

The Corporeality of Expertise

Intellectuals, taken generally ... seem to lack a starting point from which their scriptures come: where are their bodies? This is the simple question I wish to register. Sometimes, but rarely, the body is there – fleetingly and sparingly in journals, diaries, sometimes in letter. ... [I]t is noticeable how amongst male intellectuals this is the most remarkable and yet unremarked absence.

PHILIP CORRIGAN (1988:369)

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ABSTRACT *In this essay, I write about the relationship between corporeality and expert knowledge while simultaneously, and only partly successfully, trying to avoid writing about ‘the intellectual’s body.’ The first half of the essay enlists Marxian social theory to model how the division and specialization of intellectual labors generates a certain experiential relationship between expert and objects of expert knowledge that I have termed elsewhere the ‘phenomenology of expertise.’ I argue that the focus of intellectual labor upon rationality decorporealizes intellectual self-awareness while lending ‘objects’ of rational attention a peculiarly material character. The second half of the essay complicates the theoretical arguments of the first half with an ethnographic engagement of the corporeality of eastern German journalism in the 1990s. Here, I focus on the norm of professional corporeal ‘calm’ and on how gesture and reflex can be interpreted to exhibit a mode of critical expertise that is otherwise actively policed in the professional environment of the contemporary eastern German media. In conclusion, I reflect on how expert anthropological engagement with other modes and cultures of expertise creates opportunities for an improved reflexive awareness of the social character of knowledge practices that are neither ‘ours’ nor ‘theirs.’*

KEYWORDS *Knowledge, professionalism, journalism, Germany*

In this essay, I take up sociologist Philip Corrigan’s challenge to pay greater attention to the corporeal ‘starting points’ of intellectual life. Given that, as Corrigan observes, so little has been written about intellectuals’ bodies and thus, one imagines, there is so much that could be said, the first task is to admit what this essay is not. This is not an exhaustive study of the phenomenology of intellectual life, nor is it a purely ethnographic study of the corporeality of professionalism in a specific historical and social context.

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Both are elements of this project but my primary focus here is on the social conditioning of mental activity and its relationship to the formation and recognition of expert knowledge (see also Boyer 2000, 2003, 2005).

I argue in the first sections of the essay that expertise, as social relation and practice, extends across the Cartesian bifurcation of 'body' and 'mind,' involving epistemic capacities normally classified as both mental (such as rational cognition) and physical (such as reflex and gesture). I suggest that the common apprehension of intellectual life as a purely mental enterprise is phenomenologically indebted to its intense subjective focus of experience upon mental activity and to its continuous reinvestment of productive energy into the creation and transaction of epistemic forms. This phenomenological enhancement of the rational self-awareness of intellectual activity is further elaborated by the social relations of professionalism that focus dually on maintaining the sanctity of jurisdictional economies of expertise and on stimulating and honing productive intellectual activity. Intellectual professionalism, I argue, is therefore itself responsible for cultivating a phenomenological awareness of mental distinction into an 'ontological' divide between mind and body. Once defined in opposition to mind, the body of the professional intellectual is treated as an efficient yet passive mechanism for energizing mental activity. Its normative ideal is a state of 'productive calm.' Productive calm completes the praxical codification of 'the body' as a purely kinetic and physical entity that would not be expected or affirmed to display 'expertise' in any rationalist conception of the term.

In the latter sections of the essay, I juxtapose this theoretical discussion with the ethnographic exploration of a specific social-historical case of intellectual professionalism – the transition of professional journalism in eastern German media organizations after 1989. Here, I explore the normative corporeality of professionalism through the routine physical conditions of professional journalism and, contrastively, through certain communicative situations where productive calm dissolves and reflexive and gestural media assert a critical social expertise. I describe apparently involuntary gestures and reflexes like tremors as alternative media for the expression of critical knowledge of social relations that is otherwise actively policed in 'normal' oral professional communication.

Bodies Made and Made not to Matter

Let me begin with the observation that intellectuals tend to absent 'the body' from intellectual activity. For Corrigan this is a male proclivity although,

as Anne Brydon contends, a decorporealizing masculinist orientation to intellectual practice is more generally true of the dominant styles and attitudes of intellectual life (1998). Both agree that bodiliness does not belong to the characteristics through which 'we' (please allow me a little latitude with this pronoun – I deploy it not merely rhetorically but to address this problem of social knowledge of the intellectual's body) commonly identify and evaluate intellectuals and intellectual labors. In other words, there is a social tendency to regard intellectual subjectivity as composing, in Bruno Latour's amusing phrase, a 'mind-in-a-vat' (1999:4). As opposed to, for example, an athlete, whose sculpted professionalized physique and its corporeal kinesis become primary objects of both attention and value, the professional intellectual is consistently decorporealized. Michael Jackson notes 'the intellectualist tendency to regard body praxis as secondary to verbal praxis' (1983:328). The corpus 'we' answer to instead is our bodies of words, printed and spoken, since these are currencies of professional life that are, in turn, conceived to index and define 'true' intellectual qualities and values. More precisely, corporeality appears richly and pruriently in rumor, gossip, and other informal modes of professional communication but, as Corrigan rightly observes, only becomes a locus of attention 'fleetingly and sparingly' in more status-ful modes of exchange like writing and public performance.

Yet, at the same time, practices and techniques of professionalism work to habituate physical disposition to the requirements of consistent mental productivity. Gesture, moreover, few would dispute, is an essential element of successful intellectual performances. The torso leans in to emphasize the gravity of a point, or leans back to invite dialogue; arms are raised in disbelief or crossed to fend off critics, hands flutter in a thousand arcs of emphasis. And then there are the uninvited corporeal intrusions into everyday professional life: one becomes hungry or sick, exhausted or nervous, one becomes an object or medium of sexual desire, one's physical being becomes suddenly 'the body' that is ontologically distinguished from and opposed to self/mind. Such states may or may not be considered embarrassing or inconvenient (although they often are since they distract from what appears to be the 'real' business of professional intellectual life) but they do invariably bring the bioenvironment of physical being into tension with the social environment and its gendered normative expectations of corporeal comportment and behavior. Invariably, 'the body' attracts social attention when there is some transgression of these expectations. Here, anecdotes multiply: the professor who radiated such nervous energy it came to dominate his intellectual

presence, a friend in graduate school who sought to conceal her pregnancy from the faculty so that 'they [would] still take [her] seriously as an academic,' the many reports and rumors of sexual predation and tension in academic workplaces, and so on and on.

A 'we' claim about professionalism also invites some further specification. Some expert practices, even invasively corporeal ones like surgery, for example, demand a distancing 'objecthood of the body' (Young 1997:89) as a normative condition of their praxis. Perhaps a majority of professional communities regard the corporeality of practice as entirely mundane and thus requiring no special discursive attention or conscious regulation. Journalism, in my experience, follows this approach. Yet, there are some modes of intellectual professionalism that are more cognizant of their corporeal conditions. Ethnography is exemplary in this regard; although certainly professionalized in its academic existence, it has generated a reflexive literature on its own corporeality (e.g., Kulick & Willson 1995; Rabinow 1977; Stoller 1997) and a broader literature on embodiment in human experience (Comaroff 1985; Csordas 1994; Jackson 1983; Rapport 2003; Turner 1994, 1995; Young 1997). Ethnographic representation has further offered narrative media through which ethnographers, regardless of their specific projects and interests, have sought to make academic knowledge 'vulnerable' to sensuous corporeality (e.g., Behar 1996; Downey 2004; Pesmen 2000; Scheper-Hughes 1992; Stoller 1989; Wacquant 2003).

And, yet, even given that some ethnography is highly attentive to the sensuousness of its enterprise, within the academic discipline of anthropology, the experiential dimensions of field research remain in tension with the social organization and expectations of intellectual professionalism. Some of us may well value the sensuousness of the field as central to our vocational selfhood. Yet, in the space of the university, sensuous knowledge of field experiences confronts professional and institutional expectations for knowledge-making as well as exigencies of bureaucratic proceduralism, accountability and productivity demands, generic routines of academic writing and teaching, and the other mediating epistemic conditions of everyday academic life. The professional ethnographer, however attentive to the corporeal contours of his/her field experiences, returns to an institutional environment of intellectual activity that is, at best, insensible to the significance of corporeality for intellectual labor and, at worst, openly delegitimizes it. Many anthropologists are familiar with the disdain of academic colleagues in other social-scientific fields who contend that anthropologists practice a 'soft,' interpretive social

science precisely because they are perceived to have sacrificed a properly austere and decorporeally 'empirical' relationship to the 'objects' of their field research.

The question is then: Why is it that intellectuals experience (and are encouraged to experience) their mental activities rationally and to consider as genuine knowledge only that which originates in pure cognitive process? As I argue in the next section, it is the social organization of intellectual professionalism itself that codifies the phenomenology of intellectual practice as an ontological duality consisting of a phantasmatic 'mind-in-a-vat' and its silent accomplice, 'the body.'

The Specialization of Mental Labor and the Decorporealization of the Professional Intellectual

In one of the better-known passages of *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels write that 'Division of labor only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labor appears' (1978:159).¹ The process of division makes for qualitative differences in the character of labor according to Marx: some members of society are forced to engage in purely physical labor and others are forced to engage in purely mental labor,² with the latter thus coming to understand themselves as emancipated from the world of necessity and engaged in "'pure' theory, theology, philosophy, ethics, etc.' (p. 159). But, and this is perhaps counter-intuitive from the standpoint of mental labor, in both these moieties of labor specialization, labor becomes *entfremdete* (estranged or alienated) labor. That is to say, the specialization of labor always results to some degree in a human being's estrangement from the objects of his or her labor. In *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* Marx had already left some clues about this connection of labor specialization to estrangement. In Marx's dialectical philosophy, human life activity tends naturally toward *Vergegenständlichung* (objectification, the production of objective forms), but under certain historical circumstances (what we discover in his later work as the division and distribution of labor, especially under capitalism) life activity will tend toward 'object-bondage,' toward pouring one's physical energy into the production of objects that lose their subjective significance to the producer when they are released into complex systems of exchange (1978:70–81; cf. Postone 1996:158–161). The division of labor increasingly seals human beings into exclusive spheres of activity that winnow their polymorphous self-realizing capabilities into more focused and (in quantitative terms) more productive channels (p. 160).³

The division and specialization of labor tips the balance of human being from subjectivity into objectivity – we work for money (the highest expression of objectivity – pure, solvent exchange-value) to fulfill our needs instead of satisfying them more immediately, and so human life activity is increasingly *mediated* by and saturated with an instrumental, formalist orientation (what Max Weber and others have termed ‘rationalization’). The result, in Marx’s theoretical leap from practice to consciousness, is that objects appear to be independent of their producers and even to have power over them (Marx termed this condition of consciousness, ‘fetishism;’ 1978:320–1). The impoverishing effects of the growing specialization of labor and of the historical generalization of alienated labor (e.g., capitalism), upon the material laborer are well-documented in Marx’s oeuvre, but the fate of the mental worker is left more to the imagination.

I would suggest, extrapolating from Marx’s analytics, that one can arrive at, at least, two theoretical points concerning the consequences of the specialization of labor for the mental laborer, or ‘intellectual:’

1. The intellectual is prone to experience and to evaluate his/her labors as free of sensuous, corporeal context, given that the character of intellectual labor is continuously oriented to mental activity, given that so much productive energy is focused into the minute attentions of mental work, especially into the creation, interpretation and transaction of epistemic forms. I emphasize ‘is prone to’ to clarify that the presence of a social incentive or imperative to rationalize one’s labor does not guarantee that this, in fact, happens or that it happens in the same way to all people. Corrigan and Brydon have noted, for example, the co-elaborative character of rationalism and masculinism. The environment of labor specialization one might confront as a ‘logic of professionalism’ moreover does not have the same hold on all social actors nor the same kinds of institutional saturatedness in all social environments. What I am suggesting rather is that the specific phenomenology associated with this mode of labor specialization – the focus of attention to cognitive rational processes and epistemic forms that I have elsewhere termed the ‘phenomenology of expertise’ (Boyer 2005) – tends to lead to its perception of itself as an expansion of mental horizons. The obligation of subjective experience to mental activity concomitantly encourages the absencing or denial of corporeality. ‘The body’ comes to be objectified as something distinct from ‘the mind’ and to be understood, even *to understand itself*, as an entity opposed to the agentive self, a corporeal appendage or energizing medium

rather than as an aspect of the agentic self. Concomitantly, as Marx argued, the specific character of material labor specialization leaves the expanded horizons of mental activity appearing as an ill-afforded luxury. Material and mental labor specialization, in concert with one another, intensify and concretize a phenomenological mind/body distinction that is then socially amplified as an ontological duality. It is for this reason that the intellectual both is apt to see his/her intellectual labor as 'purely' mental and that intellectual labors themselves (habitually decorporealized as they are) become awkwardly suited to discussing corporeality. Indeed, under these conditions, it is the epistemic 'objects' of intellectual labor that assume a peculiarly 'material' character.

2. Mental labor is also prone to 'object-bondage' in a capitalist society and the medium of its bondage is professionalism and its jurisdictions of expertise (see Abbott 1988). Marx himself scarcely saw the generalization of intellectual professionalization in his own lifetime, but under the auspices of the social specialization and professionalization of intellectual labor, a process that began in earnest in the West in the second half of the nineteenth century, the 'alienation' (meaning the aforementioned slippage into the objective, form-centered dimension of activity) of mental labor often seems far closer to Marx's model of estranged labor than ever before. Taking the familiar case of academic labor as an example, one can think of the powerful incentives within university life to produce valuable 'objects' (research, innovations, texts or other semiotic forms, for example) that circulate either in monetary economies or in economies of cultural or symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1988). Academics often lament that knowledge is increasingly recognized as an object-like information commodity and less as a qualitative, subjective capacity of knowing. In the American academy, intellectual merit is increasingly being measured institutionally in terms of quantitative productivity (number of students taught, number of articles published, hours of service invested). In Britain, the system is even more fully rationalized through the generalization of what Marilyn Strathern (2000) and others have termed 'audit culture' – the regime of institutional accountability that elaborates and reproduces bureaucratic proceduralism and rationalism over human practice (pp. 2–3). Specialized professional economies' emphasis on focused labor and the exhaustion of productive energies both isolates the intellectual laborer in his/her own field of expertise (formalized knowledge) and demands that life activity be increasingly invested into the constitution of exchange-valuable ob-

jects. In each case, in Marx's dialectical terminology, the self-productive potentiality of human activity is dominated by a logic of formal realization and circulation. The social character of the alienation and capitalization of knowledge work can remain quite remote in everyday experience since the primary academic workplace remains, most often, the private study – yet it emerges, in varying degrees of force, in intersubjective and multisubjective encounters with the professional world outside.

It is not difficult to recognize that sensuous physical energies must be actively coordinated to participate in the process of labor specialization. E.P. Thompson wonderfully illustrated how work-discipline in early industrial capitalism was oriented to establishing a new work-rhythm among the working class that exchanged the uneven cycle of work and leisure characteristic of early manufacturing for a rationalized model of work that emphasized the disciplining of workers' bodies according to an abstract time-table (1967:73–9). Thompson also showed, like Weber (1958), how the new work ethics and rigorous spirit/body distinctions were theologized under the auspices of Protestantism. But Michel Foucault went a step further in identifying a modern regime of discipline (that evolved and was codified in tandem with the private property regime of bourgeois interests) spanning the nascent modern institutional framework and oriented to cultivating individuality from material production to spiritual character. Foucault illustrated how in these exemplary modern spaces of factories-schools-prisons, the sociopolitical logics of rationalization, specification, and efficiency multiplied the classificatory science of human bodies and minds in order to better contain, utilize and direct human energies. Premodern distinctions of body and soul were secularized, sedimented, and elaborated as 'the body' came to be treated as a complex kinetic mechanism, a generator, if you will, for the new social order. Modern bodies were disciplined through ever more precise gymnastics to exhaust their useful energies in production. 'Discipline ... arranges a positive economy; it poses the principle of a theoretically ever-growing use of time: exhaustion rather than use; it is a question of extracting, from time, ever more available moments and, from each moment, ever more useful forces' (1979:154).

I would argue that this is also a useful way of thinking about the decororealized body of the professional intellectual. For the specialized mental laborer as for the specialized material laborer, the channeling of sensuous activity toward productivity requires the training of 'the body' as an efficient, silent performer that will exhaust its energies within a dynamic economy

of exchange. The difference is the locus of productivity since the activity of the professional intellectual centers on producing objectified skills and knowledge (e.g., expertise). Magali Larson writes, 'Unlike craft or industrial labor, however, most professions produce intangible goods: their product, in other words, is only formally alienable and is inextricably bound to the person and the personality of the producer. It follows, therefore, that *the producers themselves have to be produced* if their products or commodities are to be given a distinctive form' (1977:14). Manuel Castells notes the motto of the contemporary knowledge worker: 'I think therefore I produce' (1998:359; also Graham 2000:135-7). The intense social pressure to perfect one's practice with lexical semiotic media (e.g., words, the medium of any knowledge economy) causes 'the body,' virtually by necessity, to become and remain a body apart from 'the mind' and an appurtenant partner in intellectual practice. Just as Thompson showed us how disciplining sensuousness and desire were vital for the specialization of manual labor, the codification of corporeal capacities and energies under the rubric of 'the body' and its exclusion from the stage of intellectual practice accompanies the focus of energy in productive mental activities. Professionalism, and thus by extension the architecture of jurisdictions and epistemic competencies that we recognize as expertise, are indebted, at a very basic level, to the coordinated and effaced productivity of 'the body.' This relationship produces dually the consciousness of corporeal absence that Corrigan identifies and the ideal, 'normal' habitus of productive calm for which the professional's body is trained.

In the following ethnographic sections of the essay, I want to complicate this 'ideal type' schema of the social-systemic effects of professionalism upon intellectual bodies by analyzing an actual historical case of professionalization and its consequences for economies and media of expertise. In the case of former East German professional journalists, the corporeal basis of intellectual specialization and discipline exhibits its heterogeneity and fragility in moments of tremor and flinching that intervened into a state of otherwise relatively productive calm for professional bodies. I found these unexpected reflexes to express through gestural media an 'expert' (in the sense of habituated and formal) knowledge of the social discreditation of eastern professional expertise in the dynamics of German unification.

The Restructuring of Relations of Expertise in the Eastern German Media

My research on the professional transition of former East German journalists after German unification took place in eastern German media insti-

tutions in 1996 and 1997 just after the most intense phase of transformation to western media standards had been completed. The GDR print media had already been privatized and individual eastern media organizations were now owned and managed by western German media conglomerates like Axel Springer and Bertelsmann. Meanwhile, the GDR electronic media had been fully absorbed as affiliates into the West German public broadcasting system. From roughly 1990 to 1994, the new public and private owners of the eastern German media had dispatched West German media experts to 'bring western journalistic Know-How to the East' as the process of westernizing the media was described at that time. Usually within a few months of the western experts arriving, eastern media institutions began to experience a rapid series of transformations (ranging from changes in layouts and programming composition to staffing decisions) whose rippling effects recast the daily professional life of eastern journalism (I have already discussed these effects in greater detail elsewhere; Boyer 2000, 2001).

What typified the logic of these transformations above all was the motivating assumption that West German journalistic standards would become the standards of professional expertise and practice in eastern Germany as well. Although changes (especially layoffs) were justified in the name of profitability considerations, testimony from new West German chief editors suggests that, in the minds of the new owners of the eastern German media, 'clearing the ground' of people and practices associated with GDR journalism was essential for allowing 'democratic journalism' to flourish.

For GDR journalism was nothing if not professionalized⁴ and the parallel professional skills and knowledge of eastern journalists presented an immediate threat to the legitimacy of western 'democratic' or market-oriented journalism. Unlike West German journalists, many of whom have no formal training as journalists before accepting their first posts, East German journalists underwent four years of rigorous professional training at the Karl-Marx University in Leipzig in the theory and practice of socialist journalism. Although my eastern interlocutors readily admitted that the heavy ideological emphasis of the program was onerous and of little use to their later professional practice, they felt that the trade skills they learned (like composition and linguistic skills) were easily applicable to western journalism as well. In fact, it was the case that many eastern journalists were much better versed in formal stylistics and grammatical rules than their western colleagues. But such expertise, while acknowledged, was considered a curiosity by western colleagues and some western chief editors emphasized to me that eastern

journalists continued to lag behind in expertise of independent research skills and in critical sensibilities as the detritus of their long years of propaganda work.⁵ Since such expertise and critical competence were defined as central to the practice of 'democratic' journalism, former East German journalists were gradually categorized as lacking the background and intuition for high-status western media work. Instead, easterners were recognized foremost as experts on GDR- and East German-related issues, two areas of journalistic knowledge in which West German journalists were unafraid not to excel (except, interestingly, when it came to Stasi-related⁶ themes). East German journalists were positioned as providing the epistemic and emotional bridge between westernizing media institutions and eastern publics but their mediating role apparently did not demand that they themselves become experts in western journalism and few were allowed the opportunity to prove that they could be first-rate journalists.⁷

As might be expected from a process that advertised itself as bringing 'journalistic Know-How' to the East, the discreditation of eastern professional expertise was central to the first phase of consolidation in the eastern German media after unification.⁸ Various kinds of formal and informal 're-education' (*Umerziehung*) initiatives were put into place, ranging from government-sponsored information trips to the United States for younger East German journalists to mentoring programs to seminars on research methods and western social, economic, and political norms. The practical assistance in learning the ropes of the western media was generally welcomed by eastern journalists. And, even many of those who quietly found the democratic re-education redundant in fact welcomed western journalists for their expertise in areas of media-making that they recognized they were ill-prepared to manage on their own (for example, advertising and the use of computers and other digital technologies). What frustrated my East German interlocutors, however, was that technical knowledge was bundled with critical reasoning skills and personal initiative under the rubric of western 'Know-How.' They felt professionally and personally stung that critical thinking was implicitly attributed to any western journalist while their own critical opinions and knowledge were patronizingly determined to be nostalgic. Many of my eastern interlocutors had also recognized that it was not always the cream of the western media establishment who were coming to the East to 're-educate' them; rather, many of the so-called western experts turned out to be marginal professionals who were being sent to the proverbial eastern 'bush' to prove themselves or to farm them out.

Meanwhile, layoffs were linked to re-education programs from their inception – older East German journalists (over 50) were encouraged to retire immediately since it was felt that they had invested too much of their lives in the ‘old system’ to withstand the transformation in expertise.⁹ For younger East German journalists, retention decisions were linked to how they ‘came to terms’ with the new media standards. Journalists who voiced strong concerns about the market-capitalist model of the media, for example, were portrayed as yearning for their former socialist privileges and released. West German chief editors still seemed anxious in conversations with me in 1996 and 1997 that there might still be ‘unreconstructed comrades’ lurking in their newsrooms. But, by then, the number of journalists with experience working in the GDR media was reduced by over half due to the combination of shutdowns, layoffs, and retirements.

The omnipresent fear of layoffs combined with the experience of re-education initiatives and the systematic undermining of the professional legitimacy of journalists professionalized in the GDR created very tense and occasionally poisonous climates in newsrooms in the first few years after unification. By 1996, I found that the politics of expertise had generally become silent. Pointedly, within everyday professional discourse in eastern German media institutions, the identity of professional fraternity is meant to supersede the axis of East/West differentiation. The public expression of East/West logic is commonly reported (especially by westerners) to be a non-professional, indeed a vulgar resource for interpretation, classification, and judgment. So, even though there is an intimate knowledge of eastern professional difference circulating in every eastern media institution and even though it is generally known that this knowledge of difference is utilized to justify denying eastern colleagues high-status journalistic work, there is a rigorous code of silence applied to oral discourse on East/West difference within the workplace in the name of cosmopolitanism and professional fraternity.

The Corporeality of Journalism

Like any mode of socialization, the ‘re-education’ process of former East German journalists had a powerful corporeal dimension as well. Describing early encounters with western expertise, several of my interlocutors spoke to their feelings of physical awkwardness in the newly-westernized professional space. ‘It was part of not knowing what was expected of you that one felt physically ill at ease as well,’ one woman remembered. Other interviewees recalled feelings of anxiousness about learning appropriate physical

comportment and gestures but attributed these more strongly to their older colleagues who could not or would not adjust to new expectations of discourse, dress, and hexis. Many interviewees focused on the physical stress of coming to terms with the intense productivity demands of professional journalism in the West. With the guaranteed right to work in the GDR, I was told, most GDR media institutions were overstaffed, leading to relatively light workloads for many journalists. By contrast, my interviewees considered FRG media institutions to be generally understaffed, a situation that, combined with high productivity demands, encouraged a strategic, even mercenary, relationship to one's work. Since there was so rarely the time, energy, and institutional support to produce stories that maximized journalists' creative and interpretive talents, journalists lamented that there was a high degree of genericism in their writing reinforced by the pressure of deadlines and the need to attract and keep audience and advertisers. One journalist in her late forties explained that she felt that contemporary labor conditions simultaneously produced mediocre journalism and cynical journalists:

[T]he pressure is much greater now, the pressure to produce quantity. Everyone knows that we had at lot of time on our hands in the GDR, too much time certainly, because a certain amount of pressure is positive, but not too much pressure. That affects the quality. My greatest challenge, and existential problem, now is to find ways to maintain the quality of my work. And not to give in to this pressure to do more, more, more, faster, faster, faster. In my opinion it's the quality and not the quantity that counts. Sometimes a single article on a topic can have a greater effect than five others. And for the westerners this is difficult because what they're used to is having a continuous public presence, of always having your name in the media. And it's all the same whether your name is on top of a good or a mediocre article. And they're always much more used to writing things coldly. I mean treating everything as though it were objective reportage. They write a good introductory sentence, that's how they're trained, and then they go pull something out of the archive and basically re-write what some other paper has already written. That's the way it has to be because of this enormous pressure. Now I understand the end product of this process: cynical, melancholic journalists, cynical, melancholic and smug journalists, now I understand why they end up that way. Because at some point your strength runs out from working under these conditions, you lose your physical and psychic energy.

The phenomenology of stress and exhaustion was not easily available to me through ethnography, especially since my own work practice as a researcher and interviewer was governed by few deadlines. Moreover, as an ethnographer

working in office settings, I tried to be as physically unobtrusive and uninvasive of regular work routines as possible. Working under similar conditions, media ethnographer Barry Dornfeld has written, 'The ethnography of office work, in which subjects' primary activities are speaking on the phone and typing on computer keyboards, leaves little room for productive observation without conspicuously disturbing their work' (1998:23). Yet, it was clear to me from my time in newsrooms in eastern Germany that these were intense, harried spaces especially as deadlines approached. Journalists would become very focused upon their computer monitors, typing without glancing down at their hands, breaking concentration only to quickly conference with a colleague or an editor, to make a phone call, or to run to the bathroom. I was rarely privy to the periods of greatest work intensity since journalists deliberately scheduled times to talk with me early in the day or after work when they knew they would not be frantically trying to complete projects. The non-deadline physical conditions of journalism were highly repetitive and indeed predictable as I moved from one newsroom to another in eastern Germany.

Not unlike professional academic labor, journalism is a mode of intellectual practice undertaken largely while seated. In fact, *Stuhl* (chair) is sometimes used metonymically to index one's position within a media institution.¹⁰ Journalists, especially print journalists, spend a good deal of their day perched in front of computer screens, reading and typing. One woman showed me her enormous wrist braces and described them as the liability of her profession, that she was forced to type so much that she verged on getting carpal tunnel syndrome. Besides the computer screen, the other omnipresent instrument of mediation in the newsroom is the telephone. Journalists make and receive phone calls so frequently that complaints about neck cramps and stiff back muscles from holding phones in the crooks of their necks are commonplace. Yet, for the most part, journalistic praxis is oriented to textual interfaces; stories are researched, internet search engines are queried, archives are mined, copy is produced and continuously edited. Seated productivity is interspersed with frequent breaks, quiet conversations with neighbors about non-work-related matters, short walks to visit colleagues, to get cups of coffee or to attend meetings (where journalists typically re-seat themselves again). For reporters, large blocks of time may be spent away from the office doing research and interviews.

Although I never thought to compose a full gestural typology for 'normal' physical comportment in German journalism, as in other professional intel-

lectual settings, the unspoken normative expectations for physicality in the workplace are that one will be poised, productive and active (in other words, not indolent) but also restrained of overt manifestations of professionally 'unproductive' activity (sexuality, nervousness, unusual hunger or humor). Professional being thus ideally alternates between periods of productive activity and productive calm. When calm, one is not indolent but rather continuously on-the-ready to deploy one's energies to fulfill new tasks that might appear.

Gesture as Critical, Corporeal Expertise

Unsurprisingly, when I first formulated my research plans for studying professionalism and identity in the eastern German media, I paid little attention to corporeality. I was interested in oral narratives, in workplace dialogue, and with observable routines of professional praxis but, very much due to my own incipient intellectual professionalism, I did not consider that bodily attitudes, gestures and energies would be centrally important to my research. I was only prompted to think about the corporeal conditions of professionalism and expertise during my fieldwork when I realized that certain of my interview questions were repeatedly provoking similar gestural responses on the part of my interviewees.

In my dialogues with former East German journalists, we sat most often in their offices in a moment of calm, drinking coffee and talking casually. Initially, we might both begin poised somewhat warily in our chairs. My research topic was met with polite reserve in most cases, coming as it did in the wake of layoff decisions in which journalists' opinions about the two media systems sometimes had played a considerable role. However, a new interview partner would usually – after s/he had determined that I was not interested in evaluating political convictions or in asking for moral justifications of socialist journalism – begin to sink back into his or her chair, and ruminating thoughtfully over my questions about past and present practices of journalism. Then, the conversation would invariably reach the topic of current East/West relations in newsrooms and I would ask whether there was still a lingering professional prejudice on the part of owners and senior management against journalists of eastern origin. Suddenly, in many first interviews, the dialogue reached a strange and awkward pause. My interlocutor's breathing and pulse would almost visibly quicken and before verbalizing a response, the relaxed and splayed limbs of seconds before would retract, like a pill-bug, back into a position of defensive readiness. Then, when the

vocal reply emerged it came quickly and formulaically, recited almost like an incantation, 'No, no,' I was told in most cases, 'these kinds of East/West differences and tensions which were present in the beginning are no longer important. We've grown to know and to respect one another as colleagues. Journalists have no time for these kinds of animosities.' After this scene had played itself out several times in different interview contexts, I came to feel that journalists' gestures were telling me a different story than their voices about the contemporary structuring of professional competence and expertise in the eastern German media.

Outside of the one-on-one interviews I encountered a range of gestural responses among eastern journalists that appeared to be prompted by discourse on East/West professional difference. This occurred most often in situations where I was speaking with a mixed group of both eastern and western journalists. In one case, while a western chief editor was describing the legitimate need to cleanse the German public sphere of 'unapologetic Stalinists,' I could see his eastern assistant out of the corner of my eye fidgeting uncomfortably in his chair. On two or three occasions his mouth opened as though to verbalize a response to his colleague but no sound issued forth. Even when I gently prompted him – 'Do you tend to see this along similar lines?' – the assistant chief only shrugged and said that *selbstverständlich* (of course) personnel changes had to be made in keeping with the new expectations of the media. Yet it was only when the subject of the conversation shifted away from East/West difference that his body returned to its former posture of calm.

In another case, two colleagues who had become romantically involved since 1989 lunched with me together at an eastern German public radio station. Without so much as an ironic glance in his partner's direction, Rudolf, a West German journalist in his early 50s explained to me that eastern journalists were still often hampered by a wooden and clumsy style of expression:

The East German style of writing is older, more clunky, and precise-sounding than the German used in the western media. For example, an East German might write, *die neuen Vorschriften wurden von den Arbeitern zur Anwendung gebracht*. [the new regulations were placed into application by the workers] That sentence contains errors like the unnecessary use of a passive construction and an improper use of the noun 'workers' for this context. A West German would write instead, *Die Mitarbeiter wanden die neuen Vorschriften an* [the employees applied the new regulations]. The East German variant is really an older form of German, it sounds like the German of the Third Reich, which was then adopted into party-German in East Germany.

Throughout his monologue, Rudolf's partner Katrina, who also had worked as a journalist in the GDR, had a strangely dissociated look on her face and her torso stiffened as she held herself very still. But when Rudolf connected eastern journalism to the legacy of Nazism, she began visibly trembling, and produced a strained smile perhaps to lighten the significance of Rudolf's judgment. Meanwhile, Rudolf, apparently somewhat pleased at the analogy, continued on in this vein to explain other typically 'East German' professional deficiencies such as a lack of flexibility and limited creative imagination while Katrina's head wilted slowly into her hands as she stared silently into her coffee cup.

At other times and in other places, I encountered gestures of recoil and docility, physical trembling, and shifting postures whenever differences in eastern professional competence or expertise were invoked in conversation. These gestures were rarely accompanied by vocal contestation of stereotypical assignments of professional difference. The professional 're-education' of eastern journalists had already set the stakes of vocal contestation beyond the reach of most of my interlocutors. They never criticized western colleagues or management in the workplace itself although some of my interviewees spoke more freely in their own homes or in non-professional spaces like cafés or bars. Discomfort with professional appurtenance in institutional spaces meanwhile articulated itself primarily through gestural media.

Like Fanon's Antillean in France (1967), my East German interlocutors registered the phenomenology of alterity, perhaps not directly cognized yet nevertheless epistemically replete with emotion and meaning. They absorbed and reacted to the interpellation of essentialized 'easterness' each time stereotypical eastern differences in professionalism arose in conversation. I do not think it is exaggerated to say that my eastern interlocutors displayed a remarkable 'corporeal expertise' of social difference, a knowledge finely tuned to the subtle intimation of professional difference and deficiency that was articulated through a versatile gestural grammar of reflexes and attitudes. Through the epistemic media of the body, reflexive knowledge of underlying social dynamics of professional discreditation expressed itself over and against the muted voice of professional collegiality and sameness.

A common and important criticism raised against earlier drafts of this essay was that an attitude of comportment let alone a reflex or bodily tic could scarcely be considered 'knowledge' let alone 'critical expertise' in the sense of conscious-rational cognition. I do not disagree. However, to be clear, just because a particular mode of knowing is not cognitive or rational does

not mean it is not 'knowledge' in the sense of habituated epistemic order. As Michael O'Donovan-Anderson maintains, the body retains an 'epistemic-openness' (1997:117-8) to its environment which allows it a kind of phenomenological 'knowledge how' of the world as a companion to the capability for conscious-rational 'knowledge what.' In general, O'Donovan-Anderson argues, the interactional agency of the body translates its tactile, kinaesthetic sensibilities into epistemic forms. In these terms, the corporeal conditioning that provides the productive basis for economies of expert knowledge could be understood to condition an expert 'knowledge how' of social context (involving both the hexis of professional productivity and calm and the moments of tremor, flinching, and so on, that I have just described) that also allows for corporeal responses to the monitoring and/or suppression of critical 'knowledges what' at the level of rational cognition and oral expression. Although I find O'Donovan-Anderson's discussion of 'epistemic-openness' heuristically valuable for assessing the corporeality of expertise, I am concerned that his continuing reliance on generic categories of 'body' and 'mind' encourages us to arrange categories of 'knowledge how' and 'knowledge what' along a Cartesian cleavage.

For I think that among former East German journalists critical social expertise confounds any simple distinction of corporeality and intellectuality. Largely suppressed for political reasons in oral communication, knowledge of social difference has developed active and creative expression elsewhere. What I want to emphasize is that the trembling of eastern professionals should not (in the spirit of Breuer and Freud) be taken simply as a passive physical manifestation of socially-restrained desire (perhaps for the acknowledgment of professional sameness).¹¹ Rather I would emphasize that this trembling represents the corporeal articulation of expertise, an active epistemic commentary upon the nuances of communicative context. Given the communicative encounters in which these reflexes appeared, they were clearly provoked and not 'spontaneous.' Nevertheless, I find it accurate to describe these gestures as a mode of critical testimony because of their clearly *reflexive* and indexical semiotic relationship to the social and political dynamics of the profession of journalism in eastern Germany. The gestures are thus epistemic if neither conscious nor voluntary.

The East German case is suggestive for how anthropology might reconsider expertise as a corporeal social phenomenon, even for how the corporeality of expertise could methodologically challenge ethnography, much as Wacquant (2003) has recently argued for the need for a sociology not only of the body

but 'from the body.' The problem remains, however, that corporeality either experienced or testified fits poorly with the dominant rationalist orientation of intellectual professionalism. It is the normative propriety of the productive calm and silence of the professional's body and the intuitive understanding that legitimate knowledge resides in rational awareness that, I would argue, creates perduring resistance to comprehending the corporeality of expertise, our own and others'.

Conclusion: Expertise on Expertise

It is my hope that the ethnography of corporeal expertise among eastern German journalists has helped to interfere with the mind/body dualism that has troubled this essay since its beginning. I have sought to write about the physicality and corporeality of professional intellectual life without dropping into a discussion of 'the intellectual's body' that would, I think, have made it very difficult to describe bodily epistemic capabilities and actions without, however unintentionally, asserting that these capabilities and actions 'belonged to' an abstract entity, 'the body,' opposed to an equivalently abstract entity, 'the mind.' This strategy would not have gone far in undermining a Cartesian analytics insofar as the analysis would be continually drawn back to sorting out what belonged to body from what belonged to mind. My intention in this essay has been somewhat different: to explore the social and phenomenological basis of mind/body dualism in intellectual practice through conceptual reflections and ethnographic discussions. I have tried, by so doing, to open a persuasive analytical space for confronting our social phenomenology of, and rationalistic intuitions about, expert knowledge directly.

But, perhaps as in any juxtaposition, cracks where the two halves of the essay meet remain evident. In a sense, the second half of this essay could be read as deconstructing the first. I began with what could be described as an 'ideal type' analysis of how the specialization and professionalization of mental labor cultivates a bifurcated and unequal relationship between 'body' and 'mind,' allowing for the epistemic capacities of the body to be effaced in the everyday practice of professional intellectual life. However persuasive, this is a mode of theoretical-conceptual analysis consonant with its object of study. In producing the 'ideal type' analysis (which, I should say like Weber, I find conceptually and heuristically useful) I am in essence extending the decorporealizing, decontextualizing phenomenology of intellectual activity I am analyzing. This sleight of hand is exposed in the second half of the essay when the analysis engages the complexity of actual professional

intellectual lives. The shift to the fine-focus of ethnography helps dissolve the classificatory apparatus of body/mind into recognition of the diverse acts and capacities of being (e.g., gestures, comportments, motions, speech) that provide the rich resources for conceptual codification into 'bodies' and 'minds.' By discussing the heterogeneous mediation of expertise across both bodies and minds, and by arguing for the existence of corporeal knowledge of social relations, I reciprocally illuminate certain mediating features of the theoretical knowledge produced in the first half of this essay. Specifically, it becomes evident how analytical categories like 'the body' may preempt ethnographic engagement with the abundant and excessive corporeality of human experience, sorting existential capacities into 'mental' and 'physical' phenomena, categories that then come to dominate the ethnographic narrative. Despite my intentions and pretensions to the contrary, this essay has, in the end, relied upon body/mind prosthetically as a classificatory distinction guiding its theoretical work.

I interpret this dilemma not as a failure of theory, rather as evidence of a certain incommensurability between labors of theoretical abstraction and classification and labors of ethnographic recognition and representation that has always accompanied anthropology as a theoretically-committed field science. But I do think that this incommensurability has become intensified by the anthropology of knowledge's effort to produce expert knowledge about parallel processes of epistemic formation, mediation, and accreditation. The effort to produce expert knowledge of other kinds of expertise confronts the ethnographer with the instrumental character and limitations of techniques of expert knowledge like classificatory systems and analytical procedures. The parameters between 'our' expertise and 'theirs' are sometimes not easily discernible, as Doug Holmes and George Marcus have also noted in a recent essay on the proliferation of 'para-ethnographic' research techniques outside of the academy (2005). This clouding of 'our/their' expertise would be anxiety provoking for any professional since all expertise claims depend for their social legitimacy, to some extent, on a principle of jurisdiction (Abbott 1988). Yet, this uneasy situation also illuminates our expertise in ways that may be valuable for improving the macro- and micro-analytical labors (not to mention the macro- and micro-representational labors) of anthropology. I offer this study, both conceptual and ethnographic, of the corporeality of expertise as a step in that direction. The point is not to resolve the dilemma (a conclusion echoed in the other essays in this collection as well) but rather to allow it to become, in James Fernandez's phrase, a 'motivating dilemma'

that initiates and guides further anthropological inquiry into human knowledge, beyond us and them.

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Notes

1. It is important to note that the German word, *Arbeit*, that is normally translated as 'labor' signals both 'work' but also a more open sense of 'activity' (similar to the semantic range of the term, *Tätigkeit*). Since the term 'labor' has acquired such strong associations with Fordist industrial wage-labor, it is vital to distinguish the broader referentiality of Marx's use of the term from the more specific referentiality of later usage. In this essay, I mean 'labor' to recapture the nuances of self-realizing activity.
2. I use the imperative in both instances to acknowledge Marx and Engels's position that capitalism and the division of labor are historically teleological and that they generate systemic social conditions for individual action and consciousness, 'For as soon as the distribution of labor comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape' (1978:160).
3. Even in Emile Durkheim's more positive evaluation of the division of labor (1984) as an effect of the recalibration of solidarity in complex societies, he stresses the 'distress' and even 'agony' wrought by the specialization of labor (pp. 180-86).
4. Media professionalism in the GDR was a highly-systematized and rigorously state-controlled venture in keeping with the Leninist model of journalism as the 'agitator, propagandist, and organizer' of the party of the working-class (Boyer 2003).
5. Despite the fact that there had been a genuine renaissance of investigative journalism in eastern German media institutions between the collapse of the SED regime and the political unification of the two German states, West German journalists tended to see this as another suspect 'socialist journalism experiment' qualitatively distinct from democratic western journalism.
6. Coverage of scandals relating to the GDR Ministry of State Security (known colloquially as the 'Stasi') has been a staple of western reportage in eastern Germany since the early nineties.

7. It is remarkable, for example, that West German media institutions hired virtually no East German journalists into full-time positions after 1989, instead relying on their own correspondent network and eastern stringers to provide them necessary coverage of so-called *Ostthemen* (eastern themes).
8. This was true in other professions as well. See, for example, Andreas Glaeser's study of the unification process among the Berlin police (2000).
9. Bodily metaphors routinely arose in such determinations. I heard on more than one occasion the transformation in social systems likened to a heart attack.
10. One journalist in his thirties said to me in passing, 'My editor once told me that he wanted me in this *Stuhl* here because he valued my creative abilities, not because he just needed an ass to fill it.'
11. Parenthetically, I believe that Freud's constant touchstones of the 'intelligence' and 'creativity' of hysteric patients offer evidence, especially in light of Freud's later study of femininity (1965), that Freud intuited that hysterics' bodies were taking over a creative agency denied their voices, that their bodies were not only rebelling against the discipline of their sexuality but also against the gender discipline of upper middle-class Austrian society (recall the parable of the landlord's and the caretaker's daughters) (1966:438-440).

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