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Reading leadership through Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic:

Towards a theory of the powerlessness of the powerful

Abstract

This paper develops a theory of the subjectivity of the leader through the philosophical lens of Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic and its recent interpretation by the philosopher Judith Butler. This is used to analyse the working life history of a man who rose from poverty to a leadership position in a large company and eventually to running his own successful business. Hegel's dialectic is foundational to much Western thought, but in this paper I rashly update it by inserting a leader in between the master, whose approval the leader needs if s/he is to sustain self-hood, and the follower, who becomes a tool that the leader uses when trying to gain that elusive approval. The analysis follows the structure of Butler's reading of the Dialectic, and develops understanding of the norms that govern how leaders should act and the persons they should be. Hard work has become for leaders an ethical endeavour, but they grieve the sacrifice of leisure. They enjoy a frisson of erotic pleasure at their power over others but feel guilt as a result. They must prove their leadership skills by ensuring their followers are perfect employees but at the same time must prove their followers are poor workers who need their continued leadership. This leads to the conclusion that the leader is someone who is both powerful and powerless. This analysis is intended not to demonise leaders, but to show the harm that follows the emphasis on leadership as a desirable and necessary organizational function.

Keywords

Dialectic; leader/follower; critical leadership studies; Butler; power.

Introduction

This paper aims to develop a theory of the subjectivity of 'the leader', or how someone is subjected and subjectified by being called 'leader', a topic that surprisingly little is known about. A normative identity of 'the leader' is implicit in much of the vast literature on leadership: they should have none of the usual human idiosyncrasies or failings, and indeed are not suffered to have subjectivity nor identity beyond that of their

organizational role. Those who fall from grace (fail to achieve this normative identity) instigate an academic hunt for ways of restoring the original state of perfection (Sinha et al, 2012; Hochwarter and Thompson, 2012). But leaders are people who are located within the subject position of the leader, and thus are subjects constituted through webs of discourses, psyches, bodies, cultures, history, in interaction with others, and so on; they are 'a linguistic category, a placeholder, a subject in formation' (Butler, 1997:10), so the subject position of 'the leader' influences how individuals (while) in that position constitute a sense of self in relation to others (see Harding, 2003, for a sustained exploration of this). However, it is on the body of 'the leader', 'boss' or 'manager' that capitalism is inscribed, and it is through the leader/boss/manager that capitalism speaks (Tourish, 2013). Who then, is this subject, 'the leader'?

To answer this question I model the arguments in this paper on Hegel's master/slave or lord/bondsman dialectic, notably by way of its interpretation and development in Butler's *Psychic Life of Power* (1997). The dialectic, outlined in Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977) is 'neither more nor less than the science of the experience of consciousness' (Rockmore, 2003:85). That is, Hegel aimed to outline a theory of the (self-)consciousness of the modern, individuated subject through describing a mythical encounter between a master (or lord) and slave (or bondsman), showing how each needs recognition from the other in order for each to become and to survive as individuated subjects. Note the mutuality here: Hegel argues that subjectivity, and the sense of one's self as an 'I', requires interaction with others. The relevance of this Hegelian approach to leadership studies can be seen in Collinson's (2014) powerful articulation of the need to move away from dichotomous thinking in leadership studies - dichotomization 'constrains analysis by over-simplifying the complex, inter-connected, and shifting relationships that characterize leadership dynamics' (39). Collinson outlines the value of a dialectical approach, and Hegel's master/slave dialectic is perhaps the foundational model for the dialectics-informed leadership research he recommends (43). Further, as I hope to show, it provides insights into 'the dilemmas, tensions and possible contradictions of organizational life' (Collinson, 2014: 46) because it understands the trauma and difficulties that are inherent in the constituting of individuated European subjectivities.

The master/slave dialectic has influenced the writings of Marx, Wittgenstein and post-structural theory more generally. I outline the dialectic in more depth below (see Kenny and Harding [forthcoming] for a critique of the dialectic and its use within organization studies). Butler's (1997) text is an exegesis and development of Hegel's dialectic. Its first substantive chapter analyses the dialectic itself, and its successive chapters expand on each of its major aspects. This paper replicates that structure, using Butler's insights to, firstly, rewrite the master/slave dialectic through inserting a leader between the master and slave. This gives the bare bones of a theory of leaders' subjectivities. Secondly, I will draw on the theoretical developments she then pursues to develop four propositions about leadership subjectivities. This analysis suggests ways in which the powerful are also powerless.

The structure of the paper is as follows. I will firstly introduce Alan, the person whose account of his working life I am building on here, and then summarise Butler's interpretation of the master/slave dialectic. That summary takes us away from leadership studies for a while, but it provides the background to the experiment in writing a master/leader/slave dialectic that follows. This has four major points, which I will then develop in the form of four propositions that together add up to the theory that is the paper's conclusion. The propositions are: (i) bad conscience propels the leader to seek to be a worker; (ii) the leader is seduced by an erotics of power; (iii) subjection as 'the leader' requires that s/he works harder and harder; and (iv) leadership melancholy arises from grieving the loss of pleasure. The conclusion is that leadership identity, or the recognition of the self as leader when in the organizational subject position, requires that one work as hard as one possibly can, that is, as if one were a down-trodden worker. To be a leader is therefore to be a down-trodden worker whose success is dependent upon driving all pleasure and joy out of (conscious) working life, so that staff likewise should be down-trodden workers.

I am drawing on an interview with a man who, together with his wife, started a successful company after working for thirty years as a manager in the leisure industry. I am a family friend and know him as a humorous and generous person (even though his political views are very different from mine). I will call him Alan. I was initially struck by how he

changed when being interviewed. Ever since I have known him, conversations with both he and his wife always turn to their problems with staff and the eccentricities of customers. However, while the tape recorder was running he spoke very differently: he has few problems with staff, and customers' feedback is what motivates him most. It is this change in his narrative that initially intrigued me: I had not seen it in other interviews with people I know. Why then did Alan speak very differently about staff and customers when being interviewed? I suggest that possibilities for speaking and being recognised change between subject positions. When I am a 'friend' and he is 'off duty' the recognition we seek from each other is as people able to share a joke, maintain conversations and actively listen to what each other is saying. However, when I am a professor of management doing research and he is speaking as 'the leader', we have someone who is supposedly an expert in leadership able to pass judgement on whether the other speaker deserves the status of 'the leader'. This change arising from our different subject positions can, I suggest, but can be used fruitfully when exploring the leader's desire for recognition.

The leader: Alan

In his mid-50s at the time of the interview, Alan had been born in a very tough, working-class neighbourhood in one of Britain's industrial cities. His father was an alcoholic who was violent to Alan's mother; his childhood a repetitive cycle of his parents separating from each other and then getting back together. When Alan was 15 and old enough to leave school, he gave his mother the ultimatum that it was either his violent father or him, after which his father was evicted permanently from the family home and Alan found a job as an apprentice for a national company, using his wages to help support his mother and three siblings. He finished his apprenticeship but realised he was more interested in management, and persuaded the company to send him on its management training course. His subsequent rise through the company was, to use the old metaphor, meteoric. He was given his first general manager position at 22, breaking a company rule that managers had to be at least 27 years old before becoming general managers. As a 22 year old manager, half the age of most staff in the branch of the organization he now managed, he instigated performance appraisals, consultation exercises and multi-skilling, and within two years

had increased profits by 100% and won the title of 'manager of the year'. He moved to a bigger branch of the organization where, within 18 months, he won a major award for the company, after which they asked him to take on one of their more prestigious subsidiaries. His speciality became that of 'trouble-shooter', taking over company branches that were in difficulty and turning them around. Eventually, working for a different organization that insisted on centralised policies that would not allow him the autonomy he needed, he and his wife set up their own company. Within ten years they had turned a mediocre business into a very successful one.

There seems little that relates Alan to the lord and bondsman in Hegel's master/slave dialectic, but through introducing them to each other I aim to establish a fruitful relationship.

Re-reading Butler re-reading Hegel: inserting the leader into the master/slave dialectic

This paper restages Hegel's master/slave dialectic for the conditions of 20/21st century capitalism, that is, through inserting a leader between the lord and the bondsman. The leader has to look at both the lord (his/her boss, to whom s/he is a follower) and the bondsman (his/her followers). Does the peculiar position of this intermediary change the terms of the dialectic, and can it explain leaders' subjectivities? Answers to these questions require firstly an analysis of the dialectic itself, as interpreted by Butler, and this requires a deviation away from leadership studies for a while.

Hegel's master/slave dialectic, outlined in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, is a mythical scene that encapsulates the conditions by which European subjectivities are constituted. It has been much analysed and is very influential in numerous theorists' work, although Butler points out that an important section has been virtually ignored. Her task in *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997) is to introduce this ignored section and develop its insights through drawing on Foucault, Nietzsche, Althusser and Freud. Throughout she 'let[s] the bondsman occupy the site of presumptive masculinity' (38), that is, she uses the masculine pronoun. For ease of explication I will follow her practice.

This is the scene Hegel described and Butler (1997) expands upon.

There is a master and a slave, each of whom cannot exist as social beings (become self-conscious) without recognition from the other, but the seeking of recognition is dangerous, so they are caught on the horns of a dilemma. To be subjects they need to be recognised, but in reaching out to be recognised they could be annihilated. That is, they turn to each other for recognition, but have to go through negation, that is, the individual consciousness has to get out of itself (negate itself) to meet the other consciousness, an other that is threatening and can undo or disavow the self (Benjamin, 1988). Each reaches out to this dangerous other, so each risks life/identity because only one of the parties can win and earn recognition from the other. Gurevitch (2001) illustrates this through a discussion, where individual voices struggle to be heard but only one person can speak at any one time if anyone is to be heard. The silenced party is not recognised. This is a struggle in which there is a desire to eliminate the other (Benjamin, 1988), but through finding ways of remaining in a relationship of interdependency, albeit one based on inequality, both parties survive and possess a sense of self (as self-consciousness) (Cole, 2004), but survival means one party is superior and the other submissive. The slave, forced to produce goods for the master, eventually sees himself reflected in the products he has created for the master and realises he has produced the world; through this he comes to self-consciousness. The master however, is dependent only on the lesser form of life, the slave, for recognition, and as the recognition from such an inferior form of life cannot be counted as recognition, the master cannot attain self-consciousness. Jean Hyppolite suggests it shows that 'the truth of the master reveals that he is the slave, and that the slave is revealed to be the master of the master' (Hyppolite, in Cole, 2004:579).

Butler shows how the lord 'postures as a disembodied desire for self-reflection' who desires that the bondsman be the lord's body (35). The master's wish requires that the bondsman become complicit with his ruse, so that the imperative placed upon the bondsman is 'you be my body for me, but do not let me know that the body you are is my body' (35). This has fundamental implications for the bondsman: the very body that allows him to make the objects that enable him to recognise himself as a subject freed of the need for recognition from the master is the very body that, he realises, is destined to die. As an embodied being his life is transitory, and this awareness brings with it a

recognition of his own inevitable death. His new found freedom therefore brings with it terror (who am I? how will I survive?).

In desperation he turns for reassurance to anyone who can help him cope with the fear of his own mortality. Religion offers that reassurance, but religion brings with it norms of behaviour that must be followed if life after death is to be achieved. The bondsman now judges himself against these principles and finds himself wanting. He constantly judges and berates himself because of his weaknesses. He thus moves from unhappy servitude to an unhappy consciousness. Moreover, the freedom from the master is illusory, because the bondsman's psyche is split into two parts, 'a lordship and a bondage internal to a single consciousness' (PLP, 42).

Hegel's conclusion is that redemption is eventually found through membership of a religious community. This contradicts his earlier arguments and Butler is unhappy with it. She turns to Nietzsche and Freud to argue instead (PLP: 57);

> 'If the suppression of [what we might loosely call] the body is itself an instrumental movement of and by the body, then the body is inadvertently preserved in and by the instrument of its suppression. The self-defeating effort of such suppression, however, not only leads to its opposite – a self-congratulatory or self-aggrandizing assertion of desire, will, the body – in more contemporary formulations it leads to the elaboration of an institution of the subject which exceeds the dialectical frame by which it is spawned'.

Her discussion at this point revolves around how the act of negation or repression actually constitutes that which is negated or repressed. So the act of refusing identification with a body whose animal functions shame us actually constitutes the body as such, that is as a shameful animal. This is a 'dialectical reversal' whereby what is censored by the law actually sustains that law (PLP, 58), and is Foucault's repressive hypothesis – repression does not act on pre-given fields of pleasure and desire but constitutes the fields that are to be regulated, and as such expands and proliferates them. In Freud, as well as in Foucault and Hegel, 'the instrument of suppression becomes the new structure and aim of desire' (PLP, 60). But, Butler goes on to argue, the regulatory

regime that produces desire is itself produced by attachment to the rule of subjection (60). If so (and here she returns to Hegel) then subjects will 'attach to pain' when regulatory regimes ensure that it is only painful sites that are available for attachment (61).

We therefore have a further stage in the lord/bondsman dialectic, one which is the thesis of *The Psychic Life of Power*: to become a subject requires that one absorbs and enacts requirements that can cause one pain. In short, if one is to be a subject and have a liveable life, one requires recognition from an other, including an internalised other, who not only establishes the laws one must obey if one is to be a subject but judges one's performance in obeying those laws and often (always?) finds one wanting. Despite this 'unhappy consciousness' we cling to the recognition that is offered, because without that recognition we cannot become subjects.

To 20/21st century organization theorists there is something missing from this account: there is need for a leader to be inserted between lord (shareholder?) and bondsman if the mythical scene is to hold good for analysing organizational encounters. In pursuit of understanding leader subjectivities I will therefore, perhaps wildly and unwisely, re-imagine the scene, but I will insert Alan between the bondsman and the lord. In such a position, he looks both ways, to the lord and the bondsman. Indeed, Butler's observation that the lord 'postures as a disembodied desire for self-reflection' who wants the bondsman to be the lord's body (35) suggests that for 'lord' we could read 'organization', whose metaphysical presence is inscribed on the bodies of its leaders whose task is to articulate its desires (as if 'it', the organization, has an ontological reality that can have desires). I will next re-enact each stage of the master-slave dialectic identified by Butler. This is therefore an experiment in staging a master/leader/slave dialectic as a scene that has four acts (A summary of each Act opens each section).

Act One:

In this Act: *The bondsman, forced to produce goods for the master, eventually sees himself reflected in the products he has created for the master, realises he has produced the world and through this comes to self-consciousness. The master is dependent only on*

the lesser form of life, the slave, for recognition and therefore cannot attain self-consciousness.

Alan became a successful leader at a very young age, increasing profits and winning industry awards while still in his 20's. His working week was six days and more, and his off-duty hours were (and still are) very few. In those early years everything he touched seemed to turn to gold. In his account of this time, Alan, as the leader to his staff and follower to his own superiors, mediated between the organization and the staff, but although he refers to senior managers by name, there is very little reference to staff save when recounting a few difficulties that, he says, he easily over came through introducing good management practices (performance appraisal, etc.). In those early years Alan therefore sought recognition from the lord/organization of himself as a leader, and it appeared to be freely forthcoming. In recompense for his hard work he was moved from one challenge to another. At this stage, we could say that he has an identity (the leader) but not subjectivity, because he is in thrall to the lord/organization, working hard to produce the goods that it will appropriate as its own.

However, Alan eventually met his nemesis in the form of promotion to a branch that required a great deal of refurbishment. Despite promises that money for the necessary investment would be available, it was not forthcoming. Alan therefore refused to take that job further as he knew he could not succeed at it. He was then moved back to a branch of the organization near to where he had started. Although he was to manage several prestigious subsidiaries, he was never to rise above the rank of branch manager.

There is in Alan's account therefore a story of a leader who is also a 'bondsman' who keeps working and working and working in order to obtain recognition from the lord. His followers, just like the slave to the original lord, cannot seem to give him the recognition he seeks. To achieve recognition from the organization he works seven days a week, 52 weeks a year, trying to fulfil what he imagines is the master's desire. Followers, in this account, are not so much slaves as the objects on which the leader must work if he is to obtain the recognition he craves from the lord. The harder he works, the harder the organization makes him work – the only recognition it gives is of the leader self as a hard worker (and therefore award winner). When he fails to achieve what the organization

desires, that is to turn around a failing branch without any funds, they withhold recognition of any status above that which he has already achieved. The result is that he carries on working extremely hard, perhaps trying to reverse that decision, but doing the only thing he knows that could accord him recognition, that is, constant hard work.

At this point, the dialectic seems to hit irresolvable buffers: the leader just keeps on working as hard as possible to achieve a recognition (from his own leaders) that does not arrive, so he does not attain subjectivity. He ignores his followers, just as the lord tries to negate the slave. However, there is something else happening: the organization allowed Alan to feel as if he was free. His talk about this stage of his career is littered with references to the autonomy that he desired and was apparently given. The organization had a policy of

> *You're the general manager, you run the operation, um, pause, and we'll have regular meetings, and providing, you know, everything is going well that's it.*

This organization was then sold to another company and the new owner

> *believed the general manager should run the [branch], as had [the first company]. [They said] 'If you operate it and you meet your budget you don't get a lot of interference'. So that was fine. That went on for a few years.*

However, things were to change:

> *Unfortunately [the owner] had over-stretched himself and had to sell the company. They brought in a guy called Smith. 'I think all the general managers should be known by their Christian names, you know, we're a friendly (cough). Being a suspicious [person], I thought uh uh this is going to be fun. The problem with him was that yes he was very friendly, but he wasn't going to consult, he was going to do it his way. Um. [Pause.] That's when I decided it was time to move on.*

Alan does not break free of the master/lord/organization until he realises that his autonomy is a sham. He had thought he was free, but became aware that he had been

deluded only when he became subject to a centralised system of control. Within the terms of the dialectic it is only then that Alan, the manager, attains subjectivity. He went through a difficult period when he became more and more aware of how limited was his freedom to act, and then handed in his notice

> *I was offered a position in a [big city establishment]. There you are responsible but you have no authority. Very much like that. You know. You are totally going to be responsible for everything in this place but you can't make any decisions without asking. Dreadful. So I went through, opened the [branch], got through the Millenium, and then phoned [my wife] one day and says look, this is not on. Err, and that's we looked at 30 establishments up and down the country errr,*

He left the company for which he had worked for most of his adult life to set up his own business. So Alan had thought he was free and only when that felt freedom was taken away did he realise he had never been free. In Hegel's terms, he attained that freedom that leads to subjectivity only after he had left the lord/organization that had governed the first 30 years of his working life. However, we will see that, as Butler points out, the lord/organization is incorporated into the psyche of the freed leader/follower, so freedom continues to be illusionary.

Act Two:

In this Act: *With freedom comes the recognition of one's mortality and a fear of death that invokes an ethical norm linked to the desire for eternal life. This can harden into a domineering religious stance – the subject has to fulfil certain laws if s/he is to earn a place in the next life.*

We have seen that the leader can feel he is free, but it is an illusionary freedom. He feels that he has autonomy, but this is strictly circumscribed within limits set by the organization: it is not therefore autonomy but merely the doing of the organization's will.

The fear of death engendered under illusionary freedom is, I suggest, that of the death not of the self but of the organization/lord. So long as the leader represents the organization, so long as the organization is inscribed on his body, then the leader has no identity of his

own, no self that can die, but only identification with an organization whose death therefore is greatly feared (if the organization dies the leader's self dies). Indeed, the business pages of newspapers and management journals, and academic texts and courses repeat this message of the imminent death of the organization (Grey, 2009) and how it can be staved off only if the leader is sufficiently clever, resourceful and hard-working. This suggests that fear of death of the organization imposes a dominant imperative towards maintaining the life of the organization. The leader's task is therefore that of working as hard as possible to ensure the organization does not fail. Working hard, cleverly, and resourcefully, and indeed finding ways of manipulating staff identities, motivations, feelings and psyches (Hochschild, 1983; Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) means leaders must work ever harder. Hard work therefore becomes understood to be an ethical demand, because hard work comes to equal the staving off of (organizational) death. So we have a curious reversal when we insert a leader into the master/slave dialectic: the *organization* comes to have an identity that, mediated through the leader, requires that leaders and followers work as hard as possible in order to stave off the organization's death.

However, Alan's working life changed very little after he had set up his own business. Asked what was the difference between running a large company and the much smaller one he owned, he replied:

> *We probably do the same job but it's done on a more informal basis. Where with a large company everything has to, you know, i's dotted and t's crossed you know. A lot of what we do here. We have had various er appraisals on the place and they say 'God, it's still got the discipline of a large business but it's but it's done, you know'. I don't think in a place like this you can sit down with a part-time member of staff and say 'right, you fill out that three page appraisal. Tell me what you think and then come back to me and I'll spend an hour going through it with you'. Where you will sit down and say 'look you are really doing well and but however if you just look at this and look at that', so it tends to be done less formally but it's still being done.*

The distinction between 'leader' and 'entrepreneur', if there ever were one, disappears. Alan has learned one way of running a business, and he has taken that method into his new company. There is no freedom from the relentless hours he must work if he is to stave off the death of the organization that, although he owns it, has become his master. Although he may think he is free, because he has no leader he must follow and obey unreservedly, this freedom is the freedom to work as hard as ever: it is still illusionary freedom, as he is the slave of his own company.

Act Three:

In this Act: *With ethical norms comes a realisation of the difficulties in living up to them. This invokes an unhappy consciousness that constantly judges and berates itself. Self-beratement evolves into self-mortification, in which the 'continuing inadequacy of the self in relation to its transcendent measure' is painfully acknowledged. The wretch seeks ways out of his predicament.*

Hegel's argument is that through various stages, the unhappy consciousness of the freed bondsman becomes a consciousness that constantly judges and berates itself for its contradictoriness. The lord is internalised within the psyche, from where it continues as the conscience of the freed slave who judges himself within the criteria set by the master. The wretch comes to rely on a mediator (such as a priest) to relieve the abject consciousness of responsibility for its own actions (Butler, 1997:51), resulting in rituals (such as fasting and mortification) designed to cleanse the body. Now, the leader must look in two directions at once for recognition: just like the bondsman he desires recognition from his own leaders/lord/organization for identity, and just like the lord he must desire the recognition of the follower/bondsman/worker. What does the lord want of the leader, and what does the follower want of him, if they are to accord him recognition? The leader cannot know the answers: all he can do is guess. In relation to the leader/master, he guesses that what is desired if he is to be accorded recognition is that he works extremely hard, and so we see that Alan works extremely hard. With regard to what the follower/bondsman would require for recognition to be given, Alan's account suggests he imagines that staff judge him by the criteria he sets himself, viz., the criteria

set by the organization/lord/leader, that is, they will judge him on how hard he works, on his always being there and always being in charge:

> *We probably (emphasis) because it is our own business, we are reluctant to [have a break]. Um. Unfortunately on the few occasions we have tried (laughs) it hasn't been too successful. It would be nice, we were talking the other night and saying, it would be nice just to go and, forget two weeks holiday, but maybe three or four weekends away, um (long pause) and that's ideally what we would like ..... But it's just that (exasperated sound) in a place like this the customers get used to seeing you and even if you have a night away there'll be something that's said when you come back. That in itself isn't a problem but it's probably because of the level of staff that we have, um, because you don't have the formal duty managers and the heads of department, when you go away they they they tend to rely on you to guide them. Um. And in theory they should be able to do it but in practice they just seem to kinda lose the plot somehow.*

Alan judges himself in the same way as when he was employed by a big corporation: he cannot take any time off because if he does then he is not devoting himself, 100%, to the organization. Indeed, he can justify this on the grounds that staff are incapable of taking his place, but we must pose the question of whether any member of staff would ever be good enough: does not Alan need them to be 'poor' so that he can justify to himself his continuous presence in the organization? Again we see that the freedom the bondsman earned is beyond his grasp: all he has is a simulacrum of freedom.

But there is another twist here: note how his followers are seen to 'kinda lose the plot'. I asked if Alan ever saw people who, at 22, showed the promise he had shown:

> *Errr, pause, here, no, when I was in the corporate [business] yes, ... They were really ready to develop but there was a process and that. Because we have a lot of part-time staff, some are second jobs, some, they don't, I mean, recently I've sat some of them down and said look, what about training courses, you know, but it's a part time job to them and it's not a not a career. ... we have tried to run various courses but you know (sound of moaning).*

Alan made few references to his staff/followers during the interview, but when I meet him as a friend, the topic of conversation always turns, almost obsessively, to the problems he and his wife have with them, and with the idiosyncrasies of their customers. Formally, on tape, none of those complaints were forthcoming. The above quote is as near as he came to voicing his thoughts about staff. There is therefore a disjuncture here: when we talk as friends he gives one version of his life, but when he talked to me in the formal position of academic researcher/interviewee he gave another account. One aspect of this, I have suggested, is that when I was in the formal position of 'academic' I was ostensibly in a position to recognise Alan as a 'good leader'. It follows that when he discusses himself formally and on-record as a leader or business owner, with someone whose formal position is that of a business school academic and therefore supposedly with expertise in leadership, he has to present himself as having ideal followers, because the ideal manager would have only ideal followers, that is, people he has successfully developed, motivated and rewarded and now successfully leads. In other words, Alan, the person who works non-stop, requires that his staff similarly work non-stop if he is to be known as 'the leader'. That is, a sign of the success of the leader is his/her ability to reduce staff to the status of hard-working machines.

However, there are other explanations, and one of these is to be found in 'the plot' that the staff are losing. They have lost the script of the play they are supposed to be enacting, but what is this play? It would seem that it is a play about emulating the example of the leader in working hard, and that the lost plot arises from failing to do that. Alan's account suggests he sees himself as the ideal leader: utterly devoted to the job, working very long hours, implementing policies and practices designed to motivate followers and ensure everything works extremely well. His personal life is bound up in the business: he and his wife work together, and many of their friends work in the same field. In other words, Alan is a down-trodden worker that eats, sleeps and dreams the business. It is his major focus, he rarely takes time off from it, and he is good at it. This is how he wants his followers to be, that is, versions of himself, and these are the criteria by which he assesses them. But they have lost the stage directions and do not, it seems, know how to do that.

Act Four:

In this Act: *To become a subject requires that one absorbs and enacts requirements that can cause one pain.*

There are two constant themes throughout Alan's theory about what drives him: one is the need to do hard work, and the other is freedom. We have seen that the freedom he thinks he has is illusory. Firstly when working in a big organization the freedom he thought he had was to be an autonomous leader making his own decisions. However, those decisions had already been taken elsewhere. Secondly, Alan desired recognition as a successful leader, and this required that he work very hard, efficiently and effectively, within limits imposed by the organization/lord's desire. Now as a business owner he finds his freedom is as illusory as when he worked for a large corporation: he is tied to the business, working just as hard as previously, but now he is his own judge, as he said himself, when asked what is the difference between being the owner and being a manager:

> *Ehhh, well you as an owner you don't, you you you put the pressure on yourself. Um. If if if you think about it, if you if you work for a for a corporate [company] you'll have an area manager, you'll have directors and various specialist departments. They will dictate things like purchasing policy, they will dictate things like um marketing policy, well when you're an owner that's all down to you. The only, as I always say, the only person I have to convince once a year is the bank manager, you know, as long as he's happy that's it.*

However, there is a chink in Alan's self-image: the body is mortified in that it becomes tired out. There are nascent plans for Alan and his wife to sell the business. I asked why. Alan almost shouted as he said 'probably'

> *Probably, [long pause] the hours you work. You're you're you're then beginning, you're beginning at the end of the night to feel it, you know, you kind of say well wait a minute. The other thing is when you see your friends getting ill and dying round about you. ..... I think it's now time we have got to think that's it, we've*

done our, because I've done 40 [years] … and at the end of the day you want to enjoy yourself a bit.

Note how the long hours and the hard work are seen as part of a judgement: how much should a person work before they have made a fair contribution? His statement is redolent of a prison sentence. In many ways we are seeing in Alan's account Weber's 'Protestant Ethic' (1930/2001), an injunction that one must work as hard as possible in order to secure a place in heaven. The catch, however, is that one cannot know until after one's death if one is one of the chosen. The imperative is therefore to devote oneself to one's work in the hope of being one of the chosen ones. Alan's closing words suggest that the work has not been enjoyable – pleasure will come when Alan is freed from the constant responsibilities and pressures of the leader.

Therefore, becoming a leader requires that the individual attach themselves to an identity that causes them to suffer: they must become perpetual workers, be judged as such, and judge others as such. There is a 'dialectical reversal' (Butler, 1997:58) here in that the requirement to work very hard and with total devotion to the business becomes something that is not imposed but is desired. 'The instrument of suppression becomes the new structure and aim of desire'. (60).

Summary: the master/manager/slave dialectic

Through inserting the leader into the master/slave dialectic we have moved away somewhat from Hegel's mythical scene of encounter, but a theory of leaders' desire of followers is starting to emerge. The account so far is this:

- thesis: inserted between the master and the slave, the leader thinks he is free but this is an illusion of freedom;

- anti-thesis: deludedly thinking he is free, the leader works extremely hard to achieve recognition from his own lord/leader, under the imperative of an ethical norm which requires the leader to be utterly devoted to his work, and to prove his worthiness as a leader through ensuring his followers work just as hard and efficiently as himself. The leader must therefore become a down-trodden worker,

or what I have called elsewhere (Harding, 2013) a zombie-machine that works extremely hard at turning his followers into zombie-machines;

-       synthesis: the requirement to work hard becomes a (leader's) desire to work hard. I work hard therefore I am (a leader).

That is, to be a leader, to have identity, requires that the leader attach himself to this subject position of something that is less than, or beyond, the human: he is subjected and subjectified as if he were a machine or a body without a brain.

In Psychic Life of Power (1997) Butler progressively develops her understanding of each aspect of the lord/bondsman dialectic. I will now follow the twists and turns of her arguments, expanding upon this initial conclusion of the leader subjected and subjectified as down-trodden worker, requiring that followers emulate his performance. However, some of the interpretations that follow may be speculative leaps triggered by thinking through ways in which Butler's arguments in relation to sex and gender can be applied to developing a theory of leader subjectivities. I will therefore label the conclusions to each section as propositions. These are not propositions designed to be tested, but are the building blocks of theory (Sedgwick, 1991). Each one arises from interpretations Butler offers as she expands, chapter by chapter, upon Hegel's metaphor that is the master/slave dialectic.

Proposition One: Bad Conscience propels the Leader to be a down-trodden worker

How does bad conscience (which is a turning on and against the self) serve the social regulation of the subject (66)? This is the question Butler next explores so as to better understand the formation of the subject within a mandatory passionate attachment to subjection, where a repeated self-beratement functions as that person's 'conscience' (67). Drawing on both Nietzsche and Freud, she argues that conscience is self-derived, i.e. it does not arise from external punishment but from the venting of one's aggression internally, that is, against oneself. From Nietzsche she can argue that man is a promising being who establishes a continuity between a statement and an act – what he says he will do he will do. This 'protracted will, which is self-identical through time and which establishes its own time, constitutes the man of conscience' (72). However, there can be

no 'I' without a moral labouring on the self: the 'I' takes itself as its own object, and it is this reflexive turning on the self that produces 'the metaphorics of psychic life' (76).

Bad conscience is the perverse joy taken in persecuting oneself in the service and name of morality. This arises from a prohibition against desire and that desire's turning back upon itself. This turning back upon itself becomes the very inception, the very action of what is rendered entitative through the term 'conscience'. We can imagine this as a scene. There is a desire for something but, as the desirer reaches out towards what it wants, it realises that it is in danger of breaking the norms of its culture and therefore of losing the love of others, so it turns back on itself reflexively and chastises itself for wanting what it should not want. Eventually, what it desires is this self-chastising, because, according to Freud, prohibition reproduces the prohibited desire, preserves and re-asserts it in the very structure of renunciation (81). Conscience is then figured 'as a body which takes itself as its object, forced into a permanent posture of negative narcissism or, more precisely, a narcissistically nourished self-beratement'. (82).

There was no talk of desire for anything when Alan recounted his life working for big corporations, but when he discussed his current position a desire for time away from the company, a weekend break, was articulated, as we saw above. Briefly, he said that 'it would be nice just to go and - forget two weeks holiday - but maybe three or four weekends away …. and that's ideally what we would like'. Here, the desire, the turning outwards, is for time away, to be off duty, to be someone other than the leader. But he then represents customers as a cause that prevents his having a short break. If he is using the (imagined) responses of customers to articulate his own concerns about being away from the business then we have this scene:

It is my desire to have time away from the business. But as I reach outwards to fulfil that desire I am pushed back against myself. I am a business owner and if I am not there then the business cannot function, or perhaps even I myself cannot function. That could lead to the death of the business. I therefore cannot leave it for even a short time as that would be to break the law that the business must survive. Because I have to be physically present, then I know that I am the leader, and I am certain in that identity.

My first proposition therefore is that the bad conscience of the leader is the feeling that one is not doing one's duty if one is not physically there, leading one's followers. In Freudian terms, there must be a certain libidinal joy in this feeling – the leader both wants to be there and does not want to be there, but his identification with the business is such that he gets a thrill from being so attached to something that any time away from it would be a source of guilt. This is understood more clearly through the quote from Foucault which opens Butler's next chapter (83) 'My problem is essentially the definition of the implicit systems in which we find ourselves prisoners; what I would like to grasp is the system of limits and exclusion which we practice without knowing it; I would like to make the cultural unconscious apparent'. The leader, it seems, is a prisoner within his own identity.

Proposition Two: the leader is seduced by an erotics of power.

From Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, Butler writes, we get the understanding that we can become autonomous only by becoming subjected to a power, and thus radically dependent on that power. Foucault saw subjectivation taking place through the body (and we saw with Alan how he felt the need to be *physically* present in the workplace). Butler interweaves Foucault's ideas with those of Freud and Lacan to expand upon Foucault's arguments about the prison:

> There is no prison prior to its materialization; its materialization is coextensive with its investiture with power relations; and materiality is the effect and gauge of this investment. The prison comes to be only within the field of power relations, more specifically, only to the extent that it is saturated with such relations and that such a saturation is formative of its very being' (91)

As with the prison then so with the organization: it is saturated with power relations, as is the body of the leader, the materialization of which, just like that of the prisoner, is co-extensive with that of the materialization and investiture of the organization. Where Butler asks about resistance to the disciplinary apparatus of the modern state (101), I ask about the disciplinary apparatus of the organization. This leads to the question of how leaders turn the disciplinary apparatus of the organization to their own ends, to achieving

their will to power, or what I suggest is an erotics of power, over others. Leaders have the whole panoply of organizational law (Harding, 2003) to assist them: they can discipline those who fail to achieve their objectives or break any organizational rules and regulations. They have brute, direct power over others.

This power, I suggest, has a libidinal energy arising from leaders' power to require others in the organization to do one's bidding (through making it feel as if it is followers' own bidding). Such power can substitute for Butler's discussion of sexuality in *Psychic Life of Power*. That is, where Butler suggests that there is something about the relationship of sexuality to power that conditions and makes possible resistance (101), I suggest the fruitfulness of thinking about the leader's equally strong libidinal investment in power over others. We could call this an erotics of power.

Proposition Two is that there is an erotics of power within organizations, which is a power that seduces leaders but to which they are also subjected, because they too have to do the bidding (of the organization). That power which leaders desire therefore is the very means of controlling and subjecting leaders; the leader desires that power over others to which s/he is herself subjected.

This leads us back to Butler's main thesis in *Psychic Life of Power* – 'how are we to understand the disciplinary cultivation of an attachment to subjection?' (102). She answers this by drawing on Freud's argument of the subject emerging through its formation of attachment to prohibition, and Foucault's analysis of the formation of a (sexual) subject through regimes of power that both prohibit desire and at the same time form and sustain that very (prohibited) desire. That is, in order to be, to have identity, to be a subject, we are passionately attached to subjection, to the name we are called and through which identity is granted. Althusser's thesis on interpellation helps understand the mechanisms in operation here.

Proposition Three: Subjection through interpellation requires that the leader must work harder and harder *to be* a leader

Althusser's theory of interpellation is influential throughout much of Butler's work, and it is in *Psychic Life of Power* that she develops his thesis in some depth. Althusser, like

Hegel, illuminates his arguments through use of a mythical scene: a police officer calls out to a passer-by: 'hey you'. The passer-by turns in response to that hail, and in turning takes on an identity, that of the criminal.

Butler points out (106/7) that this exemplary allegory literalizes the process of subjectification: it encapsulates a demand that one must align oneself with the law (that is, a generalized rather than state law) if one is to be an 'I'. In replying 'Here I am' to that call one becomes a guilt-ridden subject able to reflect on its self. That is, Butler takes further the concept of conscience in the constitution of the self: to be a subject, that is to be subjected and subjectified, requires that one has a conscience, that is, 'the psychic operation of a regulatory norm' (5) or, more colloquially, an internal voice with which one berates oneself. The law which governs the leader, as seen in Alan's account, is a demand to work hard. The leader, it follows, is defined by this law and dependent on it for his/her existence: the person who does not work hard is not a leader. Thus the leader's social existence, or existence as a subject, in Butler's terms, is located in a reprimand that establishes subordination as the price of subjectivation (112). Existence as a subject 'can be purchased only through a guilty embrace of the law, where guilt guarantees the intervention of the law and, hence the continuation of the subject's existence'. In Alan's case perhaps it is a customer who climbs onto the police officer's podium and shouts out 'Hey you, why were you away from your work this weekend?' Indeed, Alan himself notes that when he returns after a rare weekend away 'things are said' by customers. Alan turns, and in turning becomes guilty of the crime of forgetting his leadership responsibilities.

It follows that there is a need to prove one's innocence, and Althusser argues that this is done through labour. As Butler interprets his arguments, 'To acquit oneself 'conscientiously' is … to construe labor as a confession of innocence, a display or proof of guiltlessness in the face of the demand for confession implied by an insistent accusation' (118). Alan, the leader, claims innocence through working hard: I work hard therefore I am a leader. To become a subject therefore involves: accusation; necessity to provide proof of innocence (through one's labour); execution of that proof (labouring); and subjectification within and through the terms of the law. 'To become a "subject" is

thus to have been presumed guilty, then tried and declared innocent' (188). Importantly, because this declaration is not a single act but a status incessantly reproduced, to become a 'subject' is to be continuously in the process of acquitting oneself of the crime of, in Alan's case, idleness.

There is here 'a lived simultaneity of submission and mastery' (117) which I interpret as meaning that one becomes a master at achieving one's own submission, in each of the incessantly repeated acts of turning towards what Butler argues is a voice that need not be present, need not indeed be articulated, but is there within the norms and laws of a culture. One becomes a subject through mastery of the skills of submission which requires not simply acting according to a set of rules, but embodying and reproducing those rules as rituals in one's actions (119). Through such rituals a 'belief is spawned which is then incorporated into the performance in its subsequent operations' (op cit). There is in all this a compulsion to 'acquit oneself' so the subjectified subject is an anxious subject.

Alan recounts an incident in his early career that can now be seen to inaugurate him as 'the leader'. He had then been an under-manager for about 18 months, and

> *After about a year and a half, this is very interesting, um, [my boss] called me into the office and said 'it's time you moved on'. I said 'sorry'. He said 'it's time you moved on'. He says 'If I've been off duty and I come back and you've done everything then I worry about my position so it's time you moved' (Laughter) Which I thought was a very nice way of putting it.*

We have here the following 'very interesting' scene:

- the voice of authority shouts out 'hey you, come into my office – it's time you moved on';

- the passer-by turns round, feeling guilty. Is he being given the sack? Will he lose his job? He asks a question that is also an apology for the crime he is being accused of 'Sorry?';

- But he is proven innocent because of his labours (he's done everything the leader should do), and he is therefore equipped to be a leader.

I suggest this is the scene of inauguration of the leader, one in which the difference between 'leader' and 'worker' is constituted. To be called 'the leader' is to always have to prove one's self as a leader, and this is done through constant work. But the first two propositions suggest the name 'leader' also incorporates secret thrills and pleasures that will introduce guilt, or bad conscience, into the leader's identity. This is a deviation from what the identity of 'leader' should incorporate and therefore even harder work must be undertaken to overcome the guilty pleasures. Proposition three is therefore: To be proven innocent in the court of law of the leader's conscience requires ever greater focus on working hard at fulfilling one's leadership duties.

Proposition Four: managerial melancholy arises from refused sybaritism, or grieving for the loss of pleasure

The final, powerful chapters of *Psychic Life of Power* form 'a certain cultural engagement with psychoanalytical theory that belongs neither to the fields of psychology nor to psychoanalysis, but which nevertheless seeks to establish an intellectual relationship to those enterprises' (138). In them Butler develops a thesis of the melancholy induced in the psyche through its having to give up potential sexed/gendered identities. Butler's arguments provoke the related question of what is given up, what objects are lost, to the leader when s/he is under a compulsion to work, and work, and work. I suggest (perhaps because of my own desires) that what is given up, the opposite of hard work, is sybaritism. The term (Wikipedia tells us - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sybaris, accessed 13/07/12) is synonymous with pleasure and luxury, and originates in a Greek city, Sybaris, which in the 6th century BCE was so rich that it was widely envied and admired. This contrasts markedly with Christianity's imperatives, as discussed by Hegel, Althusser and Weber, echoes of the last of these resonating, I have suggested, through Alan's account. In other words, Christianity's influence on Western European subjectivities is that they emerge out of bad conscience; I am suggesting (and this is Proposition Four) that what is suppressed by the internalised judgemental eye is the wish for pleasure, laziness and self-indulgence.

The argument is this (and here I paraphrase Butler for much of this argument). From Freud (134) comes the thesis that the lost object haunts the ego as one of its constitutive

identifications. That is, what is given up does not disappear but is internalised, although the regret or grief from what has been lost means that this is a melancholic incorporation. For Butler, what is given up is the possibility of different gendered identities and different loves. For the leader, I am arguing that what is given up is indulgence, pleasure and enjoyment. The memory of these, of what might be, is however incorporated and their loss is a melancholic loss.

Secondly, just as heterosexuality (and sexed identities) is/are cultivated through prohibitions such as restrictions on who one can love, so leader identities are cultivated through what cannot be done (stop working and start playing). This is because, just as becoming a man requires repudiating femininity (137), becoming a leader requires repudiating everything that is other to the requirement for hard work. One's secret, guilty desires, those which one cannot allow to be articulated, are however projected onto one's other. The male knows he is male (rational, logical, transcendent) because he is not woman (emotional, close to nature); the leader knows he is leader (disciplined worker) because he is not follower (undisciplined and self-indulgent in the absence of leadership). But

> 'One of the most anxious aims of his desire will be to elaborate the difference between him and her, and he will seek to discover and install proof of that difference. His wanting will be haunted by a dread of being what he wants, so that his wanting will also always be a kind of dread'. (137)

That is, followers become for the leader the receptacle of his repudiated desires: the leader dreads giving in to his own desire for pleasure and indolence, cannot articulate that dread wish to be lazy, but installs proof of the difference between himself as leader and the not/leader, the followers, through seeing in his followers those repudiated aspects of himself. Where he is hard-working he sees followers as trying to avoid work; where he is competent he sees them as incompetent; and so on. This puts the leader in a psychic quandary. If it is the mark of the good leader to lead, develop, train, control and motivate followers so that they work as hard as possible, but the leader also needs to see followers as ill-disciplined and slothful, then the leader is in a double-bind. If his followers become controlled, highly motivated, hard-working, etc., then they will not carry his repudiated

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desires and he will feel himself to be a failure for having to admit to his desire for pleasure. But so long as they embody (in his eyes) those despised aspects of himself, they cannot be hard-working, etc., and he will have failed as a leader. All he can do to escape from this bind is to push himself to ever harder work.

However, Butler's argument is that such loss brings about a 'disavowed grief' (139), resulting in a melancholia for what cannot be grieved (in our case freedom from the necessity of constant hard work). This melancholia, Butler argues, becomes part of the operation of regulatory power (143), because such a radical refusal suggests that an identification has, at some level, taken place, but the disavowal of that identification results in the over-determination of the identification (149). In other words, the leader recognises himself at some level as someone who desires to be lazy, indulgent and free from responsibilities, so to disavow himself of that identification he works ever harder to prove that he is not that which he, at one level, desires to be.

Melancholia returns Butler (168) to the figure of the 'turn' as a founding trope in the discourse of the psyche, that is the turning back on oneself and the berating of the self for its failure to achieve normative ideals. In Hegel, turning back upon oneself comes to signify the ascetic and sceptical modes of reflexivity that mark the unhappy consciousness; in Nietzsche turning back on oneself suggests a retracting of what one has said or done, or a recoiling in shame in the face of what one has done. In Althusser, the turn that the pedestrian makes toward the voice of the law is at once reflexive (the moment of becoming a subject whose self-consciousness is mediated by the law) and self-subjugating. For Freud, the ego turns back upon itself once love fails. But it is melancholia, Butler argues, (191) that links the psyche to the norms of social regulation. This is because the power that is imposed on the self and animates its emergence as an 'I', that power which makes self-hood possible, at that very instant also imposes limits upon self-hood, so in order *to be* one must sacrifice possibilities for the self one could be, and what is sacrificed is grieved (198). Thus, the discourses of a culture that make possible 'the leader' provide the motive power that constitutes the identity of 'the leader', but at the same time they impose norms of what the leader can or must do if he is to sustain that identity as the leadaer. To be a leader requires giving up possibilities for joy, leisure, self-

indulgence, play and so on, and at the same time it requires that the leader bars staff from sybaritic pleasures.

The figure of the 'turn' in leadership studies thus becomes something like the following, not quite mythical scene:

> A leader is walking down the corridors of an organization and sees a group of followers by the photo-copier machine, talking and laughing. He stops, desiring to join in the conversation and the pleasure in colleagues' company. 'Hey you, you human being', they seem to have been calling out, 'come and join us'. But they become silent and turn to getting the photocopying done. He realises he has mis-heard the voice: it had been drowned by his presence, which had said 'hey you, get on with your work'. He sees himself reflected in the backs now turned towards him: his conscience is clear because staff are busily working; his conscience is not clear because the pleasure of genial company has been lost, and he is the cause of that loss.

Proposition Four is therefore: what is suppressed by the internalised judgemental eye is an injunction to enjoy and indulge oneself. To be a leader requires that one sacrifice possibilities for pleasure, self-indulgence, and so on. This is an ungrievable loss which must be guarded against, and it becomes projected onto the not-I, the follower. The leader must strive to ensure that followers do not enjoy themselves (save when pleasure becomes a tool for control (Fleming, 2005), and this at the same time ensures that the leader is a melancholic subject.

Conclusion: towards a theory of the leader's subjectivity

In this paper I used the life story told me by a man who had spent 30 years as a leader in a large organization before setting up his own business, and I have read his account with, through and alongside Butler's *Psychic Life of Power* (1997). I inserted into Hegel's master/slave dialectic a leader in between master and slave, and developed four propositions designed to expand upon the stages within the dialectic. These together lead to the following theory of the subjectivity of the leader, and why the leader desires or requires that followers work as hard for as long as they possibly can.

The leader thinks he is free, but this is an illusory freedom. Even when he sets up his own business, he is governed by cultural norms and discourses that both make the identity of leader possible, and place limits upon what can be done if the attempt at the impossible identity of self as leader is to be sustained. Within those cultural norms is a requirement that leaders work, and work, and work (that is, become down-trodden workers). The person who does not work hard cannot be a leader. Hard work is therefore an ethical norm of leadership. Any desire for a break from work provokes feelings of guilt (bad conscience) and fear of the failure of the company. This drives the leader to work even harder. However, there is a thrill of pleasure in the knowledge that the leader appears to be indispensable, and an erotic thrill of power over others. These contradict the definition of what it is to be a leader, to be called by that name, and they induce guilt (bad conscience). The leader therefore has to prove that he is not guilty of failing to fulfil the normative ideal of 'the leader', and to do this has to work ever harder at fulfilling his leadership role. However, this drive to refuse all sybaritic pleasures, to disown one's capacity for joy and pleasure in things other than work produces the leader's self as down-trodden worker suffering an ungrievable loss, the loss of pleasure. Unable to indulge in pleasure at work, the leader is driven to ensure that no-one else can enjoy what he cannot himself enjoy.

To be a good leader requires that followers work very hard, efficiently and with devotion to the business (they must become like machines): followers who do not do this testify to the leader's failure to line them up behind the vision of what the organization is aiming to achieve. However, followers are receptacles of the leader's repudiated self, that is, his desire for sybaritic pleasures, and so the leadaer has to seek to drive those pleasures out of follower. He is therefore in a double bind, because if one tasks is fulfilled it negates the other. The only way out is to work harder, and thereby sustain the norm and the status quo. Leadership is therefore a melancholic function where the success that is desired is impossible to attain, but what is lost in the striving cannot be regained. The power that subjectifies the subjectivity of the leader, which facilies the identity of 'leader', thus subjects the leader within a melancholic subject position.

This is a theory of how the norms that govern leaders' identities play out in practice. It is not necessarily a description of how all leaders actually behave all of the time, and indeed Butler illuminates ways in which such normative requirements can be evaded or even fail in their enactment. There may be misrecognition in interpellation when the name is a social category such as 'leader', because it then is a signifier that can be interpreted in a number of ways (96). The strict connection between name and identity may also be derailed in the imaginary which disorders and contests what is attempted in the symbolic. Indeed, she suggests that identity always fails. Further, Foucault's thesis on resistance as an effect of the very power that it is said to oppose is important (p. 98). There is the dual possibility of being both constituted by the law and an effect of resistance to the law. For Foucault, the symbolic produces the possibility of its own subversions, and these subversions are unanticipated effects of symbolic interpellations (99). The iterability of the performativity of the subject allows a 'non-place' for subversion, where the re-embodying of the subjectivating norm can redirect its normativity (99). Butler suggests that the strategic question for Foucault is: how can we work the power relations by which we are worked, and in what direction? (100) Finally, a failure of interpellation may mark the path toward 'a more open, even more ethical, kind of being, one of or for the future' (131). There are therefore possibilities for change.

What I have aimed to do in this paper is not to demonise the leader, but to try to understand the imperatives that constitute the leader subject position and impose limitations on what leaders can do if they are to sustain that identity of leader. I have illuminated, in some ways, what we could call the powerlessness of the powerful. Rather than a critical approach that decaffeinates the leader, portraying him/her as an agent of capitalism, I have tried to show how the leader is not only agent but also object of capitalism, controlled in ways that need exploring. Alan's account is one of relentless hard work, and numerous statistics show that he is not alone: the length of leaders' working weeks is a cause for concern (Ford and Collinson, 2011). But also there is within his account a sense that this person is a good man. He rescued his mother from a violent husband, rose out of the slums to become a successful businessman and is generous with his money. My concern has been to show how that person is, when in the subject position of the leader, a hard driver who is as hard driven himself. If we are to

move towards 21st century organizations in which domination, exploitation, aggressive control over people's lives, and the reduction of working selves to disposable pieces of furniture are to be challenged, we need to find ways of including leaders within the category 'human' (Butler, 2009). Indeed, it will be impossible to change the terms within which working lives are lived without doing so. This paper therefore finishes with a question that cannot be answered here: how do we change the norms within and through which leaders' identities are constituted and leadership self-making occurs?

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