

Making ‘Foreign Orders’: Australian Print-workers and Clandestine Creative Production in the 1980s

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A ‘foreign order’ is an Australian industrial colloquialism referring to a practice whereby workers produce objects at work—using factory materials and work time—without authorization. This is an under-explored but global phenomenon with many names, including ‘homers’, ‘side productions’, ‘government jobs’ and *la perruque*. This article examines the unofficial creative activities of Australian print-workers through a case study of a Sydney printing factory in the 1980s, when the printing industry was rapidly computerizing and manual skills were increasingly seen as redundant. Using oral and archival sources, the article explores how the making of foreign orders became more overt and politicized, as workers sensed their insecurity. The practice of making ‘on the side’ gave print-workers a degree of agency and the ability to narrativize their own plight.

Design history tends to examine ‘officially’ produced items, potentially leaving out whole swathes of design practice taking place on the factory floor. This study operates within what has been defined as the ‘expanded field’ of Australian design history, including considerations of the material culture of labour and manufacturing history within the design historian’s reach. It also engages with recent calls for an increased awareness of amateur practices and ‘unsanctioned knowledge’ in design history.

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Introduction

Oh, there was a lot of foreign orders, there’s no two ways about it.¹

A ‘foreign order’ is an Australian colloquialism used in factory contexts. It refers to a practice whereby workers design and produce objects in their workplace, using factory materials and work time, without official authorization. The objects tend to be made with skill and care. They are personal and form part of a moral economy of exchanged goods and favours. Foreign orders are sometimes gifted to friends, family or colleagues, and rarely sold for profit. The activity is by no means limited to Australia, and it has many names (as will be explored further on). Foreign orders are an under-explored but widespread activity that has received some attention in sociology and social history, most notably by Michel Anteby, whose studies of ‘side productions’ at a French aeronautic factory explore moral and organizational complexities.² Although it is an historical phenomenon—social historians have traced it to pre-industrial practices of the Commons³—manifestations of the practice persist in the present, in a variety of labour contexts. Some of the most revealing instances of foreign orders occurred in deindustrializing contexts in the second half of the twentieth century, when craft skills were increasingly perceived as redundant.

Despite the material and designed basis of foreign orders, the practice is yet to receive much attention in design history. This article operates within what D. J. Huppatz defined in 2014 as the ‘expanded field’ of Australian design history.⁴ Huppatz contends that Australian design history should not be conceived as a ‘singular and separate’ entity; it is drawn from and is inherently related to other disciplines, including (but not limited to) labour and manufacturing histories, social history, colonial and trading histories, and the history of technology.⁵ Understanding the *practice* of making foreign orders (and the broader social context surrounding that practice), therefore, is as much a concern of design history as the objects themselves.

This article also engages with calls for an increased awareness of amateur practices, enthusiasm and ‘unsanctioned knowledge’ in design history, recently articulated by Paul Hazell and Kjetil Fallan.⁶ As design historians we sometimes take it for granted that the objects under consideration were ‘officially’ designed and produced, in one way or another. But this may unwittingly leave out whole swathes of design and production, discretely taking place in factories. In some instances foreign orders demonstrate the continuation of manual crafts in the face of automation and computerization, while other examples attest to the social power of objects in relation to collective workplace identities and customs. Understanding these concealed and coded design practices—how and why foreign orders are made, how they are distributed, how such objects are valued—enriches our appreciation of the material culture of work, and opens up awareness to the persistence of craft practices and collective customs, particularly at times of technological upheaval.

The context of this study is a declining industrial setting: the printing industry in Sydney in the 1980s. The case study employed for this analysis is the New South Wales Government Printing Office (colloquially known as ‘the Gov’, a term I will use henceforth). This research is a result of the NSW Government Printing Office Oral History Project, in which I interviewed male and female print-workers from a variety of trades and occupations, former employees of the Gov between 1936 and 1989.⁷ The Gov was a government-run printing enterprise that printed documents such as Bills and Acts, Parliamentary proceedings and the electoral roll. From a design perspective, the Gov’s output might at first appear unremarkable; the documents it produced were tied to eighteenth and nineteenth-century governmental traditions. Yet the Gov’s employees possessed manual skill and visual acuity, and they put those skills to use opportunistically. When the Overseer wasn’t looking (or had turned a ‘blind eye’), the Gov’s compositors, bookbinders and press-machinists (among others) discretely produced objects such as comics, posters, hot-metal trinkets and photographs.

Compared to other developed capitalist economies, Australia’s printing industry was slow to computerize, due in part to strong union control and the high cost of importing technologies. However, from the late-1970s to the late 1980s the printing industry began to restructure, as employers introduced more automated systems to offset labour costs. At the Gov, computerized phototypesetting was fully introduced by 1984, although some forms of hot-metal typesetting (such as Linotype machines) remained in use for specific jobs right up to 1989. When the new technologies were first introduced, there were problems in replicating the traditional appearance of government documents. For a period of time, annotations and convoluted legislation numbering could more easily be achieved in hot metal, before the typesetting software was programmed to handle such formatting complexity. It was a period of difficult technological transition for skilled craftspeople. At the Gov, these print-workers—experts in letterpress, hot-metal typesetting, or graphic reproduction—either retired, or were retrained in the newer technologies. The process of retraining could be traumatic: letterpress operators learned to use faster and less manually satisfying lithographic presses, and Linotype operators re-learned to type on small, ‘feminized’ QWERTY keyboards; a process that could be emasculating and demoralizing.⁸

This period was also marked by significant political turmoil, with the rising popularity of the politics of 'economic rationalism' in state and federal governance, with the attendant loss of tariff protections, the opening up of trade with Asia, and consequent decline of local manufacturing sectors. Beset by negative predictions for the health of the state economy, the new state Liberal government under Nick Greiner (elected in 1988) planned to raise revenue from the sale of government institutions: power stations, coal mines, railway infrastructure and printing offices. Although manufacturing enterprises were sometimes modernized with newer technologies (as attempted at the Gov between 1981 and 1989), private-industry was increasingly 'off-shored' to Asia, in order to save labour costs.⁹ Consequently, some unions found their member-bases drying up, and many of their activities redefined as illegal through legislation that favoured employers. The city of Sydney also changed shape dramatically during this period, from a former industrial city with a working harbour into an ambitious and brash metropolitan hub, with aspirations of becoming a global city and a centre of culture, banking, sport, tourism and technology. Workers were not oblivious to these transitions, and, rather than radicalizing the workers, the disappearance of manufacturing often produced polarized and individualized responses: they sought merely to survive, to 'get by', and not necessarily to overthrow the system.¹⁰

While the term 'foreign order' is used in the Australian state of New South Wales, 'foreigners' is used in Western Australia and Queensland. In South Australia 'foreignies' and 'homers' have been recorded.¹¹ In the United States the terms include 'homers' and 'government jobs', and in France they have various names, including *perruques*, *bricoles*, *bousilles*, *pindilles* and *pinailles*.¹² In Britain the more familiar terms are 'idling' or 'pilfering' (although these terms also simply mean stealing). Foreign orders can be linked to the British workplace practice of 'fiddling' or 'playing the fiddle' (work limitation) and the customary taking of perquisites ('perks' or in-kind payments).¹³ While scholarly analysis of foreign orders is fairly limited in English-language publications,¹⁴ pilfering and 'fiddling' has attracted attention in the fields of social history and sociology, as will be outlined in the following section.

The existence of foreign orders demonstrates how the realms of work, culture and materiality are densely intertwined. Folklore historian Graham Seal has argued that foreign orders are material evidence of the 'hidden' folklore of the workplace.¹⁵ As Seal points out, the production of foreign orders is not limited to industrial scenarios; they were (and are) a feature of office contexts.¹⁶ In other manufacturing contexts, such as metalwork and railways, recorded foreign orders include tools, toys, domestic objects, billies for cooking lunch and gifts for departing colleagues.¹⁷ Such items need to be small enough to smuggle out of the factory, but workers may go to great lengths to remove concealed items from the workplace in pieces. Some foreign orders require a number of workers to collaborate—often from different sections—while others can be produced alone.¹⁸

Labour historians have charted the long-standing existence of playful workplace antics in twentieth-century shop-floor contexts.¹⁹ It is near impossible to draw a strict definitional line between pranks, foreign orders and shop floor play; such practices blur and overlap. Twentieth-century industrial workplaces often featured a culture dominated by teasing, jousting, games, practical jokes and the initiation of apprentices. Certainly, working life at the Gov was marked by all of these characteristics, and workplace pranks involved the careful creation of props, contraptions, visual tricks and physical tomfoolery. This playful culture emerged out of the myriad of clever and sometimes cruel ways in which workers designed and manipulated the materials around them, so as to play tricks on their supervisors, colleagues and apprentices. In this way, the culture of pranks was fundamentally material and embodied.

As this article will examine, the making of foreign orders became more overt and politicized over time at the Gov, as print-workers faced increasing employment insecurity. The Gov was closed down quite suddenly in 1989, resulting in over 700 job losses. At a time when employment options for skilled tradespeople were disappearing, the crafting of foreign orders allowed for the maintenance and reinforcement of desirable occupational identities.²⁰ Making 'on the side' enabled print-workers a degree of agency, and the ability to narrativize their own plight. This article will first outline the existing studies of foreign orders and perquisites, before examining unofficial creative activities at the Gov. Finally, the article focuses on a particular artefact: a small satirical booklet made by a print-worker in the final days before their factory closed down. This was a foreign order with distinctly political overtones, and it provides insights into the way in which craft-workers coped with their impending precariousness in the face of technological change and political transition.

Existing studies: perquisites, *la perruque* and playing the fiddle

French theorist Michel de Certeau celebrated the subversive yet ordinary nature of foreign orders in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. He used the term *la perruque*, defining it as a subtle form of resistance, where 'order is tricked by an art'.²¹ De Certeau described *la perruque* as a popular and rebellious tactic that can be deployed by any worker who wishes to maintain resistance to a dominant capitalist order, noting that *la perruque* is the French word for 'the wig'.²² He described *la perruque* as a form of free and creative diversion:

La perruque is the worker's own work disguised as work for his employer. It differs from pilfering in that nothing of material value is stolen. [. . .] The worker who indulges in *la perruque* actually diverts time (not goods, since he uses only scraps) from the factory for work that is free, creative and precisely not directed toward profit.²³

Although de Certeau's definition is the most popular and well-known interpretation, it may be somewhat idealistic and prescriptive. Workers did, at times, use 'new' materials for foreign orders, not just scraps, and in rare instances foreign orders were sold for profit.²⁴ Of the industrial worker who practices *la perruque*, de Certeau claimed: 'He cunningly takes pleasure in finding a way to create gratuitous products whose sole purpose is to signify his own capabilities through his work, and to confirm his solidarity with other workers.'²⁶

Here we can see that foreign orders are understood as a social practice, founded on interactions between workers and enhancing their collective identity. Although he noted that *la perruque* emerged when workers replicated tactics from a pre-industrial past, de Certeau was oblique in connecting *la perruque* to 'peasant' practices. The historical connection between the customary taking of perquisites and the practice of foreign orders has been explored in more detail in sociology and social history.

Sociologist Jason Ditton examined the historical antecedents to the 'invisible wage system' of twentieth century factories, which featured practices of pilferage and fiddling.²⁶ Drawing on British social history, Ditton traced the practices of pilfering and in-kind payment back to English feudal customary rights and the Commons. Seventeenth-century customary rights included the taking of perquisites and the gifting of 'vails'.²⁷ For example, the Common of Estover was the 'right of common to take wood from the Lord's lands and forests' and the Common of Turbary was the 'right to cut peat and turf for fuel'.²⁸ Perquisites could be surplus food from the larder, scrapings, tailings, scraps, wastage and other favours offered by the ruling class to rural labourers and servants.

Social historians such as E. P. Thompson and Peter Linebaugh (among others) have observed how, in eighteenth-century Britain, the loss of common rights (and their replacement with legal rights) led to an increasing state of legal ambiguity in relation to workers' privileges.²⁹ With the growth of industrialization, and as rural lands were increasingly reclassified as 'private' by ruling élites, the customary taking of in-kind perquisites began to be redefined as theft.³⁰ The eighteenth century thus witnessed a change whereby the worker was increasingly paid in the form of monetary wages, and the perquisites to which they were accustomed were privatized, frequently resulting in the reframing of labourers as thieves, part of a newly-defined criminal underclass.

Historian Adrian Randall has explored how the line between embezzlement and perquisites was arbitrary and ever-changing in England's eighteenth-century manufacturing industry, where the act of collecting scrapings was seen by workers as 'sanctified by custom' in order to supplement their low wages.³¹ By the nineteenth century the practice was essentially criminalized, although the taking of perquisites continued nonetheless.³² As Ditton has observed, understanding this historical background of perquisites and pilferage as a 'lingering vestige of the annexation of customary rights by the ruling class' allows us to better understand why such behaviours emerge, rather than falling back on assumptions that the working class is simply criminal and amoral.³³

In relation to twentieth-century workplaces, sociologists such as Ditton, Gerald Mars and Donald Horning examined the prevalence of pilfering and fiddling in a variety of workplaces; such practices have sometimes been defined in judgmental terms such as 'workplace deviance'.³⁴ In 1970 Horning examined pilfering at an American electronics plant. While the study now functions better as a primary resource, some use can be made of Horning's observations about objects within the factory.³⁵ Horning observed that *things* in the factory had a variety of ownership ideas associated with them. There was property that was owned by the company, personal property owned by the workers, and property of 'uncertain ownership'.³⁶ The ambiguity of this final category was seen as fair game by the workers; they did not consider that pilfering these items was something about which to be ashamed (even if they still went to efforts to conceal their bounty). Workers subscribed to a moral code where they felt they could knowingly break the law because they did not define their own actions as morally problematic.³⁷ For design historians, the more interesting implication of Horning's research relates to the ambiguous status of objects and materials in a factory, that is, how a space filled with things can have complex and contradictory notions of ownership, value and use, and how this can be bound up within a mutable moral code. The lingering presence of ambiguous things can prompt workers to act in this way, particularly if they are bored, underpaid and dissatisfied with their work and conditions.

Notwithstanding some workers' collective belief in the moral acceptability of pilfering and foreign orders, it is often difficult to persuade people to talk about such practices, for fear of reprisals and concerns about breaking a code of silence. Anteby has explored why this practice remains elusive and marginal. He describes how many workers at a French aeronautics plant designed and created useful domestic objects (such as key chains and toys), and yet most workers were extremely reticent to discuss these practices. Retired workers tended to be more forthcoming, having less to fear in terms of reprisals.³⁸ Anteby's work focuses on the complex moralities that develop within workplaces, for example, 'authentic' homer-making is contingent upon social codes that are not easily understood by outsiders. Significantly, Anteby observes how foreign orders fall outside traditional labour history and corporate history narratives, as homers are not 'respectable' forms of work practice, nor are they examples of strong, collective industrial action (since they only operate by 'diverting flows' and are therefore a form of adaptation to methods of control in contexts featuring 'already lost battles').³⁹ He

reasons that because foreign orders do not easily fit within existing historical frameworks, and because workers are often unwilling to talk about them, such practices are little known and sometimes misunderstood.

Returning to the oral history interviews undertaken about the Gov, many participants were understandably reluctant to give details of practices that they knew to be technically illegal (albeit taking place at a factory that closed down in 1989). There were concerns about reputation and solidarity. As with Anteby's interviewees, some likely subscribed to the notion that foreign orders were something that you simply do not talk about with outsiders. Not all workers felt this way. Former Linotype operator Robert Law did not consider foreign orders to be off-limits, but he told me how he encountered caginess when talking to his former colleagues: 'I went to a reunion for some of the old "Gov" employees and [. . .] asked around about [. . .] foreign orders, and to my surprise, no one was forthcoming.'⁴⁰

Only a few workers were extremely proud of their foreign orders, and happy to be identified with them, as we shall see later in this article.

Other than Anteby, the academic and curator Jennifer Harris has examined foreign orders, this time from a museum-studies perspective. In Western Australia Harris produced an exhibition entitled 'Foreigners: Secret Artefacts of Industrialism' (2009). The exhibition presented a series of artefacts made by workers from the Midland Government Railway Workshops, north-east of Perth.⁴¹ Like the Gov, the Midland workshops were government-owned (and closed down in 1994). Harris expressed concern that curatorial and analytic approaches often enthuse about working class activities uniformly in terms of 'resistance'.⁴² She argued that cultural studies' tendency to describe so many everyday actions as forms of resistance 'emphasises [resistance] to a degree which is unsustainable'.⁴³ While a worker's diversion of goods towards private gain is certainly an act of insubordination in the workplace, Harris points out that there are other motivations at play, above and beyond the workers' (possible) desire to struggle against the relations of capitalist production. She explains that other reasons for the production of foreign orders include the desire to improve one's skill, the custom of designing gifts for departing colleagues, apprentice training, casual opportunism, instrumental purposes such as making tools, and the alleviation of boredom.⁴⁴

How can we get past the obvious in discussing foreign orders? One way is to consider the specificities of each labour context and historical period. As sociologist Michael Burawoy observed, it is problematic to regard the industrial worker as merely 'resigned to the inherent deprivation of working'.⁴⁵ Rather, he argues, 'workers go to great lengths to compensate for, or to minimise, the deprivations they experience'.⁴⁶ The realities of work necessarily lead to 'deprivations' (such as boredom, tiredness and injury), yet this prompts workers to seek 'relative satisfactions'.⁴⁷ Such 'satisfactions' can take the form of games and play. One question that has plagued labour sociologists such as Burawoy, however, is the degree to which these games are a challenge to the prevailing authority, or to which they constitute a passive capitulation, a mere diversion that conceals the reality of exploitation. In Burawoy's analysis, when employers support and encourage the playing of games it can assist them in obscuring the true relations of production. Conversely, management-sanctioned competitive games can cause the workers to become individualized, thus separating them from the collective practices and group cohesion of the unions.⁴⁸ If, however, game-playing is the 'spontaneous, autonomous, malevolent creation of workers', then such practices can operate as forms of resistance to existing power structures.⁴⁹ Foreign orders fit into the latter camp, precisely because the practice is spontaneous, worker-led and done in quiet solidarity with other workers.

Historian Paul Thompson has offered explanations for the way in which twentieth century car-manufacturing workers responded to automation at a factory in Coventry,

England. One method for coping with the degradation of the labour process was to ‘accept it, but to put one’s heart elsewhere’.⁵⁰ While his example is quite specific (it refers to the way in which auto-workers played ‘games’ with time and production), Thompson’s notion of ‘putting ones heart elsewhere’ can be interpreted in a slightly different way. It offers a speculative theorization of how and why the Gov’s employees generated creative activity ‘on the side’, and it helps to explain the prevalence of workplace play, pranks and irreverent attitudes. Put simply, unofficial creative production was another way of putting one’s heart elsewhere. The following section engages further with the issue of boredom and its material results at the Gov.

Unauthorized creative production at the Government Printing Office

Barry: Foreign orders [all laugh]
 Neil: Yeah, a lot of that went on. A lot of the fancier sort.
 Barry: Cost ya two beers!⁵¹

The first time I encountered the term ‘foreign order’ was during the fourth interview for the NSW Government Printing Office Oral History Project. Graeme Murray, a former lithographic dot-etcher, explained:

Within the [printing] industry a foreign order is a pretty standard practice. [. . .] Some kid in a [. . .] basketball team [. . .] they’d want a poster done. It’d be done unofficially, on a sort of tit-for-tat basis. You’d do something for them, they’d [. . .] say, ‘Do you want anything done?’⁵²

Note how Murray explains the practice in relation to a social contract. While individuals produced foreign orders for themselves, the practice was very often a collaborative one; it was part of a social agreement and certain supervisors would turn a blind eye. Workers might leave their work area, seeking out another employee whom they trusted to finish a job. In this way, the practice of foreign orders—as with practical jokes and pranks—was fundamentally a social activity and part of a collective culture.

We tend not to think of government employees as creative people, but many at the Gov were, and they found themselves working in a bureaucratic labour system that did not always value their abilities, creative intelligence and interests. In the oral history process, print workers sometimes told me that they chose to undertake apprenticeships in the printing industry because it was the closest thing they could find to working in art or design. While some workers arrived at the Gov with earlier technical or artistic training, most undertook apprenticeships from age sixteen, and so it was at the Gov that they received the majority of their technical and design education. For example, compositors undertook a five to six-year apprenticeship involving in-depth learning in typography, metallurgy, design fundamentals, proof-reading, hand and machine-compositing and imposition.⁵³ Those in graphic reproduction were trained in a broad variety of analogue and digital technologies, from camera operation, to acid etching and engraving, to technical drawing, to small-offset, to desktop publishing, among other activities. For workers who were design-literate, being tasked with typesetting or printing government publications (such as annual reports and volumes of regulations) could be a tedious affair. The typographical choices were minimal, the print was usually black on white, the page layout was text-heavy, and the rules for document layout were strict and formulaic, leaving little space to exercise independent design decisions.

The Gov typically employed 800 to 1,000 workers. This meant that tradespeople worked on something resembling an assembly line, and generally did not get to see official

publications take form from start to finish. Workers tended to see only their stage of the production process: the copy was prepared by government and submitted for copy processing, the Linotype operators set the type, the proof-readers checked for errors, the hand-compositors set the pages, the press-machinists produced the prints, the binders guillotined and bound the volumes, and the despatch handled the delivery. The pace of work was largely dictated by Parliamentary sitting times, which resulted in sporadic patterns of rush and calm. With materials and time at their disposal, the collective work culture at the Gov silently endorsed the creation of extra printed products on the side.

As mentioned in the 'Introduction', foreign orders at the Gov took many forms; they were objects and printed publications made for private use, often for friends, family or private clubs. Former compositor Geoff Hawes explained: 'Foreign orders—they were a daily occurrence at the Gov. Wedding invitations, business cards, invoice books and so on.'⁵⁴

Such items were not usually made for profit, although producing them at work meant that one did not have to purchase external printing services. Cartoons and comics—produced by and distributed to staff—were quite common, as were graphic posters. Other unofficial objects had more practical purposes in the workplace, such as handmade tools and wire cages to make machinery safer. Some foreign orders were tacitly endorsed by management, particularly if they were used to improve apprentice skills, or if managers also wanted something printed on the side. Nonetheless, the penalties for getting caught pilfering could be steep, and managers did not officially condone such practices.

Former Monotype operator Lindsay Somerville recollected that the making of foreign orders was done with care and, moreover, it was motivated *by care*:

We were doing Christmas cards for Members of Parliament. The cards were very classy compared with the normal ones [. . .] So [we] got some for ourselves with our parents' names printed regally. I set the names on the Ludlow in Coronet [. . .] others printed them on the letterpress Heidelberg platen. Amazing how there were no overs when the job was completed! [. . .] We took great care not to damage any when doing the make ready for the press, so we could get as many cards as possible for all of us.⁵⁵

This indicates that sometimes the makers of foreign orders had fairly benign intentions, and foreign orders could be done in such a way that they did not over-use materials intended for official jobs. In this case, the making of foreign orders did not even involve a separate labour process; both official and unofficial production took place in the same act.

The most controversial foreign order incident at the Gov involved the production (and attempted on-sale) of fishing sinkers made from the hot-metal lead alloy in typesetting. This metal was, at the time, quite expensive (prior to the obsolescence of hot-metal typesetting). While no participants spoke in detail to me about this particular story, one former employee acknowledged: 'There were some guys that were making sinkers for fishing from the metal we used to make our type from. It was so big [. . .] the police were called in.'⁵⁶

Not all workers supported the making of foreign orders. In interviews, some workers complained that they contributed to an inefficient work environment and added fuel to external claims that the Gov was a 'waste of taxpayers' money'. Former compositor

Fig 1. 'The Bat-Mobile', late 1980s, designed and 'powered' by Jeff Keene and Leo Piplos. Reproduced with permission from Tony Cliffe



and designer George Woods said: 'Unfortunately I'd find that the guys would've been doing a foreign order on equipment that was worth millions of dollars. It's a shame [. . .] some people wouldn't want to admit that.'⁵⁷

Likewise, former compositor John Lee saw it this way: 'They used to help themselves to anything they wanted. You know, that was considered part of the job. Foreign orders and jobs for sporting clubs or whatever was considered a necessity.'⁵⁸

He later added, 'You said gilding the lily? With the foreign orders that went on there, they were gilding quite a bit more than the lily, and with gold leaf, that was even expensive back then.'⁵⁹

We can thus identify a number of different motivations for practicing foreign orders. This includes resistance, but foreign orders also had the social purpose of encouraging collective solidarity and loyalty (for those workers who were party to the practice; not all were). Foreign orders were sometimes generated for apprentice training, and simply for the pleasure of making things using manual skills. They were also produced for practical needs on the shop floor, and were part of the ongoing reproduction of workplace folk culture.

Boredom was another significant motivation for some of the Gov's employees. Interview testimony suggests that some workers did not feel that their skills and capacities were valued by management, while others sensed that the work was beginning to 'dry up', as more jobs were contracted to the private sector. The work-ticket system is also a factor here. This is a common Taylorist factory time-management method that allocates amounts of time for particular tasks. At the Gov, however, the unions ensured that the time allowances were so reasonable, sometimes to the point of being unnecessarily long, and some workers found they could complete their tasks in half the allocated time. Working 'too fast' could get one in trouble with the union, but it also allowed plenty of free time to engage in foreign orders, games and pranks. The print-worker



Fig 2. 'Pirate ship' depicting members of the NSW Government Printing Office, 1985. Reproduced with permission from Tony Cliffe

Sandra Elisabeth Stringer (source of the opening quotation) spoke of how, by the late 1980s, there was only a small amount of work going through the Graphic Reproduction Section. She felt that this section was full of talented people who were undervalued, and consequently they found other creative outlets to fill their time:

It blew out to the point where you ended up [. . .] with a lot of time left at the end of it. Nothing to do. Technically, if you were a good, hard worker, sometimes you could get your work done by morning tea [. . .] *Anything*, even like lawn mower repairs, people just used to look for anything to do. [laughs] It was that bad.⁶⁰

Understanding the work-ticket system enables us to see that in making foreign orders and in executing elaborate pranks, the Gov's employees were not necessarily being 'lazy' or putting off important government work. Doing more than their allocated workload could produce tensions with union representatives, and some employees did not want to 'rock the boat' in that manner.

Tony Cliffe, also from Graphic Reproduction, described how this division of the Gov was filled with extra-curricular activities. Cliffe brought his own machinery in from outside, including an antique typewriter fondly known as 'The Enigma'. He even brought in a washing machine that he had purchased second-hand, to check whether it worked. When questioned by his boss, Cliffe explained that he had washed all of the rags, aprons, dustcoats and tea towels.⁶¹ Other workers constructed a 'Bat-Mobile' (costumes included) [1] In the Press-Machine Room, press-operators fashioned cardboard boxes into a realistic life-size piano, while the book-binders built their own pool table and conducted tournaments. Pranks and practical jokes were rife.

None of this is unusual. As stated previously, pranks have been a longstanding part of industrial labour in Australian factories, with the best tricks repeated, year after year, across many industries, usually targeted at unwitting first-year apprentices. This is part of a process of enculturation and an intergenerational replication of social values.⁶² Such pranks included telling a hapless apprentice to find a supervisor and ask for a 'long weight', or asking an apprentice to find a 'left-handed screwdriver'. The most interesting pranks at the Gov were grounded in the material specificity of the printing house. Apprentices were asked to fetch some 'red type', or mix up some 'striped ink'. Another apprentice may fall victim to the 'Radioactive Highlight Dots' ruse, involving layers of protective clothing and small fluorescent stickers. Bodies, machines, printing materials and the tools of the trade were a constant part of these entrenched shop floor practices.

Robert Law recalled a well-known compositors' trick: changing a person's details on the electoral roll. In this period, the electoral roll still listed a person's occupation.

We used to have a bit of fun with the occupations [when typesetting the electoral roll]. Just change 'em and see how long it took before it went through the process to be fixed [. . .] One printer [press-operator] spotted Ian Adamson's name. Ian was the Controller of Printing [. . .] Well, the operator stopped the press, took out the

Fig 3. Farewell illustration for Sandra Elisabeth Stringer, 1988–1989: 'Rats are always the first to desert a sinking ship'. Reproduced with permission from Sandra Elisabeth Stringer



line with ‘Addo’s’ name on it, raced to the Linotype section, had it reset with his occupation changed from ‘Printer’ to ‘Dogcatcher’.⁶³

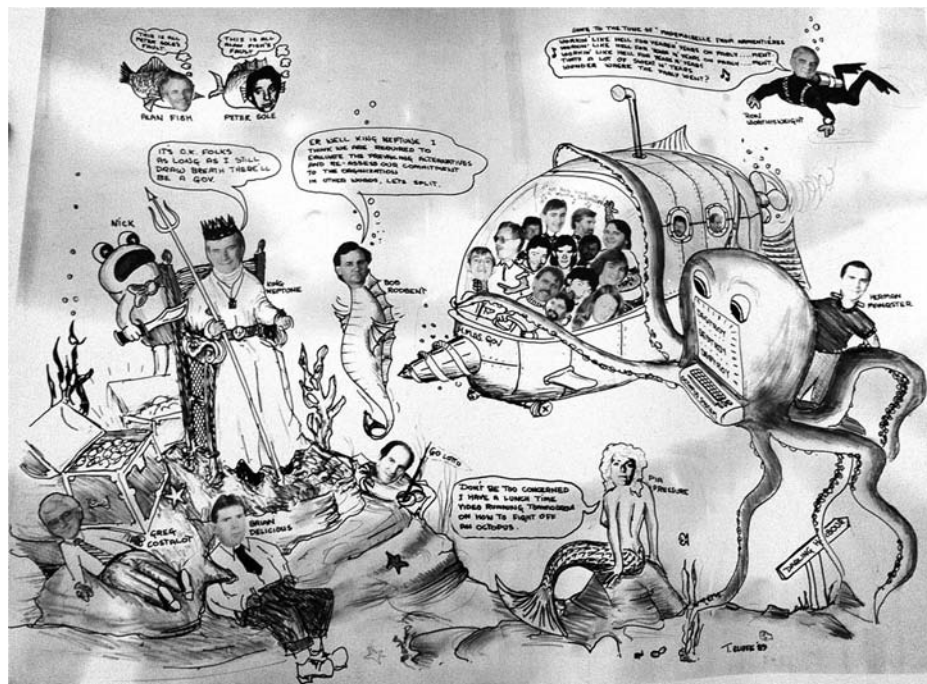
Other print-workers relayed similar anecdotes about changing occupation listings on the electoral roll. Members of the public were also victims of this trick. A popular radio DJ had his occupation changed to ‘Confederate Soldier’. No one would admit to more defamatory occupation changes, but the possibilities were seemingly endless. Given the electoral roll is an official state document, the penalties for altering the listings could have been quite severe. Here it is worthwhile remembering the tangibility of government information; each voter’s name and occupation was recorded in physical form, in metal Linotype slugs, stored in ‘standing formes’ in the Gov’s basement. Thus the fundamental basis of these practical jokes was dependent upon the object itself.

Foreign orders in the final days of the factory

We have seen how the practice of foreign orders was secretive, designed to operate not as an overt industrial action, but as a subtle undercutting, carving out small moments of autonomy in a mundane workplace. But what happened when that world of work was profoundly disrupted and drew to a close? At the point when the very existence of the Gov seemed on the cusp of collapse, the practice of foreign orders (as well as pilfering) experienced a change. It became more political, more overt and more widespread.

In the Graphic Reproduction Section workers sometimes collaborated on photographic and hand-drawn collages, often featuring satirical representations of their workplace, for example representing the Gov as an over-crowded pirate ship [2]. The graphic style of these illustrations can be connected to the DIY aesthetic of fanzines, which began in the late 1970s and 1980s. DIY ‘zine production often featured low-resolution, collaged or appropriated imagery, deliberately low-tech and handmade in appearance. This

Fig 4. *Aquatic scene of imminent danger*, 1989, ‘under the sea’ poster by Tony Cliffe. Dimensions: approx. 100 cm wide. Courtesy of Ray Utick. Reproduced with permission from Tony Cliffe



graphic style was associated with punk and other anti-establishment subcultures: it rejected the ideological drivers that lay behind high production value commercial image making.⁶⁴ A similar hacked-up, collage aesthetic is visible in many examples from the Gov (despite the fact that the pieces would have taken time and care to produce) [2, 3, 5]. In this case, however, the DIY aesthetic rejoinder is not specifically a rejection of mainstream culture. Instead, this playful drive to collage imagery is arguably a rejection of the rigid traditions of government printing, and, more importantly, unauthorized image making constituted a rejection of the false assurances of job security that the workers heard from their government. In the increasingly negative atmosphere of the late 1980s, employee attitudes sometimes shifted towards gallows humour, a sense that the ship was already sinking; it was a matter of how and when—not if—the Gov was going to close.⁶⁵ Some employees pre-emptively sought work elsewhere, including Stringer. Her colleagues cheerfully farewelled her with a printed illustration that reads, 'They say rats are always the first to desert a sinking ship' [3].

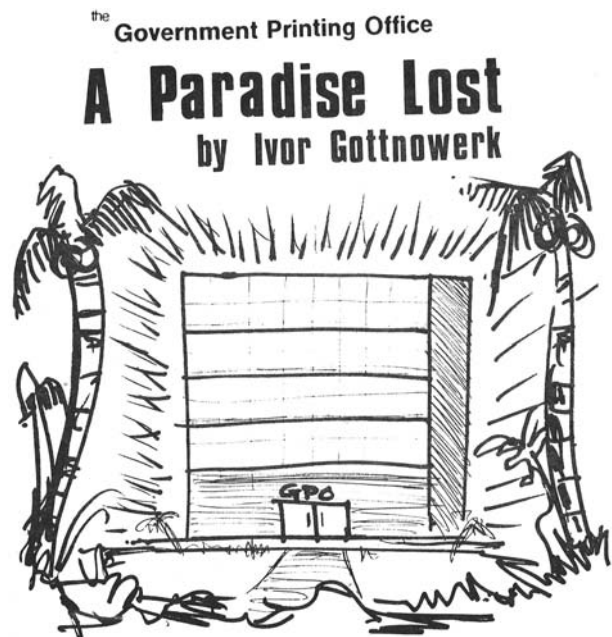
The Gov's foreign orders of the late 1980s are best exemplified by the graphic works of Tony Cliffe, whose illustrated satirical stories were presented to me by a number of interview participants. In the first half of 1989, Cliffe produced a large 'under the sea' poster, combining hand-drawn and photographic elements, satirizing the impending demise of the Gov [4]. The poster is large (around 1 m wide) and printed on archival-quality paper. It is now seen as a rare collector's item by the former employees who collect such ephemera. The image is a visual chronicle of the Gov, filled with looming threats. The Government Printer is depicted as King Neptune, regally assuring everyone that everything is going to be OK while 'Kermit' (the State Premier Nick Greiner) is standing behind him wielding a knife. The management fish blames the union, while the union fish blames management. The sense that computerization was partly to blame for the decline of the Gov is also referenced, with the 'Optimus' computer system depicted as a giant predatory octopus attacking 'HMAS Gov'.⁶⁶

Also in 1989, Cliffe produced a twelve-page illustrated satirical booklet, clumsily typed in capital letters using the aforementioned 'Enigma' typewriter. The booklet is titled *The Government Printing Office: A Paradise Lost* [5, 6, 7], purportedly written by the aptly-named 'Ivor Gottnowerk'.⁶⁷ The booklet is a simple, stapled black-and-white paper publication, and yet its significance became clear through the way in which former employees handled it with care and boasted that they owned an 'original'. Although professional typesetting computers were available at the Gov in 1989, Cliffe's decision to use the antique, half-broken Enigma is intriguing. Likewise, the booklet is not typeset traditionally—in hot-metal—but instead uses the technology that clerical staff would have used in the mid-twentieth century. The deliberate use of capital letters could perhaps be seen as consciously amateur styling. As a skilled tradesman in graphic reproduction, Cliffe would have had the design skills to develop a much more refined design.⁶⁸

A Paradise Lost tells the story of the Gov, explaining the reasons for the institution's decline. The book starts:

Once upon a time (about 1975) in a far off universe on a planet called Earth, was [. . .] a place called the

Fig 5. Front cover from *A Paradise Lost*, twelve-page foreign order booklet by Tony Cliffe, 1989. Reproduced with permission from Tony Cliffe



Government Printing Office. About 1200 people worked at this place. Approx 20 of them were bosses, five were cleaners, 1153 were productive staff, leaving about 10 people who were thought to be doing nothing at all.⁶⁹

It lists many of the reforms made by management in the later years, including the creation of new departments and sections, the appointment of more managers and the painting of yellow safety lines around machinery. The booklet presents the claim that the Gov grew 'top-heavy' with management, and drowned in inefficient bureaucracy [6]. In Cliffe's line illustrations of the Gov, the factory building is frequently represented in section. It is treated as a container within which politics and hierarchies are represented and literally played out. Technologies are also implicated as symbols of 'old' and 'new' worlds of work: 'Slowly the presses ground to a halt, there was no one to operate them [. . .] Immediately a new section was formed to implement the installation of a computer, along with a section to re-train the staff as computer operators. Everyone was happy for a while, they had a new toy [. . .]'⁷⁰

In a somewhat predictable development of the storyline, the booklet reminds the reader that 'computers didn't save the Govt Printing Office'.⁷¹ *A Paradise Lost* goes on to describe how the Gov 'became so unproductive and uneconomical that it was decided to close the place down'.⁷²

7.
SOME TIME LATER (LIKE IN ABOUT 1985.) IT WAS NOTICED THAT OVERTIME BECAME LESS AND LESS FREQUENT. IT DIDN'T MAKE PEOPLE HAPPY. IT WAS A MYSTERY, ONE WORKER EVEN WENT SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT HE THOUGHT THE PRINTING OFFICE WAS BECOMING TOP HEAVY WITH BOSSES AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF, AND THAT THIS WAS CAUSING THE PRINTING OFFICE TO CHARGE IT'S CUSTOMERS TOO MUCH FOR THEIR JOBS. THE IDEA WAS IMMEDIATELY DISMISSED AS THE RAMBLINGS OF A LUNATIC AND ANOTHER THREE SECTIONS WERE CREATED TO OVERCOME THE PROBLEM.

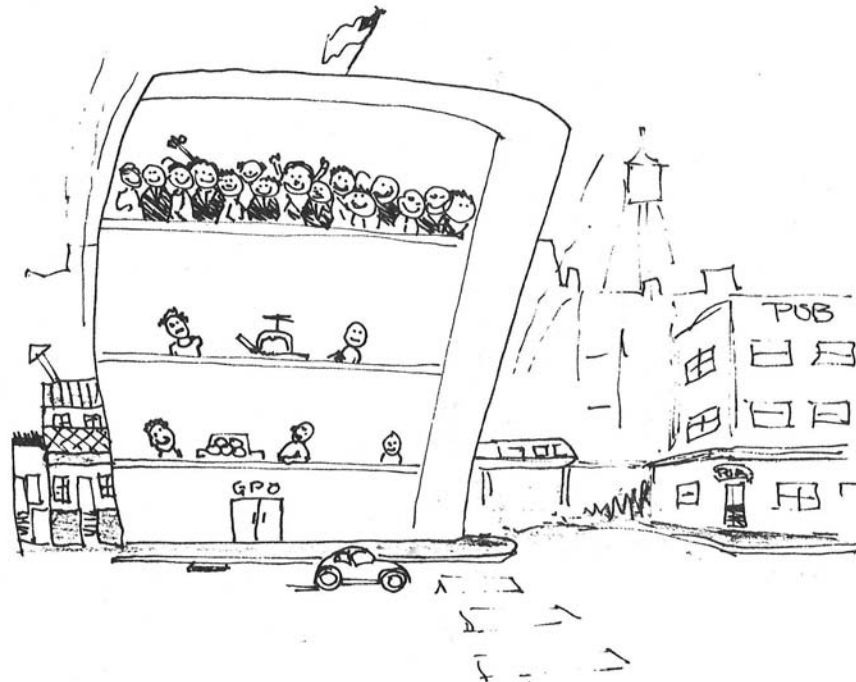


Fig 6. Selected page from *A Paradise Lost*, 12-page foreign order booklet by Tony Cliffe, 1989. Reproduced with permission from Tony Cliffe

The question of ideology versus economic reality is key here. In many senses, the claims made in *A Paradise Lost* have merit; although the Gov introduced computer typesetting in order to 'catch up' with the rest of the printing industry, this embrace of new technologies did not save the institution from the results of neoliberal policy and the broader economic impacts of global markets. *A Paradise Lost* nonetheless offers valuable insights into the relatively sophisticated way in which workers understood their fate. The former employees tended to present Cliffe's work as evidence of 'how things really were' at the Gov; this was presented as *their* version of an institutional history. While Cliffe himself is humble about the purpose of these satirical renderings, his work provides an important critical perspective from an employee, offering a view of how the workers themselves understood their place in the Australian narrative of deindustrialization.

Conclusion

After the announcement on 27 June 1989 that the Gov was to close in four weeks, printed copies of *A Paradise Lost* were openly distributed to staff. Here we have a foreign order that moved from the quiet fringes of labour into collective awareness. It became a fatalistic telling of a story in which everyone had a part. *A Paradise Lost* operated within a world that was broken and it sought to explain the loss of that world to those who were most affected by it. It narrates the workers' experience in their own terms and it does so in an irreverent manner. While the state government gave the workers a glossy photographic book when they left the factory, it was *A Paradise Lost* that became the prized keepsake. The fact that workers identified with Cliffe's illustrations and presented it in their interviews is important; it is partly what gives his work meaning.

Returning to Harris' concern about the overuse of 'resistance' as a paradigm for understanding foreign orders, perhaps we should not discount entirely the possibility of foreign orders as a form of resistance. Using an early position advocated by historian Eric Hobsbawm, it could be argued that it does not necessarily matter what the workers' stated motivations were; they did not need to make dramatic political claims about the purpose of their clandestine activities. As industrial workers, they can be said to be acting on what Hobsbawm called a 'pre-political discontent'.⁷³ They found themselves working within social and labour systems that had particular conditions and opportunities, and the opportunity to produce extra products was an available option. The making of foreign orders was a discreet and subtly political collective practice that involved craft skill, humour and resourcefulness. Making on the side was a coded social activity, part of collective workplace culture. It was sometimes motivated by care for friends and family, it relieved boredom, it made use of traditional craft skills and it provided avenues for apprentice training. Regardless of a worker's intention, the act of creating a foreign order by its very nature implicitly, and no matter how subtly, undercuts the authority of the prevailing system. This undercutting may not occur on a large scale, but however small, it is a form of resistance to the status quo. This resistance is embedded in the foreign order as an object.

How can we understand the broader implications of this example, beyond Australian design and labour histories? First, it is important to reiterate that foreign orders are

The End

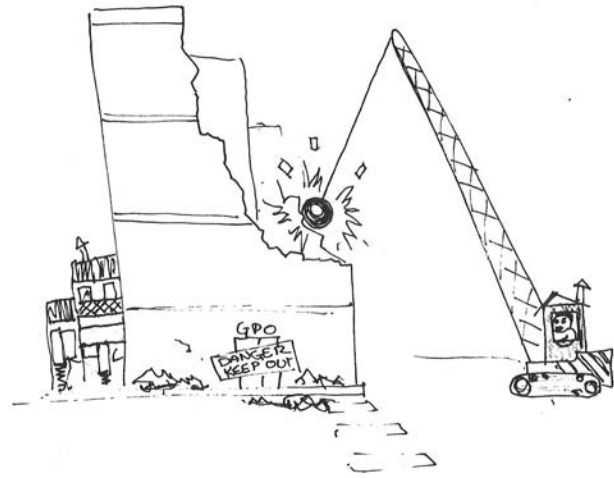


Fig 7. Selected page from *A Paradise Lost*, 12-page foreign order booklet by Tony Cliffe, 1989. Reproduced with permission from Tony Cliffe

not limited to Australia, but are a diverse, global phenomenon, as Anteby has demonstrated. Popular cultural examples of the practice also confirm its existence beyond Australia: Johnny Cash's song 'One Piece at a Time' describes a car made from smuggled parts, and the 2010 film *Made in Dagenham* portrays women workers at Ford making objects from car-seat leather.⁷⁴ Arguably, the making of things 'on the side' persists in contemporary office and online scenarios, although the complexities of precarious and/or unpaid digital labour fall beyond the scope of this particular article. Throughout this article we have considered foreign orders as part of a broader set of playful industrial antics. We have seen how foreign orders are much more than amateur 'folk art' made by 'non-designers'. They are an example of the creative disruption of surplus value by the labouring classes at the very end of the period when they more tactile control of the production process than workers tend to have today. This attention to unauthorized factory practices—beyond 'officially' produced goods—broadens our understanding of design history in relation to production. It makes us more aware of the relevance and significance of 'amateur' and/or 'unsanctioned' design practice: an important part of the maturation of design history. Finally, it is vital to remember that these findings emerged from conversations with print workers. Many twentieth-century manufacturing workers are still alive today, and they possess in-depth knowledge and understanding about past production practices. What else might we find, if we ventured to ask?

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If you have any comments to make in relation to this article, please go to the journal website on <http://jdh.oxfordjournals.org> and access this article. There is a facility on the site for sending e-mail responses to the editorial board and other readers.

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Notes

- 1 S. E. Stringer, interview with author, 17 October 2012.
- 2 M. Anteby, 'The "Moralities" of Poaching: Manufacturing Personal Artifacts on the Factory Floor', *Ethnography*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2003, pp. 217–39; M. Anteby, 'Factory "Homers": Understanding a Highly Elusive, Marginal, and Illegal Practice', 2006 <<http://www.people.hbs.edu/manteby/SocioduTravail-English.pdf>> accessed 23 March 2015
- 3 J. Ditton, 'Perks, Pilferage and the Fiddle: The Historical Structure of Invisible Wages', *Theory and Society*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1977, pp. 39–71; J. Ditton, *Part-time Crime: An Ethnography of Fiddling and Pilferage*, Macmillan, London, 1977; P. d'Sena, 'Perquisites and Casual Labour on the

- London Wharveside in the Eighteenth Century', *The London Journal*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1989, pp. 130–47; A. J. Randall, 'Peculiar Perquisites and Pernicious Practices', *International Review of Social History*, vol. 35, no. 2, 1990, pp. 193–219.
- 4 D. J. Huppertz, 'Introduction: Reframing Australian Design History', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2014, pp. 205–23.
 - 5 *Ibid.*, p. 205.
 - 6 P. Hazell & K. Fallan, 'The Enthusiast's Eye: The Value of Unsanctioned Knowledge in Design Historical Scholarship', *Design and Culture*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2015, pp. 107–23. See also G. Beegan & P. Atkinson, 'Professionalism, Amateurism and the Boundaries of Design', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2008, pp. 305–13.
 - 7 Ethics approval # HREC no. 2011–2085A, University of Technology Sydney.
 - 8 See C. Cockburn, *Brothers: Male Dominance and Technological Change*, Pluto Press, London, 1983; R. Reed, 'From hot metal to cold type printing technology', in *Technology and the Labour Process: Australasian Case Studies*, E. Willis (ed.), Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1988, pp. 33–50; J. A. Stein, 'Masculinity and Material Culture in Technological Transitions in the Workplace: From Letterpress to Offset-Lithography, 1960s–1980s', *Technology & Culture*, vol. 57, no. 1, forthcoming.
 - 9 B. Kingston, *A History of New South Wales*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York & Melbourne, 2006, pp. 232–33.
 - 10 Burawoy expresses his surprise at this pattern in M. Burawoy, 'Ethnographic Fallacies: Reflections on Labour Studies in the Era of Market Fundamentalism', *Work, Employment and Society*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2013, p. 531.
 - 11 B. Oliver, 'Making Foreigners at the Midland Government Railway Workshops', in *Foreigners: Secret Artefacts of Industrialism*, J. Harris (ed.), Black Swan Press, Perth, 2009, p. 27.
 - 12 Anteby, 'The "Moralities" of Poaching', op. cit., p. 219.
 - 13 Ditton, 'Perks, Pilferage and the Fiddle', op. cit., pp. 39–71.
 - 14 The making of foreign orders is given specific attention in: M. Haraszti, *A Worker in a Worker's State: Piece-Rates in Hungary*, Universe Books, New York, 1978; M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California Press, Berkeley & London, 1984; R. Kosmann, 'La Perruque ou le Travail Masqué', *Histoire*, vol. 11, 1999, pp. 20–7; Anteby, 'The "Moralities" of Poaching', op. cit.; Anteby, 'Factory "Homers"', op. cit.; Anteby, *Moral Grey Zones*, op. cit.; Harris (ed.), op. cit. A similar but subtly different phenomenon was explored in Jean-Luc Moulène's 24 Objets de Grève, a photographic archive that recorded objects created by French workers while on strike, between the 1970s and 1990s. These objects were designed for sale, to financially support the striking workers. See P. Magagnoli, 'Moulène, Rancière and 24 Objets de Grève: Productive Ambivalence or Reifying Opacity?', *Philosophy of Photography*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2012, pp. 155–71.
 - 15 G. Seal, 'The Folklore of Work', in *The Hidden Culture: Folklore in Australian Society*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1989, p. 38; G. Seal, 'Foreigners in Workplace Culture', in Harris (ed.), op. cit., pp. 38–47.
 - 16 Seal, 'The Folklore of Work', op. cit., pp. 128–9.
 - 17 Oliver, op. cit., p. 35.
 - 18 Seal, 'Foreigners in Workplace Culture', op. cit.; S. Smith, 'Foreigners: "The Forbidden Artefact"', in Harris (ed.), op. cit., pp. 14–25.
 - 19 P. Thompson, 'Playing at Being Skilled Men: Factory Culture and Pride in Work Skills Among Coventry Car Workers', *Social History*, vol. 13, no. 1, 1988, pp. 45–69; Seal, 'The Folklore of Work', op. cit.; J. Shields, 'Craftsmen in the Making', in *All Our Labours*, J. Shields (ed.), UNSW Press, Sydney, 1992, pp. 86–122; S. Meyer, 'Work, Play, and Power: Masculine Culture on the Automotive Shop Floor, 1930–1960', in *Boys and Their Toys? Masculinity, Technology and class in America*, R. Horowitz (ed.), Routledge, New York & London, 2001, pp. 13–32.
 - 20 Anteby, *Moral Gray Zones*, op. cit., p. 9.
 - 21 De Certeau, op. cit.
 - 22 De Certeau described *la perruque* (the wig) as a disguise. In fact, the wig was a component of dress that was perceived as normal in eighteenth-century England and France, while the mask was not condoned. There was, however, the notion that the wig could conceal a multitude of sins. See P. McNeil, '"Beyond the horizon of hair": Masculinity, Nationhood and Fashion in the Anglo-French Eighteenth Century', in *Hinter dem Horizont Band 2: Projektion und Distinktion ländlicher Oberschichten im europäischen Vergleich 17.19 Jahrhundert*, D. Freist & F. Schmekel (eds), Münster, 2013, pp. 79–90.
 - 23 De Certeau, op. cit., p. 25.
 - 24 J. Harris, 'The Grey World of Foreigner Production', in Harris (ed.), *Foreigners*, op. cit., p. 6.
 - 25 De Certeau, op. cit., pp. 25–6.
 - 26 Ditton, 'Perks, Pilferage and the Fiddle', op. cit., pp. 39–71.
 - 27 A 'vail' is an occasional profit, an addition to a salary or a gratuity, typically given to a servant. The term was used in seventeenth-century England.
 - 28 Ditton, 'Perks, Pilferage and the Fiddle', op. cit., p. 40.
 - 29 E. P. Thompson, 'Patrician Society, Plebian Culture', *Journal of Social History*, vol. 7, no. 4, 1974, pp. 382–405;

- E. P. Thompson, *Whigs and Hunters*, Allen Lane, London, 1975; P. Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century*, Verso, London, 2006. See also d'Sena, op. cit., pp. 130–47; Randall, op. cit., pp. 193–219.
- 30 Thompson, 'Patrician Society', op. cit., p. 384.
- 31 Randall, op. cit., pp. 193–94.
- 32 d'Sena, op. cit., pp. 141–43.
- 33 Ditton, 'Perks, Pilferage, and the Fiddle', op. cit., p. 45.
- 34 D. N. M. Horning, 'Blue-collar Theft: Conceptions of Property, Attitudes Toward Pilfering, and Work Group Norms in a Modern Industrial Plant', in *Crimes Against Bureaucracy*, E. O. Smigel & H. L. Ross (eds), Van Nostrand-Reinhold, New York & London, 1970, pp. 46–64; G. Mars, 'Dock Pilferage: A Case Study in Occupational Theft', in *Deviance and Social Control*, P. Rock & M. McIntosh (eds), British Sociological Association, London, 1974, pp. 209–28; Ditton, *Part-time Crime*, op. cit.; Ditton, 'Perks, Pilferage and the Fiddle', op. cit.; S. Ackroyd & P. Thompson, 'The Recalcitrant Worker', in *Organizational Misbehaviour*, Sage, London, 1999, pp. 31–52.
- 35 Horning, op. cit.
- 36 Ibid., pp. 51–2.
- 37 Mars, op. cit., p. 209; Ackroyd & Thompson, op. cit., p. 38.
- 38 Anteby, 'The "Moralities" of Poaching', op. cit., pp. 227–8; Anteby, 'Factory "Homers"', p. e23; Anteby, *Moral Gray Zones*, op. cit., pp. 153–4.
- 39 Anteby, 'Factory "Homers"', op. cit., p. e34.
- 40 R. Law, personal communication with author, 15 November 2013.
- 41 Harris claimed that her 'Foreigners' exhibition is the 'only time that a group of foreigners has been assembled'—Harris, 'The Grey World', op. cit., p. 6. Despite the international prevalence of the practice in twentieth-century factories and offices, the only other exhibition specifically of foreign orders that I have discovered was in 1984, involving 'retirement homers', held by the Labour Council of Snecma Evry-Corbeil in France; see Anteby, 'Factory "Homers"', op. cit., p. e26.
- 42 J. Harris, 'Resistance? Foreigner Production in the Midland Railway Workshops', in Harris (ed.), *Foreigners*, op. cit., pp. 62–71.
- 43 Ibid., p. 62.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 M. Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process Under Monopoly Capitalism*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1979, p. 77.
- 46 Ibid., p. 78.
- 47 Ibid., p. 78.
- 48 Ibid., p. 81.
- 49 Ibid., p. 85.
- 50 Thompson, 'Playing at Being Skilled Men', op. cit., p. 58.
- 51 B. Skewes & N. Lewis, interview with author, 17 January 2012.
- 52 G. Murray, interview with author, 9 September 2011.
- 53 Apprentice compositors feared that their training in hot-metal compositing meant that they were out of date in relation to newer technologies. See Concerned Apprentices, 'Apprentices view to new technology', *The Graphic: NSW Government Printing Office Staff Journal*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1983, p. 1.
- 54 G. Hawes, personal communication with author, 31 October 2013.
- 55 L. Somerville, personal communication with author, 31 October 2013.
- 56 Anon., personal communication with author.
- 57 G. Woods, interview with author, 21 February 2012. Pseudonym used.
- 58 J. Lee, interview with author, 2 August 2012.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 S. E. Stringer, interview with author, 17 October 2012.
- 61 T. Cliffe, personal communication with author, 5 November 2013.
- 62 It is important to acknowledge that apprentice initiation rituals could also be abusive and sexually violent.
- 63 G. MacKellar, personal communication with author, 31 October 2013.
- 64 T. Triggs, 'Scissors and Glue: Punk Fanzines and the Creation of a DIY Aesthetic', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2006, pp. 69–83.
- 65 M. Moore, 'Cuts Feared at Govt Printer', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 June 1989, p. 8.
- 66 'Optimus' was simply a computer database system for recording printing jobs, but the broad symbolism remains.
- 67 T. Cliffe, *The Government Printing Office: A Paradise Lost*, by Ivor Gottnowerk, self-published at the NSW Government Printing Office, Sydney, 1989. For a digitized version of this publication see *Paradise Lost* <<https://sites.google.com/site/nswgpparadiselost>> accessed 23 March 2015.
- 68 Further investigation revealed that this version of the publication was meant to be a rough draft. Cliffe explained that, coincidentally, the closure of the Gov was publicly announced while he was working on the booklet, so he rushed to complete and print it in the four weeks before

the Gov closed. T. Cliffe, personal communication with author, 5 November 2013.

69 Cliffe, *A Paradise Lost*, op. cit., p. 2.

70 Ibid., p. 9.

71 Ibid., p. 10.

72 Ibid.

73 E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York & Toronto, 1959, p. 147.

74 I thank the anonymous reviewer who brought this film to my attention.