

# Scheduling Routine

An Analysis of the Spatio-Temporal Rhythms of Practice in Everyday Life

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# Declaration

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I declare that this thesis consists of original work undertaken solely by myself at Lancaster University between 2010 and 2013. It has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree anywhere else. Where work by other authors is referred to, it has been properly referenced.

July 2013

# Acknowledgements

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First and foremost I would like to offer my sincere thanks to my supervisors Professor Elizabeth Shove and Professor Gordon Walker. Their advice, support and training throughout this process have been invaluable. This thesis is indebted to their experience and understanding in supporting me with a careful balance of flexibility, to develop and indulge my research interests and direction, to shape and produce a structured text and thesis. Outside of writing they have both been incredibly generous in providing amazing opportunities for learning about the academic 'world', as well as with their time and with their counsel. I could not have hoped for a better post-graduate experience.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the ongoing feedback and support from my intellectual (and) sparring partners and great friends, Kieran O'Brien and Adam Gregory. Whilst all of the 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' re-presented in this thesis has been thoroughly shaped by our 'training', conversations and friendship, in particular the idea of 'practice as event' is indebted to our many and long discussions walking to and from practice.

This work could not have been completed without the love and support of my family. Special thanks should be given to the family dog, Pikachu, whose company on much needed walking breaks was paramount to the development of many ideas and specifically to the framing and title of the second chapter.

Finally, this work acknowledges the Economic and Social Research Council for funding this project as part of Professor Elizabeth Shove's Climate Change Leadership Fellowship: 'Transitions in Practice'.

# Dedication

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*For my Mother,*

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*First is where to start. Second is where to finish.*

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# Abstract

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## *Scheduling Routine: An Analysis of the Spatio-Temporal Rhythms of Practice in Everyday Life*

*Stanley John Blue, B.A., M.A., Submitted for the Degree of Ph.D, Department of Sociology, Lancaster University, July 2013.*

This thesis is concerned with the relationship between social action and social change in 'everyday' life. I position my argument in contrast to lay and academic re-presentations of action that maintain a distinction between subject and object, between action and change and between being and becoming. I argue for a 'practice-approach' that considers action, or practice, not as performance or entity; but instead attempts to capture the *presencing* of social action by concentrating on 'practice as event' and 'practice in the moment of doing'. This serves to locate 'knowledges' and 'subjectivities' firmly within the realm of the material and bodily actions of doing, and thus in the continually changing 'world' of practice. I therefore develop an understanding of change as a fundamental and ongoing property of temporally and spatially situated practice. To support these theoretical claims I employ a rhythm-analytical methodological approach, studying my own experiences of rhythms of practice at five empirical sites, including resistance training, ashtanga yoga, stock car racing, computer gaming and mixed martial arts. Analysis of my own engagement in these rhythms (including immersive participant observations and in depth interviews with fellow participants), from a theoretical-methodological position that recognises practice as change, leads me to argue that the re-production of 'moments' of practice, depends on the scheduling of practice as routine or nonroutine. So understood, I argue that the scheduling of 'moments' of practice as routine requires 'training' to develop sufficient 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', 'syncopation' within the polyrhythmia of 'everyday' life and the absence of 'arrhythmia' or nonroutine 'moments' of practice, in shaping the rhythms of practice in 'everyday' life. My research contributes to a distinct ontology of practice that re-evaluates the notion of 'change'

in a manner that is relevant not only in 'theories of practice'; but also for wider studies of social action.

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# Preface

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*With your feet in the air and your head on the ground, you can try this trick and spin it...* (Francis)

Perhaps somewhat dangerously, I would like to preface this text by paraphrasing one of my favourite authors:

Nothing of me is 'original'; I am the combined effort of everyone I have ever met, every book I have ever read and every experience I have ever had. (Adapted from Palahniuk 2000)

This sentiment at once sets up the theoretical and methodological position of this thesis and at the same time re-presents the concluding argument regarding the becoming-ness of social being. In order to remain consistent with the conclusion of this thesis that social change is not separate from social action, it is necessary to take up a particular theoretical-methodological position that recognises the situated-ness and becoming-ness of the researcher. However, in order to take up such a theoretical-methodological position requires an understanding that social action, or practice, as it is described in this thesis, is *ipso facto* change.

In the preface to *Difference and Repetition* ([1969] 1994), Deleuze writes that it is often said that prefaces should be read only at the end, whilst conversely, the conclusion should be read at the outset. Whilst this suggestion may well be true of this thesis, it has nevertheless been organised in a traditionally linear fashion, first setting up a theoretical framework, before outlining a methodological position and then building an argument through the remaining chapters towards a supported conclusion. However, the argument presented in this text is, in many ways, a circular one. That is to say that the theoretical and methodological positions that are taken up in this thesis cannot be fully appreciated until the reader accepts the conclusion, that presents the built up and supported argument that in turn calls for such a theoretical and

methodological position. Here, I only seek to make clear the underpinning theoretical suggestion that structures the writing of the text, without giving any recourse as to where to start or where to finish. I leave it in the capable hands of the reader to dissect as he or she sees fit.

However, this theoretical underpinning has significant implications, which should be noted at the outset, in particular regarding the status of the contribution that this thesis makes to the field of social theory. Understanding being as becoming, doing as *difference*, or as this thesis argues, practice as change, requires a re-framing of our 'everyday' understanding of the 'original' and the 'new'. Nothing of this thesis is 'original'. In keeping with the conceptual argument, it is rather a distinct combination of my own questions, experiences and theoretical enframings. Having said that, this thesis contributes and develops four particular concepts for social theory and 'theories of practice', they are: 'the world of practice', 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', 'practice as event' and 'practice in the moment of doing'. These concepts are positioned and extended throughout this thesis, within a thoroughly defined ontological framework. This framework supports a second contribution, by providing a distinct methodology for studying rhythms of practice, through a unique empirical study of a combination of five sites of rhythms of practice. Finally, the thesis contributes suggestions for implementing this ontological framework towards shaping rhythms of practice and scheduling routine. None of these contributions are 'original', fixed entity-like-*things*, void of histories and geographies, separate from change and from the 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' of this researcher-writer. Instead they are re-productions, repetitions of 'moments' of practice, of ideas that produce the same; but in producing the same, they also produce *difference*. They are, then, a distinct set of contributions made up of a particular set of rhythms of practice, of experiences, thoughts and conversations.

The approach to 'theories of practice' and social theory detailed in what follows does not require standing 'everyday' thinking about social action and social change on its head, rather it requires a leap, or better, a dance, into another way of thinking about 'agency', about 'knowledge' and about change. I do not claim to describe the correct and only way to approach this field of enquiry; I instead try to offer an alternative set of ideas that can be taken out for a spin, taken up in the dancing, so that in dancing they might be re-produced again in a distinct combination, already different.

# Introduction: Towards a Shift in (Self-) Understanding

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... 'the doer' is merely a fiction added to the deed — the deed is everything. (Nietzsche)

## Scheduling Routine

This thesis takes up the methodological and theoretical challenge set by Henri Lefebvre in *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* ([1992] 2004), namely, to make the present *presence*, to turn *every-thing* into *presences*. That is, to resist the reification and commodification of doing as it is re-presented by the subjects and objects of social action in the mediatised 'everyday'. As such, this study investigates how to understand the relationship between social action and social change without resorting to re-presenting doing through an identity that is *present*, that is, as 'a practice'. Instead it seeks to capture the 'moment' of practice in its *presencing* and to conceptualise how 'moments' of practice become repeated and become different. I show in this text that the re-production of 'moments' of practice can be argued to be dependent on their characterisation as routine or nonroutine.

It is in this sense that the title of this thesis *Scheduling Routine* points to a dual usage of the word 'routine'. Most often, in this combination, 'routine' is heard as a noun, as a *thing* that is made up of a linear and repetitive series of actions or 'practices' usually belonging to someone or some kind of entity. This thesis is indeed concerned with the making and breaking of routine-as-a-noun; but significantly wants to challenge both 'everyday' understandings of the temporal organisations of what people do and sophisticated academic understandings of the shaping of rhythms of practice, by pointing to the possibility of a shift in understanding away from considering routines-as-*things* that belong to 'selves' and away from 'selves' as captured and organised by routines. Thus I suggest that we can pay close attention to the

sense of 'routine' as an adjective, as a quality of 'moments' of practice that allow them or deny them the opportunity to be re-produced.

In this way, I acknowledge the field of study and the political aspirations for shaping what people do; but significantly I set my analysis apart from those who seek to explain how social action becomes organised through an explanation of the ordering of 'practices' across 'time' and 'space' in a bid to schedule routines. Rather, I shift my attention to understanding how it is that 'moments' of practice become scheduled as routine, that is as repeatable and 'everyday'. This requires not only a focused study of the material, bodily, spatially and temporally situated 'moment' of practice; but also of the mechanisms of repetition and *difference* that are ongoing within the co-ordinated and synchronised 'polyrhythmia' of rhythms of practice in 'everyday' life.

In order to further introduce this topic, I go on now to briefly outline the field of study of 'theories of practice' both within which and against which this thesis positions its arguments. From this positioning I frame my research questions and go on to suggest why these questions require study within the rhythms of practice in 'everyday' life. Finally, I offer some words on what these questions (thus framed and explored through this particular site of study) allow me to do and outline the distinct contributions of this thesis before detailing an outline of the following chapters in this text.

## **Theories of Practice**

What have come to be labelled as 'theories of practice', within both the realms of social theory and philosophy, have sought to attend to these concerns: to move beyond problematic and dualistic ways of thinking, to bridge the gap between individual 'agency' and social structure and to understand the routine-ness and embodied-ness of social action and how it

changes. The histories and geographies of 'theories of practice' can be traced (though not at all as a singular or linear progression) through the writings of authors such as Bourdieu, Foucault, Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Marx, to argue that the relationship between social action and social change cannot be understood solely through the experience of the individual, nor solely through the existence of any form of social totality, but only through considering 'social practices' (Giddens 1984, 2). Indeed such a heavy emphasis has been placed on 'social practices', that Schatzki et al. suggested in 2001 that there has been a 'practice turn' in contemporary theory:

"In social theory, consequently, practice approaches promulgate a distinct social ontology: the social is a field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organized around shared practical understandings. This conception contrasts with accounts that privilege individuals, (inter) actions, language, signifying systems, the life world, institutions / roles, structures, or systems in defining the social." (Schatzki 2001, 3)

This 'social ontology' may well be distinct from certain strains of intellectualism, intersubjectivism, various individualisms, structuralism, system theory, semiotics and so on; but the turn towards 'practice theory' as a unifying and holistic solution to age old and critical fractures in social theory, has seen this ontology taken up by all manner of writers, from all manner of academic backgrounds, in addressing all kinds of questions and has thus led to the 'bleeding' in and out of the central concerns of 'practice theorists' into further disciplines and further systems of thought. Thus, Schatzki comments: "Varied references to practices await the contemporary academician in diverse disciplines, from philosophy, cultural theory, and history to sociology, anthropology, and science and technology studies." (Schatzki 2001, 1) This diversity of approaches to 'theories of practice' is not in itself problematic and is surely an accolade that should be celebrated as successfully encouraging "a shifted self-understanding..."



(Reckwitz 2002, 259) to a wide variety of disciplines. However, what does become problematic, or at least in my view, takes away from the strength of the concept of practice (as at the same time underlining both subject and object, structure and 'agency' and 'mind' and body) is the merging of concepts of practice with concepts from cognitive psychology that see 'practices' as the outcomes of motivated desires or decisions (for examples see Lizardo 2009; Vaisey 2008) or the coming together of understandings from 'Science and Technology Studies' with notions from 'theories of practice' that recognise 'practices' as outcomes of structured networks negotiated by the relationship between human and nonhuman actors (for examples see Law 1986; Mol 2002). That is to say, there is a danger that the notion of practice could lose its theoretical 'punching' power and potential for achieving the above described aims of reconciling subjectivity and objectivity by becoming diluted by established frameworks, the foundations of which are already firmly built on such theoretical divides.

It is in this sense that I argue that practice driven theoretical accounts of social action can maintain their power only if we take the notion of practice both back to and go beyond its theoretical roots. In particular, I argue that it is necessary to take seriously Heidegger's notion of 'being-in-the-world' as described in *Being and Time* ([1927] 1962) and to go one step further and recognise the temporally and spatially situated-ness and becoming-ness of 'practice in the moment of doing'.

In Chapter Four I offer a thorough account of my concept of 'practice as event' as distinct from practice understood as performance or entity. However it will be necessary to outline this theoretical approach here in order to frame my core research questions and methodological approach.

In an early text, *Social Practices: A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social* (1996), Theodore Schatzki made a distinction between practice as 'performance' and practice as 'entity', a distinction which has since become the theoretical and methodological

underpinning of the majority of studies in this field. This theoretical claim offers a sophisticated and subtle distinction between recognising 'practices' as 'performances' that people *do* and as 'entities' that can be mapped across 'space' and 'time'. Whilst this theoretical distinction is a far cry from the socio-technical ordering of 'practices' or the individualistic motivations required to do certain actions, it nevertheless maintains a *thingification* of doing so that it can be recognised as a provisionally stable entity, which I argue opens the door for further systems of thought to introduce the notion of 'practices' as entities, without truly considering the implications of a move beyond subjectivity and objectivity, structure and 'agency' and so on.

For example, Alan Warde has studied consumption as an outcome of 'practices' as performed by practitioners motivated by desire for intrinsic reward:

"Judgements of performance are made internally with respect to the goals and aspirations of *the practice* itself and proficiency and commitment deliver satisfaction and self-esteem." (Warde 2005, 148, emphasis added.)

In this analysis of practice, doing becomes reified as an objective entity whose performance is dependent on the 'internal-goods' and 'self-esteem' of the subjective practitioner. Whilst this distinction between subject and object that defines and organises 'agency' and structure is in itself problematic, we also find in further analyses that these positions are also reversed. For example, Reckwitz definition of 'a practice' as an objective entity is often invoked in writings on 'theories of practice'. He writes:

"A 'practice' (*Praktik*) is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge." (Reckwitz 2002, 249)

In this formulation of practice as entity, the 'moment' of doing is excluded and becomes re-presented as a *thing* that exists across 'space' and 'time'. 'Practice' becomes understood as a subject that is carried by people-as-objects as opposed to Warde's (above) analysis, as an object that is performed by subject-people:

"The single individual – as a bodily and mental agent - then acts as the 'carrier' (*Träger*) of a practice – and, in fact, of many different practices..." (250)

The distinction between practice as performance and entity goes some way to offer fresh insight into the sociological analyses of what people do. However, I contend that it is possible to go one step further, by first taking a step back, in order to reconcile the subject and object of social action. This depends on *not* making this distinction between performance and entity and instead coming to recognise doing as always both spatially and temporally situated and becoming as 'practice in the moment of doing' and as 'practice as event'. It is with this theoretical framework that it is possible to ask different kinds of questions, to employ different kinds of methodologies and arrive at a different kind of social ontology that more thoroughly fulfils the cry that draws academics and policy makers towards 'theories of practice': to move beyond problematic dualisms and free social action from over-determined structures and individually motivated 'agencies'.

### **Framing Research Questions**

The theoretical turn towards 'practice as event' and 'practice in the moment of doing', as suggested in this text, requires framing the questions asked in this research in a particular way. However, this thesis does not re-present only a theoretically driven account of social action. Indeed asking questions in such a way, as described below, also necessitates a methodological re-framing. As I suggest in the preface to this text my theoretical analyses of 'practice as event'

and 'practice in the moment of doing' support the decision to locate my sites of enquiry as sites of doing at the level of the 'everyday'. Such a methodological approach thus requires a theoretical analysis that can make sense of doing, that is, practice, in its happening like quality.

It is clear then, that not only what questions are asked; but also how these questions are framed is extremely important for the types of analyses and answers that will result.

For example, Alan Warde's suggestion that: "'Why do people do what they do?' and 'how do they do those things in the way that they do?' are perhaps the key sociological questions concerning practices..." (2005, 140) presents a particular theoretical frame that clearly separates "people" from "what they do" and establishes people-as-subjects who perform practices-as-entities. Moreover, the asking of "why" already presupposes a linear and causal relationship between *people* and what they *do* and necessarily points the field of enquiry in the direction of intrinsic internal or external factors as motivators of individuals' actions.

In an interesting reversal of this framing, Shove and Pantzar ask: "how practices-as-entities are made and reproduced by their carriers?" and "how do practices capture and retain the resources and energies of active practitioners on whom their survival depends?" (2007, 155). Again this positioning separates people-as-objects who are caught by practices-as-subjects, emphasising practice as a provisionally stable entity and suggesting an approach that requires an investigation of both the intrinsic components and extrinsic forces that come to constitute 'a practice'. Instead of framing questions in such a way that they come to re-present doing, or 'practice-as-a-thing', I seek to position my own research questions in order to capture the happening like quality of doing, free from the subjects and objects of action. Immediately this seems to be perhaps unsafe ground or an approach that might yield minimal 'utility' in terms of recommendations for action, as our 'everyday' approach to social action has to be put to one side in favour of an approach that necessarily recognises the actions of the researcher or anyone who would wish to 'use' this research as similarly void of a simplistic conception of

'agency'. However, this should not prevent us from considering the notion of practice from a different angle.

With this in mind, I frame the research questions of this study, as described at the beginning of this chapter, as those of understanding how practice becomes characterised as routine or nonroutine and how rhythms of practice might be shaped. Specifically, I ask:

- How can practice be conceptualised without resorting to re-presentations of the subjects and objects of social action?
- What would such a conceptualisation mean for the study of doing in social life?
- How does conceptualising practice in this way frame the relationship between social action and social change?
- Finally, understood in this way, is it possible to schedule practice as routine or otherwise and how might this be achieved?

Framed in this way, these questions help establish and develop my distinct contribution not only to the field of 'theories of practice' but to the field of social theory more generally. What is particular and distinct about this contribution is outlined in the section below; but first it is necessary to explore the significance and the importance of re-thinking the scheduling of routine practice and the shaping of rhythms of practice in 'everyday' life.

## **Rhythms of Practice in Everyday Life**

In order to address the research questions framed above, it is necessary to find both a site of analysis and methodological approach that is consistent with the thesis that practice is understood as 'event' and in the 'moment' of doing.<sup>1</sup> I thus turn to an analysis of the rhythms

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<sup>1</sup> Of course the temporal and spatial aspects of doing must be understood together, I deal with them separately in Chapter Four and Chapter Five in order to demonstrate that they go together.

of 'everyday' life as proposed by Henri Lefebvre in *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* ([1992] 2004). In this book Lefebvre seeks to found a 'new science' that can both study and capture the *presence* of doing without resorting to the re-*presentation* and *thing-ification* of doing through subjects and objects:

"The analysis does not isolate an object, or a subject, or a relation. It seeks to grasp a moving..." (Lefebvre [1992] 2004, 12)

This 'moving' is the 'moment' of practice, repeated and made different in its returning, in its rhythm, in its doing. In order to capture moving, or doing in its *presence*, void from re-*presentation*, Lefebvre, as in much of his work, sites his analysis in 'everyday' life, in the repetition of routine and nonroutine 'moments' of practice.<sup>2</sup> Critically though, for Lefebvre, 'everyday' life is not just where we can analyse routine practice, importantly it is also the terrain of struggle. It is where the rhythm analyst can both listen to the rhythms of the 'everyday' and where doing can be made to *presence*; but it is also where the rhythm analyst can intervene in the 'everyday' to shape rhythms and contribute to the art of living. It is with these ambitions in mind that I go on to further describe what it means to approach questions from a rhythm analytical perspective and indeed as I go on in the rest of this thesis to build towards an argument that suggests it is possible to restore 'moving' to re-*presentation*, by providing an analysis of social action that resists re-*presentation* and to come back to the 'everyday', to schedule routine and to shape rhythms of practice by making the present *presence*.

Significantly then, when Lefebvre refers to the 'everyday', he does not simply mean habitual, routine and day to day ordinary life (although this is an important part of the concept of 'everyday'); rather he means something more particular. In this thesis, I take up this particular sense of the 'everyday' in my analysis of the spatio-temporal rhythms of 'everyday' life as

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<sup>2</sup> See the three volumes on *Critique of Everyday Life* (Lefebvre 2002).

argued by Lefebvre and others described below. In detail, the 'everyday' is not just a 'natural' concept that expresses the ordinary-ness and routine nature of living; but it is a description of the commodification of ways of living that has made human life come to be experienced as dull, mundane and 'everyday'. Therefore, whilst the English translation of *la vie quotidienne* is usually 'everyday life', we must bear in mind that, for Lefebvre, it retains two important senses: first, 'everyday', (*quotidian*) suggests the commodification of ways of living and second, 'everydayness' (*quotidienn  t  *) refers to the repetition of daily life (Elden 2004, 112). Both these senses are required to understand Lefebvre's contention that linear rhythms of modern technological and industrial production have come to dominate cyclical rhythms of the becoming-ness of social being. This is not, as some readers take it, a crude distinction between objective (linear) and repetitive (cyclical) 'time'. Both are rhythms, both are repetitions of the same that produce *difference*, and fundamentally, they constantly interfere with and reciprocate each other. Rather, the difference between linear and cyclical rhythms, denotes the difference between a mechanistic repetition of modern labour and continual industrial production of 'progress' and a repetition based on the rhythmic and becoming nature of the *lived*, of the body and of the cosmos.<sup>3</sup>

Thus Lefebvre is responding to the growth of capitalism and its domination of all areas of social life. In particular he builds on Marx' concept of alienation, of the worker's alienation from his work and thus, the rest of social life. However, Marx' analysis focuses on the alienation of the economic sphere from the rest of social life and does not examine in detail the experience of alienation across other spheres of social life. For Lefebvre, capitalism grows in the twentieth century to dominate both the cultural and social spheres, in effect coming to produce 'everyday' life – *la vie quotidienne*. It is the banal, repetitive and alienated 'everyday'

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<sup>3</sup> Of course 'time' itself becomes commodified and re-presented as 'scientific' or 'objective' time as a result of the dominance of linear rhythms; but this does not make the distinction between linear and cyclical rhythms one of a distinction between objective and subjective 'time'. Lefebvre has a different notion of 'time' in mind – see Chapters Five and Six.

that this study seeks to investigate. This notion of 'everyday' life is very similar to Lukács and Heidegger's notion of 'everydayness' (*Alltäglichkeit*). For Lukács (1971), capitalism prevents the realisation of a more thoroughly lived life and instead produces a trivial life characterised by commodity fetishism and a mechanical existence. So too in *Being and Time* ([1927] 1962), Heidegger contrasts the inauthenticity of modern 'everydayness' with an authentic way of being which he claims cannot be revealed in the current mechanical and capitalistic way of thinking.

Indeed this is why Lefebvre often refers to the 'everyday' as mediatised, because he understands *presence*, that is doing and I will argue, practice, as having been commodified, re-presented and made into a *thing* that is *present*. He writes:

"We must ceaselessly come back to this distinction (opposition) between presence and present: it takes a long time to prepare the trial (process) [process (processus)]. The already marked difference links back to the philosophical and socio-political critique of the image, of mediation (mediatisation), of time, of all representation. The present simulates presence and introduces simulation (the simulacrum) into social practice. The present (representation) furnishes and occupies time, simulating and dissimulating the living. Imagery has replaced in the modern the sacralisation of time and its occupation by rites and solemnised gestures; it succeeds in fabricating, introducing and making accepted the everyday. A skilfully utilised and technicised form of mythification (simplification), it resembles the real and presence as a photo of photographed people: it resembles but it has neither depth, nor breadth, nor flesh. Yet the image, as the present, takes care of ideology: it contains it and masks it. Presence is **here** (and not up there or over there). With presence there is dialogue, the use of time, speech and action. With the present, which is **there**, there is only exchange and the acceptance of exchange, of the displacement (of the *self* and the *other*) by a **product**, by a simulacrum. The present is a



fact and an effect of *commerce*, while presence situates itself in the poetic: value, creation, situation in the world and not only in the relations of exchange.” (Lefebvre [1992] 2004, 47)

Thus, Lefebvre’s critique of ‘everyday’ life is a radical and suspicious questioning of industrial and technological society that investigates the overlaying of technical linear rhythms over lived cyclical rhythms by introducing, re-presentation, that is mediatisation and commodification, into social practice.

However, unlike Heidegger’s undervaluing of the ‘everyday’ as ‘inauthentic’ and of his understanding of ‘authenticity’ as being unable to be revealed to us in this epoch, Lefebvre argues that whilst the ‘everyday’ is both alienated and banal, it is at the same time the very ground out of which people can experience ‘moments’ of presence and ‘authenticity’. Thus, in Lefebvre, the ‘everyday’ is not only produced by capitalist and mechanical linear rhythms; but it is also the site of struggle, both for the individual and the social theorist, where the *present* can be made to *presence* through an ‘overcoming’ of re-presentation and mediatisation:

“The act of rhythmanalysis [*le geste rythmanalytique*] transforms *everything* into presences, including the *present*, grasped and perceived as such. The act [*geste*] does not imprison itself in the ideology of the *thing*. It perceives the *thing* in the proximity of the *present*, an instance of the present, just as the image is another instance. Thus the thing makes itself **present** but not **presence**. On the contrary, the act of rhythmanalysis integrates these things – this wall, this table, these trees – in a dramatic becoming, in an ensemble full of meaning, transforming them no longer into diverse things but into presences.” (23)

By adopting a rhythmanalytic approach to analysing the spatio-temporal rhythms of practice in ‘everyday’ life, I propose to reject systems of thought that deal in *things*, in re-presentations and entities. Instead I intend to make the rhythms of practice *presence*, to capture them in

their doing, in order to contribute an alternative theoretical frame and methodological approach to understanding the relationship between social action and social change.

## **A Distinct Contribution**

In framing its central research topic in this way this thesis sets itself apart from other 'theories of practice' and aligns itself with authors and texts whose more primary concerns have been in studying the relationship between being and becoming. In so doing, I contribute a distinct ontology of social action and social change to the field of 'theories of practice' and to social theory more generally. However, this ontological approach necessarily rejects, or at the very least has to re-frame the notion of an 'original' contribution, as outlined in the requirements for a doctoral thesis. As I suggested in the preface to this thesis, the idea of an 'original' is sealed firmly in the realm of commodification and re-presentation and stands in stark contrast and contradiction to understanding change as a fundamental property of practice, of being as becoming and of *difference* produced through repetition, that I argue for here. To understand some-thing as 'original' implies a particular understanding of the 'new' as a stable and fixed entity that is separated from other entities through difference as the negation of identity. I position my argument to the contrary, suggesting that there are neither 'new' nor 'original' things; but that *difference* is constituted by return, by repetition of the same. That is to say, that, as I argue in chapters four, five and six, that doing is not separate from change, rather, practice is *ipso facto* change. Therefore, to maintain a consistency between the ontological framework presented in this thesis, and my own 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' (which are in no way separate), I continue now to re-frame what is 'original' about my contribution by outlining what is *different* about this argument, and what it contributes to the field of social theory.

First and foremost I contribute four significant and intimately related concepts: 'the world of practice', 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', 'practice as event' and 'practice in the moment of doing'. 'Practice as event' and 'practice in the moment of doing' refer to the spatial and temporal situated-ness of practice respectively. Of course neither sense can be taken without the other; but I deal with them separately in Chapter Four and Chapter Five in order to bridge the gap from our 'everyday' understandings of *things* that exist in 'time' and 'space', towards an ontology that can recognise the "becoming space of time and the becoming time of space..." (Hägglund 2008, 2). I precede discussions of these two concepts by situating subjectivities and 'knowledges' firmly within the material and bodily realm of practice, through a discussion of 'the world of practice' in Chapter Two and 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' in Chapter Three. Further to these four concepts, I also contribute in this thesis a distinct methodological framework that complements and reinforces the above theoretical claims. Detailed in the following chapter, this research does not distinguish between the rhythms of research and the rhythms of participation in order to remain consistent with the theoretical suggestion that seeks to make the present *presence*. In this way, it would be impossible to re-present this theoretical account through a positivistic methodology. Thus, I present a unique combination of ideas brought to light through a distinct combination of my own rhythms of practice.

Thirdly and finally I contribute both to social theories seeking to understand the relationship between social action and social change a distinct and alternative social ontology, a set of concepts, frames, tools and methods that is fully oriented to understanding the rhythms of practice in 'everyday' life. In providing this framework I also suggest in Chapter Six, how rhythms of practice might be shaped and how routine might be scheduled through three example conceptual tools: 'arrhythmia', 'training' and 'syncopation'. These ideas contribute the conceptual weapons that social theorists, policy makers and people in 'everyday' life can

use to think about practice in a different way and potentially ‘overcome’ routine rhythms of practice by making practice *presence* in the ‘everyday’.

## **Thesis Outline**

From here I go on in the first chapter to put forward a methodological approach to studying doing, that is both capable of capturing ‘practice in the moment of doing’ and that remains consistent with the argument presented in this thesis that ‘knowledge’ is not external to practice. Therefore, I critique more traditional approaches that seek to deal with and accommodate the binary relationship between researcher and respondent, between subject and object, in efforts to come closer to the ‘truth’ of that object of study and instead offer an interpretative position that recognises my role in this study as fully historically and geographically situated within both the rhythms of research and in the rhythms of practice. In particular I argue that this position can be best understood through an understanding of Lefebvre’s outlining of the ‘rhythmanalyst’, who does not need to “jump in and out of observed bodies” (Lefebvre [1992] 2004, 20); but rather uses her own rhythms and her own experiences to listen to and interpret the ‘polyrhythmia’ of that ‘world’. It is with this approach that I continue in the following five chapters to draw out five different studies of rhythms of practice, the specific details and justifications of which are described within each chapter. Nevertheless, it is important to note that in order to make the present *presence* by taking up the position of the rhythmanalyst, as suggested by Lefebvre, requires an understanding of theory and method as inseparable. That is to say that this theoretical approach both informs the study of my own rhythms of practice and at the same time is also developed through and drawn from my empirical experiences. Thus, whilst each empirical site of resistance training, ashtanga yoga, stock car racing, computer gaming and mixed martial arts has its own story and plays its own role in conjunction with others, none of these

empirical sites were explicitly 'chosen' as objects of study; but rather the discussions that I am able to facilitate in this text were only able to be re-presented in the way that they have been both through and with my experiences of these rhythms of practice.

Chapter Two presents an analysis of the rhythms of resistance training to begin to provide the basis for the theoretical ontology suggested in this text. In particular it begins by taking a step back from already given frameworks that separate the subject and object of action, in order to think through Martin Heidegger's discussion in *Being and Time* ([1927] 1962) and consider the 'world' of practical activity, the 'world' of practice. In this chapter, I contrast this discussion with arguments from 'Science and Technology Studies' that are more readily concerned with the relationship between humans and nonhumans and the distributions of 'agencies' across networks of entities as constituting 'practices'. Rather than studying subjects, objects or relations, I turn first to Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein* and then to the notion of 'being-in-the-world' to argue that people cannot separate themselves from the network of equipment within which they are always involved amid practical activity. Thus rather than studying the relationship between resistance training practitioners and the weights and the other equipment in the gym, I suggest that we can turn our attention towards the 'world' of that practice as a site of analysis.

Recognising practice as 'worldly', as doing, I go on in Chapter Three to detail what I have called 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' through a discussion of the rhythms of practice of ashtanga yoga. In this chapter I first position an understanding of the 'lived body', as described by Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception* ([1945] 1962), not as separated between 'mind' and body; but rather remaining consistent with Heidegger's analysis of 'being-in-the-world', as the site of all possible and potential action. I contrast these theoretical building blocks with arguments from other systems of thought that distinguish between body-subjects and body-objects in order to explain how 'knowledge' about 'practice' is passed between

practitioners. Instead I draw on Lave and Wenger's (1991) argument that 'knowledge-in-practice' is always fully embodied to propose my concept of 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' that brings together both the notion of the 'lived body' and 'knowledge-in-practice'. Finally in this chapter I show how, following Deleuze and Guattari ([1980] 1988), we can understand 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' as providing the conditions, the very site for assemblages of bodies and *things* that make up the 'world' of practice in its event.

Chapter Four examines the rhythms of stock car racing, particularly on race day, to both draw out and illustrate an alternative approach to 'theories of practice' that focuses on 'practice as event'. In particular, I first contrast this idea with 'theories of practice' which seek to distinguish between practice as performance and entity. I then build on the suggestions made in the previous two chapters regarding 'the world of practice' and 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', relating these to a discussion of Allan Pred's (1990) understanding of the spatially and temporally situated-ness and becoming-ness of social practice. Of course the spatial and temporal senses of 'practice as event' cannot be separated, however I distinguish between the notions of 'practice as event' in this chapter and 'practice in the moment of doing' in the following chapter in order to offer a contrast to systems of thought, that indeed take this singular thought separately. As such, I turn at the end of Chapter Four to contrast my understanding of 'practice as event' with Theodore Schatzki's argument in *The Timespace of Human Activity* (2010) in which he provides a most sophisticated account of the distinction between performance and entity. Here I argue that Schatzki's separation of 'being-in' and 'world' as performance and entity deny him the opportunity to move beyond a representation of the subjects and objects of social action and to consider a move towards thinking about the situated-ness and becoming-ness of social practice.

In Chapter Five I propose understanding the temporal quality of 'practice as event' (which again, in no way can be separated from its spatial quality) through a concept derived from an

analysis of the rhythms of computer gaming, 'practice in the moment of doing'. I begin with the observation that both computer gamers and computer games designers make a distinction between subjective (experienced) 'time' and objective (scientific) 'time'. I trace this understanding of 'time' back through various social theories to demonstrate that even sophisticated 'theories of practice' that explicitly deal with the temporality of 'practice' are built on a re-presentation of 'time' as linear and objective. I suggest that instead, practice can be understood 'in the moment of doing' and turn to Nietzsche's account, in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* ([1883-85] 1961), of 'eternal return' to more fully explore the ramifications of understanding the spatially and temporally situated-ness and becoming-ness of practice on the relationship between social action and social change. I argue then, that following Deleuze ([1969] 1994), rather than considering change, or difference as the negation of identity, of a practice-as-entity, that we can instead consider change as a fundamental property of practice. That is to say that doing *is* change.

Finally in Chapter Six, I offer three conceptual tools for potentially shaping the continually changing rhythms of practice: 'arrhythmia', 'training' and 'syncopation'. These ideas are born out of and illustrated from a study of the rhythms of mixed martial arts. To begin this chapter I first draw out how the returning of 'moments' of practice can be understood to constitute *difference*, through an understanding of rhythms à la Lefebvre. I then argue that it is possible to shape the constantly changing rhythms of practice by inducing breaks in rhythms of practice, by repeating and drilling certain rhythms and by placing emphasis on or highlighting certain rhythms so that they come to 'fall in' as routine. These conceptual tools are explained with examples from the rhythms of mixed martial arts practice.

In sum, this thesis will argue that it is possible to schedule routine, through the study of an ontological framework that resists the re-presentation of the subjects and objects of social action. By considering the relationship between social action and social change as described in

this thesis, by recognising 'practice as event' and 'in the moment of doing', I claim that it is possible for social theorists, policy makers and people in 'everyday' life to make the present *presence* through the act of rhythmanalysis, to break certain rhythms of practice and to strengthen 'eurhythmic' rhythms of practice and in the long term come back to and shape the spatio-temporal rhythms of 'everyday' life.



# Chapter One: Studying Doing

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*The rhythm analyst will not be obliged to jump from the inside to the outside of observed bodies; he should come to listen to them as a whole and unify them by taking his own rhythms as a reference: by integrating the outside with the inside and vice versa. (Lefebvre)*

## Introduction

Given the theoretical framework suggested in the introduction to this thesis, this research requires a methodological approach that can necessarily account for an 'overcoming' of the subject / object divide. Further, the research methodology needs to remain consistent with the argument made in this thesis that rejects the notion of 'knowledge' as an external object and instead recognises it as 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice'. In this sense we can immediately suggest that just as the distinction between the subject and object of action is a re-presentation, so too is the idea that theory and method are separate. Whilst this chapter puts forward the study of one particular research methodology for studying practice in its *presencing*, it should be noted, that of course, other 'theories of practice' that understand the notion of practice differently, from as it is proposed in this text, require different methodological approaches. My point is that these methods must remain consistent to their theoretical conceptualisation of 'practice'. Thus, if one subscribes to the claim that 'knowledge' is not an external object; but is in fact an embodied and continually changing part of practice, then one must also acknowledge that this very research is a study of my own 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', *thing-ified*, commodified and re-presented as a part of the ongoing 'world' and rhythms of academic practice.

Critically then, this understanding of 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', stands in stark contrast to traditional and contemporary studies of social life that recognise a distinction between researcher and respondent, between subject and object and between theory and method. Instead of seeking to maintain a critical and reflexive distance from my object of

study, or resist any attempt to 'go native', I recognise my position as already within the 'polyrhythmia' of 'everyday' life, whether that is within rhythms of practice that I am already a part of, or beginning a peripheral participation in rhythms that I have less experience of. In order to make this argument, it will first be necessary to outline how 'theories of practice' and social science more widely has attended to the 'utility' of particular research methodologies. In particular I refer to Russell Hitchings' (2012) article that suggests that 'People Can Talk about their Practices' and Bourdieu's (1999) chapter entitled simply, 'Understanding', in order to highlight that social science research methods continue to maintain a distinction between talking and doing, between the cognitive and the embodied and between the researcher and the respondent. In response to this I then follow an argument made by Cerwonka and Malkki in their insightful text *Improvising Theory* (2007), that recognises the historically and geographically situated position of study as necessarily both participant and researcher. I argue then that this position can be more fully appreciated by taking up the suggestions made by Lefebvre in *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* ([1992] 2004), towards a methodology of the rhythm analyst. Finally, I suggest that this approach necessarily requires situating in the 'polyrhythmia' of the 'everyday', rather than in a longitudinal or historical study. In summary I refer to Loïc Wacquant's (2004) immersive and detailed study of his training in a boxing gym to provide both a model on which this research is based, but also a springboard from which this study wishes to go beyond traditional social scientific methodologies, that is, beyond immersive participant observations such as Wacquant's, in order to recognise and study my own 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', my own rhythms of practice, so that the gap between the conceptual and the empirical, between the thinking of the researcher and the practice of the respondent can be more thoroughly scrutinised.

## **Talking About Practice**

There remains within 'theories of practice' as well as within wider social scientific literature a concern regarding how to study what people do. In a recent article Russell Hitchings (2012) asks the question: can people talk about their 'practices'? He suggests that more recent studies of 'practices' have moved away from utilising the interview as a key methodology for obtaining 'knowledge' about what people do, regarding them as offering only a re-presentation of doing because they occur after the fact and therefore can only provide a washed out account of whatever social action that took place. Indeed Hitchings suggests that many theorists have gone so far as to dismiss the interview as incapable of successfully attending to routine and 'unconscious' 'practices', instead choosing to experiment with different methods including videoing participants and participating in the practice whilst conducting interviews. However, Hitchings gives a strong defence of the 'utility' and importance of collecting data through interviews, both through reference to his own successful empirical research and through a theoretical argument of key 'practice theorists' (Giddens, Reckwitz, Schatzki and Bourdieu) positions on this topic.

Hitchings first describes that whilst Giddens (1984) claims that routine practice is 'unconscious' and guided by a 'practical consciousness', that there is also a 'discursive consciousness' that is capable of talking about routine practice, particularly during moments of disruption or:

"... when otherwise routine actions are brought abruptly into consciousness by realising they are out of step with the wider social scene. The act of interviewing could logically achieve exactly this effect, were we only confident enough to quiz people about acting otherwise." (Hitchings 2012, 62)

Similarly Hitchings argues that whilst more recent incarnations of 'social practice theory' that "... decentre human 'will' such that people... find themselves relegated to a position of being just those who get drawn into the reproduction of behavioural norms with their own powerful 'teleoaffective' logics" [Schatzki] and that "paint people as the unwitting 'carriers' of practices

by which they have previously been infected [Reckwitz] ...” (Hitchings 2012:62), that this remains a framework within which people amend and improvise the contextual rules that structure their practice. Thus:

“Like the tennis player, respondents may be preoccupied at the time, but still able to discuss how things went afterwards.” (Burkitt in Hitchings 2012, 63)

Finally, Hitchings suggests that despite Bourdieu’s (1990) view that practices are opaque to their practitioners, he later advocates (1999) a disposition analysis that recognises the ‘self’-reflexivity of both the researcher and the respondent that supports “... a sensitive form of self evaluation that could quite feasibly be initiated through talk.” (Hitchings 2012, 62)

Therefore, Hitchings offers a strong defence of the ‘utility’ of interviews for studying ‘practices’. Nevertheless, this argument (and the same goes for all the above positions) tackles the question of whether talking to people is a ‘useful’ research method for gaining empirical ‘knowledge’ about ‘practices’-as-*things*. This enframing necessarily demarcates the subject and object of research, separates talking and doing and draws a distinction between researcher and respondent. Thus, for the above social theorists, the methodological struggle appears to be about closing the gap between researcher and respondent without contaminating the evidence obtained from the study.

### **Jumping From the Inside to the Outside**

Indeed, the struggle over trying to position social scientific research methodologies has been a site of contention and discussion for social theorists seeking to understand their own roles and their own ‘knowledges’ in relation to their research. Quite often the desire to reduce the distance between researcher and respondent is born out of a desire to remain as unbiased and as impartial as possible. Bourdieu deals with this very problem in his chapter

'Understanding' (1999). Here he argues that it is necessary for the researcher to recognise her position as being in no way neutral; but that the differences in position, capital and social hierarchy between researcher and respondent, will undoubtedly affect responses and can lead to 'intrusion' on behalf of the researcher (leading the respondent, interrupting at the 'wrong' times and so on), as well as misinterpretation and misunderstanding. Bourdieu suggests, in this piece, that to avoid these pitfalls that it is necessary to "reduce as much as possible the symbolic violence exerted through that relationship." (Bourdieu 1999, 609) To achieve this it is necessary for the researcher to be reflexive about her study and recognise the distance between herself and her object of study, that is to construct herself and the interview or the research in such a way that it minimises the symbolic violence done to the 'knowledge'-to-be-collected.

However, whilst it is extremely important (as argues Bourdieu) for the researcher to have a keen self-awareness, it must be noted that the researcher can also run the risk of not paying enough attention to her subject and can end up imposing her own definitions, interpretations and understandings onto the respondent's answers. Bourdieu suggests that this can become particularly problematic when research seems at first glance to be highly successful, obvious or 'natural':

"Paradoxically, the more successful it is and the more it leads to an interchange that has every appearance of 'naturalness', the more that work is destined to remain invisible (where 'natural' is equated with what ordinarily happens in the ordinary interchanges of everyday life)." (612)

Thus, in order to combat this danger, Bourdieu suggests that it is necessary to put oneself in the place of the subject in order to more thoroughly understand both practically and theoretically her particular social conditions and circumstances. Indeed, it is only through this

intimate and extensive 'knowledge' of the subject that we are able to understand the responses of the subject without extrapolating and interpreting them in our own terms:

"This means that researchers have some chance of being truly equal to their task only if they possess an extensive knowledge of the subject, sometimes acquired over a whole lifetime of research..." (613)

However, whilst it is necessary to develop an intimate and extensive 'knowledge' of the subject of study, Bourdieu warns the prospective researcher of becoming too close to the subject, less the 'naturalness' of common sense or 'everyday' understandings of situations transpose the personal, emotional and intimate accounts of the respondent into the impersonal, general and 'everyday' sense of the researcher:

"Although it may produce the theoretical equivalent of the practical knowledge that comes from proximity and familiarity, not even the deepest preliminary knowledge could lead us to true understanding if it were not accompanied both by an attentiveness to others and a self-abnegation and openness rarely encountered in everyday life." (614)

Thus Bourdieu argues that it is both necessary to put oneself in the place of the subject; but also to remain attentive and open to the respondent, despite attempting to be familiar in understanding. As such, the researcher is required to both develop an extensive 'knowledge' of her object of study and at the same time maintain a sense of reflexivity about her own position as researcher. As if this were not enough for a researcher to contend with, Bourdieu offers one further concern that I shall mention here, that is the 'self'-reflexivity of the participant. He warns that whilst many studies are keen to encourage participant reflexivity in a bid to further close the gap between respondent and researcher, between subject and object and in order to come closer to the 'truth' of the matter, that, problematically,

respondents reflecting in 'real-time' during the interview, may well resist any objectifications made of them:

"Certain interviews bear numerous traces of the respondent's attempts to master the constraints constrained within the situation by showing that they are capable of taking in hand their own objectification and of adopting toward themselves the reflexive point of view that is inherent in the very conception of the research." (616)

By attributing reflexivity to the respondent, the researcher herself has to reflect on the values represented by the respondent who may check and adjust her responses in order to protect the image that she presents to the world and to herself:

"One of the most subtle means of resisting objectification comes from those interviewees who, playing on their social proximity to the interviewer, try, more unconsciously than consciously, to protect themselves from it by seeming to play along and attempting to impose, without always knowing it, something akin to self-analysis." (616)

Therefore, it seems that it is necessary for the researcher to reflect on and recognise her own position as researcher, put herself in the place of her subject in order to gain an intimate understanding of the subject's position, whilst remaining attentive and open to the respondent and at the same time foster a 'self' reflexivity in the participant, whilst constantly being on the lookout for any resistance to objectification. In this sense a thorough methodology that seeks to understand *what people do*, requires a careful jumping in and out of observed bodies that avoids any intrusion on the 'true' object of 'knowledge' to be collected.

According to this reading, Hinchings is quite right to defend the 'utility' of interviewing as a methodology because, whilst it appears to be a fine art, *people do* their own routine 'practices'

and are also able to 'consciously' reflect on those 'practices' and communicate some object 'knowledge' about them to a researcher during an interview.

However, as set out in the introductory chapter, this thesis' theoretical framework understands practice in a different way and therefore it is necessary to offer several criticisms of the above enframing of studying what people do. First, there is a problem with the idea that there is an object 'truth' to what people do that can be uncovered if only all the issues described above could be attended to. Second there is an assumption in the above enframing of this kind of research, that 'conscious', reflexive talk about practice is somehow separate from doing (surely the interview is itself a doing, a 'moment' of practice?). Third, the entire negotiation of positions relies on a distinct separation between the subject and object in the doing of the interview (a theoretical and methodological framework that this thesis rejects). Finally, the above discussion rests on an understanding of 'conscious'/'unconscious' and 'mind' / body dualisms that are not shared by this thesis' theoretical foundations.

Therefore, instead of working from a position that seeks to limit the intrusion and impact of the researcher on an objective 'knowledge', this research takes an interpretative position, and argues for a methodology that does not seek to acquire some kind of object 'truth'. In their methodological reflections on an email exchange between supervisor and student conducting ethnographic fieldwork Allaine Cerwonka and Liisa Malkki highlight the paradoxical reproduction of positivist principles through a self-reflexive approach:

"The positivist research model encourages one to strive for objectivity by erasing all personal influences on the research. Self-reflexivity is an approach to research that is critical of many of the principles of positivism (including the ambition to achieve objectivity). Further it aims to attend to the imbalance of power in the research encounter that privileges the researcher. With the aid of self-reflexive strategies, individuals strive to reduce their authority and power in the research context through



self-awareness and sensitivity. Yet, too often such attempts in the end reproduce the positivist ambition of containing polluting influences on the research (in this case, power) by adhering to certain methodological principles (self-awareness rather than self-effacement).” (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007, 30)

To reiterate, this thesis necessarily re-frames ‘truth’ from a positivist, or ‘self’-reflexive strategy concerned with understanding ‘knowledge’ as an external object that can be passed from practitioner to researcher, to a conceptualisation that recognises ‘knowledge’ always as ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’. That is to say, that rather than being a limitation, this research recognises the position of the researcher as ‘so-close’ or even indistinguishable from the object of study, as one of its greatest strengths. Again, Cerwonka and Malkki support this claim:

“...[S]ocial science positivists have accorded ethnographic methods scant authority because the researcher is not sufficiently removed from the “data”. But the very thing that renders ethnography’s knowledge claims suspicious for some is in fact its strength. The nature of the ethnographic encounter (*participant* observation) has prompted anthropologists in particular to confront the inseparability of the ethnographer’s “horizon” (Gadamer) from her object of inquiry. For this reason, ethnographic fieldwork is a rich and demanding activity where questions about the relationships among experience, self and the alterity of the research object are more readily explored than in other research practices.” (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007, 30)

It is exactly in this sense that this research seeks to understand the other-ness of the rhythms of practice studied, through bringing my ‘self’, that is, my own built up ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’ to these experiences. Whilst I did undertake interviews, I therefore conducted them as part of my engagement in those rhythms of practice. They occurred whilst waiting outside the studio for a yoga class to begin, whilst sharing an umbrella under the rain and

standing in the mud watching the days' final 'demolition derby' stock car race and whilst losing terribly at computer games. Some took place more formally after intense weight lifting workouts or on the rest days leading up to an important mixed martial arts competition. Several were recorded and transcribed; but many of the most fruitful or insightful exchanges that helped to develop a fuller 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' occurred whilst wrestling respondents and being wrestled by them into submission holds, whilst attending privately arranged extra-sessions to practice the latest postures that we had been taught in our yoga class or whilst fighting through a gruelling cardio workout with respondents in the gym. Of the many respondents whose reflections, 'knowledges' and actions are referred to in order to represent the argument of these pages, some began as friends, others just as training partners, or friends of friends. However, through the course of this research through engaging in these various rhythms of practice these relationships have grown in breadth and in depth, from introductions as far afield as specialist stock car memorabilia and heritage collectors and independent computer games design teams, to intensely committed relationships and synchronised timetables with fellow mixed martial art training partners and 'gym buddies'.

It is only through doing these activities with my fellow participants that I was able to build up the sufficient (and at times insufficient) 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' to be able to hear, to interpret and to engage with the anecdotes, the accounts, the movements, the doings that make up these rhythms of practice. Therefore, this research requires a methodological-theoretical approach that recognises research as producing 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', whilst at the same time re-producing it. Cerwonka and Malkki refer to Gadamer's (1999) argument that understanding is not only a re-productive activity; but always productive as well:

"Rejecting the idea that research is an exercise in recording an objectively observable reality, Gadamer insists on the constructive nature of understanding and interpretation. His theory of interpretation develops an account of how understanding

inevitably involves the concrete, historically situated personhood of the researcher.”  
(Cerwonka and Malkki 2007, 25)

Rather than considering the position of the researcher as abstract, ‘self’-reflexive and as trying to stand in and out of the body that it observes and observes with, I instead recognise my position as fully historically and geographically situated as both researcher and practitioner. Adopting this theoretical-methodological position is not simply to acknowledge that I bring my own bias and own ‘knowledge’ to any object of study; rather it is to fundamentally recognise that my ‘knowledges’, questions and frames of reference fully shape both my own rhythms of practice and the rhythms of practice of those others involved; but also critically, that the rhythms of practice with which I am engaged in shape *my* ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’ as researcher as well (i.e. my questions, frames of reference, etc.) A final quote from Cerwonka and Malkki supports this position:

“To say that understanding is always a situated practice is not simply to acknowledge that we always bring personal “bias” (conceptual and personal for-understandings and pre-judgments) to our research. It is to say that we always understand *through* a set of priorities and questions that we bring to the phenomenon / object we are researching. While scholars might not acknowledge the elements that inform their research, the elements are nevertheless there, invisibly so. This point bears on the important question of how one’s personhood is also a *condition* for knowledge claims, rather than a deterrent to understanding.” (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007, 28)

In this way I recognise myself as fully implicated in this research, as the very site that the rhythms of practice and the ideas that are re-presented in this thesis have come together. Thus, in a sense none of the sites of these rhythms of practice have been ‘chosen’ by me, in the same way that this thesis would reject a conceptualisation of the rational actor as simply ‘choosing’ the ‘practices’ that make up her daily routine. Rather these sites are the products of

my own histories and geographies, my own situated 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice'; but they are also the grounds out of which the concepts that I re-present here, have been thought, grown and shaped.

Before moving on to describe the empirical sites in more detail, I first turn to describe how I have appropriated the above ideas through the theoretical and methodological framework that underpins this entire thesis: rhythmanalysis.

## **The Rhythmanalyst**

This research takes its methodological approach to the analysis of the rhythms of 'everyday' life from an interrogation and study of the previsionary framework built and proposed by Henri Lefebvre in *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* ([1992] 2004). In this work Lefebvre sets out to found a 'new science' and to critique the process of *thing-ification*, of objectifying 'knowledge' and practice. He begins, in the second chapter, to paint 'A Previsionary Portrait of the Rhythmanalyst'. It is 'previsionary', he claims, because explanations and analyses of the social world remain mediatised, re-presented and full of images. The portrait is to help bring into existence a theoretical and methodological orientation that can transcend re-presentation in this way. Unlike the researcher with whom Bourdieu (1999) is concerned, who is required to both put herself in the place of the respondent and at the same time to remove herself to a place of 'self'-reflexivity; the rhythmanalyst, according to Lefebvre cannot separate herself from her object of study:

"The rhythmanalyst will not have these methodological obligations: rendering oneself passive, forgetting one's knowledge, in order to re-present it in its entirety in the interpretation. He listens – and first to his body; he learns rhythms from it, in order consequently to appreciate external rhythms. His body serves him as a metronome. A

difficult task and situation: to perceive distinct rhythms distinctly, without disrupting them, without dislocating time. This preparatory discipline for the perception of the outside world borders on pathology yet avoids it because it is methodical. All sorts of already known practices, more or less mixed up with ideology, are similar to it and can be of use: the control of breathing and the heart, the use of muscle and limbs, etc.”

(19-20)

The body of the rhythmanalyst plays a pivotal role for Lefebvre, as indeed it does in this work, as the site and means of analysis. Indeed in Chapter Three I develop an argument from Deleuze and Guattari ([1972] 1984, [1980] 1988) that sees the body as the site of connection to other people, tools, machines and assemblages as ‘practice as event’ and ‘in the moment of doing’. In the same way the body of the rhythmanalyst is not separate from her object of study, nor ‘self’-reflexively distant from her own embodied practice; but all of her ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’ needs to be connected to the machinic assemblage that is the doing-researching of her study. In this way she can fully employ all of her built up experience, her ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’ of breathing, of moving and of practicing, to listen to the ‘polyrhythmia’ of the ‘world’ of practice, not from the inside or the outside; but to be in concert with the rhythms of that object of study. Thus, the rhythmanalyst is fundamentally ‘in-the-world’ of and not separate from, the practice that she is studying. Nor indeed from the practice *of studying itself*:

“He will be attentive, but not only to the words or pieces of information, the confessions and confidences of a partner or a client. He will listen to the world, and above all to what are disdainfully called noises, which are said without meaning, and to *murmurs* [rumours], full of meaning – and finally he will listen to silences.” (19)

Hitchings’ concerns, as described above, regarding the dismissal of interviewing as a method of research then, from a ‘rhythmanalytical’ viewpoint are well founded. Talking to people and

practicing with others is fundamental to taking part in the rhythms of practice. However, from this methodological stance, interviews, or any form of discourse analysis, must be recognised as not being separate from doing. Speaking is not separate from doing. When I give a presentation of my work to my peers, despite a lack of bodily movement and action (most of the time!) clearly this is a 'moment' of practice, a doing that involves, *inter alia*, speaking. Thus, talking to people about practice is only a part of the method of performing a rhythmanalysis. Rather, the rhythmanalyst has to come to an embodied understanding of noises and silences and 'moments' of 'arrhythmia' through experience, through participating and practicing 'in-the-world'.

For Lefebvre, this is not a matter of interfering or provoking 'arrhythmiatic' situations; rather it is about coming to catch and perceive rhythms as those who are caught by rhythms perceive them. This catching and perceiving is facilitated through the build up of experience that the rhythmanalyst brings to perception. Thus, to understand rhythms as 'polyrhythmia', as people experience, is to bring oneself, one's own rhythms to the practice. Lefebvre argues, that in this way, the rhythmanalyst comes closer to the poet than the empiricist because she always brings something to the analysis (herself), thus rhythmanalysis is always productive. Of course, it is a repetition, a re-production of the practice; but it is always a repetition that brings with it something different. He writes:

"Does the rhythmanalyst thus come close to the **poet**? Yes, to a large extent, more so than he does to the psychoanalyst, and still more so than he does to the statistician, who counts *things* and, quite reasonably, describes them in their immobility... In short, he is not a mystic! Without going so far as to present himself as a positivist, for someone who observes: an empiricist. He changes that which he observes: he sets it in motion, he recognises its power. In this sense, he seems close to the poet or the man

of the theatre. Art, poetry, music and theatre have always brought something (but what?) to the everyday. They haven't *reflected* on it." (23-25)

In this sense, this thesis is not a reflection on an objective study of five different 'leisure' case studies. Rather the ideas and concepts that make up each chapter are born out of the coming together of my own questions, my own frames of reference and my own 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' of five distinct and at the same time connected rhythms of practice that have shaped and produced both my own rhythms of practice (which include the rhythms of writing this thesis) and 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' (which include an understanding of 'rhythmanalysis'), as much as my own rhythms and 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' have shaped those 'moments' of practice.

Importantly and in summary, for Lefebvre, the rhythmanalyst must recognise that her rhythms come together with the rhythms of that which is studied. It is only an understanding of one's own rhythms that allow an interpretation of the other, as it is already changed.

Finally, in the above quote, Lefebvre makes one important contrast between the poet and the rhythmanalyst. The rhythmanalyst (because she is performing a rhythmanalysis), recognises the power (and the limits of that power) that she has in shaping rhythms of practice, in changing the 'everyday'. This recognition of her power demands a responsibility that moves beyond the remit of the poet, according to Lefebvre. The main text of this thesis is devoted to an analysis that leads to a formulation of scheduling routine and shaping rhythms of practice. However, the following chapters build up an ontological framework that is deployed in the final chapter to offer a discussion of how the rhythmanalyst might return to and 'intervene' in the 'everyday' by making the present *presence* and thus shaping rhythms of practice.

Before preparing the reader with an outline of the empirical sites of enquiry and their role in building this ontological framework (in that they have both helped build and now work to

build) it is necessary to say something about the site of empirical enquiry as situated in the 'everyday'.

## **History vs. the Everyday**

I have already suggested in the introduction that the realm of the 'everyday' provides a particularly lucrative site of analysis both for the rhythm analyst and for the sociologist more generally. However, as a methodological position, the 'everyday' is important as well. As described in the introduction to this thesis, Lefebvre was one of the first social theorists to investigate the banality and alienation of 'everydayness' (*quotidienneté*). The 'everyday' then is not only a reference to the routine nature of day-to-day living; but particularly refers to the alienated, banal and dry 'everydayness' that results from the *thing-ification* that turns all *presences* into *presents*, that mediates all material through image and displaces the 'self', *presence* and authenticity with re-presentation, the commodification of life through capitalist enterprise. Importantly though, the 'everyday' is also the location for opportunities, for 'moments' of *presence* where people can experience themselves and their activities in an unalienated and 'authentic' manner. Fundamentally, there is no room for stepping out of the 'everyday'; although there is potential for overcoming (*Überwinden*) 'everydayness' and re-presentation through, among other methods, a rhythm analysis.

Methodologically then, it will be necessary to define the 'everyday' as this thesis' site of analysis and its theoretical differences to approaching 'history'. For Lefebvre, a focus on the 'everyday' draws the micro and the macro together, simultaneously taking account of the whole of and the small details of 'everyday' life. Rather than the bracketing out of social relationships by phenomenology to focus on the experience of the individual, or the denial of experience by structuralists, Lefebvre seeks to study the interrelation between structure and



experience through the lens of the 'everyday'. Indeed this is the job of the sociologist and the philosopher, according to Lefebvre, to employ critical knowledge of social structure and experience of practice to investigate the 'everyday':

“...only the philosopher, and the sociologist informed by the dialectic, and maybe the novelist, manage to join together the *lived* and the *real, formal* structure and *content*.”  
(Lefebvre in Elden 2004, 113)

This can be done in various ways, for example, one could take a day in the life of an individual, no matter how mundane or trivial and through the act of rhythmanalysis, make it *presence*, that is, by making the familiar strange and drawing out the extra-ordinary in the ordinary, the nonroutine from the routine. Alternatively, one could pick a random date in 'history' and rather than re-present it as a 'factual' account of the events of that day, attempt to recognise those events as 'moments' of practice, as *presences* belonging to particular 'worlds' of practice. Necessarily then, this methodological approach requires a different sense of the word 'history'. To understand the event as the 'moment' of doing requires a theoretical re-framing of 'time' and thus of 'history' as well. For example, Heidegger argues that to understand practical activity, practice, it is not useful to examine 'history' as a list of *things* that are more or less old, to investigate events, causes, effects or collected facts; but to investigate the 'world' of that 'practice'. He writes:

“What is 'past'? Nothing else than that *world* within which they belonged to a network of equipment and were encountered as ready-to-hand by a concerned Dasein who was in-the-world. That *world* is no longer.” (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 432)

Thus, whilst we maintain a focus on the 'everyday', 'history' can no longer be thought of as a set of objectified *things* or events stretched out over linear 'time'. Indeed, Stuart Elden (2004) notes that Lefebvre goes as far to claim in *La Fin de L'Histoire* (Lefebvre 2001), that 'history'

itself has to be left behind. This might at first seem problematic. To understand events requires an understanding of 'time'. 'Time' does not end according to Lefebvre and because 'history' and 'time' usually go together, how can we say that 'history' ends? To solve this problem requires thinking about 'time' in a different way. Rather than one 'time', we can consider that there are many temporalities, many rhythms that overlap and conflict with each other. Thus there is no one 'history' of separate and unlinked events. Rather events leave traces or histories and geographies. However, whilst Lefebvre argues that prolonging 'history' only serves to re-present 'time' and events, he also warns against a simple and naïve liquidation of 'history'. If 'history' is only an abstraction, then becoming, that is change has no direction and becomes only chaos. It is in this sense that 'history' must be defined as having an end. Importantly though, this is clearly not an end that results in a post-historical period in a Hegelian or Marxist sense. It is not a linear and progressive 'history' that comes to an end and becomes post-historical. Instead it should be thought in terms of a Nietzschean 'overcoming' (*Überwinden*) that accomplishes the birth of a different civilization through a repudiation of 'history':

"History does not end as much as we exit it, we leave it behind and this should be seized in terms of an overcoming..." (Elden 2004, 177)

In this way, Nietzsche's understanding of the 'moment' of practice<sup>4</sup> has significant ramifications not only for how we think about 'time' but also methodologically. 'Overcoming' 'history' in this way provides a critical methodological alternative to the Hegelian model of the dialectic whereby oppositions are synthesised. Indeed, "Nietzsche stressed the ongoing and reversible character of this 'synthesis'." (Shields 1999, 72) It also offers a significant alternative to the Marxian adoption of the Hegelian dialectic as a model of historical and linear progress. In Lefebvre's account:

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<sup>4</sup> See Chapter Five, section on: 'Eternal Return'.

“... the traits of the original ingredients – the thesis and the anti-thesis – were never lost or perfectly blended in the synthesis. Syntheses were always falling back or apart. Hence they were reversible. History too could thus be reversible, falling back as much as following an arrow like course of progress.” (Shields 1999, 72)

Methodologically speaking the end of ‘history’ does not mean that there is a frontier to be reached or that has been reached; rather it is an exit from ‘history’ in order to ‘overcome’ representation and objectification. It is a method that both allows and requires a re-framing of ‘time’ as the ‘moment’ of *presence*, situated firmly in the ‘everyday’ and in routine practice. It is in this way that this thesis suggests re-framing ‘history’ as the context specific histories and geographies of temporally and spatially situated ‘moments’ of practice in order to locate its analysis within the spatio-temporal rhythms of ‘everyday’ life.

## **Beyond Body and Soul**

In sum, I take up this research and conduct my empirical work inspired by and in a similar vein to Loïc Wacquant’s seminal text *Body and Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer* (2004). Wacquant’s study of the ‘world’ of the boxer conducted at ‘Woodlawn Boys Club’, a boxing gym in Chicago, took place over three years and originally began as a ‘way in’ to the ghetto “to observe the social strategies of young men in the neighbourhood.” (Wacquant 2004, 9) However, after sixteen months of attendance and after being accepted as a *bona fide* member of the boxing gym, Wacquant decided to study the craft of the boxer. This involved interviews with fighters, training partners and coaches and collecting field notes on various exchanges and activities in the gym; but most significantly it involved his own participation in the training of this sport, bringing his own body to the demanding and repetitive training workouts and his own understandings to the interpretation and study of that ‘world’. Wacquant describes in

this book how he developed a deep rapport with his training partners who became his closest friends and his coach who became a second father figure to him. Indeed he became so immersed in this practice that he ended up competing in this sport and struggling with the decision of giving up a career in academia to 'turn pro' and fight for a living.

Significantly, this account both summarises the discussion above and echoes my own experience to lesser and greater degrees at the various sites of rhythms of practice that I studied.

First and importantly, participation is key. Wacquant argues that it would have been impossible to study the boxing gym in the way that he did if he had not participated in this practice himself.

"There is no doubt that I would never have been able to gain the trust and to benefit from the collaboration of the Woodlawn regulars if I had joined the gym with the explicit and avowed aim of studying it, for that very intention would have irrevocably modified my status and role within the social and symbolic system under consideration." (Wacquant 2004, 9)

For the same reason (with the exception of stock car racing and computer gaming), I studied at empirical sites of rhythms of practice that I was already engaged in, to different degrees, to benefit from a position within these rhythms of practice as a more 'authentic' practitioner. However, whilst I had not participated in the rhythms of practice of stock car racing at all before this study and in those of computer gaming only to a limited extent, my peripheral participation as gamer and spectator must be considered, in the same way, as fundamental to drawing out the particular notions of 'practice as event' and 'practice in the moment of doing', as they are detailed in this thesis, respectively. For example, had I been thoroughly immersed in the rhythms of practice of computer gaming, then questions regarding the differences

between respondents' experiences of the 'time' of playing computer games and my own experiences may not have been raised in the same way. Similarly it was only from my specific position, with my particular and peripheral 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' of the rhythms of practice of stock car racing that I interpreted and conceptualised the proceedings on race day as 'practice as event'. Framed in this way (as this thesis develops and draws out this framing through the following chapters), it no longer becomes a question of having enough or sufficient 'knowledge' about 'a practice' to warrant its participation and study. Rather, my 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' and my context specific histories and geographies enable me at each site to interpret these rhythms of practice and offer a re-presentation of these interpretations towards an understanding of the relationship between social action and social change. In this way, what, from a positivist viewpoint, may well be considered a limitation of this research, is in fact fundamental to maintaining a methodological approach that remains consistent with a theoretical endeavour to capture practice in its *presence*.

Thus, as they are in Wacquant's study, interviews were conducted, both formally recorded and transcribed and informally as part of practice and noted down.<sup>5</sup> Significantly though and in response to Hitchings (2012) suggestion as explored above, that 'people can talk about their practices', interviews form only a part of and only supplement participation in and the doing of practice:

"Breaking with the moralizing discourse – that indifferently feeds both celebration and denigration – produced by the "gaze from afar" of an outside observer standing at a distance from or above the specific universe, this book seeks to suggest how boxing "makes sense" as soon as one takes pains to get close enough to grasp it *with one's body*, in a quasi-experimental situation." (Wacquant 2004, 7)

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<sup>5</sup> Among the uncountable (and immeasurable) amount of 'time' spent engaged in these rhythms of practice, twenty formal interviews were conducted with practitioners, of which nine were fully transcribed.

Therefore, in the course of these empirical investigations, I have stood in a crowd of spectators, in the wind and rain for hours on end watching stock cars speed round and round an oval track, have contorted my body into strange positions I never thought possible, spent uncountable hours in the gym, frustratingly failed at trying to complete several computer games, and competed in mixed martial arts at a high level.

It is important to note here the difference between Bourdieu's (1999) concerns as laid out above regarding the 'self'-reflexivity of the researcher and the desire to positivistically represent the object 'truth' of the study and the view of participation that this research undertakes. Wacquant (one time student of Bourdieu) notes this difference in a note to the prologue of *Body and Soul* where he discusses his intoxication with being immersed in these rhythms practice to the point that he considers leaving academia:

"PB [Pierre Bourdieu] was saying the other day that he's afraid that I'm letting myself be seduced by my object but, boy, *if he only knew*: I'm already way beyond seduction!"  
(Wacquant 2004, 94, note 3)

It is only by being seduced (and recognising resistance to seduction) that one can develop an 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' that can recognise "the external factors and the internal sensations that intermingle to make the boxer's world." (Wacquant 2004, 7) Of course understanding the 'world' of practice requires grasping, the rhythms of boxing for example, in the 'everyday', through performance of the banal and mundane routines and rhythms:

"... the drab and obsessive routine of the gym workout, of the endless and thankless preparation, in separately physical and moral, that precludes the all-too-brief appearances in the lime-light, the minute and mundane rites of daily life in the gym that produce and reproduce the feeling this very peculiar corporeal, material, and symbolic economy that is the pugilistic world. In short, to avoid the excess knowledge

of spontaneous sociology that the evocation of fights never fails to conjure, one must not step into the ring by proxy with the extra-ordinary figure of the “champ” but “hit the bags” alongside anonymous boxers in their habitual setting of the gym.” (Wacquant 2004, 6)

Like Wacquant then I have “hit the bags”, experienced the ‘everyday’ training and the extra-ordinary situation of competing. Similarly I recognise that need to “make sense” of the ‘world’ of practice by experiencing with your body, the requirement of participation (and its theoretical orientation) and the utility of focusing an analyses at the level of the ‘everyday’.

However, in drawing on a range of empirical sites I develop and go beyond the methodological position and thus theoretical account that Wacquant was able to re-present. By drawing on the figure of the rhythm analyst I suggest it is possible to draw on all of my own rhythms of practice, of stock car spectating, of lifting weights, of practicing yoga, of playing computer games, of training in mixed martial arts; but importantly, of my rhythms of studying, of thinking, of writing and of being an academic. Despite his immersion and intoxication with the practice of boxing, Wacquant saw his academic studies, his rhythms of being ‘an academic’ as separate from those of being ‘a boxer’. Thus in a sense there is a sixth empirical site that is studied within this thesis: the rhythms of practice of doing research and of thinking themselves.

If we take this argument seriously, that is, if we take the position of the rhythm analyst as proposed by Lefebvre ([1992] 2004), as one who cannot separate the various rhythms of practice, say of ashtanga yoga, or of computer gaming, or of thinking and of writing a doctoral thesis, then it is significant and important to note that this implies key differences in respect to both epistemological position, of how we can come to know about a certain social phenomenon and the significance given to re-presentation through illustrations of doing.

Whilst Wacquant concerns himself, in *Body and Soul* (2004) with reflecting on and identifying his own position in relation to his *object* of study, that is in struggling to maintain his position of critical reflexivity in the face of being seduced by the 'world' of the boxer, I make no claims to either distance nor standard 'self'-reflection. Rather, in this thesis I am interested in precisely the process of seduction. Given the theoretical-methodological claims already laid out that seek to move beyond subjects and objects of doing, in each chapter thus, I do not seek to give a re-presentative account of the 'knowledge' that exists at those sites at which I conducted my empirical study as Wacquant seeks to provide a thorough and thick description of the 'world' of boxing. Instead, in taking up this position, I only seek to give an account of my own experiences and 'knowledges' at those sites in relation to my experiences and understandings of studying and thinking about the rhythms of practice in everyday life. So, whilst at all sites the empirical experience of *being-there* is fundamentally generative of the ideas re-presented in this text (doing yoga generated an embodied experience and understanding of the notion of the lived body, doing MMA generated thinking about changing rhythms of training and competition), they are generated within the rhythms of practice of writing about this topic and from my own uniquely, historically and geographically situated position.

Thus, whilst Wacquant exerts himself to great lengths to be able to capture the reader within his analysis and experience of the 'world' of boxing through thick description and almost autobiographical prose, I make, in comparison, a rather more limited attempt to try to capture for the reader my experiences of the various rhythms of practice re-presented here, precisely because from this epistemological position of interpretation rather than reflection, each reader will read each of these sites from their own experiences, their own frames of reference and their own understandings. Thus, instead I illustrate these empirical examples from my own position. It should be made clear to the reader that whilst to different extents I have conducted my study in a similar methodological approach to Wacquant's study of boxing



(through immersive participation, informal and formal interviews, taking field notes etc.) that these pages in no way provide a detailed and through description of my activities. Whilst the process has been thoroughly generative for me, from my own rhythms of practice, from my own position, it may well not have been generative in the same way for another researcher-writer. For the most part therefore, these generations are re-presented through short illustrations or 'snap-shots' to provide examples, to illustrate and to support my re-presentation of the ontological framework that I go on to detail in this thesis.

In the final section of this chapter, I set out the methodological outline of the rest of this thesis by describing how the empirical site of each chapter in turn contributed to the theoretical analysis re-presented in this thesis in order to support this claim.

## **Conclusion**

From here, the following chapter examines the material 'world' of the gym as the empirical site of rhythms of resistance training. Consisting of a multitude of material objects and human practitioners engaging in and failing to achieve more and less strict routines, the gym provides a particularly useful site at which to begin an examination of the material 'world' of practice. I have attended this particular gym for over seven years now and continue to participate thoroughly in the rhythms of resistance training. As such I have a unique access to members, trainers and owners of this gym, as well as a depth of 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' about this 'world'. Indeed it has been experiences in the gym that have fuelled my interests in commitments to routines and that have helped to develop a detailed understanding of the relationship between human and material in the doing of these overtly material and embodied rhythms of practice.

I go on in Chapter Three to explore the rhythms of practice of ashtanga yoga in order to offer a conceptualisation of the body in practice a re-framing of 'knowledge' as 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice'. I had practiced ashtanga yoga for something over six months before these rhythms of practice revealed themselves as replete with examples for illustrating; but also for drawing out, ideas about learning embodied actions and skills. Taking my own rhythms of practice and experiences of developing particular embodied movements both aided my ability to talk with and understand other practitioners; but also helped to develop the idea of 'embodied-knowledge-in practice'. Whilst the ontology that is built up in this thesis is applicable across the range of empirical examples and indeed further, computer gaming or stock car racing may well have been less accommodating sites at which to study and draw out thinking about bodily action. Similarly, ashtanga yoga, with its distinct lack of material equipment, would have provided a less fertile setting for considering the relationship between humans and nonhumans than the gym.

In contrast to yoga and resistance training, the rhythms of stock car racing at the beginning of this research were relatively unknown to me. I had watched it some time ago; but was unfamiliar with the particularities of format and content. Initially it served as a site of investigation into the routine and large scale co-ordination of material equipment; but quickly inspired thinking about race day as event. Studying the notion of event helped to conceptualise the scale of all the various doings that people described as happening on race day and to position my understanding of 'practice as event' as spatially and temporally situated. Again, thinking the event of ashtanga yoga, for example, may well not have resulted in these kinds of ideas.

The problem with studying computer gaming is that I am hopeless at playing them. I have played them for brief amounts of 'time', but have never been drawn into committed play. However, my interest in computer gaming came from living with friends who spent all of their

'time' engaged in the rhythms of this practice. I wanted to understand conceptually the difference between routine gaming practice and nonroutine gaming practice. This led to spending 'time' at a computer games production company and finding that games designers and producers have a sophisticated account of temporality that informs their design of games to catch gamers in 'flow'. As such thinking about 'time', 'flow' and computer games developed thinking about temporality as 'the moment of practice'. Again, this temporal effect was discussed by respondents at all five empirical sites and my re-framing of 'time' can be illustrated in all five as well; but in none other was the idea of 'flow' so explicitly discussed nor was 'time' such a central feature.

Finally, the last chapter examines the rhythms of mixed martial arts to explore how rhythms of practice might be shaped through 'arrhythmia', 'training' and 'syncopation'. Similar to rhythms of resistance training, I have been engaged in the rhythms of mixed martial arts for the last five years, and it is through wanting to understand my own changing rhythms of resistance training and mixed martial arts and the rhythms of my training partners and peers, that my academic studies turned to an interest in routine, embodiment, temporality etc. Uniquely it is the intensity of training, drilling and preparing the body coupled with the mundanity and banality of routinely performing the same techniques and movements that make up so much of the rhythms of mixed martial arts that generated and help to illustrate thinking about the relationship between social action and social change in terms of rhythms of practice.

Further specific information regarding the empirical engagement at each site is given in each chapter where appropriate. However, to bring this methodological chapter to a close, I want to re-iterate and stress again that throughout this work I do not attempt to put myself in the shoes of my object of study, nor do I offer a 'self'-reflexive and critical 'knowledge' of an external object from a distance. Rather I offer a rhythmanalysis of my own rhythms of practice,

fully recognising my historically and geographically situated position as both participant and researcher.

# Chapter Two: The World of Practice

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*The world is not the mere collection of the countable or uncountable, familiar or unfamiliar things that are just there. But neither is it a merely imagined framework added by our representation to the sum of such given things. The world worlds, and is more fully in being than the tangible and perceptible realm in which we feel ourselves to be at home. (Heidegger)*

## Introduction

If we are to re-consider ‘practice as event’ and ‘practice in the moment of doing’, in order to go beyond an understanding of the re-presentations of the subject and object of social action, a first step is to consider action not as some-*thing* that is performed by people, nor as an entity ordered by material objects; but as the ‘world’ of practice. In short, this first step requires us to take a step back and provide an account of the materiality of doing, of social action, and of practice that can resist the re-presentations of more straight forward discussions of ‘agency’ that rely on a distinction between the subject and object of action, on a ‘scientific’ account of linear ‘time’ and on an understanding of reflexive ‘consciousness’ as outside of the materiality of doing, separate from what people do and the material equipment involved in what they do.

In this chapter, I begin by contrasting methods of understanding the ‘world’ of practice with concepts from the field of ‘Science and Technology Studies’ that view relationships *between* humans and nonhumans as distributing ‘agencies’ across networks of these entities that come to constitute ‘practices’ and even further to critiques of ‘actor-network theory’ that nonetheless maintain and focus analyses on a distinction between living and nonliving *things*.

Stepping back from re-presenting practice as constituted by so many entities, I follow a Heideggerian analysis of the tool taken from *Being and Time* ([1927] 1962). Through a discussion of the notions of *Dasein* and of ‘being-in-the-world’, I suggest that the material equipment of practice can be considered alongside other bodies as making up the ‘world’ of

practice, turning the analytical focus away from the relationships between *things* and towards practical activity in its very material doing.

Following this discussion I argue that Heidegger's analysis of the possible character of the 'world' of practice as being ready-to-hand or present-to-hand can usefully be understood as the routine or nonroutine character of practice. This forms the conceptual ground from which I ask the question of how to schedule practice as routine or nonroutine in order to promote or negate its re-production.

In the final section of this chapter, I show that scheduling the character of the 'world' of practice as routine or nonroutine depends on the build up of sufficient 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice'. This concept is elaborated in full in the following chapter. All of the theoretical suggestions made in this chapter are born of my engagement in the rhythms of resistance training, that is, of an understanding of the experience of the material 'world' of 'lifting weights' and 'working out' and in scheduling the spatio-temporal rhythms of these rhythms of practice.

## **Resistance Training**

What I describe as resistance training is called by various other names and includes a variety of activities which generally take place in gyms (although certain rhythms of resistance training can also take place outside, in the home and in a variety of other settings). More often than not however, the rhythms of practice of resistance training refer to the use of free weights, weight machines or cardiovascular equipment to give resistance, whilst training through certain exercises and workouts to develop strength, power, cardiovascular fitness, size, speed dexterity and so on. The use of this range of equipment, which includes various weight-

assisted machines, bar bells, belts, racks, cables, weights, plates, benches, medicine balls, dumb bells, Swiss balls, mats, ropes, kettle bells and so forth, occurs in conjunction with a wide variety of programmes and timetables that come to schedule the rhythms of resistance training as routine or nonroutine. That is to say that some ‘moments’ of practice become repeated routinely, forming strong co-ordinated and synchronised rhythms of practice,<sup>6</sup> whilst other ‘moments’ of practice take on a nonroutine character and thereby fail to be repeated.

Not only is the material equipment in the gym fundamental to establishing the character of ‘moments’ of resistance training practice as routine or nonroutine; but so too is the wealth of nutritional materials and objects that support the dietary requirements for participating in these rhythms of practice. These can include the taking of protein and whey shakes, vegetable supplements, creatines, glutamines, multi-vitamins, high doses of vitamin C, branch chain amino acids (BCAAs), steroids etc., all of which can be subject to demanding forms of co-ordination and synchronisation with other bodies, *things*, and ‘moments’ of practice, with particular workouts, rest days, rest times etc., to the extent that for some practitioners, particular supplements are taken a specific number of seconds after completing certain exercises in a specific order, in a bid to maximise their benefits and thus results.

In order to understand the role of these material *things* in the scheduling of practice as routine and nonroutine and in thereby shaping the rhythms of practice in ‘everyday’ life, in this chapter I draw on my own experiences and studies of the rhythms of practice of resistance training, sited at a small gym in Lancaster, of which I have been a member for close to eight years. It is here, through several in depth interviews and specifically conducted participant observations; but also through much less formal conversations and workouts with countless other resistance training practitioners, staff and ‘gym buddies’ that I have developed my own ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’ of resistance training, that I have built up my own

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<sup>6</sup> In Chapter Six, following Lefebvre, this strong association of rhythms is described as ‘eurhythmia’.

understanding of the rhythms of practice of 'working out', of exercise, of the material equipment of the gym and of a variety of gym programmes and timetables. I have been involved in the rhythms of resistance training, to greater and lesser extents, for over ten years, beginning with weights at home, before joining this particular gym over seven years ago and then turning my attention to the study of these rhythms of practice as the empirical site for my master's thesis. Since then, the research that I conducted in that study has continued in greater detail, further developing both research and training relationships with regular gym attendees as well as with some beginners and with a renewed focus on the material 'world' of resistance training. Thus, throughout the course of this study, I have had many different experiences with and learnt from a variety of people engaged in these rhythms of practice. Some practice religiously and every day, whilst others struggle to maintain their fitness regimes for more than the first week of their new year's resolution. Therefore, in keeping with the argument made in the previous chapter regarding my position as participant and researcher, I begin to explore the differences between routine and nonroutine practice by considering the role of material equipment as making up the 'world' of practice through an analysis of both less formal conversations and in-training experiences, as well as of more formal interviews with my co-practitioners and training partners.

Resistance training has proved to be a useful topic for various sociologists concerned with a range of issues. Most have focused on the embodiment of identities, masculinities and femininities (see Broom and Tovey 2009; Jefferson 1998; Monaghan 2001). Roberta Sassatelli has sited her analysis of the subjective experiences of cultural 'practices' in gyms (1999, 1999, 2006, 2010) and perhaps most closely related to this thesis' question regarding routine practice, Nick Crossley has studied the inter-subjectivity of the reflexive gym practitioner's body as both subject and object (1995, 2005, 2006).<sup>7</sup> However, the rhythms of resistance

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<sup>7</sup> Clearly the status of the body is a significant issue. I reflect on Crossley's position regarding reflexive body techniques as hybridising subject and object in the following chapter.



training clearly present a particularly revealing site to study the role of material equipment in scheduling routine practice due to the wide range of and close physical relationship between people and *things* as well as both the variety of and strong commitment to routine that is required.

One example of this relationship between material equipment and routine practice can be found in the rhythms of practice of Stephen Bracken, a cover model for 'Men's Health Magazine':

"I've always found the best way to burn fat is an early morning run', says Steven Bracken this month's MH cover model. 'I get up around 7am, have a black coffee and take my BCAAs (Branch Chain Amino Acids), then hit the streets for a light morning jog. I know I have weights and cardio to face later in the day, so I never do more than 30 minutes at a comfortable pace... just to kick the day off.'" (Kemp 2010, 63)

In this instance there is clearly some kind of relationship between the supplements and the black coffee that Stephen takes and the 'time' of 7am, or the pre-jogging 'time', that has become routine for him. Not only this; it has also become routine for him to train three times per day as well.

However, various different kinds of material equipment are involved in quite different rhythms of practice. Moritz, another cover-model from 'Men's Health Magazine', for example, is a medical student and has different rhythms of practice of resistance training: "I do four sessions every week, and try to run every other day for an hour, with one long run of two hours every weekend.'" (Kemp 2010, 56) The first thing to notice about Moritz' routine is that instead of training three times every day like Stephen, he trains one session per day of either resistance training or running and does more exercises around other rhythms of practice that he is involved in:

"I began with simple stuff - walking every route I could and riding my bike for longer journeys. I also set up a chin up bar at my flat so I could do bodyweight work whenever I had a moment. I pride myself on training where most people don't see an opportunity.' Training at home is the perfect option if, like Moritz, you're always short on time or can't get to the gym. All you need is a pair of dumb-bells and a chin up bar and you have the tools to transform your body into cover model proportions - and no excuses."(Kemp 2010, 56)

Both Stephen and Moritz have very different rhythms of practice that require different assemblages of material equipment, used in quite different ways. Whilst Moritz' chin up bar means that he can practice at home in co-ordination and synchronisation with other rhythms of practice, Stephen's rhythms are organised around three set 'moments', or instances of practice every day. That is to say that the particular 'moments' of practice that are repeated as routine and in what configuration and co-ordination with other 'moments' of practice are vastly different for both men. Nevertheless, for each, the different 'moments' of practice are repeated and come to be scheduled as routine practice. Thus, we might do well to ask, how and why are rhythms of practice (of resistance training in this instance) different? In order to answer this question, I suggest that it is necessary to investigate how 'moments' of practice, involving particular material equipment, come to 'fall in', come to be experienced as routine and become 'moments' of practice that are repeated. The first step in understanding the scheduling of routine then, I argue, requires understanding the role of the material objects of practice. In order to highlight my contribution and make distinct my argument that the material objects of doing should be regarded as part of the assemblages of bodies and *things* that make up the 'world' of practice, I first contrast this suggestion with analyses that seek to separate out and maintain a distinction between material objects and practitioners.

## Humans and Nonhumans

One of the most important fields of study that is concerned with understanding materiality is the field of 'Science and Technology Studies' (STS). In this section I draw out a few selected arguments from this field in order to show the distinction between approaches to understanding materiality that focus on the relationships between humans and nonhumans and my approach that seeks to centre an analysis of material objects firmly within what people do and thus within the 'world' of practice. Of course it would be folly to attempt a critique of such a wide, varied and established field of study such as STS. A range of authors have contributed a variety of different, significant and thoughtful insights to the question of materiality. Instead, in this section, I intend to highlight a few key differences between my own site of analysis and some fundamental assertions that some proponents of 'actor-network theory', 'material culture' and even 'theories of practice' share. I approach the topic in this way to suggest to the reader that there are fundamentally different ways in which to conceptualise the material equipment involved in practice and that this prompts a re-appraisal of the notion of practice that can be achieved through a Heideggerian understanding of *Dasein* and 'being-in-the-world'.

I begin with a description of 'actor-network theory' (ANT) given by a central figure in 'Science and Technology Studies', John Law:

"[(ANT) traces] how elements in a network or a web take the form that they do in more or less precarious interaction with one another. People, technologies, 'natural' phenomena, social facts, collectivities and phenomena – all of these are relational effects, materials being done in interaction." (Law 2008, 632)

Various authors have presented answers to the question of how entities *become* ordered in particular ways as certain forms of social action or practice. That is to say that 'actor network theory' seeks to address how it is that certain human and nonhuman entities *become* arranged to configure 'a practice'. In this sense, following the example of resistance training, it would be necessary to explain how various resistance training practitioners, weights, machines, supplements and so on configure particular types of resistance training 'practice'.

One method of answering this question is to follow Madeline Akrich in her suggestion that objects are imbued with particular visions of action and come to 'script' human action in their use:

"A large part of the work of innovators is that of 'inscribing' this vision of (or prediction about) the world in the technical content of the new object. I will call the end product of this work a 'script'..." (Akrich 1992, 208)

In this sense, we might come to understand 'the practice' of lifting weights, as 'scripted' by certain weights or machines, designed by innovators with that particular 'practice' in mind.

Arguing for a similar position, Bruno Latour has suggested (and it is a suggestion that has been taken up by many), that the significance of examining human and nonhuman relationships is to understand the delegations of skills, 'knowledges' and moralities to technological artefacts:

"If, in our societies, there are thousands of such lieutenants to which we have delegated competences, it means that what defines our social relations is, for the most part, prescribed back to us by nonhumans. Knowledge, morality, craft, force, sociability are not properties of humans but of humans accompanied by their retinue of delegated characters." (Latour 1988, 310)

Thus, one might make the argument that 'knowledges' and competences, say of squatting, can be found in the negotiation between the resistance training practitioner and the leg press

machine (a weighted exercise machine that simulates the free-weight exercise of squatting, without the need for the practitioner to stabilise and control a free-weight bar).

For Michel Callon, if social relations are indeed to be found in the relationships between humans and nonhumans, distributed across an asymmetrical network, then the job of sociology becomes that of offering a translation of these relationships and of *how* they become organised in such ways as to constitute particular forms of social action. In his famous study of the scientific investigation of the decline in the population of scallops in St. Brieuc Bay, Callon argues that the three scientists, who investigated this situation, came to talk in the name of the scallops, the fishermen and the scientific community, fixing each entity a position in this social relationship and defining each entity's ability to affect another's:

“Translation is the mechanism by which the social and natural worlds progressively take form. The result is a situation in which certain entities control others. Understanding what sociologists generally call power relationships means describing the way in which actors are defined, associated and simultaneously obliged to remain faithful to their alliances. The repertoire of translation is not only designed to give a symmetrical and tolerant description of a complex process which constantly mixes together a variety of social and natural entities. It also permits an explanation of how a few obtain the right to express and to represent the many silent actors of the social and natural worlds they have mobilized.” (Callon 1986, 19)

From this point of view, it is the job of sociology, whilst recognising its privileged position, to attend to translating the complex social organisation of the situation, say, in the gym, constituted by the resistance training practitioners, chin up bars, treadmills and protein shakes, by programmes, trainers and timetables, in order to discern which entities control others, and which materials 'script', human action.

However, accounts rooted in theories of 'material culture' offer different answers to the question of how humans and nonhumans become organised. For example, authors such as Dant and Wheaton suggest that objects do not simply 'script' particular and specific human action in a pre-determined and mechanical way. Instead they argue that practice is the outcome of an embodied understanding of how to adjust, manipulate and negotiate objects. In this case, Dant and Wheaton refer to the embodied skill required to perform windsurfing:

“Getting the sailboard to move requires a fine interaction between the sailor’s body and the kit; there is a complex ‘material interaction’ between the material capital that is in the objects of the kit and the embodied capital that is in the body of the sailor.”

(Dant and Wheaton 2007, 10)

The suggestion made here is that whilst there may be certain 'knowledges' and skills 'scripted' in the technology, for instance, of the barbell, that this is negotiated through the embodied skill of the weight lifter in the action of lifting the weight.

Similarly, Tim Ingold, in his (2008) essay when 'ANT meets SPIDER', is critical of the suggestion from proponents of 'actor-network theory' (ANT) that objects can be attributed 'agency', even if it is 'agency' distributed across a network of both human and nonhuman entities. Rather he claims that skilled practice involves developmentally embodied responsiveness (SPIDER). Thus, for Ingold, the network itself is not an 'agent'; but rather provides the very condition for 'agency'. That is, for Ingold, 'agency' can only be attributed to living organisms, within a network of other entities:

“Our concept of agency must make allowance for the real complexity of living organisms as opposed to inert matter.” (Ingold 2008, 214)

Therefore, Ingold’s answer to the question of how entities become arranged in particular ways, is to suggest that it is only living organisms through the close coupling of bodily movement and

perception, such as resistance training practitioners, personal trainers, receptionists, managers etc., that can attend to movement and negotiate the material world in a way that qualifies as 'agency'. Thus, networks are defined and controlled, organised and shaped by humans and other living organisms.

Notice however, in all of the above contributions, that change is situated *between* entities, in the relationships *between* the embodied skill of the practitioner and the 'script' of the technology, that then defines the specific action or 'practice'. Thus, these authors have already separated out the subject and object of action and designated 'practice' as an outcome of the negotiated relationship of 'agency' constructed through a network of people and *things*. Instead I intend to take a step back from the question of 'agency' in order to re-consider how we might think about social action. I suggest that instead of asking *how things become* organised, we might do well to first ask how *things are*, that is how it is that they exist. Thus, instead of beginning with the question of *becoming*, with the question of change, it could prove fruitful to turn to an analysis of *being* to consider the material 'world' in a fundamentally different way, doing so with reference to Heidegger's notions of *Dasein* and 'being-in-the-world'.

## **Dasein and Being-in-the-World**

In *Being and Time* ([1927] 1962), Heidegger famously puts forward an analysis of *Dasein*, of the human being as it is engaged in the 'world' of practical activity, amid material objects and with others.<sup>8</sup> Significantly, this study of *Dasein* as practical and 'everyday' activity is both

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<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that a thorough discussion of this analysis (that I plunder from Heidegger's *magnum opus*) cannot be sufficiently laid out, nor adequately described in the space given here. Neither could it be done more acutely than it is in Heidegger's original work (though many good introductions and commentaries on Heidegger's thought are available). Nevertheless, Heidegger's analysis presents a

illustrated by and requires a re-framing of how we might usually think about and study material *things*. Rather than focusing a study on the ontic question of what there is, that is to say, what entities exist and what relations exist *between* them, Heidegger suggests another way of dealing with *things*, to study that they are, to ask the ontological question about the existing-ness of *things*. This, for Heidegger, is the question of *being* and suggests an alternative approach for considering the role of material equipment in practice which does not require the separation of humans and nonhumans or of living and nonliving *things*. Thus, rather than studying all of the entities, bodies and *things*, that is, the beings of resistance training, instead it is also possible to turn our attention to the study of the *being* of practical, 'everyday' life, or in this example, of 'moments' of practice of resistance training.

In order to study the *being* of practical, 'everyday' life, Heidegger grounds his analysis in the study of the human entity, the human being, that which he calls *Dasein*.<sup>9</sup> However, this is not an 'everyday' understanding of the human being; but a very particular and specific re-formulation. *Dasein* literally translates as *there-being*, drawing attention to the fact that human beings dwell 'in-the-world'. They are always spatially situated amid and with material entities and others as well as always temporally situated, directed towards their future projections and dealing with what they receive from the past. Thus, in Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein*, *things* are not in 'space' out there and part of a material 'world' detached from *being* and thus capable of being studied as so many entities that exist. Instead *Dasein* is a concerned user of practical entities. As such, the *Dasein* of resistance training is concerned with the whole assemblage of material entities, of bodies and *things* that make up the 'world' of

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unique and pivotal entry point to think again about the pragmatic relation of doing. Any discussion of the actional relation of practice, of doing, could not omit reference to such a considerable divergence in thinking about the role of the material equipment of practice.

<sup>9</sup> For now, it will be useful to follow Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein* as 'being-in-the-world' and as the 'world' of practice; but in Chapter Five it will be necessary to leave behind the concept of *Dasein* grounded in the human entity, as Heidegger does in his later work (see Contributions to Philosophy), in order to fully recognise being as becoming, or as I describe, practice as change.



resistance training. In this sense the 'world' of practice is not out there; but it is a part of *Dasein's* being: human being is essentially therefore, 'being-in-the-world'.

In the same way neither is 'time' separate from *Dasein*. Instead fundamentally, all three temporalities occur for it 'at one stroke'. That is to say that in each 'moment' of practice, *Dasein* is *thrown* amid the material 'world' that it receives from the past, is *fallen* and pre-occupied with the material 'world' in its current practical and 'everyday' dealings, and *projects* itself towards its possible future material 'worlds'. More is said in Chapter Four and Five of this thesis regarding the spatio-temporal qualities of 'being-in-the-world' and much depends upon whether we consider *Dasein* or practice as our principal unit of analysis. For now though it is enough to recognise the spatial and temporal situated-ness of 'being-in-the-world' and it remains useful to continue with Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein*, in this chapter, in order to develop a theoretical position that recognises the inseparability of *being* and 'world', rather than one that separates out humans and nonhumans, living and nonliving objects, and thus the subjects and objects of action. Heidegger's analysis of equipment can help to draw out this turn to a study of *being* in practical 'everyday' life as opposed to the study of beings or so many entities that come to constitute 'a practice' as *thing*.

The first point to make about Heidegger's analysis of equipment is that, primarily, *Dasein* does not encounter material objects as isolated 'items' or 'pieces'. Every object is rather relative to its context:

"Taken strictly, there 'is' no such thing as *an* equipment. To the being of any equipment there always belongs a totality of equipment, in which it can be this equipment that it is." (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 97)

Take for example, the bar-bells in the gym. These range in size from around five to seven feet long and are made of different materials, plastics and metals, to hold variously heavy weights,

which practitioners can lift to perform various techniques, exercises, repetitions and workouts. Whilst we may say that the bar-bell is a 'piece' of equipment, the resistance training practitioner primarily encounters the bar-bell as part of performing a particular role in facilitating weight-lifting and resistance training. As a singular 'piece' of equipment, the bar-bell could never achieve the practice of resistance training on its own. Dead-lifting (a type of leg and lower back exercise that one might perform with a bar-bell), for example, requires variously heavy, weighted plates, clips to stop these plates sliding from the bar, a lifting platform, a weight rack, lifting straps, gloves and chalk. This might seem self-evident; but we also need to take account of the fact that dead-lifting requires hands and arms and legs and muscles and a central nervous system. It normally requires a gym consisting of various owners, trainers, infrastructures and even more equipment. Even the bar-bell itself and the weighted plates and clips are constructed elsewhere, manufactured, produced and transported to arrive at the gym and thus are part of the 'world' of practice of dead-lifting. The metals and plastics too are mined and refined at even further locales and each requires their own infrastructures, systems and equipment. All of this is equipment for Heidegger, in the sense that it is 'involved' with all the rest, an 'equipmental whole' in which everything refers beyond itself. There is then, no such thing as *an* objective 'piece' of equipment; but rather all equipment in the 'world' of practice is relative to its context.

The second key point to make is that, for Heidegger, equipment is primarily directed towards something:

“Equipment is essentially ‘something in-order-to’... In the ‘in-order-to’ as a structure there lies an *assignment* or *reference* of something to something.” (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 97)

Equipment therefore, has the character of being 'in-order-to'. We might consider that a bar-bell is there in order to dead-lift, a treadmill in order to run, a protein shake in order to drink.

For Heidegger, in our 'everyday' (and routine) dealings with the bar-bell, we do not just come across it and decide to begin weight-lifting with it. Rather the bar-bell is already assigned this 'in-order-to' by the referential context of the equipmental whole, by the 'world' of practice. For Heidegger, the resistance training practitioner does not encounter the bar-bell and then ask herself what it could be used for. Instead she sees it immediately as something with which to 'work out'.

Eddie, an experienced resistance trainer for nearly twenty years encapsulated this understanding of instrumental intentionality during an interview we had about his training:

"I don't think about the bar... I just lift it." (Eddie)

Eddie is referring here to the understanding that many resistance training practitioners comment on, that when performing a heavy repetition of lifting a weight, that they do not focus on the weight or on the bar, the position of the rack or even the necessary bodily technique to achieve the lift. Indeed to do so, would be to the detriment of the lift. Instead they focus on one thing: the action of lifting. This focus on lifting, of encountering the bar-bell in this way, does however require a certain type of engagement, a certain type of *Dasein*. For Heidegger, *Dasein* does not look at *an object*; but rather circumspects equipment to see the *thing* in terms of an 'in-order-to' do this or that. *Dasein* therefore, is not separate from the equipmental whole; but is fundamentally 'in-the-world' of practice as 'being-in-the-world', which allows it to encounter equipment as 'in-order-to' do that particular action. In this way, a *Dasein* that is not engaged in the 'world' of resistance training; but is engaged in say, hammering a nail into a wall, will encounter the bar-bell as not 'in-order-to' that action and hence in a nonroutine way. However, a *Dasein* that is engaged in the 'world' of resistance training, say dead-lifting specifically, will encounter the bar-bell as 'in-order-to' and in a thoroughly routine way.

The third key characteristic of equipment for Heidegger is that when it is in use the *thing* becomes the *means* and not the *object* of experience. A useful example of this is Eddie and his protein shake. As noted, nutrition plays a vital role in the rhythms of resistance training. Practitioners are keen to provide their bodies with the optimal amounts of protein, nutrients and rest at the optimal times in order to potentially maximise their recovery from and the benefits of their workouts. For this reason, resistance training practitioners tend to be just as committed to recovery as they are to exercising. Eddie explained his recovery routine to me during one of our more formal interviews:

“As soon as I’ve finished my last rep, I’m thinking about recovery. I don’t hang around in the gym and all that... I go and get my shake straight away so my muscles can start repairing themselves.” (Eddie)

In this sense, Eddie is not concerned with his protein shake as such; but is instead concerned with drinking it ‘in-order-to’ recover from his workout and potentially maximise his gains. Heidegger refers to this much more ‘primordial’ and ‘everyday’ relationship to *things* as the *means* and not the *objects* of experience in his discussion of hammering:

“In dealings such as this, where something is put to use, our concern subordinates itself to the “in-order-to” which is constitutive for the equipment we are employing at the time; the less we just stare at the hammer-Thing, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become, and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is - as equipment.” (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 98)

We can see then, that when considering the ‘world’ of practice, that is, the ‘moment’ of doing, that we cannot look at, or theoretically observe the material objects of doing as separate from what people do, as making demands of human action, nor as an independent interaction

between material capital and embodied understanding. Instead when considering practice as described in this thesis, the material objects of practice are to be considered as an equipmental whole that *is* 'in-order-to' do those projects that are contained in the referential whole of that equipment, contained in the 'world' of practice. Theodore Schatzki sums up this understanding of equipment in his book on Heidegger and 'space':

"The world wherein a person lives at any given moment, consequently, is a nexus of teleologically meaningful entities. What it is for a person to carry on in that world is for that person to use that world's equipment in projects and for ends that are contained in the whole of significance that organises this equipment as a nexus: 'being-in-the-world' is proceeding amid equipment according to the teleological significance that characterizes them." (Schatzki 2007, 38)

The 'world' of practice therefore, is made up of the assemblage of bodies and *things* in the 'moment' of practice that constitutes social action or practice. For now it suffices to recognise *Dasein*, 'being-in-the-world' and my suggestion for considering the 'world' of practice as three concepts that, supported by Schatzki's above definition, allow us to recognise the inseparability of *being* and 'world'. However, as we will see in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, it will later be necessary to leave behind the notion of *Dasein* because it maintains its primary unit of analysis as the human entity. Indeed we can already begin to turn our attention to a focus on the 'world' of practice, on the 'moment' of doing itself as the central unit of this thesis' enquiry. The following section continues now to explore how it is that the material equipment that makes up the 'world' of practice is experienced as 'in-order-to' or otherwise, that is how it becomes scheduled and characterised as routine or nonroutine.

## **Routine and Nonroutine**

In the above section I explained that if we follow a Heideggerian analysis from *Being and Time* ([1927] 1962) of 'everyday' and routine practice, that there 'is' no such thing as *an* equipment; but that equipment is always relative to its context (part of the 'world' of practice), that the contextual and referential, equipmental whole (the 'world' of practice) assigns to equipment its character of 'in-order-to' and that in use, equipment becomes the *means* and not the *object* of experience. How then are we to understand the difference between 'everyday' and non-'everyday' involvement with material equipment, that is, the difference between routine and nonroutine practice? What role does the material play in characterising the 'moment' of practice as repeatable or otherwise? I suggest understanding Heidegger's account of the distinction between ready-to-hand (*zuhanden*) and present-to-hand (*vorhanden*) equipment, underpins this thesis' conceptual frame for understanding the scheduling of routine practice.

Heidegger characterises the experience of equipment as 'in-order-to', of engaging with the equipmental whole of practice as the *means* and not the *object* of experience, as *ready-to-hand*. When we encounter equipment as 'in-order-to' do something, we encounter it as ready-to-hand, however, intriguingly, for equipment to be ready-to-hand, it must at the same time withdraw:

"The peculiarity of what is proximally ready-to-hand is that, in its readiness-to-hand, it must, as it were, withdraw in order to be ready-to-hand quite authentically. That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves. On the contrary, that which we concern ourselves primarily is the work - that which is to be produced at that time; and this is accordingly ready-to-hand too. The work bears with it that referential totality within which the equipment is encountered." (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 99)

As equipment becomes the *means* and not the *object* of experience, technology withdraws and the user becomes absorbed in practice. A useful example of this can be found in my discussions with Lawrence. Lawrence first started resistance training in order to improve his vertical jump height for playing basketball. However, he became so captivated by the rhythms of practice of resistance training that he no longer plays basketball and for the last three years has been training through various power lifting programmes in the gym up to six times per week. We spoke at length about the experience of lifting such heavy weights. Lawrence explained to me that in order to lift such vast weights up from the floor and hold them over his head that it was impossible to 'think' about lifting the bar from one position to the other. Instead his focus has to be on particular lifting cues:

“The most important thing is getting someone to, or even in your own mind, saying cues so if you were doing a dead-lift you'd say: 'keep up my knees' or 'push hips out'. And you just think of those two things over and over again. You don't think of anything else while you're doing the lift. Squatting is a good one 'push my knees out', 'keep my chest up'. Err... When I'm doing a clean or a jerk I just think 'stick', 'stick it', which just means balance. Don't worry so much about catching it, worry about balancing. So I have these kinds of cues that I say in my head. That's how I learn it and then it becomes nature.” (Lawrence)

Lawrence clearly, in this description, becomes absorbed in the 'moment of practice'. The weighted bar (not described in this scenario at all) completely withdraws, so that Lawrence can engage in this practice quite routinely. I argue that it is only when equipment is experienced as ready-to-hand authentically, that is, when it withdraws, that routine practice is achieved, that practice takes place as routine.

However, equipment is not always encountered as ready-to-hand and 'moments' of practice are not always scheduled as routine. Indeed, *things* show themselves up in our 'everyday' lives

through the disruption of the smooth running of the whole, through the disruption of routine practice. Fundamentally, this is not something that happens on occasion but is constantly occurring, as *things* presence, that is, as they are drawn out from the equipmental whole, from the 'world' of practice. Heidegger refers to the situation of objects that are simply before us as the presencing of equipment and it is in this situation that routine practice fails. Practice is disrupted when equipment is experienced as *present-to-hand*, that is, when it is broken, absent or standing in the way. In this sense, equipment only withdraws and practice can only be achieved in so far as the material equipment of the 'world' of practice functions unproblematically. When equipment presences and is no longer experienced as 'in-order-to', practice becomes nonroutine. It will be useful to briefly explore each of the three ways in which Heidegger describes that the smooth running of the 'world' of practice can be disrupted in order to better draw out the differences between routine and nonroutine practice.

The first occurs when equipment breaks and the ready-to-hand becomes conspicuous. This is a regular problem in the gym. The very nature of the practice places a great strain on the equipment in the gym. Coupled with general wear and tear, 'pieces' of equipment often become damaged or broken. On one particular occasion, a particularly strong resistance training practitioner broke the dipping belt, a key component of performing particular exercises and in constituting the re-production of particular 'moments' of practice. A dipping belt is made from part leather and part chain and fits around the practitioner's waist. Practitioners then add weight to the chain part of the belt to increase the resistance in performing popular exercises like 'pull ups' and 'dips'. The gym only has one of these belts. One day a very strong and particularly keen practitioner over-loaded the belt, snapping the chain and in the process fundamentally altered several other practitioners' rhythms of practice and indeed had the knock on effect of altering the gym's rhythms of practice. With the dipping belt becoming quite clearly conspicuous and present in its breakdown, practitioners took to all manner of actions to attempt to account for the presencing of the equipment and to try and



re-establish their routine rhythms of practice of resistance training. Some attempted to lace the leather and chain back together with string, others tried to hold weighted plates or kettle bells between their legs, whilst others still, tried to tie weights to lifting support belts that only fasten together with Velcro. All attempts seemed to fail and eventually most gave up and turned to other exercises in the gym. The rhythms of practice of 'dipping' and doing 'pull ups' were severely weakened in the gym for around two weeks until the dipping belt was returned repaired and immediately fell back into the 'world' of practice, as rhythms of practice of 'dipping' and doing 'pull ups' were resumed as routine.

A second sense in which something may announce itself as being present-to-hand is by being absent from practice or unavailable:

"Again, to miss something in this way amounts to coming across something un-ready-to-hand. When we notice what is un-ready-to-hand, that which is ready-to-hand enters the mode of obtrusiveness. The more urgently we need what is missing, and the more authentically it is encountered in its un-readiness-to-hand, all the more obtrusive does that which is ready-to-hand become - so much so, indeed, that it seems to lose its character of readiness-to-hand. It reveals itself as something just present-at-hand and no more, which cannot be budged without the thing that is missing." (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 103)

David, a relatively novice resistance training practitioner, expressed to me his frustration when the particular equipment that he required to complete his workout was absent from his practice or unavailable to him:

"Sometimes you can go in [to the gym] and there will be a class on and you won't be able to use the equipment that you need, or even sometimes just one person can be

using the thing you need but setup in a different way and you can't get done what you need to do... It can ruin your whole workout." (David)

David raises a common frustration for many resistance training practitioners; but especially for beginners, that, when particular equipment is unavailable or unusable, they can no longer continue with their practice. Indeed as the equipment is experienced as present-to-hand by David, so too is his practice experienced as nonroutine. In this case, the presencing of the gym equipment results in a break in David's routine practice.

The final way in which things come to show themselves and disrupt the smooth running of routine is when they stand in the way, obstinately, and refuse to be ready-to-hand. Eddie told me about a local 'strong-man' competition that he had entered into several years ago. He had only ever lifted weights in gyms but at the time felt 'very strong' and had been encouraged to compete. He had performed well in many of the events that had simulated lifting weights back in the gym; but when it came to the final event, Eddie told me that he had really struggled. Eddie had never lifted Atlas Stones before (a set of large boulders that increase in weight and are to be lifted onto increasingly tall platforms). Even though the heaviest stone was of a weight that Eddie could comfortably lift in the gym, the unfamiliar size and shape meant that Eddie could not get past the third stone. He did not have the experience to lift it. Heidegger describes this standing in the way as a presencing that makes itself known as something to be attended to:

"Anything which is un-ready-to-hand in this way is disturbing to us, and enables us to see the *obstinacy* of that which we must concern ourselves in the first place before we do anything else. With this obstinacy, the presence-at-hand of the ready-to-hand makes itself known in a new way as the Being of that which still lies before us and calls for our attending to it." (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 103-104)

The third Atlas Stone stood in the way of Eddie finishing the event. The stone made itself known as something to be attended to. Eddie told me that he did just that. He practiced and went back the following year to compete in the event and now has no problem lifting the stones. They now fall back into the equipmental whole for Eddie, or rather they come to make up part of the 'world' of his practice. Nevertheless, the point remains that equipment can come to stand in the way and disrupt the smooth running of practice, the smooth running of routine; only when it is accounted for and attended to, can it be recovered and then successfully fall back into the realm of routine practice. Importantly, I argue that for material equipment to take on the character of ready-to-hand, to be experienced as routine, requires a sufficient amount of 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice'. I now go on to show how 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' comes to define practice as routine or nonroutine; but a thorough discussion of this concept, particularly of the role of 'knowledge' and of the body in practice, is detailed at length and is the subject of the following chapter. For now, however, it is important to examine how the experience of practice as ready-to-hand or present-to-hand, for practice to be repeated as routine or not as nonroutine, requires sufficient 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice'.

### **Towards Embodied-Knowledge-in-Practice**

So far, I have developed an analysis of the 'world' of practice and made the argument that, when the material equipment that makes up the 'world' of practice is authentically experienced as ready-to-hand, that it withdraws for the practitioner as she becomes absorbed in the work of routine practice. I have also described three ways in which Heidegger claims that equipment can come to show itself up, can presence and disrupt routine practice, constituting nonroutine practice. Importantly, these disruptions, these 'moments' of

nonroutine practice, are not uncommon; but are continually occurring. This is clear in that if there were no 'moments' of disruption or breaks in rhythms of practice, then no 'pieces' of equipment would stand out to us and the character of the ready-to-hand would also remain concealed. Therefore, when the dipping belt breaks, not only does it reveal itself as a 'piece' of equipment; but it also reveals the character of the 'world' of 'dipping' and doing 'pull ups', when it is smoothly working, as routine practice. In this way, we can see that even though there are 'moments' of disruption and breaks in rhythms practice, these can be recovered and repaired so that what presences as un-ready-to-hand can return to being ready-to-hand.

An example of this recovery of routine rhythms of practice and the maintaining of the character of ready-to-hand equipment, is William's ability to recover the available equipment in the gym to achieve a particular workout, a particular 'moment' of practice, despite the absence of certain 'pieces' of equipment:

"If the bench press is in use, I'll use dumbbells instead, or if I can't find a spare bench, I'll do cable flies. I can always find something, or I'll do another body part that day and do chest on another session." (William)

Whilst David (the more novice practitioner) became frustrated that the particular equipment he needed was unavailable and found his routine practice to be disrupted, William is able to maintain his routine practice through his experience, through his developed 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', of the rhythms of practice of resistance training. Precisely because William is an experienced resistance training practitioner, he has trained and developed his 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', so that these rhythms of practice have become stronger, even more embedded and connected and are thus, much less likely to be broken in the same way that David's rhythms of practice break down when 'pieces' of equipment are absent.

However, whilst on the one hand it is possible to experience the equipmental whole as so authentically ready-to-hand that equipment can be manipulated to recover it from being experienced as un-ready-to-hand, so that routine practice can continue, as is the case for William; it is also possible for equipment to maintain the character of present-to-hand, to precisely not withdraw and refuse itself as ready-to-hand.

This is the case for Alan and his difficulty in establishing routine rhythms of practice of eating five to six small meals per day (a common rhythm amongst resistance training practitioners). Alan has been a resistance training practitioner for over five years; but has found it difficult to maintain these rhythms of practice. On occasion he has found himself training four times per week quite regularly, though more often this becomes once per week and sometimes he does not train at all. In particular, he explained to me that he attributes this to not being able to organise his dietary routine effectively:

“I know how to do it. I know the right things to eat and when to eat them... but it’s just so difficult. I think it’s the preparation, you have to make like three meals to take to work with you every day and they’re usually cold and pretty tasteless. And I have to have the stuff in to make it up otherwise I have to go to the shop. I usually end up skipping meals because I don’t have anything in and then sacking off my diet. And then I’m like ‘Well, if I’m not dieting, then there’s no point in going to the gym.’” So I just play X box instead.’ (Alan)

Alan encounters various disruptions here. First, preparation is a problem for him. Making three meals per day to take to work presences for Alan, it is a constant *object* to which he is concerned rather than a *means* of ‘fuelling the body’ (as the gym saying goes). Second, if the particular food needed to make up his meals is absent from his preparation, then the equipmental whole again becomes present-to-hand, disrupting his rhythms of practice of eating five or six meals a day. Finally, as dieting itself presences for Alan, he becomes unable

to negotiate the equipmental whole of this practice, unable to recover from disruptions and breaks in practice, unable to repair practice and establish this particular routine.

Catherine however, does engage in the rhythms of practice of eating five or six small meals a day and has done for over a year. She explained to me her preparatory method:

“I make three boxes in the evening and take them to work with me because I have breakfast and dinner at home and I just eat them on my morning, lunch and dinner breaks. They only take me about twenty minutes to make because I usually have the same thing in three boxes. It’s quite easy really!” (Catherine)

Catherine negotiates the disruptions of having to prepare three meals by making one meal and splitting it into three. She experiences this as “quite easy” because she is absorbed in the ‘world’ of this routine practice. She has the experience and thus the ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’ to manipulate and negotiate any disruptions that arise. This is not a reflexive ‘knowledge’ in the sense that Alan describes that he ‘knows’ how to engage in ‘the practice’; but instead it is an ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’ that is developed through the successful engagement in that ‘world’ of practice. Alan does not have the ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’, to engage in the rhythms of practice of eating five to six small meals per day and training four times a week that might further support and strengthen the rhythms of practice of resistance training. On the other hand, William is very much a part of the ‘world’ of resistance training in that he experiences the equipmental whole as ready-to-hand and has the ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’ to maintain his rhythms of practice despite the absence of particular ‘pieces’ of equipment.

‘Embodied-knowledge-in-practice’ and its development through embodied doing is the subject of the next chapter. However, in closing, I want to emphasise my main point, that the scheduling of practice as routine depends on the withdrawal of equipment so that it is

experienced as authentically ready-to-hand, whilst 'moments' of disruption and nonroutine practice occur when equipment is broken, absent or stands in the way and makes itself known as un-ready-to-hand. As it appears as un-ready-to-hand, equipment can be repaired and recovered to fall back into the equipmental whole and back into routine practice, providing there exists sufficient 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice'. However, where there is insufficient 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', equipment refuses to appear as ready-to-hand and instead becomes present-to-hand. As described in the example of Alan's dietary difficulties, rhythms of practice become broken and cannot simply fall back into routine.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have begun to lay the ground for understanding how what people do changes, by positioning an analysis of practice not as constituted as an outcome of the relationships *between* human and nonhuman entities; but as the 'world' of practice that is made up of bodies and *things*. In so doing I suggested that it is possible to offer an alternative reading of the role of material objects in social action to readings that prevail in social science from 'Science and Technology Studies' that seek to understand the distribution of 'agencies' across networks of people and *things*. Through a Heideggerian analysis of the notions of *Dasein* and 'being-in-the-world' I argued that we can also turn our attention not only to the analysis of the way that *things* are organised; but indeed to the study of how they *are*. I showed that the material equipment of practice can be viewed as making up part of the 'world' of practice and that importantly the character of the 'world' of practice as ready-to-hand or present-to-hand fundamentally schedules the 'moment' of practice as routine or nonroutine, as repeatable or otherwise. Finally, I claimed that the experience of the 'world' of practice and the material equipment involved in that 'world' depends on *there-being* sufficient 'embodied-knowledge-

in-practice' developed through experience and 'training'. I move now to position a fuller discussion of this concept through exploring the role of the body and of 'knowledge' in my representation of social action, which seeks to more fully capture doing or practice in its *presence*.



# Chapter Three: Embodied-Knowledge-in-Practice

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*It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. (Marx)*

## Introduction

In the preceding chapter I claimed that a first step in re-considering the scheduling of routine practice was to understand the material equipment involved in social action not as external to practice; but as making up the 'world' of practice. I claimed that the character of the 'world' of practice as routine or nonroutine, that is as repeatable or otherwise, depended in particular on *there-being* sufficient 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice'. Thus, it becomes important to take account of the role of the body and of 'knowledge' within this suggested ontology of practice.

I go on now in this chapter to re-position the role of the body as it is more commonly considered in social theory as either, or both, body-subject and body-object, a distinction that at the same externalises 'knowledge' from material doing to abstract cognitive and reflexive capacities, by building an analysis of 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', of the 'lived body' as the medium and site of practice and 'knowledge-in-practice' as constituting the event of connections to various other bodies, tools and machinic assemblages that constitute the 'world' of practice.

In order to draw out this analysis I refer to my experiences and studies of the rhythms of practice of ashtanga yoga. In particular these rhythms of practice provide a useful site of analysis that give specific attention to the physical body, to a focus on the learning of bodily movements through specific postures and positions and is a good example of rhythms of

practice that highlight a particular re-framing of the relationship between the body-subject and the body-object as both the site and medium of action.

So that I might elucidate this re-framing of the role of the body and thus necessarily the role of 'knowledge', I contrast my analysis in the first instance to selected and contemporary arguments from social theory, 'theories of practice', cognitive psychology and approaches based in 'inter-subjectivity' that distinguish between the body as subject and object. I argue that these approaches variously distinguish social action, to different degrees and in different capacities, as embodied and reflexive, as habitual and cognitive and as establishing alternatively the 'I' and the 'me' of action. I argue that in providing such dichotomous analyses that these approaches, despite claims to the contrary, externalise 'knowledge-as-object', separating 'knowledge' from practice in the 'moment' of doing. Instead I suggest understanding the body as already in concert with the material equipment that makes up the 'world' of practice. In making this argument I follow a particular reading of Merleau-Ponty's description of the 'lived body' as it is described in the *Phenomenology of Perception* ([1945] 1962), as making embodied Heidegger's ([1927] 1962) notion of 'being-in-the-world'.<sup>10</sup> Having argued for considering the role of the body as the 'lived body', I go on to address the role of 'knowledge', suggesting that we might consider 'knowledge' not as an external object that works on the subject-to-be-changed; but instead, following Lave and Wenger's (1991) argument suggest that we can consider 'knowledge-in-practice' as a fundamental property of ongoing participation in practice. In the final section, I draw these two ideas together, of the 'lived body' and of 'knowledge-in-practice', through a reading of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the 'Body without Organs' ([1972] 1984, [1980] 1988) to argue that understanding 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' requires understanding the 'self', or the body, not as a stable entity that changes; but as itself a modification (and indeed as the site of modification)

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<sup>10</sup> This is a contested reading amongst Heidegger scholars. However, I argue that the reading of Merleau-Ponty, that I suggest in this text, provides a convincing and useful account of the role of the body in practical activity that maintains a central focus on doing.

that is continually changing in its connections to other assemblages of bodies and *things* in constituting the 'world' of practice. First, it will be useful to say something regarding my engagement in and study of the rhythms of practice of ashtanga yoga.

## **Ashtanga Yoga**

To draw out these ideas, first of the 'lived body' and second of 'knowledge-in-practice', I refer to my engagement in and study of the rhythms of practice of ashtanga yoga. Whilst many variants and styles of yoga are practiced today, ashtanga yoga in particular is often considered to be a dynamic form of yoga that concentrates significantly more on 'flow' between positions than it does on static postures like hatha yoga, or on meditation and breathing as in prahayana yoga (although these elements are not absent). Participants usually attend classes to follow an instructor or on occasion, pre-recorded audio timings accompanied by a visual sheet of postures (*asanas*), to move through the 'primary sequence' of postures and positions designed to improve, flexibility, strength, rotation, dexterity, balance and so on. Practitioners stand on specifically designed yoga mats that support postures by providing grip and sometimes utilise blocks, chairs ropes and other equipment to support their practice. For the most part though, ashtanga yoga requires limited equipment and as such promotes a heightened sensitivity and attention to the movements of the body.

I had been practicing ashtanga yoga for six months prior to recognising these rhythms of practice as a suitable empirical site for considering the role of the body in practice. I first attended a local class with Arnold, a martial arts training partner and already respondent in these studies, before yoga became a regular and integral part of my weekly schedule. At the height of my engagement in these rhythms of practice, I performed the sun salutations A and B (see Figure 1) every day and met regularly with other practitioners outside of class time to

go over the 'primary sequence' together, to work on the latest postures that we had been taught and discuss our experiences of these rhythms of practice. Several of these discussions were recorded and subsequently transcribed to both draw out and illustrate the theoretical re-positioning of the body and of 'knowledge' as described in this text.

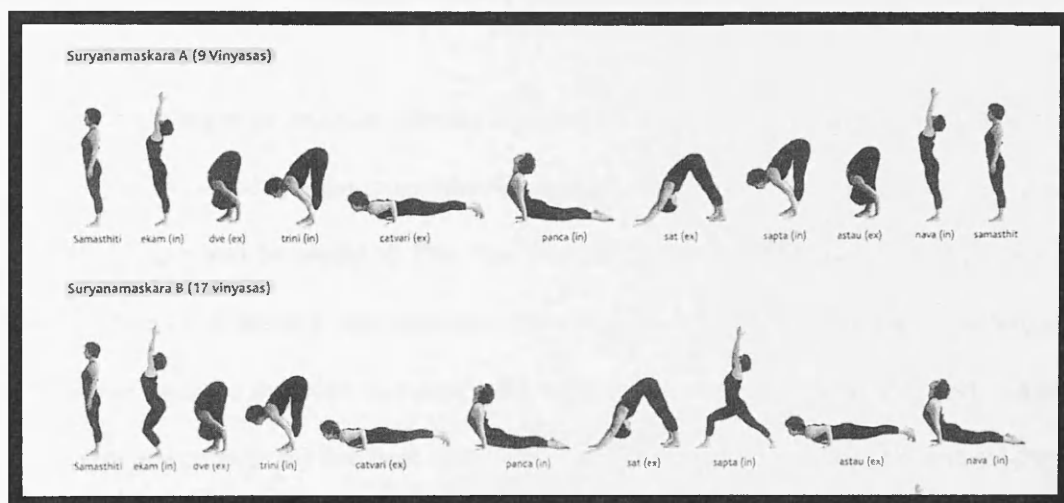


Figure 1: Sun Salutations A and B in the Tradition of Sri K. Patthabi Jois

The rhythms of practice of ashtanga yoga re-present a suitably fruitful site to both draw out and illustrate the role of the body in practice on three counts. First, these rhythms of practice require limited material equipment, thus permitting a more concentrated focus on the body, away from *body-thing* relationships. Second, the rhythms of practice themselves are about learning particular and routinised bodily movements. Finally and perhaps most significantly, rhythms of practice of ashtanga yoga offer, both explicitly through teachings, as well as re-presented through the bodily and kinetic experiences of practitioners, a particular re-framing of the relationship between the body-subject and the body-object, that is, a re-framing of the subjects and objects of social action. In order to examine this particular re-framing of the body in practice, I turn first to outline selected arguments from contemporary social theory that distinguish between and focus on either the body as subject or object, before offering an

alternative reading of these bodily experiences of learning the rhythms of ashtanga yoga practice, through Merleau-Ponty's ([1945] 1962) notion of the 'lived body'.

## **Body-Subjects and Body-Objects**

So that I might argue for an understanding of the role of the body in social action as part of the 'world' of practice and in order to position 'knowledge' not as external to action; but as always part of doing, it will be useful to first turn towards a few selected arguments from social theory, 'theories of practice' and cognitive psychology in order to demonstrate the difference between recognising the body as subject, the body as object, or alternatively as both subject and object and considering the 'lived body' as the site and medium of all practice. Here I show that these various approaches are designed to examine how external 'knowledge-as-object' becomes internalised or embodied. Instead, my thesis suggests that 'knowledge' does not need to become embodied as it is always already immediate in practice. Thus, we require an alternative reading of the body.

Until recently social science has seemed to pay little attention to the body. Instead the body has been left to various other academic fields to dissect and study as an objective entity. Biochemists study the cells of the body, physiologists muscle groups and bone structures, biomechanists investigate bodily movement, while human motor behaviourists research body memory and psychologists explore the mind. This highly mechanistic, rational and scientific view of the body has made it absent from arguments and discussions that usually take place in the social sciences (Hall 1996). However, during the 1990's, as Hall states, there was an upsurge of academic interest in the body, with a range of books and special interdisciplinary journals published on the topic of the body and its role in social theory. Nevertheless, Davis (1997) has argued that, social theory has continued to relegate the actual body to the domain

of those more scientific, biological fields, preferring instead to study symbolic meanings attached to the body:

“Human beings are portrayed as disembodied actors rather than living, breathing, flesh-and-blood organisms (Freund 1988). As O’Neil (1985: 48) puts it, sociologists seem to prefer to imagine that if society rules us, it does so through our minds, while we rule our bodies rather than being ruled by them.” (Davis 1997, 3)

In this way, readings of the body in social theory have tended to focus on the body-object, on body modification and so on, recognising the body as some-*thing* worked on by distinct actors.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, whilst many social theorists claim to accept criticisms levied at a dualistic split between ‘mind’ and body (resulting from four hundred years of fallout from Descartes’ thesis ([1637] 2005) and claim further that social science should recognise the relationship *between* ‘mind’ and body, there nevertheless remains, in a variety of social disciplines, a significant and dualistic split between the subject and object of social action that is called upon to examine how particular actions, ‘practices’, habits or techniques, are acquired, learnt or embodied.

For example, in a recent collection of articles, editors Alan Warde and Dale Southerton (2012) draw together authors from disciplines that range from pragmatism to cognitive psychology in order to promote the body as a subjective carrier of ‘practices’ and thus account for the habitual and embodied character of certain kinds of social action. This particular enframing suggests that we ask (and need to answer) the question of how ‘a practice’, of ashtanga yoga for example, becomes habitual and embodied. Thus, what ashtanga yoga practice *is*, as an *object*, is conceptualised as external to the body-subject-to-be-changed. It is through the *performance* of ashtanga yoga that the body-subject / carrier is imbued with, or takes on

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<sup>11</sup> For example see Featherstone (2010).

habits as particular and encoded 'knowledges' of ashtanga yoga are internalised and embodied.

However, for Warde and Southerton's particular 'theory of practice' as conceptualised in this collection (and indeed Warde and Southerton are not alone in facing this theoretical conundrum), a theory of 'mind', of reflexivity and of 'knowledge' as outside of the materiality of bodily doing, is required to explain the taking up, making habitual or embodying of 'practices'. They write in the introduction to the collection:

"A pure theory of habit, one which deployed exclusively stimulus-response mechanisms after the fashion of Behaviourism, or which consigned all acts to the category of personal, regular, repeated, automatic and unconsidered reaction to situations, could never produce a comprehensive or satisfactory account. It would rely too heavily on unintended consequences of action to explain change, have almost no space for personal or collective projects designed and enjoined precisely to disrupt the usual and the regular, and be unable to attribute any role to deliberation in solving previously un-encountered practical or intellectual problems." (Warde and Southerton 2012, 14)

Thus, for Warde and Southerton, ashtanga yoga may well be a habitual, embodied and routine 'practice' for experienced practitioners; but the process of deliberation to join in such an activity or to embark on a previously un-encountered project, like starting a yoga class for the first time, in this enframing, remains outside of the materiality of doing and instead within the realm of reflexivity, 'consciousness' and 'mind'.

Thus, by moving between considering the 'mind'-subject and the body-subject as both *performing* or *carrying* reflexive, 'conscious' 'practices' or habitual and embodied 'practices', their theory of action requires a scheme that can explain how 'practices' jump from the

reflexive to the habitual, from thinking to embodied, that is to say, how it is that 'the practice' of ashtanga yoga becomes an habitual and embodied 'practice'. In recent years, some 'practice theorists' have turned to models from cognitive psychology to address this fundamental question.<sup>12</sup> One particularly widely cited resource is Omar Lizardo's (2009) 'Special Psychology of Practice'. He claims that:

"...no account that wishes to retain the notion that practices are social can do without providing on explicit set of mechanisms that allow for such implicit, bodily (and motor) encoded objects to "jump from person to person." (Lizardo 2009, 717)

Thus, Lizardo seeks to explain how 'practices' as implicit and bodily objects of 'knowledge' are transmitted between subjects. In order to answer this question, Lizardo is forced to split the subject in two, making a distinction between the reflexive, 'conscious', thinking subject and the habitual, embodied subject. Referring to Wacquant's (2004) study of boxing in Chicago, he suggests that punches, footwork and drills are at first reflexively thought about and practiced until they become routine and habitual:

"While beginning as a process of conscious attention to visually available role models, during the course of training, this process of motor-schematic mirroring comes to acquire a habitual and tacit cast." (Lizardo 2009, 720)

Thus, following this fairly common sense analysis, we might consider that practitioners of ashtanga yoga first acquire a visual stock of kinaesthetic images and through mirroring these movements, develop a habitual and embodied understanding of 'the practice'.

Nevertheless, this thesis contends that it is also possible to understand the body in a different way, neither as a worked upon material *object* nor as 'a practice' carrying body-subject; but instead as part of the 'world' of practice.

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<sup>12</sup> Note that this is only a fundamental question when the body and 'knowledge' are positioned as separate.



However, there is one further approach that, in a sense, combines the two suggestions above and it is useful to explore this in order to better position the central claim of this chapter. This is, Nick Crossley's (2005) explicit argument that the body is at the same time both subject 'I' and object 'me'. Again, Crossley is keen to avoid a dualistic split and suggests that distinguishing between the 'I' and 'me' of social action: "does not indicate a substantial distinction between mind / self and body." (Crossley 2005, 2) Nevertheless, Crossley is here distinguishing between the body-subject 'I' and the body-object 'me'.

Drawing on Marcel Mauss' (1979) concept of 'body techniques' as: "practical and embodied forms of understanding", Crossley's article emphasises the 'mindful' aspect of 'body techniques' "whose primary purpose is to work back upon the body, so as to modify, maintain or thematize *it* in some way..." (Crossley 2005, 9 emphasis added). He refers to this combination of 'mindful' reflexivity and Mauss' 'body techniques' as 'reflexive body techniques' (RBTs). Thus, RBTs are argued to be 'practices' that the 'mindful' subject employs to modify or maintain the body object. Crossley writes:

"RBTs are generic body techniques which an agent annexes, in a specific context, for the explicit purpose of (perhaps amongst other things) modifying their body in a particular way: for example, in an effort to lose weight they elect to take a walk once a week." (11)

In this sense we might consider 'the practice' of ashtanga yoga as an RBT that practitioners, as agents, elect to take part in, in order to increase, flexibility, strength, balance and so on. However, importantly for Crossley, the 'mindful' subject does not simply 'choose' to do yoga in order to work on the body-object. Rather, RBTs such as ashtanga yoga or resistance training develop a sense of 'self' as 'body sculptor' or 'yoga practitioner' that orients the body-subject to the body-object in particular ways:

“Techniques of weight training are deployed by the bodybuilder in pursuit of muscular gain, for example, but at the same time these techniques orient the agent towards the body, that of the ‘body sculptor’, which the bodybuilder appropriates as they appropriate these techniques within their habitus. They heighten body and muscular awareness.” (Crossley 2005, 14)

Thus we might consider the yoga practitioner as employing ashtanga yoga techniques in pursuit of flexibility; but at the same time the performance of these techniques develops a sense of ‘self’ as yoga practitioner, a body-subject, that is disposed to attending to bodily movements in this way.

Writing about the ‘body techniques’ involved in mixed martial arts (MMA)<sup>13</sup> Dale Spencer, supports Crossley’s argument that “the actual learning of RBTs is part of the process through which our particular sense of self is developed.” (Spencer 2009, 133) Thus, through this analysis of the body-subject and the body-object, both Crossley and Spencer turn their analyses to the production of the ‘self’ and to the production of identity. Spencer describes how mixed martial arts training creates the identity of the mixed martial artist:

“...body techniques and RBTs are integral to identity formation. We posit a self in and through learning and conducting RBTs. They give bodies a particular character and are reflected in recognisable bodily dispositions. The training integral to MMA, moulds the bodies of fighters, significantly impinging on how they see themselves and how their identities are reflected to those within and outside of the MMA community.” (Spencer 2009, 135)

Thus, an analysis of the ‘I’ and ‘me’ of the yoga practitioner might lead us to argue that through the learning of ashtanga yoga ‘practice’, practitioners develop identities, their senses of ‘self’, as yoga practitioners. That is to say, that the learning of a set of ‘body techniques’

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<sup>13</sup> The rhythms of practice of mixed martial arts are discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

effects and thus modifies the subject-to-be-changed. 'Body techniques' are therefore considered as externalised forms of 'knowledge' from the body-subject / body-object.

In this way, I position my argument in contrast to positions that work with a dichotomous notion of body-subjects and body-objects, that externalise 'knowledge-as-object' from the 'world' of practice and that define identities as provisionally stable entities that *become* different and that *are* changed. Instead, I suggest, as I commented in the introduction to this thesis, that we take seriously Reckwitz (2002) suggestion that a turn to practice requires a shift in understanding the 'self' and propose that considering Merleau-Ponty's notion of the 'lived body', as described in the *Phenomenology of Perception* ([1945] 1962) can liberate us from having to position the role of the body as necessarily subject or object.

## **The Lived Body**

A first point to note, by way of introduction to the notion of the 'lived body', is to understand how Merleau-Ponty ([1945] 1962) re-frames thinking about 'consciousness'. Whilst Heidegger rejects the term 'consciousness' because of its familiar and 'everyday' connotations as distinguished from 'un-consciousness', Merleau-Ponty takes up Husserl's concepts of the 'lived body' (*leib*), as the medium that sites perspective and of 'consciousness' as a relation between the 'lived body' and the 'world' showing instead how the two work together as the very perceiving that positions my body as my point of view on the 'world' and at the same time my body as something that moves towards *things*. In her introductory text to Merleau-Ponty's work, Catherine Morris sums up this position on the body:

“The lived body is the ‘thereness’ of human reality, and the body as it is lived in everyday dealings with the world as the centre of the field of perception and action.”

(Morris 2012, 49)

Just as Heidegger describes *Dasein* as *there-being* or ‘being-in-the-world’, so too does Merleau-Ponty contend that the ‘lived body’ is at once inseparable from its ‘everyday’ dealings or practical activity and at the same time *is* the very site of perception, action and doing.<sup>14</sup>

Significantly, for Merleau-Ponty, it is precisely because the ‘lived body’ is the medium of all perception, already thrown amidst *things* and directed towards practical activity, that it is itself unperceived in ‘everyday’ and routine practice. In *The Absent Body* (1990) Drew Leder notices this absence of the body, not just in its academic consideration in social theory and philosophy; but in ‘everyday’ practice. He writes:

“... one acts from the here-and-now body to spatially and temporally noncoincident objects.” (Leder 1990, 18)

Thus, he argues that, just like the tool in Heidegger’s analysis in *Being and Time* ([1927] 1962), that the body withdraws in routine practice. That is to say practice is experienced as routine whilst the body remains unperceived and ready-to-hand. However, routine precisely breaks down and becomes nonroutine when the body presences, or makes itself known. In this way we can see that both the ‘lived body’ and the material equipment of practice can be seen to function in the same way, establishing both routine and nonroutine practice. Hence the argument that Merleau-Ponty makes embodied Heidegger’s notion of ‘being-in-the-world’.

Klas Nevrin, in his study on ‘Empowerment and Using the Body in Modern Postural Yoga’ (2008), builds on Leder’s analysis to argue that yoga practice in particular develops a

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<sup>14</sup> Throughout the rest of this section I will unavoidably at times refer to ‘consciousness’ in the same way that I have described Merleau-Ponty does to better explicate this argument. However, I too find the term problematic and will continue in this chapter to develop the notion of ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’, in order to make clearer the theoretical implications of conceiving of the body in this way.

'heightened sensitivity' in practitioners' bodies that allows them to potentially re-connect the 'lived body' (or 'consciousness') with the 'world'. He contrasts this 'heightened sensitivity' with 'normal' or 'everyday' practice and writes:

"Most of the time, then, the entire corporeal regions and powers are 'absenced' by... being directed toward some or other object in the outer world, which effectively relegates the body to the status of neutral background." (Nevrin 2008, 126)

However, during yoga practice, the entire corporeal regions are directed toward the body. Rather than presencing through breakdown or failure, 'consciousness' or the 'lived body' is drawn to the body itself, highlighting it as the medium and site of human action or practice. In another study of the experiential mode of yoga practice, Zarilli describes this bodily experience that:

"...allows for a shift in one's experience of the body and mind aspects from their gross separation, marked by the body's constant disappearance, to a much more subtle and dialectical engagement of body-in-mind and mind-in-body." (Zarilli 2004, 661)

It is this shift in experience of the body in 'everyday' practice either as absenced, neutral background or present in its breakdown, to experienced as *both* the medium and site of practice itself, that particularly well illustrates, as well as drew out for me, through my own rhythms of practice, a re-conceptualisation of the role of the body in practice as the 'lived body'.

It is a shift that was echoed in the experiences of several class mates and training partners; but also one that was explicitly taught and sought after. Indeed one respondent, Arnold, described to me his experience of this shift after one particular session, during the warm-up phase of the class performing five A sun salutations and three B sun salutations (see Figure 1):

“It’s like today I didn’t have to think about what came next in the sequence, or where to put my hands in downward facing dog, my body just did it and I could really just focus on my breathing...” (Arnold)

In this sense, Arnold describes that rather than experiencing his body as an objective set of limbs, muscles and joints; that in this particular session, it was experienced as the very mode of experiencing. Nevrin describes this experience as immersion in kinetic experience:

“Attending to movement in this way is to immerse oneself in kinetic experiences that are felt to have no goal or purpose beyond themselves, in which “the meaning of kinetic experience is in the movement itself.” (Sheets-Johnstone 1999, 151)” (Nevrin 2008, 123).

It is this immersion in kinetic experience (that is both a common experience and an explicit goal of yogic teachings), that makes yoga a particularly useful case for highlighting a conceptualisation of the role of the ‘lived’ body in practice. Importantly, though this suggestion becomes problematic when it is assumed that this role for the body only exists in habitual or embodied practice. Rather it must be recognised that particular rhythms of practice reveal the body in this way.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, just like the tool, the body functions in the same way regardless of whether practice is experienced as routine or nonroutine. Indeed it is this misconception, or at least incompatible viewpoint which prompts questions such as: how do we ‘know’ how to attend to movement in this way? How do we ‘learn’ to ‘know’ how to move our bodies without explicitly considering their position? How do we ‘know’ how our limbs are situated? Notice however, that these questions, thus framed, already separate out the body-subject from the body-object, distinguish between ‘explicit’ and embodied movement and thus open the door for such analyses that externalise ‘knowledge’ from

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<sup>15</sup> Indeed Nevrin (2008) suggests that other rhythms of practice such as sports, dance and martial arts, might also well highlight this shift in experience because of their focus on the body.

practice as described above. Instead we would do well to heed the lesson from the study of rhythms of practice of ashtanga yoga in recognising the body as the medium and site of practice. In answer to these questions, Wittgenstein suggests that we must recognise when we do not need to ask a question. He writes:

“There need be no ‘how’; we know how our limbs are situated.” (Wittgenstein 1988, 90)

It is thus, for Merleau-Ponty, that the ‘knowledge’ in question, of how to move the body, is immediate. Our body “presents us immediately with our bodily positions.” (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 1962, 143, note 3.) Rather than being built from the bottom-up, from a stock of visually acquired kinaesthetic images (see Lizardo 2009 for example), Merleau-Ponty suggests that the movement of the body works from the whole down to its parts as it is directed towards a pragmatic and bodily purpose. This is precisely why, for example, it is much quicker for yoga practitioners to master a posture on one side after they have practiced it on another, because the body is directed towards achieving the posture, towards practical activity. If it were the case that particular and individual body parts were being positioned to reflect a stock of kinaesthetic images, it would take the same amount of time to master the pose on each side. Thus for Merleau-Ponty, the ‘lived body’ is always directed towards the practical activity of that ‘world’:

“...my body appears to me as a posture having a certain or actual task in view.”  
(Merleau-Ponty [1945] 1962, 100)

This is how our body ‘knows’ how our limbs are situated in ‘everyday’ practice, through routine and practical engagement in the ‘world’ of practice. That is not to say that the body develops ‘knowledge’ through repetition; but that repetition itself is made possible through routine or ‘everyday’ practice, directed towards pragmatic purpose. This directing or aiming of

the body towards *things* is not a reflexive, 'conscious' or mirror image re-presentation of movement; rather it is a pre-cognitive and pre-reflexive engagement in and response to the projects of that 'world' of practice:

“...to move one's body is to aim at things through it; it is to allow oneself to respond to their call, which is made upon it independently of any representation.” (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 1962, 139)

Therefore, just as with the role of material objects, as argued in the previous chapter, the 'lived body' is not external to an objectifiable and outside world. Rather the 'world' of practice is constituted by the 'lived body' as it is engaged with material objects, directed towards the practical activity of that 'world'.

In this way we can begin to consider all rhythms of practice, whether novice or expert, as already containing 'knowledge'. That is, rather than separating 'knowledge' from practice by asking 'how does the body learn to move', we can instead begin to consider this 'knowledge' as immediate and that all practice, whether present or ready-to-hand, routine or nonroutine, is situated at the 'lived body'. This argument necessarily requires a careful consideration and re-framing of how we normally think about 'knowledge' in 'everyday' life. I turn now to a suggestion from Lave and Wenger (1991) which is to recognise 'knowledge-in-practice' and re-frame learning not as external to 'a practice'; but as a fundamental property and condition of situated doing.

## **Knowledge-in-Practice**



Having argued for re-positioning the role of the body in practice as neither body-subject nor body-object; but as both the site and medium of practice as the 'lived body,' it becomes necessary to also position how we think about 'knowledge' and how practitioners learn 'a practice'. In this section I suggest that to fully recognise the 'lived body' as immediately presenting us with our bodily position directed towards practical activity requires understanding 'knowledge' as inseparable from doing. I draw out this argument through an exposition of Lave and Wenger's (1991) analysis of 'situated learning' and my study of the rhythms of practice of ashtanga yoga.

In a sense, Lave and Wenger work with similar questions as other authors mentioned in this chapter. That is: how are embodied skills and 'knowledges' transferred? How do practitioners learn to do practice? How do transitions in practice occur? However, rather than externalising and consolidating 'knowledge' of 'a practice', by turning to behaviouristic models of 'conscious' and 'unconscious' processes, or to theories from cognitive science or inter-subjectivity that distinguish between the body-subject and the body-object, Lave and Wenger turn their analysis to situated practice, that is, to practice as doing, to suggest that people do not *learn* 'practice-as-an-object'; but that learning is a fundamental property of social action. They write:

"[E]ngaging in practice, rather than being its object, may well be a condition for the effectiveness of learning." (Lave and Wenger 1991, 93)

Thus, Lave and Wenger challenge cognitive interpretations of learning that argue that practitioners acquire the specifics of 'a practice' through observation and imitation. Instead they suggest that participation, that is doing, whether peripheral and novice or central and expert, is a way of learning:

"...newcomers' legitimate peripherality provides them with more than an 'observational' lookout post: It crucially involves participation as a way of learning – of

both absorbing and being absorbed in the ‘culture of practice’<sup>16</sup>.“ (Lave and Wenger 1991, 95)

In this way, learning becomes an ongoing process, the condition for practical activity at all levels, rather than an external ‘knowledge’ that exists outside of practice. Reading Wacquant’s (2004) analysis of how boxers learn the rhythms of practice of boxing, through this understanding of what Lave and Wenger call ‘knowledge-in-practice’, we can argue that learning practice is not a process of cognition and imitation as Lizardo (2009) reads Wacquant; but is rather a process of participation and absorption in rhythms of practice:

“...to understand what you have to do, you watch the others box, but you do not truly see what they are doing unless you have already understood a little with your eyes, that is to say with your body. Every new gesture thus apprehended-comprehended becomes in turn the support, the materials that makes possible the discovery and thence the assimilation of the next.” (Wacquant 2004, 118)

Similarly, yoga practitioners responding to this research suggested that you do not *see* postures; but have to *feel* them through practice. In particular Rosaline summed up this experience:

“Yeah some things you can’t learn by watching. For example, she [the instructor] is always going on about using your bandhas.<sup>17</sup> At first I thought I knew what it meant; but it was only after I had really learnt a lot of the postures that I could really feel how to use them properly ... and I’m still working it out really...” (Rosaline)

Thus, as both Lave and Wenger and Wacquant suggest, learning practice, does not simply require an observational and reflexive lookout post and a body to imitate doing. Instead learning evolves through changing participation as relations to ongoing communities of

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<sup>16</sup> For present purposes we can read ‘world of practice’.

<sup>17</sup> Bandhas are particular muscle groups that are contracted to support various yoga postures.

practice change. Or we might say 'knowledge-in-practice' develops through doing, through being engaged in the 'world' of practice. For Lave and Wenger then, the initial participation in practice takes on a new significance so that previously, seemingly trivial activities like running errands (as apprentices do for their masters) can instead be regarded as providing a first approximation of the structure of that 'world' of practice.

In this way, Lave and Wenger are making a distinction between teaching and learning. For them learning consists of situated opportunities, a field of learning resources in 'everyday' practice and it is in this sense that we might consider the relationship between practice and change. They contrast this approach to models that deal in cognition that are geared further towards understanding a teaching curriculum that is designed for the instruction of newcomers and is capable of being analysed outside of social relations, mediated through an instructor's participation and an external view of what 'knowing' is about. They argue that when 'knowledge' is considered in this way: "the focus of attention shifts from co-participation in practice, to someone acting on the person-to-be-changed." (Lave and Wenger 1991, 112) Significantly, this approach has important theoretical ramifications as it re-positions the learner away from the *object* of change. Instead, moving towards understanding 'knowledge' as 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' moves analyses of social change away from such simplistic re-presentations of the subject-to-be-changed.

As such, Lave and Wenger argue that learning is not restricted to a teaching curriculum, or to interpersonal relations; but must be understood in terms of practice:

"...legitimate peripheral participation is more than just a process of learning on the part of newcomers. It is a reciprocal relation between persons and practice. This means that the move of learners towards full participation in a community of practice does not take place in a static context. The practice itself is in motion." (Lave and Wenger 1991, 116)

Fundamentally, Lave and Wenger conclude that as social action, practice and 'knowledge' are mutually constitutive and that they are underpinned by a fundamental property of ongoing change.

Thus, my concept of 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' is an attempt to move theoretical analyses of learning away from 'knowledge' as an external object that works on the subject-to-be-changed and instead positions the 'lived body' as situating both 'knowledge' and practice in their very material doing. Having described the notion of 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', I turn now to prepare the ground for the discussions that follow in the next two chapters regarding the situated-ness and becoming-ness of social practice. Before giving an analysis of the relationship between practice and change it will be necessary to say a few words here to fully position 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', that which is commonly described in social theory, as above, as the 'self', not as a stable entity which itself changes (a subject-to-be-changed); but as both itself a modification and the site of continual connection to bodies and *things* as event. In order to do this I refer to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the Body without Organs (BwO) as examined in 'A Thousand Plateaus' ([1980] 1988).

## **Body as Event**

The 'lived body' as described in this chapter, is both the medium and site of practice and is not fixed. Similarly, neither is 'knowledge' a static and external object to practice. Rather as 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', it connects bodies and *things* as part of continually changing rhythms of practice. That is to say that the body is the site of connection, where machinic assemblages form and practical activity is achieved. In order to provide a full account of 'practice as event', detailed in the following chapter, it will first be necessary to briefly

outline the role of the body as the site of these continually changing connections through a reading of Deleuze and Guattari's ([1980] 1988) notion of the Body without Organs (BwO).

For Deleuze and Guattari, the function or meaning of a body does not depend upon an interior identity or 'self', (for which above authors go to great lengths to preserve by distinguishing between body-subjects and body-objects); but on the assemblage of machines. This is not however, a simplistic or culturally pessimistic view of the domination of human life by machines. Neither is it a discussion of the technical extension of what it means to be a human being. Rather it is an analysis of the 'world' of practice, noting how human beings become machinic in order to form assemblages that constitute social action. Raunig explains:

"It is no longer a matter of confronting man and machine to estimate possible or impossible correspondences, extensions and substitutions of the one or the other, of ever new relationships of similarity and metaphorical relations between humans and machines, but rather of concatenations, of how man becomes a piece with the machine or with other things in order to constitute a machine. The 'other thing' may be animals, tools, other people, statements, signs or desires, but they only become machine in a process of exchange, not in the paradigm of substitution." (Raunig 2010, 32)

Thus, the meaning or function of the body is not static, but depends entirely on the other bodies or machines with which it forms an assemblage in constituting the 'world' of practice. Understanding the body in this way then: "unravels the modern fantasy of the body as a stable, unified, bounded entity, and gives a language to the multitude of connections that bodies form with other bodies (human and otherwise)." (Malins 2004, 85) In this way, the yoga practitioner's body only takes on meaning in the event of its connection to other yoga practicing bodies, to yoga mats and blocks, to instructors, to the machinic assemblage of the sports complex and to the various histories and geographies of yogic practice, that is to the

'world' of yoga practice. In a sense, the identity of the subject yoga practitioner only exists in the 'moment' of its connection with these particular assemblages. Indeed when they are not connected, the blocks and mats and histories and geographies return to having no particular meaning and the body becomes connected to other machines, constituting other 'worlds' of practice, in becoming cyclist, student, employee or weight lifter.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the body only exists through its connections. Similarly there is no inner identity or 'self'. Instead of distinguishing between body-subjects and body-objects in order to locate agency, subjectivity or 'self', Deleuze and Guattari argue that the 'self' is merely the particular way in which bodies have become organ-ised in the social world. That is, that in order to understand the complex and chaotic, continuously changing bodily flux of connections and machinic assemblages, the social world organ-ises the human body into discrete and constant categories of meaning. Indeed, precisely as Lave and Wenger (1991) argue, as described above, it is not that the subject is changed by external 'knowledge'; rather it is the subject that is itself drawn and defined by its complicated and ongoing connections:

"The self does not undergo modifications, it is itself a modification – this term designating precisely the difference drawn." (Deleuze [1969] 1994, 100)

Thus, the subject, the 'self' or the body-subject, is a stratification, an organ-isation of 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice'. In Deleuze and Guattari's terms, the 'self' or the body as we usually think about *it*, or as *it* is thought of in a vast amount of social theory, is the body that has been organ-ised. *It* is the body *with* organs:

"You will be organized, you will be an organism, you will articulate your body – otherwise you're just depraved. You will be signifier and signified, interpreter and interpreted – otherwise you're just a deviant. You will be a subject, nailed down as

one, a subject of the enunciation recoiled into a subject of the statement – otherwise you're just a tramp." (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1988, 159)

In 'everyday' life the continual connections of the body to other machinic assemblages that come to constitute various 'worlds' of practice come to be re-presented through the subjectification and objectification of social action. Instead Deleuze and Guattari resist this re-presentation and seek to dismantle the 'self' in order to find the Body without Organs, or in my conceptualisation 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', that is, the machinic body as that which fluidly and continually connects with other bodies and machines. They write:

"Where psychoanalysis says, "Stop, find yourself again," we should say instead, "Let's go further still, we haven't found our BwO yet, we haven't sufficiently dismantled our self." (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1988, 151)

In fact, Deleuze and Guattari refer explicitly to yoga as a method that dismantles the 'self' on the path to finding the BwO. This is precisely what is happening then when respondents describe a heightened sensitivity towards the body, or to be absorbed in the kinetic experience of yoga practice. It is a dismantling of the stratification of the 'self' and the 'everyday' re-presentation of social action and of practice, towards a recognition of the BwO or 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' as the continually changing connections of machinic assemblages.

Significantly, both the BwO and 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' can never belong to someone, it is not mine or yours. Indeed it is unattainable by the subject. Rather it is a surface on which various machinic assemblages come to constitute 'worlds' of practice:

"It is not at all a notion or a concept but a practice, a set of practices. You never reach the Body without Organs, you can't reach it, you are forever attaining it, it is a limit. People ask, so what is this BwO? – But you're already on it scurrying like vermin,

groping like a blind person or running like a lunatic: desert traveller and nomad of the steppes. On it we sleep, live our waking lives, fight – fight and are fought – we seek our place, experience untold happiness and fabulous defeats; on it we penetrate and are penetrated; on it we love.” (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1988, 150)

Thus, ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’ or the BwO always moves towards organ-isation, towards stratification in order to construct the ‘I’ which can meaningfully interact in the social world. In so doing, these complicated and ongoing connections are reduced to a “grid of organisation and predetermination that limits the connections a body can make with other bodies; and reduces its potential for difference. Its potential for becoming-other.” (Malins 2004, 87)

However, whilst at the same time ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’ seeks stratification, it also retains the impetus for forming new assemblages, for becoming different. In this way, what sites the ‘world’ of practice is ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’. It is the ‘lived body’ which is continually learning and modifying itself through its connections to different bodies and *things* in constituting different ‘worlds’ of practice. It is only in the ‘moment’ of connection, in its event, that the body co-ordinates and synchronises with other bodies and *things* in practical activity as both the medium and the site of practice.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have referred to the rhythms of practice of ashtanga yoga in order to re-frame ‘everyday’ re-presentations of the body in social theory that make a distinction between body-subjects and body-objects and re-presentations of ‘knowledge’ as separate from practice so that I might offer an alternative account of the body as ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’.



Through a reading of Merleau-Ponty's ([1945] 1962) notion of the 'lived body', I argued that it is first necessary to recognise the body as both the medium and site of practice. I argued that understanding the body in this way requires recognising the immediacy of bodily 'knowledge' and that this required a re-framing of how we typically think of 'knowledge' as external to the subject-to-be-changed. Through an explanation of Lave and Wenger's (1991) discussion of 'knowledge-in-practice' I argued that we might begin to recognise that 'knowledge' and practice constitute each other and as such are underpinned by a fundamental property of ongoing change. I suggested that it was useful to combine these two approaches in order to recognise 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' as constituting 'worlds' of practice. I turned to a discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the BwO ([1980] 1988) in order to highlight the utility for resisting re-presentations of the subjects and objects of social action by dismantling the 'self' and recognising the body as the event of connection to other assemblages of bodies and *things* and in constituting 'worlds' of practice.

The ontological status of the event is described in more detail in the following chapter. Significantly though, it requires the understandings developed in this chapter and the previous one, of the 'world' of practice and 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' as the spatio-temporal co-ordination and synchronisation of machinic assemblages that come together to achieve 'practice as event'. It is this notion of 'practice as event' which points the way towards a re-framing of the re-production of practice through repetition and *difference* and later to the scheduling of routine through the shaping of rhythms of practice.

# Chapter Four: Practice as Event

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*The situation of human activity and interaction in time and space makes them dependent not upon universal conditions and laws, not upon essences, not upon the articulation and conjunction of transhistorical and transgeographical social forms but upon the actual now-here, upon the historically and geographically particular context of presences and absences.*(Pred)

## Introduction

This chapter develops an understanding of the spatio-temporal dimensions of the ‘world’ of practice, as it is constituted by the co-ordinated and synchronised assemblage of bodies and *things* through the idea of ‘practice as event’. It builds on the concepts of the ‘world’ of practice and ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’ as detailed in the previous two chapters respectively. In particular, I contrast my understanding of event as situated and becoming to understandings of practice as performance and entity. Further, I compare this analysis to Schatzki’s account of the event in *The Timespace of Human Activity* (2010) in order to throw light on my particular framing of ‘practice as event’ that, I argue, offers the opportunity to re-think traditional conceptualisations of the relationship between social action and social change and to theorise alternative possibilities for sites and methods of ‘intervention’ and for shaping rhythms of practice.

These arguments are illustrated throughout this chapter with examples from investigative research and field work conducted within the ‘world’ of stock car racing, a site that is replete with complex spatial co-ordinations and temporal synchronisations that occur at a variety of scales.

From here I describe the various kinds of assemblages, of bodies and *things*, that constitute the ‘world’ of stock car racing, before outlining an understanding of these kinds of assemblages, so described, with reference to an analytical distinction between practice as

performance and entity. I then contrast this view with my concept of 'practice as event', following Allan Pred (1990) in recognising the situated-ness and becoming-ness of social practice. Finally I compare my interpretation of event with Schatzki's and argue that it is necessary to liberate thinking about 'practice as event' from understandings of linear and objective 'time' in order to re-frame questions of persistence, maintenance and decline of 'practices' and to do so in terms of repetition, *difference* and ongoing change.

## **Stock Car Racing**

It is useful to begin by saying something about the 'world' of practice of stock car racing. Stock car racing involves the driving of various kinds of motorised vehicles around a quarter-mile long, oval track for the purposes of demonstration, competition and destruction. The histories and geographies of these rhythms of practice dates back to the 1920's in the United States, where today the North American Stock Car Association of Racing (NASCAR) boasts that it represents the fastest growing and most profitable sport in the country. This highly popular form of racing in the U.S. has several variants; but generally consists of purpose built machines that resemble 'stock' cars, or sedan like factory made family cars. In the U.K. however, there is quite a different tradition of stock car racing. The rhythms of practice of stock car racing only became established in the U.K. during the 1950's; but quickly became dominated by machines built from scratch known as 'The Seniors' or 'Senior Stock Cars' (see Figure 2) which, indeed, bore very little resemblance to road vehicles, rendering the label 'stock', as in unaltered from its factory configuration a complete misnomer.



**Figure 2: F1 'Senior Stock Cars' at Warton**

Instead of the more sedan like touring machines in the U.S., F1 Stock Cars in the U.K. are highly sophisticated and finely tuned, purpose built machines that comprise, amongst other technical specifications, a V-8 engine, quick change axles and a braking system that is specifically aligned for constant left turning (stock car races, not banger or super races, are always conducted counter-clockwise). Similar to these F1 machines are the smaller F2 or 'Junior Stock Cars', which are powered by a smaller two litre 'Ford Pinto' engine.

Clearly NASCAR in the U.S. and F1 and F2 stock car racing in the U.K. are two different 'worlds' of practice. Whilst they may contain similar materials and 'knowledges' and it may well be more or less easy to transition between the two, I stress that these two 'worlds' are quite distinct. A participant in either 'world' would have limited 'knowledge' of the other. No doubt a participant might have technical 'knowledge' that could be employed in the other setting; but only to the extent that they would be able to employ that 'knowledge' in other forms of motor racing, say Formula One or motorbike racing. This thesis argues indeed that the 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' and what it means to participate in each of these 'worlds',

that is, what constitutes each of them as experienced as authentically ready-to-hand by any such participant, is specific to each 'moment' of practice.

Furthermore, stock car racing in the U.K. itself is not a unified 'practice'. In fact on any given race day several categories of stock cars compete. These include Ministox, Senior Minis, Junior Minis, F1 Stock Cars, F2 Stock Cars, Supers, Bangers, F1 Heritage Stock Cars and F2 Heritage Stock Cars amongst others. A crude, but more simplistic distinction to make between the different kinds of races is between racing stock cars, heritage cars and bangers. As described above, the highly specialised and finely tuned F1 and F2 stock cars are purpose built and specifically engineered machines that are raced in serious competition throughout the season. Heritage cars have a more irregular pattern and are driven around the track only for demonstration purposes, to show off their refurbishments, traditions and histories, whilst bangers are raced somewhat for competition; but mostly for the purposes of destruction. These are road vehicles that have failed their M.O.T.s and that have been brought to the track to race in a demolition derby, usually as a grand finale which, for many spectators, is the highlight of the days' racing. In the same way that there are similarities between NASCAR and stock car racing in the U.K., there are similarities between the racing of stock cars, heritage cars and bangers. However, the particular technological specificities, skills, materials and meanings, that is, the 'world' of each type of racing is distinct, in the same way that NASCAR is distinct from stock car racing.

In order to illustrate my conceptualisation of 'practice as event' in this chapter I therefore refer to the 'world(s)' of stock car racing in the U.K. and in particular draw on examples taken from field work and my own rhythms of practice of spectating this sport at 'Warton Stock Car Club' during the seasons of 2011 and 2012. Due to the role of the empirical material, here used to illustrate and develop an argument that considers 'practice as event', that is, as a happening or doing that constitutes and is constituted by the 'world' of practice, I refer for the

most part to my own observations and experiences, although I support these observations with more informal discussions with participants, drivers, owners, mechanics and spectators, that have helped to further my understanding of these 'worlds'.

Throughout the season that begins in March and runs until October, 'Warton Stock Car Club' meets fortnightly to race and display these various types of automobile around its purpose built tarmac track only a short drive away from the small village of Warton. Every other Sunday Warton is a quiet country village whose thin and winding roads remain, for the most part, empty bar those taking a walk in the surrounding countryside. On race days however, the village is awoken early by a continuous stream of racing vehicles, tow trucks, vans full of equipment, tractors (used for dragging broken down cars from the track), mobile catering facilities and cars full of spectators all eager to set up work stations, shops, stalls and viewing platforms at the most prime locations. On arriving at the site one is met with a wall of sound not only of the revving of racing engines; but of the engines of all the auxiliary vehicles and spectators' cars.

The race track itself is built into the remains of an old quarry. Surrounding it on one side, a gravel car park provides the best viewing platform for early arrivers to view the afternoons' competitions, whilst behind the opposite side of the race track, close to four hundred vehicles make up 'the pits'. This space is open to spectators who can wander between the various racing cars, breakdown vehicles, heritage car displays, shops and stalls. Many spectators gather around to watch particular teams prepare their vehicles for racing or chat to heritage car owners about the particular refurbishment techniques that were used to restore their classic vehicles. Races begin promptly at noon and continue into the early evening whilst the officials maintain a strict and organised schedule of races. As one race finishes, the drivers and vehicles for the following race are lined up outside the track entrance, ready to move into

position as soon as the track has been cleared, thus maintaining a smooth transition between races.

I describe this scene in some detail to illustrate both the complexity of co-ordinating up to one hundred drivers and racing machines, their teams and technicians, officials, announcers, spectators and vendors in achieving this afternoon of action; but also, to consider its routine happening. All of these events run smoothly. During their forty years of racing at this particular location, 'Warton Stock Club' has never cancelled an event. In fact, over this time, the season length has expanded to incorporate more and more race days. Whilst officials conduct and organise the event, the day's racing tends to continue uninterrupted. Drivers race, mechanics repair, officials direct and spectators watch and consume. Despite the complexity of the material co-ordination and temporal synchronisation of such a vast number of bodies and machines, the event happens and it happens every other Sunday, throughout the entire season, year after year.

It is necessary at this point to make a caveat, and demarcate the scale at which I am referring to the event. In *The Timespace of Human Activity* (2010)<sup>18</sup>, Schatzki distinguishes between *the* event and *an* event. He writes:

"The event is singular in the sense that myriad events occur in the same timespace and thus belong to the same one happening – the same one *there is* – of that timespace." (22)

Schatzki's distinction in the above quote, quite rightly recognises that a myriad of events belong to the same one happening, the same *there is*, the same 'world' of that particular 'timespace'. For example then, if we consider the 'world' of 'Warton Stock Car Club' on race day there is an immeasurable number of events, of actions that happen in that 'world'. Races

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<sup>18</sup> Throughout this chapter I refer in detail to Schatzki's concept of 'timespace', as it appears in this title, not to criticise it, nor indeed to criticise other framings of 'practice' or social action; but instead to provide points of comparison and throw light on my own conceptualisation of 'practice as event'.

are won and lost, tyres are changed, drivers are injured, cups of tea and sandwiches are consumed, people cheer and applaud, vehicles crash and fires are put out. Nevertheless, as it seems to me, if we were to reduce our scale and centre our analysis on one of these myriad events that constitute the 'world' of 'Warton Stock Car Club' on race day, we would find a myriad of events that make up that particular 'world' as well. If we were to consider the 'world' of the crash, we might recognise any number of events that occur in that same 'timespace' and come to constitute the 'world' of the crash. One driver turns, another accelerates, the cars change direction and velocity, fuel ignites, motor-neuron signals fire, spectators watch and step back from the safety fence, other cars slow down, safety flags are raised and wrecked cars are removed. This is the event of the crash. Similarly we could increase our scale of analysis and focus on the event of automobile racing more generally, of which the event of 'Warton Stock Car Club' on race day would only be one of many racing events. Or indeed at an even wider scale, we could analyse the event of western consumer culture and regard stock car racing as one of many events that make up what it means to be in that particular 'world'.

My point is, that whilst I agree with Schatzki that there is a necessary distinction between *the* event (that is the *there is*, the 'world' of a particular 'timespace') and *an* event (that occurs as one of a myriad of events of that one same happening), that this distinction is a matter of analysis and depends upon the frame of reference and the position of the observer to situate that particular happening, that particular 'world' as *the* event. It is in this sense that I recognise the concept of event as particularly useful for thinking in terms of practice. Thus, it is important to recognise, that whilst at what scale we consider action affects our analysis of it, the concept of event allows us to potentially move beyond, or at least recognise these constraints.

Thus, in order to show up the event-like character of practice, it is first necessary to describe how practice is most often understood within 'theories of practice' as distinct between



performance and entity. This will be a particularly useful contrast to make to highlight the differences to the following discussion of becoming situated practice and will support a more nuanced critique of this particular distinction, in turning to Schatzki's discussion of the *Timespace of Human Activity* (2010).

## **Practice as Performance and Entity**

'Theories of practice' are multiple and diverse and various authors employ a variety of concepts of practice in different ways to achieve a wide range of intellectual goals. Whilst this lack of coherence can be problematic, I believe that it is this diversity that allows practice to be such a useful concept with which to explore the relationship between social action and social change. It is in this fashion that the following section outlines two related concepts of practice, that is practice as performance and practice as entity, in order to offer a comparison between thinking about 'practice' as a provisionally stable *thing* and thinking about 'practice as event'. This comparison is not a critique, nor a pointing to a 'correct' way of thinking about social action; but a demonstration of a further possibility for using the concept of practice so as to frame social action in a different way.

First then, it is useful to consider the work of one key exponent of 'theories of practice', Alan Warde. In particular I refer to Warde's (2005) discussion of consumption in relation to 'theories of practice'. In this text, Warde suggests that: "Why do people do what they do?' and 'how do they do those things in the way that they do?' are perhaps the key sociological questions concerning practices..." (140). In this particular text, social action is framed as 'what *people* do.' It is people that are doing some-*thing*. Thus, Warde makes a distinction between *people* and what they *do*. However, this is incompatible with the position already established

in Chapter Two and Chapter Three of this thesis that recognises practice as ‘being-in-the-world’, that is, that human beings cannot separate themselves from the doing that is the ‘world’ of practice. Rather we are always amidst material objects and engaged in doing, directed towards practical activity. However, Warde’s analysis necessarily separates out people as individuals from ‘the practices’ (*things*) that they do in order to understand how people come to perform a role required by a particular ‘practice’. He writes:

“It remains as vital as ever to ask how are individuals positioned in the practices in which they are engaged, and especially how homologous are their positions across the range of their practices. But, more than ever before, the question ‘what level of commitment is displayed to different practices?’ becomes focal, and with it a grasp of how ‘careers’ within practices take off, develop and end, of how people come to an understanding of what is required by the practice and their role within it.” (Warde 2005, 149)

Thinking about practice in this way recognises a provisionally stable entity, say stock car racing (note there is limited room here to accommodate the significant differences between NASCAR, F1 stock racing, heritage car demonstration, etc.) and individual people who are able to recognise stock car racing, their own role within stock car racing and re-produce or perform that role, say as a racing driver.

However, as Chapter Three argued, ‘knowledge’ as I have described it, is not external to practice; but rather can be thought of as ‘embodied knowledge-in-practice’. That is to say, that the stock car driver does not first understand how to race a stock car, when to brake, when to accelerate, when to overtake, when to turn and then performs this understanding. Instead what it *is* to race is only understood in the racing itself. ‘Knowledge’ is not external to, but rather *is* the very condition of practice. It is this separation of people from the practices (*things*) that they do that also externalises ‘knowledge’ from practice. It is a separation that also leads

Warde to suggest that people's engagement in certain practices is motivated by internal psychic reward. Referring to similar rhythms of practice, he writes:

“Stock car racing may not have the same aura as vintage car collecting, but it is unlikely that the experience of improving and becoming expert is very much different in the two separate practices. Someone who values the practice of stock car racing, and has the possibility of engaging in it as a competent or excellent practitioner, probably has access to the psychic rewards that psychologists attribute to the process of self-development. In other words, no matter where a practice fits in a hierarchy of prestige, there are internal goods to be derived from it for individual practitioners.”

(Warde 2005, 148)

The individual practitioner here is framed as an agent who is engaged in 'practices' for the sake of receiving internal rewards. Warde affords the racing driver a degree of 'agency' in recognising the reflexive and '(un)conscious' processes that may or may not motivate her to engage in racing.

This is a recurring approach within 'theories of practice'. For example, following Warde, Inge Røpke (2009) recognises consumers as practitioners who are motivated or not to engage in practice depending on the various social meanings attached to them.

“Consumers may be motivated to undertake various symbolic actions to demonstrate their “green” exposition, but most valued practices are performed with little or marginal considerations for the environment. Practices are motivated by core concerns in everyday life, and people take a strong interest in being competent practitioners.” (Røpke 2009, 2946)

Again, the framing of the practitioner as a consuming agent results in understanding practices as objects. I do not deny that this framing can be useful. It allows questions about transitions

in practice to be answered with reference to more familiar understandings of 'conscious' and 'unconscious' processes, of the transference of 'practices' through 'motor-schematic mirroring' etc.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, this thesis has already laid out its foundations of understanding the 'world' of practice and 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' and therefore cannot fit with understandings of practice that separate people from what they do and the material things that are involved in that doing.

Intriguingly, other writers have approached these questions from a different angle and developed discussions in very different fields. Rather than claiming that practitioners are motivated or not to do practices, Shove and Pantzar, for example, have argued that 'practices' "are made by and through their routine reproduction." (2005, 44) In this sense practices require continual re-production through those that do them and how they are done in turn defines what 'a practice' is. For Shove and Pantzar, "practices are inherently dynamic." (61) This suggestion seems to move us away from the attribution of 'agency', or motivation and desire located within the practitioner and towards a focus on the dynamism of 'practices' themselves. In fact, this framing reverses the contention that recruitment to 'a practice' is about individual identification or social or psychic reward. Instead of holding 'the practice' as a constant and asking who does it and why, Shove and Pantzar pose the questions of: "how practices-as-entities are made and reproduced by their carriers?" and "how do practices capture and retain the resources and energies of active practitioners on whom their survival depends?" (2007, 155). This reversal leads them to centre their analysis on practice as entity and on asking how it is that 'practices' retain recruits (*individuals*) and what 'practices' demand of those recruited.

Clearly here, Shove and Pantzar focus on practice as entity. Whilst they recognise the relationship to practice as performance and acknowledge that once recruited a practitioner

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<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of Omar Lizardo's (2009) argument regarding 'motor-schematic mirroring', see Chapter Three, section on: 'Body-Subjects and Body-Objects'.

already changes what 'a practice' is, they nevertheless argue (somewhat provocatively and purposefully) that: "we might think of practices as vampire like entities capturing populations of suitably committed practitioners (i.e. hosts and carriers) in order to survive." (2007, 166) In this sense stock car racing could be considered as an entity that captures drivers, mechanics, spectators etc. Nevertheless, this framing, whilst opening an alternative way of thinking about practice still maintains a subject / object divide, and still maintains a distinction between the *thing* that is doing and the *thing* that is done<sup>20</sup>.

As it seems to me, drawing the boundaries around what people do and labelling and consolidating doing as an entity, is analytically problematic. I question whether it is particularly useful to define such a *thing*, such a coherent entity as stock car racing and when and how it is useful to think about 'a practice' in this way. As discussed above stock car racing is a completely different kind of endeavour in the U.S. when compared with the U.K and stock car racing in the U.K is itself is made up of several kinds of racing; but is also made up of demonstrations and types of 'practice' that are not competitive racing at all. Rather they are opportunities to display a tradition or heritage of material artefacts, or indeed sometimes simply to destroy those material artefacts. When does it make sense to draw a boundary around all these different types of doing and label them as stock car racing? Are the materials, skills and meanings rather specific to each, thus constituting distinct 'moments' of doing? From an analytical standpoint is it useful to demarcate a provisionally fixed 'practice' that encompasses both the highly tuned racing machine and the skills of the driver and the refurbished and restored classic piece of stock car heritage and the skills of the restorer?

Alternatively, when is it useful and necessary to distinguish between these separate 'worlds'?

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<sup>20</sup> I stress that language becomes difficult here. We talk every day in terms of subject and object, of one who does and of things that are done. That is precisely why we find it very difficult to talk from the perspective of doing. I argue then, that a turn to recognising practice as situated in the moment of doing provides a language for understanding the happening-like quality of practice. However, in making this theoretical turn, I recognise that I re-present my own frame, my own set of questions and my own theoretical suggestions for thinking with(in) 'theories of practice'.

Perhaps if we were to consider drawing the boundary around motor racing 'practice', types of 'practice' as different as Formula One, Moto GP, stock car racing and monster truck would be all part of the same 'practice'. Therefore, my question is: 'When does it make sense to label and fix what people do as one type of 'practice' or another?' I argue that thinking about practice in this way is inherently problematic and turn at this point to describe practice in a different way, as temporally and spatially situated and as always becoming.

### **Becoming Situated Practice**

Rather than developing an account of stock car racing that depends on analytically consolidating practice as an entity, I turn in this section to an understanding of 'practice as event'. That is, I consider practice as situated in the here-now 'world' of practice, as temporally and spatially specific. In this sense I re-frame practice from 'the *thing* that *people* do', to a temporally and spatially situated happening. In this way stock car racing, heritage car display and speed boat racing are not taken to be bounded together as fixed entities, nor separated and distinguished as individual 'practices'. Rather each specific context of doing is always temporally and spatially situated, made up of specific 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' developed from its context specific histories and geographies which are themselves constantly changing, constantly becoming through their doing.

Here I follow Allan Pred's argument, outlined in *Making Histories and Constructing Human Geographies* (1990). This involves deconstructing the barriers between 'time', 'space' and social being by emphasising the historically and geographically particular context of presences and absences at the situation of human activity (the 'world' of practice) in constituting

'practice as event'. Thus, I suggest that it is possible to consider practice as a particular and situated happening that is both enabled and constrained through its particular social context. For Pred, human doing, or practice, is always already shaped by existing geographical and historical relations that are humanly built into given social contexts. He writes:

"The production of space and place is both the medium and the outcome of human agency and social relations, and it occurs with the making of histories." (Pred 1990, 10)

In this way, we might consider the histories and geographies, that is, the specific social contexts of F1 stock car racing, banger racing or NASCAR as spatially and temporally specific 'moments' of doing. Each specific context both enables and constraints human action; but are each also constructed through social action. Therefore, heritage car demonstration, Moto GP and ministox are not usefully thought of as absolute entities in themselves; but are instead better understood as 'moments' of temporally and spatially situated doing that are both the medium and the outcome of human agency and social structure. Fundamentally however, these 'moments' of doing are not static or frozen. Pred argues that each particular context (or 'world') of situated practice:

"is not something which merely exists in an inert frozen state,

fixed and immutable,

but something that constantly becomes

through situated human activity and social intercourse." (Pred 1990, 11, original

'textual landscape'.)

Clearly then, each 'moment' of doing, say of racing F1 stock cars or demonstrating heritage cars, is a particular and situated practice of something; but it is also constantly becoming, constantly transforming through the interplay of social structure and human agency:

“Social structures, however defined, are grounded in temporally and geographically specific human activities and discourses, are produced reproduced and transformed by knowledgeable, capable human agents practicing in place.” (Pred 1990, 12)

Human agents reproduce and transform social structures through ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’ employed in their ongoing doing. In developing this position, Pred has a particular understanding of ‘knowledge’ which is akin to my discussion of ‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’ as set out in Chapter Three.

Pred argues that most social studies have to come back to the question of the relationship between human agency and social structure and therefore position change as an outcome of the two. We might consider Warde’s (2005) analysis of people being motivated or not to perform a particular ‘practice’ as an example of this. That is to say that in that framing, whether ‘a practice’ is performed or not is the outcome of a negotiation between the performer and the *thing*-to-be-performed. Instead, Pred’s account challenges these kinds of assertions by arguing that institutions and biographies are re-produced historically and geographically through the ‘timespace’ of specific ‘moments’ of practice and through the institutional projects of practitioners in ‘everyday’ life. For Pred, people engaged in racing stock cars, are made subject to the ‘world’ of stock car racing through doing it; but fundamentally, the ‘world’ of stock car racing thoroughly depends upon what people do. Pred explains this argument with reference to daily paths and institutional projects, claiming that what people do in their ‘everyday’ lives, daily paths, perhaps in this case, restoring classic racing vehicles, is structured by long term institutional commitments say, to the ‘world’ of heritage stock cars. However, the opening and closing of these commitments depends on the building of ‘knowledges’ and embodied dispositions (‘embodied-knowledge-in-practice’) at the daily path level, that is, through situated practice.



For Pred, 'knowledge' is at the same time, the means by which human activity is undertaken and is itself acquired and transformed through activity. Thus, just as practice is always situated in 'time' and 'space', so too is 'knowledge'. Therefore, restoring heritage cars is not a static or external object of 'knowledge' but:

“... instead, in a constant state of becoming as a part of active social being in particular historical and geographical contexts in contexts that are themselves reproduced and transferred through that very same being.” (Pred 1990, 18)

Clearly this model of 'knowledge' is compatible with, my re-presentation of 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' in the previous chapter and goes some way to underpin my discussion of 'practice as event'. We can now consider 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' as constituting the 'world' of the event. That is to say that practice is both situated, a particular 'moment' of doing and becoming and is as such constantly changing.

The character of this becoming-ness and the relationship between repetition and *difference* or re-production and change will be described in the following chapters on 'time' and change respectively. For present purposes it is enough to note that 'practice as event' recognises the happening like quality of doing as both situated and becoming.

## **The Timespace of Human Activity**

I move now to compare my understanding of 'practice as event' to a similar notion of event described by Schatzki in *The Timespace of Human Activity* (2010). Whilst Schatzki tackles similar questions and addresses many of the themes considered in this thesis, I argue that Schatzki's reluctance to move beyond thinking about practice-as-entity prevents him from fully realising the potential of the notion of event. Instead I claim that his work falls back on

precisely the objective account of 'time' which he claims to reject and re-produces the problematic reification of practice-as-entity as distinguished from my concept of 'practice-as-event'.

First it is important to note that Schatzki claims that his notion of 'timespace' is not a configuration of temporal and spatial properties that is built up through activity. Indeed, Schatzki is adamant that his concept of 'timespace' should be thought of as constitutive of activity as it comes to be, as it is opened with, activity itself. That is that 'timespace' is that 'timespace' of 'being-in-the-world' and of the 'world' of that event. To make this argument, Schatzki opposes his view of 'timespace' to three notions of objective, subjective and social 'space-time' (that is space-time as two separate and then conjoined phenomena rather than the unified phenomenon of 'timespace').

First Schatzki contests various notions of objective 'time' and 'space', as 'time' and 'space' existing independently of human perception, understanding and action. He argues that:

"I conceive of experiences and activities naturalistically meaning that they are part of the world and not, as is often thought at least about experiences alongside or outside the world." (3)

Nevertheless, in claiming to ignore debates about objective 'time' and 'space', Schatzki nevertheless maintains that they remain significant for the analysis of social life and never lets go of an understanding of linear and objective temporality. He clearly argues that:

"Objective time is central to social life and analysis." (7)

Following this (contradictory) rejection of objective 'time' and 'space', Schatzki opposes his view of 'timespace' to what he defines as subjective 'space-times' that depend on 'conscious' subjects. This is a line of thought, á la Kant, that considers both 'time' and 'space' as *a priori* forms of intuition, as mental re-presentations that are imposed on objects of experience.

Kant's view therefore, does not deny an objective reality; but infers that any such reality must be independent of the subjects' mental re-presentations of 'time' and 'space'. Thus, Schatzki opposes his argument to notions that consider 'time' and 'space' existing only as perceived.

A final and kinder comparison that Schatzki makes is to social understandings of 'space-time'. He applauds thinkers from David Harvey to Henri Lefebvre for recognising 'space-times' as multiple; but critiques understandings of 'space' as separate from 'time', arguing instead for the unity of temporality and spatiality. Thus, he also accuses all literature on social 'space-time' (including Lefebvre's work<sup>21</sup>) of adopting an understanding of successive and thereby objective 'time'. Indeed this is a critique that Schatzki levels at Lefebvre's writing on rhythms and a critique which I contest in Chapter Six of this thesis.

Nevertheless, Schatzki claims his notion of 'timespace' is neither objective, subjective, nor a conjunction of 'spaces' and 'times', nor does it rely on an understanding of successive 'time'. However, I show in this section that whilst Schatzki may well conceive of 'timespace' as a unitary phenomenon drawn from the event; his analysis does in fact rest on a distinction between subjectivity and objectivity and on an understanding of linear, successive and thus objective 'time'.

To justify this claim I need to set out Schatzki's argument in order to show how it differs to my understanding of 'practice as event'.

In order to develop his notion of the 'timespace of human activity', Schatzki turns to a particular reading of certain parts of Martin Heidegger's philosophy. First, he develops a notion of 'timespace' from Heidegger's later work *Contributions to Philosophy* (1999); but argues that this thesis, due to its abstract context is not particularly useful for understanding and theorising human activity. He therefore abandons Heidegger's ontological concerns

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<sup>21</sup> See Chapter Five, sections on: 'Subjective and Objective Time' and 'Eternal Return' and Chapter Six, section on: 'Rhythms of Practice'.

regarding 'being', 'the clearing' and 'truth' and returns instead to a model of action described in Heidegger's earlier work *Being and Time* ([1927] 1962). Whilst we may question this kind of pulling together of various arguments from Heidegger's *oeuvre* as method, for now, it is more pertinent to show that these theoretical discussions do not hang together. To make this case I turn now to show that Schatzki's account of 'timespace' as *event* and 'being-in-the-world' as *human activity* are incompatible when considering the relationship between what people do and the 'world' as made up of bodies and *things* directed towards the practical activity of that 'world'.

Schatzki describes 'timespace' as unified (not as conjoined as it is apparently conceptualised in social theory) in its emergence as the happening of 'the clearing' (for present purposes we can read 'the clearing' as the 'world' as revealed in its readiness-to-hand [in its routine-ness]). He writes:

"The event, the happening of the clearing, is the happening of the timespace in which events happen or take place; it is there being places and times for events." (Schatzki 2010, 22)

'Timespace' then, originates from the event, the happening of 'being-in-the-world'. However, Schatzki has a particular interpretation of 'being-in-the-world' as human activity which is slightly but importantly divergent from the notion of 'being-in-the-world' as described in Chapter Two of this thesis. He writes:

"I think, however, that Heidegger's analysis of such phenomena as being-in and world can – and should – be taken as analysis principally of human activity. In any event, this is the use to which I put them in this book. It is important to add that Heidegger's analysis of 'being-in-the-world' should be taken as an account, more specifically, of experiential acting." (2010, 27)

Aside from that we might question whether it is plausible to *put Heidegger's analysis to use* in such and such a way, it must be noted first that here Schatzki separates 'being-in' from 'world'. Fundamentally, this is an error. As I described in Chapter Two, *being* cannot be separated from 'being-in-the-world'. Indeed, the hyphens are intended to denote a notion that language finds so difficult to express. However, Schatzki puts this separation to use in order to support his claim that 'being-in-the-world' should be taken as an account of experiential acting:

"By "experiential activity" I mean two things: first, that people experience, or live through how they proceed in the world [being-in] and, second, that a person's experience occurs within the ken of his or her activity [world]." (Schatzki 2010, 27-28)

This separation of 'being-in' and 'world' is caused by and through Schatzki's unit of analysis. Schatzki takes what people experience as the central unit of his enquiry. It is this approach which prevents him from recognising the 'being-in-the-world' of the event and from taking 'practice as event', to be the central unit of enquiry.

Furthermore, Schatzki's understanding of the present-to-hand mode of 'being-in-the-world' conflicts with his understanding of 'timespace' as the happening of the event. He describes the breakdown of activity in the following way:

"For instance, when the tip of the pencil I am using breaks off, leaving me, say, looking at the pencil in my hand, the pencil is encountered as in my hand, useless. No longer involved in my activity, the regional place that the pencil formerly occupied in my ends, tasks, and actions has dropped away, and the pencil is now encountered simply as occurring at a spot (*Stelle*) in objective space: in my hand." (Schatzki 2010, 33)

Schatzki here suggests that when equipment breaks down, that objective reality, that is, objective 'time' and 'space', are revealed. However, according to Heidegger, it is not possible for human beings to step outside the 'world'. Certainly when equipment breaks down

happening moves from writing to sharpening a pencil; but neither the pencil nor the writer step out of the happening of 'timespace', out of the 'world' of practice. Rather, that 'world' *becomes* characterised in a different way. In this way, we can consider present-to-hand and ready-to-hand as simply the routine and nonroutine characterisations of the 'world' of practice. In any event, Schatzki's rejection of objective 'time' and objective 'space' and his notion of 'timespace' as the happening of the event are incongruent with his account of 'being-in-the-world'.

Thus, the incongruity between Schatzki's account of 'timespace' and his account of human activity leads him to conceptualise 'a practice', that is human action, as an entity and forces him to maintain a distinction between actions which are performed and events that happen, which Heidegger does not. Schatzki recognises this:

"Now, an important characteristic of Heidegger's event, that is of the happening of a clearing [we can read 'world'], is that a clearing just happens, it is not a doing or a performance. Because, moreover, humanity must stand into a clearing for the clearing to happen, clearings befall humans: standing into a clearing happens to people as a feature of the happening of that clearing. Standing into a clearing is not something that people do." (169)

Despite this recognition of Heidegger's conceptualisation of event, Schatzki nevertheless applies the befalling feature of the 'world' of the event to performances:

"Performances, as events, befall people, that is, they happen to people. A person, to be sure, performs or carries out, an action. She does not, however, perform, or carry out, the performance: the performance befalls her. Its befalling her is, at once, her carrying out the action." (170)

Again, this analysis recognises the performance as a *thing*, either as 'a practice' which befalls a *person*, or as *some-thing* that people do, centring once again the unit of analysis on the individual. In this way stock car racing in its event, either becomes reified as 'a practice' that befalls people, that captures people, or as a *thing* that people perform. This analysis of the event stands in stark contrast to the discussion of the 'world' of practice as described in Chapter Two which makes no such distinction between the subject and object of doing. Indeed, it seems to me that Schatzki has missed Heidegger's key point: that the event is not something that people *do*, because people cannot *be* anything other than *doing*.

This has particularly significant ramifications for thinking about the relationships between practice, 'time' and event. Considering social phenomena as 'practices' that are bounded, separate and distinct performances establishes 'time' as linear, objective and successive, precisely the notion that Schatzki begins his discussion of 'timespace' by rejecting. He writes:

"Each of the performances into which the continuum of voluntary doing [activity] is segmented is an event. Each such event occupies a certain length or moment of time and also has a past, present and future." (194)

In this work Schatzki develops an in depth discussion of Bergson's account of 'time' as duration and 'flow' (an account that is critiqued in the following chapter), as "flowing ensembles of changing extensive, action-relative entities..." (197). He contrasts this to a Deleuzian conception of continual changing (or becoming as described above) employed by authors such as Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (2000) and Doreen Massey (2005) to theorise change, diversity, *difference* and the presence of the past in social life. He writes:

"Theorists such as Massey and Crang carry the dynamization of the social too far. A human life, for instance, embraces continuous happenings. It is not, however, constant movement or transition. Nor, pace Deleuze, is it constantly becoming

different (except in trivial regards, for example a person's objective past continuously expanding) ... *An event is not ipso facto a becoming or a change*: only some events are occasions of change or becoming. Indeed human lives and the timespaces that characterize them usually contain more continuity and sameness over time than they do difference, change and becoming." (Schatzki 2010, 200)

Therefore, whilst Schatzki recognises that social affairs consist of multitudinous events, he nevertheless argues that sameness and stasis mark their course as much as difference and change do. Notice that in this argument again Schatzki takes the unit of 'timespaces' that belong to an individual life and considers the length of their persistence over an objective amount of 'time'. My account, in comparison argues precisely that an event is *ipso facto* change, because change is not external to an objective 'time'. Rather 'timespace' as Schatzki describes it, defines change. In sum, it has to be noted that Schatzki's separation of 'timespace' and human activity, bounds 'practice' as a *thing*, whose movements, transitions and connections have to be considered over objective 'time'. This is clear when he considers ideas such as:

"Indeed, over any period of time human practices link and form gigantic nets ..." (209)

That is not to say that I disagree entirely with Schatzki's account. In fact I recognise many of the same problems, questions and framings in this thesis:

"Social phenomena, accordingly encompasses multiple organised, unfolding activity event configurations that transpire amid inter connected arrangements. Practices and social phenomena more generally – and not just social "events" such as race day – are event like in character." (209)



However, Schatzki does not go as far to recognise the event like character of practice as situated and becoming and instead maintains an understanding of ‘practices’-as-*things* that arise, evolve, connect and dissolve over ‘time’.

Therefore, in my conceptualisation of ‘practice as event’, I maintain the understanding of the ‘world of practice’ as described in Chapter Two, recognising the event as situated in ‘timespace’ and not distinct from its temporally and spatially situated-ness. As described above, not only is practice situated but it is also constantly changing and becoming.

The notion of repetition and *difference* as continuous changing is outlined in the following chapter and contrasted against Bergson’s understanding of the temporal distinction between ‘real’ and ‘spatialised’ ‘time’. In that chapter I show why thinking of becoming pace Deleuze, as becoming different, is not simply an issue of objective succession; but re-presents a fundamentally alternative understanding of change to the notion that Schatzki describes above.

## **Conclusion**

In sum, this chapter has sought to re-frame and re-think assemblages of bodies and *things* in their spatial and temporal co-ordinations and synchronisations as coming together as event. I began by exploring common conceptualisations of practice as performance and practice as entity. Through illustrative examples taken from the ‘world’ of stock car racing, I compared these kinds of framings with an understanding of practice derived from Allan Pred’s work as always temporally and spatially situated and always becoming. I argued that thinking about practice in this way helps us get away from an account of social action as motivated performance or a reversed capturing of performers and to move beyond framings that maintain a reliance on subjects and objects, or on *things* and performances and to move

towards an understanding of social action as situated in the here-now of 'being-in-the-world', as continual changing in the 'moment' of doing, that is as 'practice as event'. In the final section of this chapter I referred to Schatzki's notion of the event as described in *The Timespace of Human Activity* (2010) to provide points of comparison as well as to distinguish my thesis from his. I claimed that by separating 'being-in' from 'world' and separating human activity from his notion of 'timespace', Schatzki effectively maintains an understanding (albeit a sophisticated one) of 'practice' as entity. In tracing the movements of fixed 'practices', Schatzki necessarily rejects a Deleuzian notion of temporality and instead falls back on an analysis of the emergence and desistance of fixed 'practices' as entities over objective 'time'. In contrast, my reading of event maintains the notion of 'being-in-the-world' as described in Chapter Two. I move now to develop this idea further in the following chapter by contrasting more familiar understandings of 'time' considered as 'flow' (Bergson) with a Deleuzian temporality of repetition and *difference*.

# Chapter Five: Practice in the Moment of Doing

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*Being is nontime, time is nonbeing insofar as being already, secretly has been determined as present, and beingness (ouisa) as presence. As soon as being and present are synonymous, to say nothingness and to say time are the same thing. (Derrida)*

## Introduction

In this chapter I move to provide a more thorough treatment of the temporal-spatial implications of the previous account of ‘practice as event’ through a discussion of ‘practice in the moment of doing’. I suggest that this requires a significant shift in thinking from both ‘everyday’ and academic re-presentations of ‘time’ that maintain a distinction between subjective and objective ‘time’, that is, between the experience of ‘time’ and measured ‘time’. As in the epigraph above, having argued that we might shift our understanding of ‘practice’ from a *thing* that is present to practice in its event, or *presencing* it is necessary then to also re-consider ‘time’. Thus, I offer a reading of Nietzsche’s notion of the ‘eternal return’<sup>22</sup> so that we might move beyond more simplistic re-presentations of linear succession and develop an understanding of ‘time’ as constituted through a Deleuzian understanding of repetition and *difference* ([1969] 1994) based on understanding ‘practice in the moment of doing’ as fundamentally structured by its division between its future and its past (Derrida 1982; Derrida [1967] 2001; Hägglund 2008, 2012). As such this chapter builds towards one of the central claims of this thesis, that analyses of the relationship between social action and social change would do well to recognise that being is becoming, doing is *difference* and that practice is change. Thus, I make the argument that ‘time’ is not a mere medium in which ‘practices’

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<sup>22</sup> From a particular reading of ‘Of the Vision and the Riddle’ from *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (Nietzsche [1883-85] 1961) Although this idea is expressed in other ways and in other volumes and is a reading that is debated amongst Nietzsche scholars, nevertheless, it is a useful thought to draw out a transvaluation of our ‘everyday’ understanding of ‘time’.

unfold; but 'time' is both constitutive of and constituted by the 'moment' of practice as *presence*.

In order to make this argument I refer to the rhythms of practice of computer gaming. This is a particularly suitable empirical site through which to investigate the relationship between 'time' and practice because not only are games often described as immersive and capable of distorting experiences of 'time'; but games designers specifically study and aim to create games that provide this kind of experience. After introducing the rhythms of practice of computer gaming I outline the details of my rhythmanalytical study at this site and introduce in particular one case study, 'Larry's Story', as a means of exploring these highly synchronised and co-ordinated rhythms of practice. I show how games designers, heavily influenced by psychological theories of 'flow' (see Csikszentmihalyi 1990), conceptualise Larry's rhythms of practice as distinct between 'in flow' and 'out of flow', that is between subjective and objective 'time' and how this conception of 'time' pervades social theoretical accounts of changing rhythms of what people do. I then contrast these accounts to my notion, following Nietzsche, Deleuze, Lefebvre and Hägglund, of 'practice in the moment of doing' to demonstrate that Larry's changing rhythms of practice can be better conceptualised through an understanding of doing that is *ipso facto* change. First it will be useful to introduce the rhythms of practice of computer gaming and Larry's story.

## **Computer Gaming**

In one of 'game studies'' most cited texts, Jane McGonigal (2011) claims that across the world over three billion hours per week are spent on computer gaming. Nevertheless, within this three billion hours of practice, just as described in the case of stock car racing, there is a wide

diversity of different rhythms of practice of gaming, that vary in accordance with the types of technologies used, types of games played, meanings attributed, platforms, places, players and so on. For example, companies such as Nintendo have developed in home, family-friendly games that are played on accessible platforms and can easily be controlled through the movements of the body, whilst in other instances of gaming, players develop extreme proficiency and technical skill at using the keyboard and mouse on a PC to control their characters through highly exclusive and prestigiously ranked 'Multiplayer-Online-Battle-Arenas' (MOBA's) where any deemed lack of skill by other participants results in swift exclusion from play.

These diverse, growing and popular rhythms of practice have received a fair amount of attention from academics and as such, 'game studies' has become a discipline in its own right. Traditionally divisions in 'game studies' mostly centre around a debate between ludologists and narratologists on what fundamentally constitutes 'gaming': the structure and rules of the game itself, or the subjective narrative that narratologists argue underpin all types of media including film, music and games (see Frasca 1999). Similarly there are many discussions between technological determinists and social constructivists which centre on the relationships between technologies and users, between humans and nonhumans (see Hjorth 2011, 11-17).

However, questions regarding what can be considered to constitute 'a game' and the degree of 'agency' users have in engaging with particular technologies (that is how to frame the subject and object of doing) have been discussed at length in Chapter Four and Chapter Two respectively. Having understood practice, in this case, gaming, as event and the technological equipment (here of gaming) as part of the 'world' of that practice, this chapter turns its attention to the relationship between practice and 'time' and seeks to explore how an

understanding of this relationship can inform our grasp of the relationship between social action and social change.

'Game studies' have also been divided in terms of their methodological approach to studying gaming 'practices'. Most commonly, this division has existed between textual analysis of games and ethnographies of gaming practice (Hjorth 2011, 17). Those engaged in textual analyses of games, have treated games as objects, as texts that can be read and interpreted in various ways depending on their various contexts (e.g. Dovey and Kennedy 2006). More ethnographic approaches have shifted the focus away from the game as a textual object and towards players, towards their subjective experiences of playing games and towards their 'agency' and identity as 'gamers' (e.g. Taylor 2006). In keeping with the philosophical task of this thesis, its theoretical foundations and the methodological concerns as outlined in Chapter One, I have moved beyond a methodology that takes either the object game or the subject player as its main focus. Instead I have struggled to engage in the rhythms of practice of gaming, to learn by doing and playing with others. At the same time I have kept records of my own experiences of gaming and have recorded in-depth interviews with variously 'serious' and more 'novice' gamers. Significantly this involved spending time at a growing independent Manchester based games design studio (Black Paper Games Ltd.<sup>23</sup>) and interviewing games designers, two of whom also lectured in *Games Theory and Design* at the university and proved to be significant resources for research into this field. I also spent a good deal of 'time' both interviewing and playing with one particular gamer whom I came to know quite well and whose story I introduce now in order to begin to consider, as well as to illustrate the question of the relationship between practice and 'time'.

Larry has been playing the massively multiplayer online role playing game (MMORPG) *World of Warcraft* (WOW) since shortly after its release in 2004, that is, now, for over eight years.

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<sup>23</sup> This is a pseudonym.

WOW is a highly successful game that has somewhere in the region of ten million subscribed players who pay a monthly fee to play their character(s) through the *World of Warcraft's* virtual world of 'Azeroth'. Players' characters navigate the world to perform quests and interact with other characters, in order to increase their experience points, improve their levels and to buy and trade equipment, armour and weapons amongst other things. On reaching a sufficient level, characters can join raiding parties made up of other players' characters to take on highly problematic and technical 'instances' or 'dungeons', that require a team of players with variously specific skills to work together to defeat that level's 'boss' in order to acquire rare and prized 'drops' of specialised weapons or armour and to increase the rank of their raiding party or guild on that particular server.

Larry's 'main' character 'Conan' (at the time of our last interview) is a level ninety, dwarf, holy paladin, whose particular speciality is to heal and revive other players. 'Conan' in particular is equipped with some of the most prestigious and sought after equipment for healing not just on his specific server; but across the whole of the WOW game. It is this combination of such high level, skill and prestigious equipment, that has meant Larry's character 'Conan' has been particularly sought after and touted by various high ranking and prestigious guilds that want Larry to support their raiding parties with powerful 'heals' and 'buffs' as they attack some of the most high level 'dungeons' on the game.

Larry's rhythms of practice of computer gaming, including raiding with various guilds, maintaining his characters' level and equipment, his 'daily' quests and so on have changed greatly over the course of eight years, with rhythms of computer gaming becoming ever more dominant rhythms of practice around which other rhythms in his 'everyday' life are organised. When he first began playing, Larry worked part time in a shop for a few hours per week and played WOW during the evenings after work. After two years of play and of building up his characters' experience, Larry was working on those evenings and raiding every other morning

with a guild based in the United States. After three more years of playing with his character at the highest level possible in the game, Larry, like many other players, was booking his holidays from work to coincide with the release of various expansion packs so that he could attain the new highest level in the game as quickly as possible and was in fact by this time regularly scheduling other rhythms of practice, such as sleeping and eating, around his rhythms of practice of gaming. For example, it is now routine for Larry to order takeaway online between 'instances' and answer the door, when his food arrives, as quickly as possible, to return to eat at his computer desk thus minimising the amount of time that his 'mod' (modification to the game) has to 'auto-run' his character whilst he is 'AFK' (away from keyboard).

These rhythms of practice of computer gaming, as exemplified through Larry's story immediately invite a plethora of questions about conceptualising the relationship between 'time' and 'practice as event'. How is it, for example, that for Larry the event of gaming became repeated so routinely? How did other rhythms of practice such as sleeping or eating and even working become re-scheduled or indeed become precisely nonroutine for him? In answer to these questions I first describe how computer games designers seek to inscribe specific rhythms in the games that they create and then show how a theoretical distinction between subjective and objective 'time' underwrites computer games design as well as more sophisticated social theoretical analyses of the ordering of 'practices'.

## **Flow**

During my visits to 'Black Paper Games Ltd.', a fledgling and independent games studio based in Manchester, I was intrigued to find that the question of 'time' was central to all the designers both in their attempts at building entertaining and immersive games, as well as in



their 'everyday' lives. Many shared concerns about making 'time' for gaming and not getting 'sucked into playing a game' at the expense of household chores or doing other 'work'. Brad described this concern regarding the powerful effect of computer gaming:

"Because I work from home a lot, I have to be careful about when I go online. Because once I start a quick game I can be going for hours and then never get any work done."

(Brad)

This is a common description of gamers' experiences of 'time'. In an online article that several of the designers suggested that I should read after discussing notions of 'time' with them, Sean Baron describes an experience of gaming he claims that all readers will be familiar with:

"You sit down, ready to get in a few minutes of gaming. Hours pass and suddenly you become aware that you're making ridiculous faces and moving like a contortionist while trying to reach that new high score. You ask yourself: where did the time go? When did I sprain my ankle?" (Baron 2012, 1)

In this article, titled: 'Cognitive Flow: The Psychology of Great Game Design' (2012), Baron goes on to analyse this experience of immersion in and then sudden reflexive awareness of computer games through Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) theory of 'flow', a theory that has similarly been suggested within certain 'theories of practice' to provide a suitable temporal framework in which to situate 'theories of practice' (see Rettie 2001). Baron goes on to suggest that great game design can be achieved by following the four characteristics of tasks outlined by Csikszentmihalyi in *The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (1990) to promote, or rather induce 'flow'. That is, a so described 'engaged-state' where gamers experience extreme focus on a task and maintain a sense of active control whilst simultaneously experiencing a loss of 'self'-awareness and a 'distortion' of the experience of 'time'. It is this analysis then that computer games designers at 'Black Paper Games Ltd.' use to understand experiences like Larry's, such

that when in 'flow', gamers' subjective experiences become distorted as they become immersed in 'the practice' of gaming and they become less aware of other 'practices' or activities.

Csikszentmihalyi in the same book refers to several extracts from interviews with various people engaged in all kinds of rhythms of practice, from reading with one's daughter to playing chess, that can all achieve an experience of 'flow'. One significant extract taken from an interview with a climber and poet, describes particularly well the type of experience of which Baron, Csikszentmihalyi and the games designers spoke and helps explain why this 'optimal' experience is described as 'flow':

"The mystique of rock climbing is climbing; you get to the top of a rock glad it's over but really wish it would go on forever. The justification of climbing is climbing, like the justification of poetry is writing; you don't conquer anything except things in yourself... The act of writing justifies poetry. Climbing is the same recognizing that you are a flow. The purpose of the flow is to keep on flowing, not looking for a peak or a utopia but staying in the flow. It is not a moving up but a continuous flowing; you move up to keep the flow going. There is no possible reason for climbing except the climbing itself; it is a self-communication." (Climber and Poet in Csikszentmihalyi 1990, 54)

This may well be the experience of someone engaged in an 'optimal experience' of 'a practice'; but what happens when the experience of 'a practice' is less than optimal, when one is engaged in activities that one does not *want* to do? For Csikszentmihalyi, the answer is that if we are not engaged in 'flow', we become bored because the task is too easy or anxious because the task is too difficult for our level of skill and we return to a more 'normal' state of 'consciousness' that does not experience this distortion of 'time' (see Figure 3).

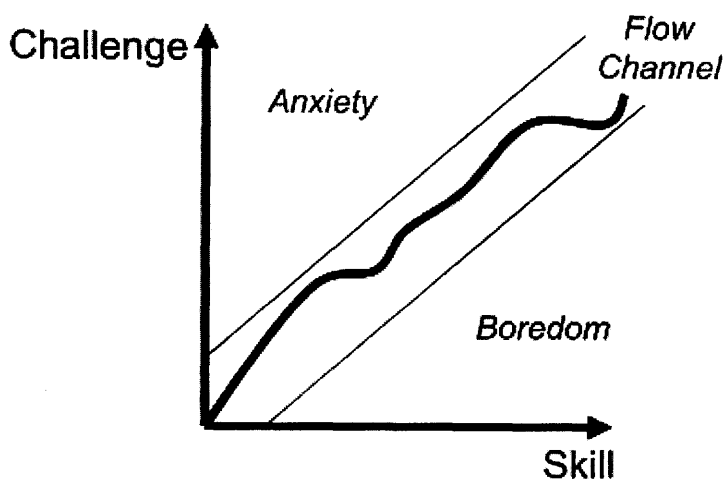


Figure 3: 'Flow' Diagram Adapted from Csikszentmihalyi (1990)

In order to achieve and maintain the experience of 'flow', Baron, following Csikszentmihalyi, argues that it is necessary for games to: 1. have concrete goals with manageable rules, 2. demand actions that fit a players' capabilities, 3. give clear and timely feedback and 4. diminish extraneous distraction (Baron 2012, 2). If these four characteristics can be applied to the rhythms of practice of gaming, then, as these writers and designers have described, players will experience an altered state of 'consciousness', that is, 'flow', and will *want* to continue playing games for hours on end.

However, this conception of 'time' and 'consciousness', is not a conception that is compatible with the arguments laid out thus far in this thesis. Indeed notice the similarities between Csikszentmihalyi's and the computer games designer's analysis of Larry's rhythms of gaming practice and Lizardo's (2009) analysis of how boxers learn to box, as discussed in Chapter Three. Just as in Lizardo's argument, routine practice and nonroutine practice are divided between the 'conscious' and the 'unconscious', between being 'out of flow' and 'in flow'. In addition, both rest on a division between 'mind' and body, between cognition and

embodiment and between reflexive and habitual action. This is an analysis that was disputed in Chapter Three through a discussion of 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice'.

Further to this concern, it is now possible to discern that these understandings of 'flow' and an altered sense of 'self' not only rest on a distinction between body-subjects and body-objects; but that they necessarily also imply a significant distinction between subjective and objective 'time', that is 'time' as experienced and 'time' as measured and quantified. I show in the following section that this re-presentation of 'time' is predicated on an ontology that pervades not only 'everyday' understandings of 'time'; but also social theoretical analyses that equate being with what is *present* and that re-present doing as an identifiable *thing*; rather than recognising being as *presence*, that is the becoming-ness of 'moments' of practice.

### **Subjective and Objective Time**

It is important to recognise that the distinction between subjective and objective temporality that gives rise to contemporary analyses of 'time', as described above, is a thoroughly modern phenomena and stands in relation to various conceptions of 'time' that have existed throughout 'history'. Aristotle, for example, considered 'time' to be the 'time' of the natural world and as such was readable through and made understandable by the changes in planetary motions, the changing of the seasons and so on (see Charlton 1970). Medieval scholars derived their conception of 'time' from theological study, recognising time as *given* by God and as such existed as a finite and fixed substance (see Warner 1963). Following Descartes ([1637] 2005) and Kant (Kant [1781] 1998), modern scholars have tended to contemplate 'time' as depending on the cognitive structures existing in the 'mind' of the rational observer. Both contemporary lay and academic thought now tends to examine 'time'

as made up of several of these elements that are often divided into two senses as 'scientific' and 'experienced' 'time'.

This distinction was first conceptualised in social theory by Henri Bergson in *Time and Free Will* ([1889] 2008). In this work, Bergson claims that the study of the positive sciences is concerned with understanding 'time' spatially, as a set of quantifiable movements such as clock hours and calendar months. For Bergson, this is how conceptual analysis must grasp 'time', as linear and as underpinning systems of cause and effect.

Importantly, however, he argues that this conceptual analysis of linear 'time' stands in contrast to 'real' or 'thick' 'time', the 'time' of 'consciousness', of human experience, that resists both scientific measurement and conceptual analysis. Bergson's understanding of 'time' recognises the unfolding of the 'duration' of 'consciousness', for example, Larry's immersion in playing WOW, as ungraspable in its unfolding by conceptual analysis. For Bergson though this 'real' 'time' unfolding of 'consciousness' is 'time', which conceptual analysis has to come to represent through spatialisation, qualification, division and measurement, for example, by counting gaming hours or recognising a period of gaming as distinct from and ordered in relation to other activities.

Whilst Bergson maintains a distinction between 'real' and 'spatialised' 'time', subjective and objective 'time', as well as a focus on the role of 'consciousness', what is significantly important and useful is his conceptualisation of the unfolding, unsegmented and changing understanding of the notion of 'duration' (*la durée*). That is to say, understanding how Bergson and others interpret the ongoing change of Larry's rhythms of computer gaming can help to point the way towards and distinguish thinking about 'practice in the moment of doing'.

For Bergson, in *Time and Free Will* ([1889] 2008), the past, present and future of activity only exist as separate and distinct, preceding and following 'moments' in 'spatialised' or

quantifiable 'time'. In subjective, or 'real' 'time' they occur 'all at one stroke'. That is, that unfolding 'duration' is to be considered as: "the continuation of what precedes into what follows... uninterrupted transition, multiplicity without divisibility, and succession without segmentation." (Bergson in Schatzki 2010, 189)

For example, Larry's experience of completing a 'raid' with his guild, checking his statistic updates, going to the auction house to sell his 'drops', answering the door to collect his takeaway, running back upstairs to get the right change with which to pay and quickly returning to gear up for the next 'raid', are not experienced by him as distinct 'practices'; but instead as continuous unfolding, or in Bergson's terms 'flowing'. It is only in conceptual analysis, as I ask him to describe his evening and as I write it here, that this experience becomes divided into distinct events. Whilst Bergson has been critiqued for his focus on the role of intellect and 'consciousness', his work has nevertheless been taken up by many authors including 'practice theorists', in attempts to synthesise the notion of unfolding or ongoing change with an account that can nevertheless map the emergence, persistence and disappearance of 'practices' over measured 'time'.

In an example of such a work, Schatzki provides in *The Timespace of Human Activity* (2010), an argument that attempts a synthesis of both unfolding and distinct 'moments' of 'time' through the distinction of practice as performance and entity. Here he points to the utility; but also the problem with taking up Bergson's notion of 'duration'. He writes:

"Ongoing life may flow, but it instantiates Bergsonian duration only if it evinces uninterrupted transition and development, as well as succession without separation; as life unfolds, what is subsequently remembered as earlier actions or phases of action must not be distinct from what is likewise subsequently recalled as later actions or phases." (Schatzki 2010, 193)

Here, Schatzki, brings to the fore the problem of succession. If practice is unfolding and ongoing, how can we say where 'one practice' stops and another begins? How can we examine how practice repeats and how it becomes different? How can we recognise change? Schatzki considers two possible responses to the problem of succession. The first is to recognise the segmentation of Larry's evening of raiding, questing, upgrading, eating etc. as a product of memory and intellect and à la Bergson to argue that: "as it unfolded it was a thick duration, an undivided amalgamation of action, sensation, and memories." (Schatzki 2010, 193)<sup>24</sup>

The second way to deal with the problem of succession is to argue, as Schatzki does, that memory and intellect do not introduce segmentations but *remember* segmentations that were actually there in the evening (i.e. 'practices-as-entities'). For Schatzki, whilst Larry's actions, completing his raid, selling his drops, eating his takeaway, etc. may well have been *experienced* as a continuous unfolding, it was a continuous unfolding of those particular 'practices':

"True, both my performances of these actions and my lived-through experiences of this series were continuous. But the continuous performance of action was of precisely these actions, and my continuous performance took precisely those turns."  
(Schatzki 2010, 193)

It seems that when it comes to the question of succession, Schatzki wants to have his cake and eat it. He both wants to maintain a Bergsonian notion of continuous unfolding, whilst at the same time to distinguish between specific 'moments' of action without resorting to an objective sense of 'time' that is built on a typical understanding of before and after.

Schatzki thereby attempts to synthesise a segmentation of particular actions ('practice' as entity) with an understanding of continuous unfolding as continuous performance ('practice'

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<sup>24</sup> As we will see later, Deleuze ([1969] 1994) might argue that Larry's evening as it unfolded contained differences but none of the describe and named actions existed as distinct and segmented 'moments'.

as performance) by transposing these adjustments onto Bergson's distinction between 'real' (subjective) and 'spatialised' (objective) time:

"I am transposing this thought to human action, contrasting performing, voluntary doing (activity), to actions as performed accomplishments. Ongoing life is marked by continuous performing, continuous voluntary doing. What in human existence, consequently, promotes Bergson's idea of an interpenetrating, separation-less flow is the continuousness of performance, in conjunction with the continuousness of attention and the fleetingness of the details of action and experience. Ongoing activity, however, is not Bergsonian duration. It is segmented into distinct episodes (performances of action) that do not instantiate his notion of qualitative multiplicity in succession." (Schatzki 2010, 194)

For Schatzki then, continuous performance or doing is segmented into particular bounded 'practices' that occupy a certain length of 'time'; but are also characterised by their past, present and future dimensions that orient what is done and why. This is a significant contribution and synthesis of both subjective and objective 'time'; but nevertheless fails to think about 'time' in a way much different to the readers of Csikszentmihalyi (1990), who maintain that they can induce 'flow' or the experience of continuous performance (of computer gaming for example) by configuring certain 'practices' in particular ways. That is to say that Schatzki maintains a distinction that allows an analysis of Larry's rhythms of computer gaming to be scheduled and organised by his subjective experience of 'time', of continuous performance that affects the length of 'time' for which *he* plays *computer games*.

By identifying Larry's rhythms of computer gaming as 'a practice' that is as *present thing* Schatzki repeats and builds on an analysis of social action and social change that pertains in social theory and that re-presents 'practice' through the subjects and objects of social action, of one who performs computer gaming or is recruited by this 'practice'. Instead to consider



practice as *presence*, in its happening like quality that resists this kind of re-presentation, I turn now to a transvaluation of our 'everyday' notions of 'time' as distinct between experienced and measured through a discussion of Nietzsche's concept of 'eternal return'.

## Eternal Return

Following the suggestion in Chapter Four that we might consider thinking about 'practice as event', the task that now stands before us is no longer to provide an analysis of how Larry's gaming 'practice' as a bounded entity is ordered across 'time' (understood as some kind of temporal container) and 'space'; but instead to consider the becoming-ness of each 'moment' of his temporally and spatially situated practice. This requires, taking from Derrida, a deconstruction of 'time', a destruction of temporal succession and a re-construction of 'time' as both constitutive of and constituted by practice. In particular, adopting Friedrich Nietzsche's ([1883-85] 1961) self-proclaimed highest thought of 'eternal return', can help to re-frame the 'moment' of practice away from our 'everyday' recuperative and re-presentative understandings of the *present* 'moment' as existing in a series of temporal instants and entities and towards an understanding of *the presencing* of the 'moment of practice' as a self-exceeding, opening out onto what is other, a continual becoming.<sup>25</sup>

First it is necessary to recognise that an 'everyday' understanding of 'time' that distinguishes between subjective and objective time serves to maintain a unity of the identity of events, *things* and beings (or 'practices'). David Wood offers a useful summary of the logic of this relationship in his book *The Deconstruction of Time* (2001):

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<sup>25</sup> Note that the 'moment' is never present in itself; but always negates itself in its very presencing. See this chapter, section on: 'Tracing Rhythms'.

“... the distinction between subjective and objective time is a conceptual labor that ensures under each heading the preservation of the unity of the temporal series, and that this is achieved precisely by making this distinction. All events can then be located in one or other category by distinct rules of integration (such as narrativity for subjective time, seriality for objective time).” (Wood 2001, 13)

For Wood, this ‘everyday’ understanding of ‘time’ is necessary for our understanding of the identity of *things*, to recognise beings and their presence. Without this understanding of ‘time’ we could not recognise what Larry does as ‘a practice’. Fundamentally then this shows us that ‘everyday’ ‘time’ is as much ontological (a way of bringing things into being, of showing things as they are) as it is temporal.<sup>26</sup> Even more importantly we have to recognise that ontological concerns are tied up with temporal concerns, that questions about ‘time’ and being (‘time’ and practice) cannot be separated. It is for this reason then that I continue to describe ‘practice in the moment of doing’, maintaining the notion of practice built up in the previous chapters including ‘the world of practice’, ‘embodied –knowledge-in-practice’ and ‘practice as event’.

In moving beyond notions of ‘time’ associated with the unity of identity and entities, Nietzsche proposes a transvaluation of ‘time’ through the notion of ‘eternal return’. This idea appears at various points in Nietzsche’s writings, disparately as a scientific account of ‘time’, a psychological motivation and ontological instruction (see Wood 2001). For current purposes and issues of space I provide an ontological reading of ‘eternal return’ though it should be recognised that this thought is not readily separated out from its other implications. Through the idea of ‘eternal return’, Nietzsche seeks to destroy our ‘everyday’ and common sense understanding of linear ‘time’ that underpins our ‘being-in-the-world’ and to construct a new vision of temporality as circular in order to re-think our understanding of (among other things)

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<sup>26</sup> Hence Heidegger’s early interest and title of his *magnum opus* ([1927] 1962).

being. As noted, Nietzsche presents this idea variously as a 'scientific' proof of infinite 'time' and 'space', and a psychological test of the affirmative will, (to will that which returns); but in a particularly famous and poetic section of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* ([1883-85] 1961), he presents a vivid image of the 'eternal return' and the 'moment' which warrants quoting at length:

“”Then something occurred which lightened me: for the dwarf jumped from my shoulder, the inquisitive dwarf! And he squatted down upon a stone in front of me. But a gateway stood just where we had halted.

“Behold this gateway, dwarf!” I went on: “it has two aspects. Two paths come together here: no one has ever reached their end.

“This long lane behind us: it goes on for an eternity. And that long lane ahead of us – that is another eternity.

“They are in opposition to one another, these paths; they abut one another: and it is here at this gateway that they come together. The name of the gateway is written above it: ‘Moment’.

“But if one were to follow them further and ever further and further: do you think, dwarf, that these paths would be in eternal opposition?”

“Everything straight lies,” murmured the dwarf disdainfully. “All truth is crooked, time itself is a circle.”

“Spirit of Gravity!” I said angrily, “do not treat this too lightly! ...

“Behold this moment!” I went on. “From this gateway Moment a long eternal lane runs *back*: an eternity lies behind us.

“Must not all things that *can* run have already run along this lane? Must not all things that *can* happen *have* already happened, been done, run past?

“And if all things have been here before: what do you think of this moment, dwarf? Must not this gateway, too, have been here – before?

“And are not all things bound fast together in such a way that this moment draws after it all its future things? *Therefore* draws itself too?” (Nietzsche [1883-85] 1961, 178-179)

Nietzsche thus presents a most vivid account of the thought of ‘eternal return’. The dwarf summarises disdainfully: “... time itself is a circle.” This is an argument that is often discussed as matter of fact in social scientific research on time. But we would do well to heed Zarathustra’s warning and recognise the significance of the implications of this suggestion: “Spirit of Gravity!” I said angrily, “do not treat this too lightly!” And we should not, because to think time as circular, as we shall see, requires a re-conceptualisation of being, of identity, of repetition and of *difference* indeed of the notion of change, that is, of becoming itself.

Thus, in my view, in this passage Nietzsche provides a successful transvaluation of our ‘everyday’ understanding of ‘time’ in two important ways, first he provides a re-focusing of ‘time’ from the *present*, to the ‘moment’ as *presence* and second he shows up being as becoming. Both of these concepts are extremely significant for recognising the relationship between practice and ‘time’ as well as the relationship between social action and social change.

First, by recognising time as a circle rather than re-presented as a series of ‘nows’ that come from the future, exist in the present and pass into the past, Nietzsche demonstrates that thinking about ‘time’ cannot be done as linear progression; but has to be recognised as coming to *presence* in the ‘moment’:

“And if all things have been here before: what do you think of this moment, dwarf?  
Must not this gateway, too, have been here – before?”

When we consider that ‘time’ is no longer a line stretching out over ‘history’; but is instead a circle that repeats itself for eternity, it no longer makes sense to understand the passing *present* but instead only to consider the ‘moment’ as *presencing* and similar to Bergson’s description of unfolding ‘consciousness’, as combining all three temporal modalities, past, present and future all at once.

This focus on the ‘moment’ then, leads us to the second significant proposition that being, ‘practice in the moment of doing’, is never *present* in itself; but is always becoming, always drawing itself into the next ‘moment’:

“And are not all things bound fast together in such a way that this moment draws after it all future things? *Therefore* draws itself too?”

Nietzsche demonstrates here then, that being is becoming, doing is *difference* and that (in this ontological scheme) practice is change. In this way, the ‘moment of practice’ in-itself can never be fully *present*; rather it is always already divided between its future and its past. To consider ‘practice’ as a *thing* is to re-present it. Instead, and this is fundamental to the argument of this thesis, we can only recognise ‘practice in the moment of doing’ in its coming to *presence*. Practice does not exist as a fixed entity or identity separated from other entities or identities by difference or change. Instead practice is change, is *difference* itself. This thought requires further elaboration through a discussion of Deleuze’s work on repetition and *difference* and then Derrida’s notion of ‘the trace’. However, first it will be useful to contrast Heidegger’s reading of Nietzsche’s idea in *Being and Time* ([1927] 1962)<sup>27</sup>, in order to show how Heidegger (in *Being and Time* at least) and subsequently Schatzki (in *The Timespace of Human Activity* (2010)), fail to go beyond an understanding of being as *present*, that is, practice-as-entity and

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<sup>27</sup> A reading he argued in his later work failed to think this idea of being as becoming.

are therefore unable to reach the conclusion of being as becoming, to recognise being in its *presencing*, as drawing itself, already divided between past and future.

Heidegger then, in *Being and Time* attempts an analysis of 'time' through discussion of the temporality of 'being-in-the-world' or more correctly *Dasein*. As I have described more thoroughly in Chapter Two, *Dasein* (or *there-being*) is a re-conceptualisation of what it is to be a human being. Indeed the human entity, though radically and particularly re-thought, is the very entity with which Heidegger sought to study the ontological question of being, that is how *things* (in this case humans) are, how they come to be. Again in Chapter Two I showed how Heidegger argued that the particular way that humans are, is 'in-the-world', that is, always engaged in practical activity, amid and directed towards the material equipment of practice. Up until this point in the thesis it has been sufficient to recognise 'being-in-the-world' and what I have called practice, or doing as relatively similar ideas. However, it is now possible and extremely important to discern a significant difference between these two concepts, namely that 'being-in-the-world' is grounded by and maintains its focus on a human entity, whilst practice does not. That is to say that Heidegger uses the human entity to study the structure of *being*, whilst my discussion of practice studies *doing*.

On his reading of Nietzsche and Bergson (whose works were both particularly influential on Heidegger's thought), Heidegger takes the notion of 'eternal return', the concept of time as cyclical and applies it to *Dasein* (the human entity as 'being-in-the-world') in the 'moment'. As such Heidegger proposed that *Dasein* has its being in 'time', that is to say, that its mode of being is structured by the fact that all three temporalities occur for it at once. Therefore, at each 'moment' *Dasein* experiences: 1. 'thrownness', (already in-the-world and dealing with what it receives from the past) 2. 'projection', (*Dasein* is never fully "at this moment" because it recognises and lives 'at this moment' its future projections) 3. 'fallenness', (*Dasein* is continually concerned with dealings as they arise, the 'nows' of the ready-to-hand world).

Nevertheless, notice that in this formulation that it is *Dasein* that holds together these three temporalities. Heidegger's notion here is that 'time' is not a mere medium in which things unfold; but *is* the thing that constitutes being, that constitutes *identity*. Therefore despite Heidegger's attempts to avoid this problem, he nevertheless promotes the human entity, although a modified human entity as 'being-in-the-world,' as the *thing*, the entity that returns in each 'moment' and the being that is *present* and thus capable of analyses. Indeed this is the very argument from which Schatzki formulates his discussion of distinct 'moments' of practice and thus positions his analyses of 'practice' as the ordering of 'practices' across 'space' and 'time' thereby externalising change, or becoming from practice or being itself.

As the opening quotation from Derrida suggests and as we will see, for Deleuze, this has serious implications for understanding the relationship between social action and social change and for positioning ideas about how rhythms of practice are shaped. Instead of asking the question of how Larry's gaming 'practice' is ordered across 'space' and 'time', we can instead turn our attention, following Nietzsche's suggestion, to gaming 'practice in the moment of doing' and investigate how it is repeated and how it becomes different.

## **Repetition and Difference**

For Deleuze, in *Being and Time* at least, Heidegger has misinterpreted the idea of 'eternal return' by foregrounding his analysis in being as *present*, in something that *is*, e.g. *Dasein*.

"And in this sense it must not be interpreted as the return of something that is, that is "one", or the "same". We misinterpret the expression "eternal return" if we understand it as "return of the same." (Deleuze [1962] 1983, 48)

Thus, Deleuze argues, (as does Derrida), that Heidegger has misread the relation of the 'moment' to itself as present, past and future, as grounding being and that it is being, the one

same thing, that returns. Instead, Deleuze argues that it is returning itself that returns. 'Eternal return' then is an answer to the problem of passage and the relation between 'moments', not to the question of being. That is to say that 'eternal return' is not compatible with a view that seeks to understand 'practices' that are *present*; but rather suggests how practice as *presencing* relates to other *presencing* 'moments'.

Indeed, just as Nietzsche does, Deleuze attributes to being, the value of becoming, of *difference* in itself whilst sameness is attributed to becoming, that is for Nietzsche and Deleuze, becoming is the one thing that never changes. This is the central suggestion of this chapter, that practice as doing, as event (but not as human entity), is itself continual change, continual *difference*.

In *Difference and Repetition* ([1969] 1994), Deleuze suggests thinking about 'time' not as grounded or brought together by some being; but as through the notions of repetition and *difference*, which are quite different from our normal 'everyday' understandings of these terms. What we commonly consider to be repetition, Deleuze argues, is a re-presentation of various objects, events, people etc. that occur at different spatio-temporal positions. Deleuze instead wants to argue for a repetition that is for itself. He writes:

"Our problem concerns the essence of repetition. It is a question of knowing why repetition cannot be explained by the form of identity in concepts or representations; in what sense it demands a superior "positive" principle." (Deleuze [1969] 1994, 22)

This superior principle then is that repetition is not the returning of the same; but a repeating of *difference* itself. This too requires a new understanding of *difference* away from difference as the negation of identity. Deleuze refers to this as *difference* in itself, pure *difference* and intensity to distinguish it as becoming, as the very thing that allows beings to appear. So, for Deleuze, 'eternal return' is not a return of the same as it is in Heidegger's *Being and Time*



([1927] 1962). Instead it is the fundamental structure of returning itself that constitutes *difference*. Therefore, Deleuze in my view successfully argues that identities, entities, beings, 'practices', are not fixed points that are required to understand differences, that is, external change. Rather it is the fundamental structure of 'time' as becoming, as divided between its future and its past, as changing, that provides the possibility for *things* to appear over and again and to be given identity. David Wood summarises this point succinctly:

“Time, then, is not only constitutive of identity, rather than a mere medium in which things unfold, but is itself constituted by its role in supporting identities and differences.” (Wood 2001, 31)

That is to say that Heidegger may well be correct in asserting that *things* ('practices') do not simply unfold in a container of 'time'; but that the three modes of temporality occurring all at once come to constitute identity. However, it is also necessary to go one step further and to recognise that it is returning itself that constitutes being in its becoming. Therefore, it is through the very structure of becoming that it is possible to recognise different beings (or 'moments' of practice). Significantly Derrida's notion of the 'trace' provides a sophisticated account of both the fundamental structure of the 'moment' of practice as well as a structure for considering how 'moments' of presence relate to each other.

## **Tracing Rhythms**

Whilst an in depth exposition of Jacques Derrida's work, particularly around temporality and 'différance', is beyond the scope of this chapter and indeed beyond the remit of this thesis, I show in this section that Derrida's notion of the 'trace' can provide the theoretical link between recognising 'practice in the moment of doing', in its fleeting *presence* and the continuity of rhythms of practice. In particular Martin Hägglund provides an accessible but yet

vital analysis of Derrida's work on 'trace' with which it is both possible to think about practice as *presence* and bridge the gap to a discussion of how rhythms of practice are shaped, which I consider in the following chapter.

Just as in the epigraph to this chapter (from Derrida), Hägglund (2012) seeks to resist understanding the identity of beings, even human beings in forms such as *Dasein*, as *present* and fixed. He refers to a speech by Diotima of Mantinea recounted by Socrates in Plato's *Symposium* (2001) which I think particularly well shows up this re-presentation of the human entity as stasis and sameness, as the fixed point to which things return:

"...someone is said to be the same person from childhood till old age. Yet for all we call him the same, every bit of him is different, and everyday he is becoming a new man, while the old man is ceasing to exist, as you can see from his hair, his flesh, his bones, his blood, and all the rest of his body. And not only his body, for the same thing happens to his soul. And neither his manners, nor his disposition, nor his thoughts, nor his desires, nor his pleasures, nor his sufferings, nor his fears are the same throughout his life, for some of them grow, while others disappear... This is how every mortal creature perpetuated itself. It cannot, like the divine, always be the same in every respect; it can only leave behind new life to fill the vacancy that is left behind in its species by obsolescence." (Diotima of Mantinea in Socrates in Plato in Hägglund 2012, 6)

In this extract, Diotima of Mantinea depicts a way of thinking about the human being as never *present* in itself; but as always ceasing to be as soon as it *presences*. In the same way Hägglund argues that 'moments' of practice cease to be in their very coming to *presence*. He writes:

"For one moment to be succeeded by another, it cannot *first* be present in itself and *then* cease to be. A self-present, indivisible moment could never give way to another

moment, since what is indivisible cannot be altered. The passage of time requires not only that every moment be superseded by another moment, but also that this alteration be at work from the very beginning. Every moment must negate itself and pass away *in its very event*. If the moment did not negate itself there would be not time, only a presence forever remaining the same.” (Hägglund 2012, 3)

Thus we can consider that the ‘moment’ of practice is never *present* in itself before it ceases to be. Rather, every ‘moment’ of practice is already divided between its future and its past. In this way, ‘a practice’ is not repeated across ‘space’ and ‘time’ constituting a rhythm along an x axis; but the very structure of doing as *presence* is itself already rhythmical, negating itself in its very happening. Thus Hägglund, via Derrida, points the way to a different solution to the question of continuation, that is, to the question of how any ‘moment’ of practice can resemble a previous ‘moment’ if it can only be considered in its event. The answer is to move away from an analysis of what is *present*, from an analysis of ‘practice’-as-a-thing and from an analysis of identities asking how they change and stay the same. Instead we would do well to recognise ‘practice in the moment of doing’ as already divided between its past and its future, thus already inscribed by, what Derrida calls a ‘trace’ and what Lefebvre would call rhythm. In this sense practice as *presence*, ‘practice in the moment of doing’, is in its very structure, rhythmical, changing and dynamic. Hence Lefebvre’s suggestion that: “The act of rhythmanalysis... transforms *everything* into presences, including the *present*...” ([1992] 2004, 23)

Thus, Hägglund and Derrida both resist the logic of identity, arguing that understanding the co-implication of ‘space’ and ‘time’ through the notion of the ‘trace’ as “the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space...” (Hägglund 2012, 15) means that it is impossible to consider an indivisible *present*. That is to say that an analysis that fully considers ‘space’ and ‘time’ together denies the possibility of conceptualising ‘a practice’-as-entity. Instead the

division between the past and the future is inherent in every 'moment' of practice, whilst spatiality and temporality provide the very conditions for the synthesis of this division in the 'trace'. Hägglund writes:

"The synthesis of the trace follows from the constitution of time we have considered. Given that the now can appear only by disappearing - that it passes away as soon as it comes to be - it must be inscribed as a trace in order to be at all. This is the *becoming-space of time*. The trace is necessarily spatial, since spatiality is characterised by the ability to remain in spite of temporal succession. Spatiality is thus the condition for synthesis, since it enables the tracing of relations between past and future. Spatiality, however, can never be in itself; it can never be pure simultaneity. Simultaneity is unthinkable without a temporalization that relates one spatial juncture to another. This *becoming-time of space* is necessary not only for the trace to be related to other traces, but also for it to be a trace in the first place. A trace can only be read after its inscription and is thus marked by a relation to the future that temporalizes space. This is crucial for Derrida's deconstruction of the logic of identity. If the spatialisation of time makes the synthesis *possible*, the temporalization of space makes it *impossible* for the synthesis to be grounded in an indivisible presence. The synthesis is always a trace of the past that is left *for the future*. Thus, it can never be in itself but is essentially exposed to that which may erase it." (Hägglund 2008, 18)

This re-framing of the 'moment' of practice and of our 'everyday' notions of sameness and difference moves us away from an analysis of identities, entities and beings that are *present*, in describing the relationship between social action and social change, by offering us the opportunity to consider *difference* from the perspective that practice *is* change. However, one might be concerned as to how one can account for any kind of continuity if practice is inherently dynamic and ask the question (as Schatzki does in *The Timespace of Human Activity*

(2010) as described above): if practice is change, why do so many '*practices*' seem to stay the same in so many ways? This is an important question and one that cannot be readily and simply dismissed as stemming from a divergence in ontological orientations. Nevertheless, a key starting point is to note that the question of continuity and persistence (of 'a practice' or 'a moment of practice') is thoroughly rooted in an ontology that recognises and deals in *things* that are *present*. In contrast, this thesis seeks to address the 'moment' of practice as *presence* (i.e. not as a *thing*). Thus, considering 'time' in the way argued for in this chapter, is not an answer to the question of being, to the question of 'what a practice *is*' and how *it* is different to other 'practices-as-things'. Instead it is an answer to the question of passage, to the relation between 'moments' of practice as *presence*.

This difference in approach can be demonstrated by considering Shove, Pantzar and Watson's analysis of the re-production of 'practices' in *The Dynamics of Social Practice* (2012). They argue that to understand how certain 'practices' continue, persist and change, that we have to understand how such provisionally stable 'practices' relate to each other *over* 'time'. They write:

"... to understand what snowboarding 'is' at any one moment... we need to identify the means by which different versions of the practice-as-entity relate to each other over time." (2012, 102)

What snowboarding 'is' then, in contrast to skiing, ski-blading, skateboarding or surfing, is defined by contested meanings, changing technologies and developing competencies. Contemporary snowboarding can then be mapped historically, linearly and progressively across 'space' and 'time'. The implication here is that we can recognise key developments or 'changes' in technology, meaning, or skill that affect the identity of a particular kind of doing which make it recognisable as surfing, skiing or snowboarding, so that we can analyse how long that particular form of doing has been recognised and identified as such. However, note

that this analysis of 'practice'-as-entity maintains that change is external from practice and rests on a relationship of 'agency' that exists between human and non-human actors (see Chapter Two).

Further, Shove, Pantzar and Watson argue that 'practices'-as-performances condition each other. That is to say they argue that not only are 'practices'-as-entities defined by the configurations of their various elements (thus accounting for continuities and persistences); but also that the scheduling and synchronisation of 'practices'-as performances both produces and is produced by, what they describes as, 'circuits of reproduction'.

Drawing on Dale Southerton's (2003) examples of domestic time management, Shove et al. argue that some performances of 'practices' can be 'rushed' in order to 'make time' for a more relaxed enactment of other 'practices'. However, we might also recognise that this analysis maintains the same distinction between subjective and objective 'time' that Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) argument (as described above) does, by suggesting that individuals' changing perceptions or experiences of 'time' affect the ordering of 'practices'-as-entities over objective 'time' and vice versa. This framing of 'practices'-as-*things* and the examination of the relations between them over linear 'time' lead the authors to suggest that 'circuits of reproduction' are both produced and re-produced by the relationships between 'practices'.

However, this proposed analysis of how provisionally stable 'practices' are both produced and re-produced over 'time' and 'space' through 'circuits of re-production lacks an answer to the question of how *things* that are the *same* become different. As Hägglund writes: "A self-present, indivisible moment could never give way to another moment, since what is indivisible cannot be altered." (2012, 3) Thus, if 'a practice' or 'a moment of practice' is conceptualised as an indivisible and unified self-present that persists over 'time', as an *is* that is present, then it can never give way to another 'practice' because it is whole, unfragmented and unified. Instead one 'practice' has to end (e.g. skiing) and another has to begin (e.g. snowboarding).

The problem from such a position is how to account for how materials, skills and meanings are 'carried over' from one 'practice' to the next.

In this way, just as the theoretical position of Shove et al. lacks an explanation for the mechanism of change because it deals in entities, beings and identities, so too does the theoretical orientation that I am proposing fail to offer a model of continuation, precisely because it deals in *difference*, 'trace' and rhythms.

The idea of the 'trace', that 'moments' of practice are fundamentally divided between their futures and their pasts, provides the answer as to why 'moments' of practice (as *presence*) do not have to be assembled from scratch at each 'moment'. There is no 'carrying over' of materials, skills or meanings from one 'moment' to the next because no 'moment' has either a beginning or an end. Rather than requiring an explicit mechanism to account for how 'knowledge-as-an-object' is transferred from one 'practice' to another, we can recognise 'knowledge' as both situated and **ongoing** (see Chapter Three). The idea of the 'trace' is not a mechanism for understanding 'carrying over' or transference, rather it shows us that it is possible to consider *things*, 'practices' and identities as becoming continually different. From this perspective our attention need not be on where one *thing* ends and another begins, on key moments of 'change'; but rather on the mechanisms and processes of *change* itself.

Thus, from this theoretical orientation, it may well prove to be a useful endeavour to consider re-production in a different sense to Shove, Pantzar and Watson. Rather than considering 'circuits of reproduction' as an episteme *object* in the same way as Knorr Cetina (1997), as being both produced by and producing relations between 'practices' *over* 'time', we might consider that it is the 'trace', the rhythm of 'moments' of practice, that is, the very condition of spatio-temporality that allows the possibility for *things* to appear again, to repeat. Without this spatio-temporal condition, we would only experience a continuous presence where all *things* appeared 'the same' (Hägglund 2012, 3).

Thus, from this perspective, shifting from the question of the continuity and persistence of particular 'practices' to an analysis of the 'trace', to a focus on the spatio-temporal rhythms of practice in 'everyday' life, suggests that it may well be illuminating to build a more detailed picture of ongoing change, of the processes that shape relations between rhythms of practice that make up the 'polyrhythmia' of the 'everyday'.

## Conclusion

In sum this chapter has offered a critique of various notions of 'time' as distinguished between 'time' as experienced and 'time' as measured in order to try to capture an alternative method of thinking about the relationship between practice and 'time'. I argued that it is possible to re-think the notion of 'time' as succession through Nietzsche's ([1883-85] 1961) understanding of the 'eternal return' and re-focus attention on the 'moment' of practice. That is not as the *present* 'moment' that forms part of a succession of nows; but as the *presencing* 'moment' that always ceases to be as soon as it comes to be. Revealing 'time' in this way shows it to be something other than a container in which 'practices' unfold and instead shows that understanding the structure of 'time' is inseparable from understanding the structure of doing, of practice. 'Time', therefore, is both constitutive of and constituted by 'practice', because it continually returns different (i.e. it is continually becoming).

If we take this recommendation seriously, that practice is ongoing change, then the question arises of how (and if it is even possible), to organise what people do, if, conceptually, there is no fixed 'practice' in relation to which one might locate an 'intervention'. The following chapter offers a solution through an analysis of rhythms. I argue that it is possible through a 'syncopation' of rhythms to affect the 'polyrhythmia' of practice, to interrupt, to strengthen



and to weaken rhythms, to schedule routine and shape rhythms of practice and thereby affect ongoing change.

# Chapter Six: Shaping Rhythms of Practice: Arrhythmia, Training and Syncopation

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*Mere repetition of rhythmic, calculated movements robs... movement of its 'aliveness' and 'isness'... (Lee)*

## Introduction

In this final chapter of the thesis, I build on each of the arguments presented in the previous chapters to develop an analysis of the potential for shaping rhythms of practice, steering ongoing change, and scheduling routine. In a sense, whilst each chapter has made a particular argument in order to position specific elements of the account given in this thesis regarding the relationship between social action and social change, everything that has been said so far has been to prepare the discussion, to prepare the reader, for an analysis of the rhythms of practice in 'everyday' life. This ontological framework, so described, poses significant problems for traditional models of policy 'intervention'. Most problematically, there is no stable *thing* into which one can 'intervene'. Practice, is constantly becoming, constantly becoming *different*. Change is no longer located in between two fixed states, in between two 'practices'; but has become practice itself. To *do* therefore, is to enact 'in-the-world' and make *things* different. Doing, therefore, *is* change. Even more abstractly and a problem that might be even more difficult to reconcile, is that the position of 'intervener' has also been compromised. If we consider 'practice in the moment of doing', it is not possible to distinguish between political landscapes and on the ground actions, between global infrastructures and handy tools, between bodily actions and 'knowledge' institutions. Rather each of these makes up the 'world' of practice. The notion of practice, thus described draws the micro and the macro through the lens of the 'everyday'. Of course the scale of this lens can be adjusted to focus on institutional, bodily, community or other locally situated rhythms; but to adjust our focus is

not to exclude the rest of that 'world'. In this sense, as the positions of potential 'intervener' and object of intervention are both entangled in the 'world' of practice, any *body* that seeks to shape rhythms of eating practice for example, has to be understood as already implicated in the 'world' of this practice, tied up in its rhythms of repetition and *difference*.

Therefore, to address these problems, in this chapter I return to Lefebvre's notion of rhythmanalysis ([1992] 2004). It is an analysis that has been critiqued by some for maintaining an objective understanding of 'time' through a distinction between cyclical and linear 'time'. This argument is predicated on a suggestion that whilst rhythms repeat in a cyclical fashion, social 'practices' are instants of succession that occur over linear time. Of course, I have already shown throughout this text that Lefebvre is not concerned with 'practices'-as-things that are *present*; but is concerned with capturing presence, that is social action or doing in its happening like quality, free from re-presentation and mediatisation. Thus, it is key to flag up from the outset critiques which rest on an understanding of the returning of the same, of identities and following Nietzsche and Deleuze, Lefebvre's critique of identities as *things*. Thus cyclical and linear rhythms as described by Lefebvre are both constituted by repetition and *difference* as described in the previous chapter. Rather the distinction between cyclical and linear is an analytical one that allows Lefebvre to describe how mechanistic rhythms of production come to dominate the becoming rhythms of human social life. He clearly writes:

"Cyclical repetition and the linear repetitive separate out under analysis, but in *reality* interfere with one another constantly." (Lefebvre [1992] 2004, 8)

Indeed, this is a fundamental assertion that will necessarily be returned to throughout this chapter; but for now it is important to recognise that whilst critiques of Lefebvre's work exist, several of these mistake the notion of rhythmanalysis and the reason for distinguishing between cyclical and linear *rhythms* (i.e. not 'times').

As a means of showing how the changing rhythms of 'everyday' life might be analysed and understood, I refer to the fast growing sport and ever changing multiple rhythms of mixed martial arts practice. My experiences of training and competing in these rhythms of practice allows me to develop three conceptual tools: 'arrhythmia', 'training' and 'syncopation' (although there are undoubtedly further ways of conceptualising these ideas) that I suggest not only point the way to a re-conceptualisation of shaping rhythms of practice through scheduling routine; but also offers those interested in steering ongoing change, that is changing *what people do*, three pragmatic tools that 'overcome', or at the very least are capable of taking account of the compromised position of 'intervener', by fully recognising the re-production of historically and geographically situated 'moments' of practice. It will be useful then to begin by saying something about the rhythms of practice of mixed martial arts, to demonstrate why these changing rhythms offer such a useful example for interrogating mechanisms and processes of ongoing changing social action.

## **Mixed Martial Arts**

In one out of only a handful of academic writings on these rhythms of practice, Dale Spencer, in his book *Ultimate Fighting and Embodiment* (2012), describes mixed martial arts (MMA) in the following way:

"MMA competitions feature competitors in a ring or a caged-in area, inflicting pain on their opponents, *inter alia*, by punching, kicking, elbowing and kneeing their opponents into submission." (Spencer 2012, 3)

In this way, many commentators focus on the 'pain' and 'violence' of the sport. United States Senator John McCain at one time referred to this sport as 'human cockfighting' and it is

commonly referred to, in order to simultaneously deride and promote the sport, as 'cage fighting' by various media institutions. However, despite its superficially unsavoury image, mixed martial arts now claims to be the fastest growing sport in the world. In 2010, the most popular of innumerable promotions that stage mixed martial arts events was estimated to have a worldwide fan base of over 65 million people (Philpott 2010). The 'Ultimate Fighting Championship' (UFC) now airs its events on America's largest sporting network alongside American Football, Ice Hockey, Baseball and Basketball games (Klemko and Non 2011) and to demonstrate its rising mainstream popularity even further, top athletes fighting in the UFC are now sponsored by huge multi-national companies such as 'Nike' and 'Burger King' (Burke 2011, 2012).

Whilst its 'violent' *image* pervades and continues to draw attention from a handful of academics and a large section of the media, what is interesting, for this chapter about mixed martial arts, is its multiple changing rhythms of practice. In particular the rhythms of mixed martial arts are not only continually developing and changing; but mixed martial arts itself fosters an 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' that recognises this continual adaptation and adjustment not only in rhythms of training and fighting; but also in the *identity* of the practice itself.

As it is practiced today MMA is built upon the central disciplines of Thai Boxing (a standing fighting system that employs kicking and punching techniques), Wrestling (a set of grappling techniques that mediates the position of fighting from standing to fighting on the ground) and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (a ground fighting system comprising various locks and chokes). Whilst bodily techniques and movements from all (martial) arts can be employed in MMA competition, currently it is the integration of techniques from these central disciplines that have formed a core syllabus of moves and positions, consolidating mixed martial arts a discipline in its own right. Competitions have become organised and sanctioned through a unified set of rules,

upheld by various athletic commissions, so that mixed martial arts is now taught and practiced in gyms and dojos, as well as in universities and schools across the world, with children as young as five years old learning, training and competing in mixed martial arts.

Whilst these rhythms of practice (to some extent) have been legitimated, are growing at an exponential rate and are now taught as a consolidated and regulated discipline, mixed martial arts is rarely defined and rarely understands itself as 'a practice'. Just as in the example of stock car racing given in Chapter Four, each 'moment' of practice of mixed martial arts can be considered as a particular co-ordination of bodies and *things* that come together to form the event of that practice. This can be particularly well exemplified with reference to the various forms that fighting practice has taken. Indeed the label 'mixed martial arts' was only coined two years after the first UFC event held in 1993; but various forms of 'the practice' had been in existence for a long time before that. Nash suggests that, if we consider Mixed Martial Arts to be something like: competition between two unarmed combatants, studying disparate styles, where victory can be obtained through effective striking or grappling, that there are endless examples of what might well be labelled as 'Mixed Martial Arts' practice that can be seen throughout 'history'. (Nash 2012)

For example, as far back as 600 BC, Pankration was practiced as a requisite in Ancient Greek military service and was obligatory for obtaining citizenship in the Greek Polis. This particular sport was a combination of grappling and striking and a popular event at the Olympic Games (Grant 2011). During the medieval period there are examples in both Europe and the Far East of the emergence of warrior classes, such as Knights and Samurais, who trained in Karate and Jiu-Jitsu in Japan and in Europe what was called 'wresting-at-the-sword', to practice disarming opponents and defending themselves when they were unarmed. Competitions in these styles were often held for the pleasure and enjoyment of noble classes (Grant 2011). Other examples include, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the proliferation of 'rough-and-tumble' fighting in the

American Frontiers and the emergence of Prize Fighting in Europe, which after being 'cleaned up' by the Marquis de Queensbury Rules would become our modern day Boxing (Nash 2012). The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of challenges between various styles, particularly in Japan and Brazil before the first 'Ultimate Fighting Championship' was held in the United States in 1993.

Nevertheless, MMA as it is done today is unrecognisable from the first UFC competition in 1993. It is unrecognisable in terms of the kinds of techniques and strategies that are utilised in the ring, the levels of athleticism that are displayed, the marketing and advertising of fights and fighters, the salaries and healthcare that fighters receive, the extreme training and dieting regimes that fighters endure, the increased 'knowledge' of the fan base regarding particular techniques, the way that injuries are managed, careers, losses and victories and the enforcing of the strict rules and regulations of the governing bodies. All of this and more has changed and continues to change significantly, making it very difficult to fix mixed martial arts as 'a practice'. Indeed this is what makes mixed martial arts a perfect case with which to analyse and describe the mechanisms and processes of shaping unfolding and continually changing rhythms of practice.

In this chapter I draw on my own 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', my own experiences of the rhythms of mixed martial arts in order to inform this chapter's discussion of the shaping of rhythms of practice. I have always dabbled in various martial arts; but in 2009 at the beginning of writing this thesis, I took up mixed martial arts more seriously, became progressively more and more engaged and committed to various training and eating routines and ended up competing in 2012. These experiences are supplemented with a huge amount of ethnographic work in the gym during the countless training sessions, several in-depth interviews with training partners and fellow practitioners as well as with a developed understanding, à la Wacquant (2004), of the 'world' of this practice. It is with reference to examples from these

rhythms of practice that I move in this chapter to suggest a conceptualisation of shaping rhythms of practice through the ideas of 'arrhythmia', 'training' and 'syncopation'. First, however, it will be necessary to examine in further detail, Lefebvre's ([1992] 2004) account of rhythms of practice.

## **Rhythms of Practice**

In the introduction to *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* ([1992] 2004) Lefebvre clearly sets out his intention:

“... to found a science, a new field of knowledge [*savoir*]: the analysis of rhythms; with practical consequences.” (3)

This 'new field of knowledge' is part of Lefebvre's effort to make the *present, presence*. This can be achieved both as a project of 'overcoming' the banality and mundanity of 'everyday' life; but also as a socio-theoretical endeavour that seeks to resist the re-presentation and mediatisation of *things* and recognise the 'moment' of practice as *presencing*, as fleeting and becoming. Indeed in this way, Lefebvre is indebted to Nietzsche's understanding of 'eternal return' and to his theory of the 'moment'. For Lefebvre though, a focus on the 'moment' is not intended to describe an epistemology, nor an ontology; but instead draws attention to the study of the 'everyday'. That is to say that thinking about the 'moment' demonstrates that the individual cannot be separated from society in any way, a notion which directly challenges any strict divisions between sociology and philosophy:

“A sociologically grounded notion, it nonetheless claims philosophical status; it is important in thinking the everyday nature of the everyday, that is the temporal dimension and the importance of repetition; and although explicitly temporal is



transformed in the analysis of the event, a more situated concept. For Lefebvre, however, the moment is not the same as the situation, but it creates them.” (Elden 2004, 173)

Stuart Elden draws attention to the critical point that Lefebvre thinks about ‘time’ and ‘space’ together.<sup>28</sup> It is only through the analysis of the ‘moment’ that *things* and bodies can be coordinated in doing. Thus Lefebvre develops an analysis, from Nietzsche (and others), that exactly challenges abstract and reductive understandings of ‘time’ and ‘space’. This analysis is based on the study of repetition and *difference* (Deleuze [1969] 1994). As described in the previous chapter, this is a distinctive way of thinking about ‘time’. Nietzsche frames this as ‘eternal return’ of the same, whilst something other occurs. Lefebvre claims that this initially seems to us as a paradox: the generation of *difference* through repetition. However, as Deleuze ([1969] 1994) describes, this requires a re-framing of *difference*, not as the negation of identity, but as pure *difference* or becoming and of repetition as the fundamental structure of ‘practice in the moment of doing’ that constitutes *difference*. Lefebvre describes this in the following way:

“No rhythm without repetition in time and space, without reprises, without returns, in short without **measure** [*mesure*]. But there is no identical absolute repetition, indefinitely. Whence the relation between repetition and difference. When it concerns the everyday, rites, ceremonies, fêtes, rules and laws, there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference.” (6)

Rhythm then, consists of repetition, the repetition of ‘moments’. However, there is no absolute repetition, this is only a fiction of mathematical thought. For Lefebvre even if  $X = X$ , the second  $X$  is always already different, because it is second. He writes:

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<sup>28</sup> Despite views to the contrary (see Schatzki 2010, 13).

“Not only does repetition exclude difference, it also gives birth to them; it produces them.” (7)

Clearly then, Lefebvre’s understanding of rhythm is a far cry from understanding scientific, linear or objective ‘time’. Instead, ‘time’ (as described in the previous chapter) is constituted by the production of *difference* through repetition. Rhythm is not, as is most often understood in social scientific literature, a mapping of ‘practice’-as-a-*thing* over linear time, over an x axis, in a drawing out of ‘history’. Indeed Lefebvre’s understanding of rhythm precisely challenges our traditional understandings of ‘history’ and in fact signals a departure from thinking in terms of linearity and ‘history’.

However, as described in the introduction to this chapter, critics have drawn attention to the fact that Lefebvre makes an important distinction between the cyclical and the linear to suggest that he thought of ‘time’ objectively and thus considers ‘time’ and ‘space’ as separate phenomena. For example, in *The Timespace of Human Activity* (2010) Schatzki writes:

“Lefebvre distinguished between two types of rhythms: cyclical and linear... According to Lefebvre, linear rhythm, the repetition of the same, originates in human activity or social practice. It opposes becoming because it is constituted by return.” (Schatzki 2010, 13)

Clearly, this is not the case. As described above the repetition of the same exactly produces *difference* and therefore, for Lefebvre *is* becoming. This contention rather rests on Schatzki’s analysis of ‘practice’ as requiring a fixed identity that returns. As I showed in Chapter Five, in the section on ‘Eternal Return’, for Nietzsche, Deleuze and subsequently Lefebvre, it is not a fixed identity, or the same that returns; but returning itself which *is* the fundamental constitution of becoming. Thus, in making this analytic distinction, Lefebvre is not distinguishing between different understandings of ‘time’; but different structures of rhythm.

Both linear and cyclical rhythms are constituted by the production of *difference* through repetition; but they do this in different ways. Whilst cyclical rhythms are of biological and cosmic origins, linear rhythms are born of the technical and the social. Yet these two rhythms are not distinct; they constantly interfere with one another:

“... the cyclical and the linear, exert a reciprocal action: they measure themselves against one another; each one makes itself and is made a measuring-measure; everything is cyclical repetition through linear repetitions.” (8)

The relationship between social, technical rhythms and ‘natural’ rhythms is a constant theme throughout Lefebvre’s work. Indeed this is precisely why his concept of rhythm is situated at the level of the ‘everyday’, in order to explore the extent to which capitalist linear rhythms of production and exchange condition our bodily and ‘natural’ rhythms of becoming.

Therefore, having made absolutely clear that rhythm is not a linear and objective extension of ‘practice’ as entity over linear ‘time’ and to have signalled that there are different kinds of rhythms, it will be useful to briefly outline Lefebvre’s notions of ‘polyrhythmia’, ‘eurhythmia’ and ‘arrhythmia’, before illustrating these concepts, in the following section, through the changing rhythms of mixed martial arts practice, in order to build a thorough picture of the mechanisms and processes involved in shaping rhythms of practice.

Fundamentally, a rhythm is never understood in the singular; but always with its contextual, supporting and connecting rhythms. Lefebvre describes this with reference to examining a garden. He claims that most often we recognise a garden as having a singular rhythm, moving through the seasons, through day and night for example. The trees, the lawns and the groves are taken in a spatial simultaneity, that is, as having a permanent coexistence. However, Lefebvre argues that we should recognise each being as having its own rhythm, which is itself made up of several different rhythms (of its flowers, seeds, fruits etc.):

“Continue and you will see this garden and the *objects* (which are in no way things) **polyrhythmically**, or if you prefer *symphonically*. In place of a collection of fixed things, you will follow each *being*, each *body*, as having its own time above the whole. Each one therefore having its place, its rhythm, with its recent past, a foreseeable and a distant future.” (31)

To understand rhythms is to understand them ‘polyrhythmically’, to understand that each analysed being has its own ‘time’ (divided between its past and its future), its own rhythm; but is also a part of longer rhythms and made up of smaller rhythms depending on the scale at which our analytical lens is set. This scale is determined through the body of the rhythm analyst, from lived experience. It does not require an understanding of subjects, objects and their relations:

“The observer in the window knows that he takes his time as first reference, but that the first impression displaces itself and includes the most diverse rhythms, on the condition that they remain *to scale*. The passage from *subject* to *object* requires neither a leap over an abyss, nor the crossing of a desert. Rhythms always need a reference; the initial moment persists through other perceived givens.” (36)

This reference point therefore is always the body (as described in Chapter One and Chapter Three). The body has its own rhythms (biological, psychological etc.); but is also the site of connection to all other rhythms. It unites all other rhythms in ‘everyday’, routine practice. This is what Lefebvre calls ‘eurhythmia’:

“Polyrhythmia? It suffices to consult one’s body; thus the everyday reveals itself to be a polyrhythmia from the first listening. Eurhythmia? Rhythms unite with one another in a state of health, in normal (which is to say normed!) everydayness...” (16)

Eurhythmia then, is the co-ordination and concordance of rhythms in their 'normal' state, in the 'everyday', as experienced as ready-to-hand, that is to say, routine practice. However, rhythms can also breakdown:

“[W]hen they are discordant, there is suffering, a pathological state (of which arrhythmia is generally, at the same time, symptom, cause and effect). The discordance of rhythms brings previously eurhythmic organisations towards fatal disorder.” (16)

'Arrhythmia' is the de-synchronisation of rhythms, it is the extra-'everyday', the nonroutine, precisely in the sense of present-to-hand as described in Chapter Two. However, it should be well noted that 'arrhythmia' does not refer to a stepping out of rhythms, to an end of 'polyrhythmia'. Rhythms are always 'polyrhythmic'. Instead it is a re-alignment, a re-synchronisation of rhythms of practice. It is only a breakdown of the previous 'eurhythmia'. Another 'eurhythmia', a different 'eurhythmia', immediately aligns. Indeed, this suggestion that the 'polyrhythmia' of 'everyday' life is ongoing, points to significantly interesting opportunities for conceptualising shaping the rhythms of practice by scheduling 'moments' of practice as routine and nonroutine through shaping relations between 'moments' of practice as 'arrhythmiatic' and 'eurhythmic'. However, first it will be useful to better illustrate these ideas through a reading of the 'polyrhythmia' of mixed martial arts practice.

## **The Changing Rhythms of Mixed Martial Arts**

The changing rhythms of practice of mixed martial arts presents a particularly useful case for both thinking about and illustrating Lefebvre's analysis of the rhythms of 'everyday' life at several different scales. From the bodily rhythms of 'drilling' techniques over and over so that they become 'ingrained' and 'natural', to the rhythms of sparring and fighting, the rhythms of training several different martial disciplines, strength and conditioning, eating, stretching and

recovering, to the rhythms of the gym, including different timetabled classes, the rhythms of the training session and the intensity of preparing athletes for competition, to the rhythms of the changing popularity of certain techniques and styles, all the way to the changing rhythms of rule sets, governing bodies and martial arts' ethos and image. Indeed the way in which various configurations of these rhythms of practice have occurred particularly well exemplifies Lefebvre's concept of rhythm as the production of *difference* through repetition. As described above, the 'history' of the rhythms of mixed martial arts practice is not one that can well be described as a traceable lineage that has progressed over 'time'. Each described practice is a form of 'mixed' martial art that only existed in that 'moment' as a situated practice, with its own particular histories and geographies. However, each situated practice is not "fixed and immutable" (Pred 1990, 11); but in its doing, in its repetition, is continually producing *difference*. Whilst it is commonly presented otherwise, that is, as a progression of all combat styles towards an evolution of the 'ultimate' martial art (see Jordan 2008), MMA as it is practiced today can be argued to be entirely situated, enabled and constrained by its own sets of (changing) rules and its own (changing) histories and geographies. Many of the 'moments' of situated practice described above develop separately and disparately, without coming into contact with each other, and continue their own repetition and production of differences, just as MMA does today. Until recently, for example, Wrestling dominated contemporary MMA training and competition. The ability to control whether the fight took place on the ground or on the feet was seen to be the most important and effective element of fighting. However, as these rhythms of practice are repeated, differences emerge. There seems to be a shift in the rhythms of practice of mixed martial arts towards good footwork and avoiding wrestling range to enable effective striking. To this end there has been a resurgence of techniques employed from traditional martial art styles, in particular the Karate front kick, for example, rarely, if ever used before 2011 in MMA competition, has become a staple technique after two top athletes had great success in finishing their fights with this particular move.

The rhythms of mixed martial arts practice then are not adequately re-presented as a progression over linear 'time'. Instead each 'moment' of practice is a 'moment' of situated doing, enabled and constrained by its histories and geographies. Nevertheless *difference* does not exist between two separate and identifiable 'moments'. Rather, each 'moment', as divided between its past and its future, is fleeting, ungraspable, making itself different in its very doing, in its repetition. The concept of rhythm is not intended to capture change over linear or objective time; but to capture the form of the production of *difference* through repetition, i.e. the rhythm.

Of course as described above, the rhythms of practice of MMA do not exist in isolation. The move from wrestling to striking as a more dominant element is tied into and synchronised with all other kinds of rhythms of 'drilling', sparring, fan 'knowledge', particular 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', promotions and advertising and so on. All rhythms are 'polyrhythmic' according to Lefebvre. To further explore this idea I offer a reading of my own engagement in these rhythms of practice.

When I first began practicing MMA, I trained once per week on a Thursday night and continued my normal gym routine quite separately, lifting weights about three times per week. I ate fairly typically but was trying to eat 'healthier' foods during my three meals. Four years later, in the middle of an eight week training camp to prepare for my first competition I was consistently eating six meals a day (each of which was made up of a specific portion and ratio of protein, carbohydrates and fats), I trained twice every day and my weights routine had become completely adapted and strictly timetabled in synchronisation with my MMA training sessions, now incorporating hill sprinting, and swimming amongst other things, to enable my technique and fitness to peak, as well as for my body weight to hit an exact 70kg, on the day of competition.

My bodily rhythms had been completely transformed. I became hungry at different 'times', tired at different 'times', energetic at different 'times'. What I was doing was different as well. As my rhythms of practice of mixed martial arts changed, as I began training more often and developed better technique, my eating rhythms changed, my sleeping rhythms changed, my working rhythms changed, my 'free-time' rhythms changed. These rhythms supported each other and held each other together. It would be impossible, for example to prepare for a MMA competition and only train once a week, just as it would be unlikely that someone would train more than once a day and only eat three meals. Instead the rhythms of MMA practice supported particular 'normal' and 'everyday' rhythms of training, eating and sleeping. This is exactly what Lefebvre refers to as eurhythmia:

“**Eurhythmia** (that of a living body, normal and *healthy*) presupposes the association of different rhythms.” (67)

Nevertheless, whilst rhythms of practice, draw in and are drawn, are synchronised and synchronise with other rhythms, they also exclude certain other rhythms of practice. For example, when training for competition and indeed training more generally, athletes and fighters tend not to consume alcohol. Lefebvre describes this as 'arrhythmia'.

“In arrhythmia, rhythms break apart, alter and bypass *synchronisation* ...” (16)

In this case drinking alcohol, which may have been a previously synchronised part of 'everyday' life for a practitioner, is bypassed, de-synchronised and broken apart from the 'normal' 'eurhythmia' of routine practice. Considering the 'polyrhythmic' structure of rhythms of practice then, provides a significantly different conceptualisation of the relationship between social action and social change. I continue now to further develop this framework, as illustrated through the example of rhythms of practice of MMA, in order to suggest three related conceptual tools: 'arrhythmia', 'training' and 'syncopation' that describe the



mechanisms and processes that occur in the scheduling of routine and that might well be considered in potentially shaping rhythms of practice in 'everyday' life.

## **Arrhythmia**

The first point of departure for conceptualising shaping rhythms of practice is to consider the role of 'arrhythmia'. 'Arrhythmia', it must be noted is at the same time a break in 'eurhythmia', in the synchronisation and concordance of rhythms as 'everyday' and routine; but it is also frequent, repeated and remains in the 'everyday'. In a sense, disruption and pain (breaks in rhythm) repeat to constitute the 'eurhythmia' of 'everyday' life:

"Pain returns. It repeats itself, since the repetition of pleasure gives rise to pain(s)."

(12)

'Arrhythmia' returns, as it is only through the repetition of breaks in rhythm that *difference* is constituted. This notion can be clearly illustrated through the experience of Alan, a fellow training partner in MMA and interview respondent who had been becoming more and more involved with mixed martial arts training until he injured his knee whilst practicing a wrestling 'take-down'.

"After I had hurt my knee and the doctor said I had to rest it for at least eight weeks I was sure I was going to come straight back to training. He gave me some exercises to do to help rehab it and I thought I was going to do them every day until I got back to training... But with one thing and another I didn't really do my exercises. It's harder to be motivated when you're just on your own. Then other stuff just seems to take over, I'm working more now and I like staying in with my girlfriend... I feel like I don't really have time to go training now..." (Alan)

Due to the rigours of the sport and the high intensities of training, injuries can be fairly common in MMA and up to a particular level, they tend to have similar impacts on rhythms of practice. In Alan's case, his injury, this 'arrhythmia', led to the breaking apart of the rhythms of MMA practice from his other rhythms. Instead working rhythms and rhythms of spending time at home have come to form another 'everyday' 'eurhythmia' that itself is now difficult to break. Let me stress again that Alan's injury, whilst a 'moment' of 'arrhythmia', never stopped being 'everyday'. Rather, 'arrhythmia' simply works to *re-configure* the 'eurhythmia' of the 'everyday'.

As such, not all 'moments' of 'arrhythmia' lead to the desistance of rhythms of practice. Some breaks in rhythms of practice are not enough to radically alter 'eurhythmia'. Shane, a professional mixed martial artist with over five years experience described how he deals with injuries:

"Injuries are just a part of the job. You just have to learn how to manage them and learn how to work around them. If I have hurt my leg, I come in and work my boxing or if my arms are hurt, I come and train my kicks. If I've knocked my head I don't spar but I work on my technique and my cardio. A lot of injury management and prevention is about listening to your body to know what to work and when." (Shane)

Shane's job is to be a mixed martial artist, to train every day and regularly compete. He recognises that injuries, we might say 'arrhythmia', have to be accommodated and that they are a part of the rhythms of mixed martial arts practice. Indeed, through his experience of these rhythms of practice Shane has developed sufficient 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' to negotiate the 'world' of practice in exactly the same way that I described William is able to negotiate the 'world' of resistance training. Thus by accounting for 'arrhythmia' (nonroutine) in this way, Shane's 'eurhythmia' (routine) becomes re-established. Lefebvre describes this as one way of thinking about 'intervention', that is to strengthen eurhythmia:

“Intervention through rhythm... has a goal, an objective: to strengthen or re-establish eurhythmia. It seems that certain oriental practices come close to these procedures, more so than medical treatments.” (68)

Lefebvre then offers a critique of reactive ‘intervention’ (say of treating patients after they become ill) because it recognises change, or ‘intervention’, as situated between two fixed states (well and unwell). He is instead calling for a re-consideration of continually changing rhythms that can be supported to strengthen or maintain ‘eurhythmia’. When thinking about the relationship between social action and social change therefore, as opposed to thinking about changing what people do, one alternative method for conceptualising ‘intervention’ might be to recognise that what people are doing is continually changing and that this continual changing can be strengthened and supported by accommodating breaks, by recognising that they actually constitute doing itself. However, breaks in rhythms present other potential strategies for shaping rhythms of practice that are also signposted by Lefebvre. One further method is the imprinting of rhythms through ‘training’.

## **Training**

Lefebvre describes that every time there is ‘arrhythmia’, a break in rhythms of practice, there is the opportunity to imprint a rhythm, that is, to shape rhythms of practice. He clearly states:

“Objectively, for there to be *change*, a social group, a class or a caste must intervene by imprinting a **rhythm** on an era, be it through force or in an insinuating manner. In the course of a *crisis*, in a critical situation, a group must designate itself as *innovator* or *producer* of *meaning*. And its acts must inscribe themselves on *reality*. The intervention imposes itself neither militarily, nor politically nor even ideologically.

Occasionally, a long time after the action, one sees the emergence of novelty. Perspicacity, attention and above all an opening are required.” (14-15)

For Lefebvre then, it is possible for a social group to ‘intervene’ in rhythms of practice, at the point of ‘arrhythmia’ and to imprint a rhythm. However, it cannot be over stated that the results of attempts at imprinting rhythms are unpredictable. Only occasionally will ‘novelty’ emerge. This is due to the ‘polyrhythmic’ nature of rhythms that always seeks to maintain ‘eurhythmia’ and the fundamental structure of the ‘moment’ as situated practice.

Nevertheless, Lefebvre notes that ‘everyday’ life is structured by rhythms which are themselves ordered and structured by other rhythms (cyclical and linear). In particular throughout his work Lefebvre is concerned with “the way in which social rhythms and the time of work and production is imposed over the physical rhythms of human life.” (Elden 2004, 197) This idea is discussed in chapter four of Lefebvre’s *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (Lefebvre [1992] 2004), under the notion of ‘dressage’, or here, ‘training’:

“Humans break themselves in [se dressent] like animals. They learn to hold themselves. Dressage can go a long way as far as breathing, movements, sex. It bases itself on **repetition**. One breaks-in another human living being by making them repeat a certain act, a certain gesture or movement.” (39)

Indeed mixed martial arts ‘training’ is organised precisely around this principle. So many of the classes at the gym that I attended were organised around ‘drilling’, practising a technique over and over and over again until it became reaction, ‘ingrained’ and ‘natural.’ Even the free sparring, always done at the end of a session was conducted in a drill like form. Three lots of four minute rounds, first of kickboxing, then wrestling, then ground fighting. Michael summed up this repetitive ‘drilling’:

“I don’t really learn anything new anymore. In fact, I could probably tell you what drills, in what order we’re going to do tonight... But it’s not boring, it’s just getting your body to react so you can do your technique without even thinking about it.” (Michael)

This sense of the routinisation of action through ‘training’ or ‘drilling’ does not just apply to bodily movements but to weekly timetables as well.

“No, I never ask myself whether I want to go training. It’s just what I do. If it’s a training night, I come home from work get something to eat and head off to the [gym].” (Kerri)

Clearly then, through their repetition, rhythms of practice become characterised as routine. Indeed for Lefebvre it is ‘training’, *dressage* (exactly in the Foucauldian sense of disciplining ‘docile bodies’ (Foucault 1975)), that comes to organise the ‘eurhythmia’ of the ‘everyday’, to determine the majority of rhythms and to schedule routine practice:

“This rhythmic model, in use throughout the world, establishes itself over the course of dressage, and subsequently perpetuates itself. Is it not convenient for armies, religious and educational establishments, for offices and monasteries alike?” (Lefebvre [1992] 2004, 41)

Thus, it is ‘training’ through repetition that schedules routine practice. Rather than simply telling someone that they have to change their rhythms of practice, ‘training’ requires repetition of doing that practice, whilst at the same time accommodating breaks in rhythm in order to strengthen its ‘eurhythmia’. However, I am going to suggest in the following section, that it is also possible to ‘intervene’ in a third way, by emphasising ‘arrhythmia’ and the nonroutine in order to ‘syncopate’ and re-configure the rhythms of ‘everyday’ practice.

## Syncopation

The final conceptual tool I want to present to both further develop the potential for thinking in terms of rhythms of practice and for shaping rhythms of practice is my own analysis of 'syncopation'. In musical terms, 'syncopation' refers to a disturbance of the regular flow of rhythms as emphasis is placed on the off-beat of the rhythm to create an unexpected rhythmic pattern. I suggest that having understood 'arrhythmia' and 'training' as described above, that the 'syncopation' of rhythms offers an intriguing notion for considering the shaping and moulding of rhythms of practice at a variety of scales. Of course as Lefebvre argues this above all requires an opportunity, a 'moment', a break in practice in which to 'intervene'. It also requires an understanding of the rhythms of that practice to be altered as rhythms that are 'trained', that is, repeated to the extent that they are experienced by the practitioner as routine and as 'everyday' practice. It is then potentially possible to recognise the extra-'everyday', the nonroutine and that which has not been 'trained' or disciplined in the same way and to emphasise, to highlight or to accent this 'moment' of practice, this 'arrhythmia', in order to *overcome* the 'everyday' and the disciplined. Repetition of this 'moment' of 'arrhythmia', of nonroutine practice through 'training' would then allow this rhythm to 'fall in', for itself to become recognised as the 'everyday' and as routine. For Lefebvre, this is the importance of and the goal of rhythmanalysis. To move away from re-presentation, the continual study of the mediated *present* and to recognise *things* in their becoming, in their *presence*. He argues:

"The rhythm analyst could, in the long term, attempt something analogous: works [oeuvres] might return to and intervene in the everyday. Without claiming to *change life*, but by fully reinstating the sensible in consciousness and in *thought*, he would accomplish a tiny part of the *revolutionary* transformation of this world and this society in decline. Without any declared political position." (26)

However, it is important to recognise that any attempted 'syncopation' is still built on the understanding of rhythms as constituted by *difference* through repetition and that of course the production of *difference* as 'polyrhythmic' and existing across multiple scales is not predictable nor is it open to design. Merely it is possible to recognise 'arrhythmia' and attempt 'training' that might imprint a rhythm. Lefebvre warns us:

"But it should not be necessary to see in these innovations... only *progress*, creations. This *positive* aspect is not without the so-called negative side: impoverishment, weakening, through the loss of spontaneity, etc." (64)

As conceptual tools, 'syncopation', 'training' and 'arrhythmia' are ways of getting a handle on continual change, on becoming. They do not offer an analysis of how to change one state of affairs into another; but rather suggest how continual change, that is, rhythms of practice might be steered. Nevertheless, rhythmanalysis recognises that events happen and practice changes. As Rob Shields describes of Lefebvre's conceptual tool kit:

"In the end, he leaves us with something like the scissors-and-rock game played in schoolyards and seems to almost shrug, saying, 'events overturn theory' (1968)." (Shields 1999, 74)

## Conclusion

In sum, this chapter has sought to think through the implications of an analysis of rhythms. If practice is both situated as event and continually becoming in the 'moment' of practice, the study of rhythms provides a particularly intriguing field in which to examine the various ways in which repetition comes to constitute *difference*. After an elaboration of Lefebvre's schema, as outlined in his proposed 'new science' of rhythmanalysis, that recognises all rhythms as

essentially 'polyrhythmic', comprised of 'eurythmic', 'everyday', routine practice as well as 'moments' of 'arrhythmic' and nonroutine practice, I proposed a conceptualisation of shaping rhythms of practice by scheduling routine through thinking with the ideas of 'arrhythmia', 'training' and 'syncopation'. Indeed these ideas can be taken as building together to suggest that it is possible to recognise 'moments' of breakdown and imprint rhythms through repetition and 'training', so that emphasis is placed on nonroutine practice and the syncopation of extra-'everyday' rhythms. However, it was noted that 'syncopation' across 'polyrhythmia' and multiple scales is neither causal nor predictable. Rather any 'syncopation' of rhythms of practice can only hope to prepare the ground from which further rhythms of practice might spring.

This account of change and of managing change then has significant implications both for academic considerations of transitions in practice, in understanding how what people do changes and for those seeking to affect what people do, to shape rhythms of practice. In the following conclusion of this thesis I address the implications of this research in both these regards and suggest how this ontological framework of practice might be mobilised in further empirical studies of the rhythms of 'everyday' life as well as some of the conceptual problems that it would be important for further research to consider.



# Conclusion: Towards a Sociology of Becoming and Strengthening Eurhythmia

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## Summary

This thesis began by proposing a particular methodology for studying doing, that is, through analysing the spatio-temporal rhythms of practice in 'everyday' life. I argued that the premise of this thesis, to recognise 'practice as event', in its *presencing* and 'in the moment of doing', without re-presenting practice through the subjects and objects of action, required a theoretically informed methodological approach that could marry this account to a practice informed empirical study of doing. I therefore contrasted my suggested methodological approach first to an account that understood talking about 'practice' as distinct from practical activity (see Giddens 1984; Hitchings 2012) and second to an account that required the management and negotiation of jumping from the inside to the outside of observed bodies (see Bourdieu 1999). Thus, instead of trying to reduce as much as possible my own impact as a researcher in order to get to the 'truth' of 'the practice' under study by swinging between 'self'-reflection and total immersion, I argued that in this research I would take an interpretative position, recognising the historically and geographically situated-ness of my position as both researcher and participant within the rhythms of practice described in these pages. Following Lefebvre ([1992] 2004) I argued that this position could best be understood as the position of the rhythm analyst. In the same way that Wacquant (2004) turned his attention to the study of his own rhythms of boxing that he found himself engaged in, I too employed an analysis of my own (more and less strong) rhythms of practice to re-think the relationship between social action and social change. However, I also argued that

rhythmanalysis, as it is re-presented in this thesis, goes one step further than Wacquant's analysis, by recognising my own rhythms of practice of academia, studying and thinking as inseparable from my rhythms of mixed martial arts, yoga and computer gaming practice. Indeed Wacquant's deliberation over whether to leave an academic career to pursue a career as a professional boxer demonstrates his methodological separation of these rhythms of practice. Instead I argued that the rhythms of practice as detailed in this thesis (including the rhythms of thinking and writing the thesis) must be understood as a 'polyrhythmia' sited at the body of the rhythmanalyst.

Having defined the position and the methodological approach of this thesis I moved in Chapter Two to propose an understanding of the 'world' of practice, of 'being-in-the-world', constituted by and amid the material equipment of that 'world', as opposed to an understanding of 'practice' as constituted by the relations between various human and nonhuman objects. Through analyses and examples of resistance training, I argued that one way to consider the 'world' of practice was to take a step back from re-presentations of subjects and objects of social action and to re-focus attention on doing, on practical activity, that is on practice as the central unit of enquiry. I suggested that Heidegger's ([1927] 1962) notions of *Dasein* and 'being-in-the-world' could provide exactly the conceptual ground on which to build a social ontology free from re-presentation.<sup>29</sup> It was through analyses of 'being-in-the-world' and the examples of resistance training that I proposed that experiencing the equipment of practice as ready-to-hand and present-to-hand, was to experience the 'world' of practice as routine and nonroutine respectively. It was with this framing of routine and nonroutine that I went on in the rest of the thesis to investigate the scheduling of routine and the shaping of rhythms of practice in 'everyday' life.

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<sup>29</sup> Of course later it was necessary, as Heidegger himself notes in his later work, to leave behind *Dasein*, or the being of the human entity, in order to recognise the becoming-ness of social being. See Chapter Five, section on: 'Tracing Rhythms'.

In light of these claims I argued that it was necessary to position the role of the body and of 'knowledge' in relation to this configuration of the 'world' of practice. Therefore, in Chapter Three I referred to my experiences of the rhythms of practice of ashtanga yoga, in order to explore what I have called 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice'. I described that many social 'theories of practice' despite claiming to acknowledge and rescind such dualisms between the 'mind' and the body, between 'conscious' and 'unconscious' actions and between 'practical' and 'discursive' 'consciousnesses' nevertheless maintain a distinction between body-subjects and body-objects that necessarily externalises 'knowledge' from practice and situates change as existing between two fixed entities. I therefore began this chapter, following the work of Merleau-Ponty ([1945] 1962), by making clear the argument that Heidegger's 'being-in-the-world' is fully embodied, that the body is the *there-ness* of all possible action whether characterised as routine or nonroutine. In this sense, I fundamentally opposed systems of thought that considered routine as 'habitual' action and nonroutine as 'conscious' action. Building on this argument I suggested that it was important to re-frame questions that asked how 'practices' were learned, that asked how 'knowledge' about 'a practice' jumped from one person to another. Following Lave and Wenger (1991) I argued that 'knowledge' is not separate from practice; but instead *is* the very condition of practice. That 'knowledge', in this account, is never an external object that can be passed between practitioners; but is always established in doing, as 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice'. Finally, I prepared the ground for the following chapter on 'practice as event', by situating this concept of 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', following Deleuze and Guattari's ([1980] 1988) argument, as the site at which the body constantly connects with other bodies, tools and machines constituting assemblages of the 'world' of practice, 'in the moment of doing'.

Building on these ideas, in Chapter Four I described a re-orienting of 'theories of practice' towards recognising a theoretical approach underwritten by the notion of 'practice as event', that is, as the synchronisation and co-ordination of bodies and *things* that make up the 'world'

of 'practice in the moment of doing'. This idea was shaped and illustrated through my analysis of the rhythms of stock car racing and in particular was explained with reference to the synchronisation and co-ordination of all the various, racing vehicles, spectators, officials, drivers, teams, mechanics, stalls, vendors and so on race day. To distinguish my understanding of 'practice as event' from other 'theories of practice,' I compared my notion, as building on Allan Pred's (1990) analysis of the temporally and spatially situated-ness and becoming-ness of social practice, with 'theories of practice' that follow a distinction between practice as performance and practice as entity. I argued that it becomes increasingly problematic to consolidate and label what people do as 'a practice' and that re-presenting 'practice' as a provisionally stable entity externalises change, 'knowledge' and people from practice. Having made this argument, I went on to show, through a close comparison of my understanding of 'practice as event' with Schatzki's discussion in *The Timespace of Human Activity* (2010), that a distinction between practice as entity and practice as performance has significant ramifications for thinking about the relationship between practice and 'time' and thus practice and change and therefore has important consequences for thinking about shaping rhythms of practice. By separating human activity and 'timespaces' Schatzki maintains an understanding of 'practices'-as-things that exist, arise and end at certain points in 'time' and 'space' (despite his attempts to circumvent this problem). Instead this thesis suggests that social action, or practice is always situated in the "becoming space of time and the becoming time of space..." (Hägglund 2008, 2). In this way, rather than being separate, 'timespace' and 'human activity' as Schatzki describes them, produce and re-produce each other.

In Chapter Five, I elaborated on the temporal aspect of 'practice as event' in order to argue that rather than considering social change as external to social action, recognising 'practice in

the moment of doing' requires understanding change as a fundamental part of practice.<sup>30</sup> In order to substantiate this claim I provided a discussion of the rhythms of practice of computer gaming and described that computer gamers often detail experiences of gaming as distorting their subjective experiences of 'time' and that games designers purposefully try to theorise and implement this experience when building games with explicit reference to Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) theory of 'flow'. I argued that the theoretical distinction that underpins Csikszentmihalyi's theory of 'flow', between subjective and objective 'time' can be traced back to Bergson's ([1889] 2008) distinction between 'spatialised' and 'real' 'time' and suggested that this distinction influences much contemporary social theory on 'time' and nearly all 'theories of practice' that try to grapple with this issue. I argued that it is possible to move beyond these re-presentations of 'time' by considering Nietzsche's ([1883-85] 1961) transvaluation of 'time' through the notion of 'eternal return'. By following Nietzsche's argument I claimed that we can both re-focus 'time' away from a re-presentation as the *present* towards the 'moment' of practice as *presence* and come to recognise that being is becoming, doing is *difference* and that practice is change. Thus, I argued that 'time' is not the mere medium of practice; rather it constitutes and is constituted by practice. Finally, in this chapter I gave a reading of Deleuze's argument in *Difference and Repetition* ([1969] 1994) to support my assertion, that when considering 'practice as event', change, or difference, can no longer be understood as the negation of identities or entities and has to be understood as *difference* in itself, pure *difference* or becoming. Indeed as I described, with reference to Hägglund's (2008, 2012) work on Derrida's deconstruction of 'time', this *difference* is at work from the very beginning and it is this structure of practice, as synthesised through the 'trace', which makes it rhythmical from the very outset. Thus I turned in the final chapter to Lefebvre

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<sup>30</sup> I elaborate on the temporal aspect not to separate 'time' and 'space', of course here the unity of 'time' and 'space' is implied. However, opposing this account to temporal accounts given by other systems of thought provides a useful lens through which to think about this idea.

([1992] 2004) to provide an analysis of the rhythms of 'everyday' life and suggest how rhythms of practice might be shaped.

Chapter Six builds on all of the arguments made in the previous four chapters concerning 'the world of practice', 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', 'practice as event' and 'practice in the moment of doing' in order to put forward three theoretical concepts for shaping rhythms of practice: 'arrhythmia', 'training' and 'syncopation'. In it I drew on my experiences of the rhythms of practice of mixed martial arts, to explore Lefebvre's ([1992] 2004) conceptual scheme and 'new science' of rhythmanalysis and the relationship between routine, 'eurhythmic' rhythms of practice and nonroutine, 'arrhythmiatic' rhythms of practice, in order to re-think 'everyday' 'interventions' on the subject-to-be-changed as the shaping of rhythms of practice and the scheduling of routine. Building on Lefebvre's work I argue that it is possible to schedule routine by recognising 'moments' of 'arrhythmia' and seeking to imprint rhythms through repetition and 'training' to place emphasis on or to highlight nonroutine rhythms of practice that might lead to the 'syncopation' of extra-'everyday' or nonroutine rhythms of practice. In this way I argued that it is possible to come back to and to 'intervene' in the rhythms of 'everyday' life; but warned that any attempted 'syncopation' in the 'polyrhythmia' of the 'everyday' cannot result in predictable outcomes and that anyone seeking to shape rhythms of practice must recognise their own rhythms as thoroughly entwined, synchronised and co-ordinated within the 'polyrhythmia' of the 'everyday' in the same way that I described the historically and geographically situated position of the rhythmanalyst in Chapter One. This is not necessarily a limitation; rather it provides the opportunity for the rhythmanalyst, for one who has considered the implications of thinking about rhythms of practice, to restore the authentic to the 'everyday', to move past representation and to bring *presence* to the *present*.

## **Towards A Sociology of Becoming: Socio-Theoretical Implications**

Such an ontology of practice, thus defined, has significant implications not only for 'theories of practice'; but could also be important for wider social scientific programmes that are interested in studying social action and social change. In particular there are six key implications that can be drawn from this research. First it re-presents a fundamentally alternative approach to many contemporary systems of thought, second it lays the foundations for an understanding of situated research through the body of the rhythmanalyst, third, it draws attention to the level of the 'everyday', fourth it points to an 'overcoming' of 'history', fifth it re-frames change as a fundamental property of ongoing rhythms of practice and finally it points to the responsibilities of the sociologist, of the philosopher-poet, of the rhythmanalyst, to attempt in the long term to return *presence* to the *present* and restore the cyclical becoming-ness of social being to human life currently eliminated by the linear, repetitive and mechanistic rhythms of modern, technical and industrial production. I expand on each of these implications below.

Thus, this thesis suggests a distinctive approach to the study of social action, that is, of what people do. It neither contends that the central unit of enquiry should be the individual, motivated and structured to perform (or not) a variety of 'practices'; nor does it centre its analysis around 'practices' that capture or recruit more and less passive practitioners. Instead, this theoretical approach to studying the social necessarily rejects the distinction between subjects and objects of action and turns its attention to practice proper, to social action 'in the moment of doing', as it *presences*, that is, not as it is re-presented and commodified as an entity. Whilst 'theories of practice' have claimed to have founded a field of study that underwrites subjectivity and objectivity (see Schatzki, Cetina, and von Savigny 2001), I have argued in this thesis that because these studies require an entity such as 'a practice' or a practitioner towards which they might focus their studies and 'interventions', that this project

has had limited success. I argue that the model re-presented in this thesis much more successfully and thoroughly underwrites a re-presentation of social action, first and foremost through a recognition of the situated position of the researcher.

Not only does my research provide an alternative analytic approach to the study of social action; it also re-presents a necessary approach to matters of methodology. Like other contemporary social theorists, I advocate an interpretative position, that does not seek to uncover an object 'truth' to social action, or to get as close to it as possible; but seeks to recognise the historically and geographically situated-ness of the researcher as only able to interpret social action through her own experiences, her own rhythms of practice. Indeed this thesis provides an example of rhythmanalysis by taking up of the role of the rhythmanalyst to demonstrate that conceptual analysis is not separate from empirical study, that theory is not separate from method and the researcher is not separate from her object of study. Rather the rhythms of reading and writing in the academic 'world' of practice, I have argued, both shape and are shaped by participation in all other rhythms of practice in 'everyday' life. At the very least this suggestion has significant implications for how social scientific researchers consider and engage with their 'object of study' and could more widely point to a re-configuring of a social scientific methodology that is capable of taking account of an interrelating of both the rhythms of the researcher and the rhythms of social action within the 'polyrhythmia' of 'everyday' life.

Importantly a third implication for sociologists and 'practice theorists', that can be taken from this research is that studying social action should be situated at the level of the 'everyday'. Again, 'practice theorists' often champion approaches that study routine, ordinary and habitual day-to-day living; however this research suggests refining this approach not just to the study of the repetitive nature of day-to-day living or 'everydayness' (*quotidienneté*); but to the study of the introduction of the 'everyday' (*quotidian*) into social life as the



commodification and domination of the becoming-ness of social being. Thus, focusing analysis at the level of the 'everyday' draws both macro analyses of social structures and the experiences of people through a theoretical re-appropriation of the 'moment' of doing in its *presence*. This notion and its exemplification in this research is a useful tool to contribute to social scientific investigations of practice and change.

Even further, the research re-presented in this text points to a re-framing of 'history' as the histories and geographies that can be 'traced' from events or 'moments' of practice. This is a significant implication that can be addressed both to 'theories of practice' and systems of social thought more widely, that 'history' does not only have to be understood as a linear stretching out of *things* and events-as-they-happened. In fact, according to Lefebvre, social science should see its job as seeking to 'overcome' 'history' as the past sequence of *things* and events. Instead, by 'overcoming' 'history' through a transvaluation of 'time' we can come to understand becoming as ongoing and not as existing between two stable entities, identities or *things*. Indeed this is a significant contribution to social theory, to argue again (that is to repeat the arguments made by Nietzsche, Deleuze, Lefebvre and others, so that they might become stronger rhythms within the 'polyrhythmia' of social science research), that becoming is not external to being, that change is not the negation of social action as entity or identity; but that *being is becoming, doing is difference* and change is a fundamental property of practice. Thus, in contrast to Schatzki's (2010) argument, practice is *ipso facto* change.

All of this implies one final suggestion for the social theorist. That is, that if one follows the path developed in this research, then the social theorist has a responsibility to fully re-instate herself into the 'everyday', to come back to it and to change it, no matter how small these changes at first might seem, to restore moving to re-presentation, to restore living to the commodified and to restore *presence* to the *present*. Simply by taking on this kind of theoretical-methodological approach the sociologist, the philosopher-poet, already brings

herself to the 'everyday' and already achieves a small part of the imprinting of cyclical rhythms onto the linear.

### **Strengthening Eurhythmia: Policy Orientated Implications**

Considering that the implications of this study for the social theorist require both a level of theoretical-conceptual understanding and a recognition of the strength of linear 'polyrhythms' that might slow any recourse to cyclical and becoming rhythms, one might ask: 'are there implications or suggestions that can be made in the shorter term, that might aid policy makers, NGO's or other institutions interested in making an impact on what people do, to influence the shaping of rhythms and the scheduling of practice as routine or otherwise?' Whilst this thesis recognises the prevailing dominance of linear rhythms, of mechanical and technical repetition and makes the argument that in the longer term, social science should seek to restore the lived to the 'everyday', it also suggests a framework for analysing and managing linear rhythms, for scheduling routine and nonroutine practice and for both strengthening and weakening 'eurhythmic' practice, through the tools of 'arrhythmia', 'training' and 'syncopation'.

That is to say that whilst rhythms of practice are difficult to predict, fix and constrain precisely because they are always 'polyrhythmic' and changing in 'the moment of practice', that it is possible to significantly weaken 'eurhythmic' rhythms of practice through deliberately introducing forms of 'arrhythmia'. Take for example bans on fox hunting or smoking in public places. Those rhythms of fox hunting or smoking do not desist or end; rather they are weakened and provide opportunities for other rhythms to be strengthened through repetition. Indeed this is exactly what Lefebvre argues in *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* ([1992] 2004), that in order to imprint a 'new' rhythm or to make a rhythm stronger, it is first necessary to have an 'arrhythmia', a 'moment' of nonroutine practice. 'Arrhythmia' could be

induced in several ways, for example introducing present-to-hand equipment to a 'world' of practice, or weakening 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' or through the prohibition of those rhythms and so forth.

Significantly though, this only schedules the 'moment' as nonroutine, it still requires repetition *for difference to continue*. Thus anyone seeking to shape rhythms of practice would do well to take on board Foucault's discussion regarding the disciplining effect of *le dressage*, of the timetabling and *routine-isation* (that is the making routine of 'moments' of practice) of prisoners through repetition in *Discipline and Punish* (1975). Indeed, Lefebvre makes it clear that in order to strengthen 'eurhythmia', it is necessary to schedule practice as routine, through repetition and by building up 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' so that the material equipment that constitutes the 'world' of practice (including human bodies) comes to be experienced as ready-to-hand. We can think about this method of shaping rhythms of practice, of weakening and strengthening 'eurhythmia', of scheduling routine, as 'syncopation'. In musical terms this refers to placing emphasis on or highlighting the offbeat so that it comes to change the dominant rhythms of the whole. So too, it is possible to understand and to suggest to those interested in shaping what people do, that it is possible to schedule the nonroutine as routine, by placing emphasis on the nonroutine, that is by providing the material conditions and sufficient 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' for it to be experienced as ready-to-hand and thus to be repeated as routine.

In particular these suggestions contrast not only with much contemporary social scientific writing that considers change as external to social action; but also to dominant political rhetoric that calls on individuals to *choose* to adopt certain attitudes or behaviours. However, this is not to suggest that talking to people is a waste of time and resources. Clearly this kind of engagement has its place; but this thesis suggests that this is firmly within a theoretical framework that recognises talking as part of practice, as part of social action.

However, whilst 'arrhythmia', 'training' and 'syncopation' might seem like wholly applicable concepts that contemporary policy might make use of to shape all manner of rhythms of practice, from rhythms of practice of exercising to rhythms of practice of recycling, these ideas come with a necessary theoretical-methodological re-framing that affects the position of the social theorist and policy maker alike. That is that the social theorist wishing to study rhythms of practice of exercising or the policy maker wishing to shape rhythms of practice of recycling already bring their own 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice', their own understandings and experiences, to the 'polyrhythmia' of the 'everyday', producing and re-producing the already changing 'worlds' of practice that they seek to study and influence. Thus, policy has to recognise, in making use of these ideas that suggest that practice is produced and re-produced by the totality of bodies and *things* that constitute its 'world', that it is not separate from the rhythms of practice that it wishes to shape and that any shaping that can be done is already a part of the 'polyrhythmia' of the 'everyday'.

Finally, as far as policy orientated implications for this thesis go, considering social action and social change in this way requires understanding not only 'intervention' as inseparable from the 'polyrhythmia' of the 'everyday'; it also requires understanding 'intervention' in a different way that might make a significant implication for how any 'intervener' or policy maker might consider themselves or their own role in the longer term. Lefebvre makes this clear when he says:

"Intervention through rhythm (which already takes place, though only empirically, for example, in sporting and military training) has a goal, an objective: to strengthen or re-establish eurhythmia. It seems that certain oriental practices come close to these procedures, more so than medical treatments." (68)

Thus, the implication for policy might be to approach the shaping of what people do by strengthening the 'eurhythmia' of already continually changing rhythms of practice in a

preventative sense, rather than attempting to respond to 'arrhythmia' or changes as external to practice or social action in a curative sense.

## **Limitations and Future Research**

In coming to the end of this thesis, it is useful to reflect on some of the limitations of this research, how these problems might be addressed and to take stock of what future research in this area might look like. Significantly there are two important limitations to this work, the first concerns the depth and detail of the empirical study and the second concerns the potential remit for translation of these ideas into other social-theoretical schemes and for use by political or other institutions looking to govern change.

First then, by drawing on the rhythms of practice from five empirical sites of study, I was unable to provide in any way an equally detailed account of any of the rhythms of practice in which I was engaged in the same way that Wacquant was able to paint a totally immersive picture of the rhythms of boxing in *Body and Soul* (2004), for example. Further to this, of the five empirical sites, two were rhythms of which I at first had very limited experience: stock car racing and computer gaming. Even by the end of this research my 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' at both these sites was still insufficient for either of these rhythms of practice to become scheduled as routine for me. It could be argued that, if the thesis takes an approach that the rhythm analyst has to rely on her own experience to listen to rhythms of practice, to use all her 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' to understand what is going on, then there could be a problem here. In this particular piece of research, however, it seems to me that what was gained by drawing on a multiplicity of sites, being able to learn and test ideas at different sites and being able to compare and contrast concepts across sites, was necessary to prepare the ground for more detailed studies using this conceptual framework. Further, the fact that I had

more experience at some rhythms of practice than others was hardly a limitation; as it seems to me it helped to draw out questions about nonroutine practice and the conceptualisation of 'time'. Nevertheless, now that this study has drawn out a consistent and thorough social ontology of 'practice as event' that is, 'in the moment of doing', it would be particularly interesting to conduct a much more detailed and in-depth investigation into one of these empirical sites to work with the concepts of 'arrhythmia', 'training' and 'syncopation' to see how well they capture the shaping and changing of the spatio-temporal rhythms of 'everyday' life.

The second significant limitation or critique that might be levied at this thesis' argument is that the sites of enquiry explored in this thesis are all taken from what might be termed the 'leisure' or 'autonomous' sphere and that they are activities which are more readily considered as 'freely chosen' by practitioners. As such, the extent to which a theoretical argument developed with these empirical cases can speak to political interventions, to the contestation of rhythms or to the critical potential for shaping what might be considered more 'heteronomous' or more deeply embedded rhythms of practice, such as 'work', that are more typically the target of intervention in areas such as sustainability or public health for example, might well be contested.

In defence against such a critique I would argue that in this thesis I have hoped to have shown not only that a *rhythmanalysis* requires moving away from understanding 'practices' as *present*; but also away from a distinction between 'practices' understood as requiring 'voluntary' commitment or as commitments that are imposed upon people. Such analyses do not usefully capture in any way different from those systems that rely on distinctions between individual actors and social structures, or between subjects and objects of action, the processes of shaping rhythms of practice. Clearly, rhythms of practice become 'eurhythmic' and 'arrhythmic' independently from their characterisation as 'leisurely' or 'workly'. Take for

instance Larry's rhythms of 'working' which were arranged around his online gaming commitments (see Chapter Five) or Shane's job as a professional mixed martial artist (see Chapter Six). Many so-called 'leisurely' rhythms of practice become repeated even more routinely or embedded just as deeply as rhythms of 'working'.

Thus, I would argue that, from this perspective, it is no longer a matter of measuring 'voluntarism' or 'autonomy' in commitment; but rather a question of how rhythms of practice themselves change. That is, that the critical, emancipatory, or political importance of the argument of this thesis clearly does not lie in the potential agency of the practitioner. Rather it lies in both understanding and developing forward an analysis of how linear, repetitive and mechanical rhythms or production are imposed over the cyclical rhythms of human life and in developing strategies to contest this. One such strategy, as described in this thesis, is the act of rhythmanalysis itself. That is, to promote for individuals, political institutions and the study of social science, a move away from the study of the mediated *present* and towards recognising *presences*. Thus the rhythm of contesting rhythms is to restore the cyclical becoming-ness of social being to human life that is currently eliminated by the repetitive and mechanistic rhythms of technical and industrial production.

Nevertheless, whilst I have drawn out three conceptual 'weapons' that might aid in this struggle, clearly there is much more work to be done, more to be considered and said regarding how these ideas might be further translated into a policy 'world' and many more conceptual 'weapons' that might be developed from this theoretical framework to help further conceptualise the rhythms of contesting or shaping rhythms of practice.

## **An Analysis of the Rhythms of Practice in Everyday Life**

To conclude, this thesis has sought to explain how practice becomes scheduled as routine or nonroutine through an analysis of the spatio-temporal rhythms of practice in 'everyday' life. I have argued that to understand how practice comes to be scheduled as routine requires understanding the concepts of 'practice as event' and 'practice in the moment of doing' to recognise both the spatially and temporally situated-ness; but also the becoming-ness of social action, which I have come to define as practice. This notion of practice thus argues that neither 'knowledge' nor 'change', as they are understood in the 'everyday' sense, are separate from practice. Rather 'embodied-knowledge-in-practice' is a fundamental and ongoing property of social practice that is *ipso facto* change. Therefore, within this framework of practice, social change neither relies on individuals' motivations, desires or beliefs nor on the life and death of 'practices' as entities. Instead social change is ongoing through the repetition of 'moments' of practice that come to constitute *difference*. These rhythms, repetitions of 'moments' of practice that produce *difference*, I have argued, form the fabric of social life and can be shaped, by strengthening and weakening 'eurhythmia'. In this way practice can be scheduled as routine or nonroutine through the concepts of 'arrhythmia', 'training' and 'syncopation'.

In making this argument I have worked within the limits of language and re-presentation to develop an analysis indebted to Henri Lefebvre, that might prompt further social investigation into the rhythms of 'everyday' life and thus challenge re-presentations of social action as distinct from social change, of 'knowledge' as distinct from practice and of human beings as distinct from the 'world' of equipment in which they inhabit at any particular 'moment' of doing.



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