be several others. She asks me if I am doing any more of these- she doesn't call it an interview- indeed for her this is probably a weird, unfamiliar process. I give her the answer I felt capable of, but I also interpret it as a sign to end the interview. In calling out the process, she is signalling that she wants to get out of performing this role. She's seen the boundary of the stage and would like to step out. We do.

Perhaps a sign of my own anxieties, but I have seen some commonalities in the structures of the interviews (recall Jungian (1936) collective consciousness).

Starting from the initial settling in, the development of a story, transitioning between a story to the next, evolution of the interview from a more researcher dependent exchange to a more interviewee ownership based conversation, starting off as a hesitant dialogue with a lot more defence and permission seeking, and evolving to more monologues- rich with visual metaphors, and with evidence of subconscious work on the fly- the non-lingual verbal cues, leading to exhaustion of the interviewee (or reluctance to participate further,

both different ways of looking at the same phenomenon depending upon how much you believe it was a conscious decision…

As I pick up on this exhaustion, I endeavoured to break the trance and ask the interviewee to come back to the here and now, and reflect upon the interview process.
This is very much a post-hoc summary of how the interviews evolved- I went into the process as clueless as the interviewee as to how it might evolve.

Coming back to the here and now

Even though when I was interviewing, my intention was to end the process by asking for 'reflections on the process', perhaps still inhabiting the selfhood of a smug academic doctoral student who thinks who's done something clever and 'new' or at least different.

This was, of course a purpose served when, at the end of each interview I asked the interviewees what it was like to be on the receiving end of this process, upon reflection now (in 2019). But another important impact of this question and this part of the conversation happened to be that the interviewees come back out of the dream like state of reminiscing and remaking sense of the things, into the here and now.

That this question has this impact is of great sense of relief to me. I have pointed earlier at the huge labour that the interviewees undertook to go through this process. I would have hated for it to end abruptly and left with a question mark about whether the interviewees

gain a sense of closure or not. Even though, I have to add that they may still have gone and gotten upset by any content that they recalled, but at least by engaging them with the question "what was it like to undertake this process" I encourage them to think that this was a process, it had a beginning and an end, and allow them to project any anxiety on to me and the process rather than carry it with them. I'd rather they label this a bad interview and I as inexperienced poor researcher rather than carry the weight around[61].

For example, when I ask Dave after over 50 minutes of what was an intense process, this is how the conversation goes.

Conversation with Dave: 53:44 min Gaurish:	"What was it like, being a part of this interview, from the beginning to this point"
He answers:	"It was a little bit abstract, a bit confusing…. it's not clear what you are looking for or what you want… [voice that denotes smiling]... which is perhaps part of the design of the interview…. it is a little bit uncomfortable not knowing… There's not a clear right or wrong answer, there's not a clear question… it made me feel a bit uncomfortable in the sense that thinking about social acceptability of the answer… Am I saying things that

[61] Looking at it in 2021, I do want to say that I have been part of many surveys and questionnaires that stress me out a lot. So, this interviewee discomfort is not just because of my 'Free Association' interview- it can happen in any interviews. Goodness knows how many people like me get angry each time they have to fill in an immigration form, or indicate their otherness by ticking their 'Race boxes', for instance. I have discussed this within the Method chapter.

	will sound unreasonable to you or someone else… those are the feelings that are induced in me… but it was interesting…. interesting opportunity to reflect on my career and this organisation within society…"
Gaurish/Investigative I:	"And the social acceptability of the answers… did this impact what you told me?"
Dave:	"No! I don't think it did… but I think in some ways in healthcare there's a lot of … things that are taken for granted… thigs that are socially acceptable to say… like healthcare is always a good thing… healthcare should get more resources… healthcare.. you know...people are always in healthcare for the good reasons… to help people to make life better for people not for more self-centred reasons… and I don't think those things are always true…sometimes they are and sometimes they aren't…

Again, there is a lot to be said about the content of this excerpt. In line with what I have said before in the settling in section, it can be seen how there are extended monologues in this phase.

Dave mentioned checking whether what he was going to say was going to be socially acceptable or not: he later denies the implicit allegation in my question that this would have influenced what he said to me. Dave knows that what he has seen (it's not always true that people who work in healthcare are nice people and want to help others…) goes against the public brand of healthcare workers as 'Heroes' (Remember 'Clap for Heroes' last year?), and healthcare work as 'high quality' (e.g. in Darzi, 2008). But he also doesn't want to say these are bad people- he wants to say that they/we are just people. We have our convictions, we have our contradictions. I do, you do too.

To be human is to be messy.

Chapter 6: Stories of/from Interviewees: brief interviews with non-hideous women/men

This section completes the trinity of knowledge I promised at the beginning of the thesis. In the previous section we have seen how the interview progressed. In this section, I allow myself permission to share the stories offered to me by the interviewees. If you have read this far, I can entrust you with these- that you will read them kindly, empathetically. Before though, a few points to consider.

Firstly, I have tried hard, to inhabit a self that does justice to these stories. I have had these stories for a few years and only now can I bring myself to talk about these, after having lived through certain transformative experiences. These experiences and this growth occurred as part of this PhD, sometimes directly sometimes implicitly, but never unrelatedly. However, the reader's assessment may vary- and I apologise in advance if I haven't afforded a particular anecdote my utmost sincerity. If I could, I would have read this thesis out to you. The limitation of the programme means it has to be written.

With that in mind, let me describe how the stories are presented below. I start each story with the anecdote from the interview, also including a time signature from the interview. The inclusion of the anecdote is important as I would like for you to be able to see what is it I am looking within, and perhaps it makes it easier for you to come along on this journey with me. As Voloshinov writes in 'Marxism and the Philosophy of Language', "the meaning of a word is determined entirely by its context" (Voloshinov, 2018 p75). The time signature is important too- firstly to allow you to piece together an order should you wish to, but also to point to the methodological implications. As a general rule, as the interviews went on,

the anecdotes became richer, fluid and required less and less prompting from myself. Time signature will give you some indication of how engrossed we were in the interview at that time- in other words- how deep were we in that shared dream like state at the time.

Then I discuss it in light of theory that I have read and deem relevant- we have covered this in the first part. Utilising autoethnography to meet the ethics of generous reciprocity (Rhodes and Carlsen, 2018), I present relevant reflections- bridging the gap between the researcher and the researched, lived experience and academic theory, personal and political.

You'll find the stories below under 'people'; and, 'myths and mechanisms'. In 'people', we don't talk about individuals, but more of mythified/reified caricatures of people that we come to believe as truisms which we project on those who appear to fit that image. For example, when we talk about consultants as gods or demons, this doesn't apply to one individual - rather refers to the image/myth of consultant held within the 'memory' of the speaker (and therefore within the collective organisational subconscious).

And this mythology is important, as important as 'truth'- because this is the working data from which the organisational worker draws on to act. Not through evidence (as evidence-based management will tell us), nor through informed exercise of free will (as conservative individualism will tell us), but this collective subconscious mythology is our driver.
As Foucauldian government and governed live within the same being (Dean 2009), similarly, various myths, even seemingly contradictory, get intertwined to form our Identity- our first person singular.

What I felt through my own identity shifts, was that truisms that are bound to our identity through intense pain are perhaps the ones we hold most dear and these become our 'values': if all the world is indeed a stage, these truisms become the cornerstones of our character, and, when challenged, cause intense discomfort. Indeed, Mahmutovic's (2012) essay on causes of existential angst struck a few chords with me. This helped me understand how identity shifts through work for my interviewees.

Therefore, some bits of these stories will resonate with all of us- for these myths in one form or the other, are likely to be entwined with all our identities. These are stories of all of us. In being of healthcare, these are stories of how our society manages illness and the only inevitable- death. In being of NHS, these are stories of work. These are stories of normal people.

Lastly, the photos I used are attached at the end (Appendix 6) and I invite you to look through these and think about what comes to your mind about your work when you do. Engaging with the activity will allow you to resonate with this work, and empathise with me- something I bitterly need. It will help us have that conversation that we are all now heading towards (the VIVA!) if you have felt what I try to stitch within this tapestry.

National Health Service: People, Myths and Mechanisms

Ralph gives the best definition of NHS:

"The NHS isn't like a nuclear explosion, but maybe it is...".

Nuclear explosion is a violent image, huge smoke clouds, destruction, death. I like this comparison not only because it trumps myths and stories about NHS being a place, but also because it captures the violence inherent in healthcare and dealing with death beautifully, accurately. I have been a doctor. A carer. A cleaner. I have seen death closely. I agree.

People

We start the section on 'People' with (the mythical) 'Consultant'. Consultants are doctors who are no longer 'junior' and have specialised. In the world of medicine, consultant is often therefore, the position with a lot of (if not the maximum) positional power. That may be why people who perform the roles of consultants are often romanticised as Gods, but also loathed as if they are demons.

Consultants are in charge of performing intricate and complicated healthcare tasks- and arguably this power, and control over life and death, separates them from us mortals. As Zoe says, "Consultants are not general people".

Consultants are not general people: Zoe

Zoe (about 2 minutes in)

"This one here... Consultants…. had no patience… very old school… respect…. used to be more respect for people then.."

Me: "So what does that mean- 'No respect?'"

Zoe: "I don't know… consultants… they are not general people… there was respect for them… now there isn't respect… first name terms… I have had surgery and I called everyone by first names… you wouldn't have that then… everybody should have more respect for people… there's no respect"
(ends 06:10)

Consultants: angels or demons?

In the above exchange, several elements are noteworthy. First is that even though Zoe is talking about respecting consultants more, unacknowledged is that she has associated a photo of a 'demonic' figure with consultants (and not, as a notion of respect might imply, of angels) which leads me to believe that the word respect as used by Zoe most likely refers to fear of authority.

Respect is often used as a euphemism for fear.

Of course, consultants, with their mouths "stuffed with gold" (Gale, 2017), came into the NHS holding supreme power. As medicine became more clerical and automated (Gale, 2017), one might argue that the positional power of the Doctor- the being only next to God, somewhat wore off. As Gale (ibid.) expands, doctors became contracted, lost their independence perhaps, began to be scrutinised more. Plus, attention has begun to be paid to where the doctors come from and whether they reflect the society they are supposed to serve, and what that might mean. Medicine is expressing a desire to step away from its elitism.

So, one might allege that the Leadership industry (see Martin and Learmonth, (2012) for a critical account, or Raelin (2004) for the uselessness of putting leadership into people), the need to 'upskill' already highly trained individuals (e.g. Bass and Avolio, 1990) is akin to a farce by which those governing through scalpels retain control over the lives of the governed. That is perhaps the dark side of 'transformational leadership' (Bass and Avolio, 1990; Bass, 1998; Bass, 1985; Bass and Avolio, 1994).

Also visible are the metaphors used to depict notions of power, such as old vs new school, as well as a reference to the symbols of positional power- such as first name terms or not. Articulated once in the above exchange, but indirectly and directly referred to several other times in Zoe's account (see later on in this manuscript) is also the fear and trauma induced by the ways of working in such a system.

How does fear become respect? Perhaps through internalisation of trauma and its pain. I know that I really 'respect' the Home Office. How does something that subconsciously looks like a demon become subject of a conscious narrative of respect? Perhaps through denial.

Zoe was not the only one to refer to consultants as mythical gods/demons though. Everyone else who I interviewed who wasn't a doctor (or a privileged leader) referred to them in similar language. Let's look at another interviewee's relationship with the mythical Consultant-Gods.

Vick's job as a pharmacist involved auditing drugs that are addictive, and are kept under lock and key- aptly named as controlled drugs (although if you think about it, for the general person, most drugs are controlled by the gatekeeper of the prescription. We know less about our bodies than how to count beans for the capitalist). Vick told stories of angering and upsetting the all-powerful consultant, whose wrath was unleashed upon him. An excerpt-

Vick 10:02 If the theatres are not keeping proper check on the drugs, the people who are in charge of theatres are in legal trouble, technically mmmmm and when they did have things wrong... unless if it was a.... if there was a quantity missing we'd report	My reflections later on

it...like properly... it will have to be dealt with... there's the potential that someone has been stealing.... Or selling and using.... If it is for example not signed correctly... you have to give the consultant a tap on the wrist.... Which for a trainee pharmacist is quite intimidating... these are practising surgeons for years....	the banality of power over….
Generally the smartest medics... the surgeons... so to do that to... that's a as a trainee pharmacist.. was quite a challenge... something that... I ended up loving doing.... Most of them were quite good at taking it on board and listen...And the ones who didn't... excited my day a little bit... broke the kind of mundane monotony.... Of a pharmacy.	The person doing the talking to is the head honcho of pharmacy...
So one consultant was particularly unhappy about my comments about how bad their control drug book was and the records kept... and he kind of shouted at me to get out of his theatre..... which was quite an experience..... I had to go down to the pharmacy to explain… (to my boss)	…the child asks the parent to speak to the 'big voice'. .in the playground...
Tell him what had happened... he gave the consultant a bit of telling off... this was certainly an experience that toughened me ..	…respect is paid to those in power…

Now I am used to talking to people ... who deserve a **lot of respect**... **they are god in a way, some of them.** Ends at 11:30min	…these consultants are the gods of this organisation....

Again, similar theelings emerge for Vick as did for Zoe (or maybe it's my projection!). Zoe and Vick have worked for different durations, in different periods, in different departments, so to have such similarity in their narratives is striking.

We note a similar use of the word respect in Vick's narrative towards the end- the consultants deserve a lot of respect- they are, of course, Gods- and who wouldn't want to respect the gods- for Vick it is that obvious and unquestionable. The consultant surgeon is the one who can bring you back from life- is the God... but; our Vick really likes fighting with the Gods- either he sides with the devil or the gods are devils too.

The use of the word 'technically' early on in this narrative particularly piqued my interest. Technically, to me means here that if they didn't do that, they would be breaking the law but getting away with it**.** Selective enforcement of the law is a neoliberal mechanism of power.

Everyone can be stopped but the black body is searched everyone can progress on merit but the woman hits her head on the glass ceiling everyone can be policed but the immigrant is kept on a leash IMMGRATION CHECK DO NOT IGNORE IMMIGRATION CHECK DO NOT IGNORE IMMIGRATION CHECK DO NOT IGNORE emails give us CPTSD[62] All pigs are equal but some pigs are more equal than others fun fact Orwell was born in India why is he British writer then

The same laws exist, only applied differently. For the consultant/leader/boss/elite, the law is a minor technicality- an option- a frame of reference that only serves to remind them of their power as they step over it. For the worker, it is a question of life and death.

And I empathise with the worker through multiple frames of reference- not only do I connect with the worker as a fellow worker, but also as an immigrant.

If you are an immigrant, even legal tax amendments will get you branded a terrorist (Hill, 2018). A similar phenomenon happens in the workplace- if you are the consultant, you could get away with murder on a technicality but if you are a clerk like Lisa- well, you are watched. As Foucault describes so eloquently, the rich always have the gaze, while the poor are always under scrutiny- sometimes by the rich directly, sometimes by the offshoot university researchers, who want to study the unfortunate to understand their misfortune better- layering on the trauma of being scrutinised (Foucault, 1982).

[62] Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Complex because it occurs in response to stressors that hurt you repeatedly, over a period, continuously, unexpectedly- as opposed to- say, being in a war and seeing your fellow people die in front of you (Herman 1992). Recall what MacAlister (2017) said about how we see Trauma.

Surgeons are the smartest medics

For someone who believes in deterministic forces defining outcomes of our lives, the myth of meritocracy is quite hard to believe in. Surgeons are the smartest medics- according to Vick, and yet again the smartest medics find it hard to stomach the importance of keeping a check on potentially addictive substances- these two assertions in Vick's narrative are mutually contradictory, leading me to draw out the conclusion that when Vick is talking about being smart, he is talking about being privileged.

This would lead to the contention that smartness or prestige is another name for privilege in the NHS/healthcare. Interesting here is also that the power in the myth of 'surgeons being the best' comes on the back of the myth of 'god' and the myth of 'religion': as in to me it seems that the reason the myth of surgeon is powerful is in its disproving of the myth of God. That is to say, I feel that the strength in the myth of Surgeon comes from the strength in our myths about religion as one seems to replace the other. Has medicine has become the new Church, with its own dogmas and beliefs?

Vick, clearly, enjoyed being one up against the surgeons: He enjoys his kerfuffles (covfefes? Trump said it so I can too! If the President of USA can make 'mistakes' and get away with it, why judge me!) ... he enjoys taking on the power- he enjoys taking on the 'smartest' and telling them what to do. He enjoys his rebellions. I like it.

If his colleagues accept his position and do as he tells them, these encounters turn out to be nice enough- he gets to do his job well, but these encounters are not exciting. He is not thrilled at being able to do his job well- he is thrilled when he comes up against the smartest/powerful and is able to have power over them. In his work, he's not looking for smooth 'efficiency'- he is looking for picking these fights: picking those arguments with the powerful 'smartest' and coming out on top.

It is, through this account, visible that Vick's self fantasy is that of the underdog, and he is thrilled to take on the mythical beast- the most powerful, the smartest surgeon- he gets to dissipate his primal urge of rivalry, in his fantasy land he gets to have his own little rebellion.

The surgeon, though, is absent in Vick's account. The myth of the surgeon is present, but not the humanity of him. In that omission, it would be easy to go with Vick's representation of the events and project our own 'righteous anger' upon the being that is the surgeon.

However.

That I shall not do. The surgeon is human too. Sometimes we get thrown into positions of power without realising it. The surgeon shouts at Vick- unaware of the meaning Vick is creating of the act- however in his (let's face it, when we think surgeon, we all think he, such gendered is our understanding of work- it mustn't be though, so from now on the surgeon will be a she) self fantasy, the surgeon is perhaps trying to concentrate and save a life.

When Vick is getting shouted at in this context- he doesn't consider this to be a positive experience... or a learning experience- he's weirdly sadistically happy. He thinks he has taken on the power, but one might argue that he has inflamed the surgeon. Vick doesn't want anything else apart from experiencing the exercise of his power, as Nietzsche (2014) would probably say. But Vick's account doesn't cover what it was like to be on the receiving end of this encounter.

Now it could be that when Vick was in the theatre with the surgeon- maybe the surgeon was thinking of something else: the 'shouting' definitely is perceived as an angry action by Vick (and indeed in popular culture) but in a trauma informed, psychodynamic way, I would say that shouting is an expression of a fearful self trying to cope, a self being stimulated too close to pain. This is an example of analysis through resonance with my self- I scream when I hurt, so I apply the same interpretation here. The surgeon asks Vick to get out of the theatre, which Vick interprets as an expression of power- but, just to play the devils (or the God's?) advocate, this could have been due to any number of reasons. Perhaps Vick was interfering with the focus of the surgeon: perhaps the surgeon was doing something really scary (what she might have called 'important') .... We don't know- the surgeon's doings and thinkings are kept out of this account by Vick.

Vick wants to portray his own triumphs, his own 'I was the underdog and came out on top...' kind of narrative is what's important to him... he's just wielded his power and he's happy he's attacked. To him, anything the surgeon could have done is a retaliation.

This is, indeed, not a criticism of Vick. We all, or most of us, in our self fantasies, engage as little traumatised children, broken selves, the Davids facing the Goliaths, the underdogs up against the elite. This is a safe place to be. But in this space, we can easily learn to blame the Other.

To be the opposite- to engage oneself in the fantasy of the father/parent- the giver/provider, the author- is difficult, excruciating sometimes. One has to embrace the power one possesses and denial of it is much easier. Uneasy lies the hand that wields the pen. This is why I admire Greta Thunberg and the young climate activists a lot- they have not learned helplessness, they embrace their power and use it.

Perhaps Vick wanted to attack not the surgeon, but the myths that the surgeon represented to him. The attack was on the myth not the person. As my mum would say, hate the alcohol, not the alcoholic. But because, just like Vick, the surgeon himself- in her own self fantasy- was probably engaged in herself as a traumatised child- she was engaged as an underdog self herself- perhaps thinking she is overworked and burnt out- she has to save so many lives.... not enough funding…. Not enough sleep… Pondering her own existentialities....

I have little doubt that the surgeon, in her own head was also the victim and had I met her instead of Vick, the story would have been different: perhaps one of a pesky worker annoying her with petty bean counting when she's trying to do actual important healthcare

work of saving lives- and not 'managerial bean counting'. Indeed, if someone else were to be writing this, this story would be different too. You might look at the above and opine something different. That's fine.

"This was an experience that toughened me"

This coming of age features a few times in Vick's narrative. Perhaps this is to do with where he is in his self-fantasy- he's forming a new identity, perhaps. He speaks about this coming of age, growing up, developing 'worldly wiseness' or, awareness of sociological myths and the forces that operate through them, as a kind of 'toughening up' here- an expression that has undertones of macho-ness. In popular culture, this might be referred to as toxic masculinity (see for instance Harrington 2021).

The use of 'Toughening up' normalises the abuse by conjuring up images of, perhaps, an ironmonger beating a tool into shape by repeated blows. Had he used, instead of 'toughening up', a phrase such as 'beaten up', perhaps, the images conjured up would be of beat up kids and emotional and physical damage. But calling it toughening up alters the images that are evoked and thereby shifts the fantasy which the person is living.

Instead of buying into the fantasy of helpless abused, the individual buys into the fantasy of being a tool shaped up by the blacksmith- a fantasy which implies that he wasn't useful before the abuse, and now, after all the beating up, he may become so.

The fantasy of being toughened up comes close to, but falls just a step short of, acknowledging the ideological power we discussed in Theories. If Vick is the tool getting toughened up, who is holding the tool? What is the driving force governing the mind of the blacksmith who is shaping the tool? Žižek explains in (Gook and Žižek, 2020) that it's (drum roll please!):

Capitalism Capitalism Capitalism Capitalism Capitalism Capitalism Capitalism Capitalism

He Toughens up. She loses her innocence.

Vick also talks about a female colleague of his, who also comes of age (and he is friends with) early on in their career. This talk of toughening up is in (at least on the surface: if one examines the ideological roots, one can argue that they are both products of the same ideology of toxic masculinity, Harrington 2021) stark contrast to how he talks about his (female) colleague, who, as a result of an encounter with a 'strict boss' (as Vick implied, but what I would call as abusive), also comes of age, but she **'loses her innocence'** as opposed to 'toughening up'.

Freud would perhaps quickly remark on the sexual connotations of these phrases. I will talk about it without talking about it. The use of 'loss' indicates something has gone away (as opposed to a robbery where something is taken away by force), and so the individual is less valuable now than they were before- the wholeness is diminished, something is taken away.

Innocence implies a kind of childlikeness, immaturity- and it is interesting how Vick and his friend have both recently entered the NHS after working through similar degree programmes, and yet she is seen by Vick as a childlike, innocent being and not a learning/learned professional.

Everyday sexism in action

He does it without realising, but such is the normalised nature of both violence against women, exploitation of the worker by the boss, or an intersection of both. Vick has borrowed from a common phrase in which women are often described, so this discussion is not just about what Vick said, but a mirror into how women are constructed in the society. The trouble is not what Vick says- the issue in this is not how good or bad Vick is as a person- he is, sadly, to use the cliché, normal: the trouble is that this narrative is so common that if you blink, you miss it, and yet this narrative sits on the surface of our misogynistic society.

Microaggressions are doled out- only the sufferers notice them.

Vick's narrative in this context doesn't mean that he (alone) possesses toxic masculinity or that he is a bad person, but that this is the 'prevailing normal', however pervasive might it sound upon closer examination.

If normality is this

Give me madness any day

instead

For me, this was, to borrow from Vick's phrases, 'this was an experience that toughened me up AND I lost my innocence' through this period of PhD work.

"He gave the consultant a bit of telling off"

Vick then talked about how he went and reported this back to his boss who then went and had a word with the offending consultant. We learn about the bosses and leaders through hints and absent references like these. Vick's account, due to the language used, evokes images of a school boy encountering a bully in the playground and, after having been bullied, running up to their parent and asking the parent to intervene.

"Telling off" is usually used to convey rebuke, but a soft, non-formal version of rebuke. Unlike words of HR language, such as "informal intervention", which sound a bit more formal and therefore evoke an anxiety, the defence mechanism of adopting a kind of talk that is used in context of children softens the blow as well as makes it easier to "file" the memory in the brain: 'This one is not going with the formal and informal interventions, it's just a bit of a telling off so it's fine'. The parental figure in this case- the boss- then goes and gives a "bit of telling off" to the consultant.

This then teaches Vick that even though some of the consultants are Gods “they are god in a way, some of them” (Vick: 11:53), perhaps not all of them are infallible/ unapproachable/ can’t be told off.

Through this anecdote we learn about Vick’s perception of leaders and bosses and leadership, I have no doubt there are many workers who share Vick’s views. Nevertheless, in Vick’s case, the leader is expected to be the parent who protects. He goes to this figure who validates Vick’s desire to be protected by ‘telling off’ the ‘offending party’-the consultant.

It is crucial here that this is by no means Vick’s ‘fault’- we have to focus on the interpersonal dynamic rather than judging the parties involved. For example, when Vick approached his boss, the boss had various ways in which to respond- they could have coached Vick into talking to consultants, given them some prep talk, some self-esteem or subconscious bias training; or told Vick to mind his own business, saying that perhaps it’s Vick’s own fault and he has no business talking that way about consultants.

Various tools that sit on the worker development-oppression axis were available to the boss-figure here- but Vick’s boss seemed to prefer to play the role of the protective parent- subconsciously, they choose to fulfil Vick’s fantasy and partake in their own fantasy of being a protective boss/parent. Depending upon who one asks, this could be deemed a ‘good’ way to lead/manage or a ‘bad’ way to lead.

Also interesting are the absences. Assuming that Vick's narrative is a fair reflection of events, we can entertain the possibility that Vick's boss doesn't look for evidence-based action or consult organisational behaviour manuals or group dynamics literature- Vick's boss is acting out their own subconscious fantasy. Or; Vick's boss is enacting what they have learnt on a course or through a book (we don't know, but to Vick, it doesn't matter), but to Vick, they are acting as a parent.

Similarly, while the narrative about the consultants discusses them as Gods, there is absence of adjectives such as evidence based, rational, reasonable, etc. In Vick's narrative, some of the consultants may be Gods, but they are still 'irrational'- they can be scandalous and all powerful, but they are not beyond being told off. It's a complicated, dissonant picture, but that's what we all look like within. This is normal.

Doctors and 'staff'

Dave, a doctor, on several occasions, used the word 'staff' (e.g. 6min 40 sec in) to refer to non-doctor-colleagues- and he called doctor-colleagues as 'clinicians'. So Dave, even though doesn't assert his status as God, does distance the doctor from the 'staff'- as if to indicate that he's not staff, he's above- beyond, separate. Another euphemism used is that of 'me and my team'- and the narrative crafted in a way that me is separate from my team. In this distancing, this separation of the identity of the self and that of the others, he does, in effect

affords himself a status that is not, by implication, attained by the others. In that, Dave confirms to me that he believes he is a God.

Angels and Demons- Consultants

The Consultant-God is (and it's mostly a he) regarded for his ability to grant and takeaway life- but subconsciously, the power/agency devoid workers consider the same mythical consultant to be a demon too- they are feared, their power begrudged (e.g. Vick). It is perhaps telling that in common usage, any doctor who is not a consultant is a 'junior doctor'- they have yet to attain God status- no matter how experienced or skilled they may be. Like a hopeful wanting to enter a mythical masonic fraternity, the tag of junior compels the doctor to slog their way to God status.

Nurses: the important middle

14:10	Romesh speaks- This reminds me of hierarchy of work structure... a thing about devolved leadership... so it reminds me of changes in structures and hierarchies that are going on... if you look at it almost 30 years

	ago... it was almost like a military... but now it's all different.... I ask: So how is it right now.... ?
14:37	He says- I think there is still leadership... But leadership is not something where you get dictated down to... you get listened to more by the management/... people respect each other's opinions more... the consultants are more often led by the nurses... and use their expertise to advise the nurses...
15:02	If there was gonna be kind of a pyramid of influence- it will be flat in the middle and pointed at the two ends... I ask:-who would be in the middle He answers: Senior nurses- they do the assessment…. I ask "and the pointy ends".... He answers- "the consultants at the top and support workers, therapists, etc at the other end...."

Romesh describes power and authority as prevailing in the NHS, and the myths surrounding them. He wonders, how leadership is constructed (Grint (2005) writes how Leadership is socially constructed). Romesh talks about the popular myth of 'devolved

leadership'/distributed leadership (Gronn 2011) in the NHS. He says that "it used to be all military style but it isn't". Maybe Romesh's interpretation is true to his experience, maybe he doesn't 'get dictated down to' and is 'listened to more by the management' and where he works, 'people respect each other's opinions more', but it certainly is not representative of the whole NHS workers' experience (as we shall see).

The consultants are more often led by the nurses... and use their expertise to advise the nurses...

Romesh makes an interesting point that I can echo thinking back to my years as a doctor. Romesh says that the nurses lead the consultants, and the consultants merely offer advice to the nurses. In this account, we see that even if consultants may be the gods of the healthcare system, the person who effectively oversees the care of the patient is the nurse.

The nurses run the show and consultants merely consult to the nurse. This implies that the primary burden- medical as well as emotional- of healthcare is carried by the nurse. This is consistent with the landmark study of nurses by Menzies Lyth (1960) where she examines the anxieties that nursing has to shoulder. What Romesh doesn't mention, though, is that considering the nurses' pay packet doesn't match or exceed that of the consultant, the role of nurse, the performative feminine, is that of the exploited, and their exploitation is perhaps essential for the patriarch consultant to maintain their mythical status of God.

1502	If there was gonna be kind of a pyramid of influence- it will be flat in	There are multiple things here.

	the middle and pointed at the two ends... I ask- who would be in the middle Romesh: Senior nurses- they do the assessment (to me it sounds like they do the majority of the work) I ask: And the pointy ends.... Romesh- Consultants at the top and support workers therapists etc at the other end....	Firstly- senior nurses, as per this account, form the core of the system. Secondly- what Romesh's saying could mean that the support workers and therapists are sort of the subaltern, the unconscious of the organisation...

The Pyramid of influence, according to Romesh, is flat in the middle and pointed at two ends. The senior nurses are in the middle- they have the most influence on the patient care and, according to Romesh, the influence that consultants have on patient care is as much as that of support workers and therapists. However, the Pyramid is not horizontal- it is vertical- the pointy bits are up and down, the consultants are at the top- perhaps because, even if their influence on patient care is equal to that of support workers, the privilege and the pay packets they carry are far higher- hence they still sit atop the pyramid.

I like the conversion of the pyramid (as depicted on the card) into a rhomboid shape. One could think of this in terms of Romesh realising that the support workers and the therapists- the lowly workers of the NHS- their status is not adequately depicted by being at the base of

the pyramid- for him, they are below the ground level- it is almost as if he is saying that they are the 'subaltern' (Spivak, 2003) of the NHS. They don't have a voice, no privilege to speak of, little influence. Even if he isn't aware of the academic language of the subaltern, the power of visual metaphors allows him to express his contestation through distorting the traditional and widely used organisational charts which are often pyramidal in nature.

Myths and Mechanisms

Before we delve into some of the myths that my interviewees shared with me, let us first start with some of the popular myths about the NHS. The widely popular belief is that the NHS is one organisation, that it is homogenous, that it is a benevolent public service that is hard done by politicians.

The colonial origins of the British welfare state, that includes the NHS, however (Bhambra and Holmwood, 2018) are rarely talked about. The myth of equality and diversity is tooted about, but the systemic alienation of the non-white practitioner is rarely talked about.[63]

The NHS's beloved junior doctors launch a massive strike at the first hint of precarity hitting their profession, but the same issues have been hurting nursing and care professions for

[63] Update, August 2021. David Olusoga presents an excellent feature on BBC that challenges this narrative. "Our NHS: A Hidden Story" (Olusoga, 2021) talks about the role of the immigrant and person of colour in this celebrated institution of British psyche. For much of my PhD duration though, this was something that was not known, not talked about- the discourse of NHS origins has been whitewashed- a history erased. I speak about it when I teach, but of course David Olusoga's work brings this story back into our collective consciousness.

many years and yet, as a doctor friend mentioned in a lecture to me, the only times doctors in the UK have launched industrial action in the recent past, it has been for their own pay. Indeed, if one examines the origins of the NHS, the doctors were quite opposed to formation of such a public service, and at least for some it was due to the threat of lost earnings and privilege. This led to the (in)famous claim by Bevan "I stuffed their mouths with Gold" (Gale, 2017). This is what Dave said- didn't he- we'd all like to believe everyone in healthcare is there because they want to help people, but that's not the case.

Inaction of the pseudo-left was a problem for Fanon as much as it has been a problem in the present times never mind the Hostile Environment it's the 'Nice' racism (DiAngelo 2021) that kills me the power behind is the same- be it exploitation of the performatively feminine roles of nurses and carers, as well as exploitation of the Non-European in Britain.[64]

Medicine is an imperfect science: The Church of Medicine

This is a confession from Dave early on in his narrative, where he says "Medicine is an imperfect Science". Since science is supposed to be pure, reason-based, a higher order pursuit- the notion that medicine is an imperfect science implies that medicine is not (just)

[64] As Martin Luther King Jr explains in Letter from Birmingham Jail (no date), it is easy for those who have not suffered the ill effects of prevailing system to ask to "Wait". Similarly, cries of "Wait", or "Compromise" can be heard by those who claim to have egalitarian principles, but are perhaps too accustomed to the ongoing damage the absence of change is causing. In the world of knowledge, the epistemic genocide is destroying the knowledges of the world through colonisation of minds and must be challenged. That doesn't happen through compromise. Nice Racism is a book by Robin DiAngelo (2021).

science, but a collection of some scientific facts, some myths, several misconceptions that carry the weight of the embedded ideologies. Of course, this narrative (and as we'll see later, many others) contradicts the validity of the sacrosanct church of evidence-based medicine.

To say that medicine is imperfect is saying that medicine is as amenable to intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics, biases, subconscious processes, as would be- let's say arts or humanities. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but I hate the supra-political pretence (Said, 1978).

It is easy to immerse ourselves in the cult of progress (Olusoga 2018) and forget that it is still a mish mash of science as well as other stuff. Therefore, while it may be easy to ridicule the ancients for alchemy, the question really is what do we do now that the bearers of the future will ridicule us for[65].

[65] I think Foucault would be happy if in 50 years the terms 'Capitalism' and 'Racism/Sexism/Homophobia' entered death certificates. I would love to die not of Suicide but Capitalism. Foucault writes, in the preface to 'The Birth of the Clinic' (Foucault, 2003), this paragraph below- I have turned it into a prose poem:

From what moment, from what semantic or syntactical change,

can one recognize that language has turned

into rational discourse?

What sharp line

divides a description that depicts membranes as

Dave continues. “You

can see there’s a difference between the activity of the system geographically

but also different teams...”

Dave points out the heterogeneity in healthcare- highly subjective: who gets what treatment after what prayer in the Church is a highly contextual and subjective thing. Medicine is a highly capital-intensive system. Knowledge about our bodies is taken away, not available in schools, higher education- except for the privileged few and put behind closed doors shielded by the myth of meritocracy and is dispensed in sparing quantities through the gaze of the clinician who occupies, as some of my participants talked about, a god like status.

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being like ‘damp parchment’

from that other equally qualitative,

equally metaphorical description

of them laid out over the tunic of

the brain, like a film of egg whites?

Do Bayle’s ‘white’ and ‘red’

membranes possess greater value, solidity, and objectivity—in terms

of scientific discourse—than the horny scales described by the doctors of the eighteenth century?

“Through the lens of Leadership”

After looking at one of the gods of medicine and the alchemy they practice- let us look at the newly appointed leadership gods of the NHS, who have recently put on the ‘Leadership’ tinted glasses (to borrow the metaphor as presented by Henry). He is looking through “the lens of leadership”, as he puts it. Henry is indicating that he sees the leadership phenomenon as something of a change to his way of seeing.

He doesn’t speak of gaining new skills, new behaviours (which a significant leadership literature focuses on), but, adopting a new way of looking at the same object.

The subject is adopting a new filter- in that the subject is changing their world view. This is consistent with Learmonth (2019) that leadership, in many ways, is just another word for the work that was being done by managers earlier.

Learmonth (2005) applies the Orwellian idea of language as power to make a case for rejecting the use of the word leader which implies an all-powerful, religious, god like being- and rebelling against it and calling these roles and people administrators. Tourish (2020) would disagree on this going back. While calling the leaders administrators is a fair point and a way to reclaim the language and express your language of contestation, I do think that we have to give the workers a bit more credit. I don’t think workers necessarily automatically start worshipping their manager as soon as they are rebranded leader. They will, if they haven’t already, find a way to disagree with the leader as well.

My concern is not that use of leader affords those who occupy this position with supreme authority- my concern is the obfuscation created by this repeated renaming of things and the myth of progress it permeates. It may or may not squash the worker's language of contestation, but it sure does create a smoke screen. The powers that be keep serving the same dish with different names, and by the time one catches up to one vernacular, the vernacular changes.

> "In Freud's view, it is to be explained by the same identification mechanism that we have already seen. Owing to the fact that all members of a tribe have transferred their superegos to one and the same object (the chief), they have no other course than to identify with one another and become equals, neutralizing their differences. That is how a tribe is formed." (Voloshinov, 2013 pp137-138)

Calling your boss a leader means that while the boss does the dirty work of oppression, the worker is confused because the images evoked in his/her mind are that of 'leaders'- mythologised figures that represent force for good. This myth is leveraged by the capitalist to exploit the worker further.

The purpose of racism is distraction- Toni Morrison

Distraction is also a powerful, highly used tool of neoliberal oppression

But this is also how the workers identify with each other. While the rampant leadership discourse forces us to believe that organisations are all about the dyads of leaders and

followers, Voloshinov writes that there is more to existing than that. The workers are also united by their rebellion against the power.

Medicine as a system of privilege

Once you interpret Capital to mean Knowledge, you rethink medicine as a capitalist institution (see for example (McKee, 1988)) where knowledge of our bodies is separated and channelled through the means of production that are medical schools.

As any other capitalist system, there are the privileged few in medicine as well, and indeed privilege and power seem to be the social currency that can get things done in medicine and in the NHS. What is also important to state, is that it's not the 'them' at the top, it's the 'us' at the bottom too- we all execute privilege when given an opportunity.

One of the ways that works is through control over information. As one works through the chain of hierarchy, the information available is progressively reduced. For example, the nurse would have access to less than doctor but the cleaner will probably not even have a log in and password for the computer systems. The capital that is the knowledge of our body- is under strict surveillance- and even the person to who this information originally belonged to, can't access it readily. For example, if you have had a scan done and you want a copy of it, several forms need to be filled, even if the copy you want is to have treatment

in a different hospital in the same NHS. Indeed, Lisa tells me about who gets in and out of where the data is kept, that doctors can readily pull out any file they want.

Another way that privilege travels through the health system is in controlling access to treatment. As Dave, a doctor, comments (8:38 min) that “interpersonal relationships mean that you can skip pathways in patient care”.

This amounts to admitting that basically if you know people within the NHS, you can take a shortcut through the treatment pathways and get treatment quicker. Presumably this means that those of us who don’t have an insider have to wait longer. I suppose we can’t judge the doctors, we all steal Post-It notes from our offices.

These pathways then, for the outsider, serve as obfuscation- indeed Dave admits to such- he says that “pathways don’t make much sense”.

Lastly, privilege functions in making one feel comfortable. Dave says (15:10 min) that “you never feel isolated, it is a good way to work...” but Dave is blissfully unaware of the alienation, for example of the migrant workers to the NHS (Shahvisi, 2018a and 2018b; Singh, 2020) who suffer through racism and discrimination. You don’t feel isolated in a system if the system is built into your image. (Mary in Ashwin et al, (2020) speaks about having to switch voices because she, as a person of colour, can’t see herself in text). For everyone else, life is a struggle to fit in.

Dave further gives an indication of his omnipotence and all-encompassing power when he talks about how easy it is for him to access the data- i.e. the capital of information about our bodies: (5:10min) "...Data can be accessed whenever we want...". Dave is a God.

"You were looked after more by the NHS"

Zoe	Salary... benefits... you were looked after more by the NHS... private were different... quite a few changes in the contract as well... overtime changed... sick pay etc changed.... All the auxiliaries... in the end had no option.... All the auxiliaries were changed to team leader or team sisters....	Public money... NHS was a proper organisation... that sort of that made you feel privileged... but then NHS was built on colonial money…

Zoe felt that the NHS, when she was working in it, was a more benevolent organisation. What Zoe describes as looking after, is now coming under scrutiny as over-generous pensions. Even so, colleagues such as Zoe don't question the extra wealth that comes their way- they don't question how come they/we get looked after (hint hint colonial riches!!). NHS is a benevolent God to them, and they accept the grant gratefully.

They don't question, for example, why the NHS gets to be so generous when the global south is struggling with poverty. The myth of the 'Nation' covers up the colonial brutality

that has led to the NHS being in such a generous state. (NHS funded from colonial money- see Bhambra and Holmwood, 2018).

Chance

(Chance in Medicine: Dave, 3.50 min)

Dave says-

“Dice represents

chance… chance in not just what care the patients get but also whether or not

the care is effective for those patients because medicine isn’t a perfect

science… there’s a lot of chance in the way systems are set up...”

As Dave says, it’s not just chance in what care the patient receives but also whether the care they receive works for them. This implies that even though the medical world likes to portray as if all treatments work for everyone, it isn’t true.

I am more likely to connect with people by chance who are of similar intersectionality, socioeconomic status, as me: owing to the fact that I’ll probably frequent the kind of establishments as they do, indulge in the same activities as they do: similar deterministic forces have shaped our lives.

So, chance, as Dave describes, is a reference to determinism. With the quality of care you receive depending upon your interpersonal relationships and the latter in turn depending upon deterministic factors, we begin to see how the same 'impartial' system delivers different care to different people. NHS may cater to everyone but as a system it subconsciously is built to favour the whitemiddleclasscishetman.

As Dave admits, "how patients access care is random" (6:19 min) and in a haphazard, random system, chance- or determinism plays a key role in determining who gets what.

The rich get richer.

The poor get poor.

Chance is cruel.

'Pandora' box of lies (Duncan, Clarke and Barr, 2021; Mason, 2021)

Hierarchy

The NHS is complex- sometimes this hierarchy is clear, sometimes obfuscated. 'Junior' doctors clearly come below doctors who only need to 'consult', and the Chiefs of the Executive tribe are clearly above the cleaners. We can agree there is a hierarchy. Fine.

The issue for this work is not so much that hierarchies exist: but that these hierarchies, as we know from Romesh, are not built around the importance in treatment of the patient.

We recall how Romesh says that if you were looking at the hierarches of how the patients are treated, you'll probably get a vertical rhomboid, with nurses being in the middle- with the maximum influence over the life of the patient- the consultant or the CEO playing as little role as the 'lowly' workers. Looking at the work of the nurse, vs their pay, and having been a doctor once, and how much privilege came my way, I desperately want to agree.

Fair pay for nurses fair pay for the midwives fair pay for the care workers

Underfunded Story

	Romesh	
1025	This one- we are having a lot of technology issues at the minute... with computers... but we don't have enough computers... quite underfunded in that regard...	This notion of underfunded creates a sense of urgency and a sense of we don't have enough.... Upon which the story of 'we must get more' is built...

The NHS is underfunded is one of the most common stories about the NHS prevalent today. As we shall examine below, the story of underfunding is problematic. I am arguing that the story of NHS being underfunded is propagated to evoke the fear of death in not just the NHS employee, but also the general public, in order for the powers that be to take actions which would otherwise be questioned. By propagating a myth that evokes deep-seated fear of

death, the powerful are able to justify taking drastic/harmful steps without facing a rebellion from the worker- because the worker has been surrounded by the story of how it is essential that sacrifices be made for the betterment of all. It amazes me how little we hear of the discourse in popular media of how the UK is built on masses of colonial wealth, is one of the richest countries on Earth, but this shameless self-pity that "our health system is unfunded" is nauseating. Step out to where I was born. You will see what 'underfunded' means. Such climate facilitates the exercise of power- as in an environment where the fear of death is stoked, workers' self-preservation instincts are activated- they are worried about their jobs and families, and in such a climate it is easier to exercise power through mechanisms such as divide and rule, oppression of the feminine, etc- (which we explore a bit later) without much rebellion.

Ralph remarks that "there seemed to be plenty of money in the system (back then)", alluding that there isn't anymore, allegedly. From the way he speaks, I pick up a certain suspicion- as if he doesn't want to believe that there is less money now, but maybe that is me projecting.

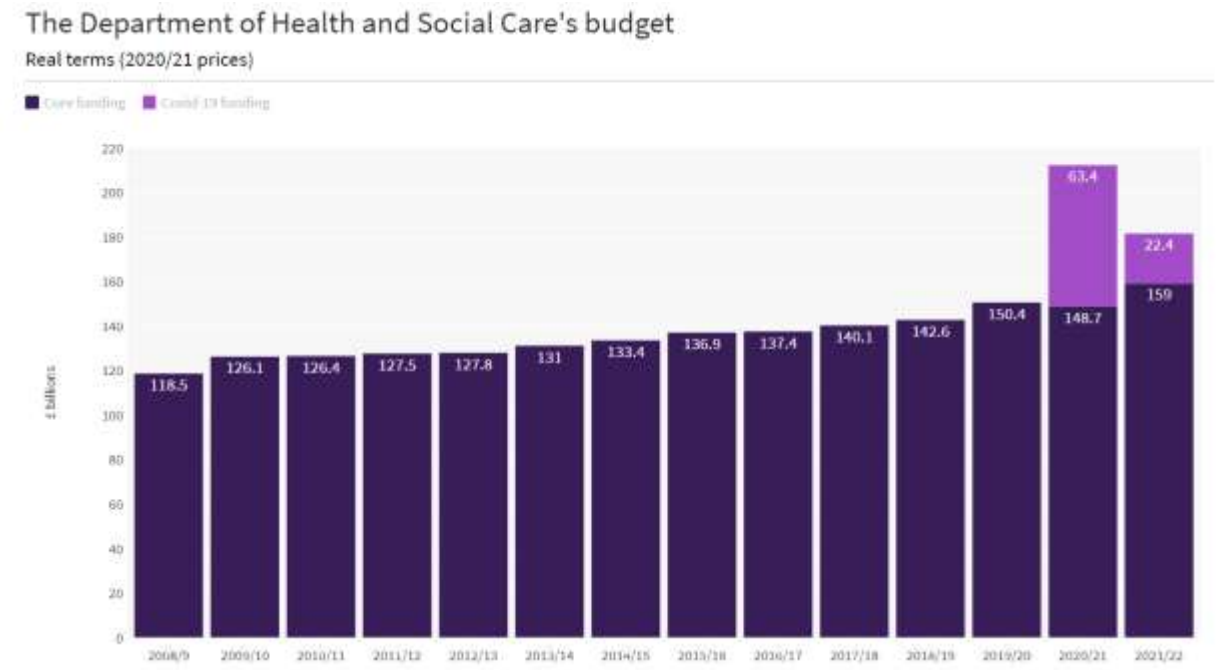
Now, there are certain aspects to the underfunding story that are interesting-

Firstly, that we don't pay enough attention to why and how, in a post-war era, NHS was well funded to begin with (colonialism and neo-colonialism denial) and where that money came from. (Bhambra and Holmwood, 2018). This self-pity narrative allows the focus to remain inwards, on continuously making sure the resources are pointed inwards, the 'blinkers'

make sure that the gaze remains narrow and the structures of exploitation of the 'Global South' are maintained.

Secondly, even from within a sphere of colonialism denial, what becomes fascinating once one looks at the actual funding data, is that the budget of the NHS has increased a lot over the years (see graph below), and what is often termed underfunded/ cuts/ savings to be made- are savings against projected spending increase. In other words, what has been cut under coalition government is the rate of increase in funding the NHS. To use a physics/ driving metaphor, the speed (money allocated) is still increasing, it is the acceleration (the rate of increase of speed/money) that has been cut. There is some argument about the increased needs of an ageing population- certainly that is the popular explanation of this story. However, as Snowdon (2020, p3) asserts, this claim "no longer stands up to rigorous examination." Indeed, Davis (2018) in their analysis of the 'Disaster Capitalism' ideology within the NHS agree, and so also do Hyde and Epton (2019). Davis (2018) point to how 'disaster' talk is used to further capitalist agendas in the NHS- the disaster being we are 'running out of money'.

See below from The King's Fund (2021):



Thirdly, when speaking of 'underfunded NHS' we need to consider executive salaries and expenses (Donnelly, 2015), high locum/consultant salaries- all of these expenses of the privileged few are strongly protected by the myth of meritocracy- these people deserve the money they get because they are better/do more important work/- if we have to save money, the worker needs to make changes to make system more efficient (Doward, 2019) but these Gods must stay protected.

The Foucauldian idea of the power of the gaze

it is the vulnerable people who always come under the gaze

they are the ones needing studying, educating, or reforming

the elite must remain untouched

There are plenty of ethnographies of the colonised, not so many of old Etonians.

We mustn't make a moral judgement against the people for believing a story. People need stories to believe to save themselves from existential angst. If we have any power, we must use it to write better/different stories, not judge and belittle the believers of stories we don't like.

Power and authority

In the previous section we looked at how practice of medicine is a capitalist endeavour run through chains of privilege and how the worker is kept from rebelling by maintaining a climate of panic. One might argue that the creation of panic is a recent phenomenon after austerity. They will be partially correct- the source of worker panic in the austerity era has been induced through the story of underfunding and cuts (See Davis 2018 for a discussion of this Disaster Capitalism). But this doesn't mean that prior to austerity there wasn't worker oppression and panic.

If the workers need to unite and rebel, as Marx might say (Balibar, 2017), they first need to overcome this sense of panic that is induced within them by the fear propagating stories by the elite. One way of overcoming this panic/fear of death is to welcome it- indeed when Mandela chose to rebel, he knew the outcome would be incarceration or death. Similarly for Gandhi- hunger strikes. What Gandhi showed us, through his hunger strikes and getting arrested voluntarily, was that by taking the power to destroy oneself within their own hands, and away from the hands of the elite powerful is one (only?) way the worker can overcome the powerful. In a psychodynamic sense, by acting in a way that depicts not

fearing death, the worker overcomes the panic induced by the fear of death. By voluntarily self annihilating, the worker induces the same panic in the mind of the capitalist- that the workers may cease to work. Perhaps the most potent example of this comes in the shape of infanticide by the slave mother Margaret Garner (see Caroll 2019)- she kills her own child because that's the only way she can hurt the capitalist- by taking away her child which is his property/worker. She somehow puts her parental grief away- her desire to rebel and refuse such a sub-life for the child so strong. However, before we speak of how to resist, let's first look at how the power functions through the system, as told to me.

Romesh: time to do your work is a privilege

Another aspect of the austerity measures, apart from the underfunded story, is that of making efficiency savings. Often the efficiency saving rhetoric is used to cut jobs, (which is bizarre as the NHS is understaffed- see for example Abbasi 2019), cut down on patient contact time; again, bizarre as the health service is criticised for its dehumanisation and there is a push for person centered care (ibid.).

Romesh alludes to this deficiency in time: he says "getting time to speak to patients properly is a luxury". Considering he is a therapist and talking is one of the main ways therapy works, what Romesh is claiming is that his work schedule makes therapy a tick-box. The cure the system is trying to dole out is talking-time, but reluctantly. The worker is caught in a tussle- do I help the person, or do I count the beans? You may recall the story

earlier where Lisa alluded that the work of relationships is not really considered work. How does therapy work then? Without time, it doesn't.

Divide and rule

Lisa's story (also supported by Vick and Zoe) illuminated me to the existence of divide and rule ideology within the NHS[66]. Lisa tells a story of a working class divided under different labels.

[66] That I was illuminated to *Divide and Rule* made me question whether I was projecting my own knowledge of Divide and Rule- which, upon reflection, I realised came from my readings as a school boy in India where one learns about India's freedom struggle and how the coloniser used the tactic of Divide and Rule to further their empire through the subcontinent. "An Empire At Home" (Trafford, 2020) discusses use of Colonising strategies within the UK.

This led me into a tight spot- if I decide to interpret Lisa's story of different factions as that of Divide and Rule, am I doing justice to Lisa's story or am I just projecting my own self on to her words. This led me to question other aspects of me, and understand where the thoughts that were coming from, were coming from.

In this instance, for example- I realised that since the same ideology of the coloniser that sent divide and rule through to my textbook were also behind Lisa's description of different factions. In a way, it is immaterial whether I am explaining what Lisa said or projecting what "I" thought. We are both, in one way, victims of the same oppressive system. My positionality, in a large part, owes itself to neo-

02:22 onwards	"Basically I worked in an office... There were all those **different factions**... there was **permanent staff**.... Who like underpaid and doing something quite boring... pretty unsatisfied with their jobs... and then there were all this **bank staff**- mainly students coming in for summer... who had these (voice becomes dreamy) dreams... laughs.... We didn't necessarily work to build relationships ... everyone knew we'll be leaving so they were kind of snarky about it... and then there were also **apprentices**... who were young people… often with... **Learning difficulties**.... Apprenticeships... in business.... And I am not sure how I feel about that because **they were paid like 3 pounds to do the job I was doing... which was easy... but they were getting paid less than half...**"	Different factions… Differences… Divide and rule… Paid different for equal work Exploitation of those with neurodiversities… My wife has dyspraxia…

03:46	Continues... "And these **groups didn't really speak to one another.**.. and this made me quite anxious..."	Tribes divided, develop rituals, language over time...

colonialism, which is another facet of the oppressive power that has divided up the workers in the NHS/British working class too.

06:42	Aaand.... I picked that one... because. . . yeah I just felt like it was often badly organised as a department.... Not saying its any one's fault... I think just the way... **three different staff groups ... all working towards the same goal but different levels of training.... Like 6 teams... different departments... like obs and gyne team.. oncology team... but the bank staff and apprentices didn't have a team so we kind of floated around... we didn't actually have... desk space...** if someone from permanent staff were off we could go sit there but otherwise we just... stood... we just lent against the wall... laughter....	No space- lent against the wall- as if everything around you is telling you that you don't belong here- I feel privileged to have an office with a chair... use of word team is exciting- but then these are not divided by teams these are more- servants serving the gods of Gynaecology and Obstetrics and other subjects- by which I mean specialties of medicine- divided factions of human body..

This is an account of division between what would superficially appear as the same staff-group. Here my work goes beyond the work of Menzies (1960) which has been found to be politically sterile (Chernomas 2007). While Menzies approaches the NHS through very benevolent eyes, my primary area of disagreement (and that of Chernomas, 2007) is how she brushes over the implications of having subtle differences within colleagues. She writes that the uniform was largely similar except for subtle differences. To her, these differences are justified, they are acceptable. To me, these subtle differences are important signals of fault lines of division.

Lisa talks about the differences in Uniforms:

16:27	Lisa – I got pulled up by permanent- snarky- members of staff.... For not wearing proper uniform.... Wear polo.... This guy... told them my uniform was inappropriate and that I was showing too much flesh.... So... there wasn't a difference but the bank staff cared less about their uniform..... leggings etc... main staff got a bit annoyed... about that	Same level, yet permanent accorded more power- assume more power. This caring less is to my mind a subconscious act of resistance- resisting through not doing up clothes properly- a bit like Corbyn not doing his tie or- it is a representation of the poverty that then forces people to leave homes too quickly...

Lisa talks about different factions. Factions in itself is an effective metaphor- it conveys division within a bigger group. It is particularly effective here as Lisa and her colleagues from different factions are there to do the 'same' job, and yet they have strong divisions- so strong that they aren't even on pleasant talking terms with each other. There are divisions

created by the neoliberal system- and it is worth noting that these divisions are not like 'professionalisation' (different people doing different jobs).

Staff that are 'permanent' (although the popular terminology now is with open ended contracts as I got reminded once…) and staff that are 'bank' (but, as Lisa later on explains, work there for a significant proportion of the year- so they may as well be 'permanent') do the 'same job' but the difference is in the minutiae.

The permanent vs bank division is how the NHS gets to keep its 'generous, good employer' image, that Zoe was so impressed by (remember she said the NHS used to be generous) while getting its dirty work (as Lisa explains, the bank staff often end up with the kind of work that is the dirtiest of the tasks) done cheaply.

The joy of neoliberalism is that this isn't even the worst part of the story- the worst part is the lawful exploitation of vulnerable people. What system is it that we have that allows people doing the same job to get paid half of the normal salary. As Jeremy Corbyn rightly points out at the time of writing (Gye, 2017)- do these younger adults eat less food? And the fact that some of them, as Zoe says, may have learning difficulties and hence they are on apprenticeships- I have to take a moment to park my shame somewhere- really speak to the extent to which capitalism would go to exploit.

No matter how many women are on top of our neoliberal organisations, as Maya Angelou speaks (CNN, 2013)-

None of us is free until all of us are free.

Going back to the talk of the factions, let's talk about tribalism at work. It is safe to be within one's own tribe. Each tribe has its own rituals, its own ways of dealing with the anxieties, its own unspoken rules. Lisa's factions/tribes have their own internal spaces.

Vick also mentioned how if someone from the outside were to come and see his tribe, they would probably call their humour inappropriate (inappropriate humour is how Vick and his tribe deal with the anxieties of facing death everyday) but they are okay with it. See Vick's story below.

Vick

27:36 Vick

I hung out with the student nurses and junior staff members myself....

So it could be an age question.... Maybe it's an age thing then.... I talked to people my age... but then as I became more and more experienced... I started talking to other people too... but at the start.. definitely….

And I told you about that head of pharmacy going to have that conversation so there was definitely a more mutual respect there... I know they had interdepartmental meetings where head of pharmacy head of surgery head consultants would meet get together...

a lot of band 8s on the ward will talk to consultants..... you do stick to those bands... even across professions...

the only professions everyone talks to are the nurses….

so even as band 5 the only band 8 I was able to talk to were the nurses....

I don't know what it was ... I think partly because they are friendlier... partly because they are on the wards... they know the patients... they are helpful....

For nursing it felt like the bands were a bit blurred.... And less pronounced....

Rather than pharmacy and in doctors.... Where there are real hierarchies...

it probably became a bit easier... but I never really went and talked to people above a band or two higher... except in situations like the controlled drug audit when I sort of **had to** talk to these people"

29:59

As Vick points out, he found it easier to hang out with people who were in a similar position as him. You can see that he starts off by saying that he hung out with the other students and junior staff members- but then he quickly tries to rationalise it by stating that maybe it was an 'age thing'. Normalised ageism?

He later on contradicts himself as he goes on to say that he rarely talked to people who were separated by more than 1-2 bands of pay (nurses were an exception, as he said) and so therefore, confesses that it is a band thing. People fraternise with people of similar bandings, even across professions- but never/rarely across bands. Bands of course, mean £££. Classism prevails.

This tells us that the divisions created by the capitalist band structure are deeper, stronger than the boundaries created by years of professional training in different skills. The colours of capitalism run deep through us. Band 8s talk to the top doctors, the lower bands talk amongst themselves, and the only exception to this rule, for Vick, is nurses (remember the rhomboid- nurses are the centre of healthcare).

Vick's description of nurses- their approachability and knowledge of the patient care is illuminating. He describes how nurses act as the central anchor in patient care- they know what's going on, they know the patients as well as different professionals and act to make the care happen for the patient.

Vick's account confirms the rhomboid of Romesh- that nurses have a lot more influence over patient care than most other healthcare professions. I hope, reader, like me you can begin to connect the dots and are beginning to see how the medico-industrial complex (Chernomas, 2007) exploits the feminine nurse who provide the majority of the labour and get little credit or compensation (let alone compensation- as Romesh says- they often barely get time to do their job properly). Reader, do you know a care worker? My mother-in-law is

one. And I can tell you, she works her back off. If we academics pride us on our 'labours of love', all her day is spent doing 'labour of love' for barely enough sustenance. Of course I know she's not the only one. Carers are the real heroes of the system. And instead of sustenance, Hancock gave them a pin badge.

The power structures imposed by the patriarchal world blur away in the feminine world. Feminine is about empathy. Nurses help everyone. This is such a beautiful illustration of actualisation of Simon de Beauvoir's ambition (Beauvoir, 1997) about feminism not being about putting women in positions of power but blurring power structures altogether.

Zoe

Zoe 41:54 Maternity... maternity was good.... They looked down on us...

52:16	What was it like for you to do this process?

	She says “fine it was nice to have a chance to think about what we used to do....” Me- One of the things you said was that you were thinking that these might be NHS like photos.... But these aren’t.... so how was this for you.... She summarises- “Some of the photos made me think... the dinosaur.. the sister who I used to work with.... She used to get stressed.... Student nurse white hat... I year- blue stripe 2 year 2 stripes.... Similarly... staff... stripes.... Now you wear scrubs.... Staff nurse wears blue scrubs... light green dark green burgundy..... if you wore green you were a ward nurse.... Then other colour staff nurse... but now they all wear scrubs... but everyone wears scrubs now and you don’t know who is who …”

Zoe brings up the point of divisions towards the end. If you look at some of the earlier anecdotes from Zoe (they may be scattered around in the write up but the time stamps should help you) you notice that most of her stories are tinged with fond nostalgia- even things that to us readers look problematic, she thinks they were all fair and good, and almost forces her to remember her time in the NHS fondly.

It is only at the end that the differences come up. She describes differences in clothes- students nurses, staff nurses, ward nurses and so on- you had similar but different kinds of uniforms. It bothers Zoe that nowadays you can’t tell who is who, that everyone wears scrubs, that if she goes to the health service, she doesn’t know what rules apply to who. That everyone looks the same might feel like a good thing on the surface. One might

be forgiven for thinking that this means boundaries are being blurred, hierarchies are being broken, people are coming together. Except- a deeper examination reveals a different story.

Even if the doctors and nurses 'look' the same in some contexts, they have different powers- for instance of prescription, of asking for diagnoses etc, have different contracts, and different salaries. Plus, we already know that some consultants can behave like Gods or demons- this makes it quite a difficult situation.

To me, it is not so much a story of boundaries being blurred, but that of a wolf in sheep's clothing. This is exactly what Žižek says in his video about having a friendly boss vs a shouty boss (Ben The Benevolent, 2016). If the boss, who has the power and can wield it, is openly oppressive at least you can get upset and hold a rebellion against them- but if the boss is a sweet talker ("rules through his castration", ibid.), then you find yourself confused and even more subjugated.

Zoe doesn't actually say anything about the meaning of these differences, except, "they (about a different group of nurses) looked down on us." The divisions created/maintained/signalled by the different clothing are not merely important for identity, but also signal fault lines across which conflict can arise- or in other words, egos and their drives are diffused and anxieties are projected.

Menzies (1960) and Chernomas (2007) appear to be in conflict about the positioning of nursing with respect to wider society about this- whether nurses are in a better position to discharge the primal urges due to the visceral nature of their work and their proximity to

death- or whether they are at a disadvantage. Menzies writes that nursing offers an opportunity to sublimate primal urges such as dealing with death and life in a socially acceptable way, however, it must necessitate the nurse having to suppress her libidinal urges. This is work. This work is not counted anywhere.

Obfuscation

The over-professionalised healthcare can be difficult for some patients to navigate. Remember that eye thing I told you about? I got sent to a consultant by my GP, but it was the wrong consultant! Human error? Systemic racism? Obfuscated system? I leave the interpretation to you. And I would call myself an 'expert patient'- even I can't figure it out.

Access to healthcare becomes a fight. Throw in some waiting times as well, and the health service quickly reveals itself as not something that is there to help you, but to keep health away from you as much as possible. This was certainly my experience, and has been echoed by so many patients and health service users I have met over the years[67]. The access and

[67] For me, it was a case of fighting to repeatedly work through the barriers that presented themselves in form of workers denying me my feelings and trying to talk me out of my symptoms, in addition to long waiting times and the multiple numbers of virtual questionnaires- each of which inflicts a trauma of their own- all the while trying not to worry about the links between home office and the NHS see (Docs Not Cops, no date) while trying to get psychological injuries given by the home office looked at. However- this is not about me- lots of people have told me similar stories-

care are so professionalised and divided into steps that it is not so much an interaction- it is a journey, or as Romesh says- “pathways- massive buzzword at the moment”.

Pathways are the buzzword. Something else will be tomorrow. The important word in that context is not Pathway. It’s Buzzword. We live our works through Buzzwords. That’s the structure.

The notion of buzzword implies that it is one of many passing fads that the NHS worker goes through. Except, these pathways of treatment don’t really come with road maps- as Dave says (3:10) “pathways don’t always make sense.” The flipside of over-professionalisation is mass dehumanisation and breaking off of the personhood of the patient into small chunks. Each chunk must be examined under a different microscope in this obfuscated system.

“Pathways don’t always make sense”

(Dave 3:10[68])

Dave points out the baffling, arbitrary nature of care ‘pathways’ which are

but because I can’t use their anecdotes- I have to use mine to represent an experience that may look only mine on surface, but is of a lot of people.

[68] Sometimes I leave the ‘min’ from the end because it looks like a quote from a Gospel, and the visual appeal is striking- it makes the reader realise that to this thesis, the words of the interviewees are Gospel.

supposedly created to increase the efficiency of the system. The rhetoric is that the patient will follow a giant, very complicated flowchart- like an orienteering course. And as Dave says, these pathways don't always make sense. And this is for the healthcare professionals- so I guess it is fair to assume that for the patient, these pathways probably never make sense. Let's have a look.

Dave

3:05 minutes in-

Dave: "This one kind of illustrates pathways that don't
make sense." (pointing at the
haphazard linked dots)

Pause

Gaurish: "How is that relevant?"

Dave: "so the patient could be seen as following
pathways… but the pathways don't always make sense...either to the patient or
the clinician..."
hesitation… "errmmm..."
continues "information flows around but not in a kind of
sensible way"

Then moves on to pick

another photo, that of a dice

"There's a lot of chance involved..." (continues about the dice)

ends at 3:40 minutes

Dave supports his claim of the pathways being arbitrary by adding that information flows, but not in a sensible way. There's a lot of chance involved. This is in contrast to the certainty that we see on patient information leaflets, or in popular discourse about healthcare. It all seems to be sold to us as certain, scientific, orderly. It isn't.

What we are seeing here is that the pathway is more a myth than a rational object- a pathway doesn't always make sense, are different to different people, sometimes work, sometimes don't.

"Information flows around, but not in a kind of sensible way.", Dave added. I found myself thinking that the denial implies that there is an implicit (received/popular) expectation that information should have been flowing in a sensible way. Dave understands that the popular discourse projects that information flows in a sensible way, but he is now confronting his theeling that it doesn't.

Perhaps Dave is using denial to deal with the discomfort of the mismatch between his expectation- that information should flow sensibly- and his perceived reality- that it doesn't.

Using his metaphor of flowing fluid, while the image sold to healthcare worker and the patient is that of a streamlined, straight river, what Dave is suggesting is that all of us are kind of caught in a whirlpool where the flotsam and jetsam of information catches you randomly.

The only order is chaos

These pathways are, interpreting from Dave, an attempt at obfuscation. Making accessing care so difficult, confusing and resource intensive, that people either drop out of the care and then can be blamed for it- as 'Did Not Attend'. DNA, as it is often known- often focus on projecting the blame on to the patient, and attempts to rectify it by sending them reminders- adding insult to injury.

Not only are the pathways random (Smyth, 2019), the different specialisations are too. The different specialisations themselves carry a sort of agenda beneath them.

"Specialisations are erratic"

08:53 Romesh "Doctors.. we have two consultants ... who specialise in different...one specialises in older persons...one specialise on self harm...

then we have juniors who are on placement for certain length of time and one or two juniors who come in every now and then... then we have a psychologist doctor... that's it really not really many."

09:49

"Who else is in the team..." I ask.

He says. "We have... band 7 clinical lead nurses... majority of staff- band 6... mental health nurses... some support workers... therapists... nurse prescribers... diverse team... pharmacists… some are newish...."

Romesh names a few different kinds of health professionals all working in mental health area.

Notice how there is a consultant specialising in self harm and one that specialises in older persons. What does this mean? Can older people not self harm? Who do younger people who do not self harm go to? These systems may work for the health service- but these are definitely not driven by 'scientific logic'. Are they driven by market forces? I think so. So much for evidence-based medicine. Juniors come and go- in this revolving door of patient treatment, no wonder the most emotional labour of restoring humanity to the patient falls on the nurses' shoulders.

The following from Dave makes the dark effects of the system clearer.

Dave: Even high-risk suicidal patients are stuck in obfuscated pathways

Dave

12:39 Usually those children can come into the service through a number of ways.... One way is they have harmed themselves... or attempted to harm themselves... hospital will call and we will see the patient...

and then we might decide to admit the patient or we might decide that risk could be managed in community... which is not an ideal situation....

And then we see the patient intensively for a couple of months we can go to patient's home over a couple of months... we can start treatment...

pharmacological or talking therapy... or patient could be referred in from the wider child and adolescent team ...

if risk is too much.... We will then see the patient for a couple of weeks.... Until risk is reduced...

once situation is stabilised we'll refer the person into other service...

or discharge and

manage the transition...

Dave is talking about children who are severely mentally ill- often as a result of social determinants- who resort to self-harm. Dave and his team then have to decide what is the

risk of these children hurting themselves and whether to offer hospitalised care or send then back home.

This is an example of pathways that don't make sense. Just because an individual child hasn't self harmed strongly enough yet, doesn't mean they can't and will not do it again. And an example of how people are dying, as we speak, of Capitalism. The 'efficiency' ideology forces the professionals to send the vulnerable person back to the risk. That's how Capitalism kills.

And then there are variables- of treatment choices, of other professionals being involved. This makes for a complicated system. That isn't in itself as bad an issue, until you look at it through the agenda for patient choice- which as Fotaki (2006) has discussed, often just adds to obfuscation. Imagine being a person so unheard who is having to hurt themselves (and self harm is a sociological act of communicating pain, it is a social act- as we know through the work of Durkheim, 2013) to communicate their misery, having to go through such a system and make choices along the way.

In Radical Happiness, Lynne Segal (2018) writes of how the systems we have to 'help' people in this situation add insult to injury. I have felt that. As an occasionally 'self-indulgent' 'mild' self-harmer (don't worry, but do see Appendix 5. Again, please read the appendices!), I feel some of the pain of the self harming people described above, and I resonate with the difficulty of navigating the system- thus feel important to highlight it that the 'system' doesn't work.

Systemic obfuscation: Ralph

The obfuscation doesn't just operate at the patient facing level. It operates at regional, national, brand level as well. Here Ralph reflects on one such change initiative (recall what I said about the language changes and how that device is deployed) when the Health Service Authority became Health Authority and then became Primary Care Trust (which have been abolished now)- all of these being massive changes- but as Ralph said, nothing really came out of these top-level games, which I am inclined to therefore label as mostly political, obfuscatory tactics.

Ralph 53:30 "When I started we were the Family Health Service Authority then became Health Authority then became PCT in a period of 3-4 years... massive change...an awful lot of change... nothing particularly evolved through that change"..

Bureaucracy- Ralph

Apart from obfuscation, another mechanism for tiring out the worker's voice is bureaucracy, as Ralph elucidates. He had to learn about the politics, that you can't go straight to the top (I wonder if he had tried) and that you learn from the wrong thing very quickly. His words convey a sense of threat- a sense of severity, that shocked people new to it.

Ralph- about 9 minutes in- "I think you had to use... go through the process of line manager and ... you couldn't go straight to the top... I did learn the politics of it all..."
ME "You mentioned about understanding the politics of the place... were many people able to do that...?" He says "seems so long ago... I think most people had worked here a long time... for newer people it was a shock...I didn't experience anyone else having any issues... but you learn from the wrong thing and you learn very quickly...what's acceptable and what's not"
ME: who decided what's acceptable and what's not acceptable?
HE "I think obviously... it is the communication line, how you communicate through the organisation...what you do what you don't do... you knew what was expected of you..."

By now, I think you can see how 'politics of the place' refers to power-relations, and how knowing the rules of the tribes was essential. It is interesting how the account is: "you know what's expected of you" signifies knowledge of an overarching Godlike existence/ an ideological power that governs.

The trauma of 'Organisational change'

Work is traumatic. As I have discussed through myself, changing of identity is traumatic. In the work place, this trauma comes through 'organisational change'. This is perhaps another timeless story. The only constant is change, as it goes.

Ralph talks of organisational change, and how some of his colleagues were "like dinosaurs…" because they weren't responding to change well. Ralph tells the story of advent of computers in the NHS and how some people adapted quickly, some others were resistant. He calls the latter employees 'dinosaurs'. The suggestion being clear- if one doesn't adapt to survive, one perishes like the dinosaurs did.

While one might be forgiven for judging harshly the employees who were branded 'resistant to change'; psychodynamics highlights the human desire to not be in a state of flux: to maintain constancy of tension (Constancy Principle, Freud 1975). In other words, those 'resistant to change': were they 'dinosaurs' or were they acting in self-preservation? Or perhaps, they were protestors, refusing to give way to what they saw, perhaps, an

oppression. The NHS keeps on changing (Mason and Campbell, (2021) tell us more is coming) and yet stays the same.

Indeed, constancy principle plays an important role in explaining organisational behaviour in the face of change: change being, in the context of the contemporary NHS, neoliberally driven transformation. People don't like being moved around between different roles, between different places of work, but their dissent is hidden away, because they have been sold the idea that being flexible is desirable and being adaptable is an asset. However, removing an individual from their workplace is also a violence, likely to leave scars.

Oppression

Mechanisms like obfuscation are a bit hidden, however we also look at some old school oppression of the worker; as well as, crucially, how the workers deal with it using various defence mechanisms.

In some cases, the worker has internalised the oppression (Orwell 1946)- their language is such that the words used are 'nicer' than the horrid acts they describe (Repression in action).

This is one reason the hermeneutics of suspicion is necessary to get beneath the surface of the organisation to find the worker's oppression and dissent, because (Chernomas, 2007)

the objective of Taylorism is to wipe off all signs of worker's dissent- and indeed to reiterate the Cicerean myth, the best slave is the consenting one.

For instance, one can assume oppression to be internalised when it is designated the nice language of 'respect', as Zoe does. By calling oppression as respect-worthiness, consent is virtually afforded to the oppressor and there can be no rebellion- for surely everyone wants and deserves respect- and the more meritocratic ones deserve more respect. "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others", as the Orwellian[69] line goes.

That's not to say the worker is at fault. This belief is, for the worker, a defence mechanism- for believing this helps them prevent the anguish that may result after appreciating the unfairness of the capitalist system and the sense of loss and injustice that inevitably follows that realisation. In other words, it is far easier and self-preservatory for the consciousness to believe that consultants deserve respect because their work is incredibly hard rather than believe that all humans are equal so must be respected equally because our society seems to be built on the 'tyranny of merit' rather than 'for the common good' (Sandel 2021); and believing the latter can lead to deep discomfort that our society is unfair, in chaos and deeply troubled. One begins to question one's life experiences and positionality- an existential crisis.

[69] Fun fact- Orwell was born in 'India'. But he entered the mythology of 'Britishness' because of his Whiteness, perhaps.

For someone who holds little positional power, it could indeed be taxing to be aware of the behemoth of capitalism and its unfairness, and the sense of powerlessness that comes with the realisation that they can barely do anything about it can be severely debilitating.

But without the means to organise, revolt and reclaim their means of production, and without adequate support and action from their more privileged 'left leaning' colleagues, the worker's anguish, injustice and sense of loss can manifest as frustration and internalised anger and self-annihilation rather than emancipation. Hence the Marxist call to organise and unite (Balibar, 2017).

Not my boss: Lisa

21:35	Me And I notice you smiled a little bit at this... do you remember why that was....
21:50	Lisa Oh... Just... someone might pick that out and that might remind them of their boss.... Through laughter... but not my boss specifically... just... laughter....
22:05	Me- so how was your relationship with your boss then.... She says... errrmmmm... didn't really have one...

22:09	Continued... but because we were just bank staff.... Didn’t really invest enough... they were pleasant enough... and just more focused on the permanent staff... which is fair enough… they let us pick our shifts... because they were basically always understaffed... so always needed bank help... yes so really quite relaxed just didn’t really speak to them that much .... and like the
22:48	The office manager had a separate office... that was walled off... I didn’t really see her.... Me- so did you ever meet with her ....
23:10	Errmmmm only really at the beginning and the end of the day... she power dressed... she had like these big heels...

	so I only ever saw here in passing... either when she'd tell me off for talking or something...

Lisa looks at the photo of the (I call it the 'demon', see Appendix 6) demon and laughs. She moves on to talk about something else, but I quietly register this aberration/ release of anxiety. Once she is finished talking, I ask her about the photo of the demon. She reveals her thoughts. "This could be like someone's boss, but not my boss", she claims.

I sense the denial- she's thinking of her boss, but denying me and herself the admission to that effect- instead choosing to project the emotions arising within on to some mythical other person. Intrigued by what lies beneath the denial, I ask her about her relationship with her boss. "Didn't really have any" she starts by saying, and then gives this account of what I can only describe as a boss who expresses their power clearly and emphatically.

The next point of significance in her statement is that she didn't really have a relationship with her boss. This is a complicated claim- for of course if it is her boss, she is in a relationship of power and hierarchy with them. What the sentence that Lisa says tells, then, is that the relationship is not a hugely memorable one- which in turn means it was a relationship to be forgotten, for remembering it only triggers pain. And this interpretation is supported by the kind of relationship she describes in the next few moments.

When Lisa talks about her employee status: “We were just bank”- there is an admission that because we were bank staff, we were less important than the permanent staff. She justifies her own poor treatment. She then offers her judgement on this situation- that it is fair- as if to affirm to herself that no injustice happened in this context. That it is okay that the faction she belonged to, was not invested in, was treated relatively harshly, that this faction of the agency nurses was othered.

But as external observers, it is easier to see the issues here. Unequal pay for equal work and workers artificially divided across the fault lines marked by different employers is clearly problematic. However, this is not just Lisa’s story. This is the story of all of us. It is easy to see this discourse on this piece of paper, but if we are honest, it happens around us and more often than not, we turn a blind eye, act/are helpless.

The power of the story of ‘who’s on which contract’ is so deeply attached to our identity, that we don’t see it as an injustice that people doing equal work are not afforded equal pay. And the implications, the alienation is clear. Because you are bank staff, you or the manager doesn’t really invest enough in the relationship. This relationship building is not often counted as work, but is crucial to worker’s sense of belonging in the workplace. Without this, the worker’s sense of alienation from the means of production and place of work is compounded and slowly the anxiety turns into paranoid schizoid fantasies (after Menzies Lyth, 1988, 1991) as Lisa later on tells us.

Even more striking is the rationalisation and internalisation of this behaviour in Lisa's account- this is all fair to her conscious mind, and so when she is offered the 'choice' of when to work, she takes it as a privilege. The expectation is so low that it is easily fulfilled by the falsehood of choice[70]- she's happy to have a say in how and when she gets to do this underpaid, discriminatory work. Fotaki's work on illusion of choice (2006) is also remarkable.

The next part talks about the neoliberal method of crisis talk. The NHS is short of money, and it is also short of staff- this crisis talk, as previously discussed keeps the workers on edge, keeps them in a sort of traumatised, afraid state.

The NHS is underfunded we are short of staff there is no petrol there is no toilet roll this approach is too risky we are a rich country but we are short of money they want their artefacts back we stole and put in our museums the immigrant is taking our jobs the women are stepping out and not staying in kitchen the pages are yellow the queer is out

[70] This is reminiscent of the famous Žižek gag: "Do you want tea or coffee? Yes please!" (Massey, 2021). Massey also recounts Žižek saying that "Most academics are idiots." Now, maybe Žižek is agreeing with Gabriel and saying most 'Standard' work is meaningless, or maybe Žižek is saying that people like me who try to do not Standard are idiots.

of the closet the immigrants are here who is the real paranoid me or the world around

meFEAR FEAR FEAR FEAR FEAR

As Lisa continues to explain, the NHS is short staffed at all times, and bank staff is needed at all times. One would think that if the workplace was a bit more benevolent, they will just hire all the bank staff and then there will be no/less shortage of staff. But of course, that isn't how the issue is resolved- the continuation of the crisis story is essential to keep the worker in a state of panic, so that self-preservation becomes their primary concern, thereby quashing any dissent.

The rest of the anecdote speaks about the manager inhabiting a separate, more privileged space in the workplace- we pick this up in discussion about the governing of the physical space later on, but right here, I want to draw attention to how Lisa perceives her boss in the few interactions she does have with her.

What Lisa remembers clearly is the power dressing and the verbal abuse. I want to make it clear, the 'power' in the dressing of the boss rests within the fantasy of Lisa- Lisa perhaps projecting the authoritarian part of herself on to her boss. Maybe Lisa formed this projection due to the verbal abuse that she received from her boss- the telling off- a phrase which signifies infantilising of the adult worker. What comes first is difficult (the abuse from the boss of the fantasy from Lisa), if not impossible to fathom, so also is the 'true' nature of the boss (when I say 'true', I mean what I would perceive the boss like, or what the boss

thinks of herself, depending upon who is writing this- I use the word 'true' to satire the fantasy of truth that we commonly propagate in our language) as the boss is not with us to speak for herself. But I question the significance of these absences.

What matters is that Lisa's operating truth is that her boss power dresses and verbally abuses her- in her fantasy of her workplace, this is what is happening and this is the truth that is being used to create her self fantasy. In other words, splitting is happening in Lisa's narrative- Lisa's subconscious carefully splits off things that mustn't be a part of her self-fantasy and projects them on to her boss- because if that wasn't to happen the self-fantasy will not meet the ego ideal. Lisa projects the part of herself that she doesn't desire on to her boss, I think is what I am trying to say.

Everyday Abuse

I thought about this quite a while. When do the discontents of work become 'abuse'? Where is that line where you decide what is acceptable and what's not, in terms of what we experience at work? The line is subjective, of course, but also 'objective'- by which I mean shaped up by the other prominent myths that surround the working organisation.

It may feel to some that suddenly one day they wake up and suddenly some things can't be said, that it's all political correctness gone mad. But often behind that sudden shift are stories that have been constructed, popularised, inserted into popular discourse, often at

significant personal cost to individuals, even if often later on to be capitalised by the capitalist. In other words, if today, suddenly, we are all clapping for the immigrant carers, for the carer, this change in attitude is not sudden. It has happened after years of experiencing a society that has looked down on them, given them experiences that were always hurtful- but normalised earlier, and now recognised as abusive. This shift may appear sudden to some who are unempathetic to the struggle, but that doesn't take away the personal sacrifice of those who have made this happen. In other words, what was always hurtful was normal a few years ago and now called abusive. In this shifting landscape, it is important to define what I mean by everyday abuse.

My definition of abuse, much like everything else, is highly subjective. One could make the argument that what I find abusive about the narratives may be defined by what I find abusive in my other identities. I would agree. You already know my various identities, so my definition of abuse in this section is that if it were to happen to me, I would find it abusive; because they remind me of times when I may have been on the receiving end of similar theelings and found them abusive. My definition is also influenced by what I know about trauma and self, as discussed earlier. Not sure what I have said, but on I go.

Bullying in the NHS

Sadly another timeless story. There is plenty of work published in the area of bullying within the NHS: see (Quine, 1999; Stein et al., 2002; McAvoy and Murtagh, 2003; Randle, 2011;

Cilliers, 2012; Carter et al., 2013; Kline and Lewis, 2019). I offer my own definitions and interpretations below.

We start by looking at experiences that would be called bullying by which I mean acts of violence- not necessarily physical, that threaten the identity of the individual on the receiving end. Harassment to me is behaviour that is less violent if one looks at just one act, but the violence is not just in the one instance but in the repetition of it, which wears down the victim (Einarsen et al 1994, 2020). So, if bullying is a punch on the nose, harassment is slapping you on the back extra hard every time: it hurts a bit, but not enough for you to complain. Over time though, you develop a bruise.

Both bullying and harassment represent trauma to the self of the worker. Trauma to worker's self is different to worker's discontents. Discontents are like the feelings that can be recovered from, by time allowed between work, trauma can't be. Trauma evokes deep fears, triggers pain.

Several people gave examples of behaviours that I found amounting to bullying and Harassment. I don't think these were particularly vulnerable people or the NHS is a bad place to work. The point of focus is that this bullying and harassment are so commonplace in our work, we turn a blind eye to it.

Harassment is normal

Campbell (2019) outlines how one in 12 women working in the NHS are victims of sexual violence. So even if I am talking about Lisa's experience here, it is safe to assume that it reflects experience of a huge number of employees of the NHS.

Lisa speaks of being on the receiving end of bullying from multiple people and on multiple occasions. Some of the accounts were quite difficult for me to process- in hind sight, I feel like I was quite affected by the violence I was made confidante of. That was one of the reasons why I was moved, shifted, broken- I was hit by these forceful accounts- and yet at the same time it was a privilege to be told some of these traumatic things. I know from my own traumas that we keep our traumas close so to share them is an act of deep trust. I was moved by the trust placed in me.

The reason for telling you this, reader is to warn you to brace yourself, and to receive the following as the incredible gift these stories are.

Below, we have Lisa's story of experiencing varying degrees of objectionable treatment in four separate anecdotes.

1.

02:22 onward	"Basically, I worked in an office... There were all those different factions... there was permanent staff.... Who like underpaid and doing something quite boring... pretty unsatisfied with their jobs... and then there were all this bank staff- mainly students coming in for summer... who had these (voice becomes dreamy) dreams... laughs.... We didn't necessarily work to build relationships ... **everyone knew we'll be leaving so they were kind of snarky about it...**

Here, Lisa is talking about the different factions as she witnessed existed in the workplace- something we discuss in the section on divide and rule. When she begins to describe the relationship between the permanent and temporary staff, she says that "everyone knew we'll be leaving so they were kind of snarky about it".

To me this snarkiness implies an implicit hostility that says 'you are not one of us- you are here today, gone tomorrow, you are not welcome into our world'. I draw on my immigrant identity to resonate with Lisa.

This hostility could be Lisa's perception (a misogynist, victim blaming self might say), or it could be a defence mechanism of the permanent staff to protect themselves from the violence of witnessing their colleagues change everyday. A reminder that they themselves are replaceable. The anxiety this change brings- not just of having to work with different people each year, but also of helplessly witnessing the injustice done to the other, this could be manifesting in the behaviour perceived as 'snarkiness'.

However, it is not that the temporary staff didn't have their own defences. You can see how the way Lisa describes the permanent staff has a kind of derogatory tone to it (The losers! Wasting their lives away in underpaid, boring jobs)- perhaps less visible in the transcript- but clearer in the speaking voice. I think this reflects Lisa's fears about her own career's future as much as is an observation of the status of permanent workers.

2.

5:20	Picked up this one.... Laughs.... There were groups... One of the apprentices touched me inappropriately and no one really did anything about that... I went to my boss.. one guy was really touchy.... Library files... following me down... and the other one... really loud and sexist... and I went to my boss about it... she was like well this is what we have got to deal with as women in the work place and I was like what the f... 0613 A lot of (nervous) laughter accompanied this story
6:14	She sent me off to work with this guy in that hospital... I had a mini panic attack... and I was like I can't go there with him in that room.. and my boss was like well this is what we have got to deal with... so this is why I picked this...

Lisa talks about the guy who is 'really touchy', touches her 'inappropriately', follows her down the alleys where files are stored, really loud and sexist. She is talking about getting repeatedly sexually harassed in the workplace and finding herself in quite vulnerable

positions, an experience, as I learnt today, is not uncommon at all in the NHS (Forster, 1992; Beecham, 2001; Pearce, 2017; Launer, 2018; Sayburn, 2018; Dacre, 2019).

Notice how her plea for help is received with apathy from the boss- "this is what we have to deal with in the workplace"- which signifies normalisation and acceptance of the sexual violence and exploitation in the workplace. But also, notice how her language is sanitised and represses a lot of violence. By changing the words from 'he sexually assaulted me' to 'he touched me inappropriately', the violence of the act is taken away from the conscious thought. This is censorship in action. Women have to do this work of surviving in our misogynistic society everyday. As Kipnis writes, "assault is around every corner" and that she could think of "no better way to subjugate women." (Kipnis, 2017, p1) Lisa has to hide away the violence from the conscious in order to allow her to come back to work the next day.

Lisa is wise to censor the act's violence. When she reports it to her female boss- the female boss does acknowledge that it is an issue (that women have to 'deal' with) tells her to adjust (as if to say, fighting against it is futile, I tried it too- and trust me, it's best if you get used to it for it is too big a beast to slay, and it's not like it's better elsewhere). In other words, Lisa wants to object to it, but her discourse (not that it's my position to mansplain I am sorry) hides the violence away. Her boss wants to help, but recognises that the beast is bigger than the both of them, and her advice of self-preservation is perhaps well meaning. Firestone writes (2015, p25) "Many women give up in despair: if that's how deep it goes, they don't want to know." You can hear Lisa's boss saying to Lisa "You don't want to know."

3.

16:27	Lisa – I got pulled up by permanent- snarky- members of staff.... For not wearing proper uniform.... Wear polo.... This guy... told them my uniform was inappropriate and that I was showing too much flesh.... So... there wasn't a difference but the bank staff cared less about their uniform..... leggings etc... main staff got a bit annoyed... about that	Same level, yet permanent accorded more power- assume more power. This caring less is to my mind a subconscious act of resistance- resisting through not doing up clothes properly- a bit like Corbyn not doing his tie or- it is a representation of the poverty that then forces people to leave homes too quickly...
17:22	When you say main staff got annoyed about that... who is it that got annoyed.... She responds Just a guy on the permanent staff.. same level... reported me to the manager... manager had to have a	

	quite word with me... it was an embarrassed word.. somebody's complained... da da da…	

However, here, when the guy reports Lisa to the boss for 'showing too much flesh', the boss does **take action**- by having a word with Lisa. The boss does not tell the complaining guy that "this is just something you have to deal with when working with women, you have to keep your sexual urges in check".

No No No

The boss has a word with Lisa

The man's comfort takes importance over the woman's

Here's patriarchy in action for you.

The male libido is embedded in the system- and it is the female's fault for arousing them, and the male not only blames the female for arousing them by projecting the origin of his libidinal impulses on to the female, but also gets away with it because it is the accepted normal. This is our normal society. I'd rather be mad.

Not only must Lisa work through the heat of the summer in very hostile conditions, in which she's dehydrated, she must also bear the weight of protecting the male from his own libidinal urges that risk him feeling less in control of himself.

4. The creepy dude makes another appearance here. In these anecdotes, humour is used to diffuse of the anxiety resulting in recalling some painful experiences- there was a lot of laughter.

8:27	I was so anxious when I worked there... and it wasn't like the work place... it was my own thing... but It didn't help like that environment.... Office spaces... one bit was really quiet... the other one... where this creepy dude... could come down... and try and touch me ... laughter... fun work environments...

I don't think being in a workplace with a creepy dude is fun. Lisa doesn't either. The dissonance between her words sits at unease with her feelings, and the laughter is an acknowledgement of that.

Indeed, his violence was normalised and accepted into the fabric of the organisation as 'having a crush'- whereas Lisa's protests of this 'inappropriate behaviour' only draw denials from colleagues. We humans, us men, we can be/are disgusting.

Eventually Lisa remembers that something was allegedly being done about this person as she was leaving- although the notion of the memory being 'blacked out', is, to me, a metaphor for the subconscious repressing traumatic event. It is poetic, the language used,

because ‘blackout’ implies all light (which I take to be a metaphor for the conscious gaze) is taken away from it, confining it to the ‘dark’ spaces of the subconscious[71].

23:12	She says- honestly I can’t even remember the guy’s name... it was long time ago... he.... I did ... it wasn’t a secret thing... the woman who sat across from me could see him coming... and touching my neck and stuff... but she was like aww he’s got a crush... and I was like no this is inappropriate... I told... She continues, after I ask if she reported it or if something was done about it: Oh no!!! they did try to deal with it.. someone else had a problem with it.... No, it was dealt with, she remembers.... Laughter..... it completely blacked out.... It’s funny.. I think it must have been as I was leaving...

Towards the end of our interview, Lisa comes back to this person who sexually assaulted her. She finally reveals that it wasn’t just her- there were other victims too, and it was a normal accepted part of the office culture.

Let
That
Sink
In.

[71] I completed this analysis in 2019, but in 2020-21 the normalisation of violence against women has once again found itself in public discourse. Sarah Everard’s death and ensuing protests have once again raised a firm question on the normalised violence against women. Unfortunately, this thesis remains relevant.

Of course we never find out, nor did she, if something did happen in the organisation trying to 'deal with it', but for the aggrieved, in this case Lisa, it is irrelevant almost, as the trauma that has been caused stays with her irrespective of what, if anything, becomes of the aggressor. As the title of a good book on trauma goes, "The body keeps the score" (Kolk, 2015).

Bullying a junior doctor

I discuss Dave's narrative which highlights how it happens under our nose.

From my conversation with Dave- 25 minutes in.

Me- how does this workplace compare to some other places you may have worked at?

25:21 Dave - I suppose to take the most dysfunctional team....

There was one which had basically a **bully** working in it.... One of the consultant physicians was basically a bully... all of the clinicians were **afraid to approach the consultant** for help... the **reaction would be he'd shout at them or humiliate them**..... And **people wouldn't approach him for fear of being shouted at... and that had a very dysfunctional effect on the team.... Physically (stresses) the team avoided the consultant**...

26:12 Even the way they moved around the unit was inefficient because they will take the long way around.... Leave the hospital, walk around and then come through the other side so they didn't have to walk past the consultant.... That is a fairly trivial thing you know but even effect of that...

But more importantly clinicians- doctors, nurses would be scared to ask advice and this clinician might be the lead clinician for the given day .... on the unit and during that day clinicians would not ask for advice .... they will treat patients to the best of their abilities... but they will not ask for advice because they will be shouted at and humiliated.... But when they were outside of their competencies... they would be very reluctant to ask for help so they will teach patients without the same support that they should have got and that's extremely risky situation for patients to be in... and so that's one of the worst examples of my career....

Me: So tell me more... you told me walking around... you told me not asking for advice... tell me some other examples if you can think of impact on the team….

27:40 Dave - Well the other impact was on the morale... of the team because people are afraid to go to work when this person is leading the team... so people want to go in... no doubt it affected sickness rates... people were stressed.... People didn't want to go in on the days that these people were there.... People's relationships with other members of the team were affected because when one member of the team was seen talking to another member of the team this clinician would come and humiliate them that why are they not seeing patients or something... and this would... it will become a stressful unit... it was a stressful unit with a high throughput and no doubt less patients were seen... patients who were risky

didn’t get the senior opinions they should have got... the referred patients didn’t get the care...patients were referred to other departments unnecessarily.... Because the clinicians didn't ask for advice... people just didn't want to work there ... people didn't want to be on the unit... they would look for any excuse to get out.... A whole range of negative impact on the productivity... and the efficacy of the team....

Me- and how did you deal with that...

Dave - Well... it was very difficult... at that point in my career I was a junior doctor working within a team on a 4-month placement, I was on the receiving end of ha ha ..... abuse from this particular person... clinician on a couple of occasions.... I raised it with my superior who acknowledged it but wasn’t prepared to do anything about it... because we were short staffed ... couldn’t replace this person.... So the advice from superiors was to put up with it, get on with it... and I considered raising a complaint against this particular clinician... but by this stage I had a month left.... I needed to get signed off. . . for my competencies of working in this placement... if I raised a concern this person could stop me being signed off, and I would have to repeat the placement.... So I didn’t... I just stayed out of his way.... avoided him.... Tried to find other people who I could ask for advice.... I didn't enjoy that rotation and would never go back to work in that rotation... and I think that’s been the approach of most people so that’s why this guy is still there....

31:10 So you can see the impact... patients that I cared for didn’t get the care they could have and should have got.... If I had had a more helpful senior... and that speciality has suffered because I wouldn't go back to work there.. decided I would never work in that speciality.... So

that unit has great difficulty recruiting junior and senior doctors and nurses.... It is constantly understaffed...

Silence....

He carries on...

I did actually raise it in my feedback... of the rotation and raised it in GMC survey... I didn't tackle it head on... it wouldn't have been worth my while... caused me more problems... and it's something I look back on... over the years have felt some guilt about.... Because a lot of people have been subjected to that situation.... And if me or any of these people did something about it, that person would have been retrained or removed... but ... the incentives within the system are not set up to encourage people to speak up about it... when I told my supervisor I was told to forget about it... ignore it... and that's ... that's why the unit has the problem that it has... but that was an unusual case... that was the worst place I worked... I never had anything similar in any other job...

In this story about his previous workplace, Dave describes workplace bullying coming from one of the 'God' like consultants, and how it impacts the system. Dave explains how this bullying consultant was part of the fabric of the place, and how it impacted working environment, and, crucially, patient care as well. Dave makes sure he tells me about not just the 'obvious' impacts of bullying, such as staff-sickness, high turnover, unhappy staff and patients receiving suboptimal care, but also the seemingly 'trivial' impacts as well- people

taking different routes around the hospital to avoid running into the bully. I can only imagine that a lot of worker time and energy was lost to the bully.

Dave explains how he doesn't take action that in hindsight he thinks he should have taken, and that it makes him feel guilty, and how he rationalises the guilt- he goes to great lengths to explain why what he did was the right thing to do for him. I don't think he's explaining it to me- I think he's reminding his own self. He needs to do that to continue his self-narrative of being a good person, because the account of his own inaction that he has surfaced contradicts that self-image. We all do it. I wonder if we stopped doing that.

Dave has never had similar experiences: perhaps admitting that his positionality has changed since then and as he is no longer a trainee, he is perhaps no longer 'at the bottom'. So, when he says that this was an isolated place and other places have been good, I think what he might be saying is that after he ceased to be a trainee, he never encountered similar behaviour. The cause of not encountering similar behaviour could be that place has changed, but also that he is no longer a trainee. He establishes the causal link to the place all too easy, perhaps to repress thinking that he is now a privileged, almost god like person, the elite of the system. I also want to illustrate how the rhetoric of short staffed-ness comes up again and allows for a state of panic to be maintained where this kind of hurtful culture thrives. The worker is made to believe that there is no choice but go on going on. Rationalising, accepting the violence we witness becomes second nature. It becomes normal.

Internalisation of the oppression

“you get shouted at but you get used to it… you were shaking but it worked”- Zoe

Zoe tells me how even though you were verbally abused to the point you were shaking, it was okay, because it got the job done. Zoe rationalises it as something that you need to get used to, eventually you got to like it- because it worked. She doesn’t dare question why it works, or even if she has questioned it she must have had to repress it, for the language of dissent is now locked away in very expensive libraries, themselves governed by the same neoliberal ideology that runs the NHS. We know trauma makes excellent immigrants/workers (see Epilogue).

For Zoe, it makes you a stronger person. Of course we- me and you reader- have the privilege to look at this narrative with a critical eye and fantasise that ‘this becoming stronger’ that Zoe is talking about is the popular euphemism for getting traumatised, part of the ‘be more resilient’ narrative broadcast by neoliberal capitalism; a breaking up of the selfhood so that your identity is recreated through the role assigned to you by the oppressor- but to Zoe, this interpretation is not helpful. She needs to feed her family and this story doesn’t do that. We all need stories to believe in to save ourselves from the existential angst, and this is Zoe’s.

She presents this account of being subject to the strictest of regimes by her boss who would come and check, and the terror of the consequences of a job not well done would send shivers down people. I empathise with it through my own state-violence-traumatised self.

31:36

Zoe: It was done.... She would come and check... back of the lockers top of the lockers... the cleaning was clean... I know it sounds silly... regimented... whatever you want to say.... Infections weren't as bad... because you knew that if she found some rubbish.... She inspected her wards.... I think going back to the ways... you were shaking... but it worked... do you know what I mean...

you knew who was the boss and you did it... whereas now there's this lack of respect... you seem to be friends... you can't be everybody's friends and their boss.... You just can't you just didn't cross that bridge...

32:57

Me: And what would happen if you did cross that bridge…

Zoe: Oh you'll be in trouble. That's the way it was.... You wouldn't dare refuse it.... But then again we didn't have this mess we have now....

33:31

You were shouted at.... But that was it...

34:40

But it's part of the job... you get used to.... Take things like that... you do...It makes you a stronger person.... You go in you do your job and you go home...

Zoe says that it was better to have such an oppressive, abusive boss rather than a seemingly friendly boss, because of the confusion the latter creates. Žižek agrees with her (Ben The Benevolent, 2016), he says that you'd rather have a boss who was screaming at you, rather than one who was smiling at you politely whilst exploiting you.

This also relates to Mark's book (Learmonth, 2019) where he makes the point that the new ways of talking about work are merely a ruse and we should perhaps go back to the old ways because that is sincerer and more honest.

Governing the physical environment

A key aspect with which soft power operates is through being embedded in the system. In Lukes (2004) we learn about the power that is enacted subtly, through the fabric of the system[72]. Space where work happens is important to work, and indeed subtle changes to work places can alter work[73]. Adjusting to physical space for the worker is excruciating and time-consuming, but just like the work of relationships and communications, this work of adjusting to physical space also rarely counts as work.

[72] Altering the work condition is one way, others are managing and controlling the wider conditions of the workplace through design. Our cities, buildings, the whole world is designed for able men (See Kern's Feminist City, 2020) doing 'manly' things.

[73] An example of this is found in the Hawthorne effect, where worker productivity increases in response to subtle changes in the light of the space. Just the reminder of being observed is enough for the worker to feel insecure and sublimate that insecurity into working harder and faster. (Payne and Payne, 2004)

Open-plan or exposed worker?

03:55 Henry

my experience of two organisations that I worked in directly as opposed to briefly parachuted in briefly or whatever... has been that I have actually had really good line managers and... directors and chief execs that are... a bit more accepting to that sort of thing...

so, my first experience of an NHS open-plan office was in my last role. I say NHS because scale is different to a smaller business... so an open-plan is massive and then there's no walls and it is **scary**

(hand and voice gestures are so informative in this monologue. When he says massive, his voice booms, his hands go wide, and there is a sort of confessional tone in the rest of the phrase...)

people are all in there together... and the chief exec is there (he takes one of his hands to a side, motions it as if to pick up a chess piece... or a hand puppet...)

they are not in an office in a corner (hands moving to a side as if to shut a door away...) with walls or glass... they are a part of....

Me- You say massive like how many, like hundred two hundred... fifty ... (The investigative I interrupts but the author I thinks it shouldn't have)

Henry - So on one floor... floor over there... maybe a hundred people in one open-plan area... **where are the boundaries there...laughs..** the **chief exec has a meeting room to one side... but then there is one on the other side that's for the staff to use...** so the only difference is that you have a slightly different set up

(How he is moving his hands in space is beautiful to watch- he is illustrating the expanse of the space, the position of the room etc to emphasise the importance of this)

5:27 Aaallll the people are in there together and I don't know who's who?... and where does... **well where's the restriction... where is the end and the beginning...**

Me- 5:40 **And how did that make you feel.. the being there**

So.. it felt...inclusive... **immediately it was daunting.. when I first started... I have never experienced that... so it was a bit..... as an introvert... it was too much... I needed kind of small...**

and boundaries..

but I think you do that anyway... maybe... when you start in a new organisation you are still figuring out what are the boundaries... where are they... errrmmm.... And so **it was a bit harder because... when there aren't obvious boundaries...** when you are new and you

pushing to test where the boundaries are... you don't find them...giggling...or you get asked loads of questions... when you start as opposed to being told answers... then that's disquieting because you haven't ... figured out yet... how you fit into this thing, and I suppose it's almost like and I don't think there is (a photo- he's now looking for a photo to give the metaphor of his thinking and feeling- he wants a visual metaphor for his emotion- that's the only way to describe these theelings...) **there's a drop of water... the water moves out of the way of the drop when it falls in and then it becomes a part of the rest... and I think that is probably more that what it's like...**

ends at 06:49

As with most of these stories, the thing that makes them all the more powerful is that they come in response to non-questions. I haven't gone in with an agenda to find out about the physical space- I haven't asked him about it. Henry speaks of starting within the NHS and the scale of the office being scary. The office space evokes fear and therefore kicks in the survival instinct. He's probably not had enough changes to articulate and sublimate this fear, or so I feel due to the emphasis he places on every word and how his whole body is talking through gestures and animations. He's not talked about this often enough.

He describes impact of working in the open-plan office on his selfhood. He speaks of being confused about boundaries, about not knowing what is appropriate behaviour. The laughter indicates his unease- the unease he locked away at the time, but it has now become conscious (remember how we said the subconscious drives never lose force, they just hide

away- and given an opportunity, manifest in dream structures). Hundreds of people are working together, in Henry's case, people come and go, belong to different factions are naked together. Scary.

Henry describes the confusion arising from not knowing where the boundaries are, something Žižek warns us (Ben The Benevolent, 2016). Zoe, you'll remember, also touched upon this confusion about how to behave with the boss. This sort of friendly avatar is confusing for the worker, who doesn't know what is expected of him. Before the worker knows it, the shoe comes at her, even if wrapped up in a towel.

Even in a supposedly egalitarian, equal place, there are separate meeting rooms for the CEO and the staff. The Boss can see you all the time, even if you can't see him. Not only does the boss protect his special privilege of privacy, but also interesting is the use of the word- CEO and staff- as if the boss is beyond staff. Lisa describes her boss as having a separate office as well, and through these, we see how the power and its symbols are maintained, even in face of a 'distributed leadership' or open-plan office where 'we are all friends'. All the animals are equal on animal farm, but some animals are more equal than others. As the language on surface becomes more confused, the symbols of power evolve as well. Zoe worked probably 20 years before Henry. What all has changed, Ralph might muse.

Henry starts off by saying it felt inclusive- maybe because inclusivity and equality are the buzzwords of today. Aim for equality, value diversity, include everyone- that is the rhetoric

that works as a defence for the oppressive practices that operate. But the story he tells after saying the buzzwords is anything but those words. Rhetorical irony is the tool of language for our times.

Governing the space: Lisa

Lisa 06:42

I just felt like it was often badly organised as a department.... Not saying it's anyone's fault... I think just the way... three different staff

groups ... all working towards the same goal but different levels of training.... Like 6 teams... different departments... like obs and gyne team.. oncology team... but the bank staff and apprentices didn't have a team so we kind of floated around... **we didn't actually have... desk space... if someone from permanent staff were off we could go sit there but otherwise we just... stood... we just lent against the wall... laughter....**

Lisa talks about the workplace being badly organised, but refuses to hold the boss or the manager accountable for it. This is her defence for lessening the impact of the trauma this boss causes them. By not admitting to herself that some of this could be attributable to the boss, Lisa is in effect trying to tell herself that the boss is not all that powerful- and trying to convince herself that the boss doesn't have power over her.

But this denial, to me, says the contrary. What I hear is that Lisa desperately wants to blame it on someone- I think, going by her relationship with the boss- the boss- but they cannot be named because their name is too powerful and will bring back memories. Trauma operates a bit like Voldemort. If you name it, it comes back.

Lisa's conscious internalised fantasy adjusts to the lower status afforded to them by the divide and rule ideology in action; separating them from the permanent workers. The bank staff are only able to sit down if the permanent staff are absent. If not, they just stood- images of manservants always standing-by come in my head. My ancestors were some, probably.

A lot of nervous anxiety is released through laughter by Lisa- her subconscious keeps her oppression hidden away from her conscious gaze- and when a glimpse of the former is caught, anxiety has to be released through laughter.

The permanent staff can sit. Temporary can't. Chair is a symbol of power. Chair is power.

10:10

Me: were there any other experiences to remind you of not having space...

Lisa	She says-- we were meant to be pulling files... getting them ready.... Sent them over... but the bank staff tended to only pull the files.... 8 hours a day of pulling these big dusty files out and pushing them around .... heavy trolley..... **because the**	

	permanent staff wanted to sit in their chair and prep the file... it was because it was their job which was **fair enough**... because it is their proper job…	

The father I, the father of a daughter I, wants to scream and say to Lisa that "No! It wasn't fair enough!" but I should stop projecting my own manly positional power onto Lisa.

11:54	Me - Did you have any space to go away from this environment.... Any breaks etc
12:05	Lisa - Yeah canteen upstairs but I didn't eat in the canteen because ... didn't eat in the canteen... **permanent staff had canteen clique... so there was like an office park... there was like a Tesco.. it was quite nice to go outside... we got like half an hour for lunch....** Either with other bank staff or read a book... there was a space....

Here Lisa is talking about how the clique formation by the permanent staff kept her and other bank staff out of canteen. The 'snarky' 'cliquey' conversations of the permanent staff colonised the canteen space and prevent the bank staff from feeling at home. I don't blame the permanent staff. They are living their own anxieties. Lisa is living her own anxieties. The responsibility lies with capitalism that has created these divisions. Chair. Food. All seemingly 'neutral' things are forts, flags hoisted upon them.

D.

(Lisa talks about not having somewhere to sit)
I guess it makes sense in an office where there was not enough desk space... to give us jobs that needed standing and wheeling... but like

it doesn't make sense in terms of making your staff happy... 04:44 laughter....

Lisa describes 'reality' of her work and its comparison to the leadership and management rhetoric/ the 'staff wellbeing is important to us' rhetoric.

YOUR CALL IS IMPORTANT TO US WE WILL PICK IT UP AS SOON AS WE CAN YOUR CALL IS IMPORTANT TO US WE WILL ANSWER IT AS SOON AS WE CAN YOUR CALL IS IMPORTANT TO US BUT CLEARLY NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO LISTEN TO YOU YOUR CALL IS IMPORTANT TO US BUT WE WILL WEAR YOU OUT THROUGH WAITING YOUR CALL IS IMPORTANT TO US BUT NOT AS IMPORTANT AS THE MONEY WE MAKE FROM YOUR SOUL YOUR CALL IS IMPORTANT TO US HERE LISTEN TO SOME BEETHOVEN PUSSYCAT THERE THERE DON'T BE ANGRY HERE'S VIVALDI FOUR SEASONS TO KEEP YOU CALM WHILE I SCALPEL YOUR LABOUR OUT OF YOU DID I MENTION YOUR CALL IS IMPORTANT TO US? WHY ARE *you* ***GETTING SO UPPITY I TOLD YOU YOUR CALL IS IMPORTANT TO US!!! WHAT A DIFFICULT CUSTOMER YOUR CALL WAS IMPORTANT TO US BUT LOOK WHAT YOU DID***

She understands how not having space to sit makes sense from an 'efficiency' point of view- a view that wants to get the maximum output out of a person for minimum investment. But from a 'human' perspective, Lisa is aware that if the management was truly concerned about staff wellbeing and happiness, this practice would be absurd. The laughter at the end tells us that she understands this gap between her reality and the received rhetoric, and the absurdity of it only makes her laugh. The absurdity got locked away at some point, and is now manifesting through laughter.

There is anger in her laugh, it's not just that she understands the game of the oppressor, it's that she doesn't care. She doesn't care that she's oppressed- she will not acknowledge the oppressor by calling herself oppressed. In her laughter is also her rebellion.

There is a form of civil disobedience: as if to say that's what they do- they have a word game but so have I. I know the game, I play it anyway- there is a Holloway-ian (2010) 'within and against' in this laughter.

Who controls the sensory input- the radio

Lisa talks about the politics of radio. She mentions that she never really alters the channel of the radio, but doesn't know why.

19:13	Lisa - I mean like when it was somebody's birthday, they'll bring them cake... that was nice...

	Me- That was a personal thing... not paid by the organisation... Lisa - Yes.... And then there were family days.. . like NHS staff family fun days. but I never really heard about that... I mean there was the radio...
20:00	Where was the radio... she says... the radio was in the big scary hall... but I remember in Christmas... they put an extra radio in the office... to boost the Christmas morale.... The radio was normally on the ladder.... Me- who controlled the radio?
20:36	Lisa - Not me... the team leader... he attended to... he used to put on something that was alright .... and then there was this mouthy person... who thought what he put on was crap so he would put on something like the metro... and I was like pushing... not much of a stake in what went on because **I was a bottom feeder**... but we wished the team leader kept the radio control...
21:23	Me - And who got the extra radio... Lisa - I have no idea.... Only worked briefly over Christmas.... It was the office manager.... Actually, no it was one of the two deputy managers...
21:51	Me - Do you know who controlled that one?
21:59	Surprised… Lisa - No, do you know what I never thought to touch it... and it's weird because it was really annoying... actually it was right next to me... I never changed the channel or think to change it... maybe because it was Christmas and I thought everything will have Christmas... I don't know... office mentality... hierarchy...

22:26	Me - you say office mentality.... What's that?
22:36	Lisa -I don't know it's just like you know your place in the office... but I guess that was just me... louder people in the office... didn't seem to have that effect... I sort of sensed my place in the office... didn't touch the radio... feeling people talking about me... you just sort of know your place... but I think it's also to do with sort of not having a team to be put on...

23:12	Lisa -You just don't really feel part of the real office when you don't have a team but also if I didn't necessarily want to be a part of the office. It didn't feel a nice place to be part of...

I hypothesise that it was the inherent authority that the place itself represented. Lisa never even thought of questioning the channel on the radio, because the instinct to question, to change is not encouraged. Also, the radio was in 'big scary' hall. Why put it there? Maybe to ease the scariness? Maybe to reinforce the creepiness of the space? Who knows.

Also note the metaphor of the 'bottom feeder'- a fish in the ocean that feeds off the crumbs dropped by those high above.

You can sense Lisa's internal, Hamlet-ian tussle here. There are multiple narratives conflicting in Lisa, much as in me, much as in everyone else. Because Lisa shared hers with me, I shared mine with you. It's only just.

Part of her wanted to belong, part of her wanted to not belong because it wasn't a nice place to be. I could draw on group dynamics here, but I will draw on Bhabha-ian 'without-within' (Bhabha 2004) struggles of the immigrant who is always on the cusp. Lisa has a love-hate relationship with her workplace/work. We all do.

Space and its health impacts- Lisa.

10:10 Lisa speaks-

8 hours a day of pulling these big dusty files out and pushing them around .... **heavy trolley**..... because the permanent staff wanted to sit in their chair and prep the file... **it was because it was their job which was fair enough... because it is their proper job**

10:11

So like there were times when ten staff were trying to get into these **same small spaces... laughter... dusty... hot...**

so like that was ....

and then when we bundled them up or whatever... there was **no fixed work space... it was a bit confined.**.. the days that I looked most forward to were the days when they pulled me

up... for jobs ... doing like... maternity data entry... coz the woman who did that job was sort of part time... 2 days a week so **I got to sit in her seat and I was like yes!**!

Ends 1138…

Another anecdote…

Later on- 19:38, Lisa circles back to the same topic

I remember the light... it wasn't like a .... purpose built records facility... we just had these huge inappropriate windows... shouldn't have been there... **made the records fade and crumble... keep the curtains closed all the times.... Worked mainly in the summer.... No natural light allowed to us during the day..**. I picked this one like light because it is a bit like clouds of dust... **we had no natural light... and heat... always hot... very hot**... and I picked that one .... because.... Space... files... containers. Trying to get in and out ... **it's weird trying to keep like office politeness.** trying to get around each other with heavy objects... like oops ... sorry...

ME: You mentioned dust- did you get dust masks... tell me a bit more...

Lisa - No **we didn't get dust masks... I think it did affect my chest actually... I have eczema and that used to flare up... dust mites... but you get that from filing anyway...** we got loads of health and safety training... like insane amounts... but it was the hardest... like physically the hardest job I have ever done... like I've done.... I've done bar work... teacher... both quite

energetic physical... but this was still more physical... **I'd get home like 5 o clock, fall asleep on the sofa... in broad daylight wake up and get back to work…**

The physical issue was that **I was doing the same task over and over again... for 8 hours... pulling records... really heavy... when you talk about it it doesn't sound that hard... but it was like... being in asda pushing a heavy trolley for 8 hours.**

I got this... in my foot... one day I was walking to the bus stop... and **I was crippled**.... I had to go to walk in... and I phoned work... and **I was like can't come to work but inside... (in hushed voice)... I was so like yay don't have to go to work....**

Foot flaring up... doctors.... Nothing wrong with work.... Just the **repetition... it was....** Long pause**... hard....**

Me - ... What about the permanent staff... were their tasks repetitive...

Lisa - I guess **yeah they were repetitive**... we bundled the files... but the permanent staff would go to the shelf... and prep them for clinics ... various comparative stuff... so yes repetitive... **but they were doing sitting down... whereas we were kind of doing it up on our feet.**.. coz the bank staff really came in summer... so I suppose permanent staff pull files anyway... but when we came it became our job...

Lisa is dismissive of the hardship she has suffered at work. There's no way to capture that except tell you that her tone was as if to say, 'well I got on with it, I did it'. Censorship perhaps, or perhaps a feeling of victory over adversity. She wants me to not think about it as something big, that's the sense I get from how she spoke. Even though in her tone she is

very dismissive of the physicality of the work and the hardships she endured, the details to me (my middle-class author self, not to my self who cleaned toilets and pushed and pulled food trolleys for hospitals…. Come to think of it I suppressed that hardship I endured similar to how Lisa suppressed it) seem quite harsh.

Lisa described being so tired that as soon as she arrives home at 5, she would just hit the sofa and fall asleep. Dust, mites, diseases flaring up, lack of proper protective equipment- all of these seem quite harsh conditions of work- particularly considering NHS is one of the richest organisations in the world, consumes disproportionately high amount of natural resources for health protection of a very limited number of individuals.

It is also quite interesting that Lisa says that the pushing of the heavy trolley is like working on the aisles in Asda. On surface, it may appear that she is trying to position herself above the Asda worker- as if she is saying "I wanted to work for the fancy brand NHS but I instead ended up working for in an asda-esque job".

However, I don't think that's what she is implying there. When I immerse myself in her story, listen to it again and again, I feel like the reason she uses the Asda comparison is to help me understand her work context. As she begins to tell this story, she becomes aware that what she is describing is not the NHS people see. She sees the investigative PhD student me. She, subconsciously becomes aware that if she has to communicate this hardship to me, she has to look for a metaphor that I can understand. She is being kind. She

has, in her subconscious, picked a metaphor that she thinks I would understand. She doesn't know that I have done similar work for a similar organisation- she has no reason to- that self is hidden from her- she only sees the investigative PhD student I.

Anyway, Lisa knows that in popular consciousness, the image of NHS that is depicted is either of nice buildings equipped with proper offices- this sort of image is easily encountered in NHS brochures- this is the image the NHS likes to keep in its consciousness- a bit like all UK Universities on their brochures print sunny skies.

The image that you don't see, is that of worker bees toiling night and day for a pittance. That's not the NHS people clap for. They clap for 'heroes.' Citizens of the UK would probably call these conditions of Lisa's work Dickensian, but for me, I haven't read Dickens, but through my immigrant identity, through my knowledge of the Coolie (Dabydeen, Kaladeen and Ramnarine, 2018; Kaladeen and Dabydeen, 2021), I can say that her conditions were immigrant-ian[74].

As Berger said, the disease is Capitalism (Sperling, 2018, p187)- and Lisa demonstrates how diseases in the individual are created by capitalism (also see (Dastagir, no date; Malachi, 2020; Prins *et al.*, 2015; Haymarket Books, 2020; Benach, 2021)). If Lisa goes to the Doctor,

[74] Just like Lisa gave me a metaphor, that of the ASDA worker, I gave you the metaphor of Dickensian, even while in my idiolect I claimed that I am not going to give you it! I am deploying the power of inception that language carries. The author *I* is proud, the author *I* is a bit cheeky, as my daughter calls me.

she probably gets diagnosed with eczema/allergy/dehydration/exhaustion. I doubt that she gets diagnosed with 'oppression.' Separation of the systems that care for the person into multiple bureaucratic systems in the name of specialisation creates further barriers for the individuals in accessing them and resolving the deeper issues. The symptoms- health illnesses, housing issues, rent issues, debt issues, are all jurisdiction of different bodies[75] that rarely talk to each other effectively, and through these divisions, the power is able to carry on its capitalist action. One can imagine a precarious worker like Lisa struggling in other facets as well- rent, debt, education perhaps- maybe not specifically Lisa, but many similar to Lisa would find themselves in this position.

Lisa's example here is about health illnesses- but one could easily swap health illnesses in this anecdote for financial issues, relationship issues, mental health issues, wellbeing issues- we can call it anything we like- and we do- but all off these names are a defence mechanism our collective consciousness employs to hide that the disease is capitalism. The cures we dole out will be 'resilience' training, 'anti-depressants', 'financial management advice', 'self-help'- we will do all we can do avoid admitting that we as society are defunct. See Epilogue for a word from Fanon about this.

The evidence of rationalisation is in multiple places. For example- it is 'fair enough' that the conditions of the permanent staff are better. It is the order of the place, it is a truth ingrained in the fabric of the organisation, it is not questionable. Then we see it again

[75] Double meaning here….

regarding her illnesses- "you get from filing **anyway**." These diseases are normal, they are a given, you will get these diseases from filing anyway, much like if you are sweeping the chimney's you will get coughs and lung cancers. Look at another face of the same beast- If you are doing the work of being an immigrant, you will get anxiety, you will get depression, you will get PTSD, you will get adjustment disorder, these are a given.

I'm a POC BAME DOA PTSD

I'm a POC BAME DOA PTSD

Broken by the empire, raised by MTV

But still, it's fish and chips for tea

"Fish and Chips" from "We Are Lady Parts" (Match Lyric, no date). What a show!

This is similar to the logic we apply as sedentary workers in higher education- we will inevitably get repetitive strain syndromes, lopsided bodies, painful backs, and we get 'support' for all of these. But, while we are inflicted by the same disease as Lisa, we have more power. We have the power of the pen. We have the power of safer houses, more incomes, better living conditions. The god of capitalism is kinder to us right now. But, it won't always be. We are not free until all of us are free- remember Audre Lorde. So act while you can. I am trying, you try too. Really try. Write that letter. Write that paper. Change that policy. Ask that question. Send that email. Do not turn away from your positional power. I beg you. That, is the real conclusion. Stop reading, do something. Destruction of

selves in work in a capitalist system is a given-so when the system pretends to care for worker's wellbeing- that's when it really adds insult to injury. That, my dear, that is political correctness gone mad.

The confined space meant office politeness struggles- as many people struggle to work through small spaces. It is not hard to imagine that these conditions could easily breed sexual harassment or, to use Lisa's polite term, 'inappropriate behaviour'. Indeed, Lisa describes working in some really hot and uncomfortable spaces. But, as we have seen, she must still look after the male gaze and 'not show too much flesh'. Her physiological need to cool down and stay alive is less important than protecting the man's gaze. Honestly, how disgusting are men! I speak as one: very.

Lisa is hurt, and I imagine in a fair bit of discomfort. But her reaction to that is not to be sad about the hurt that body has endured, but she tells me about the sense of happiness, of freedom, of victory she feels inside. She doesn't use the language of Marx or fancy academic critical theory, but the combination of the words and the way she expresses them speaks volumes of dissent.

The hurt that her body has endured is not a personal illness- it is a political event of dissent. All the doubts about whether her job is actually painful or not, are taken away by the physical pain of getting hurt. Now finally, she can say to herself that the job has hurt her. Doubt is no longer. Physical pain of broken bones is reassurance that your suffering is real. There is liberation in that conclusion.

She is not only jubilant that she escapes the exploitation, but also that she gets to name her discomfort. A crippling sense of uneasiness due to being dehumanised and exploited is hard to articulate. "I am hurt" due to working hard is easy to articulate and the worker can make sense of their identity through the physical pain. That doesn't mean it is easy- as Lisa says, putting great gravitas on the phrase- "It was.....hard."

And, she is joyous. She can finally claim to be 'sick' and be off work. She is not sad that her body hurts, she smiles because she is denying the capitalist an opportunity to oppress her. She knows that she is hurting, but she knows that even if for a brief moment, the capitalist machine is going to hurt. She likes that.

The politics of 'uniforms'

Lisa

Lisa - how we had to dress differently than everyone else in the building... we looked a bit grubby than everyone else in the building... **even though I am pretty sure that they are same pay scale as us... we are still the losers of the NHS building..**.. So when lunch... sit with each other... everyone else looked cleaner.... Nice work wear... something about clothes we wore that made us look like freaks...laughter 14:52

Me- so tell me did you have uniforms or something… tell me a bit more about that…

14:55

Most of us wore blue polo shirts with NHS on and had to wear black trousers or skirts and comfy shoes coz we were on our feet all day... the team leaders wore red.. and then... **oh yeah... this was a bit weird... so the ... just within the records department just in that office entry level staff wore blue polo shirts the team leaders wore red polo shirts... which is... laughs... they didn't get paid any more... laughs... they just kind of like... you know worked harder I guess....** 1544

And then the... two office managers... wore... sort of like checked blouses... so still kind of a uniform but a bit of a step up in a uniform and then the main... manager... didn't wear any uniform... so they were all sort of uniform wearing ranks within the office.

Yeap. (in a way as if to signify she's satisfied with the answer) 16:06

Me-

And how did people in payroll dress

Lisa

Nicely... like they were at work... office wear... people like to dress nicely to work... it makes you feel that your job is a bit more worthwhile if you dress for it.. whereas if you just put on like a dusty polo.... Laughter... it definitely showed... coz we definitely were like the losers of the building.. which is weird...

16:52

Me- and that's despite having the same salary, you said…

Lisa - Yes because I know me and the guy who I started with (in the payroll) we were on the same and I know that a girl she'd done a law degree... she moved from records to HR... yes for the most part it was the same ... same NHS pay band.... I think there was another thing... **people who did have degrees who didn't have degrees.**.

Lisa 23:10

she power dressed...she had like these big heels...

Lisa here speaks about wearing different clothes and the impact on her self-esteem in relation to her work. At first, she is comparing her job to others- for example with other people who earn the same (and therefore by capitalist logic contribute the same amount to patient care) but are dressed better so when the different professions come together, she ends up feeling inferior because of how the system dictates she should dress up.

The uniform, the way to dress up, is a signifier of who is the winner and who is the loser. The people who earn the same money as Lisa are still winners, because they are dressed nicely. She explains that the difference exists not just in the different professions but also in the same job - she understands that and expresses her dissent through laughter. She then explains how as you go further up in the ranks, your uniform gets 'nicer' until eventually you are not required to wear a uniform- a metaphorical equivalent to being free-er.

Medical Secretaries- all dressed the same- Zoe

Zoe Medical secretaries (22 minutes in) ... they all looked like that.... All wear the same hair same uniform...

Zoe describes medical secretaries that all dressed the same, same hair, same uniform, presumably in a system where anyone is replaceable by anyone. Zoe then speaks of different groups of nurses working on the ward and the subtle differences:

Zoe - Student nurse white hat... I year- blue stripe 2 year 2 stripes.... Similarly... staff... stripes.... Now you wear scrubs.... Staff nurse wears blue scrubs... light green dark green

burgundy..... if you wore green you were a ward nurse.... Then other colour staff nurse... but now they all wear scrubs... but everyone wears scrubs now and you don't know who is who ...

(sounds miffed)

Zoe is talking about the confusion amounting from everyone wearing scrubs. The surface similarity may portray similarity, but doesn't take away the inherent differences. This is an example of how the political correctness creates confusion for workers (Žižek in Ben The Benevolent, 2016) even through how they dress, leaving workers confused as to how to react. Uniforms serve multiple purposes. They are divide and rule in action- but they also remind the worker that they are 'Uniform'- they are all surrogates for one another. All replaceable, as Zoe seems to indicate.

Breathing Space

Let's practice some mindfulness

and build our resilience

Neo-colonial Health Service

UK NHS has, since its inception, been reliant on non-UK staff. NHS is a Neo-colonial institution- even more so as NHS employees are given work of border guards (See (Docs Not Cops, no date)). Suggest looking up Arianne Shahvisi's work (2018a, 2018b) as a good

starting place. And now, in 2021, our beloved Boris is trying to get the 'immigrants' back (Syal, 2021; Henley, 2021). The cockroach[76] is now the saviour.

A lot has changed since I wrote this section initially (2018-19) and when I am editing it (2021). There is now a documentary on BBC iPlayer on the contributions of non-European people of colour to the NHS (Olusoga, 2021). The anti-immigrant rhetoric prevalent pre-Brexit has somewhat subsided, although the surveillance remains. Still, some relief.

The Non-EU student contributes approx. £100,000 each to the UK economy (Adams, (2021b); Meredith, (2021)). NEWS has calmed down a little bit- after George Floyd's murder, the protests that ensued have highlighted the racism and prompted UK Higher Education Institutions (e.g. see Durham University, who 'updated their diversity pages' in 2021) to release anti-racism statements and do anti-racism/decolonial work. And I am plugged into that ecosystem, doing what I can.

The British welfare state, including NHS, was built on, and continues to survive on colonialism. Bhambra and Holmwood (2018) describe how welfare state is rooted in colonialism, and after the ill-fated accident with the Windrush generation, we have been reminded of the continued contribution of the colonies/commonwealth worker to the British society and specifically NHS. The same continued with the SAS (staff grade, associate specialist and specialty) doctors, and continues to this day.

[76] Fun fact. Cockroaches have survived eons. They predate dinosaurs. Dinosaurs got extinct, but cockroaches still thrive. One might suggest that if humanity can shed its delusions of grandiosity, they might find that its these critters that rule the world. They survive on a lot less resource than us, and yet raise their young and their species survive. Cockroaches might outlast us too.

Since I am situated with CMS, a little self-criticism: even the 'critical' factions play a sort of sibling rivalry game of UK vs US- the indigenous is largely ignored (i.e. we forget that the US we speak of, has not been built on empty land but by exploiting the native Americans who even today struggle with the after effects of settler colonialism. In the UK we do a lot of we do this, Americans do that- but we don't know what the 'American' does because the native American is not allowed in the room! Unless we speak explicitly of 'Indigenous', like (Driskill et al., 2011). My positionality within these crossroads is problematic and cause of great existential angst to me. I criticise the system, but I also benefit from it. I am within what I am against. With all of that in mind, what I want to draw your attention to is how the coloniality mythology runs in the everyday chit chat.

Dave- 5 min in- "Medicine is a global set up. Cooperating with people all around the world…

Sequential and random access… you could take it in its literal sense… data can be accessed on as required basis…"

"Or you can take it as a representation of

the way data is stored in servers... ""

Dave says 'Medicine' is a 'global set up'. We know that healthcare and health outcomes globally are widely different. When Dave speaks about medicine being a global setup, he is hinting at the colonial forces in action within the world that the NHS benefits from. I wrote

this pre-covid, but post-covid, these inequalities are easier to see. Who has the jab, who has had two jabs and wants a third one, who is still waiting (WHO, 2021).

Like a lot of Britain, Dave suffers from selective-colonialism-amnesia: the dirty work of colonialism and neo-colonialism is hidden. He doesn't have the language of colonialism/neo-colonialism/decolonisation. He sees medicine as global: he benefits from working with people far and wide. Medicine hides away where it has colonised indigenous knowledge, for example of vaccines, in gynaecology, in surgery (Chakrabarti, 2013). Medicine is a global setup- just not an egalitarian one, but a colonial one.

Shahvisi (2016) writes NHS recruits a huge number of staff- doctors and nurses from around the anglosphere. Shahvisi (Shahvisi 2018a, b) goes on to explain that these staff are offered worse pay and living conditions than the citizens and their training is neglected. They are often made to give back huge chunks of their salaries in 'immigration' fees- a hand giveth, another taketh away. Even though they have studied English and studied through the same medical system, they are reminded of their inferiority by asking them to take multiple tests and English language tests- while the fellow European- even though studying in different language- are not subject to similar conditions.

But it's not just people. Hardware that the NHS runs on- through the guise of private companies-comes through exploitation of the global south (Bridle 2018). Another way to understand it is how we complain that the greenhouse emissions of China are high- but a lot of what China produces ends up in our homes, so whose greenhouse emissions are they really! We are very good at shipping our waste to the Orient (McVeigh, 2021).

The routes are still there, the only thing that has changed is the commodity. Earlier it used to be silk and spices, now it is data. So yes, once you connect the dots, you begin to understand that neo-colonial exploitation is essential to NHS's survival- an organisation that privileges the health of a global minority over the many. I am equally guilty, by the way- as soon as I get an ouchie I run to the doctors to avail of the 'free' treatment.

Neo-coloniality of travels

Ralph says	That reminds me I was looking to raise money... go to (holiday abroad) ... it was interesting because people I was working with... highly educated travelled the world...

Ralph talks about another colonial privilege- of travelling abroad. A British passport is one of the most powerful passports in the world. Ralph here takes for granted his ambition to travel the world, without understanding that not many can have this ambition. What gives Ralph the right to this dream, except his coloniality? I daren't possess such a dream. Not many can.

This is how even ordinary people partake in 'evil'. We like to romanticise some myths and glorify them as evil (Hitler was bad, slavery was bad, but they are gone so it is all ok, good

has prevailed, we are okay) to defend ourselves against the banality of the evil of our current actions. For example It is much safer to look to the past and romanticise and judge, for example, Nazism, as that enables us to shut our eyes to the humanitarian crisis that is currently unfolding, e.g. the ~~refugee~~ crisis of narrow nationalism. We lament those who watched from aside in the past, but we don't do anything when the same atrocity is reproduced beneath our nose.

It is easy to lament the violence inducted in the name of religion in past as that allows us to suppress the admission of the horrid way we treat people differently if they belong to the different religion of nationality

Map of the world

A few people commented upon the map of the world image. Nothing said as such, but we must acknowledge how the map of the world is representation of our colonial histories, normalisation of our colonial pasts and present. What we call map of the world is the Mercator projection produced to allow European sailors to navigate the world (Villanueva and Gonzalo, 2000). It shows Africa a lot smaller than it is, and puts Europe at the centre. Just another example of reification of the myth of what the world is in the image of the coloniser. Beyond this thesis, but see also a review of Eurocentrism in Maps by Hodgkinson (1991). Maps are the structures of geography. Language is the structure of PhD.

“Reminds me of the map of the world” Ralph

Boy in dirty city

Henry- 16:27	I was more drawn to the environment this person is in than this (now pointing at the boy) environment... its darker and ..... looks..... I don’t know it looks dirty... whatever environment he’s in... all this digging that’s going on.....eeeerrrrmmmmm.... ”

Similarly, another example of the implicit colonial gaze is the description of a picture by Henry as dirty. It’s the picture of a young person, standing in front of raw material/rubble.

Now, it could have been described as busy, full of work being done- the word dirty is particularly offensive to me because it is often used to describe ‘brown’ places. This left me wondering if it was a picture that was of a ‘British’ construction site, would he have described the picture as dirty. Maybe I am being ‘too sensitive’. Maybe others aren’t sensitive enough.

Before we go further, I want to acknowledge that I will accept the accusation that I am seeing too much in these photos- although I do anticipate that such an accusation will

perhaps not come from a politically black person, but from a politically white person- which I am afraid will only prove my point about colonialism denial. To a lot of us on this side, it's all common knowledge. In Hindi, we have a saying- (translated) 'if you've burned your tongue sipping on hot milk once, the next time you are offered yoghurt, you'll sip carefully'[77].

Secondly, I do want to say that these are everyday people- they are not bad people. The point I am trying to make is how banality of evil lives within all of us and these are the thoughts we push away to our subconscious and often find easy to project them to groups that are visibly other- such as politically 'different'. These are not 'bad people'. This is our normal. I have my own mess.

Perhaps a good example of this comes from Olusoga documentary, Britain's Forgotten Slave Owners (Olusoga, 2015). It speaks of how everyday normal people owned shares in slave business. Similarly, 200 years from now, there will hopefully be a documentary- Britain's neo-colonialism beneficiaries which might name and shame some people/institutions of present day. Not that capitalism has any shame.

[77] Doesn't work as well in English translation, but there you go. The English equivalent is of course, 'once bitten twice shy'. I privilege the Hindi one, because of its detail, its viscerality, its visuals. The English one is almost describing an encounter with a pet cat. Just doesn't carry the same trauma. You will remember the section on trauma- where I distinguish the White middle-class trauma and the trauma of colour. This distinction in idioms is a great example.

Neoliberal story of diversity and inclusion: Henry

Henry

4:41

... okay.... So... When I think about that, **diversity and inclusion** come to mind...so in my team... originally... not so much now... there were concerns that we were not diverse enough... we were **all Male and we are all white**...so... we were asked... do we need to start considering our **inclusion** practices here...and yes there are two dimensions here- **gender and colour**... but how are we doing in other dimensions... **in terms of our cognitive diversity we are all quite diverse... we all see the world through totally different lenses.**.. and that's really helpful when we are working together.... And yet **now we have had two different people join who are different in their ethnicity and their origin of birth and that brings a completely different lens...** so I think we are getting there... and we are starting to use that...and I am also aware of bias... in the sense that... when diversity is more visual... then as with the initial question of well your team is not as diverse as it could be... and I am like well hang on **there are things below the surface... that contribute to how we see the world**...ummmm also it can affect in the other direction.... So when we see each other and when we work together I wonder what biases come to mind with the diversity that is in the room... so I think some obvious ones are....mmm… He interrupts himself "is this...Am I going too deep into things..

Me- No its absolutely fine... tell me tell me..." I am literally purring begging

Henry - So, we got a colleague that just onward joined... he's Asian by background... there's certain things

he doesn't believe in for example that I assumed that he would do because of his background and origin and I am dealing with my own biases WOW why hang on why did I assume this... just because of how he looked or his name.... So it is a healthy challenge back to me... the more the team is diverse... not just how the team is diverse but also how the team works together but also how we see the world.

Silence.... After a while he goes "Shall I pick up another photo...?" I say "yeah sure"

This is a good example of the rhetoric of equality that prevails within the neoliberal systems, and how attempts are made to, without addressing structural issues, increase 'representation' based on skin colour (or visible gender). Indeed, if Kehinde Andrews (2019; 2021) was to be believed, the west is built on racism and therefore it is naive to seek redressal of structural issues of inequality by the west, because it thrives upon them.

We see how much emphasis this person pays on the background and skin colour- he fetishizes the presence of non-European, laments there not being enough of them, and yet doesn't speak of the neo-colonialism within the UK and the NHS (and you and I know, reader, this exists within the HE as well. That's where in 2021, I am working. So you see, this thesis did become my becoming!) but focuses on the visibility of the different colour. This fetishization takes up various names- representation, attainment gap, equality and diversity,

diversity and inclusion etc and ignores the structures that create inequality. It regards putting Obama or Javid/Patel in charge of USA and Home Office of UK respectively as victories of equality (Andrews, 2019). This is the organisational equivalent of saying "I am not racist, look I have a black friend." or "I am not a homophobe, I have gay friends" etc.

A sincere and unapologetic critique of this appears in 'Feminism for the 99 percent (Fraser, Bhattacharya and Arruzza, 2019). The authors talk about the dangers of the message these rhetorics reinforce and how putting brown people or women in charge of oppressive regimes is the opposite of feminism, as Judith Butler and Simone De Beauvoir would hopefully agree.

Data vs People

Data dehumanises Narrative restores

Reductionism reduces Constructionism constructs

Positivist reductionism removes from the complexity of the individual being and tries to replace the complex human with traits, features, characteristics, behaviours, and so on. Dehumanised selves, then, present to us under the euphemism of data. Data comes from and is about people. But whenever we speak of data, we ignore the person and value the number. Let's see some examples.

Let's start with Dave. Dave is a doctor, and as it transpires, enjoys the science and data

aspect of his job. This example below captures an interesting moment in our conversation. This is 7 minutes in, and Dave has so far been interpreting the photos in terms of data. For example, here he says there is the interconnectedness of systems and how within such a huge organisation, there is a lot of data flowing around.

You will note reader, that what follows below is my exasperation and a suggestion- a departure from free association, one might argue, and I will agree. As I am transcribing this, I am beginning to think that there is a lot of mention of data- there is a lot of language of numbers- reducing the human experience to a digit.... Even as I am analysing it, I am thinking gosh where are the people in this story? When I was in that room, I must have felt that same anguish, because I say a thing- I offer a challenge as you can see. I ask a question- and what about the people you work with.

I hope you can empathise with my exasperation. See how Dave talks about healthcare organisation with 7000 members of staff and covering a population of one million- and depressingly, when he sees interconnected dots, he doesn't see these people, he sees data flowing. This glaring repression of humanity of the patient and the worker within the eyes of the doctor compels me to ask him about the people.

And as soon as I do, he shifts. He shifts in his seat, he shifts in his narrative. He explains that these interconnected dots could also represent interpersonal relationships. But not only this, he retraces through most of the photos he had picked and spoke about previously, and reinterprets them in terms of interpersonal relationships and people, instead of in terms of data- as previously interpreted. He's seen how he's been thinking data all the time, and is defensive, feels the need to correct his narrative.

This to me represents a moment of insight. My challenge has made him realise how his narratives are all about data and how people are absent from them. To me, the going back over the cards looked at before and revising the narratives from before is almost an apology and a revision of self narrative to accommodate a bit more of the humanity of people he works with. .

Dave- 7min - Dave has picked up a photo with interconnected lines-

Dave - This one shows the interconnectedness of systems... and you know this is a healthcare organisation with 7000 members of staff... covering a population of a million people

(Picks up a 'pie chart')

This one just shows a way of visualising data- there is a lot of data flowing around in the institution...

7:15 **Me- "And what about the people you work with..."**

7:25 (Dave is defensive now.) Dave - I think they're... crucially important... ummmmm...I think some of these things show those interpersonal relationships...

I almost think of each of these things as representing a person... (pointing to the dots with a finger) ... Each of those dots represent a person... staff member or patient... so each of those lines would be an interpersonal relationship... you can see some people have more interpersonal relationships than others...

(He continues revisiting the cards he's picked before and talks about every card now as if it represents people and relationships.)

We focus too much on data: Henry

Henry says in an apologetic, repenting manner, that "we focus too much on data". This is a strange confession within an NHS where the rhetoric of patient centred care and person-centred care are widely spoken about and written about.

Henry 9:30

lots of data.... we **probably focus too much on the data**...9:41 (this sentence said very slowly, with lots of pauses...) silence...

The slowness of utterance of this sentence is an indication of its importance. Data here represents information reductively obtained from people within a masculine, scientific

systems. Data represents dehumanised selves[78]. Henry has realised that and he doesn't like it. Maybe we will realise this in Higher Education one day. This is such a timeless, border-less story, captures the mood of so many organisations today.

Romesh tells us a similar story. You'll remember how he told us that time to talk has been taken away. I present another anecdote from Romesh.

Romesh 18:38

Pineapple[79].... (photo) this has nothing to do with pineapple but fruit... I have a lady who only eats strawberry....

A lot of the times nurses were saying like she could have been depressed... she could have been... **but when you had a chat with her**- she says that she didn't like most of the food that was offered... even at home she loved strawberries and ate that…

It's just a reflection of the frustrations we have when the g**eneral nurses are too fast- goal driven... they want to tick boxes... but they don't have time to have these conversations....**

[78] A reflective point here. The irony of the dirty work of research, where individual stories are converted to data in academia is not lost on me. When I did arrive at this realisation, it caused me a great deal of discomfort and this dictates a lot of my performativity now. Not only have I tried to do as much justice as possible to the stories I received, I am aware that in the act of writing this work, I have undoubtedly failed at preserving the wholesome humanity of the people who I interviewed. This is not an excuse and in no way a justification. Re-search, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes (2012), is a dirty word.

[79] Also notice how even a pineapple photograph can bring to the fore story of dehumanised patients and workers.

This is an example of commodification and capitalisation of the vocation of nurses. Nurses put a lot of effort in and yet the work context they receive forces them to become 'goal driven', wanting to tick boxes and not with time to have any conversations.

Again, this may be a small anecdote and a scientist may say that this is just one example, not representative of the majority. I would disagree. It is a thread pulled from the collective subconscious.

While Romesh was upset about the lack of interaction between nurses and patients, Vick (see below) is unhappy about similarly dehumanised communication between staff. He speaks of how he and his team receive directions from their bosses via email. In spite of all the talk of flattening hierarchies, distributive leadership and so on, the way Vick's work works is that people up at the top plan and decide something and let the workers below know what is expected of them.

Vick 25:10

Vick - Quite a lot of the time the interaction was via email.... **It wasn't even... a proper interaction....** It was just an email saying... dear band 7s ... this is what us band 8s have discussed in our previous weekly meeting... this is what we think needs changing.... Please ensure you put this into practice.... That was kind of it.... There was no asking... like if you have any questions come back to us.... **It was kind of like... this is what we have discussed... this is what you need to do...** there were a couple of band 7s who would talk to band 8s I

guess... **people who got shown a little bit of favouritism... maybe ... were seen to show a bit more potential than some of the other band 7s.... so the interactions were minimum.... Personally I did not like that…**

Zoe used to work in the NHS several years ago and witnessed the transition from times when "everything was hand done" to use of computers (see table below). She points out that there is "too much focus on the computers" and her narrative and examples offer an insight into the fragmentation of the 'human' connection after mechanisation of work. Fromm (e.g. 2011), Freire (2017) and Bellow (2001) have warned us of this dehumanisation.

Unlike Henry and Dave, who think all this data is great, Zoe disagrees and feels hindered by computers. It may be an accident, but it is interesting that the gods of the organisation, the leaders of the organisation see computers and data as romantic, amazing tools, while the worker/woman on the ground sees them as shackles. Zoe doesn't need to read fancy critical theory papers about how mechanised way of working on computers is gendered (Muhr and Rehn, 2015). She is wise enough. Instead of 'giving' Zoe a voice, CMS needs to learn from Zoe.

The computer may be sold as an improver of working condition, but the human is chained to it- it restricts the humanity- the emotions, the connection. It makes us all uniform. We academy writers may not need to wear uniforms to the workplace, but the computers are doing that job for us. If our writing is our self, Computers are making us all Uniform.

18:36	Zoe - Computers... when I started.. everything was hand done... this day and age.. **too much focus on computer**... too much time spent on computer... whereas then everything was written on round and medical secretary to type it up… **computers have made it less personal... do you know what I mean....** **People get sicker .... everybody is chained... to the desk....**

Zoe offers important insight into how this computerisation has affected training of nurses. She explains how nowadays you don't get hands-on experience, which means the nurses training today get less contact with the patients during their training, than they used to.

Zoe - I think the way nurses used to train, nurses... nurses on wards... **now a days you don't get hands on experiences...** student nurses all the time... they had to work... now... they are only there to observe... I think the old way was better . . you learnt hands on.. **anything you should learn hands on…** **Later on… 23:45** **Now people qualify but without hands on care... you have qualifications but you have no hands-on experience...** I think the care was better then... definitely...

Zoe thinks the care was better then, and you can understand why. While the use of simulators may be making healthcare professionals today more 'proficient', there is an argument that due to lesser human contact, the healthcare professions are becoming less 'caring'.

Ralph worked through similar times and recounts similar story of dehumanisation through focus on IT. He had to learn to use the computers. Or perish. But see how when the computers came out, the work of learning, the dirty work of struggling with the new technology was outsourced to the secretaries (predominantly women) than directors (predominantly men). You will remember me recounting Solanas' womb envy (Solanas, 2004)- here it is in action.

7:51- Ralph

He points to a photo with different people interlinked-

screenshot 7:51 "Records… laughter... Obviously....We were coming into a time when IT [information technology] was coming in more and more... before that it was all paper...so watching IT coming in… by the time I finished, the IT was really quick... IT was a massive improvement in the NHS... **I learnt to use a**

computer properly... coz I had to"

(He talks about other things, but then towards the end, comes back to this point about computers)

52:00

He asks me- “Does it work, is that any good for you?”

Me “Ya, ya ya... everything is good... how did it work for You?”

Ralph: “I don’t know I think it was interesting looking at

pictures... I don’t know… time’s gone by... anything that may have been significant has disappeared... initially when I started... there were no computers... **directors had secretaries... they didn’t work on the computers... massive**

things have changed… didn’t have emails... they were all getting computers... we had to learn to send email... some people were alright but others not... writing was on the wall... that was the start of downsizing from health authorities to PCTs and so on and so on...”

ME- “how did the secretaries respond to...”

He... “I think they were given other roles... there was no downsizing... **you go behind the door and there were 4 typists there… you don’t see that anymore**”

“When I started we were the Family Health Service Authority then became Health Authority then became PCT in a period of 3-4 years... **massive change...an awful lot of change... nothing particularly evolved through that change.. I don’t think it was a major upset.**.. just a

change of direction... it was a few years ago so I can't remember... **but on the surface everything was fine..... of course 3000 down to 45 that was a massive change... I was offered retirement...or outsourced... I took early 53:30 retirement.**.. choose my destiny..."

Silence, lots of umm and aah, tutting...

Looks at another photo… "**nuclear explosion… volatile... which I don't think the NHS is but maybe**

it is..."

56:00 "That's it, I think"

If the worker is ill, who is the Patient?

When we think of the patient, we think of the person who seeks treatment- the one who (in the medical sense) suffers the symptoms, and seeks cure. But in a psychodynamic sense, the healthcare professional is also the patient- seeking validation, seeking authorisation, seeking dissipation of their own psychodynamic urges.

Patient or the therapist?

Vick describes a case of role reversal where the patient becomes the therapist to the ailing worker. He describes how levity is brought to staff through interactions with patients- the medically qualified therapists seemed to be existentially healed by the patients. I felt like it was a thread connecting Vick's narrative as a whole. Vick indicates that though the patient is technically the patient due to their illness, in some cases, the patient is empathetic to the pain of work and acts as a therapist for the therapists themselves- suffering from the disease of capitalism-restricted work contexts.

Listening is curing By listening to me you heal me. Thank you.

This is consistent with Menzies Lyth's findings about nurses in her ethnography (1960), where she finds that sometimes patients would act to heal the nurses. In this case, the patient is described by Vick as a cheerful person who united the divided factions through humour to diffuse some of the anxieties the workers pick up in their everyday work around death in a capitalist institution. As Berger said, the disease is capitalism (Sperling, 2018, p187).

Concluding notes

Radical happiness

If Capitalism Hurts, Radical rebellion is the Cure.

Here's a 'found prose[80]' inspired section that is presented as an imaginary dialogue between Segal, Leader and I.

Segal:

> "Freud ends where he had begun: by noting the inevitable sorrow of human existence…Today, we are less likely to be diagnosed as suffering from hysteria. However, many have argued that the widespread depression we hear so much about is the cultural equivalent of hysteria. Depression has become an expanding blanket enfolding all manner of individual miseries and fears. …" (Segal, 2018)

Leader:

> "The belief in quick fixes for depression, whether through psychotropic drugs or CBT, are themselves merely a 'mirror of the malady' itself. The daily pill or the individual cognitive goal of replacing negative thoughts with positive ones primarily reflects back the bleak image of us all as separated units … each … taken to be an

[80] A form of prose poetry where one puts 'found' words together. This passage is inspired from the form.

> isolated agent cut off from others and driven by competition for goods and services in the marketplace rather than by community and shared effort". (Leader, 2009 p9).

Gaurish:

And we are back to where we started- there's no such thing as individual! So maybe, there's no need to call for the workers of the world to unite: they already are! We just need to find the connections! Does it mean that the Marxist call for workers to Unite can be reinterpreted as not a call for individuals to unite but for all of us to find the resonances we already have beneath the surface. If I let my guard down, like I have in this thesis. I can try and resonate with other people- as I have tried to do with all of my interviewees. If I write it in a way that breaks through the defence mechanism of depersonalised writing, I can attempt to build a connection across the page.

And then, it could also mean that just as culture was preoccupied with the notion of hysteria in Freud's time, as Segal writes (2018), we are thinking incorrectly about anxiety and depression? Of course, not everyone's anxiety and depression is the same, but are we underestimating the sociological component of the condition and focusing on the individual notion of these 'diseases' too much? Certainly I have felt the same. That's why, this writing has been my home. When I got caught up in the Hostile Environment storm as a student of the University, and what I received from the system was an individualised attempt at treatment which as Leader has said, doesn't really address the issue, what else could have I done except code that experience into this analysis? But then, I don't begrudge it because I am aware by commodifying my experience for a degree, I am also benefitting from it. I take

solace in that my experience allowed me to carry out an intimate and careful analysis of the interviews, rather than one where I may have dehumanised the accounts.

Segal:

> "Radical politics is about being happy, not about being good; Feminism is a vision of active freedom, of fulfilled desire, or it is nothing. In the same era, black American feminist Audre Lorde wrote in Sister Outsider: 'The sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers which can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference.'" (Segal 2018, p60; citing from Lorde 2013, p77).

Gaurish: Aha! I think I know! Maybe the revolution we all dream of, is already underway… But maybe the object of it is not to overthrow power, but to become humanised humans. What I have done here, for me, is about sublimation, about being free. I am sharing my joy through these pages and it can be, as Lorde says above, a basis for understanding and building empathy and reduces our differences. I hope that through my account, I can connect with the reader as well as the reader, upon reading the accounts of these workers, can reflect differently at their own work experience as well as humanise the workers they work with.

Maybe, then,

through my/our work and my/our politics

it's not a rebellion that I/we seek

but a happiness.

If I/we have anxiety/depression

and, the cause of it is capitalism

and the only cures available from our neoliberalised health system are

more of the malady, then

maybe through our work,

what I/we really seek

is

a

cure.

Maybe, we don't care for rebellion. All we want is to belong.

Lessons learnt

Lessons from the interviews: Resistance below the surface

The stories that I have captured, and those of my own, point to the same truth that Segal points to above- the inevitable sorrow of human existence. As Leader writes above, diagnoses of anxiety and depression seem to have replaced the diagnoses of hysteria. But the medical term may change, the underlying sociological causes remain the same- inequality, poverty, capitalist exploitation.

This inequality manifests itself in my stories in a variety of ways. There is the characterisation of Consultants as Gods, and discussions of flow of power, everyday bullying and abuse. The poverty and exploitation manifest in the living and working conditions, for example in Lisa's account.

Studying stories of working in an increasingly neoliberalised NHS through psychodynamics offers images of workers traumatised by the oppression. If capitalism corroded character (Sennett, 1999), neoliberalism is eroding selves of the workers.

Now, my workers aren't weak, or silly. They are deploying defence mechanisms- as we've seen- because the defence mechanism is needed to process trauma. While to make sense of their/my condition, it is helpful to look at how that is happening; structurally, it's not important to know what defence mechanism is being employed, how and when. What is important is that trauma is happening through work. Workers exist in organisation so full of

traumatic experiences, that trauma is normal. That is the takeaway. If we can do anything it must be to relieve that trauma rather than teach the worker 'resilience'. Deleuze and Guattari write that

> "There is no metaphor here: the factories are prisons, they do not resemble prisons, they *are* prisons. Everything in the system is insane…" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2013 p374)

The NHS is like a prison experiment. Obfuscated structures bring out the evil in the banal. Hence why we see everyday sexism, for example in stories of Lisa, everyday abuse, wry humour. This is what it is to be normal.

The work of healthcare puts the worker face to face with the death, and this has profound psychological implications. The worker is in a state akin to post traumatic stress, the trauma that of witnessing death, as described by several of my interviewees, particularly Romesh. With the anxieties high, colleagues often find it easier to project these on to what would be seen as mundane things, because it is safe to do so. Romesh gives the example how his colleagues given so much love and care to the patient, and yet if in the staff room if someone takes their biscuits or something seemingly trivial, they can't seem to with it. In the safety of staff room, the stunned/dehumanised/worker-self dissolves, and workers allow themselves to express the anxiety absorbed through their work.

Similarly, Lisa describes her paranoid state that results from the anxiety of workplace tensions.

Lisa 3:50	And then I picked this one... coz it felt like people were talking about me all the time- (screenshot 03:50) like when I got up out of my desk chair to do something like I just try and tune out all the conversations going on around me...
	coz it will mess with my head... having like so many people in an enclosed space everyday... and normally people don't really get on... and if they did get on they'll just talk about other people in the office all the time... I had never been in an office environment like that... so I picked that one... saw that speech bubble.

An excellent discussion of this paranoid schizoid state in the nurses of the NHS appears in Menzies Lyth's landmark work within the NHS (1960). It is interesting that that work was several decades ago, and the prevalence of a similar paranoid state several decades later In Lisa challenges the myth of progress, if any.

Once I had conducted my interviews and presented the initial research to multiple audiences, the question that I couldn't articulate then, but needed answering, was that of so what? So what? What's the use of this? Where's the emancipatory potential? What can this work do? I may have never found the answers but thanks to the traumas I received personally through the UK Home Office Hostile environment policies, I became acutely aware of what it actually means to feel oppressed. Indeed, as Žižek writes (2012), the object of exploring subconscious is not to find out what lies beyond the conscious gaze, but to understand the dehumanisation that forces these defence mechanisms and utilise this to alleviate suffering.

Before my own Otherings, it was not much more than an academic construct for me. I of course understood it, but I hadn't felt it. After the Home Office cracked its whip and asked me and my now wife to prove our marriage isn't a sham, I felt the pain of the worker who suddenly is told that due to a procedural change, they will have to reapply for their own job and there is a chance they may not get it- like it happened to Zoe. I felt the pain of those who lost their livelihoods when work was computerised, as told by Ralph. When I am constantly kept under scrutiny through the multiple checks and reporting mechanisms, I felt what it must have been like for Lisa to work in a place where the patriarchal power was constantly scrutinising her moves and her clothes. When I feel the limitations posed upon me due to the immigration controls- limited movement, limited rights to work etc, I feel the pain of that female worker who works as hard as her male colleague but can never understand why her rights in the organisation stay limited. The year of living dangerously, as I called it, transformed me and my outlook on life- and this is not just a statement- my diagnosis letter states as such (see Appendix 4). So of course I don't write orthodox. Orthodox writing is the privilege of orthodox academic- privileged, secure, resourceful, free to think. I feel the opposite. I write the opposite. Other. Queer.

Don't you blame me world you started it

That Dehumanisation due to work will happen or is happening has been a conclusion of many psychoanalysis-based thinkers who have looked into the world of work. Freud himself wrote about the discontents of civilisation, and one can easily argue that workplace is a kind of civilisation where Freud's arguments can be applied (Wollheim, 1971).

The remedy to thingism is humanism.

If normal is oppression, madness is the freedom.

If order is the problem, anarchy is the medicine.

If thingism is creating a neat, spellchecked Grammarly edited work

To be human is to claim 'mistake' is my 'humanity'

To err is human,

To forgive is Divine.

I have erred. Hopefully you can forgive.

While I am not making an argument that work in capitalist society can ever not be dehumanising, nor is this a plea to the capitalist to soften up or be nice. If anything, we need a reset and restart. What this is, is a rebuttal of the delusion of progress that seems to go around in popular writings. We get told that things aren't as bad as they were. I think we have just practised hiding too much. I am done with polished affronts.

Fallacy of chronology is a term I fancy using sometimes- the tool used to propagate the myth of progress- that because worker's life today is better than worker's life yesterday, this means the relations between capitalist and labourer have improved. Or in another context, just because the immigrant looks more comfortable than the coolie, the relation between the European and the immigrant have improved. These are all lies. Come back to me in 200 years- we'll see how this has evolved.

The capitalist often propagates this fallacy of chronology, where they compare a myth of present to a mythical past to make the argument of progress. What they don't offer is

comparison within the same frame of reference- e.g. yes, the worker today is better off than worker 100 years ago but the capitalist today is much much better off than the capitalist yesterday- Musk and Bezos are richer than Scrooge McDuck (May 2018)- the cartoon character that was created to signify the absurdly rich.

the wealth of the richest today is literally beyond the wildest dreams of those who lived half a century ago Don't tell me to not be upset. Don't tell me not to scream Nothing is 'better'. Capitalism still Hurts

But then, going back to Leader above, the way we look at the malady of depression today, from the clinical, individualistic, positivistic mindset is incorrect. We are looking at a structural problem through the lens of individual, and therefore the system only amplifies the problem. As Leader says, the individual may be prescribed pills, as I have been, or may be offered courses of cognitive behavioural therapy, as I have been, but these are not going to solve the existential mess we are in because they replicate the fundamentally flawed perception of all of us as individuals acting in a market space rather than connected entities.

The famous call to workers from Marx to unite, therefore, could be interpreted as a call to transcend this individualism. Indeed through my method of trying to analyse interviews through my own fragmented identities and presented my autoethnography alongside their accounts. In this paper, I am united with the workers- or at least that is my fantasy. What I have learnt from this work is that to Unite is difficult in this fragmented society- to resonate itself becomes a radical act. I had the privilege of this space to enact such a resonance, but the question for my future self is to translate this into praxis in my academic career. Judge

me when I am dead. From my autoethnographic work, I learnt that, as Segal says, it's not about being 'good'- it's not about being evangelical about your morality, or believing that one's morality is better than the other. I have deep respect for all workers, those who I agree with, and those who reproduce ideologies I would not like to reproduce. For me, what I have learnt is that most of all, writing, working as an academic, is about envisioning a collective happiness, a sharing of intellectual joy. That's the real 'impact factor'. Several people have read this work and told me how they resonated with it, have shed tears and laughed out loud, all the while gaining a deeper understanding of what it is like to be human and a worker. And that's good enough for me.

"Nowhere within the British Empire were black people passive victims. On the contrary, they were everywhere active resisters." (Gopal 2020, p3)

The worker doesn't just accept the oppression. The language, the mode of rebellion may be taken away from the worker, but two modes of resistance are demonstrated to be available and that's where workers sublimate their rebellion.

The first example of this comes in Vick's account- where Vick describes how he finds it fun to challenge the consultants through audits. He is not interested in evidence-based management, or efficiency- he is looking to prick the power, the project his anger on to them. He wants to pick a fight. This is an example of a sort of indirect challenge to power.

Then there are acts of fraternising, self-annihilation, civil disobedience, of rebellion. Oscar Wilde famously said that "Disobedience, in the eyes of anyone who has read history, is

man's original virtue. It is through disobedience that progress has been made." (Wilde, 1891 p3).

The practice of smoking/smoking breaks as Zoe describes is a brilliant example of these. The workers go on a smoking break and use these breaks to fraternise. Everyone knows that smoking is bad for their health, or so the oppressor will tell you- but that is the point. The worker is trying to destroy the body upon which the capitalist has full control. This is an act of deliberate self-annihilation, for this is the only way the worker feels able to protest. And of course going to, coming back from breaks, a few minutes here and there are stolen which the worker uses to feel like they have taken something away from the capitalist.

This analysis may prove too far to some, who have perhaps never known such desperation. But a gut-wrenching example of this self-annihilation as a form of protest occurs in Spivak (2003), who speaks of enslaved women killing their new born babies because that is the only way they can destroy the labour of their oppressor. But they do it. They understand- there's no such thing as 'individual'. The popular consciousness of the society we live in can seem so far off this- we are running around desperately filling our toilet roll cabinets, fuel tanks, with little regard for others- or so it seems. And that is the epistemic chasm that this thesis sits somewhere in the middle of.

You may recall the metaphor of dinosaurs as well, used for example by Ralph. Dinosaurs resisted change- and the positivist values sometimes condition us into believing that that's not the right thing to do- hence the somewhat derogatory moniker of a dinosaur. But, these so called dinosaurs are often the resistors, the quietly disobedient, the silent

revolutionaries. As Mueller has recently written (Mueller 2021, p8), “To be a Marxist you have to be a luddite.” You have to resist automatic, uncritical technologification of work.

Random acts of rebellion are there- they are subconscious Freudian aberrations. We must connect with these mistakes. If capitalism is common sense (Parker 2012), then we must embrace non-sense. This is exactly what I have tried to do through this thesis as well- if going back to what Oscar Wilde said above, the way to progress is disobedience, then that’s the route I have taken to further the agenda of CMS.

And here’s the thing- we must let go of this desire, or fantasy of a rebellion, of a process of creation to be ‘neat’. It is messy, it is heterogenous. That’s because the power that operates, also operates in a messy, heterogenous kind of way- its tentacles all around us. Indeed as Spivak (1988, p66) writes in a critique of Foucault and Deleuze’s conversation (Foucault and Deleuze 1972): “The networks of power, desire and interest are so heterogenous, that their reduction to a coherent narrative is counterproductive.” In trying to understand and critique power, we must resist the urge to pursue a coherent narrative- one may not be found because power is everywhere. Therefore, it may not be an exaggeration to say that to contest power, we must give up the pursuit of the perfect critique. If the body we set out to critique is not well defined, it’s critique should grapple with whatever corner, lump it finds. As a result of this work, that has become my understanding of what it means to work within CMS, what it means to build on the work of those that have gone before. The opportunity mustn’t be squandered.

Lessons about Myths

We operate our world through the myths we believe in. Some myths we believe in strongly- that is to say they are bound to our identity with a lot of pain, trauma and guilt. These can be stories of political views, or sports teams, or religions. Some myths we believe loosely- these are easy to shift and aren't deeply ingrained within the myth that we call 'self-identity'. These can be, the rules of the road- speed limits, administrative technicalities.

Some myths we are forced to believe in because they form the bedrock of our society- e.g. time, money, language. They are so deeply and tightly ingrained within our identities that shifting these can give us a major identity crisis.

A complex interplay of these myths make up our identities- some of these myths we are aware of, some of these we hold subconsciously. I identify a particular way, so do you. But there are ways of my identity that I take for granted and am not aware of too. And so are you.

Some myths are born out of a new encounter. When a self comes face to face with new, it doesn't know how to make sense of the new and as their fear is triggered, they create a myth to explain the new (e.g. ancients looking at lightning for the first time).

We tend go about our world only selectively choosing to register things that confirm what our myths project. This is because, as Freud's pleasure principle (Freud 1900) states, we like to avoid pain as it can evoke a fear of death. Keeping our myths alive and well means we can

feel safe in the cityscape of our thoughts, so we propagate towards what conforms to them. In other words, we like to amplify our beliefs. Challenging them is scary and painful.

When our deeply held myths are challenged, the fear of death is evoked, which we translate into 'feeling scared/ angry' as that is the received wisdom and language for us. We then tend to project this emotion- sometimes outwards; e.g. calling the challenging party/event bad or good, nothing or all powerful, etc. We need to bring the henceforth inexplicable into form by bringing it into our language, and the act of doing that is interlaced with our own emotions and anxieties.

If I am feeling content, I am more likely to call a stranger a 'friend' and not a threat. If one is not, one is more likely to call a stranger (say an immigrant) a threat (or, as Katie Hopkins called people like me in a National Newspaper, a Cockroach. (Williams, 2015) Note to you reader, did you see that? What did you do when that happened?).

A psychodynamics informed person would believe that subconscious myths dictate our actions and agency (if any). When people come together (e.g. for work in an organisation), some of our myths are selectively reinforced and some others are selectively de-enforced- we amplify the common myths as they make us feel safe in the group- we all start to find common ground upon which to relate (but we hold the uncommon myths close enough- indeed group dynamics would say that the individual within a group wants to find a fine balance between individual and group identity (Pavitt, 1998).

This results in some common myths we believe in- such as the myths of religion, the myths of organisation (Harari offers a case-study of Peugeot in Sapiens- (Harari, 2015)), and in our case- the myths within the NHS.

Whether these myths are 'true' or not is moot. The way people believe in them and respond to them and sublimate them- these act as if true. For example, there is no genetic basis in the idea of race, yet the mythology that governs the idea of race is very much true and individuals' experiences of the world are racialised, their experiences of racism are very real (Saini, 2020, or Marya and Patel, 2021).

Lessons for CMS

I go back to the theory around individualism in reflecting about what should CMS pursue. As Deleuze and Guattari, in their landmark work 'Anti-Oedipus- Capitalism and Schizophrenia' aptly write, "Do not demand of politics that it restores the "rights" of the individual, as philosophy has defined them. The individual is the product of power. What is needed is to de-individualize by means of multiplication and displacement, diverse combinations." (Deleuze et al, 1900 p-xiv). CMS, to fulfil its egalitarian ambitions, must put individualistic frameworks aside.

For example, the way we see Equality and Diversity pursued in Higher Education or in the workplace is through a framework of Equality for all individuals. While this is a worthy

ambition, it will not in itself lead us to what Oscar Wilde in his reflections on Socialism (1891) regards as Equality. Only by deconstructing this image of us as individuals in competition with each other, and strengthening the image of us as a collective entity, can we arrive at a level of empathy, where, the 'tyranny of merit' gives way to the 'common good' (Sandel, 2021). When that can happen, the notions of hierarchies, and pursuit of individual perfection as a definition of 'good work' can be deconstructed as capitalist fallacies and can be replaced with the notion of togetherness, and 'good work' will begin to mean not what is 'perfect' but what is resonating and allows people to see through to you and see themselves reflected in that work- warts and all.

Lessons about Work

Let us recap-

> "All culture and industry are symbolic. We live in a world of symbols, all of which, in the final analysis, signify one thing—the mother's womb (more strictly, the uterus) and the accesses to it." (Voloshinov 2013, p78)

Work, psychodynamically speaking then, is actuation of psychodynamic drives. In a utopian world, we would admit to all the drives and create 'safe spaces' where these drives can be exercised: but of course if one asks Freud this remains a fantasy.

Interesting insight on Work comes from "Sapiens, the history of human kind" by Harari (2015). Harari makes the argument that in Anthropocene, the position of humankind is

unprecedented. Once struggling against natural forces, humankind is now the major destructive force on the planet: for the first time, it produces more food than it needs, and destroys more than it needs. We are the devils to the planet.

All this means that future of work is going to be radically different from what we can imagine now. Will Freud prevail, and mankind continue to have the same struggles? Or will Marx prevail, and at the back of the global warming climate destruction, will emerge a radically transformed humanity? Or something else, we don't know. Maybe we need an alien invasion to unite us all in the face of an 'external Other'.

To conclude, then, as Henry, one interviewee, said to me,

"**Organisation is a beautiful mess of stuff**"**,** and I think that is as close to a truth as I can get.

Epilogue: Coming back to the here and now

Time Capsule[81]
As I write this ***Jesus sends Benin back*** ***'Coach' destroys rather than give away*** ***Queen is irritated by Climate Change inaction*** ***How can you not scream!***

Just as it was important for my interviewees to come back to here and now, it is important for me to come back out of this thesis- dream and into the here and now. My traumas live here, but I don't live my traumas out everyday. I suppress them, or try to, most days, most of the time. It is hard going into this zone to edit, revise. There is a cost of this writing to my being.

Time stands still for the traumatised soul. Ten weeks is now. Deadline is death threat. DO IT NOW NOW NOW NOW NOW. Panic says. The Body Keeps The Score. The mind is arrested in trauma. To write of trauma is not to recall, it is to relive.

[81] Refers to news today. Jesus College agrees to send a Benin Bronze back (Khomami, 2021). 'Coach' fashion house destroys bags, (CBBC 2021). Queen is annoyed by Climate Change Inaction (Kleiderman, 2021). The 'scream' refers to Holloway's (2019) scream, we spoke about it in 'Anger'.

But, it is important to speak of hard emotions. When we speak of emotional work, so often, we restrict ourselves to romanticised notion of emotion. But anxiety, and panic, we mustn't ignore.

A lot of sentences in this thesis hide beneath them knowledge which is quite personal/painful for me, but no matter how much I want to, knowing what I know, I can't begrudge my condition, because it gives me a fantasy to fulfil and an outlet for my primary drives, as well as some, if any, empathy for the worker.

If I dip my ink in pain and write, how do I begrudge the pain? I will run out of ink!

A lot of emotions and memories of trauma are triggered when talking about these themes, so hopefully I have been able to make some sense of it whilst preserving the feelings and sublimating them into the content.

Currently, I get nausea, almost vomiting. Sorry- too much information[82]- but it's important to tell you to tell you what I am about to tell you next. See, Freud at one stage deduced that the morning sickness in pregnant women was a sign of the mother loathing of her husband (Pinker, 1997). For me, my nausea is a symptom of the traumas that I carry around with me threatening to come out. There is truth in all those horror movies where the human is

[82] Although, let me remind you that the origins of Psychodynamics are in Freud's self-analysis of his 'gross' feelings, as well as his study of his 'patients' and his dreams. In other words, psychodynamics is comprised of autoethnographic work, study of human interaction, as well as meditative theorising. So, this work is not bad psychodynamics. It's good psychodynamics! The researcher I giggles.

infested with a being trying to come out of their mouths. Psychoanalytically, these creatures represent our traumas threatening to come out.

You may recall how Freud derived Oedipal complex in his self-analysis- we have looked at that in the section 'The iceberg model of subconscious?'. You see, that's why looking within is important- that's where the meaning ultimately happens. Now, I want to, through my self-analysis, change this definition of my own nausea (I don't dare extend it to morning sickness though) and vomiting to a symptom of state given trauma. It happens when I receive periodic emails asking me to 'reconfirm' my right to study, right to work, right to live. The non- immigrant in the academy is generally not aware of these checks. But they happen. And remind us of the traumas we have lived in the name of immigration[83] control.

Your right to study check is now required your right to study check is now required your right to work check is now required your right to live check is now required do you have papers we don't care you have a heart but do you have papers you may be living and breathing that doesn't matter do you have papers your right to study check is now required your right to work check is now required running away from war well tough luck your passport is expired so is my humanity

You may recall, I gave explanation of my 'mistakes' earlier. I am not being phony there- just today I wrote an email to the University's immigration service who had (yet again!) asked to

[83] Isn't it funny that as I write this, the immigrants who've been sent back, now don't want to come back. Allegretti, (2021) writes how, amidst our lorry driver shortage, our Prime Minister offered thousands of visas but only twenty requests received at the time of Allegretti's writing. Be careful what you wish for 'coz you just might get it. Was that the Spice Girls song?

see my documents to reconfirm my right to study. These checks happen repeatedly. I am never truly 'in'. I can't believe I am saying this, but thank god for Covid, now these can be done online- earlier I had to trek to the office in person- no matter where in the country I was- sometimes from all the way across England, to report to the office and had someone look at my passport in person[84]. Having said that, when I speak of Mistakes, I mostly speak of breaking unwritten rules. As per University regulations, this thesis is well within the law. In many ways then, my rebellion is just a fantasy- it's timid, it's perhaps not a rebellion at all.

But the reason I am telling you this is that to some this might have been a small administrative procedure- to me it took a long time, fingers trembling, mind wobbling. And as soon as I had done it, I realised I had made mistakes and I had to send several emails offering corrections. Outside of this context, I am fine. No issues. You'd walk past me and think nothing of me. But when it comes to this, I shake.

Unfortunately for me, this trauma is intertwined with this PhD. Over time, I have gone in and out of this zone and corrected a lot of mistakes that have been pointed out to me and the thesis is very readable (I am told). But part of me wishes that the academy would have accepted a rawer version of this work. But then I guess, it would be unfair too- wouldn't it? I have my traumas, but I also have a lot to thank for. This seat of privilege- in UK Higher Education academia- so much knowledge I have access to. I live a comfortable life. I am blessed with a happy family. My child has a childhood I couldn't even dream of. I suffer the

[84] You know the sham marriage interview I told you about? At the end of the process, you get issued a letter that says thanks for complying with the investigation, but there's a caveat- that we may summon you again. The threat never really goes away. As Murphy (2018) writes, the British politeness is a myth.

pain of things, but I also want my child to have a comfortable life. So complicated, so messed up. But aren't we all?

My pen holds power. So perhaps it's fair that this work has been revised, 'corrected'- after all- just like meaning is created in communication, meaning is created between my traumas and my privilege- and wherever this works comes to rest, is its right resting place. When death happens, we try not to judge. We recount the contributions of the soul, and we grieve. This is my final word. No one's correcting Van Gogh's 'Starry Night' arguing that he didn't paint the stars right. He wrote it through his trauma. I painted my picture through mine.

You may have noticed some idiosyncrasies. I have explained for those already in multiple places. In the section on autoethnography via Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) that the concern of Autoethnography is authenticity, meaning and resonance- rather than a preoccupation with accuracy. Also, the same argument comes in Feminism, to remind you of the quote from Firestone (2015) who asks us to be authentic, rather than accuracy-obsessed. Another comes from Trauma theory that I have quoted. I request you to allow me my idiosyncrasies. I rest with the idiosyncrasies of this world all the time- and there are plenty- why else would we have 'British' Tea, 'Belgian' Chocolate and 'Italian' Coffee? I should be allowed mine too. But the academic I understands that this is a PhD thesis and is anxious- he doesn't want to fail- so having said that, he's done what's been asked of him and corrected what he can, going over and over.

But I must also remind you of Toni Morrison:

> "The function, the very serious function of racism is distraction. It keeps you from doing your work. It keeps you explaining, over and over again, your reason for being. Somebody says you have no language and you spend twenty years proving that you do. Somebody says your head isn't shaped properly so you have scientists working on the fact that it is. Somebody says you have no art, so you dredge that up. Somebody says you have no kingdoms, so you dredge that up. None of this is necessary. There will always be one more thing."
>
> (Morrison, (1975), cited in Daurka, (2018))

We all know who pays our salaries. But, we must try and find out who our words work for. Maybe our individual failings in pursuit of sincerity cease to matter if we succeed collectively.

You may have questions regarding what now. Some I have answered throughout the work. I have made arguments to allow different writing, to allow different methods, to allow different language, to allow CMS to be the 'Graffiti on the Wall' rather than 'Graffiti in the Museum'. I have made arguments to allow decolonisation of knowledge, and to allow art-based research its space. But my most important argument is based on my experiences of getting this work to this stage- that when the Other speaks, when the Different speak, we must, we must learn to stop our judgement and listen. Helen Johnson (2021) makes this point (see 'Dedication'). There were times this work was called weird, too different, threatening and so on.

Anyway, maybe, the academy can listen better. But then again, if they did, this wouldn't be rebellious research. For what it's worth- Fanon says-

> "They realize at last that change does not mean reform, that change does not mean improvement." Fanon (2001, p76)

I hope the academy can listen to Fanon. It's okay to start again.

You may have questions regarding the formatting, the structure, the grammar etc. I have already defended against them in the initial sections on Queer writing, different, more feminist modes of writing, Prose poetry etc. I have cited arguments for what to do when grammar fails. What I want to add, is that a lot of our rules in academia- what font- what size- what spacing- are our own made and if they are restrictive, we must change them. The story takes precedence.

In any case I find that the actual rules are often more relaxed than our reified- truths of them. For instance, The University's Curriculum Learning and Assessment Service (Durham University, no date) is pretty relaxed about how the work is presented. But, at times I have been made aware of 'requirements' to publish this in a particular font, present paragraphs longer than three sentences etc. but there's no rules to that effect. So you see, a lot of our academic rules are just reified preferences that we must look within and change. Perhaps sometimes, to allow the femininity in writing, to allow the queer in writing to flourish within academia, we have to look at our gatekeeper rules and instead of focusing on 'tightening'

the writing, we could look at pushing the boundary. And this is crucial in Critical Studies-Management or otherwise.

As Ives (2008) writes in their review of Lecercle's 'A Marxist Philosophy of Language', "The politics of language should concern anyone interested in Global Capitalism." And one way or another, we are all invested in Global Capitalism. Knowingly or unknowingly. For it or against it, we can't ignore it. And Ives (2008) further notes of the global dominance of a certain kind of English. So, if language is capital, to critique it inevitably means examining how it works if you shuffle up some of it fragments, which is what I have done. It's not about distorting language, it's about claiming some of it as my own, my own heritage. Just like Campbell (2021) writes.

Irony

green talks inside lecture theatres

mowing the lawn, destroying ecosystem outside

Irony

covers up the violence of

British Tea Belgian Chocolate Italian Coffee

Why wouldn't you want to change this language, that covers up so much violence so easily

If language's ironies fill up our consciousness with ideological illusions

Why not change the language? Maybe it will become more

Sincere.

Immigrant, and Autoethnography receive criticism from both sides. When I live in the UK, I am not British enough. When I go 'back home', I am not 'Indian' enough. I exist in between. Similarly, Ellis, Adam and Bochner (2011) argue that Autoethnographic work (and art-based research) receives criticism from both sides- to the social scientist, it's not scientific enough, to the artist it's not artist enough.

Similarly, this work will perhaps receive criticism from the academy that it's not academic enough. From the artist, the autoethnographers, I dread the criticism that it's not autoethnographic enough. The heteronormative writer may say this is too weird. The queer writer may say I am appropriating queer writing. The ecofeminist will perhaps call this work a self-aggrandising, self-pitying, virtue signalling that came at a huge environmental cost. All that electricity burned, devices like this computer built on dubiously mined materials- was it worth it? I don't know. All criticisms are valid. I am having a crisis now. Be right back.

If humanity exists in the exchange, every exchange is preceded by an existential crisis

But hear me out, for what it's worth. I exist in the liminal space- in the inbetween- and so does this work. My traumas tell me to write in a way that you'll see in the summary poem. My academy tells me to write normally. I exist between the two, so does this work. All criticism is gratefully received- what I will say though, is that if you criticise one part of the work, I might just risk assuming that the other parts resonated with you.

And knowing that something in here resonated with some part of you, reader, is good enough for me.

It is worth noting here also, that I am not saying the UK immigration system is bad[85]. All immigration systems are dehumanising. The passport I hold- that country has received severe, and in my opinion, correct criticism for its policies against minorities. Arundhati Roy's work is worth reading. All of it.

But, reader, while I was there, I wasn't aware of these issues. I was there, like perhaps you are here, the majority. So I want you to know that I also stand in sympathy with you if there was stuff in here that you hadn't heard before. My againstness isn't against a particular immigration system. It's against our narrow nationalism. I dread to think how will people from two centuries in the future (if humanity lasts that long) might judge us as. Will they look at our immigration systems and speak of those as we speak of, say, Nazism? The Academy and the Politicians came together to protect a student (Matthew Hedges) from detention (Greenfield, 2018) by a state, when it happened 'elsewhere'. Matthew's ordeal was painful and scary, but it shows also that we have capacity for compassion. But, this compassion somehow doesn't extend beyond nationalistic boundaries. What about the collective pain of the Non-European in the UK? See- (Scott, 2018; Swain, 2018; Usborne, 2018; Bradbury, 2019; Fazackerley, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c; Griffiths and Yeo, 2021; Pollard and Howard, 2021; Worthing *et al.*, 2021). Or for that matter, the situation in India? See- (BBC News[86], 2019; The Economist, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2021; Rahman, 2021).

[85] For what it's worth, also mentioning that I'd rather be friends with Jeremy Corbyn than be associated with Priti Patel. See Adams (2021).
[86] Names not available for authors of the first three in this list, hence referral to the outlet (rather than say, 'author unknown').

We need to make the story of Compassion stronger than the story of Nation

Similarly, we can clap for the carers, but why can't we give them a proper wage? Lives lost due to austerity (Gregory, 2021)- why can't we stop that? Why is it so hard? Sometimes, reader, I don't get it. I guess it's because the story of capitalism is strong at the moment.

I can tell you from personal experience that the traumatised immigrant/worker can make for an excellent subject- scared to break rules, always making sure they are on the good side of the law. Being extra safe. They know the cost of breaking the rules can be high. Always reminding themselves and those around them, that they are fine. Just look through to see how many times I have explained myself in here.

We need to make the story of Compassion stronger than the story of Capitalism.

I don't know what else to say, in terms of 'recommendation for the future' that I have been asked to provide, except, let difference in. I dread to think of what people two hundred years from now will think of us. As Nelson (2016) said (cited in 'Mapping' section), perhaps we should do more apologising, become more tentative. Stop giving out the impression that we are certain that it's all good and proper, whatever we are doing- research, writing, working. If consciousness is formed in childhood, raise children with all our being and all our attention and care.

In the topic 'In defence of the Personal/Confessional', I wrote of a great risk. That no matter how much I try to evoke, the reader still judges. No matter how much I try to speak of

resonance, feelings and empathy, the reader still questions accuracy. I wonder if by now you crossed that ontological bridge. That is the big question isn't it? In this context you have power over me. I pray, go back to the abstract please- the first line from bell hooks. Have we found a way to communicate across this boundary? The power-divide? The class-divide?

The big question is, can someone who has power over betray that power and come around to empathy to those they have power over. If they can, then perhaps we can pay workers fairer wages. Treat each other more humanely.

The thesis, you may have noticed, dies out relatively suddenly. I run out of steam. That's what happens when free association is happening. Suddenly, the 'patient' runs out of steam. My interviewees, sometimes, ran out of steam. I run out of steam at the end of my countless therapy sessions. And when writing is therapy, eventually, it runs out of steam. The fact that it runs out of steam, is not a weakness, the running out of steam is an indication that it's time to stop.

Thank you for letting me speak. Your turn.

Thank you for reading.

> “Change is the immediate responsibility of each of us, wherever and however we are standing, in whatever arena we choose…”
>
> (Lorde, 2013 p21)

> “But the most efficient way to expose or demystify an existing practice would seem to be by suggesting an alternative practice, rather than criticizing the current one.”
>
> (Rorty, 1993 p96)

On the next page, I present a summary of the thesis in a new format. Using different fonts, colours, crossouts intentionally.

Summary Poem

My experiments with/as fantasies

"TO CREATE TODAY IS TO CREATE DANGEROUSLY"
(Camus, 2018)

~~Table of~~ contents

Permission to speak.

do not think of a pink elephant

prose - poetry
prose - poetry
prose - poetry
prose poetry
paintings
photos
gaps
set the narrative free

Meet I, I and I
Metamorphoses

lost student~~child~~ seeks refuge in ~~the UK~~ PhD Study
Becoming freud-ian diagnostician Uncovering **trauma in then out**

~~International Student~~/~~Immigrant~~ Coolie.
Anger.

RESISTANCE. comrade will not write will not publish will not give them our stories they know not what they do.

But who ~~sins~~ pays the bills plays the games? Him over there. The doppelgänger.
Guilt. Shame.

The father arrives ~~provides~~ writes, resigns, submits. **FAILURE.**

Trauma into multiple (pieces of) selves
The constant turmoil between the different I's. Helplessness.
Angst. Pain.

What fantasy to live?

You think. therefore I am. **Empathy**.

Who are **you**? Welcome all.

Work- Meditations- Theories- Stories

NHS: the benevolent public service?
Neoliberalisation: the common sense? the essential sacrifice?

the religion of science the cult of progress the disease of our times

Critical Management/Leadership Studies.
psychoanalysis
subconscious. fantasy. myth.
defense mechanisms. discontents.
Diagnosis. of organization. in depth.

hermeneutics of suspicion.
Get beneath the mud they stuck on.
photo ~~elicit~~ation.

free association narrative ~~inquiry~~
Hello! is there anybody in there?

where is buried that language of contestation?

Tales of comrades
Interview of qwerty
Interview of asdfgh
Interview of zxcvbn
Interview of poiuyt
Interview of lkjhgf
Interview of mnbvcx
Interview of tgbyhn
Interview of HOW MANY TALES DO YOU WANT YOU SADIST VOYEOUR! Back off! They said to me.

not method
not interviews
not transcription into demeaning smudges
not analysis

trying to empathize embody connect.
trying to resonate.
failing.

Why defense? Why fantasy? What are they/I/we shielding from?

PAIN.

Becoming freud-ian diagnostician Uncovering **trauma out then in**

The traumatized ~~employee~~ worker ANGST

The violence ~~leadership~~ in the NHS ANGER
~~Neoliberal capitalist dehumanizing~~ oppressive NHS public services UK State, this state, that state- all in a state
Mass psychosis of oppression in everything (I pick up) everywhere (my eyes look).
Pain. Empathy.
for the ~~defensive precarious worker~~ hurt mother.
Anger for the ~~oppressor leader boss H.O.~~ psychotic father.
Meet the ~~oppressor leader boss psychotic anxious~~ father.
Discovering the ideology. The ground breaks.
Driven by fear
I vs Other

The Ideology of Violence
The ~~critique of stupidity of~~ privilege/violence of pure reason
Anger, Guilt, Shame, Pain.
Empathy. It hurts… So much…

Empathy for the gaslighted ~~leader oppressor soldier oppressor~~ anxious carrying trauma from above father.

Consciousness- What story does one live?
The ~~leader father~~ aggressor is too a victim.
A different story, a different trauma.

Weapons of Mass Destruction
Language Money Story

~~Multiple~~ Single personality/narrative disorder/privilege of privilege/disorder
Child-bearability Envy
The totalitarian ~~state~~ father
The head in sand ~~intellectual~~ mother, afraid
The psychosis of ~~leadership~~ oppression
The NHS prison experiment
The circus of university
The ideology of violence, lives on
Destroyed ~~patient worker self earth~~ child.

RESISTANCE. FAILURE. Guilt.
PAIN. Angst
#
ANGST
ANAGST
AGAINST
AGAINST management leadership
AGAINST critical management studies
AGAINST critique of critical management studies
AGAINST critters asking for ‘something different’

AGAINST critique.
AGAINST method AGAINST re-search AGAINST pHd
AGAINST university AGAINST conferences AGAINST publishing games AGAINST organization.
AGAINST freud-ianism, marx-ism and allthereistism
AGAINST colonialists AGAINST post colonialists AGAINST the right AGAINST the left
AGAINST english language AGAINST the capitalist money.
AGAINST the stories we tell.
AGAINST you AGAINST I

AGAINST againstness itself.

Oh wait
The parents are fighting the children are crying no one is watching no one is watching **WHY IS NO ONE WATCHING**!

An eye for an eye turned the whole world blind
Burning everything (Turn it off and on again).
(Or do we need an alien invasion?)

Annihilation. Nothingness.

Phew.

Mummy, Papa. ~~You hurt me~~ It hurt.
Burned it all. that was.
Contained within. those delusional webs in conscious trees.
above those roots. of sub-conscious.
we've been chopping the wrong trees all this time.
~~Radical~~ Reduced to roots.

But here, ~~examiner/reader/thesis~~ child. I hope.

Resurrect from global empathy.
Selves
Theelings
Myths
Ethics
Work

Currency of resource
Expressions that carry the weight of it all.
Intellectuals?
Leadership?

Thus ~~spake~~ cries the Other.

How much 'different' ~~do you/we need~~ can you/we take? Is this enough? to Shake ~~you/us~~ up in a ~~necessary~~ urgent!! Manner?

What was that?! You/We ask
Self annihilation. you/we ask for
Autoethnography and Stories
Emotions in work- of NHS, of PhDing, of writing
Transference Countertransference
~~Research or art~~ Empathy or Resonance
~~Situated doctoral work~~ **Fiercely** breaking/failing
the shackles/the shackled
Work A fantasy
Unlearning A story

Was I not supposed to say this? Was I not supposed to be here?
(leaves)

Reflections

I am writing this paragraph in 2022, whereas I wrote the above summary in the summer of 2018, when tasked to produce an abstract of the thesis. It took around 3 months to perfect. In the original, the background was yellow as a nod to the fact that if you have dyslexia/are neurodiverse, an off white background makes reading easier (is less offensive). My quandary with the notion of 'abstract' was, how to capture all of the learning I have done, into 300 words? I struggled with writing a 'normal' abstract. So I started trying to capture the various themes in a poetic form. Pushing the idea of writing like a painter (Biehl-Missal 2015), this writing took the shape of a word- painting. Now, four years later, I feel able to write an explanation as the emotion behind the writing of it has somewhat subsided.
The above word painting is, in one way, a representation of the whole of the thesis. You can see, how in the top part, prose and poetry come together- literally. The coming together of prose and poetry in my thesis, thereby, reflected in the reduction of space between the words prose and poetry. Similarly, phases where I was at my most vulnerable/ weakest/ sensitive/ traumatised, are coloured red. Use of cross- outs signals evolution of thought, critique. I would learn later on that Derrida would do something similar.

My desire with this piece was for it to be spoken and not read. But, due to the context we are in, it has been ascribed to page. In this process of translating it to page, it becomes a product for you to read. And when you read it, you read it from within your self fantasy, and ascribe the meaning you want to ascribe to it. And knowing that gives me a sense of anxiety- anxiety that you will not read it 'the way I want to say it', that without the force of my voice behind it, the voice in your own head will take over the meaning. There is the anxiety that a

lot is lost when we write instead of speak. A detailed discussion of phonocentrism (language is primarily voice and written word is inferior) and logocentrism (language is primarily written and spoken word is inferior) can be found in Derridean work, for example (Salmon 2020). This poem and this thesis, are me trying to find a middle ground. In the thesis, the written word speaks, and in this summary, spoken word is written down. Something is lost in each translation, but something is gained too. This mathematical reduction that I have just done is inappropriate of course- a better interpretation would be, that in exploring the middle ground between phonocentrism and logocentrism, I have tried to explore what else language can do.

Appendix 1: Encore

When Freud wanted to submit his PhD thesis, he was faced with a resistance from the academy. His work was deemed too radical, crazy and unacceptable. One might imagine that such celebrated and influential thinker, writer and philosopher would have been celebrated at his times, but reader, you may be surprised to learn that Freud wasn't really offered any awards or celebrations for his PhD. We often romanticise him, but his struggles are forgotten.

In Foucault's words, the governed and the government are both within (Dean, 2009). So, in that, inevitably the self is also plagued by institutional anxiety.

The objective of an aspiring critical radical theorist/academic/activist performative individual perhaps is to challenge this institutional anxiety, chip away at it, push the boundary of what is pragmatic, and create work that moves the academy from its patriarchal roots to a more decolonial/ feminist model of working with/in knowledge.

With that in mind, special thanks to my supervisors, who have endured many readings of this work, and have put up with me. Thank you to everyone at Durham University. You made this.

I am grateful to my supervisors, Mark, Rob and Jackie. I am thankful to the examiners for their comments.

I will caution against an interpretation of my writing as Lazy. I will not be thrown into the 'lazy Indian' category by this institutionally racist academy (even the watchdogs are in (Siddique, 2021)- I am not the first one, and this is not the first time. Women have it worse (Gabriel and Tate, 2017). I have several qualifications, I left my parents behind, worked my way through cleaning toilets as well as teaching students to find my feet, so if the academy thinks I could be being simply lazy, I will take offence. I wonder if AA Milne had to explain it when he spelt it as Hunny. If some do it, it is more likely to be considered innovation, whereas if others do it, there's a risk that it is deemed ignorance (Dabashi, 2015).

Thank you to Muna Al-Jawad (NHS Consultant, Sr Lecturer in Medical Education) for reading and sharing these words with me to be included here. Thank you Muna for propping me up at a critical juncture by saying reading this reminded Muna of Sara Ahmed. Muna also said that the A and E is full of patients of Poverty. Wise words. Examiner, you may think I am being cheeky including this. But trust me, the fact that this is here will prevent me from writhing in debilitating panic attacks while this thesis sits with you. My work has been called many names. Some more unkind than others. Muna's testimonial is my defence mechanism against those.

> "Chawla's work explores a relatively uncharted liminal space between raw emotion, the social world of the NHS/UK and academic discourse. It is defiant in its

hybridity, it is joyously imperfect. It made me laugh out loud and brought a tear to my eye.

The thesis is internally coherent and consistent with its (well explained) ethical and epistemological position. It is Qualitative research with a capital 'Q'. Chawla manages to do that very difficult thing of making the very personal resonate with societal and political discussions of the day.

This is protest writing at its best, manipulating the reader into believing that change might be possible. It left me feeling inspired. I will be re-reading it and quoting it to many friends, students and colleagues." (M Al-Jawad, 2021, Personal Communication, 15 October 2021).

And thanks to you, examiner, for persevering.

Appendix 2: Bloopers Reel

Rebirths

“To be a Marxist today, one has to go through Lacan!”

– Slavoj Žižek (in Tomšič, 2015, p3)

To be a Marxist today, as Žižek says, one has to go through Lacan. Psychodynamics can lead one to a Marxist way of thinking, because that’s how you peel off the layers.

Shifting, rebirthing is important.

The consciousness of the world today is markedly different from when this PhD started.

What a time to be alive! All these changes influenced me in a way that can only be described as starting again, as is said about Marx

In the psychopathology of everyday life, Freud included his errors and omissions in published work to make the point that these aren't accidental, but a manifestation of what he seeks to describe.

Situating this work in the wider world

A lot has happened in the last few years, and some of it therapeutic. I will list some of these events below, that frame for you my world

Demonization of Immigrants

Hostile Environment

Windrush

Grenfell

The taming of the shrew/the resignation of the HO Secretary

david cameron/theresa may/boris johnson

Maya Goodfellow and Hostile Environment

Televisation of 1919 Massacre on Channel 4

David Olusoga on TV speaking of slave owners, decolonising the discourse of the NHS

Kehinde Andrews and rebirth of black radicalism

Priyamvada Gopal and Insurgent Empire

Calls to return museum artefacts ((bpornotbp, 2021))

Rhodes must fall and decolonisation

Rise of right-wing nationalism

Brexit.

#BlackLivesMatter

#Metoo

COVID

War in Ukraine

"There is no Black person who can afford to wait to be led into positive action for survival. Each one of us must look clearly and closely at the genuine particulars (conditions) of his or her life and decide where action and energy is needed and where it can be effective. **Change is the immediate responsibility of each of us, wherever and however we are standing, in whatever arena we choose**. For while we wait for another Malcolm, another Martin, another charismatic Black leader to validate our struggles, old Black people are freezing to death in tenements, Black children are being brutalized and slaughtered in the streets, or lobotomized by television, and the percentage of Black families living below the poverty line is higher today than in 1963."- Audre Lorde. (Lorde 2013, p21, my emphasis)

Hopefully this explains the rapid pace, the contradictions and the many beginnings that are present in this work. All of these events also mean that where I thought my work fits within the wider world, has shifted many times, often markedly.

Alienation

"Who built Thebes of the seven gates?
In the books you will find the names of kings.
Did the kings haul up the lumps of rock?
And Babylon, many times demolished
Who raised it up so many times? In what houses
Of gold-glittering Lima did the builders live?
Where, the evening that the Wall of China was finished
Did the masons go? Great Rome
Is full of triumphal arches. Who erected them? Over whom
Did the Caesars triumph? Had Byzantium, much praised in song
Only palaces for its inhabitants? Even in fabled Atlantis
The night the ocean engulfed it
The drowning still bawled for their slaves.
The young Alexander conquered India.
Was he alone?

Caesar beat the Gauls.
Did he not have even a cook with him?
Philip of Spain wept when his armada
Went down. Was he the only one to weep?
Frederick the Second won the Seven Years War. Who
Else won it?
Every page a victory.
Who cooked the feast for the victors?
Every ten years a great man.
Who paid the bill?
So many reports.
So many questions.
'Questions from a Worker who Reads' by Bertolt Brecht"

Excerpt From: Chris Harman. "A People's History of the World".

To be a worker in a capitalistic system is to be alienated, to be exploited, to be dehumanised. Psychoanalysts and radical theorists have said so for decades- see Thingism of Bellow, Fromm's Dehumanisation, Marx's Alienation, Freud's Civilisation and its Discontents.

The interview stories are not just stories of the people I spoke to, they represent the collective mythology of the NHs and by extension, of the worker today.

As Berger said, the disease is capitalism (Sperling, 2018, p187).

The subconscious of the organisation is always dirty, murky, confused, conflicted.

I have to, however, ask the defensive reader to suspend moral judgement about the workers and the NHS. These stories don't mean working in the NHS is Bad or that the NHS is a bad organisation or that the UK is an evil nation and there are other organisations/societies that are better. What we have done in this thesis is make the subconscious of the organisation conscious- this doesn't mean we have to embark on a crusade to name or shame people or use this work as a basis for condemning or romanticising certain people: or launch leadership courses or training courses (Please don't teach Yukl (2002) or Yukl (1989) without considering what and why). The subconscious of the organisation is always dirty, murky, confused, conflicted. If we are to believe Freud, so

long as we have civilisation/organisation, we will have a subconscious and we will have repression.

Similarly, this doesn't mean business schools are bad, the people who work in them are bad, CMS has any moral high ground, or the people who disagree with me are bad. We are all engaged in our own struggles- in a capitalist society, everyone is alienated. If we are not connected, we are all alienated. The worker is alienated from their selfhood through myths of work and systems of dehumanisation, the capitalist is dehumanised through the myths of burden that what they are doing is 'good for the society.' The trouble is, Capitalism has literally burned down the planet (McGrath, 2021).

Normality

Defining normality is exclusive, oppressive and creates pathologisation of the other. This is all 'normal'. When narratives of violence as contained within this work erupt past the subconscious, we romanticise the scandals and look for a scapegoat. This is how the society as we know it works, we vilify Midstaffordshire's failings, we name and shame scandals to reassure ourselves that these are isolated incidents. We want to push the violence back beneath the surface, so we project our anxiety on individuals (that's what we are currently doing with Donald Trump) and project our unwanted shameful parts on to them.

Much like

> "It is only when there is some riot in Jamaica, or shooting in Palestine, or unrest on the North-West frontier, that the average Briton is made even remotely conscious of his responsibility toward the hundreds of millions of coloured people over whom the British ruling class speciously claim to be exercising a benevolent trusteeship."
>
> George Padmore (1939)

Critical performativity in Neoliberal Capitalist world

For every $1 that travels in aid from global north to global south, the return is of the order of $24 (Hickel 2018). The academy, if it wants to shake up the shackles, can turn things around for the world very quickly: Chomsky, Butler, Roy and many others are doing a fantastic job of holding the power to account. But a. that's not enough, and b. what is MY answer?

The English language academy is one of the most powerful organisations in the contemporary world- academics in this organisation command knowledge of the world and a lot of economic capital (lets disregard that much of it is ill gotten- see for example ghost of Leverhulme), and complicit in most of the above. Barring a few interventions, by and large the academy's response can sometimes be of burying its head in the sand, pretending that publishing stories in 'rip off' journals (Monbiot 2018) will effect change, and deploying the defence mechanisms of protecting its rules and regulations. I think it's time we shake things

up and practice the radicalism we preach a bit more strongly. If what we've been doing has been working, why is the world today more unequal than 50 years ago? Why do we have more refugees than after second world war? Why can't we see that we need a shift? How about, write, create, and share with the audience where they are. My wife often performs spoken word, and I am in awe of her performances. That's one medium. Public speeches. Blogs (You'd have noticed my admiration of Prof. Gabriel's blogs). 'Open Access' in a convoluted journal is somewhat oxymoronic. The 'public intellectual', as (Rancière, 2012; Marsh, 2018; Sand and Fernbach, 2018) argue, is somewhat lost. We need her back.

Think before playing publication games

Canagarajah's (2002) words stop me from engaging in the journal publishing game. But of course, I understand the importance of work being out there- how else would I have read the works I used to write this? I haven't solved my positionality in this, maybe one day I will figure it out. I am looking how to get this work out- the best way is, to share this thesis, as is, as I have done. It is after all, hosted in the University archives open access. That is itself a way of publishing it. That to me seems enough. This may not matter to you personally reader, but I thought it essential to offer the neoliberal school an explanation to the question every PhD student is asked- "Have you published anything of it". (The Durham University PhD page states that 'it is expected each PhD will have three good journal articles worth' (PhD Programme Structure, no date). Well.

Work that is produced is gifted away to the big four journal companies (Monbiot 2018) who put it in rigid containers and often put it behind a paywall that keeps this work away from those who may want it the most. I know of open access, but there are problems there too, as Monbiot points out. Academic publishing as a capitalist industry has a huge profit margin. Publishing is important. But it's not the be all and end all. Or is it?

I have nothing against you if you enjoy the accolades publishing in great journals brings- I wouldn't have been able to do this work without it, of course. Despite issues (Monbiot, 2018) within the system, I acknowledge that it allows us to read- it allows us to communicate- it allowed me to read and write this work. Canagarajah wrote the work above in 2002, and it is fair to say that the academy has come a fair way. We have open access publications now, and a lot of journals publish open access work. When you do a work in the UK at a publicly funded University, you are required to submit an open access copy. As Monbiot (2018) writes though, a lot of the issues remain- high library subscription fees, control of 'big four' publishing houses on most of academic knowledge. Monbiot encourages piracy as a protest. I don't know how to fit myself within the world of journals/publishing yet. Maybe I am silly, wrong, incorrect. Or maybe I am trying to not publish work that contributes to that 80% that if destroyed, will make no difference, as Gabriel said earlier.

A close look around us will remind us that not only does CMS need to be highly radical, but by not doing so, it risks becoming just another mechanism of operation of neoliberal oppression.

CMS needs to constantly innovate, and explore newer areas of study, newer methods of study and create knowledge that redefines what we call knowledge, express it in ways that it hasn't been used before. If not, it risks becoming the graffiti that decorates the expensive museum rather than challenge the people into rattling the foundations of oppression by suddenly appearing on random (or carefully chosen) walls.

If the goal of CMS is to be leftist, anti-colonial, feminist and anti-neoliberal, how can it accomplish that goal by only publishing an article in an 'academic journal', a medium belonging to yet another archaic institution? And how can it achieve that aim by keeping the knowledge it creates within the ownership of a select few? Those acts may be a part of action taken, but the action needs to be bolder, stronger. As Marx said, the point is to change the world.

In the interview stories I tell later on in this thesis, I attempt to paint a picture of work that differs from what is visible via standard qualitative interviews. The picture I witnessed is that of workers living traumatised by work: trauma that they call 'normal' stress, and yet, in denial of trauma; anxious about their work conditions.

And in that, lies the argument of choosing method of dissemination of knowledge. Somehow it feels hypocritical to create knowledge that seems to critically evaluate one system of capitalism, but then succumb that to another system- that of the academic institutions, journals that only a few percent of the population read, and just talk amongst ourselves at fancy academic conferences calling for a 'revolution' while sitting within fancy hotels probably owned by those who benefit from the very system we meet to criticise.

However, worth noting that even the radical left publishing house Verso has come under criticism for some of its practices, and perhaps rightfully so. See Joy (2016) who writes of their discontents with Verso for putting behind paywall knowledge by someone who gave their life for Open Access. Verso, the 'radical left' publishing house offers capitalism inspired 'deals'. So, you know, what to do? A few people said to me, publish this as a book. I don't know. Haven't I dedicated enough natural ecological resources to it? Countless electricity units burned, devices used, servers upon which copies hosted- isn't that enough? Why must I burn more of the planet just to put this in a different cover? It will live on the University server as open access for a long time, isn't that a publication itself? I don't know. But I do want to problematise this publish more mentality, as if it costs nothing. It literally costs the earth. Internet runs not on magic, but energy- it is the most/second most ecological resource consuming industry.

Shut down the business school

From Martin Parker- Shut Down the Business School- (2018, pp15, 16)

> "The contrast between the shiny leaflets in the shiny buildings and the expressions of doubt is clearest in the field usually called 'Critical Management Studies' (CMS). A term coined in the early 1990s, it now brings together a large number of academics – mostly in Europe but in other parts of the world as well –

who have been biting the hand that feeds them for quite a few decades, sometimes gnawing it so obsessively that it is surprising that they find any meat left on it at all. And CMS has done very well for itself. Certain schools, superstar professors, journals, conferences, textbooks and so on have made what once seemed 'outsider' into something rather insider. In terms of publications, there is a reader, a companion, a handbook, a key concepts book, a four-volume set of readings, several journals with 'critical' in their title, and even (with a breath-taking lack of modesty for an area only two decades old) a 'classics' "collection. To these core readings, we can add books on 'critical' research methods, critical approaches to strategy, marketing, quality management, accounting and just about every other category of knowledge offered by the business school.

The problem is that these insiders' dissent has become so thoroughly institutionalized within the well-carpeted corridors that it now passes unremarked, just an everyday counterpoint to business as usual. Careers are made by moaning softly, rocking gently, or wailing loudly in books and papers about the problems with the education offered by business schools. The b-school is described by two CMS insiders as 'a cancerous machine spewing out sick and irrelevant detritus, justified as "practical" and glossed up as "business relevant". […] It extorts fees from the middle and upper classes so that it can stamp their offspring with a passport into corporate sleaze, mortgage slavery, burn-out, stress, overwork and repression'. Even titles like Against Management, 'Fucking Management' and 'The Greedy Bastard's Guide to Business' appear not to cause any particular difficulties for their authors. I know this, because I wrote the first two. Frankly, the idea that I was permitted to get away with

this speaks volumes about the extent to which this sort of criticism means anything very much at all, or is really just a fart in a thunderstorm. In fact, it gets rewarded, because the fact that I publish is more important than what I publish."

It carries on-

"Within Critical Management Studies, many authors have worried a lot about what the word 'critical' means. In order that the boundary between 'us' and 'them' is clear, it is necessary to distinguish between the sort of critique that is morally righteous and that which is self-interested posturing. The problem is that there are lots of people who claim to be critical of the current climate of managerialism: business ethicists, opportunistic management gurus, relativizing postmodernists, consumer champions, doctrinaire Marxists, careful reformers and the sort of people who throw bricks through McDonald's' windows. But these people do not themselves agree on the distribution of the righteous and the self-interested. Indeed, they actually agree about very little." (Parker, 2018).

Parker writes, in Shut down the business school (Parker, 2018pp47-48),

"What do business schools teach? What are the contents of the courses? What skills or knowledge do they convey? Much writing on education has explored the ways in which a 'hidden curriculum' supplies lessons to students without doing so explicitly. From the 1970s onwards, various critical researchers on primary and

> secondary education explored how social class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and so on were being implicitly taught in the classroom."

Parker talks of the hidden curriculum. How class, gender, race, sexism are implicitly taught in the classroom through reproduction of power structures. We can extend that to the PhD process itself. It is biased towards a certain kind of knowledge, and I feel incredibly lucky to be able to deviate from that (or at least try to deviate from that).

Freud says forgetfulness has a key part in psychoanalysis (e.g. Macmillan 1997), but how can you do that in a 3 year marketised PhD? It was a blessing in disguise that I could take longer. Business schools teach common sense, teach ideology, and that ideology is capitalism**.** I think this passage is crucially important:

Because it is "CONCEALING CAPITALISM AS COMMON SENSE"

> "You might well think that each of these areas of research and teaching are innocuous enough in themselves, and collectively they just appear to cover all the different dimensions of business activity – money, people, technology, transport, selling and so on. Indeed, the separations between these areas are one of the ways in which they maintain themselves as distinct academic subjects, with different journals, prizes and associations. In this sense, the business and management curriculum is no different from any other part of the university, divided into tribes and territories which guard their fields jealously.

It's an irony then that, despite all the energy put into distinguishing these areas, that they actually share so much, largely because they collectively question so little. The shouty branding which insists that each and every b-school is different and special conceals the fact that most of them are pretty much the same. Subject to the same pressures and markets, they respond with courses and strategies that are effectively identical." (Parker 2018, p3)

"…there is very little attempt to reflect on the practices that they proclaim expertise in. Indeed, much of the 'knowledge' provided is just banality dressed up in tinsel, hyperbolically justified as being relevant and vital with insane statements such as 'Much of what is known in the business arena is obsolete in eighteen months or less.' This is largely to say that they are uncritical in any very meaningful sense. If criticism is mentioned, it would largely be in the academic sense of normal science, being critical of someone else's model or theory. This is a practice which largely ignores the woods for the trees, and which few outside the academy would have any interest in. This is scholastic critique, of counting angels on pinheads, of fine distinctions and extensive literature reviews." (Parker 2018, p4)

"The first thing that all these areas share is a powerful sense that the direction of travel of market managerial forms of social order is desirable. It would of course be acknowledged – probably in the opening sentence of the mission statement – that business needs to be more sustainable, diverse and responsible to 'meet the challenges of the future' (or something like that), but the acceleration of

global trade, the use of market mechanisms and managerial techniques, the extension of technologies such as accounting, finance and operations are not routinely questioned. This is a progressive account of the modern world, one that relies on the promise of technology, choice, plenty and wealth. Within the business school, capitalism is assumed to be the end of history, an economic model which has trumped all the others, and is now taught as science, rather than ideology.

The second I have already mentioned. This is the assumption that human behaviour – of employees, customers, managers and so on – is best understood as if we are all rational egoists. This provides a set of background assumptions which allow for the development of models of how human beings might be managed in the interests of the business[…]"organization. Motivating employees, correcting market failures, designing lean management systems or persuading consumers to spend money are all instances of the same sort of problem. The foregrounded interest here is that of the person who wants control, and the people who are the objects of that interest can then be treated as people who can be manipulated. The task of the manager is to structure the incentives and disincentives in such a way that the individual – because that is the salient unit of behaviour modification – will decide to do this rather than that. Even concepts which appear to imply different foundational assumptions about the nature of human beings – such as culture and community – can be harnessed to this view by being reduced to symbolic or collective structures of incentive which can also be engineered to produce predictable behaviours.

The final similarity I want to point to concerns the nature of the knowledge being produced and disseminated by the business school itself. Because it borrows the gown and mortar board of the university, and cloaks its knowledge in the apparatus of science – journals, professors, big words – it is relatively easy to imagine that the business school is in search of knowledge. This means that the business school very often appears to imagine itself in some rather self-congratulatory ways. This might involve invoking the idea of the university, the neutrality of science, or a conception of public service. The institutional location of the school means that it can employ certain narratives which make the knowledge it sells and the way that it sells it somehow less vulgar and stupid than it really is. Or perhaps this is just the sort of story that lots of organizations tell about themselves, clothing self-interest and a measure of self-disgust in grand talk of corporate social responsibility. And when the trumpets are sounding and the red carpet is rolled out, and the feast is waiting for all the loyal servants, who is going to be stupid enough to suggest that the king has no clothes?"

"The young people who are considering studying in business schools also know a few other things. They also know that the Earth is warming fast, and that bankers' salaries are telephone numbers whilst in some other quarters of the world dead-eyed children starve in their mothers' arms. They know that people sleep in the doorways of the shops in their cities, and that sometimes you can taste the chemicals in the air, which means that you often wear a mask. They know that adverts lie and marketing is a glossy sham, and that animal species are becoming

extinct at an accelerating rate. They know that the sea is full of plastic, people in sweatshops in Bangladesh make cheap clothes for them, and that a McDonald's double cheese and fries diet is bad for you. They also know that businesses try to avoid paying taxes, and regularly conceal problems with their products. None of this is new to the students. None of this shocks them.

It really isn't as if the people who enter business school need to have the scales lifted from their eyes. They might need to be reminded of some things, but they aren't idiots. **What they don't have, or many of them don't have, is a sense that the world could be organized differently. They are simply confronted with the massive edifice of the way that things are, which they know is a bit shit, and are told that it's not their fault that the world is like this, which it isn't. It just is what it is – get used to it**. Any colour you like as long as its globalizing consumer capitalism, because there isn't any other colour available. Or, as Frederic Jameson said, or rather he said that someone else said, 'it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism."

All of the above is from Martin Parker's Shut Down The Business School. (Parker, 2018, pp6-8) My emphasis.

Irony vs sincerity

> "Most intellectuals would like to find ways of joining in the struggle of the weak against the strong. So they hope that their particular gifts and competences can be made relevant to that struggle. The term most frequently used in recent decades to formulate this hope is 'critique of ideology'. The idea is that philosophers, literary critics, lawyers, historians, and others who are good at making distinctions, redescribing, and recontextualizing can put these talents to use by 'exposing' or 'demystifying' present social practices.
>
> **But the most efficient way to expose or demystify an existing practice would seem to be by suggesting an alternative practice, rather than criticizing the current one."** (Rorty 1993, my emphasis)

Here is what I propose. I propose a move towards working for the Gandhian other, and in the most sincere, non- ironical manner. I explain.

The tentacles of neoliberal capitalism are so deep and so vast that it is impossible to seriously take a stand against it without causing upheaval elsewhere- rendering our action ironical. For example, if you want to do decolonise the academy, but end up producing work that is funded by Leverhulme or Wellcome, and is not in the language that is widely understood, costs £150 to buy and is published through a capitalist publication house, this is ironical. Write a pamphlet in multiple languages, distribute it for free, then we are getting

somewhere. More simply, if one thinks that by replacing all petrol cars in Europe with electrical battery ones, they are going green, this is again deeply ironical, for the production of these electric cars creates huge carbon burden for the rest of the world, and is exploitative. In 'Feminism for the 99%', the authors (Fraser, Bhattacharya and Arruzza, 2019) give excellent examples of how the lean- in feminism, the white feminism which aspires to have female CEOs in power and equates it to feminism, is the epitome of ironical action.

We must see through the fakery of new optimism (Jason Hickel, writes in 'The Divide', 2018). It is irony that allows Donald Trump to say that he stands against white supremacy, and for the Sun to report it.

Kehinde Andrews gives a good example of this during USS pension strikes. British Socialists approach the black radicals asking them to sign up to the protest, saying that they have similar aims. Andrews (2019) explains that the left of the Europe is often fighting for a bigger share of the pie from the right, but they neglect that the pie is made upon the exploitation of the person of colour. It's not that the European system is slightly biased (popular liberal left notion, especially pre #BlackLivesMatter protests that happened after George Floyd's death), it is that built upon the exploitation of those who it doesn't think belong.

If CMS's objective is to stand up to this ideological power, it needs to pay attention to its own ironies, and look at the aesthetics of its critique. It needs to be mindful of not just the

thought that's being written, but also where it might be coming from, who it is meant for, how it is getting there.

Further, the practice of CMS must be informed by critical theory as well, not merely the content. For example, CMS must not be content by writing a really fancy journal paper about neoliberalism in the NHS and then give it to the capitalist journal industry for free, only for them to put it behind a paywall so the worker for who this work is written, cannot benefit from it. Print a few pamphlets and give them away at street corners, like Valerie Solanas did- that's more like it. One of the reasons that Marx's manifesto shook up the world is because it was a pamphlet handed out in street corners. We can, at the very least, put it in open access journal, write it in language of the worker (and to avoid pretending to be a worker, the author identity and the worker identity must fuse), or give it away for free- that is a lot more sincere. We can speak it, art-ify it. The question that needs careful consideration is- "Who do my words work for?" Yes, for now, Capitalism pays my salary, but who do I really work for? And how do I know?

Ethical questions remain for me, that I shall seek to answer in my career. What does it mean to be an immigrant in the western academy? At the moment, I have gotten stuck into the debates and action from within- attending meetings about attainment gaps, mentoring students, doing anti-racism and so on- but the truth is I don't know whether it is enough- for I also derive my salaries from the same ill-gotten capital I critique. As Andrews says, we are all complicit (2019). This thesis was the becoming of me, judge me when I am dead.

Did I do good work by writing this thesis? Or was any remote good I did is cancelled by the ecological resources consumed in the production of this computer on which I write? Am I being sincere or just another phony? The truth is, I don't know. If Hickel (2018) is right about the 1:25 ratio, we must work to even that ratio out.

In this morality, my position is different from both Marx and Freud-

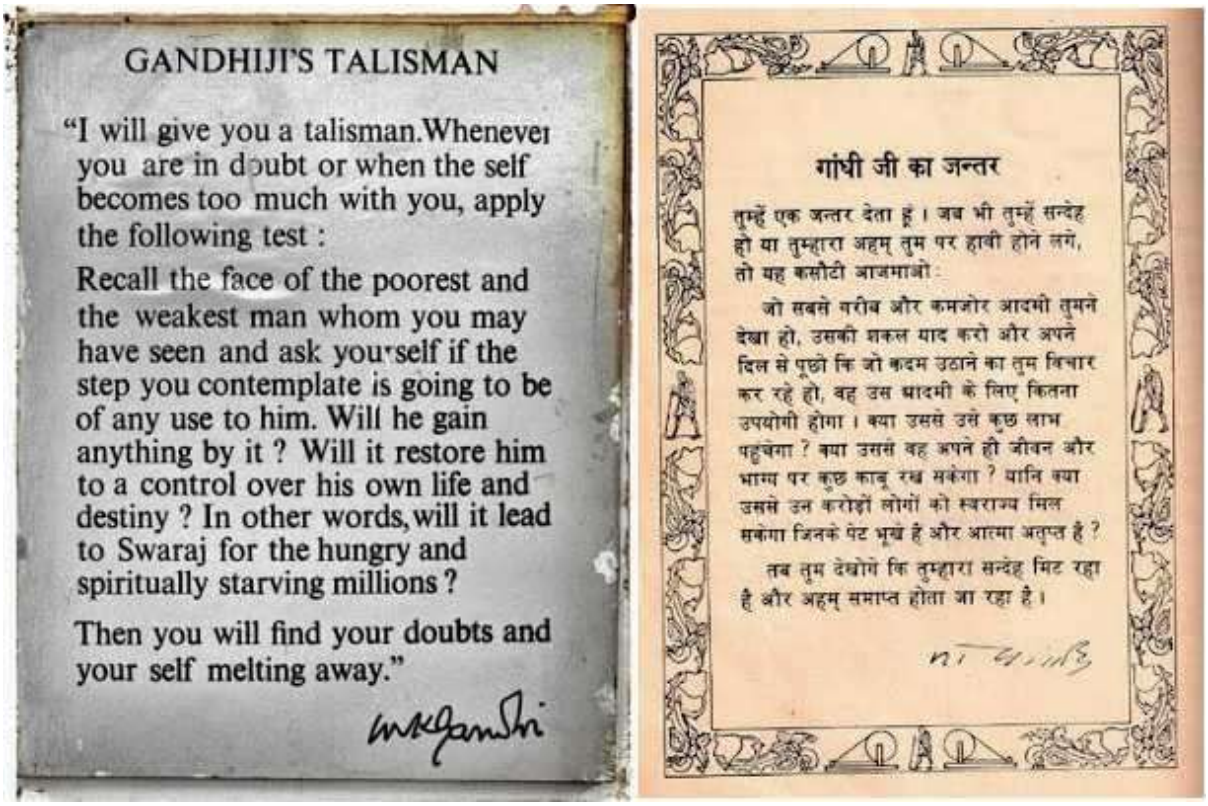
[About Marxism and psychoanalysis] "Both sides are hesitant to reflect on the same blind spot: morality." (Macmillan 1997)

The only conclusion I can offer from this is that of empathy, for ultimately, critique only gives againstness- but in this paragraph I turn against againstness itself, for an empathy for the other. A good example of this comes in myths of praxis of Gandhi.

Gandhi understood the alienation of everyone, and hence the famous dictum where when slapped on one cheek, he would present another cheek. Hence his support of nonviolence- underpinning it being the idea that all humans are alienated by their own consciousnesses and so the way to respond to violence is non-retaliation. Gandhi also understood that the only way to rebel against power is self-annihilation- taking the power to destroy oneself away from the powerful- for this renders them powerless. Mandela enacted the same by submitting himself to 40 years in prison.

While I don't want to celebrate Gandhi (who like every human, was full of contradictions and flaws) too much, I want to focus on the idea of the Gandhian other- because the notion of empathy is incomplete without answering the question of whom for.

The Gandhian other



GANDHIJI'S TALISMAN

"I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test :

Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it ? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny ? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions ?

Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away."

M.K. Gandhi

गांधी जी का जन्तर

तुम्हें एक जन्तर देता हूं। जब भी तुम्हें सन्देह हो या तुम्हारा अहम् तुम पर हावी होने लगे, तो यह कसौटी आजमाओ :

जो सबसे गरीब और कमजोर आदमी तुमने देखा हो, उसकी शकल याद करो और अपने दिल से पूछो कि जो कदम उठाने का तुम विचार कर रहे हो, वह उस आदमी के लिए कितना उपयोगी होगा। क्या उससे उसे कुछ लाभ पहुंचेगा ? क्या उससे वह अपने ही जीवन और भाग्य पर कुछ काबू रख सकेगा ? यानि क्या उससे उन करोड़ों लोगों को स्वराज्य मिल सकेगा जिनके पेट भूखे हैं और आत्मा अतृप्त है ?

तब तुम देखोगे कि तुम्हारा सन्देह मिट रहा है और अहम् समाप्त होता जा रहा है।

M. K. Gandhi

The Gandhian Talisman. The image on the right is in Hindi and appears on the inside of all national curriculum books in India.

So, the question for empathy is, is it reaching Gandhian other directly? At least through ripple effect? Or is it, like the circus of charity in the west, just ironical? How do we do the shift?

Replacing the Existential Hinges

> "You cannot take away someone's story without giving them a new one. It is not enough to challenge an old narrative, however outdated and discredited it may be. Change happens only when you replace it with another. When we develop the right story, and learn how to tell it, it will infect the minds of people across the political spectrum. Those who tell the stories run the world." (Monbiot, 2017 p3).

As Monbiot writes above, we have to offer another story, if we aren't happy with the one we see. However, in trying to articulate a future, we run into a problem straightaway- again of language.

> "Since we can speak of what transcends the language of the present only in the language of the present we risk cancelling our imaginings in the very act of articulating them. The only real otherness would be that which we could not articulate at all. (Monbiot, 2017 p3)

So, while I have offered an alternative ethics, I don't assume that it is perfect: however, within the current framework, that is the best I can do. Another thing I can do is to follow Marx when he says that philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point is to change it.

However imperfect be my actions, I am on my way- and the rebellion that sits within this thesis is one example.

Higher Education Activism

As higher education workers, we could take heed from Clément (2015, p80)-

> "I happen to be a teacher, and, even in its decline, that practice implies the idea of transmission. **Activism means, still more, a desire to transmit fast, fast, in a state of urgency constantly overtaken by reality**." (My emphasis)

Going back to empathy, I echo Parker in his advice about praxis, that it's not the State that will make lives better for the Other. The State often is the problem. We need to do it, you and I.

> "...millions throughout the world have given up the dream of a radically different type of society. … The notion of revolution was so strongly identified with gaining control of the state that the failure of those attempts to change the world through gaining control of the state has led very many people to the conclusion that revolution is impossible. There is a toning down of expectations. For many, hope has evaporated from their lives, giving way to a bitter, cynical reconciliation with reality. It will not be possible to create the free and just society we hoped for, but we can always vote for a centre or left-of-centre party, knowing quite well that it will not make any difference, but at least that way we will have some sort of outlet for our frustration. 'We know now that we will not be able to change the world', says one of

the characters in a novel by Marcela Serrano. 'That has been the greatest blow of all for our generation. We lost our objective in the middle of the way, when we still had the age and the energy to make the changes … The only thing that is left is to ask with humility: where is dignity?'

Is the character in the book not right? If we cannot change the world through the state, then how? The state is just a node in a web of power relations. But will we not be always caught up in the web of power, no matter where we start? Is rupture really conceivable? Are we not trapped in an endless circularity of power? Is the whole world not a spider-web, which can be made a little better here and there? Or perhaps: **is the whole world not a multiplicity of spiderwebs, so that just when we have broken through one, we find ourselves entangled in another?** Is the idea of a radical otherness not best left to those who comfort themselves with religion, to those who live with a dream of heaven as the reward for living through this vale of tears? The great problem with trying to retreat into a life of private dignity and saying 'let's make the best of what we've got' is that the world does not stand still. The existence of capitalism implies a dynamic of development which attacks us constantly, subjecting our lives more directly to money, creating more and more poverty, more and more inequality, more and more violence. Dignity is not a private matter, for our lives are so entwined with those of others that private dignity is impossible. It is precisely the pursuit of personal dignity that, far from taking us in the opposite direction, confronts us fully with the urgency of revolution.

The only way in which the idea of revolution can be maintained is by raising the stakes. The problem of the traditional concept of revolution is perhaps not that it aimed too high, but that it aimed too low. The notion of capturing positions of power, whether it be governmental power or more dispersed positions of power in society, misses the point that the aim of the revolution is to dissolve relations of power, to create a society based on the mutual recognition of people's dignity. **What has failed is the notion that revolution means capturing power in order to abolish power.** What is now on the agenda is the much more demanding notion of a direct overcoming of power relations." (Parker, 2001).

Appendix 3: Send-off

कुछ कर गुजरने को
खून चला खून चला

कुछ कर गुजरने को खून चला खून चला बदन से टपक कर ज़मीन से लिपटकर नए रंग भर ने को खून चला खून चला	To accomplish something The blood flows away Drips off the body Hugs the ground, runs away To fill in new colours To create new traditions The blood flows, it flows away…

Songwriters: Prasoon Joshi / A.R. Rahman

Appears on Hindi Movie soundtrack “Rang De Basanti” (2006)

My translation

Appendix 4: Evidence

One in four people suffer from mental health problems each year (Mind, 2020). One in five of us will have suicidal thoughts during the course of their lives (ibid.) but in academia, my experience is that we shy away from such conversations. The normality of trauma doled out by capitalism is abstractly understood but scarcely visible. Or maybe it is, but we are just so conditioned to turn a blind eye to it. Here's some graffiti from my case files. This is not all of it, but hopefully a decent enough window.

Most Recent PHQ9 16 Oct 2018 19 / 27 **Most Recent GAD7** 16 Oct 2018 15 / 21

These questionnaires measure common symptoms of depression (PHQ-9) and anxiety (GAD-7) and how frequently you are experiencing these symptoms at the current time. An explanation of these scores can be found at the end of this letter.

Date	Status	Details
Tue 16 Oct 2018 13:45	Finished	F2F Trauma Ax

Presenting Problem

You attended an initial assessment on 16th October. You explained that you have been struggling with symptoms of anxiety and depression following a traumatising investigation into your proposed marriage by the immigration services which has altered some of your fundamental beliefs about the world.

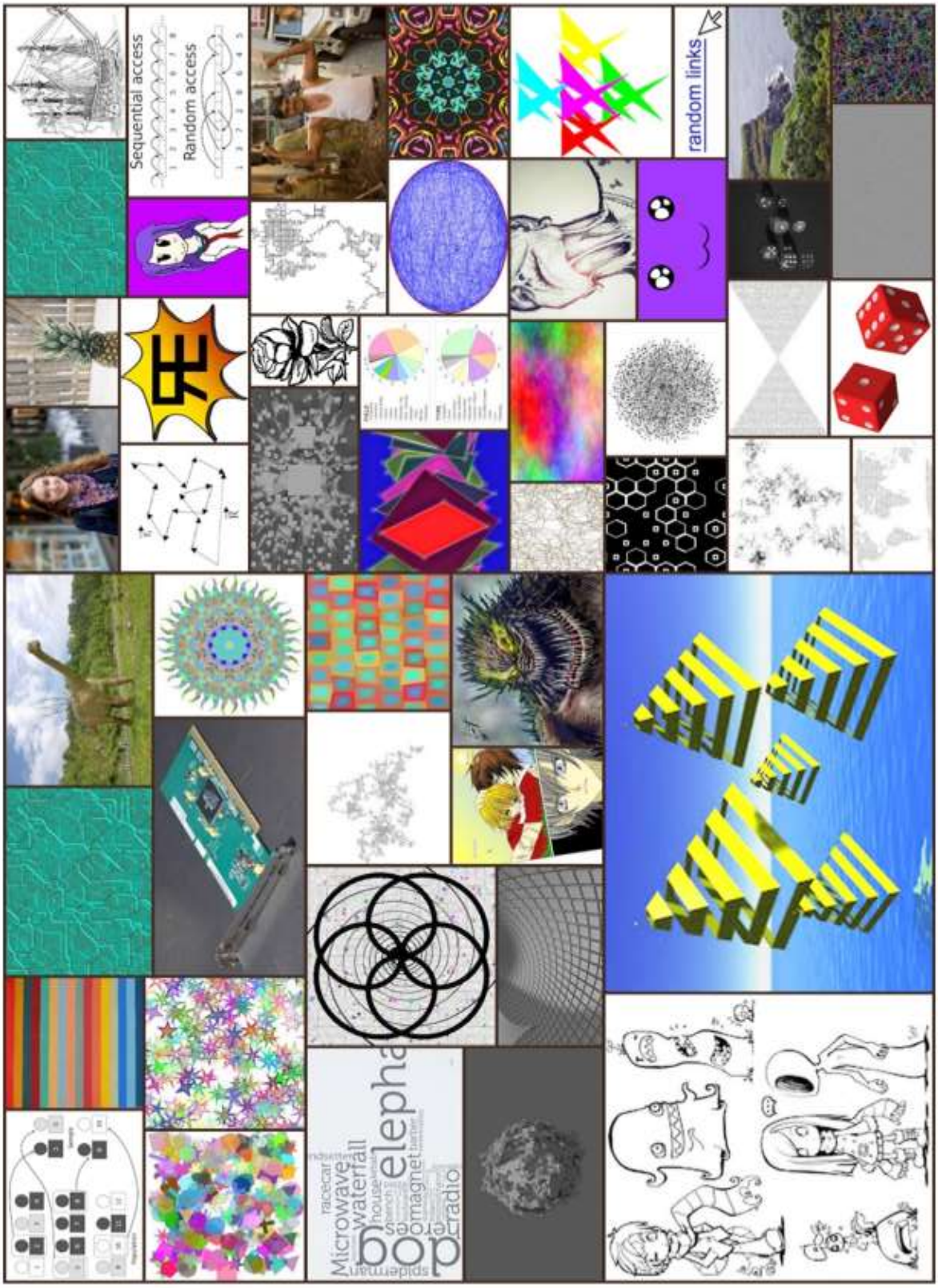
Risk Issues/Risk Management Plan

During the assessment no issues of risk were identified. If this was to change you explained that you would be able to uses a service such as the Samaritans (please see below for further details) or the Mental Health Rapid Response Service (MHRRS). You also said that you would be able to make an appointment to see your GP.

Treatment Plan

You have been referred for a 1-1 course of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Your name has been added to our waiting list and you will be contacted in due course when an appointment becomes available. I hope you find this helpful and wish you all the best for your course of treatment.

Appendix 5: The photos I used- a collage



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The end.

नमस्ते/ Namaste.