

## Chapter 5: Violence and Poetry: A Broader Sample of Anonymous Workblogs

### Introduction and Methodology

The previous chapter introduced a group of blogs that have emerged from the geographic and socio-cultural context of the north-west UK, which are loosely held together by similar values and orientations to the labor process. The group of Mancunian blogs I chose to study in that chapter reflect the “flesh-world” in which they are embedded. The sophisticated humor, the sardonic worldview, and the cheeky tone that pervades blogs like *A Free Man in Preston* is very much a reflection on northern British humor and the disaffected, Indie subculture that prevails in the Manchester area among educated and cosmopolitan *Guardian* readers. I specifically sought blogs of this type in order to study manifestations of creatively expressed progressive politics and anti-capitalist values in the blogosphere, which is the focus of this dissertation.

This chapter takes a step back and explores a broader range of white collar workblogs. The goal of this section of my dissertation is to further define the concept of creative resistance and to circumscribe it by placing the blogs that we have dealt with so far within a wider context of others that are written from differing and conflicting perspectives. Looking at a sample of approximately 25 anonymous workblogs from the United States and the UK (including one English ex-pat in Australia and one Australian ex-pat in the UK), this chapter attempts to capture the tone, writing quality, and political orientation of a more diverse selection of blogs, illustrating that anonymous workblogs *in general* do not necessarily contribute to an anti-capitalist movement. At the same time, this chapter illustrates that, particularly in certain sectors such as the call center industry, there exist a small number of energetic, progressively oriented blogs that are well-written

enough to cultivate the prolonged attention of like-minded readers and to connect to mainstream media. This type of blog, it is argued, ultimately contributes to the formation of a counter-hegemonic bloc that may advance a progressive social agenda based on principles such as work-life balance, fair trade, and ecological sustainability.

For this chapter, I decided to focus only on blogs where work is the central theme, since the inclusion of blogs where work is mentioned only fleetingly (such as *Girl on a Train*, featured in Chapter Four), created too diffuse a sample for systematic study. The results summarized here indicate many defunct workblogs, suggesting that anonymous workblogging is a transient phenomenon that is very much on the wane. Many of the anonymous workblogs in my broader survey ended in 2005 or 2006, and do not appear to have been directly replaced by new, up-and-coming blogs of the same type. This decline, as I have already argued, indicates not a disappearance of discontent among workers, but a shift to more covert blogging activity, such as cellphone-driven microblogging, or “generalist” blogs where work is mentioned occasionally and interstitially rather than as the central theme.

I have been reading anonymous workblogs since late 2004, when I began the preliminary research for this dissertation. As explained earlier, most blogs feature archived postings that date back to the blog’s inception, so it was possible, in some blogs, to read posts that dated back as far as the year 2000, when the blogging phenomenon was first emerging. My initial collection of anonymous workblog material was gathered somewhat haphazardly, using search engines, recommendations from bloggers and blog readers, fired blogger lists at *The Papal Bull* (<http://homepage.mac.com/popemark/iblog/C2041067432/E372054822/>) and *Morpheme*

*Tales* (<http://morphemetales.blogspot.com/2006/10/statistics-on-fired-bloggers.html>), blog networking mechanisms such as the *Anonymous Workblog Webring* (<http://anonworkblogs.blogspot.com/>), and mainstream press coverage. Having generated my own list of blogs, I felt the need to evaluate my notions of the range of blogs that constituted the “field” against the work of other scholars. Fortunately, as summarized in the literature review in Chapter One, scholarly work on blogging is beginning to emerge, making it possible for those studying the phenomenon to compare notes and findings.

With this in mind, I have recently adopted, as a point of reference, James Richards’ workblogging site, *Work-related Blogs and News* (<http://workblogging.blogspot.com/>), which has emerged as the most comprehensive listing of anonymous workblogs available at present. The process of generating my own, not so comprehensive, list of this type of blog enabled me to ascertain that Richards’ list is particularly thorough. It has been helpful to work in reference to a list of blogs that has been identified by a separate, independent researcher, in order to counter my tendency to highlight only those blogs that support a progressive social change agenda. Between 2005 and 2007, I collected data from approximately 30 anonymous workblogs written by knowledge workers. Beginning in June 2007, I explored a total of approximately 30 additional blogs from three of Richards’ categories: “Office and manager,” “IT, technical and craft” and “Call centre.”

Eliminating blogs that had completely disappeared or were about topics that were completely irrelevant to my research, in each blog I read postings from one or two sample months, as well as following links to the user profile and reading postings that were

tagged or otherwise identified to be specifically about work. I coded my findings using a qualitative approach that took note of the subject matter as well as the tone and relative sophistication of writing of the postings. From this broad content survey, I identified approximately 25 blogs that highlighted key themes or tendencies that had emerged from the data. Given my focus on creative resistance, I also conducted in-depth interviews with two call center bloggers who stood out as particularly talented authors. The blogs featured in this chapter are listed in **Table 2** on the following page.

*Table 2: Sample of Anonymous Workblogs.*

	Blog Name / Alias / URL / # visits*	Country	M/F	Active	Work	Notes
1	<i>Aginoth's Ramblings</i> Aginoth aginoth.blogspot 46,000	UK	M	Y 12/05 – present	Ministry of Defense	
2	<i>A Large Farva /</i> Richard / richardeid.blogspot # not available	US	M	N 6/04 – 1/07	Corporate office	Very infrequent posts
3	<i>Blogging the Swoosh /</i> Swooshblog / swooshblog.blogspot # not available	US	M	N 1/06 – 4/06	Nike Marketing	
4	<i>Bored Ramblings of an Office Worker /</i> alias not available / boredramblings.co.uk # not available	UK	M	N n/a	not available	Taken down
5	<i>Call Center Purgatory /</i> callcenterpurgatory.blogspot Anonymous Cog / # not available	US	M	N 2/04 – 1/07	Call Center	
6	<i>Corporate Peon /</i> Kate / corporatepeon.blogspot & corporatepeon.wordpress.com 21,000	US	F	Y 6/04 – present	Corporate office	Moved to password- protected Wordpress blog in April 06
7	<i>CAD Monkey in the Cubicle Jungle /</i> CAD Monkey / cadmonkey.blogspot 14,000	US	F	N 1/04 – 7/06	Corporate CAD Designer (Architecture)	
8	<i>Diary of an Office Wench</i> T officewench.blogspot # not available	AUS	F	N 7/04 – 1/06	Corporate office	Moved to new non- work blog
9	<i>Diogenes Liberated /</i> T / diogenesliberated.blogspot # not available	US	F	N 10/03 – 5/04	IBM software developer	
10	<i>Furballs /</i> Jeber / www.svarri.com/jeber_wp # not available	US	M	Y 7/06 – present	Corporate help desk	
11	<i>Hypercubicle</i> hypercubicle.blogspot Paul 17,000	US	M	Y 10/04 – present	Information technology	Semi- anonymous

	Blog Name / Alias / URL / # visits*	Country	M/F	Active	Work	Notes
1 2	<i>Intern in New York</i> / Intern Andy newyorkintern.blogspot # not available	US (NY)	M	N 1/05 – 4/06	Comedy Central HQ	Moved to new non- work blog
1 3	<i>Just Quit Work</i> / Damien / justquitwork.com # not available	US	M	Y 1/04 – present	Corporate office	Infrequent posts
1 4	<i>Ms. Machiavelli</i> / Ms. Machiavelli / msmac2.blogspot # not available	US	F	N 8/04 – 1/05	Corporate office	
1 5	<i>My Worst Call of the Day</i> / Anonymous Me / worstcall.blogspot/ 15,000	US	M	N 2/05 – 10/05	Government Call Center	
1 6	<i>Seldom Updated</i> / Seldom / seldomupdated.blogspot 1,809	AUS	F	N 2/03 – 2/06	Corporate accounting	UK expat?
1 7	<i>Sentimental Geek</i> / Jo / sentimentalgeek.blogspot # not available	UK	F	Y 2/05 - present	Information Technology	
1 8	<i>Shit That Bugs Me At Work</i> / Resource / shitthatbugsmeatwork.blogspot # not available	US	M	N 7/03 – 10/03	Corporate office	
1 9	<i>Stress Release</i> / Stressrelease stressrelease.blogspot # not available	US	F	Y 12/04 – present	Corporate office	
2 0	<i>The Advertising Agency Writer</i> theadvertisingagency.blogspot # not available	UK	M	Y 6/04 - present	Advertising agency	
2 1	<i>The Staple Gun</i> Kristian / thestaplegun.blogspot 1,030	US (NY)	F	N 2/05 - 4/05	Corporate office	Writes as man
2 2	<i>Things to Do at Work When You are Dead</i> / Joe Slacker / thingstodoatworkwhenyouaredead.blog spot 1,633	US	M	N 6/04 – 7/04	Corporate office	

	Blog Name / Alias / URL / # visits*	Country	M/F	Active	Work	Notes
2 3	<i>What's New, Pussycat</i> / Shauny <a href="http://www.shauny.org/pussycat">www.shauny.org/pussycat</a> # not available	UK	F	Y 5/00 - present	Corporate Office	Australian expat
2 4	<i>Why Be An Engineer?</i> / Little_Armadillo / <a href="http://littlearmadillo.blogspot">littlearmadillo.blogspot</a> # not available	UK	M	N 12/04	Engineering	
2 5	<i>Wide Lawns and Narrow Minds</i> Subservient Worker <a href="http://widelawns.blogspot">widelawns.blogspot</a> 432,000	US	F	Y 10/05 - present	Homeowner's association	Much of blog taken down
2 6	<i>Work Hate</i> / Workhate / <a href="http://workhate.blogspot">workhate.blogspot</a> # not available	UK	M?	N 1/04 – 3/05	Corporate office	
2 7	<i>Yet Another Grey Suit</i> / NHS Manager / <a href="http://greysuit.blogspot">greysuit.blogspot</a> # not available	UK	M	N 11/05 – 3/06	NHS	

\* visits July 22, 2007

This broader survey of anonymous workblogs, involved reading a lot of blogs that were, at least for me, somewhat less compelling than those featured in Chapters Three and Four. The writing quality of the blogs reviewed for this chapter is highly variable and ranges from carefully crafted prose to repetitive, misspelled ranting. Several of the workblogs in the sample contain minutely detailed accounts of illness, others feature vitriolic rants about workplace grudges that are somewhat alarming in tone. Some start off with fiery claims about their mission and peter out after a handful of postings. Others feature postings that condemn academics for “getting it wrong again” in their attempt to reveal flaws in the capitalist system. A smaller number resonate with the humorously expressed yet intellectually sophisticated anti-corporate sentiments that were highlighted in the previous chapter, and which support the notion that certain knowledge workers are transforming their workplace experiences into compelling narrative that embodies

politically progressive values. These few, it is argued, embody the kind of creative resistance that is the focus and thrust of this dissertation.

## **Tired of Blogging?**

Like most Internet phenomena, the practice of anonymous workblogging is morphing rapidly. Given that most of the blogs in the sample have already petered out, the first part of this chapter looks at reasons why anonymous workbloggers stop blogging, which often points to a lack of creative resources, coupled with lack of readership. Analysis of defunct blogs confirms that bloggers are writing in an environment of heightened surveillance and also points to a relationship between creative talent and persistence that helps to distinguish creative resistance from less structured venting.

As outlined in Chapter Three, bloggers are increasingly subject to technological change and managerial crackdowns that make it harder to blog anonymously on company time. The passing of the initial media furore about anonymous workblogging means a simultaneous decline in novelty value that may lead less tenacious workbloggers to move onto new projects and new technologies. Most of the workblogs in this sample ended in 2006 or earlier. Many include a farewell of some sort that indicates the author's reason for discontinuing the blog, while leaving the postings intact for posterity. Others end abruptly with no explanation, or are taken down entirely, apparently to elude detection.

The anonymous author of *Bored Ramblings of an Office Worker* (<http://www.boredramblings.co.uk/>) leaves this apology to the person whose name he used to register his blog, indicating the climate of increasingly heightened surveillance in which workbloggers operate: "Sorry, but although this domain is registered to a



completely random person and can't really be tied back to me the press are starting to sniff around. So to save me (and the poor guy who's name I used to register this domain) any hassle I've decided to take my blog offline" (Anonymous, 2007). Another blogger, Kate, who writes *Corporate Peon*, opts to take her blog out of open view in April 2006, shifting from Blogger (<http://corporatepeon.blogspot.com/>) to Wordpress (<http://corporatepeon.wordpress.com/>), which offers password-protection (Kate, 2006).

Other bloggers appear to become tired of blogging because they run out of things to say, because they feel that nobody is reading their posts, or because they feel that they have become too depressed to write anything interesting. "CAD Monkey," the author of *CAD Monkey in the Cubicle Jungle* (<http://cadmonkey.blogspot.com/>) signs off in 2006 after 2.5 years of blogging, writing, "I'm done, guys. There's nothing left to do but complain, therefore, this blog has nowhere to go but down" (Monkey, 2007). An NHS manager stops writing his blog *Yet Another Grey Suit* (<http://greysuit.blogspot.com/>) because he is too disillusioned by his circumstances and feels he is writing into a void: "I haven't posted anything on here for a while. That (*sic*) partly because I'm not sure that anyone reads my musings anyway, but also because my morale has been so low that I just couldn't bring myself to put things down on 'paper'" (Manager, 2006). By contrast, "Seldom," who writes *Seldom Updated*, signs off because her work situation has become *less* disagreeable: "Maybe I've lost the art, or maybe I've got nothing to say. There's certainly nothing inspirational enough going on in my life right now that could result in the vitriolic posts I was spewing out a while ago" (Seldom, 2006a).

Other bloggers end their workblog to signal a new chapter in their lives. T., the author of *Diary of an Office Wench* (<http://officewench.blogspot.com/>), writes, "The

office wench gig has been ditched, the bags have been packed and April 1 marks the beginning of the Great Overseas Adventure” (T., 2006). She invites readers to visit her new blog *Girl.blog.etc* (<http://girlblogetc.blogspot.com/>), which chronicles the backpacking adventures that follow her resignation. Similarly, downsized worker “Kristian,” who authored *The Staple Gun* (<http://thestaplegun.blogspot.com/>), stops posting when she gets a new job and returns to the workforce. Other blogs are creative experiments that are abandoned when their authors move onto other blog projects. For example, *Intern in New York* (<http://newyorkintern.blogspot.com/>), the journal of an intern at Comedy Central, comes to a halt after six months when the author, “Andy” directs readers to a new blog he has started on a completely different topic.

Some of the workblogs in the sample are very short-lived, with the enthusiasm of the first few posts quickly fading. *Blogging the Swoosh* (<http://swooshblog.blogspot.com/>), a blog written by a Nike employee, begins with the promise of rich anecdotal content about life inside the firm, “You are reading the inaugural post of a blog that will peer into life at Nike. Not a view from the marketing department, not a view from wall street analysts, but a view from 1 of the 24,000 employee's (*sic*) world wide that has made this company his life” (Swooshblog, 2006a). After three months, Swooshblog “retires,” saying that he is bored, that he cannot think of interesting topics to write about, and has had his chance to vent (Swooshblog, 2006c).

Bloggers often disappear with no explanation, leaving their blogs intact for years after the final posting. “Joe Slacker,” author of *Things to Do at Work When You are Dead* (<http://www.thingstodoatworkwhenyouaredead.blogspot.com/>), gives up after two months, in spite of his blog’s energetic beginning, in which he seems enthusiastic about

using work time to chronicle his experiences:

Since my energy level is highest during the day when I'm at work I've decided that I am wasting far too much time on actually doing my job. What I need to be doing is using my peak energy time to follow my dreams. So there you have it. That is what this blog will be about, a daily chronicle of me pursuing my dreams and interests on the corporate dime and offering the occasional slacker tip for other corporate cogs (Slacker, 2004c).

Joe Slacker's workblog, like many abandoned blogs, becomes littered with spam comments, but remains otherwise intact three years after its demise, leaving readers who happen upon it clueless as to what became of the author.

Blogs, like any other artistic or literary work, require a degree of persistence in order to attain significance. Those that are too fleeting undermine the seriousness and conviction of their authors. Blogs that end after a significant period of time retain their artistic integrity as finished pieces that are no less meaningful for having been discontinued, persisting in the blogosphere as archived testimonials that can be accessed as easily as blogs that are still active. Becoming tired of blogging, or of writing a particular blog, does not necessarily undermine the value of that piece of work. However there does seem to be a relationship between writing ability and duration, with less able writers becoming bored more quickly. Also, some workblogs can be active and lively, without necessarily suggesting creative resistance. In exploring the type of blog writing that may constitute an intellectually and creatively sophisticated response to the labor process, it is also helpful to examine the type of blog content that falls short of this mark. With this in mind, the following section looks at blog content that, while often interesting and valid in its own way, is distinct from the notion of creative resistance that is the focus of this dissertation.

## Rants, Ailments, and Pro-Capitalist Sentiments

The tone of anonymous workblogs varies widely, from the jauntily disaffected to the irate, and the frequency or fervor of posts does not necessarily make for good reading. Less skilled writers tend toward repetition or unstructured ranting, and some bloggers come across as almost paranoid or unstable. Poorly written, mentally unhinged, or overly mundane blogs, while they may point to workplace discontent and serve a cathartic function for their authors, do not qualify as creative resistance, which elevates individual experience onto an artistic plane where criticism that is not purely instrumental or personal becomes possible. Additionally, while opposition to corporate ideology can accommodate many perspectives, some anonymous workblogs are too explicitly pro-capitalist to be considered under the category of resistance as it is used in this dissertation.

As alluded to above, there is a strong correlation between writing skill and blog duration. Blogs are primarily a written medium, and inability to communicate effectively in writing necessarily decreases the power of a particular blog. Where bloggers lack the writing ability to turn everyday events into fluid prose, they often seem to lose steam, realizing that the medium cannot satisfyingly convey their feelings, even to themselves. Conveying a generally depressive worldview, “Resource,” the author of *Shit That Bugs Me At Work* (<http://shitthatbugsmeatwork.blogspot.com/>) writes (spelling errors are retained from the original), “So today is a crappy day again. Wish i didnt have to bitch about my job all the time. I think I wont ever be happy. Life sucks here” (Resource, 2003). Resource’s blog peters out after three months and lacks any kind of sustained energy. In other blogs, the language used to express dislike of co-workers becomes

somewhat disturbing as well as repetitive. “Rich,” the author of *A Large Farva* (<http://richardeid.blogspot.com/>), writes of an annoying employee who visits from another office, “I could choke her” (Rich, 2004b). His blog, which consists of only a few postings, is a collection of rants against individuals from home and work who have enraged him, with musings such as “Which person should I murder first?” (Rich, 2004a) that make him appear mentally unhinged.

Some bloggers are able writers who offer interesting anecdotes and reflection about workplace experiences, but they simultaneously come across as so self-absorbed that their testimony can sometimes seem more of a personal grudge than a critical commentary. “Damien” who writes *Just Quit Work* (<http://www.justquitwork.com/>) writes that he is a dependable and hard-working employee but has come to realize that the long-hours culture of his workplace is a trap. Writing on company time, he warns other workers:

One reason that i’ve (*sic*) become so resentful of corporate whoring is this: at the end of the day, it doesn’t matter how hard you work. The corporate structure could care less. You’re a cog in the machine. Machines have interchangeable parts. Thus, you’re always expendable. Don’t let them convince you that you’re necessarily a better person because you log more hours on the clock than anybody else (Damien, 2004a).

Elsewhere, he offers thoughtful anecdotes about race in the workplace (he is the only African American at the bank where he is employed), and comments on his plans to start his own business some day. However, his postings convey a degree of instability that makes his testimony less convincing. In one post, he offers an account of his employment history that includes jumping from job to job and being often close to being fired. Of one bank job he writes, “the Teller Manager pulled a scandal, and tried to take everybody else down with her. It’s a long story; just know that I had to bail out on it...”

And of a subsequent job at a different bank, “I was miserable from day one. By the time I decided to take some extended time off, I was on written warning” (Damien, 2004c).

Damien’s blog has a sharply misanthropic tone and the writing is lacking in the nuanced and ambivalent tone of blogs such as *A Free Man in Preston* (featured in Chapter Four), often degenerating into repetitive outbursts. A typical post about Damien’s frustrations begins: “As you probably know by now, i’m trying to leave this shithole of a job. I’m at the point now where i’ve even stopped pretending to work. Usual I don’t get to that point until about a year or so into the job. But this place sucks worse than any other place i’ve worked” (Damien, 2004d). The spelling errors and rant-like construction of these posts do not make for particularly compelling or informative reading, even allowing for the fact that Damien is writing surreptitiously on company time and attempting to convey the intensity of his emotions in the moment. Phrases such as “This place sucks. It’s so fucking backwards” and “This job is so unchallenging and boring. It fucking sucks” (Damien, 2004c), and homophobic utterances (Damien, 2004b) detract from the more carefully crafted reflection that is found in Damien’s blog.

Sometimes, the level of mundane detail in some anonymous workblogs becomes overwhelming, narrowing the audience potential and suggesting that these blogs are written more for catharsis than for reading by visitors to the blog. In *Diogenes Liberated* (<http://diogenesliberated.blogspot.com/>), which is an intelligently written, play-by-play account of a woman’s final year at IBM, the author seems aware that the level of detail offered affects the readability of her blog, opening her blog with the header: “The following is a revealing look at ethics in corporate America and the lack of protections for employees in the workplace. With allowances for readability, the events are presented

as they occurred” (B, 2005a). The blog consists of long and minutely detailed postings that criticize the culture of endemic overwork at IBM, and also lay out the author’s personal struggles with her mood disorder.

Detailed accounts of illness are commonplace in some of the workblogs studied and health issues often become intertwined with employment-related narrative, often resulting in an unrelentingly negative tone. Stressrelease (<http://stressrelease.blogspot.com/>) writes, “The job stress is getting unbearable. I have anxiety from the time I wake up in the morning until I get home everyday. Actually I think its (*sic*) one big long anxiety that lasts from Sunday night to Friday afternoon every week” (Stressrelease, 2006b). Aginoth’s Ramblings (<http://aginoth.blogspot.com/>) features detailed information about his struggles with various ailments, including arthritis, psoriasis, and depression, and chronicles his hopes of being signed off work permanently for medical reasons. CADMonkey offers a lengthy and detailed account of her hip surgery (Monkey, 2006), and Jo, the author of *Sentimental Geek*, (<http://sentimentalgeek.blogspot.com/>) mixes her frequent accounts of hospitals and illness with racist invective against the National Health Service and its staff (Jo, 2006), which is followed by a slew of comments from readers condemning Jo’s racist views.

Anonymous workbloggers write from all manner of political and spiritual perspectives including Christian, Libertarian and even Machiavellian. “B,” the author of *Diogenes Liberated* (<http://www.diogenesliberated.blogspot.com/>), writes that she interprets her struggles as an IBM employee through the lens of Christ’s teachings (B, 2005b). Paul, the author of *Hypercube* (<http://hypercube.blogspot.com/>) writes that he is a staunch Libertarian (Paul, 2004). Ms. Machiavelli (<http://msmac2.blogspot.com/>)

writes her postings as illustrations, albeit in an attempt at humor, of maxims such as “The enemy of your enemy is your friend” (Machiavelli, 2004). Many heterogeneous perspectives contribute to the critique of capitalism embodied in anonymous workblogs – libertarian and religious accounts can critique concentration of corporate power, just as ardently as those which spring from a socialist, secular perspective, and these must also be considered as a valid dimension of creative resistance, even though they are often highly incompatible with the thrust of progressive politics, which is the focus of this dissertation.

The practice of anonymous workblogging is by no means synonymous with anti-capitalist sentiments, and some blogs are so pro-corporate as to exclude themselves from the banner of resistance, at least as the idea of resistance is understood for the purposes of the current study. The Nike employee blog, *Blogging the Swoosh*, quoted above, is notably lacking in any kind of critique of Nike’s global labor practices and focuses instead on topics such as the need to tighten administrative spending (Swooshblog, 2006d) or promoting the idea of Nike buying out the Portland Trailblazers basketball team in order to achieve direct product placement (Swooshblog, 2006b). Another anonymous workblog, *The Advertising Agency* (<http://theadvertisingagency.blogspot.com/>), is explicitly pro-capitalist, and specifically opposed to academia, as indicated by this post protesting attempts to regulate junk food advertising to children, “Once again, this kind of loaded 'research' is funded by your taxes. The communists might have lost the war but they're still fighting their anti-capitalist battles behind the iron curtain of academia” (Writer, 2007). In addition, blogs such as *Sentimental Geek*, which is explicitly racist, and homophobic blogs such as *Just*



*Quit Work*, also tend to exclude themselves from participation in a community of progressive ideas in which such sentiments are unacceptable.

As illustrated by the above, motivations for writing anonymously about the workplace vary widely, and while pro-capitalist or racist writings may be highly creative in form, they are beyond the scope of this dissertation, which focuses on a concept of resistance that is aligned with the critical sociology of the labor process. This dissertation research does not set out to make the claim that anonymous workbloggers *in general* are likely to become engaged in an anti-capitalist project that critiques corporate practices in ways that support a left-wing social change agenda. Nor do I intend to argue that any employee blog qualifies as creative resistance purely because it involves written documentation of workplace experiences. Rather, this research is concerned with highlighting the presence, in the blogosphere, of a relatively small yet significant number of iconoclastic, intellectually sophisticated creative responses to the labor process that harmonize with the progressive political notions embodied in critical organizational studies. Within the sample, several of the blogs fit this description, as detailed below.

## **Glimmers of Creative Resistance**

The above highlights bloggers who complain about work and malign their co-workers and managers, using a form of critique that remains at the operational, mundane level. This section attempts to highlight both quasi-literary attempts at expressing workplace discontent and also examples of analytical reflection on the labor process that, while often tied to specific individuals and circumstances, creatively transcend particularity in order to speak more broadly to the system in which many knowledge workers are embedded.

Several of the bloggers in the sample use the writings of others to frame their own critique of corporate culture, work-life balance and overwork, elevating their concerns above the individual level. Looking critically at the long-hours-based meeting culture of her organization, “Seldom” opens a posting by quoting some text from the website *i-resign* (<http://www.i-resign.com/>) to give weight to her own experiences. The quoted text, culled from an essay on workplace boredom by T.J. Snaith, begins “Meetings are the diabolical ceremonies that sustain and propagate the boredom cult,” (Snaith, 2002) and counsels employees to quit office jobs that cause intense ennui. Seldom then documents her own budget meeting schedule, which results in fifteen hour days, and vows that she is going to pretend to be sick in order to avoid having to attend the next cycle of meetings (Seldom, 2006b). Also using the writing of others to contextualize her own reflections on work, “Stressrelease” quotes the full text of a *San Francisco Chronicle* article that extols the virtues of taking time off work, and condemns American overwork culture (Stressrelease, 2006a). The article, by columnist Mark Morford exhorts Americans to do their work well but do less of it, linking personal and political ills to time-scarcity:

Think of what you could do. Paint the house. Start your novel. Drive across the country. Finish that Proust bio. Rethink your life. Read up on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and come up with a solution because apparently they all insist on remaining pious violence-drunk hatemongers who regularly shame their God. Fly to Bali. You know, do stuff (Morford, 2002).

Thoughtful musings on how much time is spent at work are particularly common. “Little\_Armadillo,” an engineer, reflects in his blog *Why Be an Engineer?* (<http://littlearmadillo.blogspot.com/>) on the possibility of a shorter work week, and wonders why it has never been realized in spite of the promises made in the 1970s: “I

remember a British ‘Horizon’ documentary from 25 years ago which caused quite a stir, prompting questions in parliament the next day. It asked how we would adjust to lives of leisure, working for only two days a week but with a high standard of living, because of the rise of the microchip. I was quite excited at the prospect” (Little\_Armadillo, 2004).

Other bloggers encourage other workers to join them in reflecting on the meaning of work. Kristian, the author of *The Staple Gun* (<http://thestaplegun.blogspot.com/>), muses, “I mean, I’m pretty sure as human beings we weren’t meant to sit in an office for 12 hours a day, in a temperature controlled environment, worrying about whether we have time to get another latte before we have to go to yet another meeting on interpersonal effectiveness...” (Kristian, 2005a). She wonders whether happiness is more attainable in traditional societies that are not based on maximizing productivity and consumption. An anonymous commenter advises her to give up her job and do some kind of work that pays less but involves being outdoors: “Life is pointless, but it seems even more so in an office [...] We don't need to aspire to this consumer driven ideology that we've been fed.” Another commenter, “Dr God” advises her to take time out to travel, work in the community, and discover herself. Kristian also attempts to collect work stories from other employees (see figure 15), and although her efforts seem largely unsuccessful and her blog quickly peters out, her impulse is to connect to other workers and share stories about office experiences in order to shed light on the meaning of work in general (Kristian, 2005b).

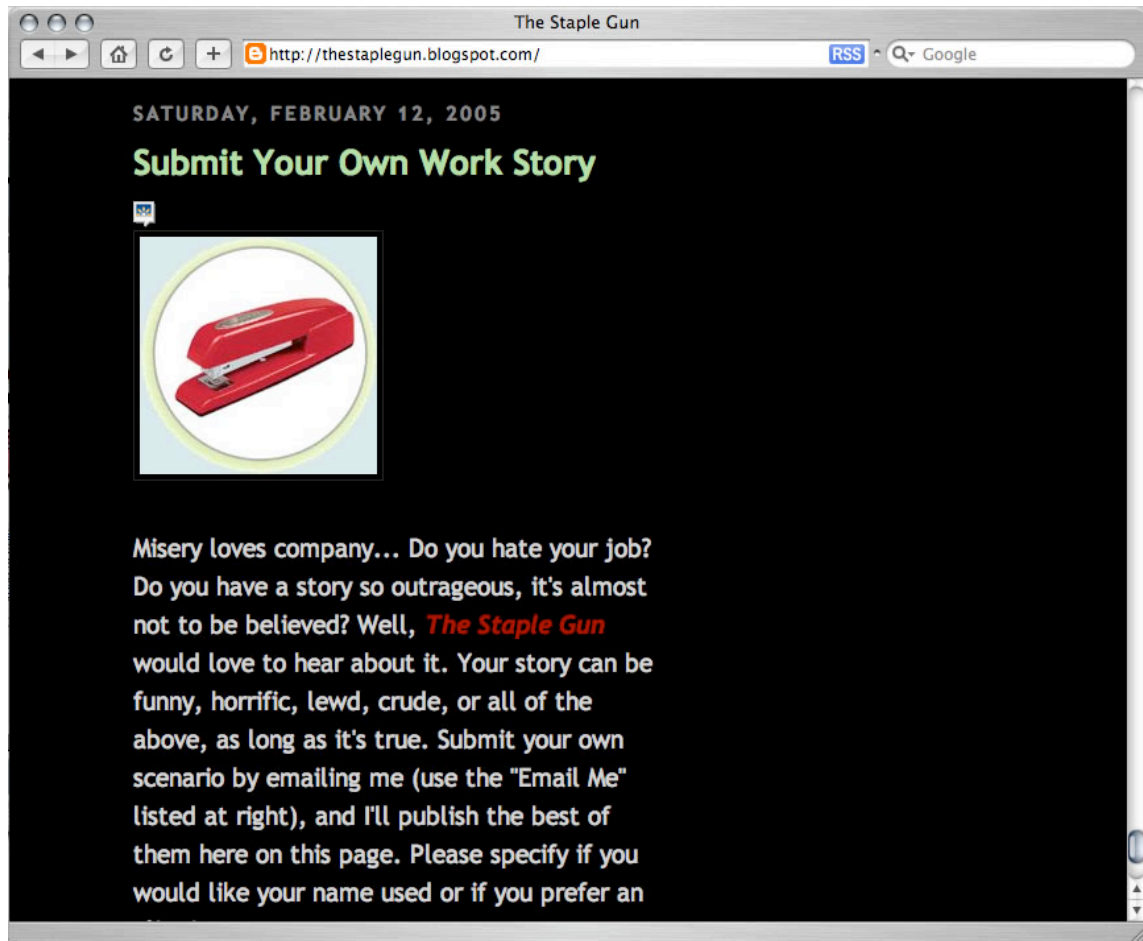


Figure 15: *Staple Gun's attempt to collect work stories from other readers.*

The impulse to connect with and influence other workers is also strong in Joe Slacker's blog, *Things To Do At Work When You Are Dead* (<http://www.thingstodoatworkwhenyouaredead.blogspot.com/>). During the short life of his blog, he encourages fellow workers to form a union and to adopt a slacker mentality, offering links from his blog to the AFL-CIO's website, Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, and to writing guides that might encourage slackers to devote company time to their own creative projects. He celebrates his own slacking efforts, which include writing a movie script on company time (Slacker, 2004a); muses about the heartlessness with which layoffs at his firm are implemented (Slacker, 2004d); and encourages readers to check out

Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed* (Slacker, 2004b). Joe tells the story of his own disillusionment, which began when he witnessed the laying off of a 61 year old man who had dedicated his life to the organization. He reflects, "That my friends is the day Joe Slacker was born. I realized I needed to look out for myself first even if it meant doing it on company time" (Slacker, 2004d). However, as noted above, his blog peters out after a very short time, and Joe Slacker leaves no forwarding email address.

Creative time wasting is a feature of several blogs in the sample. *What's New, Pussycat?* (<http://www.shauny.org/pussycat/>), written by "Shauny," includes many postings about her attempts to stave off workplace boredom in a variety of temporary administrative jobs. She creates artworks that are a commentary on the banality of office work, as in the following posting, where she creates a collage of fruit stickers on office stationery: "Late last year I was bored at work and decided to start sticking all the stickers from my pieces of fruit on an old Expense sheet in my company diary. Since I do no work of real consequence for said company and never have any expenses, I could think of no better use for a beautiful blank page." She posts a photo of her collage (see figure 16) along with a detailed tally and a pie chart she has created to track all the pieces of fruit she eats in the office (Shauny, 2002).



Figure 16: Shauny's Apple sticker collage on an expense sheet  
([http://www.shauny.org/pussycat/images/2002/08/cropped\\_apples.jpg](http://www.shauny.org/pussycat/images/2002/08/cropped_apples.jpg)).

Some blogs stand out as being approached by their authors as focused creative projects. Among the blogs studied, *Work Hate* (<http://workhate.blogspot.com/>), conveys the sense that it has been conceived as an integral whole, as a time wasting hub for bored workers. The *Work Hate* blog, whose authors (or author) write under the pseudonym “Workhate” features links to intriguing websites such as the now defunct “Virtual Bubble Wrap” (Workhate, 2004b), each with its own “Time Waste Potential” index; and posts such as “The Great Sick Day Getaway” (Workhate, 2004c), which celebrates the “national tradition” of taking time off work under false pretences. Workhate’s “Mission Statement” celebrates the art of “skiving” or using company time for one’s own creative endeavors:

Everything we write for workhate is created at a place of employment when we should be doing something productive for the people who actually pay us a wage - but instead we’re secretly typing away, glancing over our shoulder in case anyone sneaks up and discovers what we’re really up to (Workhate, 2004a).

Workhate also makes fun of corporate jargon, as exemplified in the link to the blog’s “sister site” *Huhcorp* (Workhate, 2004b), a fictional consulting company whose website lampoons new age management jargon (see figure 17). Workhate abandoned the blog after a year, leaving a humorous “exit interview,” but it remains as an entertaining testimonial to the idea of subversive use of company time for Internet-enabled creativity, and the desire to flee one’s job for a more exciting and carefree life.



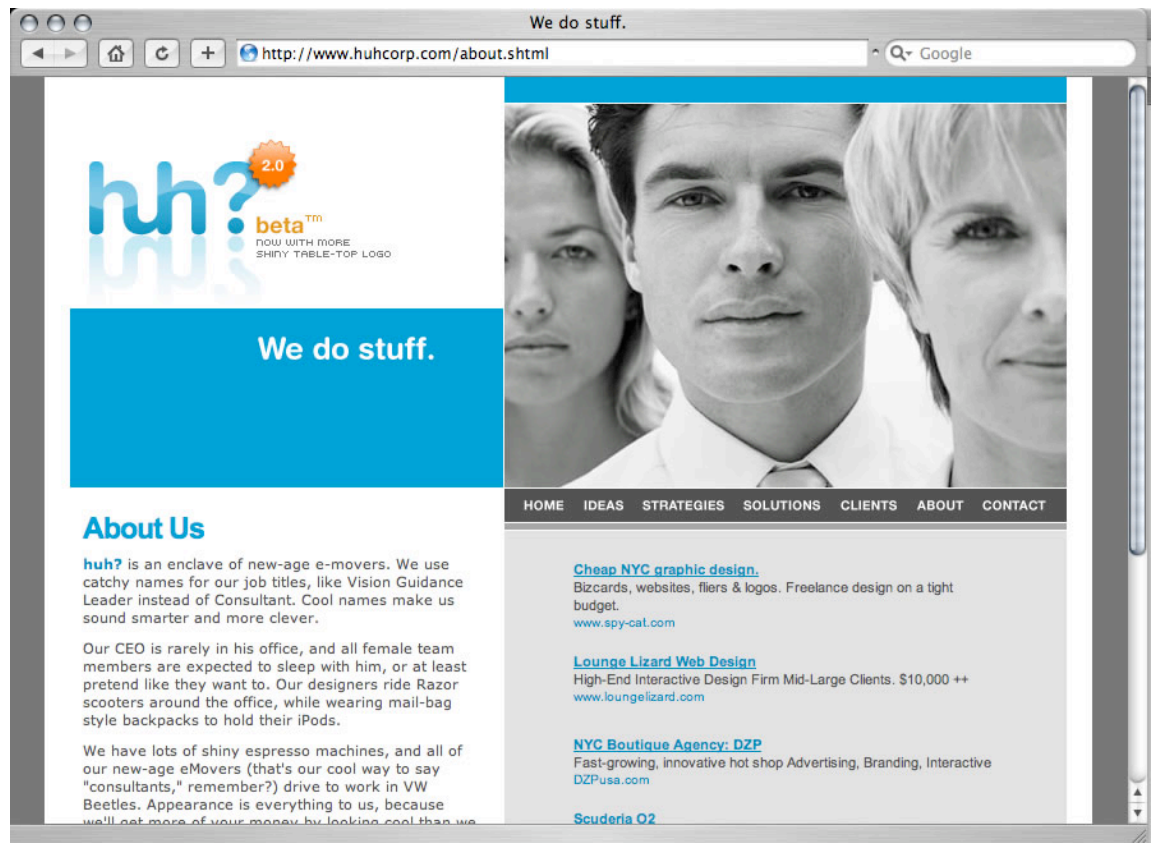


Figure 17: Huhcorp (<http://www.huhcorp.com/>), the “sister site” of Work Hate

These efforts – even when somewhat ephemeral or excessively lighthearted – show a level of sophistication that goes beyond the mere rant or mundanely descriptive journal. Blog entries such as those from Shauny’s *What’s New Pussycat* and Joe Slacker’s *Things to Do at Work When You Are Dead* are written from the heart, and express an attempt to intellectualize, or, in Shauny’s case, to respond artistically to their work experiences. Kristian’s effort to collect workplace stories shows a similar effort to creatively synthesize shared experiences, trying to move beyond purely personal anecdotes and reflect on larger questions. However, this type of content is by no means the norm in the sample of blogs studied. Rather, thoughtful and well-crafted blog postings are relatively scarce in the sample of anonymous workblogs reviewed for this chapter.



Writing talent, motivation, and audience feedback seem closely intertwined, even where the positive feedback is on a small scale (as in Manchester blogs such as *CB*, featured in the previous chapter). Some bloggers, such as “Subservient No More,” the author of *Wide Lawns and Narrow Minds*, attract gratifyingly large or intimate readerships that help to sustain creative momentum. *Wide Lawns and Narrow Minds*, which featured (recently taken down) compelling writing about a young woman’s office job at an upscale country club, garnered a large following, relative to the other blogs in the sample, and is quickly recognizable as the work of a good storyteller. In 2007, “Subservient No More,” tried recently to resign from her blog, claiming that it was distracting her from more sustained creative projects, but she was bombarded with supportive comments from readers who urged her to keep posting, and she has since decided to keep blogging but transition toward a new blog with fewer postings. She has also asked her readers to support her when she tries to become a published author, a request that was received enthusiastically by many of her commenters (More, 2007).

All types of anonymous workblogs are important in forming an iconoclastic milieu that incorporates many levels of writing skill and accommodates disturbing rants and thoughtful musings alike. However, creative resistance is the domain of relatively talented writers or artists who have chosen to hide out in the knowledge workplace and who have felt inspired to turn their talents in the direction of critiquing their employers in a more than ephemeral, superficial fashion, that might readily be placed alongside quality journalistic or fictional writing in more traditional media with which it co-exists.

## The Exceptional Eloquence of Call Center Blogs

Among the blogs studied, call center blogs stand out as a particularly interconnected, lively, and iconoclastic group. In addition to *Call Centre Confidential* (featured in Chapter Four), there are several other humorous, and thoughtfully written blogs originating in call centers that have gained popularity in the blogosphere. *Call Centre Purgatory* (<http://callcenterpurgatory.blogspot.com/>), which ran from 2004 – 2007 and cultivated a large readership (based on blogshare statistics at [blogshares.com](http://blogshares.com)), is particularly notable among call centre blogs for its well-crafted writing and humor. As in some of the blogs featured in Chapter Four, the author of *Call Centre Purgatory*, who writes as “the Anonymous Cog” or “AC” manages to criticize capitalist excesses through subtly exaggerated anecdotal postings about daily life in the call center where he is employed. In a typical posting, he satirizes a caller who babbles excessive amounts of caffeinated jargon, paraphrasing her real meaning as: “when will this be handled in a satisfactory manner so that we can begin to construct our forced labor sweatshops, I mean outsourcing activities in the Latin American nation of NoHayTrabajoBuenoAquí?” (Cog, 2004d). Elsewhere, he expresses similar sentiments about corporate greed by quoting or linking to poetry, literature, news articles, and the writings of other bloggers. In one posting, he copies out, in full, a poem from James Kavanaugh that he has seen on another blog (Cog, 2005): “There are men too gentle to live among wolves; Who prey upon them with IBM eyes; And sell their hearts and guts for martinis at noon” (Kavanaugh, 1991).

In another posting, he shares the lyrics of James Taylor’s song “Millworker,” in which one of the verses goes, “Yeah, but its my life that's been wasted, And I have been the fool, To let this manufacturer, Use my body for a tool” (Cog, 2004b). This posting is part of a series of reflections on alienation, in which AC sets out by summarizing Marx’s

theory of the routinization of the labor process and the demise of artisanal production:

“Instead of being able to craft a product such as a barrel, to have control of it from the time you picked the materials to the manner in which it was sold, you become an anonymous cog in a large barrel making machine” (Cog, 2004a). Subsequent postings meditate on how this logic has been applied to the call center industry, resulting in dehumanized, repetitive work.

Like blogs such as *A Free Man in Preston*, AC’s blog is characterized by an ambivalence that enriches his postings and makes for interesting reading. In a post celebrating his outsider status, entitled “The Joy of Alienation,” he recounts his desire to be part of the group: “I’ve felt guilty I could not be as successful as the other call center superstars. I’ve wished I could have received the performance plaques...” However, he observes that his alienated position enables him to see the flaws in the system in which he is embedded, concluding, “Without people who are on the outside of the dominant group, looking in and seeing what is wrong with that group, there is not a chance for positive change” (Cog, 2006b).

At a glance, *Call Center Purgatory* seems somewhat similar in tone and content to blogs such as *CB* (featured in Chapter Four), which spring from a secular, left-wing political perspective. Yet closer reading reveals that AC is not from a progressive political background, that he grapples with his Republican upbringing, claiming still to hold many Republican political views, and that he draws his convictions about creating equitable, meaningful labor from his Christian faith. In a series of postings entitled “Christian Capitalism,” he proposes a spiritual economic doctrine based on “the idea that making profits is of secondary importance to how you treat the world around you, how

your business affects the world around you” (Cog, 2004c). He alludes to Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* to promote the idea of humanized commerce, which, for AC, is a religiously inspired concept.

By contrast, another popular call centre blog, *My Worst Call of the Day* (<http://worstcall.blogspot.com/>), is written from an anti-religious perspective. The author, “Anonymous Me” writes scathing accounts of the “hillbilly,” stridently Christian, and xenophobic customers whom he deals with in his government job, linking their manners and beliefs to the excesses of the Bush regime. In one humorous posting, entitled “King of the Douchebags,” he recounts the story of an irate caller who is complaining about the telephone company’s support for its gay employees and its donations to Planned Parenthood (Me, 2005c). Anonymous Me fantasizes about telling the customer to find an alternate phone company “preferably a Halliburton subsidiary” to do business with. In other postings, he lampoons outraged callers who protest about the illegal aliens in their neighborhood (Me, 2005b) or expect privileged customer service because they are Christians (Me, 2005a). At one point, he protests, “Imagine being forced to listen to the State of the Union Address for eight hours a day, and you’ll have a sense of why I sniff glue on my coffee breaks” (Me, 2005d).

Clearly, *My Worst Call of the Day* and *Call Center Purgatory* are written from quite different and somewhat incompatible ideological perspectives, yet they are united in their focus on criticizing the call center industry and using its machinations as a metaphor for some of the wider problems related to corporate greed. Their respective authors, Anonymous Cog and Anonymous Me, display different attitudes regarding religion, yet the process of blogging reveals common ground regarding a mutual sense of exploitation

in their respective customer service jobs, and a sense that their work situation symbolizes deep contradictions within the capitalist system. Anonymous Me comments that he respects Anonymous Cog's blog because of a sense of empathy in terms of their common work situation, but also because of the quality of the writing, which attracts him to Anonymous Cog's blog in spite of a clear divergence of opinion on the topic of religion: "I'll read workblogs with points of view I don't necessarily share, but the craftsmanship of the prose might be enough to keep me coming back for more" (personal communication, 1 August 2007).

This heterogeneity of perspective amidst broader agreement regarding the need for change is reminiscent of the notion of polyphony within the labor movement (Carter et al., 2003), which makes room for a broad range of personal orientations to the labor struggle while allowing for broad consensus building around issues such as the need to stem corporate greed and increase employee power. Although call center workers, unlike the Liverpool dockers in Carter et al.'s account, are not organizing a union, their writings are capable of operating in harmony to send out a message that is more powerful than the sum of its parts. Anonymous Me sees this loose solidarity as a mosaic, built by many different bloggers with different but often overlapping viewpoints:

I see my relationship to other workbloggers as like pieces of a mosaic. We do all cover roughly the same ground, but with widely varying individual themes, tones, language, and perspectives. So if you read a large enough assortment of our blogs, the big picture about contemporary office work does tend to emerge (personal communication, 1 August 2007).

Underscoring this tendency for the blogosphere to support a degree of heterogeneity in terms of ideology as well as rank, while simultaneously building consensus, there are signs of solidarity between more lowly call center employees and middle managers. Some call center blogs are written by middle managers or supervisors

who, while also criticizing the workers they supervise, also focus on the power dynamics inside the company, and the pressures of work in the industry. *The Supervisor of Customer Service Hell* (<http://thesupervisorofhell.blogspot.com/>) introduces herself as “the company's wage-slave, my manager's gofer, the puppet of the upper brass, the faceless representative of “The Man” – the one that's responsible for shepherding over of all this misery that you see” (Supervisor, 2005b). She muses on her struggles to be a good manager, often complaining about insubordination among the employees that she supervises, but also chronicling her own disillusionment and cautioning against becoming loyal to the organization:

I guess the best advice that I can give all of you is that you should never trust a company that you work for. Regardless of mission statements, executive speeches, and corporate pep rallies, the company does not want to invest in you or provide a great opportunity for you. They don't care about you, or your family, or the community. The company is always interested in one thing – profit (Supervisor, 2005a).

Mirroring the language of *Call Center Purgatory*, The Supervisor concludes about her work life, “Wherever I go, whatever I do, I'll just be a cog in the machine” (Supervisor, 2005a).

Call Center blogs are strongly interconnected and appear to reference each other and to identify as a group more powerfully than the more diffusely connected office blogs featured earlier in this chapter. Call Center bloggers frequently devote a section of their blogroll to other call centre blogs (see figure 18) and quote each other in their postings, attempting to build a kind of virtual solidarity in spite of differing political and spiritual perspectives and differences in rank. *Call Center Purgatory*, *The Supervisor of Customer Service Hell*, and *My Worst Call of the Day* are all linked via each other's blogrolls. AC and The Supervisor provide lists of links to a large number of other call center blogs.

Call Center employees seem keen to talk to each other and to be interested in building a social network. AC encourages other call center workers to join the now defunct discussion forum entitled “Call Center Slave” (Cog, 2006a). Jeber, an IT help desk worker observes how many call center workers are blogging and relates the energy behind this group of blogs to the relative exploitation of workers in that sector. In a post entitled “Help Deskees Unite!,” he writes:

It turns out I’m not the only help desk technician who is speaking out on line. Purely by accident I happened across several blogs being published by other help desk agents, and judging by what they write, our experiences are fairly common. *Call Center Purgatory*, *Call Center Guru*, *Craziest Call Center*, *My Worst Call of the Day* and *Call Center Redemption* are all posted on Blogger<sup>1</sup>, which is only natural considering the below-average pay we receive for working in our cubicles (Jeber, 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> Blogger is a free blogging service – Jeber here implies that call centre employees are too low paid to be able to afford higher cost blog services such as Typepad.

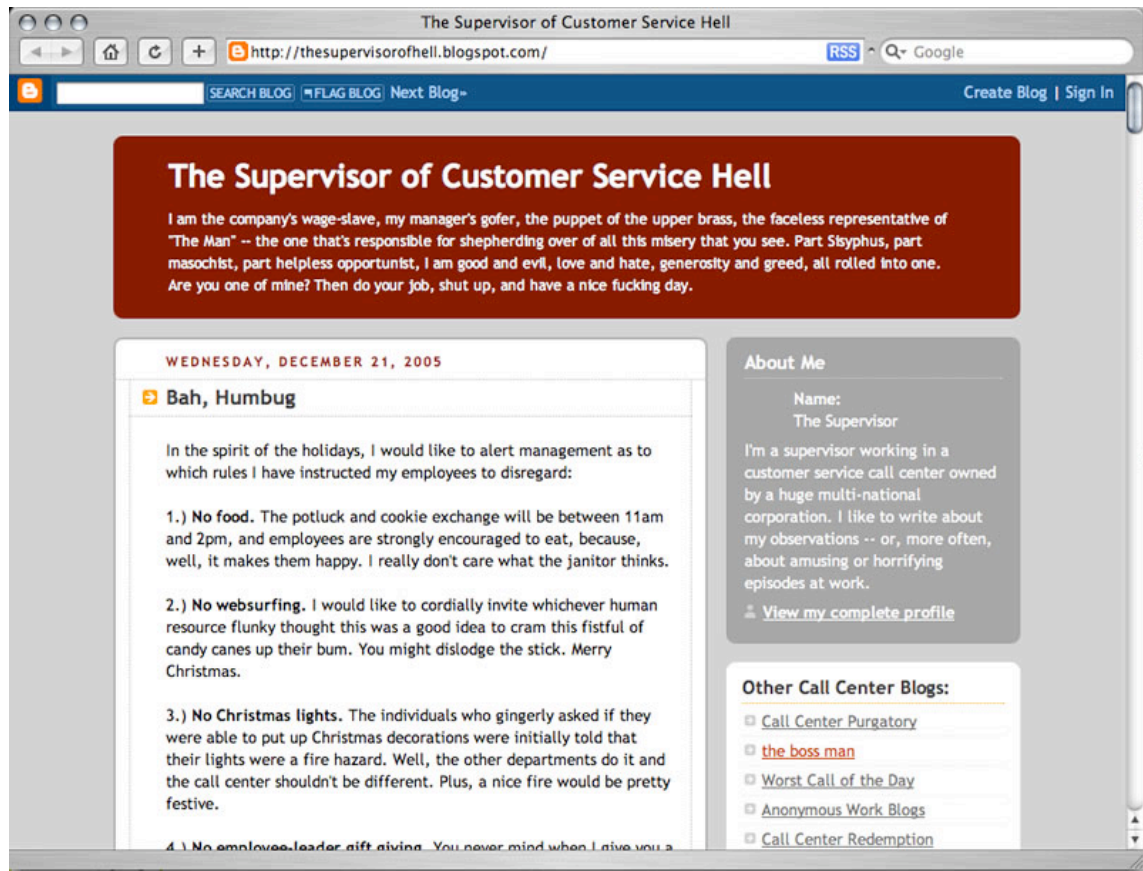


Figure 18: *The Supervisor of Customer Service Hell* (<http://thesupervisorofhell.blogspot.com/>) showing blogroll links to other call centre blogs from middle management and rank-and-file employees.

Call center bloggers frequently comment on each other's blog postings. For example, in response to *The Supervisor's* posting about company loyalty (described above), several other call center employees chime in with advice. "Miss Manager," another supervisor agrees with the need to disengage, writing that the job "will eat away at your soul and when you look in the mirror (if you ever get a bathroom break, that is), you don't even know yourself." Another call centre employee "CallGirl," concurs, "Unfortunately, I only learned not to trust when I was betrayed after 15 years with a company, so that they could replace me with a lower-paid worker. That realization took



the wind out of my sails, also, and sadly, I don't think I've been the same kind of employee since” (Supervisor, 2005a).

Retaining distance from organizational culture, and carving out space for one’s own writing projects is an act of resistance that goes beyond mere venting or footdragging, particularly for those bloggers who view themselves as creative writers. Anonymous Me says that he writes his blog primarily to amuse. However, he also agrees that writers and artists can change the world by transmission of their experiences and ideas. He argues that when art is tied too overtly to a cause it becomes propaganda, yet he also feels that workblogs manifest an unconscious aim to subvert the corporate hierarchy or status quo (personal communication, 31 July 2007).

Like the Mancunian workbloggers who were interviewed in Chapter Four, Anonymous Me aims to keep his creative and work life separate, and to limit the encroachment of his job into the time he spends developing his own art. He is a diligent employee with a work ethic he describes as “solid but not exemplary,” but does not look to his job as a central part of his identity, commenting, “it’s pretty clear to everyone around me that I’m just there for a paycheck” (personal communication, 31 July 2007). He likes to keep his creativity separate from his paying work – he obtained a degree in English “just for me, not for any kind of career,” and he feels that his creativity would suffer if he tried to tie it to a paycheck:

Personally, I can only write when it's purely for my own amusement or edification. I lose all motivation to write when I have to do it to someone else's taste. My creativity (at least in terms of writing) would surely escape to the dusty recesses of my brain if I had to rely on it for a living. So yes, the blog has been enormously helpful in balancing what I'm paid to do with what I want to do (personal communication, 31 July 2007).

The prevalence of talented, critical, progressively minded writers in the call

center industry presents intriguing possibilities for social change, not least of which is the ability to make manifest a yearning for more absolutely unfettered time, and a demand, however subtle and polyphonic, for a radical shift in work-life balance and a significantly shorter working week that would enable creativity to flourish, unhindered by the exigencies of making a living.

## **Toward a Theory of Creative Resistance**

The preponderance of high quality writing and the impressive degree of interconnectivity among call center blogs points to several conclusions about the social change potential of the blogosphere for knowledge workers in general. On the one hand, call center workers are perhaps one of the most exploited kinds of white collar workers, enduring Taylorized work environments where surveillance and monitoring of employees harks back to the factory discipline of previous centuries. Their protests could be interpreted as a sign of intense exploitation and degradation, in line with the Marxist notion of the emiserated proletariat who have nothing to lose but their chains and, in this case, have taken up the computer as a weapon against their oppressor. However, close reading of call center blogs reveals that those blogs that are successful in terms of building a community of readers, being sustained for a significant period of time, and featuring a high standard of creative or analytical writing, are not produced by the most emiserated or lowly call center workers. Rather, they are written by relatively educated people in somewhat stable jobs who have time to look about them, and who have perhaps manipulated their work environment (some of them becoming middle managers) to free up time for critical reflection on their working life. The particular banality of call center

work seems to lend an artistic sharpness to blogs that emerge from the industry, since call center employees are reporting from an sector that often epitomizes the dehumanizing influence of capital on the labor process and its tendency to commodify social relations. However, the best call center writing also highlights an existential dimension of employee struggles that are common, if less obviously, in more flexible and “enlightened” workplaces where workers are relatively free to structure their own time and set their own goals.

Call center bloggers, at least at the beginning before surveillance made this too difficult, used the tools of their cubicles for blogging activities, suggesting the dialectical emergence of resistance emerging from the capitalist labor process itself, which is embodied in Marx’s analysis of the dynamic transcendence of capital (Marx, 1992). Witty, scathing, and satirical call center blogs such as *My Worst Call of the Day* draw artistic and political inspiration from the notable exploitation and routinization that is prevalent in the industry. However, these blogs also strongly suggest the hopes of New Class theory (Coates & Topham, 1970; Alvin Ward Gouldner, 1979; Mallet, 1975), which held up relatively skilled, educated, and comfortable workers as a powerful force in critiquing and moving beyond capitalism. As in Marcuse’s more optimistic analysis of technology (Marcuse, 1991), some call center workers have been able to manipulate their circumstances and harness digital tools in order to free up time for critical reflection and for creative self-expression that protested their disgust at the system in general. Their articulate efforts to protest the meaninglessness of their work speaks to the

concerns of a larger white collar workforce that is often well-paid and materially comfortable yet existentially dissatisfied.

Close reading of the blogs in this sample, and of the reader comments and blogroll links that they sustain, indicates a series of little overlapping worlds that are characterized by broad agreement. Apart from occasional moments where readers realize that a blog they are reading is advocating views that they find offensive – for example when *Sentimental Geek*'s readers encounter her racist views – individual blogs seem largely to sustain broadly like-minded communities. Blogging is not only a “very large hidden subculture” (Richards, 2007, p. 5) but rather it is a multiplicity of subcultures that are concealed from each other by virtue of value and stylistic differences that make one set of blogs particularly appealing to a particular audience yet passed over quickly by another type of reader. The concentration of thoughtful comments at *Call Center Purgatory*, indicate that educated, progressive-minded employees are more likely to be drawn to the thoughtful world of *Call Center Purgatory* than to the misspelled invective of blogs such as *Shit That Bugs Me at Work*, even if AC's religious perspective differs from their own. This view of the blogosphere still harmonizes with the claim, made in the previous chapters, that some workers are using blogs to create and sustain sophisticated oppositional responses to work, but it adds the qualifying assertion that blogs tend to bolster a pre-existing orientation to the labor process and create communities of like-minded readers, rather than necessarily “converting” readers to new worldviews.

Creative talent, or lack of it, is a defining factor in the persistence and popularity of a particular blogger. A handful of particularly skilled bloggers have succeeded in creating iconoclastic reflections on contemporary knowledge work that appeal to a broad audience, but these blogs are as heterogeneous as they are critical. Even in the relatively interconnected case of the call center blogs, there is little sign that bloggers are interested in aligning themselves, in a coordinated fashion, with the labor movement. Their heterogeneity nevertheless supports a mutual respect that seems founded in the quality of the creative writing itself, as much as in the views behind it. As such, the blogosphere brings together writers with diverse yet broadly harmonized views and allows them to work loosely in concert in developing a polyphonic critique of the labor process. At certain rare points within the ever-shifting, noisy, and conflicted blogosphere there is a sense of an emerging community of writers and readers that is also an emerging community of progressive values, of workers who think of themselves as too gentle to live among wolves, and who may be increasingly more demanding about how their society is organized.

Ultimately, this dissertation is concerned with a particular type of worker who combines a critical intellectualism with the reality of being embedded in the knowledge workplace, and is able to transform his or her impressions into relatively sophisticated prose. This chapter has therefore suggested the limits of the anonymous workblogging phenomenon, indicating how the power of the medium is circumscribed by the ability of an individual employee to perform as author. The following chapter, outlines the characteristics of these employee-authors and attempts to show how their output

simultaneously draws on and adds to a rich fabric of creative resistance that succeeds in challenging the arrogance of corporate capitalism.