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Power, politics and entanglement

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NAM 2013

This paper is about the situatedness of power and entanglement, and it may resonate with questions about how a small country on the margins of Europe can have global impact in archaeology.

I want to start with Paul Willis' 1977 *Learning to Labour. How working class kids get working class jobs*. The book looked at 12 boys – the 'lads' – in their last two years at a school in the West Midlands in England in the 1970s, at a time when unemployment was not particularly high. It was fascinating to get inside the thought processes of these young boys as they made the decisions that would set them on one path or other in their lives. The boys were creative, defiant, thoughtful, belligerent, and very aware of the decisions they were making, articulate and humorous. They were undoubtedly strong and masterful agents. They were powerful young men. And yet they made decisions that recreated their working class category. They reproduced their own subordination. In reacting against the establishment, they made choices, such as not doing well in school, spending time in the pub, that made sense to them but which ensured the reproduction of their own conditions of existence. But Paul Willis' book was not judgmental. It did not blame the boys or the working class more generally. Rather it pointed out that the boys had few alternatives, it gave the sense of their being stuck or entrapped.

Re-thinking about this book today, I am struck by how much it informs my ideas about entanglement and entrapment that I discussed in my 2012 book *Entangled: an archaeology of the relationships between humans and things*. I want to explain what I mean by entanglement and entrapment before I discuss the relationships between these terms and power.

I define entanglement as the sum of four types of relationships between humans and things: human dependence on things (HT), plus thing dependence on things (TT), plus thing dependence on humans (TH), plus human dependence on humans (HH). Since the term *dependence* is the key to all these four types of relationships, it is important to define what I mean by dependence.

I define *dependence* as having two different components. The word *dependence* in English has two connotations. The first is about reliance, as when I say that I depend on my car to get to work. But there is also a component that is about contingency, as when you say in English "it depends" – for example, I might say "whether I get to work on time depends on the traffic".

A rather different meaning is given by the term *dependency*. In a dependency or co-dependency relationship there are connotations of limitation and constraint. The most well-known examples are dependency relations in world systems, where the development of marginal countries is limited or constrained by the growth of dominant countries; another well-known type of dependency occurs in relationships between

people when a co-dependency relationship is destructive of one or both participants, or there is the dependency on drugs or alcohol or nicotine that becomes destructive or limiting.

I argue that all relationships between humans and things have this dual character. As humans we have evolved a particular way of dealing with the world that depends on technologies. We are successful and productive as a species at least partly because we came to use tools to achieve our ends. Tools are productive of human life. But as soon as the first tool was invented, we started to be constrained and limited by our dependence on tools, their procurement, manufacture, maintenance, discard. There were dependence and dependency relations between humans and things.

Take the effect of the invention of the wheel. This invention in Eurasia in the 4th millennium BC led to carts, chariots, water wheels, potters wheels, and later cars, trains, buses, planes. The modern world is entirely dependent on wheeled vehicles. I ask you to try and imagine how long you would survive if you could not use a wheel. How would you get to the supermarket? How would you get food after the supermarket lorries had stopped running? Where would you find land to grow crops and how would you get there? Where would you find the seed to grow crops … and so on and so on. Modern society is entirely dependent on the wheel. But this dependence also involves dependency in that we become constrained by the vast networks of debts and relations that go into making a car, we are constrained and entrapped by our resulting dependence on oil, and we are constrained by the effects of carbon fuel emissions on global warming. We would like to solve the increase in global warming but we cannot get rid of the car – we have become too dependent on it. Our economic and social systems, our livelihoods, would collapse without the car or wheel. So we are trapped into a dependency that might ultimately destroy us. This is what I mean by the entrapment of entanglements. We go down paths that we get stuck in; there is a path dependency.

Entanglement can thus be defined as the dialectic of dependence and dependency. The tension between dependence and dependency produces continual movement and change. We keep searching for solutions to the entanglements and entrapments we find ourselves in. Human 'being' involves us in things, but things are unruly, have their own lives and needs. They are us but not us, and we continually devise new things to manage the entanglements and entrapments that we find ourselves in. We invent hybrid cars, electric cars, we use public transport – but these solutions only lead to further entanglements and entrapments. There is a continual movement produced by the unity of opposites that is humans and things.

This focus on an always dialectical relationship between humans and things takes my approach away from symmetrical archaeology (Witmore 2007) and from network theories (Mills *et al*. 2013). These entanglements that I have described are not networks of flows and relations in which humans and things play equal and symmetrical parts. While I recognize the value of foregrounding things and drawing attention to their role as social actants, in my view the focus on symmetry, assemblages and networks misses the key point about human-thing relationships, which is that they are asymmetrical and as a result the source of tension and change. Entanglement as a dialectic of dependence and dependency draws us towards the ways in which humans and things entrap each other, always one dominant over the other, in continual tension. To talk of symmetry is to miss the point – that it is precisely the asymmetric dependence between humans and things that generates change and transformation.

Power and entanglement

I have so far introduced some of the key ideas of entanglement as I see and define it. But what is the relationship between entanglement and power? My brief discussion of dialectical and asymmetrical relations suggests that such a link might

exist. And certainly both entanglement and power describe situations of limitation and constraint – both describe a situation of entrapment, the "Iron Cage" of Max Weber and Talcott Parsons (Baehr 2001). So, is entanglement a form of, or the same as, power? I will explore this question in the rest of this paper. But one can perhaps already see that our entrapment in cars differs in some respects from the entrapments of power. Of course there are powerful interests that get profits from cars and control petrol supply, or go into Iraq to safeguard oil supplies But superficially, and this is something that needs unpacking, the entrapment produced by dominant groups seems to differ from our entanglement in wheels and cars; we seem entrapped in cars whether elites are involved or not.

I want to argue in this paper that entanglement produces entrapment and constraint that is different from the workings of power, even though it might produce or be produced by power.

So, what is power? We have tended to see power as something that is top-down, wielded by dominant groups that have "power over". We tend to relate power to inequality, the rise of complex societies and dominant elites that control the means of production, exchange relations, specialized knowledge, prestige goods and so on. But archaeologists have recognized for some time that there is also "power to", that is the ability to mobilize resources in one's interests or to achieve one's goals (Miller and Tilley 1984).

Another lesson we learned from discussions of power in archaeology was that different forms of power are produced in different historical contexts (Miller and Tilley 1984). From Marx to Foucault we learned that in different social conditions, whether feudal systems or capitalist states, different forms of power and domination were possible; and that in the nineteenth century in Europe new formations of power and knowledge arose in which bodies were surveilled and administered in prisons, hospitals, schools, all informed by the ideas and practices of the panopticon. This type of surveillance society creates a situation in which individuals are entrapped within discourses and regimes of power/knowledge.

The focus on entanglement is close to that of regimes of power/knowledge in that it posits a specific historical context within which entrapment of a particular type is produced. But entanglement focuses less on discourse and power/knowledge and more on the practical messes, the everyday constraints and restrictions that people find themselves caught in. For Foucault, power was everywhere. Entanglement focuses on the ways in which people are entrapped, whether they are elites or non-elites.

Entanglement allows us to explore how both dominant and non-dominant groups are entangled. It allows us to look at how elites also are entrapped, even if less so, or differently, than non-elites. It allows us to argue that you can have inequality without domination and power.

In order to explain what I mean I would like to give some archaeological examples. These first examples are taken from an SAA session in Hawaii in 2012 that I commented on. The session was called "Living Abandonment: the Social Process of Detaching from Place", organized by Maxime Lamoureux St-Hilaire and Patricia McAnany (unpublished but see McAnany and Yoffee 2010). The session looked at what happened to the people living in sites or regions that became abandoned by elites. In a number of the case studies, what was of interest to me was that as elites left or abandoned a site or region, non-elites remained and had to find a way to cope. It seemed that elites were not very entangled in a place, they could just walk away. They had the resources, knowledge, connections to walk away. But non-elites were entangled in place, tied up in local crops and skills and knowledge. They had given meaning to local places and invested them with memories. They could less easily uproot.

We saw this in the case of Maxime Lamoureux St-Hilaire's work at Minanha Belize. After the abandonment of this Maya site the local community still buried their dead in the ruins of the elite site that had dominated them. The

burials created links to the ancestors and bound the community together even when the elites had abandoned the site; it seemed tragic that local people were so invested in an abandoned site; but the investment created community ties in the present – it worked as people struggled to maintain the community after abandonment.

Another very good example is provided by Maggie Morgan-Smith on the 18th century Rancho Kiuic, Yucatán, México. The ranch was abandoned in the first part of the 20th century. It is clear that the workers on the ranch left partly because of the great inequalities on the ranch, but they still buried themselves there even after having left and they called the abandoned elite ranch "mi tierra". So the ranch is abandoned but then it isn't. In a way there is a tragedy of the commoners – in that the commoners don't own the land but they come to be more attached to it, through labor investment and habituation and memory.

A final example is a study by Olivia C. Navarro-Farr, again on the Maya – at El Perú-Waka'. She looks at the main civic-ceremonial shrine at the site that had a lot of material deposited by non-elites in the Late-Terminal Classic at the time of the decline of the site's royal court. There is also a lot of re-setting of stones and stele in new juxtapositions. The aim of all this was to improve agricultural potential and restore sacred balance in the community and in the land, long after the decline of the royal court – and such rituals have gone on to the present.

In these examples we see that elites might *own* and *control* a place, but that the people that are owned and controlled may become most invested in place and need it most – they are the ones that become habituated and entangled, whereas the owners can just wander off.

We can of course say that the reasons non-elites stick to places is just habituation and habitus. Bourdieu (2013) in his discussion of class distinction focuses on our dispositions that recreate and transform the larger social field. We could say that these examples from the Maya show that people get stuck in certain dispositions; and similarly for the working class kids in England. But that is not my argument. Rather, I am arguing that non-elites get entangled so that they are trapped in particular investments and networks of resources such that they have little choice to change. So rather than talk of habitus and disposition I am arguing that people make choices that are practical and pragmatic; non-elites may simply not have the choice, resources, networks, skills, knowledge to do otherwise. It may make practical sense to stay put.

Elites may often have the resources to disentangle themselves from a particular place, to walk away. But non-elites may be so entangled to place that they cannot so easily move away. The important point for this paper is that in these Maya examples, non-elites remain entrapped even when elites leave. Their entrapment and lack of choice derive from something other than "power over". Even centuries after elites have abandoned a place, non-elites remain tied, entangled and entrapped. All this suggests *that power and entanglement may be rather different, producing different forms of entrapment.*

I want to explore this decoupling of power and entanglement further by looking at egalitarian societies that reject power differences beyond age and sex, and where even age and sex differentiation in access to power may be slight. I want to show that in such egalitarian societies that privilege sharing and common access, there may nevertheless be a strong sense of being entangled and entrapped. Or to put it another way, even in the absence of significant "power over", "power to" may itself be curtailed in specific entanglements.

My example returns me to Çatalhöyük and the origins of agriculture in the Middle East (Hodder 2006).

Through the late Pleistocene and early Holocene in the Middle East we know that people were gradually investing more in plants, including the wild ancestors of the later domesticates. From about 20,000 BC we see the increased use of grinding stones and other artifacts associated with plant processing (Wright 1994). There seems to have been a trend

Figure 1. Examples of storage bins in side rooms at Çatalhöyük. Jason Quinlan and Çatalhöyük Research Project.

whereby people were trying to get more and more nutrients out of small plants, processing them more exhaustively. In the early stages there was collective plant storage (Kuijt and Finlayson 2009), for example at the PPNA (Pre-Pottery Neolithic A), pre-domestication, site of Dhra' – this collective storage can be seen as part of the usual hunter-gatherer focus on generalized reciprocity. But it can be argued that a contradiction gradually emerged between collective storage, and presumably collective use of the landscape, and the increasingly intensive processing. My point is that as humans in the Middle East became increasingly dependent on the processing of cereals, it became practically sensible to do a lot of the "late processing" in the home rather than collectively. For example, we know that at Çatalhöyük, all the last stages of processing, that is storage, dehusking and final winnowing were all done in the house; and of course in addition all the grinding of the grains and their cooking was also done in the house. Doing the final stages of processing and nutrient extraction in the house made practical sense for lots of reasons. For example, if each family is of different size you don't want to waste your labour preparing larger amounts of food than you need for your particular family size. Also it is more efficient to process the different parts of a meal at the same time, and at the same time as other tasks, such as tool production, bone processing, weaving of mats, making clothes. And processing is often helped by parching over the fire, and so it is useful to be near hearths and ovens.

All these practical entanglements meant that intensive plant (and indeed animal) processing increasingly got drawn into the house. Through time from the Natufian through PPNA (Pre-Pottery Neolithic A) and PPNB (Pre-Pottery Neolithic B), houses gradually got bigger and more and more took place inside them. Initially there was collective storage, and presumably shared use of resources in the landscape, and there was a focus on collective rituals, as seen at Göbekli Tepe (Schmidt 2000). Through time there is increased tension between this collective ethos, and the individual house. In earlier work I argued (Hodder 1990) that the Neolithic house in the Middle East was a social and ritual and economic unit that I termed the domus. I still argue that the house was the most important unit in these early societies, and today at Çatalhöyük we talk of 'history houses', that is houses that were the center of domestic production but also the foci of history making and ritual organization. But rather than argue that the domus was an idea that held society together, nowadays I would argue that the practical entanglements of people and things (mainly plants in this case) meant that the house became an important locus of production. It was where people stored and processed food, as well as kept their dead.

This increased focus on the house and separate storage and processing of food may have made practical sense (as I have just argued), but it went

Figure 2. Bull heads and horns in Building 52 at Çatalhöyük. Jason Quinlan and Çatalhöyük Research Project.

against the grain (if you will forgive the pun) of the strong egalitarian ethic at Çatalhöyük and elsewhere. Indeed the grain stores are usually hidden and unmarked in inner rooms in the Çatalhöyük houses (Figure 1) They are hidden away in back rooms. Amy Bogaard and others have shown how killing large wild animals and meat consumption were overtly referenced in the main rooms (as in Building 52 – Figure 2), but the grain pantries are hidden away (Bogaard et al 2009). There is much evidence of sharing at Çatalhöyük, including the sharing of meat from large wild animals, and this focus on sharing contrasts with that of individual house-based processing of plants and to some extent house-based processing of domestic sheep products.

Çatalhöyük was an aggressively egalitarian society. Some buildings are more elaborate than others, or have more burials. These 'history houses' (Hodder and Pels 2010) may have acted as nodal houses for others; perhaps as ancestral houses. Such houses can contain up to 60 people buried beneath the floors, as in Building 1. Perhaps people here controlled memories and histories. But there is no association between these more elaborate houses and the control of production or storage. There is no evidence that the more elaborate houses or history houses had more storage, or that the people buried in them had better diets or worked less hard. There is no association between the more elaborate houses and specialized production or richer burials. Looking through large amounts of data we can find no way in which the history houses that had a special place in ritual and memory making had any special role in production and consumption. It seems that at Çatalhöyük it was not possible to convert control over ritual and memory and the dead into control over production and material wealth. People were very constrained within an egalitarian ethic of sharing and equality.

We know that there was some differentiation in terms of diet by age, but the variation is slight, and we can find no such differentiation by sex. Men and women are buried with similar burial goods and there are no differences between men and women in terms of diet or work load and work practices as evidenced by skeletal markers.

So Çatalhöyük, dated to the late 8th and 7th millennia BCE, was a society in which there was a

strong focus on collective sharing and egalitarian relations, but in which there was increasing focus on house-based processing and plant storage, even if that storage was hidden away in back rooms. Çatalhöyük is also an example of what have come to be called 'mega-sites' in the Middle East (Simmons 2011). Through time in the late Pleistocene and early Holocene sites got bigger and bigger. By around 7000 BC there were a series of mega-sites with populations in the many thousands. At Çatalhöyük the population is estimated to be between 3500 and 8000.

There are many reasons that can be given for the gradual increase in site size through time. My own view is that an important cause is the egalitarian focus on sharing. As intensification of production increased there was both an increased focus on the house, and an increased focus on sharing and dependence on others. The larger the networks of people in one place, the more individuals could rely on others in times of loss or hardship. At Çatalhöyük we have identified a dense web of connections between houses and people. In this dense network of entangled social relations, people and things circulated, and any individual house or person had multiple possible ties that could be drawn upon at times of loss or hardship. This dense net was very resilient.

Another aspect of these large closely-packed sites that is rarely discussed is that they allowed very effective surveillance. It was very difficult in such a context to amass individual wealth and to differentiate yourself from others. There were no streets or back doors. To walk to your house you had to walk across the roofs of other houses and all eyes would be on you and what you brought back. Tests on the acoustics of Çatalhöyük by Stephen Mills have shown that you could hear everything going on in neighbouring houses (Mills 2005). The tight clustering and thin walls meant that people would have been aware of each other all the time, and of each other's activities.

The fact that people were in and out of each other's houses all the time is shown in the amazing degree of similarity between houses and their internal arrangements. The same types of symbolism and decoration are widely found. As we excavate each house we know what we will find. Everything is always in the same place. Presumably this means that people had a good idea of what was in each other's houses. And indeed, as Amy Bogaard and others have claimed, the main rooms and their bucrania had a display function (Bogaard *et al*. 2009). It would have been difficult to hide the build-up of any surplus. Small stores were allowed, hidden away in side rooms. But the bucrania in the main rooms referenced sharing rather than individual stored wealth.

So Çatalhöyük was a highly constrained and restricted place to live. There is a strong emphasis on sharing and sameness. There was a high potential for surveillance. Presumably the surveillance had a number of functions. As agriculture intensified so people would have wanted to protect their investments in the periods between investments of labour and returns for that labour. They would have wanted to protect the participations on which they depended – that is they would have wanted to protect the complex web of social and material links on which they depended. If certain people started to become independent and amass their own surpluses, store large amounts of their own food and other goods and keep their own fields, then the overall system of sharing would break down.

As we have seen, the system of sharing seems to have been very complex. It seems that people at Çatalhöyük had numerous ways in which they built relations and sodalities with others. In times of need or hardship, rather than relying on large stores of their own, they could gain support from numerous cross-cutting networks. For example, they could use the connections of all those buried in the same history house. Or they could use the ties of all those who used the leopard or bear symbol (these may have been symbols of sodalities that cut across the settlement), or the ties of all those that lived in the same neighbourhood, or on the same terrace. This was a system of networks that depended on everyone sharing. If somebody started to opt out, and invest labour only for themselves, then the whole system would collapse.

Figure 3. Unique pot showing human and cattle heads from the middle layers at Çatalhöyük. Jason Quinlan and Çatalhöyük Research Project.

It was thus in everyone's interest to survey and monitor each other. And indeed in many ways it seems a scarily conformist and restrictive world. Every house is the same. There are minor differences of course, but there is an eerie conformity to the endless repetition of floor plans and ways of behaving. Floors are scrupulously cleaned, boundaries exist between different parts of floor, clean and dirty areas are marked out. Moving around this world must have been very constrained and restricted.

Of course people could leave Çatalhöyük and the other mega-sites, and through time this occurred. The size of Çatalhöyük decreases in the later levels of occupation and there is evidence of dispersal of population into the 6th millennium BC. Indeed, it can be argued that it was dispersal from sites such as Çatalhöyük that could have been the main impetus for the spread of people into northwestern Anatolia and the Aegean and then for the Neolithic colonization of Europe. This fragmentation and dispersal speeded up in the later levels at Çatalhöyük, and resulted from changes additional to those that I have been describing here. In these upper levels of occupation, the tension between egalitarian social sharing and house-based production was decided increasingly in favour of the latter. Through time independent households became more viable as a result of the domestication of cattle and more intensive use of sheep, both of which occur in the upper levels at Çatalhöyük. In these upper levels, houses do begin to amass large amounts of storage in houses and wealth on the hoof. This allows them to be less dependent on other houses and to break up the dense networks of sharing. Dispersal and private accumulation become more possible.

Before this point, I argue that people had become entangled in a particular system based on sharing. But in practical terms the sharing was contradicted by separate investments in household processing, production and consumption. The end result was a highly constrained and restricted world in which people were trapped – trapped by their dependence on each other to share and by the resulting need to monitor and survey to make sure that no one broke out of line.

This is not to argue that people at Çatalhöyük were not agentful and creative and individual. We see this in wonderful individual works of

art (Figure 3), in the individuality of each house behind the conformity, and in the individual creativity of each burial. It does not seem as if people were just stuck in a disposition they could not get out of. Rather, it made sense to reproduce a particular entanglement of people and things that had been shown over the long run to work. The dense web of interconnections meant that individual houses could rely on others at a relatively low level of agricultural intensification. Breaking out on one's own meant harder work and greater investment in plants and animals. It made sense to put up with the restrictions and social sharing because the social web provided a safety net and it meant that greater investments of labour were not required.

But note that there was no overarching elite that was making all this happen. The elders may have been a dominant group that manipulated the system to their own ends. As I noted earlier, older people had a slightly different diet (particularly in relation to carbon isotopes), and they may have played a special role in the history houses and in the control of the dead. They may have had special roles in the ritual system and in the systems of sharing and surveillance. But as noted earlier, they were not able to translate these positions into the control of production, storage or wealth. There is no evidence of significant force wielded by an elite group of elders. Rather, their activities seem to have been leveled and surveilled as much as anyone's.

Everyone who stayed at Çatalhöyük seems to have been caught within, entrapped within, a particular set of entanglements that they chose to reproduce. In time, some do make the change and move away and the system of aggressive egalitarianism starts to weaken; but that must await the domestication of cattle. Before that, in the main sequence at Çatalhöyük that I have been describing, I argue that people voluntarily became entrapped. To move away or break the system would have involved increased house-based labour and greater risk. Until the domestication of cattle, it was safer and easier to stay in the system of collective sharing, despite the restrictions and surveillance and conformity that implied. People were trapped in entanglements that were both productive and constraining. Servicing all the dense webs of interconnections at the site must have been demanding; submitting to all the restraints and all the surveillance must have been limiting. There was both dependence and dependency; and in the end it may well have been the build-up of these limitations and constraints that led to the break-up of the system and the introduction of domestic cattle. But for a very long time, entrapment occurred in an entanglement that it made sense to reproduce, even in the absence of strong elites that wielded "power over".

Conclusion

In conclusion, I do not want to deny that in many situations people get caught by despots into appalling entrapments. But I do want to argue that there is a dimension of entrapment that is not reducible to control by dominant groups. I want to argue that there are practical entanglements in which people find themselves and which it may be in their best interests to sustain. This is perhaps a slightly different argument from Bourdieu's account of the dispositions of habitus. I am not arguing that people get entrapped in social groups or classes because they have become disposed to act in a certain way. Rather, I argue that they get entrapped because they have little choice in terms of their material and knowledge resources, and it makes strategic sense to work within a system rather than to try to break out of it.

And in contrast to theories influenced by Foucault and Nietzsche, entanglement allows us to discuss aspects of entrapment that are not solely about power. In this paper I have tried to decouple entanglement from power. I have shown most extensively in the Çatalhöyük example, but also in the briefer Mayan examples and in the case of English working-class boys, that entrapment may be understood as separate from the workings of dominant groups that wield power over others. If the entrapments of power

can be separated from the entrapments of what I have called entanglement, we can then ask the question, who is most entangled, elites or commoners? While we are most used to think of non-elites as entrapped and powerless, the entanglement perspective allows us to explore the ways in which elites too are entrapped. They may have more resources at their disposal, but these very resources create entanglements and entrapments. For example, elites may depend on access to prestigious or rare goods, they may take on loans and debts, they may depend on their control of armies. In all these ways they have a lot to lose and may suffer or lose power as a consequence. On the other hand, they are more likely to have the resources to find their way out of trouble, to relocate, or re-negotiate terms.

Non-elites seem more circumscribed. Indeed I would argue that they are often doubly entrapped. The first type of entrapment is the type I have been focusing on in this paper, that is the practical and everyday process of being caught up in human-thing dependencies. These are the strategic decisions of the boys in a working class school and neighbourhood in the West Midlands, the practical engagements of local Maya communities when those living in elite residences leave, and the practical everyday processes of getting by at Çatalhöyük 9000 years ago. Dealt a certain set of cards, we are positioned and situated, and we work within these parameters as best we can.

And yet on top of this there is a second type of entrapment experienced by non-elites, that is the 'power over' wielded by elites. To varying degrees in different societies and contexts, elites can manipulate the entrapments of entanglement, add to them, exploit them, to exacerbate entrapment. The chains of slavery, of abject poverty, of ignorance, of lack of rights can be imposed by elites, causing new realms and levels of entrapment. This human to human entrapment is often based on the control of things, resources and labour. But the human to human entrapment is often possible because the two types of entrapment reinforce each other. It becomes possible for elites to exploit non-elites precisely because non-elites are entrapped in entanglements which afford them very little and give them little room to manoeuvre.

Ultimately this is why it seems to me to be important to separate entanglement from power. It is not enough to deal with power if one does not deal with the deprivation, lack of education, lack of resources that people find themselves caught within. It is important to recognize and address the double bind of dominated groups and classes. It is important too to recognize that elites may hold on to power at least partly because of the entanglements they find themselves within – they have too much to lose. It seems to me to be wrong or at least unhelpful to say that humans have a basic 'will to power' that surfaces wherever and whenever it can. Rather, power over other humans is produced in particular entanglements; it is the study of those entanglements that leads to a deeper understanding of the intractability of power.

Summary

This paper discusses the relationships between entanglement and power. Entanglement is defined in terms of the dependencies between humans and things. Power is often discussed in terms of power over others, that is in terms of human-human, rather than human-thing, relations. This paper argues that human-thing entrapment can be used and manipulated by elites but that non-elites find themselves caught in a double bind, both entrapped in human-human power relations, and entrapped in the daily practices of human-thing relations.

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