Culture and Organization

Disturbing structure: Reading the ruins

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Disturbing structure: Reading the ruins

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In this paper, we look at buildings from the 'disturbing' perspective of ruin and ruination. The relationship between buildings and ruins appears to be an antithesis, one between organisation and disorganisation: a dyad of mutually exclusive opposites. However, we try to show how the relationship between buildings and ruins is more complex and multifaceted so that rather than being the play of opposites, it is one which is mutually enacting and inextricably entwined. We explore three aspects of the relationship of mutuality between building and ruin. The first is a consideration of ruins and their relationship to *structuring* and *de-structuring*. Second, we look into the multiplicity of meanings that ruins engender, their inherent *ambivalence*. Finally, we argue that ruin and ruination are as related to construction and *re-ordering* as they are to destruction, since they are not the absolute annihilation of building and organisation, but are themselves different forms of organisation and organising. Thus, the paper is not so much about ruins themselves, where ruins are seen as obliteration or the absence of form. Rather, it is about what ruins and ruination tell us about buildings, structure and the processes of organising.

Keywords: architecture; organisation; ruins; structuring; destructing

It is not the ruin of form, but the ruin that forms. (Andrew Benjamin 2000, 152)

Introduction

Buildings are associated with the creation of structure (Hitchcock and Johnson 1995; Jodidio 2001; Sudjec 2005). Architect-designed buildings and monuments are constructed at great social and economic cost in terms of land, materials and labour and are celebrated for their human achievement. They have symbolic and political value. Even the mundane buildings of terraced homes, factories and shops carry with them the force of solid construction. To those who inhabit them, these everyday edifices are also concrete anchors in the world. A building is human organisation materialised, a hybrid form of inter-subjective and social relations projected upwards and outwards into material, physical form. Buildings make material the work, thoughts, design, plans, imagination, timescales, budgets, meetings and deliverables of the humans involved in architecture and construction. Organisations themselves are often associated with their buildings, and sometimes the directors of organisations seek to make this link manifest by the commissioning of iconic buildings. Examples which immediately spring to

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mind include BMW's Munich headquarters, shaped like the cylinders of an engine, the Swiss Re building in London, otherwise known as the 'gherkin' because of its unusual shape and the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur. This symbolic connection between buildings and organisation tends to reinforce a reified view of 'organisation' as structured, fixed, located or, in other words, the organisation as bounded entity.

In this paper, however, we want to look at buildings from a different perspective: that of ruin and ruination. It may be suggested that since 'structure' is a crucial element of all aspects of the built environment, the most disturbing event to occur to any structure is its ruination. Thus, the relationship between buildings and ruins appears to be an antithesis, to be one between organisation and disorganisation: a dyad of mutually exclusive opposites. However, we will try to show how the relationship between buildings and ruins is more complex and more multifaceted than this suggests. In recent decades, organisation theorists have begun to treat 'organising' as seriously as they have 'organisation' (Cooper 1986; Chia 1998; Tsoukas 1998), where organising is much more concerned with process, the desires for orderings and is multiple, ambivalent and ambiguous. This has been a helpful move in illuminating previously hidden aspects of organisational life, but it can lead to a tendency to dichotomise between (stable) structure and (dynamic) process, just reversing the primacy of one side of the dualism over the other. In moving away from the judgemental position of either/or, it is more useful, we believe, to consider their dyadic interplay from a both/and perspective. Correspondingly, whilst we would suggest that looking at the structures of buildings *and* the structure of their ruins makes a contribution to the way we understand the 'ruin', we also need to consider simultaneously the relationship between the processes of building and of the processes of ruination. Rather than being the play of opposites, our consideration of ruin/ruination in the paper is more akin to the relationship between organisations and organising in that structure (ruin) and process (ruination) are conceptualised as being mutually enacting and inextricably entwined.

We will explore three aspects of the relationship of mutuality between building and ruin. The first is a consideration of ruins and their relationship to *structure* and *de-structure*. Second, we go further into the multiplicity of meanings that ruin engenders by looking at the *ambivalence* of ruin in terms of the process of ruination. Finally, we argue that ruin and ruination are as related to construction and *re-ordering* as they are to destruction, since they are not the absolute annihilation of building and organisation, but are rather themselves different forms of organisation and organising. Thus, the paper is not so much about ruins themselves, where ruins are seen as obliteration, the absence of form and the presence of the void. Rather, it is about what ruins and ruination tell us about buildings, structure and the processes of organising.

Unearthing issues of 'structure'

Buildings, architecture, monuments appear to epitomise structure. They stand as a materialised testament to the human ability to construct order out of chaos, both literally and metaphorically. They seem to embody in physical form Bauman's description of structure as 'a space inside which probabilities are not randomly distributed: some events are more likely to happen than others' (1989, 213). Many social scientists are disturbed by the notion of structure, being simultaneously fascinated and repelled by the ordering of life chances that accompany such probabilities. Structures seem to set prevailing power relations in concrete. Forms of dominance solidify from the accretion of processes that, whilst appearing fluid in the quotidian, over time coagulate and firm up. Sheer

routine has a sclerotic effect upon the dynamism of human interaction. Tradition and repetition lay down well-worn pathways of possibilities and impossibilities, so that Bauman is able to express the sociological concept of structure in telling spatial terms:

> Ontologically, structure means relative repetitiousness, monotony of events: epistemologically, it means for this reason predictability … It is in this sense that the human habitat is 'structured': an island of regularity in a sea of randomness. (1989, 213)

His mention of an 'island of regularity' may describe many an organisational structure, for the intention of the designers may well have been control, predictability, calculability and efficiency within a space demarcated from the outside by walls and gates. Well-known techniques of people-processing such as Fordism (Littler 1982), McDonaldisation (Ritzer 1998) and Disneyisation (Bryman 2004) are all predicated upon the development of well-defended defences of these islands of order against an ocean of randomness. Within these enclaves, processes of social ordering will and must take place. Organisation comes from a process of organising which is constantly in play. This takes the form of economic, cultural and psychological structuring through everyday activities and the conduct of the extraordinary, such as war. With regard to the quotidian, we have pointed (Burrell and Dale 2003) to the part played in the constitution of identities within factories, offices and workplaces by cultural change agents. In these processes, clear attempts are made by designers, bureaucrats and owners to structure 'selves', demarcating groups of insiders from those outside. But this of course is not only a modern project. The 'mode of organising' undertaken by societies marks them off from other states in clear and deliberate ways, creating distinctive architectures and, along with them, recognisably different selves, subjects and citizens in the process. This has happened over millennia and is often in relation to the pursuit of war. Let us consider one extreme example.

Carthage was the main trading port and city of the North African Phoenician, and then Carthaginian, empires and became the subject of intense rivalry and jealousy by the growing Roman Empire. The modes of organising these imperial entities employed were very different. The social and cultural differences between Carthage and Rome were both spatially inscribed in their architectural constructions and in the ways in which social life was organised. The huge double harbour of Carthage (the outer one for military use, the other rectangular one for trade) gave it a dominating position in the Mediterranean, reinforced by a central island allowing advantageous surveillance over the sea passages. Carthage's key position was expressed architecturally through its many temples, palaces, vast libraries and the luxury homes of the merchant classes. Their town houses were up to six storeys high, centred around courtyards. As an empire based upon trading relations and in the absence of a standing army, Carthaginian architecture privileged privacy. The private bathrooms with complex plumbing systems unearthed by archaeologists in the deep ruins of Carthage should be compared to the primacy of the public baths, for both meetings and collective activity, in Rome. As a militarised empire, Roman architecture was dominated by the centrality of public spaces: the Forum, the Coliseum and the Pantheon. Within all of these spaces the collective political identity was expressed (Lefebvre 1991, 243–6). Between the conflicting social and spatial structures of Carthage and Rome lay differing assumptions about how to organise. In order for Rome to win the clash of cultures – built upon competing modes of organising – they sought nothing less than the total destruction of Carthage's architectural organisation.

The conflict between the two city states, initially over access and domination of Mediterranean trading routes, culminated in the three Punic Wars. But the ultimate resolution of the conflict was to be seen by Rome as the total destruction of Carthage. The Roman general and orator, Cato, ended every speech he gave, whatever its subject matter, with the phrase 'Delenda est Kathago' – 'And Carthage must be destroyed'. This imperial objective was achieved in 146 BC. It took a three-year siege of the city, but once the defences of Carthage were breached, the Roman army systematically obliterated the buildings and land, burning the city for six days, using what might be described as a 'scorched earth' policy, and selling 50,000 Carthaginians into slavery. The destruction was so complete that it has been argued by some historians that the Romans even dug salt into the surrounding agricultural land to prevent it being inhabited thereafter, although this is disputed.

Yet, the organising power of Carthage in the spatial imagination of the Romans does not rest there. One hundred years later they returned, under Julius Caesar, to re-found it as a centre of population. But only – it should be noted – through reassimilating the site as a Roman city. The heart of the desolate Carthaginian city, Byrsa Hill, was flattened by the Romans, covered with concrete and only then rebuilt in the standardised image of an imperial Roman city, complete with public baths. The Carthaginian mode of organising was expunged, and privacy, large libraries and volunteer naval power were long forgotten. So conflict between states is etched in spatial terms on the body-politic through the ruination of its architecture.

Conflict, of course, is not only between societies but can easily exist within a nation state. Industrial disputes within society can be so bitter that the expunging of whole industries and their associated communities can be sought by the state apparatus. When such sites are cleared, the impact upon the previous workforce may be severe. If these buildings and the processes which they contain are destroyed, we might ask if this ruination destroys the worker psyche. Since the identity of working-class individuals is often associated with their place of employment and if these locales are ruined, then so too may well be the livelihoods, careers and self-esteem of those who used to work within them. This is an unexplored side of these processes and occurs when edifices close, buildings fall and ruination sets in. In the 1980s, the miners at Woodhorn Colliery in Northumberland knew their pit was due for closure. They sought to make a museum of it, celebrating an industry which had thrived in the area for centuries. To do so, they wished to maintain its architectural integrity and show the public its structure and functioning. However, on the very *day before*, the pit changed hands from British Coal to the collective who were to run the museum; the chimney of the colliery was destroyed by explosives placed by a demolition team employed by the owners. This chimney was over 100 feet tall and had been associated with the steam power necessary to drive engines employed in the raising of coal and men. A major architectural feature of the colliery had been wantonly destroyed. The absence of the chimney through ruination makes its point through its very lack and demonstrates perhaps the wanton destruction of an entire industry. The lack is still felt today. One need not make anything of the detumescence and castration signified by the destruction of the chimney as a landmark which had stood for 90 years, but it is clear that such an obtrusive architectural feature cannot be removed without some effect on the identity of those who worked there on a daily basis. Right across Britain, the Rust Bowl of the USA and in many parts of Eastern Europe, industries have died, sites have been cleared and lie in ruins. Industrial workers have become post-industrial operatives – or unemployed – and their landscapes are scarred and seared by

wholescale ruination. So too are their lives and their identities. Their expression of choice is lost as 'market forces' play themselves out over terrains of the ordinary citizen, bringing down their human structures of mutual support.

On the other hand, tearing structures down can seem to be part of an essential liberatory project. The motivation for complete ruination of the enemy may be liberation from their overbearing command, and it is here that the valourisation of terms such as collapse, ruination, destruction, undermining and demolition shows that both the architectural metaphor of material structure and of its 'slighting' are well 'entrenched' in the critical lexicon. Deliberate ruination, then, seems to be linked with radical de-structuration: the death of the architecture of the 'establishment' and the end of pre-existing mechanisms of ordering. It is as if the breaking of habit is accompanied by the breaking of habitat. It is noteworthy that architecture has often been the first target of revolutionaries seeking to bring down old structures, as important visual and politico-economic structures, buildings and monuments of the *ancient regime* are sought out and destroyed. The storming of the Bastille in 1789 is but one prominent example of an attack upon symbols of Royal power. It is said that as the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh on 17 April 1975, their very first target was the fiery destruction of the Coca-Cola plant, a symbol to them of American imperialism. They went on that day to force an abandonment of the whole city and to institute Year 0 as an attempt at wholesale spatio-temporal reorganisation of Cambodian society.

In these extreme examples of Carthage and in Cambodia, the enemies of the existing state apparatus seek to change the spatial ordering that they find because this represents a different, opposed mode of organising. This is deliberate strategic ruination in which ruining is valourised for its destruction of the 'other'. But is not as simple as this. Examples of the wielding of huge political power by other states in wartime or the use of revolutionary power by successful dissident groups to demolish that which has preceded them by no means even *begin* the exploration of the range of possibilities that exist in relation to ruination.

For we must note that the process of ruination is deeply embedded in our cultural consciousness (Edensor 2005a, 2005b; Huyssen 2006). Ruins indicate 'a world we have lost' – often one image representing huge symbolic shock value. A ruin symbolises decay and decline and encapsulates the human condition in very concrete terms. The Latin phrase *sic transit gloria mundi* expresses this feeling precisely. The glories of the world are transitory and so are human lives and human lineages, and deep understandings of our species' insubstantiality are embedded in many cultures. It would be possible therefore to draw up a very long list of cultural expressions of ruination in movies and literature. The British film *The Full Monty* begins by juxtaposing an old promotional film of steel-making in Sheffield in its heyday with the abandoned ruins of its factories within which the story of the unemployed steelworkers trying to rebuild their lives is set. Whilst once they worked within the mills and foundries as proud employees, the central characters have become trespassers in this now ruined landscape, searching for booty within the detritus. *Terminator II* begins with the cyborg machines, crunching the skulls of the dead humans wiped out on Judgement Day, as they patrol in the ruins of Los Angeles. In Cormac McCarthy's (2006) novel, *The road*, a father and son trek across a burnt and looted landscape in which everything has been laid waste by some unknown catastrophe. Everywhere lies in ruination and the population has turned to cannibalism. In *The day of the Triffids*, Wyndham describes the ruination of Central London by the uncontrollable forces of nature, magnified through human tampering with genetic structures beyond their/our understanding:

The gardens of the Parks and Squares were wildernesses creeping out across the border-ing streets. Growing things seemed, indeed, to press out everywhere, rooting in the crev-ices, between the paving stones, springing from cracks in the concrete, finding lodgements even in the seats of abandoned cars. On all sides they were encroaching to repossess themselves of the arid spaces that man had created. (2000, xii)

And it is worth noting here that Wyndham's last sentence posits that humanity is the architect of an urban desert rather than the creator of civic beauty and that the ruin-ation of London is a triumph for nature. One could continue in this melancholic vein for a long time, such is its power in art and literature.

These dramatic portrayals of dystopian images of ruins identify different causes of the catastrophe: Thatcherism, the Net, nuclear war, genetic engineering. But imagined ruination by human hand is not the only form of destruction, for all human powers may be brought down by the real and sudden violence of nature. The collapses of physical and social order in Sri Lanka in the Boxing Day tsunami and the inundation of New Orleans are very different examples of ruination from human-made ones, but it is as well to remember that whole cities have disappeared beneath jungle, desert or waves.

Ruins then are usually associated with breakdown and loss. The fate of the glories of the world is to disappear from human consciousness as structures fragment and crumble. In the ruin, architectural elements are fundamentally disorganised. Roof meets floor, columns are rendered horizontal, there are voids where walls should be and a jumble of fragments of diverse materials where the spaces and places of human life should be played out. Regularity and predictability disappear and seem voided as principles of spatial organisation. Nothing about the ruined building can be taken for granted. They often are very unsafe. The disruption of the physical elements of the building produce, even force, a disruption in our organised ways of thinking. Whilst the structures of buildings embody many of the bureaucratic organisation's assump-tions about closure, hierarchy, scale, linearity, conspicuous consumption and surface gloss (Dale and Burrell 2008), when they lie in ruin all sense of social exclusion is removed, the penthouse rooftop of the organisation no longer exists and the paint and chrome are long gone. The pyramid is piled high as rubble. The bureaucracy is gone, for the 'office' is closed for business. It is 'out of order' because ruination spells final destruction. This then is *the ruin of form.*

But in this paper, through our exploration of the relationship between building and ruin, we argue that there is no *simple* connection between ruination and fundamental changes to structure, no easy identification of de-structuration with liberation, no facile exemplars that the process of ruination means the complete obliteration of structuring. For neither buildings nor social structures are the fixed, concretised entities they appear to be. Nor is the ruin the end of structure, but something much more complex because, as Andrew Benjamin argues, in the quotation which begins this paper, 'it is not the ruin of form, but the ruin that forms' (2000, 152). It is to an examination of the ambiv-alent nature of forming and de-forming structures that we now turn.

Ruins and ambivalence

Notwithstanding attempts to expunge the old order from the face of the land, ruins inevitably form part of the new landscape which may be ordered 'differently' but not so differently as might have been hoped for by the revolutionaries. For ruins hold a strange fascination to later generations, often engendering in the West a respect for the

past and a willingness to tap into its deep symbolism. In some respects, there is a human obsession with ruins, as in for example the 'Ruinenlust' as Rose Macaulay calls it in *Pleasure of ruins* (1953). This mode of thinking is part of a valourisation of the old one finds in romanticism but is famously tinged with a reminder of the dangers of hubris in Shelley's poem:

<div align="center">

Ozymandias

I MET a traveller from an antique land,
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.
(Percy Bysshe Shelley 1818)

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In this poem, we see perhaps both/and the *fear and the fascination* that ruins engender. Fear comes from the significance that ruins hold for the integrity of our own world whilst the fascination with ruins lies in their liminal status between organisation and disorganisation, architecture and dust, order and chaos, humanity and nature. They materialise tensions in temporality and spatiality, survival and decay. In terms of culture, ruins are a form that holds the key to stylistic expressions within (neo-)classicism, romanticism and post-modernism (Jameson 1991), so supple are their symbolic resonances. They veer too from the apparently useless, the antithesis of functionality, to perhaps the most ironic of all capitalist commodifications.

There are levels here, then, to the deep ambivalence between buildings and ruins, between the creative and destructive forces unleashed by humans and by nature alike, and ultimately between organisation and chaos. Ruins surface all of these tensions in particular spots within the built environment and beyond. In their multiple, conflicting but pervasive potency, constantly on the edge of our psyches, caught out of the corner of our consciousness, ruins are profoundly ambiguous. They hold a relationship of 'otherness' and tension with architecture. Ruins problematise structure, even the structure of language. Ruins escape the segregating function of language because they are not discrete and distinctive entities. They are complex and multifaceted, bringing their own form of time–space compression with them, for they are in the present but of the past. They are of the present but in the past. Bauman in his *Modernity and ambivalence* says: 'To give the world a structure [is] to manipulate its probabilities; to make some events more likely than some others; to behave as if events were not random, or to limit or eliminate randomness of events' (1991, 1). Ambivalence on the other hand is 'the possibility of assigning an object or an event to more than one category' (Bauman 1991, 9). Whilst many attempts are usually made to assign objects into a correct, controllable and coherent category, ruins escape such easy distinction. Thus, we explore a number of dimensions of ambiguity, starting with the ambivalent relationship between buildings and ruins, between the creative and destructive forces and between organisation and

chaos. We also look at ambivalence about materiality and transcendence, wholeness and fragments, stasis and movement, temporality and spatiality.

Since ruins are multiple and are produced and reproduced through many different processes, they show the ambiguity of our relationship with building, architecture and construction – and ultimately arising from this, our ambivalence with *ordering and organisation*. Now, this is not the place to theorise the logical opposite of 'organisation' in any detail, but it is worth noting that many contenders raise their heads for the role of antithesis to 'organising'. Is it organic 'death' or 'chaos' or 'dis-organisation' or 'anarchy' that takes one's fancy? In the case of 'death', ruins may be seen as the antithesis of life affirming architecture. A ruined building must seem an end point which heralds the ultimate failure of the *architect's* desires for a form of immortality. It is the architect's ruination. Second, ruins also represent the death of architecture as the inevitable end point of a *building*'s life-cycle, and third, they symbolise the ever-present antithesis of the *human* impulse to create and build. Ruins are the discomforting reminder that all organising is futile and that the universe moves inexorably towards cold entropy. For this reason, it is relatively easy to destroy and disorganise structures because they are 'natural' tendencies towards universal entropic decay and there are clear limitations imposed by the shortness of any human life span.

When it comes to organisation's other as being 'disorganisation', another form of ambiguity may be identified in the built environment. The first facet is *hypo*-organisation – the gradual cessation of human organisation in the face of impediments to its maintenance. Order breaks down or winds down. Here the ruins become untended and covered over by the accretion of dust, soil and grass. The ruins enjoy a closeness with nature but not with human organisation. Vast cities in Amazonia and Equatorial Africa succumb to hypo-organisation in the face of the encroachment of natural forces. This lack of order is often called 'chaos' and is a form of disorganisation (yet we must note in passing that much work remains to be done on this concept). The second facet to dealing with disorganisation and the perceived threat of the triumph of 'chaos' is *hyper*-organisation which speaks of over-regulated order within inappropriate boundaries, as expressed in for example the nightmarish works of Kafka and Orwell. Under the gaze of hyper-organisation, ruins are conceived of as sites of intense and essential social structuring where processes are at work for reclaiming the locus of ruination as symbolic of a new order soon to arise. Following 9/11, the political processes involved in gaining approval for Daniel Libeskind's plan for the 1776 'Freedom Tower' is probably a contemporary example of hyper-organisation (Libeskind 2004).

This particular ambiguity between order and disorganisation is crucial in reading off the role of the ruin in contemporary debates on structure. Different forms of organisation and different forms of disorganisation appear in the body of any ruin and co-exist alongside each other somewhat uneasily. They are in a relationship of constant ambiguity.

Within the built environment over the centuries, there also seems to be an underlying mythic outpouring of the contradictions inherent in the creative urge to build, between *immanence and transcendence* (Leach 1999). There are, for example, in art and literature, multiple stories of the requirement of human sacrifice to secure a building from collapsing into ruination. In *The golden bough*, Frazer indicates how widespread the myth of honorific sacrifice to the edifice is across the globe. Children, animals, adults, the builders themselves have all been killed, sometimes at their own hand, in order to appease the gods of the building by the placing of the blood spilt within the foundations.

Of all of these fables of seeking support for the building in the good earth, let us simply point to those in Ibsen and Milton. Whilst in Munich and already planning his play, *The master builder*, Ibsen heard a story about the master builder who had built St Michael's Church and who was said to have thrown himself from its tower because he was afraid the roof would not hold. On hearing that this was a myth associated with all German cathedrals, he was said to have commented that this 'must be because people felt instinctively that a man could not build so high without paying the penalty for his hubris' (Meyer 1961, 30). In *Paradise lost* (Book III, lines 466–72), Milton (1980) makes a similar allusion to the suicide of Empedocles which he links to the construction of 'New' Towers of Babel. Ruins are both spiritual and material, both ethereal and substantial, both of this world and of another. They speak of the heights of achieved dreams and of the depths of despond: the inevitable collapse of confidence following soaring ambition. From death of the few, comes life affirmation for the many.

Ruins, as the *destructuring* of buildings, thus express a critical ambivalence between materiality and transcendence, which is inherent in human creativity. The desire to create which is embodied in architecture is a powerful combination of a drive towards the transcendent, the overcoming of time and human frailty. But inevitably, this desire for transcendence can only be fulfilled through the use of and transformation through organisation of mundane materials: stone, concrete and bricks. This tension is perhaps literally made concrete in Rachel Whiteread's controversial *House*. This 'sculpture' was created in 1993 in the East End of London by filling a suburban terraced house in a street due for demolition with liquid concrete. The structure of the house – its walls, roof, doors and windows – was then removed, producing through this upheaval an inverted cast of the spaces of the domestic home. The other houses around it were demolished, leaving it as a white/grey monument standing alone in a brown-field site. Profoundly unsettling by making the innards of the privatised family space so overtly public, *House* generated reactions of love and hate in those who saw it. As Graham-Dixon said:

> *House* is a paradox made concrete since it is a monument made out of void space, a thing constructed out of the absence of things. Being a dwelling in which it is not possible to dwell, a building that you cannot enter, it has the character of a tantalus. It is both a relic and a prompt to the imagination. (1993, 27)

Ruins then are 'prompts to the imagination' for past, present and future reveries, but they are also symbols of spent potential.

Ruination, like anatomy, brings us up against the synecdochal relationship of *whole and parts* (Scarry 1985). Dissection, potentially paradoxically, cuts the body into fragments in order to reconstruct a new knowledge of the whole, but this knowledge remains one which is dictated by the notion of discrete, dead, pinned down parts, organs, tissues and cells rather than a complete dynamic organism. Similarly, a ruin with its missing parts, a layout of mixed fragments all collapsed upon each other and perhaps suffering from attempts to deface its symbolic meaning, suggests that holistic approaches to ruins are difficult. For ruins are the remaining fragments or relics of whole buildings, even whole towns and cities. From them archaeology can learn much, but it remains knowledge of a fragmentary still-life found residing in broken stone and crushed brick. Of course, from the study of these frozen fragments can arise some knowledge of complete architectural and stylistic movements. In Neo-Classicism, a totality of style is taken from the ruins of classical antiquity so that contemporary buildings come to be erected on the design foundations of fragmentary

Ionic, Doric and Corinthian columns. The innards of the building are what hold it up against gravity, and they are lovingly displayed. From pieces of marble column left standing by the ravages of time and humanity, architects and historians can work out the structure and functions of Hellenic buildings. The part stands for the whole. Metonymically, ruins can speak to us of complete civilisations.

Temporal ambiguity is thrown up by the work of several leading architects today. William Vassal tells a story about the legendary Renzo Piano showing his clients, members of the Kanak people, his completed building in New Caledonia. Piano pointed to his creation and said 'this is a hut'. The Kanaks spoke in their own language and then asked where the hut was. Piano, who liked to use a notion from Borges that architecture is just on the borders of memory and oblivion, said that what was before them was the remembering of a hut and that it was just what you remember of a hut before you begin to forget it. The Kanaks talked together again, and the oldest member of the group said: 'This hut is like ours, before we put the thatched roof on.' He then stopped and started again 'this is not us anymore, but it's still us' (quoted in Findley 2005, 76).

Ruins too are 'this is not us anymore, but it is still us'. Ruins are a combination of stasis and dynamism: in some sense they hold the building at the moment of destruction, caught at that point in time where the building exists between a lived-in structure and a heap of rubble. They thus make material, asynchronous, temporal realities, as well as producing a set of imagined and reconstructed temporalities.

In looking at examples of ruins, it becomes clear that there is often a continuous process of building, ruination, rebuilding, ruination and yet more rebuilding involved in the construction and reconstruction of places of significance. Such processes are evident elsewhere such as in Crete (Herzfeld 1991) where there is contestation over Cretan, Venetian, Turkish and Greek 'antiquities' involving successive periods of ruination and rebuilding. Ruins then are only one part of this complex and layered interaction of temporality and spatiality. For, whilst 'ruins begin at the end of things, overwhelming the "ordinary" flow of time with inescapable memories and desires' (Stewart 1996, 95), they then can quite easily re-enter the ordinary flow of things which in turn overwhelm 'the inescapable'. Indeed, it may well be that: 'Memory is narrated and conceived as an unfolding succession of stories but, in the ruin, this linearity is upstaged by the host of intersecting temporalities which "collide and merge" in a landscape of juxtaposed and "asynchronous moments"' (Crang and Travelou 2001, 161).

Our argument in this section, then, has been precisely that the meanings that surround ruins and the processes and structures that create and are created by them 'collide and merge' in a context of ambiguity. And the collision and merging of ruins, landscape and memories is an accretion of uncertain political processes. It is to this relationship between building and ruin, where the structuring, destructuring and restructuring processes of power are in evidence that we now turn.

Re-ordering ruins

We have argued that, although ruins appear to be about waste, destruction and an end to the link between structure and function, ruination is not all about collapse. 'Market forces' do play out across ruined terrains and come to re-order the landscape. In this section, we wish to address the ways in which ruins were and are re-ordered in multiform ways. Hollis (2009, 7) claims that: 'In the discourse of architecture, all buildings, in order to remain beautiful, must not change; and all buildings, in order not to change,

must aspire to the funereal condition of the monument.' Hollis (2009, 9), however, wishes to demonstrate the opposite that there is a constant change in building design and building use and even ruins are constantly re-ordered. These are the secret lives of buildings which are 'capricious, protean and unpredictable'. They are not necessarily funereal and may be full of life. We have discussed above how ruins produce meanings, and here we explore how those meanings are produced through the manipulation of, and ultimately the commodification of, ruins.

If one looks to Marx and Engels (1992, 6), one finds the assertion that:

> All old established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations.

Thus, it is not only the commodification of ruins, which marks modern capitalism, but the continual generation of ruination as a process of commodification in itself. Marx and Engels famously said in *The communist manifesto* that all that is solid melts into air, but Harvey (2000) points out that it is the section which follows that which is crucial. Here, Marx and Engels begin to talk of the destructive and reconstructive powers of capitalism. Capitalism does not only break down unwanted facilities and buildings but happily recycles them for further profit. The facilities that it has built to replace the old, in turn, themselves become obsolete in the face of competition and are destroyed, to be replaced by new factories and offices. Henry Ford expresses this desire when he talks of moving production to wherever it will be most profitable:

> We frequently scrap whole divisions of our business – and as a routine affair. And then one has to be prepared against the day when a complete change may be necessary and an entirely new plant constructed to make a new product. We have gone through all of this. (Ford 1931, 29)

Harvey (1989, 16–17) claims that this twin drive for creative destruction and to be destructively creative is identified with Nietzsche and thence back to Dionysius, and from it is created a maelstrom – the tragedy of human development. The mythical figure of the destroyer of worlds is made flesh not only by Ford in Detroit but by Haussmann in Paris (Harvey 2003) and Moses in New York (Ballon and Jackson 2005). Correspondingly,

> Schumpeter picked up this very same image in order to understand the processes of capitalist development. The entrepreneur, in Schumpeter's view a heroic figure, was the creative destroyer *par excellence* because the entrepreneur was prepared to push the consequences of technical and social innovation to vital extremes. And it was only through such creative heroism that human progress could be assured. Creative destruction, for Schumpeter, was the progressive leitmotiv of benevolent capitalist development. (Harvey 1989, 17)

De-industrialisation creates not only factories lying in ruins but is also productive of urban ruins (Edensor 2005b, 2005c). Zukin (1982) begins *Loft living* by describing the 'gentrification' process in Greenwich Village, turning the area from a diverse and active mixed use space (albeit physically dilapidated) into a smart, upmarket residential area exemplifying the commodification of loft living. 'With the bulk of the market in loft living, the use of the basic real estate commodity – loft space – was wholly transformed … The residential conversion of manufacturing lofts confirms and symbolizes the death of an urban manufacturing centre' (1982, 3). Thus, Zukin points

to a longer history of economic ruination and rebuilding than just the ejection of the artists and alternative theatre groups in the wake of the property developers. Before this, the small local businesses had been forced out by the 'giant firms of monopoly capital' (1982, 5). Out of this destruction is created the aestheticised project of life-style consumerism. The buildings once suitable for manufacturing are now seen as perfect for 'exhibiting large works of art, using professional stoves and refrigerators, luxuriating in mammoth whirlpool baths, and experimenting with an avant garde *mise en scène* or *décor*' (1982, 2). Thus, we see in the processes of organising and disorganising and re-organising, of structuring and destructuring, that building and ruination are both one and simultaneous.

Nowhere is this complexity clearer than in Adolf Hitler's notion of the 'theory of ruin value' (*theorie vom ruinenwert*) as conceived by Albert Speer, his architect of choice. Both men were so aware of the importance of the 'ruin that forms' that they planned their imperial building programme for the '1000 year Reich' with its future ruination in mind. The theory was an extension of the German architect and art historian, Gottfried Semper's views about using 'natural materials' and the avoidance of iron girders, because stone survives to produce the ruined monuments of past empires. Once the Third Reich was conceptualised in this way, instructions went out that:

> Steel and ferro-concrete could not longer be used in the construction of official Nazi buildings because they were too perishable. The use of marble, stone and brick alone would ensure that, at the fall of the 1000-year Reich, they would resemble their Roman models. (Woodward 2002, 29)

After his return from a visit to Rome, Hitler also argued that his monumental architecture should be built by slaves just as that of the Roman Empire, for that made future generations aware of the power required to produce such edifices (Spotts 2002). Speer even presented Hitler with a drawing in which the marble frontage of Nuremberg was shown as an ivy-clad ruin after the eventual collapse of the Third Reich. Architecture, even when ruined, provides a 'bridge to tradition' for future generations. Hitler was by no means unique in having a theory of ruin value. Sir John Soane was one of the most successful architects in Regency London, having worked on plans for the Lord Chancellor, the Prime Minister and the Directors of the Bank of England. Having completed the building of a rotunda for a new Stock Exchange inside the Bank, he commissioned a painting of it from Joseph Gandy, imagined as a ruin. And when it came to be demolished in 1925, a century and a half later, it looked remarkably like Gandy's presaged ruin (Woodward 2002, 162–3). It is as if instead of 'writing' history as a text, the powerful seek to inscribe history materially by designing the ways in which ruination will be *allowed* to take place.

The theory of ruin value as developed by Semper owed something to the Picturesque movement in Britain (Mallgrave 2005). This was a confluence of philosophers, poets and painters in the first half of the eighteenth century. 'Men of feeling' had discovered that a building could seem more beautiful as a ruin than when its original structure was intact. The corpses of abbeys and castles were thereby given a second life (Woodward 2002, 124) and projected positive aesthetic feelings by their association with the past. In 1709, John Vanbrugh tried unsuccessfully to persuade the Duchess of Marlborough to preserve the ruins of Woodstock Manor on the site of Blenheim Palace. He argued that it had a place in English literature and that it would make for good landscape paintings if trees were planted around it. Elsewhere, families whose estates were bereft of ruins could have new ones erected. In 1729, a 'ruined'

hermitage was completed in Cirencester and was the first of such follies. More than 30 mock ruins were to be built by the end of the century. One Sanderson Miller was a famous designer of such follies in the mid years of the century and used no compass or set square (Woodward 2002, 128). As a professional 'ruinist', he became a model for other Europeans in Rome and in France of whom perhaps Clerisseau was the best known. He produced a thousand drawings of ruins for the perusal of clients. Sir John Soane himself built two new 'ruins' for his own properties: a Gothic one in Lincoln Fields and a classical one at Pitshanger Manor where he deliberately set out to present it as if it had been uncovered *in situ*, a newly found Roman temple.

These re-ordering of ruins were intended for an elite class of propertied landowners, enhancing not only the aesthetic but also the economic value of their estates. In effect, the modernisation of these landed properties was undertaken through the importation and construction of ruins, drawing value from their historical and cultural associations. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one could say there was a process of democratisation of access to significant ruins through the development of the museum and the heritage industry (Massey 1995). However, this apparent openness obscures the ever-closing processes of commodification and consequent narrowing reconstruction of the meanings of ruins within the heritage industry (Hewison 1987a, 1987b). For example, Alton Towers in Staffordshire is now marketed as a white-knuckle ride theme park. Thirty years ago, it was marketed as a park of flowers and shrubs in which the ruins of Alton Towers stood and which one could wander around for an entrance price. The ruins were genuine ones but have now been altered to appear of recent construction, themed alongside the latest rides. Similarly, on Hadrian's Wall in the North of England, the visitor to Chesters Fort or the settlement at Vindolanda is presented in each with a meaning machine that represents an 'imaginary of ruins' (Huyssen 2006, 8). 'Rubble' from Roman times could be said to have been transformed into 'ruins' through the production of narratives and histories, facilitating 'ruin tourism'. But this is also the case in Berlin, in Hiroshima and in Coventry, with each city presenting themselves in part as victims of aerial bombing in World War II. Each city is both monument and ruin – at the same time. This paradoxical relationship between actuality and potential is articulated in Benjamin's comment that any finished piece of architecture always represents a melancholic lack (2000). It represents but one of all the possibilities that could have been. As an 'imaginary', even if it is successful, it has ignored all other possibilities. It has killed the potential to be different from what it is. It represents achievement but also failure, for it has missed an opportunity to be 'other'. Even as a new building opens, there is something deathly about the proceedings. This, too, is in the nature of power, for in its achievement there is always also the kernel of its ultimate failure.

Conclusion: 'Ruins that form'

Here is the crux of our disciplinary difficulty with structure. We are fixated *with* it and *by* it. It is that we have turned it into an object, we have fixed and stained it, put it under the microscope, seen it as something that is unchanging and unmoving. We have, though this is highly occluded, seen structure through a particular set of physical and spatial metaphors, as a sort of social architecture, a concrete construction of barriers and enclosures, walls and ceilings, hierarchies and clubs. The notion of structure suggests fixity and embeddedness and barriers to change. Through it, the shifting sands are kept at bay.

However, what we have been dealing with here in this paper is the apparent destruction of structure: the erasure of architecture and its ruination. This is a topic not much discussed within the management literature for this focus on ruination may appear deeply problematic to disciplines where the foundational principles appear to be order, regularity and predictability: in other words, where 'organisation' is valourised. But as social scientists and as organisation theorists, we have a relationship with structure that may be ambiguous. On the one hand, social science in the guise of social policy often seeks to undermine the burden of overbearing structure on sections of the population; on the other, the patterning effects of social structure still continue to form something of our subject matter. Over the decades, however, structure has become the 'other' to more 'attractive' ways to understand organisational life. Structuralism became unfashionable. Structure has become the fixed, the static side to the dualisms, underprivileged in relation to such other terms as agency or process. We have moved away from seeing organisation primarily as about structured entities towards more 'dynamic' modes of analysis on topics such as cultural change, or, put another way, on *organising* as a process of *flows*. Thus, whilst structures are about social order and social ordering, we must also interest ourselves in how choices, identity and agency come about and how ordering as a process is as important as fixed relations. As mentioned earlier, however, the trick is to avoid privileging either/or thinking and to embrace both/and approaches to dualities. For, just as processes change, so do structures themselves. Structures are not fixed, and the nature of the ways in which they confine, divert and channel processes are subject to change, just as buildings are not fixed as structures and change over time in multiple protean ways.

And just as buildings flow in a structured way, so too do ruins. Ruination is most often not the end point of structure but is a new and transitory form of confinement for social processes. Ruin is not the termination of events but is their rebirth. New forms of process, of course, are intimately connected to power and thence to meaning-construction. In looking at a ruin, meaning and power are constantly and continually present. They are also at the same time constantly and continually deferred. Ruins represent organising, disorganising and reorganising at one and the same time. Ruins are a melancholic lack – of what might have been – but ruins are also a presence of what was, what is and what might come to be.

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