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Iain Munro

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Whistleblowing and the politics of truth: mobilizing 'truth games' in the WikiLeaks case

Iain Munro

Abstract

This paper investigates the role of 'truth' as an object of contention within organizations, with specific reference to the 'politics of truth' in the WikiLeaks case. For an empirical illustration of a 'truth game' this paper draws on varied accounts of the WikiLeaks whistleblowing website. The paper shows how different 'truth games' are mobilised by different organizational actors engaged in a politics of truth. The paper demonstrates the existence of different truth games at work in the WikiLeaks case. It shows WikiLeaks' profound challenge to hegemonic games of truth in terms of a 'networked parhessia', which entails a radical transformation of the process of truth telling in support of whistleblowers and in pursuit of an explicitly emancipatory, anarchist political agenda. Networked parhessia provides a new infrastructure to enable a 'parhessia of the governed.' This paper demonstrates how WikiLeaks is of singular importance as a case study of organizational resistance in the way it moves beyond micropolitical acts of resistance, such as whistleblowing, towards an engagement with wider political struggles.

Keywords

"And Ye Shall Know the Truth and the Truth Shall Make You Free" (John 8:32; CIA Motto)

The aim of this paper is to investigate the role of 'truth' as an object of contention within organizations, with specific reference to the WikiLeaks case. The practices of resistance to power in the WikiLeaks case can be understood in terms of a 'politics of truth' and the use of different 'truth games' in organizations (Foucault, 2007a). An empirical illustration of 'truth games' is developed from varied accounts of the WikiLeaks whistleblowing website (Assange, 2011, 2014; Assange et al., 2012, 2013; Becket and Ball, 2012; Brevini et al. 2013; Domscheit-Berg and Klopp, 2011; Leigh and Harding, 2011; O'Hagan, 2014). This paper argues that WikiLeaks has created a new politics of truth - a '*networked parhessia*' to resist abuses of corporate and State power. WikiLeaks has been described as a new kind of truth telling which hails a 'globalisation of conscience' (Nayar, 2010, p.28). This has been particularly notable in its role in the recent democratic struggles in the Middle East (Amnesty International, 2011; Sauter and Kendall, 2011), and in its numerous critical engagements with institutional abuses of power (Assange, 2011; Brevini et al., 2013; Nayar, 2010). WikiLeaks is of singular importance as a case study of resistance due to the way it moves beyond micropolitical acts of resistance, such as whistleblowing, towards an engagement with wider political struggles.

The WikiLeaks organization is an online platform that has been designed for the purpose of facilitating the mass leaking of documents of organizational wrongdoing from corporate and government whistleblowers (Brevini et al., 2013). In his account of WikiLeaks Sifry (2011, p.16) explains that 'we are living in a time of radical uncertainty about the 'official' version of the truth.' WikiLeaks is symptomatic of a profound anxiety about what we know about the

world that surrounds us and a 'mistrust pandemic' in traditional sources of authority (Mueller et al., 2015). The WikiLeaks project has already attracted some attention within legal studies and media studies (e.g. Benkler, 2013; Brevini et al., 2013; Fuchs, 2011; Hood, 2011), but has so far attracted only marginal comment from within the field of management and organization studies (Kaulingfreks and Kaulingfreks, 2013; Logue and Clegg, 2015; Munro, 2016).

In the field of management studies a great deal of scholarly work has already been devoted to the micropolitical dynamics of employee resistance (Contu, 2008; Courpasson, et al., 2012; Jermier et al. 1994; Knights, 2002; Mumby, 2005; Vallas, 2016). A recent review of studies of employee resistance by Vallas (2016, p.120) has observed that they have tended to focus on local acts of resistance and concluded that 'a structural condition that has received little or no attention in the literature, but which may be most important of all [is] the availability of external organizational resources that can help workers establish linkages to their counterparts who are employed outside of their own immediate workplace.' WikiLeaks offers an excellent opportunity to investigate an 'external organizational resource' that has been specifically designed to support employee resistance. The WikiLeaks case also provides an exemplary case study for scholars of 'alternative organization' (Parker et al., 2014; Reedy, 2014) to investigate an organization that has invented radically novel tactics to support employee resistance and to challenge corporate hegemony. A new politics of truth is at the very heart of this form of resistance.

The contribution of this paper is threefold. Firstly, the paper shows how different 'truth games' are mobilised by different organizational actors engaged in a politics of truth. Secondly, the paper demonstrates the existence of diverse truth games at work in the WikiLeaks

case including: i) *parhessiastic* truth games, ii) confessional truth games, and iii) the market-place as a truth test. This analysis shows how truth can become an important site of struggle within organizations, and then develops the concept of '*networked parhessia*' to explain the distinctive way in which WikiLeaks has created a new politics of truth. The third contribution of the paper explains WikiLeaks' profound challenge to hegemonic games of truth in terms of '*networked parhessia*', which entails a radical transformation of the process of truth telling to support whistleblowers and to pursue an explicitly emancipatory, anarchist political agenda.

The paper is structured as follows: first, a review of the significance of 'truth' within the field of organization studies will be discussed, particularly in terms of the role of truth as an object of contention within organizations and the practice of whistleblowing itself. Next, the 'politics of truth' will be explained in terms of Foucault's genealogical conception of 'truth games'. Three forms of truth game are identified where each game has its own procedures and organizational micropolitics: i) *parhessiastic* truth games, ii) confessional truth games, and iii) the market place as a truth test. Finally, the paper analyzes the WikiLeaks case by revealing a variety of truth games at play and tracing the emergence of a new emancipatory truth game of '*networked parhessia*'.

Literature review: Truth in organization theory

Existing literature within the field of organization studies has problematized the concept of 'truth' in the co-existence of different paradigms for the production of knowledge (e.g. Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Hassard, 1988; Hassard and Wolfram Cox 2013; Lewis and Keleman, 2002; Morgan, 1980; Pfeffer, 1993; Van Maanen, 1995). This debate has focused specifically on the epistemology of management studies, but it does not look to the way that truth may be

an object of contention within organizations themselves. The concept of truth has also arisen in the literature on the ethics of whistleblowing (Contu, 2014; Mansbach, 2011; Weiskopf and Willmott, 2013), which has focused on the courage of the individual whistleblower and the great risks involved in speaking truth to power.

Foucault's (1977, 1981, 1985, 2005, 2010, 2011) genealogical account of the invention of truth pays particular attention to the micropolitical relationships underpinning different truth games as well as to their related practices of subjectification. These genealogical studies have revealed the historical emergence of a wide range of different truth games within organisations and the social world, each of which is implicated within historically contingent networks of power. A key aspect of these historical studies concerns how truth games have underpinned different apparatuses of power and how they are themselves an important *'techne of struggle'* (Rose, 1999a).

Whilst Foucault's work has inspired a great deal of research into power and subjectivity in the workplace (e.g. Burrell, 1988, Carter, 2008; Clegg, 1998; Jermier et al. 1994; Knights, 2002; McKinlay and Starkey, 1998; Townley, 1994), the implications of this conception of truth for understanding the development of new practices of resistance has yet to receive sustained academic analysis. The significance of truth in organizations has been explained in terms of its key role in the regulation of worker subjectivity (Collinson, 2006; Knights, 2002; Kondo, 1990), and is particularly clear in studies of the 'confessional' aspects of modern management techniques (Metcalfe, 1992; Townley, 1994; Covaleski et al. 1998). The notion of truth as an object of contestation within organizations has gained some traction within ethnographic studies that suspend judgment about the veracity of their informants' accounts (Van Maanen, 1979). Ethnomethodological studies have also revealed how organisational

members enact 'ceremonies of truth' in their construction of differing accounts of organisational history (Lynch and Bogen, 1996; Whittle and Wilson, 2014). Bardon and Josserand (2010) have advocated a critical attitude towards truth claims in organizations, enjoining scholars to investigate the 'invention of truth' (Bardon and Josserand, 2010, p.511). Others have cautioned that such an ambivalent treatment of truth leads to a position 'in which all knowledge claims are suspect' (Rowlinson and Carter, 2002, p.533). Whilst these studies have acknowledged that the politics of truth is a contested terrain within organizations, the present study will focus on the emergence of a new politics of truth associated with the emergence of '*networked parhessia*' from WikiLeaks.

The concept of truth has emerged as a key problem in the practice of whistleblowing, where certain truths that are of public interest are actively censored within organizations (Contu, 2014; Mansbach, 2011; Miceli and Near, 2002; Near and Miceli 1996; Weiskopf and Willmott, 2013). Existing research has demonstrated that whistleblowing is an important mechanism for employee 'voice' when other internal channels for addressing organizational wrongdoing have failed (for excellent review papers see Dasguopta and Kesharwami, 2010; Near and Miceli, 1996; Winfield, 1990). Near and Miceli's (1996) review of whistleblowing found that whistleblowers often turn to external channels as a tactic to increase the chances of their message being heard but also to protect themselves from possible retaliatory measures from their institution.

Whistleblowers are often exposed to retaliation from their employers by means of harassment, bullying and redundancy (Contu, 2014; Dasguopta and Kesharwami, 2010; Near and Miceli, 1992; Soeken and Soeken, 1987). Whilst potential retaliation against such whistleblowers has already been the subject of much rigorous inquiry (Dasguopta and Kesharwami,

2010; Near and Miceli, 1996; Soeken and Soeken, 1987; Skivenes and Trygstad, 2010; Winfield, 1990), the role of truth telling in the development of novel forms of resistance has been given far less attention. Contu (2014) contends that existing approaches to whistleblowing have underplayed the 'singularity' of this act and its profound threat to the existing social order. Accounts of organizational whistleblowing have highlighted the personal risks to the whistleblower in speaking truth to power (Contu, 2014; Kaulingfreks and Kaulingfreks, 2013; Mansbach, 2011; Weiskopf and Willmott, 2013), whereas the present study will investigate the creation of a new truth game associated with WikiLeaks, that attempts to mitigate these risks at the same time as pursuing an emancipatory political agenda.

Methods

WikiLeaks can be seen as an 'extreme case study' (Flyvbjerg, 2006) of truth telling, given that the revelation of 'truth' is the defining characteristic of the organization's stated aims (WikiLeaks, 2015a, 2015b). This article builds a case study of WikiLeaks based upon a diversity of sources in the public domain. This includes WikiLeaks' policy documents that are published on its website (WikiLeaks, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c) and a variety of first-hand accounts that have been published by individuals who have worked for WikiLeaks (Assange, 2011; Assange, 2014; Assange et al., 2012, 2013; Beckett and Ball, 2012; Domscheit-Berg and Klopp, 2011; O'Hagan, 2014). Secondary commentaries on WikiLeaks are included that make explicit reference to the role of 'truth' in the WikiLeaks organization (Amnesty International, 2011; Benkler, 2013; Brevini et al., 2013; Christensen, 2011; Fuchs, 2011; Hood, 2011; Leigh and Harding, 2011; Kaulingfreks and Kaulingfreks, 2013; Pilger, 2015; Roberts, 2012; Sifry, 2011). The WikiLeaks' website offers a number of policy statements and editorial commentary which makes explicit reference to 'truth' and its significance to the aims and scope of the organization (WikiLeaks, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). Note that leaked materials and

reports that have been released onto the WikiLeaks website have been excluded from the analysis unless their subject matter is specifically focused on WikiLeaks itself (European Commission, 2012; McCurdy, 2013).

The analysis of the case material is abductive in nature, where 'theoretical knowledge and pre-conceptions serve as heuristic tools for the construction of concepts which are elaborated and modified on the basis of empirical data.' (Kelle, 1995, p.34). The case study includes all statements that refer to the term 'truth' in the primary and secondary sources of data. This case material is then grouped according to the different ways in which the question of truth is problematized in these statements. The process of identifying distinct games of truth in the WikiLeaks case is guided by three genealogical principles from Foucault's own work: i) a respect for 'different ways of speaking the truth' (Foucault, 1988, p. 51), ii) a focus upon the 'agonistic' (Foucault, 2010, p.105) aspects of these truth games understood as a *techne of struggle'* between different truth tellers (Rose, 1999a, p.281), and iii) a focus on the structure of the different truth games in terms of their underpinning procedures, rituals and ceremonies (Foucault, 1985, 1994, 2007a). These three principles provide the conditions for analyzing the 'truth games' in the present study, mapping out the politics of truth in the WikiLeaks case.

Some games of truth that Foucault identified in his own research proved not to be relevant in the present analysis, such as ancient rituals related to 'ordeals, judicial duels, judgments of God' (Foucault, 1977, p. 40). The present analysis also excluded some truth games due to their highly secretive nature, for instance the grand jury investigation into WikiLeaks (Guardian, 2011; Reuters, 2011). The ensuing analysis identifies three distinctive truth games that are apparent in the WikiLeaks case study. These truth games include: i) an analysis of Julian

Assange and Daniel Domscheit-Berg as heroic *parhessiasts*, ii) an analysis of Julian Assange as a reluctant confessor, and iii) an analysis of the role of WikiLeaks as part of a marketplace of ideas. Following this analysis we will be in a position to define the relationship between truth and new forms of resistance in terms of '*networked parhessia*'. I shall now turn to an explanation of the concept of truth games before engaging with the WikiLeaks' case in more detail.

Foucault's genealogy of truth games

Foucault's (1977, 1981, 1985, 2005, 2010, 2011, 2014) genealogical studies were deeply skeptical of truth games and how they are bound to particular forms of subjectivity and power. Foucault (1987, p.127) defined the concept of a truth game very broadly as 'an ensemble of rules for the production of truth.' The concept of 'games of truth' is at the heart of his genealogical research, where he observed that, 'There cannot be particular types of subjects of knowledge, orders of truth or domains of knowledge except on the basis of political conditions that are the very ground on which the subject, the domains of knowledge, and the relations of truth are formed.' (Foucault, 1994, p.4). Relations of truth do not emerge in a vacuum, and Foucault's studies revealed that a variety of 'games of truth' play a central role in ethics and the governance of social life.

The ensuing analysis will show that many of the truth games highlighted by Foucault are hegemonic in nature and underpin prevailing apparatuses of power, but others are counter-hegemonic in nature and present a critique of the social order, most especially '*parhessiastic*' games of truth. Before embarking upon an analysis of the WikiLeaks case I shall briefly introduce the main truth games that form the core of the present analysis.

Critical truth games in ancient ethics: Parhessia

Foucault's (1985, 2005, 2010, 2011) genealogy of ethics traced a variety of conceptions of *parhessia* and practices for being capable of truth telling. The ancient truth game of *parhessia* was translated by Foucault as 'speaking frankly', but this was by no means a simple matter and Foucault himself revealed a complex and diverse web of relations between the listener and the speaker in his analysis of ancient ethics. Within the Stoic school of Epictetus, students first had to learn the art of silence and to listen to the master for several years before being permitted to ask questions. Here *parhessia* required that students internalize the discourse of the master before being capable of speaking truthfully themselves. Another variant of truth game discussed by Foucault (2005) is from the Stoic texts of Seneca and Marcus Aurelius which held that anger, vanity and flattery were emotions and practices the master ought not to permit himself because this would interfere with speaking the truth. Foucault (1985) devoted much of his book on ancient Greek ethics to an elaboration of the truth games between the master, Socrates, and his disciple Alcibiades, which involved its own peculiarities. Socrates' truth game required that the disciple learns to love truth through his (erotic) love of his master. Socrates is seen as an exemplar of *parhessia*, because he was a 'master of truth' and a courageous speaker of truth, who challenged the powerful elites of his society (Detienne, 1999; Foucault, 2003, 2011, Nehamas, 1998).

Many of the *parhessiatic* texts that Foucault (1985, 2005, 2010, 2011) examined were characterized by a somewhat anti-hegemonic orientation, such as Plato's courageous criticism of the tyrant Dionysus, Creusa's challenge to the god Apollo, and Diogenes the Cynic whose school of philosophy challenged the whole social and moral order of ancient Greek society. *Parhessia* was often defined by the fact that a powerful person had committed an offense

against weaker individuals, through rape, exile, or the murder of a relative, who then told the truth of their oppression but lacked any communal or institutional support (Foucault, 2010). Such truth telling required a great deal of courage on the part of the weaker person, since they put their very lives at risk in revealing the unjust nature of the powerful.

Many of these ancient truth games were implicitly political, where Foucault (2014, p.20) described truth telling as 'a weapon in relations between individuals'. He broadly distinguished between political *parhessia*, which concerned the role of truth telling in democracy, and ethical *parhessia* which concerned the role of truth telling in the ethical 'care of self', although these different approaches to *parhessia* were not necessarily exclusive (Foucault, 2001, 2010). The present investigation of WikiLeaks addresses both the political and ethical aspects of *parhessia*, where the ethical aspects are the focus of the earlier part of the analysis (heroic *parhessia*) and the political aspects come to the fore in the discussion of WikiLeaks as a form of '*networked parhessia*'.

Parhessiastic truth games thus appeared in a diversity of forms including the internalization of the discourse of the master of truth (e.g. Pythagoras, Stoicism), the asymmetries of power and risks involved in speaking truth (e.g. Euripides, Plato), and the courage of the speaker who challenged the existing moral order (e.g. Socrates, Diogenes the Cynic). This genealogical approach to truth does not consider it to be only a matter of 'speaking frankly' because even such frankness possessed its own moral and institutional presuppositions.

Parhessia in Management Studies

The concept of *parhessia* has already been the focus of an emerging literature in management studies on the ethics of resistance (Barratt, 2008; Jack, 2004), and the ethics of whistleblowing itself (Contu, 2014; Kaulingfreks and Kaulingfreks, 2013; Mansbach, 2011; Weiskopf and Willmott, 2013). Barratt (2008, p.528-529) has argued that *parhessia* entails an activist way of practising criticism and is the 'exemplification of an independent life'. The existing work on *parhessia* within organization studies has focused upon the risks involved in speaking truth to power and the courage of the individual speaker in so doing (e.g. Contu, 2014; Mansbach, 2011; Weiskopf and Willmott, 2013).

Another important aspect of *parhessia* that has been taken up by management scholars is the harmony between *logos* (truth) and *bios* (life) that is essential for living the 'true life' (Barratt, 2008; Contu, 2014; Jack, 2004). Foucault (2003, 2005, 2011, 2014) himself noted that in the ancient world diverse stylizations were created by different philosophical schools for harmonizing truth and life. Socrates enjoined Athenians to live the true life through the 'care of oneself' (Foucault, 2003, 2011). However, radical schools also emerged from his followers such as the Cynic school, which taught its disciples to abandon the trappings of civilised life and live a 'true life' according to nature (Foucault, 2010, 2011). Foucault (2011) noted that the early Christians also picked up on the practice of *parhessia* as a 'true life' but reframed this in terms of faith in God, rituals of public confession and the renunciation of the flesh. Foucault's genealogy thus revealed numerous possible stylizations of *parhessia* and the true life where each invented its own distinctive practices for harmonising *logos* (truth) with *bios* (life).

Contu (2014, p.398) has argued that while some aspects of whistleblowing are comparable with ancient *parhessia*, whistleblowing 'never completely fits the role of political parhessia'

because of its profoundly ambiguous status. Jack (2004, p.129) has similarly highlighted the difficulties that arise when smuggling an ancient concept into a modern context, where 'according to Foucault, [there] are different conceptions of truth: a modern truth based in 'evidence' and an ancient form of truth instead based on certain moral qualities.' Foucault (2010, p.45) described *parhessia* as a 'spidery kind of notion' which was of somewhat limited application because 'parhessia… can no longer occur in our modern epistemological framework.' (Foucault, 2003, p.14).[1] Whilst this concept is clearly useful for highlighting the risks involved in truth telling (Barratt, 2008; Contu, 2014; Jack, 2004; Mansbach, 2011; Weiskopf and Willmott, 2013), the present analysis of WikiLeaks will show that the dynamics of modern whistleblowing entails a broader range of considerations beyond the individual character and courage of the whistleblower, which this paper will explain in terms of '*networked parhessia*'. We now turn to an analysis of a more contemporary truth game which Foucault highlighted as being essential to contemporary forms of subjectivity and power in the West – the confessional truth game.

Truth games in Christian ethics: The confessional

Perhaps the most well-known truth game that Foucault (1977, 1981) analyzed was the confessional ritual and the power relations that surrounded this ritual which he detailed in *Discipline and Punish* and the first volume of his *History of Sexuality*. In this work he described the role of power relations in producing 'the truth', which could only be properly interpreted by an expert authority, and where the subject was supposed to be liberated through the process of confession. The confessed truth is endowed with redemptive powers as a part of Christian penitence (or emancipatory powers in therapeutic contexts). The truth is only properly revealed when spoken to an appropriate authority, such as a priest (or a qualified

therapist in the analytic context). Any resistance to the inquisitor is interpreted as further proof of the secret's existence and the need to further intensify one's efforts in revealing it.

Foucault (1981) explained that the ritual of the confessional had broken out of the confines of the church, spreading into various aspects of social life, including the family, school, work, prison, and the therapist's couch. Expert discourses have grown up in the fields of psychology, pedagogy, criminology and industry whose professional knowledge promises their clients liberation, whilst simultaneously employing techniques of institutional normalization (Rose, 1999b; Townley, 1994). In the closing pages of his analysis, he remarked upon the irony that the liberation of the self is conceived very much in terms that conform to the dominant institutional order. Today we find this truth game everywhere - 'Western man has become a confessing animal' (Foucault, 1981, p.59). The field of organization and management studies has itself discovered that confessional practices have been integrated into a broad range of contemporary management techniques, from accountancy to Human Resource Management (Covaleski et al., 1998; Metcalfe, 1992; Townley, 1994). These adaptations of the confessional ritual into modern management practices bring us to another 'game of truth' that bears witness to the increasing hegemony of the marketplace as a truth game and the rise of economic forms of truth.

The marketplace as a 'truth test'

Foucault (2007b) first highlighted the peculiar role of the market as a mechanism for producing truth in the closing pages of his book on the emergence of liberalism and the market economy. He observed that the rise of liberalism entailed a rejection of the 'truth of the state'. Liberal doctrine challenged state authority arguing that society was the 'possessor of its own

truth' which was located within the institutions of civil society and the marketplace (Foucault, 2007b, p.357). A paradigmatic expression of the role of the market as an arbiter of truth can be found in US Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes' (1919) dissenting legal opinion against State censorship of ideas which argued that, 'the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas - that the best test of truth is the power of thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes safely can be carried out.' (*Abrams v. United States, 1919*). Holmes (1919) spoke of 'free trade in ideas' and 'competition of the market' as mechanisms for the validation of truth claims, mechanisms which he believed were enshrined in the liberal ideals of the US Constitution. More recently Brown (2015) has examined a series of laws passed in the US which have extended the notion that the marketplace can be employed as a truth test, with a particular focus on the rights of business corporations to participate in political debate.

The economization of truth plays a prominent role in Foucault's (2008, p.18) discussion of neoliberalism where he observed that the market had become 'a new regime of truth… reconfiguring all the questions formerly posed by the art of governing'. Numerous theorists have built on Foucault's work to explain how neoliberal policies have fostered new techniques of social control and power relations that are increasingly mediated by the market (Brown, 2015; Dean, 2007; Miller and Rose, 2008; Rose, 1999a). Neoliberalism has not only exacerbated social inequality and concentrated wealth in the hands of a few (Harvey, 2007), it has attempted a complete redefinition of society in economic terms. Neoliberal economic theory advocates an extension of the logic of the marketplace to social domains that were previously considered to be outside its scope including the institutions of marriage, crime, health care, child care, and education (Brown, 2015; Dean, 2007; Foucault, 2008; Miller and Rose, 2008; Mirowski, 2013). The market now sits in judgment over an increasingly broad range of social

relations, and produces the truth of government itself. All other truth games, whether these be social, religious, or political have become subordinated to the market as the final arbiter of truth.

A key aspect of this analysis of neoliberalism has been to highlight the way that the marketplace has been deployed as a 'truth test' in matters of public policy, particularly in the dismantling of the welfare state, the gradual privatization of public services (Brown, 2015; Jones, 2013; Rose, 1999a), and the increasing role of the 'grey sciences' such as accounting, economics, work psychology, and marketing to mediate social affairs in economic terms (Miller and Rose, 2008). Jones (2013) hails Foucault for his critique of the neoliberal project as a contingent truth game, but argues that Foucault gives too much credence to the putative rationality of the market. Mirowski's (2013, p.101) remarkable critique of this process cautions us not to be seduced by this truth game and asks us to consider that, 'Markets don't "validate" truth; rather markets are the product of struggles over the truth.' Brown (2015, p.67) has also reworked Foucault's critique of neoliberalism and its concern that 'the market itself… is the true form of all activity.' Brown (2015) explains that the naturalisation of the market as a social form has placed it beyond criticism precisely to the extent that it has become enshrined in law. She has identified a series of recent legal rulings in the US which have extended the logic of the marketplace as a test of truth by giving increasing powers to corporations to frame political debates (e.g. *Virginia v. Hicks, 539: US113 2003*; *Citizens United v Federal Electoral Committee, 2010*), thus fundamentally undermining 'the demos' in which all citizens should have an equal right to participate. Common to these critical analyses of neoliberalism is that the marketplace is conceived as a site of struggle over what counts as truth and that new forms of counter-hegemonic resistance must challenge the putative truth telling powers of the marketplace (Brown, 2015; Jones, 2013; Mirowski, 2013).

The analysis of the WikiLeaks case developed in this paper directly concerns its challenge to the hegemonic powers of the market and WikiLeaks' alternative counter-hegemonic process of truth telling. We shall now turn to an analysis of the WikiLeaks case in terms of this analytics of truth games. This provides a detailed study of the role of 'truth' as an object of contention within organizations, and the different procedures that may be applied for establishing truth. The ensuing analysis of WikiLeaks draws on all three major truth games discussed above as a heuristic device in order to i) investigate the structure of the different truth games at play, and ii) investigate the way that truth is deployed as a '*techne of struggle*' between different truth tellers. The first game of truth that we shall examine in the WikiLeaks case concerns '*parhessia*' and the way that courage has been appealed to in order to legitimate the status of Assange and others as truth tellers.

An analysis of truth games in the WikiLeaks case

Heroic parhessia: Assange vs Domscheit-Berg

The WikiLeaks case involves a variety of stakeholders claiming the status of truth teller, including whistleblowers, journalists and members of WikiLeaks, among others (Assange, 2011; Beckett and Ball, 2012; Domscheit-Berg and Klopp, 2011; Keller, 2011; Leigh and Harding, 2011; O'Hagan, 2014; Pilger, 2015). These accounts vary significantly in their opinions, but a prominent theme has been the character of Julian Assange, where some have praised his courage and ingenuity in creating WikiLeaks, but others have questioned his reliability as a truth teller.

The concept of 'truth' plays a key role in WikiLeaks' formal strategy, where its own website explains that, 'Whistleblowers can face a great many risks, depending on their position, the

nature of the information and other circumstances…. WikiLeaks applauds the courage of those who blow the whistle on injustice, and seeks to reduce the risks they face.' (WikiLeaks, 2015a). In his own account of WikiLeaks, Assange (2011, p.139) stated that, 'we wanted to reveal… the naked truth under the disguises of power'.[2] *Parhessia* may be thought to be an appropriate concept to understand this project because the members of WikiLeaks have faced great risks in 'speaking truth to power' (Assange 2011, p.183, 240). Foucault (2011) himself observed that courage was the key virtue of the *parhessiast* because lacking institutional support for their truth claims they have only their own courage to fall back on. The WikiLeaks strategy makes reference to a list of 300 'truth tellers' who are praised for their courage (WikiLeaks, 2015c). Assange (2011, 2014) places great importance on the courage of whistleblowers in speaking out against the abuse of power, and observes that an important function of WikiLeaks is to 'lower the courage threshold' demanded of individual whistleblowers (Assange, 2014, p.138). WikiLeaks thus makes appeal to a *parhessiastic* conception of truth in its focus on the courage of truth tellers and the dangers that they face in speaking out.

Julian Assange has consciously confronted significant risks in undertaking the WikiLeaks project and in this respect he may also be considered to be a *parhessiast*. Assange has been subject to calls for his arrest and for his assassination by major political figures and media pundits, and since 2012 he has been living under political asylum in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London (*The Washington Times*, 2.12.2010; Beckett and Ball, 2012; Leigh and Harding, 2011; Pilger, 2015). The investigative journalist John Pilger, among others, has described Assange as being 'fearless' and possessing great courage (*The Guardian*, 24.8.2012; see also Zizek, 2013).

Assange has put into place a new technology for networked whistleblowing where he has become a new type of *parhessiast*, inventing a new form of truth-game in which he has endeavoured to reduce the risks for others to speak the truth to power. This new truth game might be thus termed '*networked parhessia*', which provides a new infrastructure to enable a '*parhessia* of the governed' (Foucault, 1988, p.51). This particular aspect of the politics of truth in which WikiLeaks is engaged has been highlighted by Slavoj Zizek, who explains that WikiLeaks is, 'not just violating the rules. You [WikiLeaks] are changing the very rules, how we are allowed to violate the rules.' (Zizek in Assange et al, 2013, p.257). WikiLeaks and its network of alliances with whistleblowers, the traditional media, hacktivists and other groups has thus been engaged in creating a new form of '*networked parhessia*'.

This perspective is complicated by the existence of alternative accounts that have been written about WikiLeaks, such as that of Daniel Domscheit-Berg (2011), who worked as Assange's chief lieutenant in the early days of the project. In his book, *Inside WikiLeaks: My Time with Julian Assange at the World's Most Dangerous Website*, Domscheit-Berg tells of his friendship with Assange and his early enthusiasm for the project, which later turned to disenchantment and eventual departure from the organization. Domscheit-Berg's account makes frequent reference to 'the truth' where no opportunity is lost in discrediting Julian Assange as a truth teller. Take the following selection of excerpts as a small sample of the many occasions in which Domscheit-Berg casts aspersions on Assange's character and his capacity for an apparently unlimited mendacity:

> 'Julian, too, had a very free and easy relationship with the truth. I had the impression that he often tested how far he could go.' (Domscheit-Berg and Klopp, 2011, p.65)

'My first thought when I heard he was writing an autobiography was that they should put it in the fiction section!' (Domscheit-Berg and Klopp, 2011, p.73)

'He had told me on a number of occasions that the point was not to give in to other people's preconceived ideas but to take an active part in constructing the truth by creating facts.' (Domscheit-Berg and Klopp, 2011, p.190)

Domscheit-Berg was expelled from WikiLeaks and published his autobiographical account of working at WikiLeaks shortly afterwards which in large part is devoted to discrediting the character of Julian Assange. A review of this book published in the *Wall Street Journal* (2011) concluded that Assange must be a despicable human being and praised Domscheit-Berg for 'blowing the whistle on the world's most famous whistleblower.' Numerous media commentators have questioned Assange's commitment to truth. Bill Keller (2011), the editor of *The New York Times*, has made similar comments regarding Assange's credibility. James Ball and Daniel Domscheit-Berg, both former WikiLeaks staffers, have pointed to his online pseudonym 'Mendax' in questioning the reliability of Assange's pronouncements. The ghost-writer of his 'unauthorized' autobiography has also commented upon his 'habits of self-regard and truth manipulation' (O'Hagan, 2014).

Benkler (2013) has remarked that such claims ought themselves to be treated with some skepticism. Benkler's (2013, p.26) analysis of the networks of alliance between WikiLeaks and its partners in the traditional media reveals a highly ambivalent relationship, where 'the media organizations that were most openly associated with the WikiLeaks scoops, and therefore the most threatened, were the most critical of WikiLeaks.' He explains this ambivalence

in terms of an acute awareness on the part of the traditional media outlets of their increasing usurpation by alternative forms of journalism like WikiLeaks itself.

The hacker community has also responded to the claims made about Assange that were set out in Domscheit-Berg's book. The Chaos Computer Club has expelled Domscheit-Berg from its membership and has refused to ratify his rival project OpenLeaks. A spokesperson for this hacker group noted that Domscheit-Berg sabotaged the WikiLeaks' software before he left the organization as well as taking with him a quantity of its leaked documents. The hacker group countered that Domscheit-Berg is also 'quite flexible with the facts' (*Der Spiegel*, 2011). However, unlike the initial claims of Domscheit-Berg these counter claims have not yet found wide circulation in the mainstream news media (The German news magazine *Der Spiegel* is an exception).

This analysis has shown that different parties involved with WikiLeaks have clearly drawn on the *parhessiastic* discourse of courageous truth telling to legitimate their status as truth tellers. But the application of the concept of *parhessia* is by no means a straightforward matter in this case, not least because various accounts of the project name different actors as being either courageous truth tellers by their allies or traitors and liars by their opponents (Assange, 2011, 2014; Assange et al., 2013; Becket and Ball, 2012; Domscheit-Berg and Klopp, 2011; Keller, 2011; Leigh and Harding, 2011; O'Hagan, 2014). Nevertheless this particular truth game has clearly played a prominent role in WikiLeaks' explicit concern for the risks involved in whistleblowing and the courage required by both whistleblowers and the members of WikiLeaks itself. We shall now turn to an analysis of another related truth game which has framed the truth of WikiLeaks as a part of a ritual of confession.

Confessional truth games in WikiLeaks

Assange's own writings provide little in the way of a confessional discourse, and explicitly object to such an approach to truth telling (Assange, 2011, 2014; Assange et al., 2012, 2013). However, as we have seen above confessional accounts of WikiLeaks exist in which others do the confessing on behalf of Assange. A confessional discourse can be detected to a limited extent in Domscheit-Berg's book, but the ghostwriter of Assange's unauthorized biography, Andrew O'Hagan, maintains a far more openly confessional tone. O'Hagan (2014) provides his own distinctive analysis of Assange and WikiLeaks, much of it confirming other critical accounts. O'Hagan portrays Assange as a narcissist, a cult leader, a liar, and as suffering from Asperger's Syndrome. O'Hagan's analysis follows the dialectic of the confessional ritual where he sets himself up as the master of truth in contrast to Assange who is cast in the role of the reluctant sinner. We can observe O'Hagan's (2014) presentation of himself as the superior interpreter of truth in the following descriptions of his relationship with Assange (italics inserted):

> 'He [Assange] loved having an audience, a pupil, an *analyst*, and *father* [O'Hagan].' (p.18-19)
>
> '… he [Assange] forgot what a writer [O'Hagan] is, someone with a tendency to write things down and perhaps *seek the truth…*' (p.26)
>
> 'I've never been with anybody who made me [O'Hagan] feel so like an *adult*. (p.28)
>
> 'It was a good season to be *a listener* [O'Hagan] and a bad one to be *a talker* [Assange], so I'd followed that ethos to the letter.' (p.32)

In the first line above, O'Hagan frames his relationship with Assange following the classic structure of the confessional, where he places himself in the position of the master interpreter of the truth - 'an analyst, and father'. He repeats this structure again framing himself as the 'listener' and Assange of the 'talker'. He affirms his position as the master interpreter explicitly stating that he is the one who will 'perhaps seek the truth'. O'Hagan (2014) is also explicit in his framing of Assange as a defensive and resistant confessor, as we can see from the following statements (italics inserted):

'The man who put himself in charge of disclosing the world's *secrets* simply *couldn't bear* his own.' (p.12)

'I thought he saw an opportunity … to tell it like it was, step out of the *bluster* and *tell the truth*.' (p.27)

'That was the *big secret* with him: *he wanted to cover up everything* about himself except his fame.' (p.30)

'I knew *the truth would hurt him* because the truth, after all, was not his friend.' (p.42).

The second set of quotations above show how O'Hagan positions Assange in the role of the reluctant confessor. Assange is presumed to possess 'secrets' which he 'can't bear', where O'Hagan attributes guilt to Assange - a key presumption of the confessional discourse. Furthermore, Assange is represented as a man who 'wanted to cover up everything about himself', again assuming the pre-existence of guilt to be revealed. In short, 'the truth... was not his friend'. O'Hagan's account is disingenuous to the extent that he portrays himself as a dispassionate master of truth, and denies his own power as the interpreter of Assange's apparent resistance to confession. This 'confessional' approach to WikiLeaks exemplifies one attempt

to undermine and invalidate the truth claims of Assange and WikiLeaks, but as we will see in the following analysis this is not the primary hegemonic game at work in the WikiLeaks case.

The market place as a 'truth test' of WikiLeaks

The marketplace has been appealed to as an arbiter of truth on numerous occasions in the WikiLeaks debate, both in terms of its status as a reputable source of news and in its role as a mechanism of governance. The clearest account of WikiLeaks as a function of a market 'truth test' comes from WikiLeaks' own explanation of its role in improving governance mechanisms by increasing the transparency of information in the marketplace of ideas. Its website describes its conception of truth in the following terms, 'its only interest is the revelation of the truth…. WikiLeaks relies upon the power of overt fact to enable and empower citizens to bring feared and corrupt governments and corporations to justice' (WikiLeaks, 2015a). Fuchs (2011) has highlighted that WikiLeaks' concern for 'reform' is indicative of a liberal market ideology, which assumes that by revealing the unmediated truth, the market will facilitate mechanisms of 'good governance'.

Several commentators have remarked upon WikiLeaks' role as a mechanism of governance in the 'networked Fourth Estate' (Benkler, 2013; Fuchs, 2011; Hood, 2011) and its attempt to confront the inadequacies of a 'free' press that works in the pockets of a corporate owned oligopoly (Christensen, 2011; Sifry, 2011; Winseck, 2013). Assange himself has explained the relationship between truth-telling and institutional power in the following manner, 'Transparency should be proportional to the power that one has. The more power one has, the greater the dangers generated by that power, and the greater the need for transparency. Conversely, the weaker one is, the more danger there is in being transparent.' (Assange quoted in Sifry,

2011, p.165). WikiLeaks is thus presented as necessarily challenging those hegemonic structures in business and government that support large power inequalities.

The political significance of WikiLeaks has been subject to quite diverse interpretations (Fuchs, 2011; Kaulingfreks and Kaulingfreks, 2013; Sifry, 2011). Fuchs (2011) has argued that WikiLeaks' appeal to reformist mechanisms of 'good governance' is symptomatic of a liberal market ideology, in contrast to Kaulingfreks and Kaulingfreks (2013) who have argued that its dedication to an open 'information commons' is better understood as a form of communism. Assange himself has described the WikiLeaks project as being rooted in anarchist ideals in keeping with the aims of the 'cypherpunk' movement (Assange, 2011; Assange et al., 2012). Assange has explained the political philosophy of the cypherpunk movement in terms of the promotion of 'three basic liberties': freedom of movement, freedom of communication and freedom of economic interaction (Assange et al. 2012). The cypherpunk movement allows a broad spectrum of political exponents which includes both anarchists (Assange et al., 2012) and free market libertarians (May, 1992), although its key aims are focused on the protection of individual privacy and being against censorship (Hughes, 1993). WikiLeaks is thus critical of market ideology to the extent that this supports the power of corporations which threaten its higher goals relating to privacy, censorship and 'basic liberties' (Assange et al., 2011, 2012).

The marketplace for ideas has also become the subject of much debate relating to the problems WikiLeaks has faced concerning the redaction of names from leaked secret documents (Assange, 2011; Assange, 2014; Beckett and Ball, 2012; Hudson, 2013; Leigh and Harding, 2011; Schmidt and Cohen, 2013). Assange (2014) has argued that any redactions have been kept to a minimum because redaction can itself become a form of creeping censorship. He

explained that WikiLeaks' sources play an important role in this process where, 'If sources believe that we are going to protect them, and that we are going to have a higher impact for the material, they will simply give us material …we are disciplined by the *market of sources* [italics inserted].' (Assange, 2014, p.165). This remark has been picked up by commentators who are critical of the WikiLeaks project (Hudson, 2013; Schmidt and Cohen, 2013), leading to an accusation that, 'Money is the only reason Julian Assange redacted WikiLeaks files' (Hudson, 2013). Assange has subsequently disputed this claim, 'I actually said, We're disciplined by the market of sources [not market forces]' (Assange, 2014, p.197). Assange objected that the process of redaction is a 'slippery slope', which should only be done as a short term measure to avoid harming their sources. He argues that one of the unique features of WikiLeaks is that it is not subject to the same market pressures as the mainstream media because it does not fear offending advertisers or corporate sponsors - it has none. This entire debate is quite explicit in its framing in terms of the extent to which the marketplace operates as a truth test or acts instead to censor truth[3].

The marketplace for truth is very much conditioned by the perceived reputation of the speaker, and the social capital that underpins their truth claims. In this respect Roberts (2012) has observed that whilst governments may have lost control of the release of certain information, they still have the capacity to influence the media in shaping how this information is interpreted by the public. Highlighting the peculiar role of Assange himself, Roberts (2012, p.127) explains that, 'Not only were Americans not primed to receive and act on the message which WikiLeaks was sending: many seemed ready to turn on the messenger.' McCurdy's (2013) analysis of whistleblowing in the WikiLeaks case has observed that the process of denigration, undermining a speaker's social status, is key to understanding the dynamics of 'truth telling' in this case. He observed that, 'If you can't denigrate the message, denigrate

the messenger… focusing on the leaker's identity fits both the logic of media representation in the network society *and* the goal of the US military to deter leakers by exposing and, where possible, alienating and shaming them.' (McCurdy, 2013, p.132).

McCurdy (2013) quotes from a leaked report of the US Army Intelligence Centre from 2008 that recommended undertaking misinformation and counter-intelligence campaigns against WikiLeaks in order to 'damage and destroy this center of gravity and deter others from using Wikileaks.org to make such information public.' (quoted in McCurdy, 2013, p. 132). Similar tactics were also employed by business corporations to discredit WikiLeaks in the market-place for ideas, where 'HBGary, a high-tech intelligence contractor, was asked by Bank of America to submit a tender to take us [WikiLeaks] down… The quote was $2 million a month, for which they would spread disinformation, hack, target our journalists…' (Assange, 2014, p.176). Much evidence has thus come to light which shows that big business and government have pursued strategies to undermine and discredit WikiLeaks as a reputable source of truth.

Massumi (2010) has described this kind of symbolic manipulation as the creation of 'affective facts'. Massumi (2010) explains how performative utterances can take on an 'affective reality' of their own, independent from any referential truth value. The parallels between Massumi's notion of the 'affective fact' and the truth games that have developed around WikiLeaks are all too clear, where accusations against those involved have proliferated, and Assange himself has been accused of being a terrorist, liar, spy, rapist, and so on (Beckett and Ball, 2012; Brevini et al., 2013; Leigh and Harding, 2011).

A concern for the 'affective' implications of these accusations has been clear in the business community's response to WikiLeaks and calls by the Department of Homeland Security to censor this organization (European Commission, 2012). Business organisations justified their censorship of WikiLeaks on the grounds that business links with WikiLeaks were potentially a 'Brand-damaging Transaction' (Mastercard, quoted in European Commission, 2012). Visa, Mastercard Paypal, Amazon.com and Bank of America all censored the online activities of WikiLeaks in order to 'disassociate' their brands from the project (European Commission, 2012). Winseck's (2013) study of the corporate response to the WikiLeaks project found that Twitter was the only major media company that refused to cooperate with the US government's anti-WikiLeaks campaign, where all other corporations justified their actions by claiming that their brands would be tainted if they continued to allow WikiLeaks to operate using their financial and media networks.

Assange's (2011) own account of WikiLeaks identified two key incidents where accusations have had a profound affect upon its social status as a reputable source of truth. The first was after the release of the Afghan war logs and the second concerned the allegations made against Assange of rape and sexual misconduct. In the former case, Admiral Mike Mullen had stated at a press conference that Assange had 'blood on his hands' with respect to the safety of US troops in Afghanistan after the leaking of the Afghan war logs. Mullen's phrase about Assange's guilt was repeated *ad nauseam* by the mass media without any supporting evidence. A subsequent announcement by Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell revealed that in fact no evidence had come to light of any casualties arising from the Afghan leaks (*The Washington Post*, 11.08.2011).

The second example that Assange (2011) identified as an effort to discredit him concerned the allegations of rape that have been made against him. In this second example, the accusations and counter accusations become far more difficult to unravel, where some have argued that the accusations are part of an effort to discredit Assange and others have argued that Assange is a sexual predator with loose morals and still others have argued that either way he must face trial (Assange, 2011; Domscheit-Berg and Klopp, 2011; Leigh and Harding, 2011; Pilger, 2015). The media organizations that had previously collaborated with him on major leaks of the Afghan and Iraq war, including *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* newspapers, were quick to distance themselves from Assange after the allegations of sexual misconduct were made against him, and they have also withdrawn permissions for the use of their brand logos by the WikiLeaks project (Benkler, 2013).

In response to these attacks Assange has managed to recruit a wide array of allies, who have bolstered the social status of WikiLeaks and his role as its founder and chief strategist. From its outset WikiLeaks gained a great deal of prestige from its achievement of several high profile awards including the *Economist's* New Media Award in 2008, Amnesty International's UK Media Award in 2009 and in 2010, and Assange himself won the reader's choice award for *Time* Magazine's Person of the Year in 2010 (McCurdy, 2013). Fuchs (2011, p.11) notes that newspapers were initially important allies because they possessed 'the reputational and political power to reach the public, whereas an alternative medium like WikiLeaks is less likely to be recognised by everyday citizens.' Assange (2014, p.127) himself has explained that 'how you distinguish truthful publishers from untruthful publishers is a reputational business'.

WikiLeaks has forged a wide range of supportive allies, probably the most squeaky clean of which has been Daniel Ellsberg, who had himself been a figure of controversy after he blew the whistle on the Pentagon Papers in 1971 regarding the USA's prosecution of the Vietnam War. Other allies include prominent human rights lawyers (Helena Kennedy QC, Geoffrey Robertson QC, Baltasar Garzón, Mark Stephens), film-makers (Ken Loach, Michael Moore), journalists (John Pilger, Ian Katz), academics (Noam Chomsky, Slavoj Zizek), and politicians (President Evo Morales in Ecuador, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil, MP Birgitta Jónsdóttir in Iceland, MP Craig Emerson in Australia). In their report on human rights activism for 2011, Amnesty International (2011, p.3) make a great deal of reference to the work of the WikiLeaks project, commenting that, 'There are differing perspectives on the WikiLeaks drama, with some commentators describing it as operating in 'a moral void' while others see it as the modern equivalent of the release of the Pentagon Papers. What is clear, however, is the impact that the leaks have had', and furthermore that, 'those who live with daily abuses of power may understandably celebrate WikiLeaks.' Thus we can see that a wide range of high status individuals have lent their support and social capital to further the WikiLeaks project. We shall now examine the significance of these different truth-games for organizational power relations in greater detail.

Discussion: Truth games and networked parhessia

Much existing research within management studies has been devoted to organizational power relations (Barratt, 2008; Burrell, 1988; Clegg, 1998; Knights, 2002; McKinlay and Starkey, 1998; Miller and Rose, 2008; Townley, 1994) and resistance to power (Contu, 2008; Courpasson, et al., 2012; Fleming and Spicer, 2003; Jermier et al, 1994). These existing studies have tended to neglect the role of 'external organizational resources' such as WikiLeaks

that support such resistance (Vallas, 2016) as well as the role of 'truth games' in the development of new forms of resistance (Barratt, 2008; Bardon and Josserand, 2010). Rose (1999a, p. 281) has highlighted the fact that truth is itself part of a '*techne of struggle'*, and that social conflicts are often bound up with hegemonic systems for the production of truth. Foucault's own analysis of truth games proposed that new truth games may be invented in important social struggles, where he highlighted the emergence of the ecological social movement and militant revolutionary movements as sources of counter-hegemonic games of truth (Foucault, 1987, 2011). In the present analysis WikiLeaks can be understood precisely in terms of '*networked parhessia'* which has empowered weaker actors in their challenge to institutional corruption and engage in a wider struggle against corporate and State power.

Now that we have mapped out the different truth games surrounding WikiLeaks we are in a position to give a precise definition of '*networked parhessia'* and how this practice differs from previous truth games. *Networked parhessia* is designed to protect and empower those in weaker positions within institutions to release information about institutional corruption and the abuse of power. It actively attacks the censorship of information, whether this done by the State or by corporations. It can be understood in terms of what Foucault (1988, p.51) called a '*parhessia* of the governed' directed against the prevailing hegemony. *Networked parhessia* integrates micropolitical acts of resistance with macropolitical struggles against corporate and State power. In micropolitical terms *networked parhessia* provides important protection and support for whistleblowers, whose lives and well being may be threatened by speaking truth to power (Contu, 2014; Mansbach, 2011; Weiskopf and Willmott, 2013). In macropolitical terms, it is a part of a broader critical project associated with an espoused anarchist political agenda (Assange, 2011; Assange et al. 2012).

This critique of both corporate and State hegemony moves beyond a micropolitical concern for whistleblower protection by engaging with a broader political project, offering a 'decentralized technology to protect revolutionary activity… fit for the emancipation of human history and human beings' (Assange, 2014, p.50-51). WikiLeaks can be understood as a new interactive technology designed explicitly as an anarchist 'organisational praxis' (Reedy, 2014). Reedy (2014, p.649) has already observed that 'networking is often facilitated by the ease of access to information that the Internet provides, in itself sometimes hailed as an exemplar of anarchist principles'. WikiLeaks has shown itself to be an important supporter of revolutionary social movements (Castells, 2012, 2013; Nayar, 2010; Sauter and Kendall, 2011), and its *networked parhessia* provides a tantalizing exemplar of recent calls in management studies for an anarchist organisational praxis (Parker et al, 2014; Reedy, 2002, 2014).

Networked parhessia shares some similarities with its ancient forerunner, most notably its concern for the asymmetries of power involved in speaking truth to power, the seriousness of the risks to the speaker, and its importance to the flourishing of democracy, however there are also significant differences (Foucault, 2003; Nayar, 2010). *Networked parhessia* employs technology designed to protect the speaker and reduce the risks of truth telling, it places greater emphasis on the role of technological infrastructure for leaking rather than on the virtue of the leaker, it is not confined to a local debate but is a part of global network of journalists and activists, it is grounded in anarchist, hacktivist principles related to the free flow of information and opposes market and State censorship. *Networked parhessia* is therefore quite different from its ancient predecessor in the technological protection it offers truth-tellers, in its global dissemination of information and its anarchist macropolitical agenda.

In contrast to its ancient predecessor, a key characteristic of *networked parhessia* is its ambivalent relationship with the market as a truth test. The preceding analysis has shown that *networked parhessia* is itself embroiled within the marketplace for ideas. This analysis has identified how the marketplace has been appealed to as a truth test in four key ways: i) in the stated aims of WikiLeaks to improve market mechanisms of corporate and political governance through increased transparency, ii) in its reputation as a source of truth allied with other high status individuals and organizations, iii) in the use of security firms and state agencies to denigrate and undermine the WikiLeaks project as a reputable source of truth, and iv) the censorship of WikiLeaks and its materials by powerful corporate brands. We can see from this analysis that WikiLeaks has exposed the highly ambivalent role of the market place as a truth test, especially with respect to its problematic role as a mechanism of censorship. To some extent this *networked parhessia* is itself conditioned by the marketplace of ideas, but WikiLeaks also struggles against this marketplace when the latter is used by States and powerful corporations as a censoring mechanism.

Conclusion

This paper has addressed recent calls to investigate the role of 'truth' in organizations where 'truths…in social relations can no longer be taken for granted' (Knights, 2002, p.581, see also Barratt, 2008; Bardon and Josserand, 2010). The concept of truth has been framed in genealogical terms as a nexus of social relations tied to specific forms of governance and a '*techne of struggle*' (Rose, 1999a). This paper has shown that 'truth games' constitute important sites of struggle in organizational life, especially with respect to contentious practices such as whistleblowing. The notion of 'truth' is a highly contested terrain, where both the powerful and the weak make claims to be sincere 'truth tellers', enrolling different 'truth games' for the production and circulation of truth.

Scholars of organization have undertaken a great deal of research into power and subjectivity in the workplace (e.g. Burrell, 1988, Carter, 2008; Clegg, 1998; Jermier et al. 1994; Knights, 2002; McKinlay and Starkey, 1998; Townley, 1994), but the implications of 'truth games' in the creation of new practices of resistance in organizations has been relatively neglected in the existing scholarship (Contu, 2014). The *networked parhessia* of WikiLeaks can be understood both in terms of its micropolitical commitment to support individual whistleblowers by providing them with an increased level of anonymity and security and by bringing greater public attention to their message, and the way that it has mobilized this support in pursuit of its macropolitical commitment to the critique of corporate hegemony and State power (Assange, 2011; 2014; Assange et al. 2012).

The Foucauldian analysis that has been developed in this paper shows that the question of 'truth' is not necessarily emancipatory, where it is very much conditioned by the wider political dynamics of the situation. Many of the truth games outlined above, particularly those of the confession and the market as a truth test, are hegemonic games underpinning the prevailing apparatus of power. In contrast, WikiLeaks' practice of '*networked parhessia*' has a clear emancipatory aim grounded in its critique of the power of State and corporations and in its pursuit of anarchist ideals of autonomy and freedom of communication (Assange, 2011, 2014; Assange et al. 2012, 2013). Foucault (1991, p.74-75) himself did not reject emancipatory ideals out of hand, observing that, 'It is not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power… but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony'. It is precisely the goal of *networked parhessia* to detach the 'power of truth from the forms of hegemony'. WikiLeaks has created an 'organizational praxis' that protects those individuals

that speak truth to power, and that facilities the broader critique of corporate and State power (Parker et al, 2014; Reedy 2014).

This paper has mapped out the complex truth games that have been involved in new forms of '*networked parhessia*' that were initiated with the WikiLeaks project. The contribution of the paper to organization theory has been threefold. Firstly, the paper has shown how different 'truth games' are mobilised by different organizational actors engaged in a politics of truth. Secondly, the paper has demonstrated the existence of specific truth games at work in the WikiLeaks case including both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic truth games. Thirdly, the paper has explained how WikiLeaks has challenged hegemonic truth games in terms of its '*networked parhessia*', which endeavours to reduce the risks for others to speak truth to power, through exploiting technology to ensure anonymity of whistleblowers and the wider dissemination of their message. This new procedure for truth telling is only partly captured by WikiLeaks' own appeal to improved governance through increased transparency of the powerful, but is better understood with reference to the image that has been painted of it by power, as a radically destabilizing force which challenges existing power structures by re-vealing their systemic corruption.

This paper opens up a number of avenues for further research into the phenomenon of re-sistance in organizations. Further empirical studies are needed of the micropolitics of organi-zational truth games in terms of who has the right to speak and be heard in organizations, and how this right is influenced by micropolitical games of truth. Research is also required into new forms of organizational praxis such as WikiLeaks which are creating new truth games to challenge our hegemonic social institutions. A number of different projects based upon leaks have emerged recently including Edward Snowden's whistleblowing about mass surveillance

and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists' leaks of the Panama Papers, all of which call for a broader investigation of the radical potential of these projects in the development of new forms of resistance.

Notes

[1] Elsewhere he states that parhessia 'has disappeared as such' (Foucault, 2011, p.30).

[2] Assange does not provide a consistent definition of "truth" in his writings, but he does make reference to an unmasked, "naked" truth and to a Platonic realm of information and truth (Assange, 2011). This suggests that Assange himself holds an a-historical, transcendental conception of truth.

[3] This paper will not address the redaction antinomy arising from WikiLeaks' principle to protect the privacy of the weak and its leaking of data from corrupt elites, where such leaks may contain also some data pertaining to the weak.

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Biography

Iain Munro is engaged in research in the fields of organisation theory, information warfare, and business ethics. He has published in the journals Human Relations, Organization Studies, Organization and the Journal of Business Ethics, among others. He has written a research monograph on the subject of 'Information Warfare in Business: Strategies of Control and Resistance in the Network Society'

Corresponding author:

Iain Munro

Strategy, Organization, Society

Newcastle University Business School

University Newcastle

5 Barrack Road

NEWCASTLE

NE1 4SE

UK

Iain.Munro@ncl.ac.uk