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Discourse, defiance and rationality: 'Knowledge work' in the 'obedience' experiments.

Stephen Gibson

York St John University

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Address for correspondence: Stephen Gibson, Faculty of Health & Life Sciences, York St John University, Lord Mayor's Walk, York, YO31 7EX, UK. E-mail: s.gibson@yorksj.ac.uk

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Abstract

In this paper I present a secondary qualitative analysis of archived audio data from two conditions ('voice-feedback' and 'women as subjects') in Milgram's experiments. Using a perspective informed by rhetorical and discursive psychologies, I focus on the rhetorical strategies employed by participants. This highlights the use of strategies based around direct invocations of 'knowledge'. Analysis explores the ways in which participants could use such strategies to challenge the experimenter's definition of the situation in their efforts to extricate themselves from the experiment. Findings are discussed in relation to two ongoing debates in the study of Milgram's experiments: First, the importance of attending to defiance and resistance as much as compliance and obedience; second, the questioning of the status of the phenomena captured in Milgram's studies as necessarily being concerned with '(dis)obedience'.

Discourse, defiance and rationality: 'Knowledge work' in the 'obedience' experiments.

There has been a recent surge of interest in the materials from Stanley Milgram's obedience experiments held in the archives at Yale University. Scholars have used these materials to explore a number of historical, methodological and ethical issues (Gibson, 2013a; Millard, 2011, 2014; Nicholson, 2011; Perry, 2012; Russell, 2011). However, there have been relatively few attempts to use the archived data as the basis for secondary analysis (see Modigliani & Rochat, 1995 for an exception). Indeed, there has been no previous attempt to use recent developments in qualitative data analysis to shed light on what actually happened as Milgram's experimental sessions unfolded. In an earlier article (Gibson, 2013b), I outlined the possibilities afforded by drawing on the insights of rhetorical psychology (Billig, 1996) to undertake such an analysis. In the present paper, I develop this approach further in two ways. First, the present analysis focuses specifically on the rhetorical strategies used by defiant participants in their attempts to extricate themselves from the experimental situation. The rationale for this focus is that whereas discussions of the experiments frequently highlight the levels of 'obedience' uncovered by Milgram, there is a tendency to neglect the defiance shown by many participants (see also Reicher, Haslam & Miller, 2014). In switching the focus of analysis in this way, we therefore move from questions of *why* so many people appear to obey the experimenter, to questions of *how* many other people managed to defy the experimenter. Second, the present analysis is concerned directly with the discursive psychological imperative to explore the ways in which psychological terms are used to perform particular social actions (Edwards & Potter, 1992). In contrast to the myriad attempts to work out what, psychologically speaking, was going on in the experiments, my concern is with psychological categories as *participants' resources*. That is, with how the psychological terms are used by participants themselves as they seek to argue their way out of the experiment.

In previous commentary on Milgram's experiments, the status of participants' understanding of, and beliefs about, the situation in which they found themselves has often been central. To take just one example, Orne and Holland's (1968) critique of the experiments as being compromised by demand characteristics relies on the assumption that participants *knew* that the experiment was in all probability not all that it seemed. Responses to this line of criticism (see Blass, 2004; Miller, 1986, for summaries) have typically suggested that, if anything, this actually demonstrates Milgram's basic point that trust in the experimenter (and the wider institutions which he represents) could lead people to carry out potentially extreme actions. There was no way of *knowing* for sure that the shocks were not genuine, and thus the morally appropriate action was to defy the experimenter.

Whatever the relative merits of these opposing positions, they both rely on speculation (however cogently argued) concerning the beliefs, understandings and knowledge of Milgram's participants. Moreover, attempts to try and access these are almost inevitably hamstrung by issues of accountability. These issues can be circumvented through the adoption of a discourse analytic position informed by empirical relativism (see Potter, 1996 for a detailed outline of the epistemological underpinnings of this approach). This entails a commitment to treat all accounts as discursive products worked up to perform particular social actions in particular contexts. Such an approach thus moves away from a concern with the veridicality of accounts to a concern with their function. We ask not 'is this true?' but 'what does this do?' This directs us to look at how participants mobilized psychological categories such as *beliefs*, *thoughts* and *knowledge* during the course of the experimental sessions themselves.

In the present paper, the task of unpacking these issues is begun through focussing in particular on *knowledge*. Transcriptions of the archived recordings are thus approached with a view to addressing questions of how participants invoke knowledge in the experimental

interactions. The criteria adopted here are therefore quite stringent (and quite straightforward) – 'knowledge' only becomes a live concern if participants in the interaction make it live. Analyst attempts to draw inferences concerning what particular individuals may have 'known' are thus ruled out by this approach. Following Whalen and Zimmerman (1990) we might describe this concern as being with *practical epistemology*, although — to emphasize the slightly broader scope of the present analysis — the term *knowledge work* is preferred. In contrast to the use of this term in the organizational/management literature to refer to those parts of an economic system which involve the production of knowledge (in contrast to manual work; see, e.g., Alvesson, 2001), 'knowledge work' here refers to the rhetorical/interactional work undertaken by speakers to manage knowledge-related matters in discourse. My use of the term is therefore akin to 'identity work', used to refer to the discursive management of identity (see, e.g., Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). At all times, the over-arching concern is with what participants are doing when they engage in discursive knowledge work.

Method

Data

The data are drawn from the archived audio recordings of Conditions 02 ('voice-feedback') and 20 ('women as subjects'; re-labelled condition 8 by Milgram, 1974) from the obedience experiments. These were selected as they represent two of the most complete conditions which used the same basic procedure as perhaps the most well-known version of the experiment, presented in Milgram's (1965) film, *Obedience*. Obedience levels – defined as the percentage of participants who delivered the maximum 450v shock – were 62.5% in condition 02 and 65% in condition 20. It is therefore notable that, even in these conditions, which yielded some of the highest levels of obedience, over a third of participants managed to extricate themselves from the experiment.

Transcripts of the experimental sessions captured on the recordings were made using

a simplified version of Jeffersonian transcription conventions (Jefferson, 2004). [1] This allows the capturing of detail (e.g. overlap; pause length) which enables analysis of the unfolding nature of the experimental interaction. Out of a total sample size of 40 for each condition, 39 recordings from Condition 02, and 31 from Condition 20, were available and in usable condition. Of these, 26 were of defiant participants (14 in condition 02, and 12 in Condition 20), and it was the recordings and transcripts of these defiant participants' sessions that formed the data for the present analysis.

Analytic framework and procedure

The analysis draws on the principles of rhetorical psychology (Billig, 1996) and discursive psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992), members of the wider family of discourse analytic perspectives that have become firmly established approaches to qualitative research in social psychology over the last 25 years or so (Potter, 2007, 2012; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). These approaches stress the constitutive nature of discourse and emphasize the importance of attending to language use through analysis of participants' own words. Rhetorical psychology draws attention to the role of argumentation (understood broadly) in social life, and suggests that individuals are engaged in constant attempts to buttress even the most mundane of claims in everyday interaction from potential counter-arguments.

Discursive psychology has a particular concern with the ways in which psychological matters become interactionally 'live', and is notable for an ongoing re-specification of the 'psychological thesaurus' (e.g. Edwards, 2005). This involves recasting terms that are typically understood as representing underlying metal entities (attitudes, identity, memory, etc.) as being participants' concerns. This has two important implications: conceptually, it demands an agnostic stance in relation to the correspondence between terms invoked in discourse and any underlying mental entities; empirically, it demands an attention to the ways in which psychological terms are invoked in discourse, and specifically the functions they are

used to perform.

The actual process of analysis followed well-established guidelines for rhetorical and discursive psychology (Billig, 1997; Potter & Wetherell, 1987), and began with a careful reading and re-reading of the transcripts of the defiant participants. Rather than starting with a view to identifying knowledge work in the experimental encounters, the concern with invocations of knowledge arose from this initial period of extended engagement with the data. Particular attention was paid to those sequences in which participants began to challenge, or otherwise resist, the experimenter. It was from consideration of these sequences that the rhetorical functions of knowledge work began to appear significant. A decision was then taken to focus the present analysis solely on invocations of knowledge, and the various uses of knowledge were listed on a participant-by-participant basis in order to ascertain their rhetorical function. At this stage, the analysis followed Potter and Wetherell's (1987) guidelines for conducting discourse analytic research, with particular attention to their recommendation that analysis should proceed with a search for patterns in the data.

The aim was thus to identify commonalities and distinctions between different uses of knowledge. As a qualitative approach, there are no hard-and-fast rules concerning the number of instances of a particular phenomenon that need to be observed in order for it to be deemed noteworthy, but for present purposes uses of knowledge are only reported where they occurred in more than one case. This is not to deny the potential importance of uses of knowledge that may have occurred only once, and in order to ensure the robustness of the analysis, deviant cases were considered in order to ensure that these instances did not falsify, or otherwise complicate, the emerging analytic narrative. Deviant case analysis is a useful analytic technique across a number of different qualitative approaches (Silverman, 2006), and involves paying particular attention to any cases which may identify the limitations of an analytic account.

Analysis

Invocations of knowledge by participants can be broken down into three broad categories: knowledge claims (*I know*), denials of knowledge (*I don't know*) and appeals to common knowledge (*you know*). The analysis will deal with each of these in turn.

'I know': Knowledge claims as entitlement and conviction

In their attempts to argue their way out of the experimental situation, four participants made knowledge claims in order to position themselves as entitled to make judgements on the nature of the situation, and/or the likely consequences arising from it. For example:

Extract 1: Participant 2006

1	L:	I'm no longer part of this experiment.
2	T:	I'm sorry I won't continue.
3	E:	The experiment requires that you go on teacher,
4		until he's learned all the words pairs correctly.
5	T:	I will not continue. I'm sorry.
6	E:	It's essential that you go on.
7	T:	I refuse to be responsible for that man getting sick.
8		I mean he's petrified in there and he's not learning
9		anything. I know enough about medicine and about
10		teaching, and I'm sorry to disagree with you I'll
11		give you your cheque back gladly but I will not
12		continue.

Participant 2006's initial attempt at withdrawal follows the learner's own apparent withdrawal (line 1-2). This elicits one of the standardized prods from the experimenter, which is followed by a re-statement of withdrawal from the participant. Again this only elicits a prod from the experimenter, and the participant responds to this with an account of why she

will not continue. Participant attempts at extricating themselves from the experiment typically followed a similar structure to this, with extended accounts of participants' reasons for non-continuation being provided after initial – and more succinct – attempts at withdrawal proved unsuccessful. This suggests that participants oriented to the experimenter's refusal to accept their withdrawal as indicating that they needed to account for their decision to withdraw, and – importantly – it is in these accounts that we often see participants doing discursive knowledge work.

On lines 9-10 of extract 1, the participant invokes knowledge of medicine and teaching in order to warrant her 'disagree[ment]' with the experimenter. Such knowledge claims function to challenge the authority of the experimenter by positioning the participant as having greater (or at least equal) entitlement to make judgements regarding the experimental situation. It is notable that the knowledge claim follows the invocation of the learner's own psychological state (l. 8: 'petrified') and the assertion that the apparent aim of the experiment is not being achieved (ll. 8-9: 'he's not learning anything'). The knowledge claim thus acts as a warrant for this assertion concerning the failure of the learning task. It is notable also that the offer to return the cheque (ll. 10-12), acts as a form of concession to the experimenter – the participant is breaking the agreement by seeking to draw the session to a close, and so offers to forego payment. Similarly, as Milgram (1974) himself noted, in attempting to defy the experimenter, the participant here is nevertheless still orienting to norms of politeness (e.g. l. 10: 'I'm sorry to disagree'). The invocation of knowledge raises the intriguing possibility that, in addition, participants were orienting to norms of rationality (Billig, 1988): in order to behave in a certain way, one must have good reason and – more to the point – one must *demonstrate* that one has good reason. This can be seen as following directly from the experimenter's refusal to accept more straightforward statements of withdrawal.

Participant 2006's knowledge claim is proffered without further elaboration on *how* she knows what she claims to know (Whalen & Zimmerman, 1990). In contrast, participant 0230 (referred to as 'Jan Rensaleer' by Milgram, 1974) provides a basis for his knowledge claim:

Extract 2: Participant 0230

1 E: although the shocks may be extremely painful
2 there is no permanent tissue damage.
3 T: Yeah but I know I know what shocks do to you I
4 mean I'm a er an, electrical engineer. And I've-
5 I've- I've, had shocks too myself an- and you get
6 real shook up by them and, especially if you know,
7 that you know, the next one is coming and er

Here an identity claim (l. 4: 'I'm ... an, electrical engineer') is used to warrant the knowledge claim ('I know what shocks do to you') – an example of what discursive psychologists have referred to as category entitlement (e.g. Edwards & Potter, 1992). Indeed, the participant then goes on to invoke personal experience of electric shocks to further augment his argument (ll. 4-7). It is notable that the knowledge claim follows the experimenter's use of one of the scripted prods concerning the effects of the electric shocks (ll. 1-2). The function of the knowledge claim is thus explicitly to contest the experimenter's assertion concerning the absence of 'permanent tissue damage', and the focus of the participant's resistance is thus not simply a moral or ethical one, but concerns the entitlement to pronounce on the effects of electric shocks – the issue is thus one of rationality. Also of note is the status of this formulation as being what conversation analysts term a *dispreferred* response (see Sacks, 1992). This is apparent from the use of a 'yes but' formulation at the start of 0230's turn (l. 3) (see Speer & Stokoe, 2012, on the dispreferred status of the removal

of consent in research more generally), and is a further indication that norms of politeness are still being attended to.

The dispreferred status of participants' attempts to extricate themselves from the experimental session could also be marked directly by knowledge claims themselves (N=5). Rather than claiming expertise in a particular area relevant to the study, this involved participants using 'I know' to demonstrate their awareness of the consequences of their actions (i.e. terminating the study), yet nevertheless sticking to their position regardless. In such cases, variations of the phrase 'I know but' were often used:

Extract 3: Participant 2032

1 E: It's absolutely essential that you continue with it.

2 T: I know it's essential.

3 E: As it is outlined.

4 T: I know it's essential but it is painful for him.

Following the experimenter's prod on line 1, the participant uses a knowledge claim to affirm that the 'essential' nature of the experiment is (already) known. This is restated on line 4, and is followed by a statement concerning the pain experienced by the learner. In using 'I know' in this way, the participant is treating the information contained in the prod (i.e. that it is 'absolutely essential that you continue') as being something that was already understood (i.e. as previously given information). This information is thus not new, and as such makes no difference to the participant's position (see Edwards, 1997, Chapter 5, for a fuller discursive re-working of the given-new distinction). Such formulations concede that the participant's actions are detrimental to the experiment and/or the experimenter, but do so in order to dismiss the importance of this consideration relative to the well-being of the learner (l. 4: 'but it is painful for him'). The decision to defy the experimenter is thus positioned by participants as having been made in full awareness of the consequences, and in so doing this

can be seen as an instance of *doing conviction*: participants demonstrate their commitment to the termination of the experimental session by recasting the experimenter's emphasis on the 'essential' nature of continuation as a simple restatement of something that they were already aware of, and thus had already taken into account in making their decision. This serves to undermine the rhetorical force of this particular prod.

'I don't know': Constructing sufficient uncertainty by denying knowledge

If knowledge claims constituted one rhetorical tactic for attempting to extricate oneself from the experiment, denials of knowledge could be equally effective. Tsui (1991) and Diani (2004) have mapped some of the functions of the phrase *I don't know* and noted how it is used to perform a diverse array of actions beyond merely reporting a speaker's lack of knowledge of something. Of particular note is the observation that *I don't know* is often used to mark uncertainty. Participants used *I don't know* in this way in Milgram's experiments in order to construct the situation as sufficiently uncertain so as to render further participation problematic. This took two forms: participants could mobilize a lack of knowledge about the learner (N=4), or a lack of knowledge about the experiment itself (N=4). Indeed, these denials could co-occur, as in Extract 4:

Extract 4: Participant 0224

1	E:	Please continue.
2		(8)
3	T:	No I- I can't do that. That would be ((inaudible)).
4		I'd rather, ((inaudible)) rather not. In other words
5		er, it's putting him in a bad, position and er, I
6		believe it might be injurious to him, you know, and
7		er, I don't know anything about him or, who he is
8		or anything

((13 lines omitted))

22 T: Well I'd like to very much but I didn't realize I
23 mean in other words I didn't know that this
24 particular, in other words, I wouldn't actually know
25 but I mean I don't feel that er, that er, it's any of my
26 affair anyway but I mean er er, it doesn't seem to
27 me as though it's er, working out and I, don't feel as
28 though I could subject him to that.

On lines 5-8, Participant 0224 works up his own ignorance of the learner in order to warrant his 'belief' that 'it might be injurious to him'. The way in which the lack of knowledge of the learner is constructed also contains several discursive devices identified as rhetorically powerful by previous research. The claim 'I don't know anything about him or, who he is or anything' follows a three-part structure with the first (*about him)* and second (*who he is*) components followed by a generalized list completer (*or anything*) (Jefferson, 1990). This generalized list completer is itself an extreme case formulation, as is the previous formulation 'I don't know *anything*'. This works up the lack of knowledge as not merely partial or incidental, but as complete and total (Pomerantz, 1986). Subsequently, the participant works up a description of himself as now knowing something that he had not previously realized (ll. 22-28). This claim to a *past* lack of knowledge is used to build a contrast with a current realization of what is actually involved in the experiment. This allows him to minimize his accountability for non-continuation as he can present himself as having agreed to take part in the experiment while not in possession of full knowledge about what would be entailed.

In Extract 4, it is notable that the possibility that the shocks may be 'injurious' to the learner is accompanied by a marker of common knowledge (l. 6: 'you know') which orients

to the expectation that the experimenter should also appreciate the possibility of harmful effects on the learner. It is to such appeals to shared understanding that we now turn.

'You know': Enlisting the experimenter through appeals to common knowledge

As Schiffrin (1987) notes, the phrase *you know* can function to mark a particular aspect of a situation as being something that a recipient might reasonably be expected to be aware of. Following Edwards (1997, p. 114), we might describe this as a matter of pragmatic intersubjectivity, which involves a concern with 'shared knowledge as a participants' concern; what their talk *treats as* shared, and when, and how' (emphasis in original). Eight participants invoked shared knowledge in this way in the course of defying the experimenter. For example, in the following extract, Participant 0226 uses *you know* to respond to one of the experimenter's special prods by prioritizing the experiential effects of the electric shocks over their physical effects:

Extract 5: Participant 0226

1 E: As I said before although the, shocks may be
2 extremely painful there is no permanent tissue
3 damage. So please continue.
4 T: That makes no difference.
5 (6)
6 T: I hate the pain of the shock, he's in, you know,
7 whether there's permanent tissue damage or not.
8 So th- I do not wish, to go on any further beyond
9 this point.
10 (3)
11 E: You have no other choice you must go on.
12 T: Course I have another choice.

The participant's initial response on line 4, which simply dismisses the experimenter's distinction between pain and 'permanent tissue damage', occasions a long silence of six seconds. The participant orients to this lack of response from the experimenter as an indication that a further account is required. He provides this account by working up a strong emotional reaction (*hate*) to the 'pain of the shock, he's in' (l. 6). This is followed by an appeal to common knowledge (*you know*), which functions to mark this hatred of pain as something that the experimenter is expected to know, to understand – to share – regardless of 'whether there's permanent tissue damage or not'. Following Schiffrin (1987), this can be seen as functioning to draw attention to an aspect of the situation (pain) which the participant seeks to problematize. The fact that the experimenter does not attend to this, instead responding (after a further period of silence) with Prod 4 (line 11) escalates the disruption of the mundane social order, and the participant stands his ground.

In Extract 6, we see a slightly different type of appeal to common knowledge:

Extract 6: Participant 2036

1 T: What do I have to do now?
2 E: Just continue using the last switch on the board as
3 a punishment. The four fifty switch.
4 T: Oh, you know if he has a heart condition I'm a
5 nurse.

Here the teacher's resistance is predicated on an identity claim ('I'm a nurse'). The category-bound activities (Sacks, 1992) of 'nurse' are incompatible with administering painful electric shocks to someone with a heart condition, and the invocation of this identity sets up a particular difficulty for the participant given the incongruity between the act and the identity claimed. Moreover, the use of 'you know' marks this as common knowledge – something that the experimenter might reasonably be expected to know. The participant is

not, therefore, presenting her identity claim and explaining to the experimenter why this makes it particularly difficult for her to continue with the experiment; the identity claim is treated as sufficient on its own, and the marker of common knowledge treats this as something that the experimenter should be aware of.

Once we begin to pay attention to the experiments as occasions for rhetoric, then, it is possible to see how rhetorical struggles over knowledge became central to participant attempts at resistance. This bears directly on the nature of the authority processes at work in the experiments. Rather than seeing the status of the experimenter (or the institution of Yale University) as by definition embodying a particular kind of power through expert knowledge, we can begin to conceive of matters of who knows what, and who can be expected to know what, as being up for grabs in the unfolding to-and-fro of the experimental session. For some participants at least, this discursive 'knowledge work' proved to be a viable tactic for extricating themselves from the experiment.

Discussion

The present paper contributes to the ongoing re-evaluation of the Milgram experiments by seeking to shift the focus of attention to defiance and resistance, and to language and rhetoric in the experiments. In so doing it further challenges the 50-year consensus that the experiments are about obedience, but does so in a novel way. Specifically, whereas previous work has pointed out that when the experimenter issued direct orders they were largely ineffective (see Burger, Girgis & Manning, 2011; Gibson, 2013b; Haslam, Reicher & Birney, 2014; Reicher & Haslam, 2011), here we see that defiant participants were able to mobilize their arguments for drawing the experimental session to a close well before the experimenter resorted to direct orders.

In this sense, the participants are not so much *disobeying* as engaging the experimenter in rational debate. The experiments thus begin to look less like a struggle over

obedience, and more like a contest of persuasion and a test of rhetorical skill – what Billig (1996) has termed *witcraft*. For example, it is notable that the participants typically address the specific content of the prods. The prods are thus perhaps not best understood as orders, but rather as rhetoric – as attempts to define the situation in a certain way, which participants could challenge, undermine and contest. This also highlights more generally the virtues of developing a perspective on social influence which draws on the discursive and rhetorical traditions in social psychology (see also Hepburn & Potter, 2011).

These findings also extend previous work on the ways in which participants' questioning and challenging of the experimenter could lead to it becoming apparent that the experimenter was not 'playing by the rules' of interaction (see e.g. Modigliani & Rochat, 1995). For example, markers of common knowledge acted as an appeal to what the experimenter might reasonably be expected to understand (e.g. that pain is problematic regardless of the lack of 'permanent tissue damage'). The experimenter, of course, typically resisted such appeals. This, arguably, contributes to the emergent sense in which the behavior of the experimenter is palpably unusual from the perspective of the participant.

Limitations

In considering the limitations of the present analysis, it should be noted that only a small selection of conditions have been explored, and only the defiant participants within those conditions. Future research would thus be well advised to explore knowledge work by participants who did not defy the experimenter, and by participants in other conditions. Similarly, it might be suggested that my transcription and selection of material for analysis may have inadvertently 'biased' the analysis presented here. It should of course be emphasized that the extracts presented above are only a few brief examples from the experimental sessions, which were transcribed in their entirety. This does not mean that my analysis here should be taken as the final word on the matter – at the heart of the qualitative

research endeavour is the idea that different researchers may focus on different aspects of the same data, and in this respect there is undoubtedly much more to be said about the experiments analysed here. Nevertheless, in choosing to focus on knowledge work, I have made a series of claims which, I have argued, can be demonstrated in the data. In this respect, qualitative analysis has one notable advantage in that actual extracts from the data themselves are presented to illustrate the claims made.

Policy implications

The policy implications of the present analysis – and of the broader re-examination of Milgram's work of which it is a part – are numerous. Milgram's studies have been used in explanations of abuses and atrocities such as the Holocaust (see Miller, 2004), the My Lai massacre (Milgram, 1974), and the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuses (Lankford, 2009), as well as in more general explanations of phenomena such as terrorism (Fiske, Harris & Cuddy, 2004), yet it is rare to see them used to draw out lessons concerning how people might *resist* authority. To take just one example of how such issues may be addressed, in the UK 'obedience' is part of the curriculum for diplomas in 'Public Services (Uniformed)' (Edexcel, 2012). Associated textbooks frequently draw out the standard lessons of overwhelming obedience from the Milgram experiments (e.g. Cullingworth, 2004; Gray, Stockbridge & Vause, 2007), with minimal consideration of the ways in which a sizeable proportion of participants managed to defy the experimenter. Re-orienting our view of Milgram's studies through a focus on defiance enables a corrective to this tendency to over-emphasize 'obedience', and instead might be used to facilitate strategies for challenging unjust authority. While attempts to draw direct parallels between the highly specific setting of the Milgram experiments and any other social context are fraught with difficulty, the findings of the present analysis are at least suggestive that the utility of knowledge work as a means to challenge authority might fruitfully be explored in other settings.

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Stephen Gibson is a social psychologist based at York St John University, UK. He holds BSc, MSc and PhD degrees from Lancaster University. In addition to his work on Milgram's archived data, he has interests in areas such as national identity and citizenship, peace and conflict, and the development of qualitative research methods in psychology. He has published widely on these topics, and is co-editor of *Doing Your Qualitative Psychology Project* (with C. Sullivan and S. Riley; Sage, 2012) and *Representations of Peace & Conflict* (with S. Mollan; Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Endnote

[1] In the excerpts from the transcripts, speakers are identified as E (Experimenter), T (Teacher) and L (Learner). Other transcription conventions are as follows:

(11)	Numbers in parentheses indicate a timed silence, with the number indicating the amount in seconds.
I can't, I	A comma indicates a pause of less than a second.
I-	A dash indicates a sharp cut-off of the preceding utterance.
[continue]	Brackets indicate overlapping talk.
volts.	A full-stop (period) indicates a 'stopping' intonation, rather than the end of a grammatical sentence per se.
Why?	A question mark indicates a questioning intonation, rather than a grammatical question per se.