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Conflict for Sale

Setting the Retail Stage for Post-modern Servicescape
Interactions

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Abstract

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| Title: | Conflict for Sale: Setting the Retail Stage for Post-modern Servicescape Interactions |
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| Keywords: | Space, Interaction, Themed Servicescapes, Kenneth Burke, Retail Theatre |
| Thesis purpose: | The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the relationship between space and consumer interaction at WEEKDAY, a contemporary fashion retail store in Malmö, Sweden. |
| Methodology: | The thesis is based on a qualitative case-study and has a social constructionist approach. In order to understand the interaction taking place between consumer and environment we conducted observations guided by Kenneth Burke's Pentad. |
| Theoretical perspective: | The retail servicescape at WEEKDAY is conceived as a metaphorical stage where drama unfolds, analysing and defining the retail space using Kenneth Burke's pentad of dramatism. We concentrate on the use of two terms of Burke's pentad, the scene and the act, almost exclusively as we investigate how the scene stimulates the act. |
| Empirical data: | To collect our data we conducted 72 observations of consumers at the WEEKDAY store in Malmö. |
| Conclusion: | Our analysis revealed that consumers at WEEKDAY are validated by co-producing their own experiences. Difficult to predict, the consumers invoke moments of drama, more specifically, carnival, into their life through interaction with the scene on the stage of the retail theatre. Rebellious in nature, the carnival encourages the |

consumer to rethink the rational and traditional values and norms they bring inside the servicescape with them.

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Introduction

As themed servicescapes are increasingly emerging in our marketplace, contemporary consumer behavior is of growing interest in marketing management discussion. The relationship between retail space and consumer behavior within a themed servicescape encourages dialogue for relevant discussions. Of particular interest to us as researchers is the interaction between structure and space of the servicescape and the consumer at WEEKDAY in Malmö, Sweden.

WEEKDAY is a retail clothing store featuring four store brands MTWTFSS, Cheap Monday, Sunday Sun, and Qoniak. WEEKDAY's store brands include a diverse range of garments from ready-to-wear to mass market to a great selection of carefully chosen second hand clothes. WEEKDAY has six stores throughout Sweden and has recently undergone international expansion by opening a store in Copenhagen, Denmark. The store carries many other Scandinavian and international designer brands and WEEKDAY store brands have some international distribution throughout the world.

Experience economy

In the 1970's, Tauber, (1972) theorized different motives for shopping. One of the personal motives is sensory stimulation that may influence the consumers' decision about where to shop. Sensory stimulation can include many things from just browsing through a store, to touching and trying clothes on. Atmospherics like color, scent, music, lighting and touching can also act as sensory stimulators (Kotler, 1973). The gestalt of the store can be one part of why a store is selected. Social motives can be another reason to go shopping, and the store can provide a space to "hang out" with your friends (Tauber, 1972).

The "three Fs", fantasies, feelings and fun, emerged in the early 1980's, and are considered experiential aspects of consumption (Holbrook, 2000). To fully understand consumer behavior it is necessary to take the experiential aspects of consumption into consideration, and not only focus on the consumer as information processor that makes choices about products by being exposed to verbal stimuli alone; instead the nonverbal stimulus in form of atmospherics also becomes important. The nonverbal stimulus makes the role of aesthetic products, multisensory aspects of products, and feelings arising from consumption another important factor (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982).

Further, the “three F’s” was developed in the late 1990’s into the “four E’s” that stands for experience, entertainment, exhibitionism and evangelizing and can be referred to as the Experience Economy , see figure 1 (Holbrook M , 2000).

| Experience | Entertainment | Exhibitionism | Evangelizing |
|------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Escapism | Esthetics | Enthuse | Educate |
| Emotions | Excitement | Express | Edvince |
| Enjoyment | Ecstasy | Expose | Endorse |

Figure 1, the “four Es”. Source: Holbrook, 2000

What is so different when comparing the experience economy with previous offerings in the industrial and service economies where the goods and the services have been in focus? The good is tangible and standardized with specific features in the industrial economy, and in the service economy the intangible services are customized and offer tailored benefits for the buyer. When applying the traits of the experience economy to a business plan, the offer is something that goes beyond the goods and services we have become accustomed to, and when implemented properly, we walk away with a memorable and personal experience. The customer now looks for and expects sensations when they enter the servicescape as if they are a guest that has been invited in by the owner. The sensations are created within the personal experience of the customer, which makes the experience different for different people. The value of this is that the offering lies within the customer where it may remain for a long time (Pine II and Gilmore, 1999).

As we acknowledge that store environments have a great impact on consumer behavior, delivering a memorable experience is becoming a priority for retailers and as a result, themed servicescapes are emerging on the high streets of urban areas. Encouraging consumers to enter, stay and return to a themed environment are important motivations for retail and marketing managers. Questions about consumer behavior within these environments emerge as interest in observing the what’s and how’s of consumer action and agency become more important as we take on the difficult task of predicting and explaining behavior in relation to the increasingly complex servicescape.

Bringing the experience economy into retailing means creating a space where consumers can experience what Holbrook (2000) discusses as the stimulus of experiential consumption; fantasy, feelings and fun. In a retail space, these stimuli can motivate consumers to have closer relations with the servicescape and the people within it. Here, “[...] consumers have become part of the retailers’ value creation process, one that has moved from a product focus

to individualized experience” (Kent, 2007, p 734). The retail space also provides a place for leisure and socializing, providing an important medium for interaction, “[...] as well as arenas for synthesizing leisure and consumption” (Kent, 2007, p 737). When wanting to communicate particular messages to customers, store designers might adopt the use of retail theater. “Retail theater is generally presented as a ‘fun’ experience involving spectacle and excitement” (Baron et al, 2001, p 103). When utilizing retail theater, there may be a planned customer/audience effect that can be in the form of stimulating interaction, the influence of cognitive and effective responses more directly and, making customers feel like he/she belongs to the space (Baron et al, 2001).

Space and Consumer Interaction, previous research

Until the 1970’s the store and the space it occupied was looked upon as an entity where the main focus was economic output. Not unlike current retail goals, the space and store layout should generate as much money as possible per square foot. At this time there was also a growing recognition, including the breakthrough articles by Kotler about store atmospherics in 1974, that by designing the retail space in a store you can affect consumer behavior (Markin et al, 1976).

When it comes to previous research about spatial layout and its affect on consumer behavior there is not much done (Bitner, 1992; Turley & Milliman, 2000). However, the few studies that have been done are about how knowledge of the shopping environment in combination with time pressure can affect unplanned purchasing, (Iyer, 1989). Newman and Foxall (2003) measured store layouts and affect on consumer behavior movements via computer-aided observations in a fashion store. Knowing how people move around can facilitate locations in-store where optimum contact with consumers can be reached. This knowledge has helped management to maximize their sales potential.

Experiential retail marketing has become a growing area of interest to contemporary marketing and social researchers (Jevons, 2005). However, much of the current research literature have focussed primarily on environments facilitating fast moving consumer good products such as the grocery retail environment and have dealt with practical issues and applications pertaining to consumer perception and spending behavior, however little research has currently been conducted to explore in depth, the space the servicescape offers within a fashion store environment.

Previous research literature in retailing and consumer behavior have expressed that although there has been an increased interest in the space that retail environment provide in terms of it’s effect on behavior, a larger body of research into creating retail space in which consumers enact positive approach behavior would aid both academia and retail managers in

understanding what elements are important in creating spaces that consumers can patronize repeatedly. New research could also beg researchers and retail managers to consider new ways in which to house the goods in their retail space. Much of the current literature that calls for creativity and innovative solutions has been predominately expressed in organizational literature and not specifically in literature aimed at defining or exploring retail space and is not well understood (Kent, 2007). The progression towards retail environment as experiencescape calls for a need to increase retail creativity and the ability for consumers to “co-create products, services and their interactions” (Kent, 2007, p 741) within the store environment. The designed retail environment is now becoming more and more important. In his article Kent (2007, p 734) writes:

As experience has become more important so the store environment has taken on a greater significance, providing spaces for interactivity, socialization and communication. Space may suggest how we should behave in a particular setting where signs, symbols and artifacts may act as cues that give suggestion on how one may act in a particular space.

A semiotic approach to analysing symbols in daily life is committed to treating phenomena as texts categorising reality into signs, signifiers and the signified (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Signs, signifiers and the signified are considered to be the key attributes to the school of thought known as structuralism for which Ferdinand de Saussure founded (Guin et al, 2005). These three main terms in semiotics are used to aid in understanding and interpreting reality and is mainly concerned with unveiling the processes of meaning production and representation through signs and the ability of these signs to convey messages and effect social action (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

Signs, symbols and artifacts are an important environmental dimension and for the purposes of our research as we will consider these signs, symbols and artifacts as part of the retail space that occupies the servicescape under study. Symbolic meanings can be created in a retail environment by using different quality of materials used in the construction, artwork and personal objects; and can all together create an overall visual impression (Bitner, 1992). We believe that much of the artwork, materials and shapes of the interior design and other artifacts bear an intentionally conveyed meaning when it comes to the space of the servicescape WEEKDAY in Malmö.

Behavioral cues may be influenced by the space a person is in. For example, In the *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, author Erving Goffmann (1982) describes some follies of a misinterpreted situation where the person was being motivated by another space in which they were accustomed to being in, in their everyday life: “Seamen, whose home away from home is rigorously he-man, tell stories of coming back home and inadvertently asking mother to ‘pass the fucking butter’ ” (Goffmann, 1959, p 26). Of course this statement would have been appropriate at sea and not in the presence of his mother in the family kitchen. Just as

there is no love scene in a battlefield, the space suggests the appropriate or inappropriate behavior guiding the persons behaviors and interactions.

Space and Consumer Interaction

As the retail environment becomes more and more important, we are increasingly recognizing its role and influence on behavior. The retail setting or space exists around us as consumers. Bloch, Ridway, and Dawson (1994, p 23) uses the concept of The Shopping Mall as Consumer Habitat to help define the retail space as follows; “The habitat is defined as ‘the natural place or occurrence of a species... the special locality, station, or spot in which a specimen is found’ “. Also “Consumers, like wildlife, are likely to gravitate to a setting offering a favorable climate, a high potential for social interaction, a perceived freedom from safety concerns, and a large selection of consumable goods and experiences” (Bloch et al, 1994, pp 23 - 24).

The retail setting can provide consumers a space in which to feel comfortable to interact with the space around them and each other. Similarly at WEEKDAY, the retail setting provides a space where consumers can interact. Here, consumers can behave either with the objectives set by marketing managers and store designers or against, confounding the behaviors suggested by the space around them.

An important environmental dimension that influences consumer behavior is the spatial layout of a store. This includes how the racks and display tables are formed and the spatial relationship among them (Bitner, 1992). Amongst the many environmental factors effecting consumer behavior we ask, what exactly is affecting the consumer behavior when entering a retail store environment? According to Bitner the environment, of which a large part is space and its dimensions, influences behavior (1992, p 62):

One can infer from the environmental psychology literature that employees and customers in service firms respond to dimensions of their physical surroundings cognitively, emotionally, and physiologically, and that those responses are what influence their behaviors in the environment.

When a customer enters a store, the first elements that will affect him/her is the environmental dimensions that will influence internal and behavioral responses. These dimensions are things in the environment that can be divided into ambient conditions, space and its function, and finally signs, symbols and artifacts. Of these conditions, space and its function is of particular interest to our research. The ambient conditions are those that appeal to your five senses (Bitner, 1992) and there has been much research in the form of direct behavioral effects resulting from store design (Everett et al, 1993). A few examples on this is the effect of music (Yalch, 1990; Beverland et al, 2006), if you are allowed to touch the products (Grohman et al, 2007), the effect that colors have on behavior (Bellizzi and Hite, 1992) and how illumination

can influence consumer behavior (Summers and Hebert, 1999). When it comes to previous research about space and its function in form of layout, equipment and furnishing, Bitner (1992, p 66) writes the following: “Surprisingly little has been published about the effects of spatial layout and functionality on customers in a service setting”. How does the spatial layout influence behavior in a servicescape, is a point of interest for our study. Further whether or not consumers conform or confound to the behavior suggested by the space at WEEKDAY is of interest to us as researchers.

Behavior moderated by Space

Environmental dimensions together with response moderators are a part of the consumer response to the store environment. These different response moderators, in form of personal and situational factors, can be an explanation to why people respond differently at different times that they enter a store. The response moderators can effect behavior in the form of personality traits and mood state effects the behavior. According to Bitner (1992, p 65):

... plans and purposes for being in or seeking out a particular environment may vary from day to day or hour to hour. What the individual notices and remembers about the environment, as well as how he or she feels about it, is influenced by the purpose for being there.

As mentioned before customers respond to the environmental dimensions in different ways, cognitively, emotionally and physiologically, and this influences their interaction with the environment. Even if it is possible to separate them into different kind of responses they are also interdependent (Bitner, 1992).

Two possible responses according to Mehrabian and Russell is either approach or avoidance to a store environment. The customer will stay in the store or, alternately, leave it as soon as possible. Approach behavior is the willingness or desire to look around and interact with the environment, while avoidance behavior is characterized as a desire to leave the environment. Is the customer exploring what is displayed on shelves, racks and other form of display areas? Is the customer communicating and interacting with other people like staff or friends in the environment? If communication occurs, the environment can be said to evoke an approach behavior. Finally, another aspect to approach-avoidance behavior is whether or not the customer is satisfied with the overall shopping experience. If the customer is satisfied and feels that the shopping experience has been enhanced it is more likely that he/she will come back to the store. It will also effect the amount of time spent in the store and how much money that the customer will spend on buying things (Donnovan and Rossiter, 1982).

Mehrabian and Russell (1974) found that people are more likely to approach a store environment if they find it pleasant rather than unpleasant. What contributes to this perceived pleasantness or unpleasantness is ambient conditions, spatial layout and functionality and at

last signs, symbols and artifacts in the environment (Bitner, 1992). The goal of making people approach the store is for maximization of profit (Aubert-Gamet & Cova, 1999). In order for a servicescape to fully maximize its profit retailers need to encourage consumers to feel comfortable to approach the retail space and to feel welcome to patronize and interact with the space wherever and perhaps however they like.

Further, Sherry (1992) and Belk (1991) call for more research in the academic field, about shopping behaviors that is influenced by store environment in form of various design elements and the physically interaction with those elements. Some research has been conducted in laboratory settings and by doing surveys, instead of using observations and interpretive methods. This makes it important for further research when it comes to interaction between consumer and the environment in form of shops (cited in Everett et al, 1994, p 104).

Postmodern Consumer Behavior

The modern consumer can be characterizing someone who wants to authenticate their shopping experience by standing out from their peers and other shoppers. Like the modern period, individuality is coveted. Shopping in the modern period was normally a more formal experience and use value of products was often emphasized. This being said, the use of entertainment was also a feature of early retailing. The Bon Marche, opened in 1852 and used elaborate storefront displays in order to pull passerby into the store (Penaloza, 1998). A premiss by Firat et al (1995, p 40) is that “we are in an epochal transformation from the modern to the postmodern era”. An era where consumers want to form links with other consumers and are increasingly looking for a sense of community. This is a shift from the modern consumer that wanted to be liberated from other consumers and regarded as an individual to the postmodern consumer that wants to form links with others (Aubert-Gamet & Cova, 1992).

Increasingly the postmodern consumer seeks adventure and authenticity in the experience of acquiring the good or service according to his or her mood of the moment. Cova (1997, p 304) writes in his article “...for the postmodern person, the leitmotiv is: ‘It is as I wish and when I wish’ according to the mood of the moment”. Often times, the mood or the moment will include a desire to be connected to others who share similar interests to us. Cova (1997) argues that consumers are not merely looking for products and services that will liberate them per say, but also products and services which can link them to others, such as a community or a tribe. It is even claimed that the postmodern individual seeks out service settings less for their use-value (functional or symbolic) than for their “linking value” in order to satisfy his/her need for community. Further, Cova (1997) says that on a global scale this postmodern consumer behavior calls for a redefinition of the role and value of servicescapes as a place where the community gathers or links together. A communal exchange where the customer seeks a linking value in interacting with other clients and personnel corresponds to so-called tribal marketing where the servicescape houses predominantly societal exchanges, although

with economic effects; the bazaar is a good example of this type of communal exchange (Cova, 1997).

Sherry et al (2001) intends to sharpen our understanding of the role of architecture in structuring the space as a stage where customers can enact fantasies and dreams often not permitted in real life. They also call for further research into consumer experience within similar themed zones that are increasingly emerging in our marketplace. Kozinets et al (2004) are helpful in illustrating the imbedded consumer-producer relationship where the wills of consumers and producers overlap interdependently and mutually and encourage us to rethink the level of agency of consumers in the spectacular servicescape. A limitation of Donovan and Rossiter's (1982) research is that store atmosphere is examined at a global level and that it does not offer guidelines to retailers regarding which environmental elements create the different types of affective response like the physical features/architecture of the store, the customer as components of the environment, and further, the interactions between the people and the tangible elements in the store (cited in Aubert-Gamet and Cova 1999 p 38).

According to Aubert-Gamet and Cova (1999, p 38) the person becomes important in the customer – servicescape interaction:

Given the complexity of customer – servicescape relationships, alternate approaches that borrow concepts and methods from anthropology (Belk et al., 1988), or semiotics (Floch, 1988) have been considered as appropriate to enhance customer – environment interaction research (Bitner, 1992; Everett et al., 1994). Taken as a whole, they present a reversal in the way of looking at the customer – servicescape interaction where the environment is no longer considered only as a defined stimuli but also partly as a personal construct;

- the environment is not only spatial but also social (a socio-spatial construct)
- the consumer is an active part of the environment.

Despite the fact that there is not a large body of work into the post modern consumer experience in the servicescape to draw from, the existing research available is of great value to help guide our research. Sherry et al (2001), Kozinets et al (2004), and also Aubert-Gamet and Cova (1999) have been a great source of contemporary knowledge in examining the experience of the servicescape. Aubert-Gamet and Cova (1999) for example, suggest further reflection on the meaning ascribed to servicescapes: since consumers increasingly place different meaning to servicescapes, that are no longer fixed nor connected with their functions, it is difficult to examine the postmodern servicescape. As impressions are often fleeting and fragmented for the consumer this creates a challenge for the future of marketing management when examining the servicescape, leading us to examine the future of the concept of evidence itself in human services management and marketing. Aubert-Gamet and Cova (1999) also suggest examining the servicescape for opportunities to either integrate or recognize the linking value in order to create a space in which customers may interact to share emotion with others.

Using entertaining spectacular corporate showcases to wow consumers and build invaluable brand equity is nothing new for marketers, what is, however, is the painstaking attention being made to architectural and display combinations by increasing numbers of retailers and the use of symbols and meanings employed (Penaloza, 1998). As spectacular, “concept” marketing techniques become more commonplace; the study of spectacular consumption contributes to our understanding of marketer-manufactured environments as agents of cultural meaning (Penaloza, 1998).

In *Lucid Agency and Retail Spectacle* Kozinets et al (2004) discuss spectacular themed environments in contemporary society where the customer, in existing consumer research theory, has been described as dupe’s who are overpowered and overwhelmed by marketing technique. Further, Sherry et al (2001) argue Debord’s theory that we live in a society where the unreal is celebrated and elevated above the real. “Extending this nihilism, he believed that the real is no longer real, fantasy inexorably replaces reality, and themed places such as Disneyland are there to conceal this fact” and oppress consumers by using entertainment and spectacle to blur the lines of reality and unreality and to direct and misdirect attention in ways beneficial to marketers” (cited in *Being in the Zone* pp 466-468). “Although sometimes overpowering and often offering cues for behavior, the spectacular retail environment is just as reliant on consumers for legitimization” (Sherry et al, 2001, p 504). For example, in ESPN Chicago, “the built environment of the site is the stage on which the consumer enacts fantasies and dreams – with enough verisimilitude and reduced risk – that real life often does not permit. Such an environment offers the consumer a sense of agency and one of mastery as the fantasies are consumed” (Sherry et al, 2001, p 504). Sherry et al (2001) suggest further research in the preceding set of properties in order to better understand engagement, participation and attributes of authenticity.

For example, Chicago’s servicescape Nike Town relies on score of market research to help design stores, displays, cultural artifacts and symbols that are then interpreted subjectively by its consumers who decide what statement their product makes to themselves or others (Penaloza, 1998). Cultural meanings and consumers’ interpretations of them are shaped partly by the marketers who anticipate customers’ value and desire. In *Just doing It: A Visual Ethnographic Study of Spectacular Consumption Behavior at Nike Town*, author Penaloza (1998) demonstrates, through her observations and interviews, the dialectical relationship between cultural consumption meanings prescribed by marketers and the reinscription of those meanings demonstrated by consumer behavior. “Examples were pervasive in the ethnographic account, from the junior high school students wearing the shoes to stand out from their classmates, to the young women who felt inspired to work out after visiting Nike Town, to my use of the slogan in writing my dissertation” (Penaloza, 1998, p 392).

Sherry et al (2001) looks at themed sports environment ESPN in Chicago and explores ways in which relationships between consumer experience and retail space play out in the store and how they are masked by the retail environment. Knowing that some contemporary criticism say theming can be harmful because it serves to reduce open discourse and lessen opportunities for an informed public sphere, resistant readings of these environments are

inevitable, because their design allows for a variety of interpretations. Grounded in scopophilia, the pleasure derived from looking, Sherry et al (2001) follow closely the consumers gaze within an environment constructed with mass media images and intent to incite play. Whether or not consumers conform or confound marketers objective or not, consumers read images in the space both with and against the grain, creating their own experiential fabric. In a mock stage within ESPN's restaurant there is a reporters desk, where, elevated above the social world around of people dining, you can watch others and be watched. Tonya, a white female in her twenties explains (Sherry et al, 2001, p 483):

Tonya: I Like the fact that the downstairs restaurant is set up like a studio. I mean, who doesn't want to sit in Kirk Herbstriet's [ESPN college foot-ball sportscaster] chair? I can pretend that I am Stuart Scott or, like, the Anna Kournikova of sportscasting.

Interviewer: So when you sit there, you become the center of attention, or at least other people notice you are there?

Tonya: I guess I don't really care about the other people. It's just like people that go to places to feel more connected. Like *Star Wars* fans, or something.

Perhaps the tendency to theme is increasingly satisfying our innate need to feel social? We have a desire to escape the sterility of our homes and join a human community, even if it is just for a short time where we can share a moment in a community of perfect strangers with whom we share common beliefs in the value consumption and the shared experience of purchasing the same brands (Aubert-Gamet and Cova, 1999) With the time increasingly time starved and entertainment focused contemporary lifestyle, shopping has become a leisure activity (Sherry et al, 2001). For the postmodern consumer the community is important. The following quotation explains this relationship between the consumer and the community in an experience economy (Sherry et al, 2001, p 468):

The experience economy celebrates entertainment as a source of common interests and, thus, community. Gamet and Cova discuss the importance of marketing toward the phenomenon of community in postmodern society (1998), where people come together to share a common interest to satisfy a social need to gather in a communal place that is increasingly occupying the space of the servicescape. The predominance of entertainment fits perfectly into a society in which time is scarce and in which shopping itself becomes a leisure activity. Entertainment is described here as a vital and necessary balm addressing the emotional needs of modern life.

Retail Theater

The experience economy in a retail environment places an emphasis on the interactions between the consumer, the servicescape, and each other. The servicescape provides a space in which consumers can experience fantasies, feelings, and fun. The experience of space and interaction, is, to an extent, what theatre is about. If we look at the space we occupy in a servicescape as the stage of a theatre, then we have a frame in which to look at the interactions of the consumers, servicescape and each other. Shop and store designers use retail theatre to convey particular messages to retail clients and intended effects include wanting consumers to interact physically with the merchandise, amongst other reasons like providing a sense of belonging (Baron et al, 2001).

The use of metaphors of dramatic representation have been widely adopted throughout time and can be dated as far back as the days of Plato and classic Greek theatre “referencing human beings as marionettes in the hands of god and human life” (Wood Jr, 2001, p 12). The second half of the twentieth century saw an explosive increase of consumer products in the market that lead to more advanced and creative approaches to retail differentiation – including the use of retail theatre. The increased threat of international competition also contributed to the demand for more sophisticated strategic approaches in retail thus, pushing beyond the focus on consumer goods and services and into the retail environment (Kent and Stone, 2007).

However, it wasn't until the 1990s and early 2000s that the theatre metaphor began to gain popularity in describing day-to day social experiences such as shopping in a retail store (Baron et al, 2001; Riggin, 1993). Several reasons are available to explain the increased popularity of using the theatre metaphor and extending this notion into retail marketing. One explanation being that the world is seen as a stage where all human beings are viewed as actors and adopt various roles throughout their life time, therefore; life is acting and everyone is an actor (Wood Jr, 2001). The theatre metaphor was adopted by organizational and retail marketing fields to accomplish a range of strategic goals and intended outcomes (Baron et al, 2001; Wood Jr, 2001) such as eliciting consumer interest in stores and their merchandise as well as providing an opportunity for audience participation and interaction (Baron et al, 2001).

As intense competition exists from a domestic and international scale, there is often little room left for spontaneity in retail marketing decisions and thus, there is a call for the increased sophistication of strategic approaches to the design of the retail environment to ‘manipulate impressions’ (Wood Jr., 2001) and influence desired consumer emotions and behaviors. The theatre metaphor may enhance new perspectives through suggestive imagery and help elucidate areas of uncertainty for retail marketers (Baron et al, 2001; Bolman and Deal; 1991; Morgan 1993). Thus, the retail theatre metaphor may be used as a tool for marketing management and store managers in analysing customer and staff performances as well as identifying the staged settings, different roles, and functions that interact to create a memorable experience. The metaphor of the retail store as a theatrical stage has been

embraced by many marketing managers and academia in creating store designs and merchandise presentation in an entertaining manner (Baron et al, 2001). Baron et al described four forms of theatrical movements, each with distinctive atmospheric elements such as store layout and music choice to influence intended emotional effects on audience members/consumers. The theatre styles best suited for audience members whom possess hedonic shopping motives are surrealism and absurd theatre (Baron et al, 2001). In the Surrealist theatrical stage, the intended effect on the audience members/consumer is to impress, shock and “stimulate subconscious sensory reactions” (Baron et al, 2001, p 105). Absurd theatre in the retail stage places emphasis on minimalism and is designed in such a manner as to excite thought provoking dialogue upon audience members. The response of these audience members or consumers does not contain any true or false reaction to the displayed items (Baron et al, 2001).

As mentioned above, the metaphor of the retail store as a theatrical stage has been embraced and it’s usefulness in creating entertaining spaces in retail has been acknowledged. When analyzing the effect the store space and structure has on consumer behavior it can be useful, like the metaphor of retail theatre, to look at something in terms of something else. We, for instance, would like to look upon the interaction between the store structure and space and the people within it as an act. Each act can hold a theme, whether it be about the space of the store or the interactions it incites. The scenes that comprise the act can detail the interaction between the consumer(s) and the servicescape. By going one-step further here and conceptualizing store space and consumer behavior as drama unfolding on a stage, we may be able to see nuances or interactions that may otherwise go unnoticed.

Kenneth Burke and Interaction

Using the metaphor of retail theatre to observe the stage of the servicescape assists in revealing the interactions of the consumer. In theatrical terms, when watching a play, the drama is usually comprised of acts, which are then broken down further into scenes that we watch unfold before us. We normally look at one scene at a time, but there are also times where the stage may house multiple scenes at once just as there are many interactions taking place upon the stage of a retail store. The retail space can be looked at as a stage that, upon which, there is a scene where interactions are taking place.

Kenneth Burke and his pentad reveal useful ways in which we can look at interactions within the scene that is housed on the retail stage. What is involved when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it? The answer to this question is the subject of Kenneth Burke’s book *A Grammar of Motives* (1945, xvii): “The book is concerned with the basic forms of thought which, in accordance with the nature of the world as all men necessarily

experience it, are exemplified in the attributing of motives”. Using a pentad of five terms as a generating principle of investigation of motive: Act, Scene, Agent, Agency and Purpose, Burke offers, by filling in the preceding terms, some kind of answer to the following five questions: what was done (act), when or where was it done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency) and why (purpose).

Much research into retail store environments looks at how the environment of a store affects consumer behavior in terms of motivation to approach or avoid patronizing the store environment. Here we wish to look at the scene as the store environment when we ask where was it done (scene) and what was done (act).

Just as a change of set (scene) during a stage play implies a motive for a different drama to unfold (act), the agent, as if commanded by the set (scene) is motivated to behave differently than the scene previous. The same can be said for different retail environments or spaces within a store. As demonstrated above, the retail environment has the ability to have a great impact on consumer behavior and can serve to motivate interaction or, equally, the desire to leave the environment.

Using theatre terminology to describe interactions in the retail space allows us as researchers a frame for our analysis as part of the audience when looking at consumers and their behavior. For the consumer, the drama of the theatre provides a space where they can engage by interacting on the stage and at the same time observe as part of an audience, if they choose. By choosing one or more of these levels of interactions consumers are engaging in some level of interaction in the scene of the retail stage.

Research question

The discussion above in the introduction has guided the opportunities for our own research at WEEKDAY. The limitations and suggestions made by contemporary marketing researchers has led us to form the following research question in order to contribute to the existing body of work in postmodern consumer research in servicescapes so that retail marketing managers may better assess opportunities to create and evaluate spaces where consumers can come together and interact while contributing to a body of academic work on contemporary consumer research in regards to consumer interaction with servicescapes. While previous research has been useful in revealing the extents and limits of consumer servicescape behavior from a consumer perspective via interviews and observations, we wish only to make observations about interaction in the servicescape.

Our thesis tries to explore space in the retail environment in terms of the theatre metaphor, and our contribution is to use Kenneth Burke to look at this relation. Using the metaphor of

theatre to create a stage where the scene(s) houses the space and interaction in the retail environment allows us to see directly the drama as a performance, allowing us to view consumer environment interactions in a new way. The theatre metaphor also helps us to ask questions about interactions in the retail environment and to guide the framework of our theory and methodology.

How does the retail space take the form of an act that is played out in scenes between the consumers and a servicescape? Using Burke's pentad we will look at how the servicescape can stimulate consumer interaction.

Using the theatre metaphor we would like to introduce Kenneth Burke and his pentad in order to help us analyze the individual scenes that comprise the acts of consumer servicescape interactions at WEEKDAY.

Purpose

As contemporary marketing students and researchers we are fascinated by the increasingly themed servicescapes and the different store structures emerging in the western marketplace. Increasing interest into the unpredictable post modern consumer motivated us to search for an equally unpredictable space in which to observe behavior and interaction. WEEKDAY in Malmö has provided us a space in which to observe a contemporary servicescape that encourages consumers to engage and interact with the environment. The servicescape fascinated us. In particular we were interested in the structure of the store and how it made us all feel upon our first exploratory visit. We noted a dramatic change in response and interaction with the store and each other in comparison to the responses we normally experience in our other day-to-day shopping experiences. The non linear special layout was confusing and we found the conflict presented by the stores space very interesting. Outside of our very narrow experiences as researchers, we were interested in observing how other consumers acted within the space.

This study is relevant to consumer behavior researchers who may be questioning traditional methods of looking at consumer behavior and thus, marketing to and reaching these consumers. This study is also relevant to retail managers and servicescape designers, who might be interested in looking at new ways to engage consumers to peruse, interact and return to the servicescape setting.

Theory

Using the metaphor of retail theatre to guide our theory, we are able to look at the interactions in the servicescape in a dramatic frame. Inspired by the thematic acts and scenes of a theatrical play, we structure some discussions and many interactions around this format for presenting our observations later in the analysis section. Exercising the theatre metaphor, as detailed below, has allowed us to ask theoretical questions about the how the servicescape may stimulate interactions in a way we may not have been able to without looking at WEEKDAY in terms of a retail stage. By looking at the space at WEEKDAY as something else, a stage, we are able to approach a theoretical discussion based upon and inspired by elements of drama.

Metaphors

In the classical theories of language, metaphors have, since Aristotle's time, been referred to words that are not used in their normal everyday sense. According to Lakoff (1992, p 1) the word metaphor was defined as:

A novel or poetic linguistic expression where one or more words for a concept are used outside of its normal conventional meaning to express a similar concept.

Lakoff argues that this definition is false when it comes to the contemporary theory of metaphor and that it does not lay in language alone.

If the contemporary metaphorical expression goes beyond use in language, then where is it? It is instead in the thought. The language is still of importance but becomes secondary. Among contemporary metaphor theorists the term metaphor refers to the conceptual mapping, while the term metaphorical expression refers to an individual linguistic expression. This linguistic expression is sanctioned by a mapping (Lakoff, 1992).

Different theorists like Berggren, Black and Brown has contributed with their research work to a view of scientific inquiry as a creative process. In this process they have viewed the world in a metaphorical way where language and concepts have filtered and structured their perceptions of their subject of study. According to Morgan (1980, page 611) they have by using specific metaphors which they implicitly or explicitly chosen to develop their

framework for analysis. Why use the metaphor? When studying a subject the use of a metaphor serves to generate an image and represent a way in which to describe the consumer interactions with the retail environment. The theatre metaphor in particular helps us to see things we didn't see before and to ask questions we could not have asked before without thinking of the retail space in these dramatic terms.

Semiotics and Revealing the Retail Stage

Semiotics

Semiotics has been rooted in literary and linguistic analysis and development and more recently, the concept of semiotics has been applied to any situation in where communication may take place and has been extended to areas in marketing such as product design and store retailing (Smith and Burns, 1996).

Signs are described as anything that can be made to stand for something else (Berger, 1984) or things that represent other things (Burns and Smith, 1996). Text, acts, images, textures, fragrances, tastes, audio cues and gestures, are all but a few of the ways in which messages may be communicated through signs. Signs are at the core of semiotic analysis and represent the key concept of semiology (Eco, 1976). Saussure, the 'father' of linguistics and 20th century structuralism (Guin et al, 2005) analysed the system of language and attributed such an analysis as the theory of semiology (Saussure as translated by Harris, R, 1983). Saussure categorized the sign (or cue) into two components: The first part, consisting of the signifier and the second component pertaining to the signified. The signifier represents the concrete form of which the sign takes. The second level, or the signified, involves the concept the sign represents where meaning may be derived from the signifier. The signifier can either have a denotative meaning, involving non-material and connotative imaginistic meaning applications (Burns and Smith, 1996). Saussure refers the relationship between the signifier and the signified as 'signification' (1983) whereby the signifier and the signified should be viewed as a two sides of the same coin rather than independent concepts.

Saussure believed that one of the most important considerations of semiotics was to consider sociological-cultural implications when analysing signs when he stated:

It is [...] possible to conceive of a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life [...] We shall call it semiology (from the Greek *sémeîon*, 'sign'). It would investigate the nature of signs and the laws governing them. Since it does not yet exist, one cannot say for certain that it will exist. But it has a right to exist, a place ready for it in advance. Linguistics is only one branch of this general science. The laws which semiology will discover will be laws applicable in linguistics, and linguistics will thus be assigned to a clearly defined place in the field of human knowledge.

- Saussure as translated by Harris, (1983).

According to Burns and Smith, Saussure suggested that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary in nature where there is often no natural connection in the meaning between them (1996). Instead, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is often determined or 'learned' socially. Symbols refer to the form in which the signifier does not resemble the signified and is fundamentally arbitrary where such a convention of the relationship of the symbol and the meaning attached is learnt; for example, the case of text, language, alphabetical letters, traffic lights and flags (Chandler, 2002). This semiotic approach of analysis must then stress the importance of being familiar with the relationships that exist between signifiers and the signified within a specific social-cultural context.

Metaphors in Semiotics

In semiotic terms, a metaphor involves one signified acting as a signifier referring to a different signified (Chandler, 2002). Metaphors can be referred to as a type of figurative language that seeks to introduce a variety of ways in which to view or say “this is (or is like) that” (Chandler, 2002, p 124) in a certain cultural context and may require an “imaginative leap” (Chandler, 2002, p 127). Metaphors, often perceived as only belonging to literary writings may be extended beyond text and applied to everyday life. Semiotician, Roman Jakobson (1971) believed that metaphors were fundamental modes of communicating meaning. Lakoff and Johnson argued that “the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (1980, p 5).

Previous research literature in retailing such as Jean-Marie Floch’s contribution to structural semiotics have used the semiotic framework as an aid to conceptualising, defining and designing the interior architecture of hypermarkets (1988). From this sociological perspective, a deeper meaning of a retailing phenomenon was sought, emphasizing on the interpretation of signs and symbols to help understand and define elements of the retail store

environment. Outside of retailing literature, the use of a semiotic analysis in marketing has mainly been applied to the advertising field where researchers have recognised that the interpretation of the same advertising message varies for each individual (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

Revealing the retail stage through signs

As semiotics may be applied to any situation where 'the exchange of any messages and of the systems of signs that underlie them (Smith and Burns, 1996); semiotics may also include the communication of a store's retail environment. If signs are described as anything that can be made to stand for something else when analysing objects, elements, and human action that take place within in a retail environment, then they may be viewed as signs revealing the theatrical movements characterising the retail stage.

Kenneth Burkes contribution to semiotics

Burke has been explored from many scholarly fields (Meadows, 1957) including socio-cultural studies since his seminal work in *A Grammar of Motives* in 1945 (Overington, 1977), and although Burke did not consider himself as a sociologist and “declared his concern to be with the analysis of language and not ‘reality’” (Overington, 1977), his literary body of work on *Dramatism* analyzes the processes of social interaction and the interpretation of symbols in ones environment in order to reveal, through the terms of the pentad, the motivations behind the interactions under analysis. Using the pentad also in terms of dramatism, we attempt to analyze the process of scene and agent interaction where the motivations of the scene and agent as a stimulus for interaction might be revealed. We find it suitable to use the pentad as if it were a form guiding us to ask the right questions in order to analyze the circumference of the retail store environment as a text.

One of Burke’s main concerns as the title of his book aptly suggests is motivation. Burke argued that motivation can be explained by a well-rounded description of what took place (the act), the background of the act (the scene), who performed the act (the actor) and the means or instruments used (the agent) and the purpose of the performance (Meadows, 1957). Thus, According to Burke’s conceptual approach to dramatism, “to tell what a thing is, you place it in terms of something else” (Burke, 1945:XXIII).

By framing the interactions of the retail environment in terms of theatre, and more specifically, scenes on the stage of the retail store, we use the metaphor of theatre to reveal the relationship of the scene act ratio. The signs and symbols that are present in different scenes connote different meanings and can help to motivate consumer interactions at WEEKDAY. The signs and symbolic meaning we as researchers ascribe to the space at WEEKDAY helps us to analyse the interactions between the consumer and the servicescape and assists us to

create a new way of looking at consumer servicescape interactions. The following description of the five terms of Burke's pentad below is described in terms of theatre as follows:

Act: What is happening and what was done in the scene by agents?

Scene: Where are our observations at WEEKDAY taking place?

Agent: Who are the agent(s) in the scene? Agents can include consumers and co-agents will be anyone accompanying consumers, staff members or others in the scene.

Agency: How did the agent do it? Describing the means or instruments used by the agent.

Purpose: The interplay of Burke's Act, Scene, Agent and Agency is used to interpret: Why is all this done? To explain, or infer, what the scene or customers/agents were trying to accomplish or what Burke would refer to as their motive.

As mentioned previously, as we analyse the interaction of the terms of the pentad during our research, more focus will be placed on what Burke refers to as the scene act ratio.

Semiotic Perspective in the Retail Environment

Chandler (2002, p 1) states, "We seem as a species to be driven by a desire to make meanings: above all, we are surely Homo significantis - meaning-makers ". Signs and symbols are constantly used and negotiated in every environment that one encounters including the retail store environment. All elements in the store work together as signs and symbols conveying the servicescape. A semiotic understanding of the retail environment is used to reveal the view the store as a metaphorical stage where drama unfolds. Analysing and defining the retail environment drawing from Burke's five elements of dramatism and metaphoric reasoning is considered to be the most suitable approach to our analysis of the retail store environment. This semiotic approach will enable this thesis paper to identify the key actors, theatrical performances and symbolic representation of the drama taking place in the retail store.

Kenneth Burke and Dramatism

Setting the stage

Much research into retail store environments looks at how the space of a store affects consumer behavior in terms of motivation to approach or avoid patronizing it. Here we wish

to look at the store's space, or part of it, as the scene when we ask what it is we want to look at (scene) and what was done (act). This use of Burke's pentad is considered to be the scene-act ratio.

Just as a change of set (scene) during a stage play implies a motive for a different drama to unfold (act), the agent, as if commanded by the set (scene) is motivated to behave differently than the scene previous. For example, Burke refers to the motivational aspect of the scene-act ratio when referring to a passage from Shakespeare's Hamlet when he recounts Horatio's description of natural surroundings as enough to provide a man with enough motive for an act as desperate and absolute as suicide (Burke, 1962, p 6):

What if I tempt you toward my flood, my lord,
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
That beetle's o'er his base into the sea,
And draw you into madness? Think of it;
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain
That looks so many fathoms to the sea
And hears it roar beneath

In this way the scene can be viewed as the motivating factor of the act, or as producing the act. As Burke (1962, p 7) states, "The proportion would be: scene is to act as implicit is to explicit". Just as the scene is a motivating factor of the act, the changing of the scene provides different circumstances or situations for the agent to interact. For example, the scene-act ratio either calls for acts in keeping with the scenes or scenes keeping with the acts – and similarly with the scene-agent ratio (Burke, 1962, p 10):

When Lavinia instructs Seth to nail fast the shutters and throw out the flowers, by her command (an act) she brings it about that the scene corresponds to her state of mind. But as soon as these scenic changes have taken place, they in turn become the motivating principle of her subsequent conduct. For the complete embodiment of her purposes functions as a "command" to her; and she obeys it as a stimulus, like a pure automaton moved by the sheer disposition of material factors.

Here the uses of props on the set of the scene motivate the act of the agent. The props on set of the scene contain symbols that denote meaning, suggesting behavior guiding the agent to act.

So exactly how many terms of the hexed pentad are needed to ask of the text to which its structure implicitly supplies the answers to what motivates the scene? The dialectical relationships of the pentad function in terms of ratios like “scene-act ratio” or “agent-act ratio”, rather than as independent terms to themselves. The circumference as a whole is an important consideration here when looking at the pentad of terms and ratios. What is the overall scene in terms of which we are to discuss the nature of human conduct and human relations? (Burke, 1978). Burke argues that the question of the human relation to an ultimate circumference must be a philosophical issue rather than a scientific one; even a scene of limited empirical scope resists scientific determination (Burke, 1978).

The theory section above has guided the opportunities for our own research at WEEKDAY. The use of semiotics has extended beyond textual analysis and more recently to include the retail marketing field (Smith and Burns, 1996). In continuing with this extension, our research team wishes to explore a retail servicescape with a semiotic understanding; conceiving it as a metaphorical stage where drama unfolds whereby analysing and defining the retail space using Burke’s five elements of dramatism. Using Burke’s pentad enables us to view how the servicescape can stimulate consumer interaction. Dramatism allows us to analyze the processes of social interaction and the interpretation of symbols in ones environment, thus, the pentad is a suitable guide that leads us to ask appropriate questions that we believe are needed to analyze the WEEKDAY stage. Such an approach will enable us to identify the key actors, theatrical performances and symbolic representation of the drama taking place on different acts and scenes on the WEEKDAY stage. Text, acts, images, textures, audio cues and gestures, are all but a few of the ways in which messages may be communicated to us through signs in the retail servicescape. The retail theatre metaphor not only serves to strengthen our ability as researchers to ask questions about interactions in the retail environment; such a metaphorical approach also contributes to understanding the retail environment with images that may represent a way in which to describe the consumer interactions with the retail environment. The method section below will detail how we intend to draw from the interrelationship of semiotics, theatre metaphors and Burke’s Pentad to research the WEEKDAY servicescape and the social interactions that take place within it.

Method

Ontological and Epistemological Orientations

The retail marketing field has been employing ethnography directed methods of research to examine consumer interactions and experiences within servicescapes (Bitner 1992) for the past 20 years. Studies such as themed sporting venues (Shery et al, 2001), shopping malls (Bloch et al, 1994) flea markets (Sherry, 1990), creative retail spaces (Kent, 2007), retail theatre (Baron et al, 2001) and the post-modern shopping experience have been explored previously. In continuing with the exploration of servicescapes, we focused our study on WEEKDAY - a retail fashion store that embodies various attributes reflecting the post-modern consumer experience and servicescape. Our goal is to reveal in detail the WEEKDAY stage and capture the experience of being in a post-modern servicescape. We strive to explore the importance of the retail context in its influence on the complexities of consumer interaction that unfolds (Bitner 1990; Aubert-Gamet, 1996; Baron et al, 2001).

The ontological consideration of our research method draws upon semiotics that is explored in detail in the theory section. The concept of semiotics may be applied to any situation where communication may take place and are used to aid in understanding and interpreting reality with the main concern being, to unveil the processes of meaning production and representation through signs and the ability of these signs to convey messages and effect social action (Bryman and Bell, 2003, p 195). We use semiotics to understand the possible effects that the WEEKDAY servicescape may have in producing different types of social action.

The epistemological perspective of our research view reality as a social construction and seeks to understand and find meaning of a phenomenon through the representation of signs and social interactions that take place in a specific environment, the WEEKDAY retail clothing store. Drawing links from semiotics and symbolic interaction, we as social constructivists took a constructive philosophical stance with our ethnographic research because we attempted to understand our 'reality' as being determined by people as opposed to objective and external factors. Symbolic interaction share a common thread to social constructivism as symbolic interaction is a "theoretical perspective in sociology and social psychology that views social interaction as taking place in terms of the meaning actors attach to action and things" (Bryman and Bell, 2003, p 575).

Social constructivists such as our research team were interested in focussing on the ways our subjects communicated with each other and the servicescape non-verbally (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002). Thus, the aim in social constructivism is to understand why humans including ourselves, act the way they do based on different situations and social constructions rather than explaining human action based on definitive scientific laws and the search for external causes (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002). This study took on a sociological perspective that helped us to understand the relationship between the spatial environment and consumer interaction

We employed qualitative methods of primary research data collection to understand our phenomenon of interest from a sociological-cultural perspective. The epistemological considerations our research is inherently interpretivistic as we viewed the retail environment and the objects within it subjectively. According to Peirce, 'Nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign' (1931-58, 2.172). Researchers belonging to the social sciences realm tend to be critical of the application of scientific models to explain the social world, and share a view that a phenomenon of interest belonging to social sciences is fundamentally different from the natural sciences (Bryman and Bell, 2003). A different approach to the explanation of reality of a social researcher as compared to that of a researcher in the natural sciences thus calls for a different logic to the research procedure (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

WEEKDAY – A case study

Research design

When wanting to look at the interaction that takes place between consumers and the servicescape we find the research design in form of a case study the most suitable. In our study we look upon the WEEKDAY store in Malmö, in form of a single location, as a case. When doing a qualitative case study the methods that are suitable are ethnography or qualitative interviewing (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Due to the time constraints when writing a Master thesis we have chosen to carry out a micro-ethnography study.

Micro-Ethnography

In addressing inductive considerations, we as researchers were interested in interpreting the social environment of the WEEKDAY store. An explanatory approach was adopted in our research as we used secondary literature borrowed from Burke's contribution to dramatism as a guideline as well as contemporary marketing literature to further explanations for the understanding our phenomenon of interest. Our Secondary literature sources act as "perspective by incongruity" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p 163) such as in the case of

the use of the theatre metaphor used to make sense of the retail store environment when comparing it to secondary sources. Adopting the ‘perspective by incongruity approach’ is ideal for heuristic purposes such as in our case “to rejuvenate jaded imaginations and spark new conceptualisations” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p 163; Burke, 1964). As researchers influenced by ethnography, we seek to ponder upon the activities of readings and writings in social settings where “such everyday activities are incorporated into the ethnographer’s topics of inquiry as well as furnishing analytic and interpretive resources” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995, p 174).

Aspects of exploratory research also exist in our data collection stemming mainly from the initial stages of our research and the acknowledgement that our study did not seek to generalise our findings to the population at large in regards to the employment of our qualitative research method. Our choice of conducting a micro-ethnography will be elaborated upon in the following section.

Due to the time constraints of our master thesis project, it was not possible for us to conduct a long term, full-scale ethnography; therefore a micro-ethnographic study on our subject has been decided to be the most suitable alternative. Micro-ethnography refers to the study of narrowly-defined cultural settings where such a study may be carried out on a shorter period of time such as one week and on a part-time basis when the focus of the research is on a particular, closely defined aspect of an organization (Bryman and Bell, 2003). In our case, our narrowly defined cultural setting was the WEEKDAY servicescape where we were interested in interpreting the store environment and the interactions taking place. We are not seeking to generalise our findings to the general public or generalise the motives of consumer behaviour from our interpretation and understanding of retail servicescape; but rather raise awareness of potential issues in experience marketing within a specific type of fashion retail servicescape. Therefore, we did not believe it was necessary to conduct a long-term ethnographic analysis at the specific retail store –WEEKDAY for which we have chosen to take a detailed look at.

In-store Observations

There are a variety of methods suitable for researching the relationship between the environment and behaviour (Bechtel et al, 1987). One method which can be appropriate is direct observations that can be used when trying to understand the environmental conditions on customer behaviour in specific cases, such as research on the effect of the facilitation of specific spatial layout options on customer interaction (Bitner, 1992). Direct observations allow us as researchers to make detailed accounts of current environmental conditions and the actual behaviours of customers and employees (Bitner, 1992). As our research focussed on the actual behaviours of customers, we believe it was not necessary to conduct interviews as we were not focussed on understanding customer perceptions but rather customer interaction with the WEEKDAY servicescape. Although it should be acknowledged that conducting customer and employee surveys could be appropriate for furthering the depth of addressing the impact

of a retail environment on customers, it has generally been used and work best for achieving generalisable results (Nasar, 1987). As stated previously, the intent of our research is to not make generalisations about consumer behaviour but raise awareness of key implications in the growing field of experience marketing within servicescapes.

Our method of participant observation has been decided to be the most suitable method of our primary source of research investigation and documentation because we are trying to interpret and understand a social phenomenon occurring in a retail setting. For ease of observations and to prevent confusion, we did not observe groups larger than three people as it was difficult to keep track of and provide rich and detailed records of groups larger than three.

Data Collection

Ethnographers are often compared to that of novelists because of their shared interest in telling stories in their analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Thus, the document source we employed in our data collection were narrative, diary like account and descriptions of the store environment was recorded not only in our analysis but in our field notes which are commonly used in an ethnographic analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). In an ethnographic study, field notes are the traditional means of recording observational data and considered the central research activity and cater to the unpredicted nature of our insights and discoveries where there is often no definitive prescription as to how initially carry out an ethnographic study (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

Our research team consisted of three females that represented diversity in age categories that ranged from mid-twenties to early forties, cultural backgrounds, stages in life and thus, diversity in perspectives. Our multicultural team consisted of one Swede, one Canadian-European and one Canadian-Asian.

Two days were initially spent at WEEKDAY conducting exploratory inspired research during the beginning stages of our research project. At this stage our research team had not yet decided specifically what we wanted to observe but had all agreed that there was something interesting about the emotional experiences that we had as we patronized the store and wanted to pursue it further. Entering the WEEKDAY servicescape made us feel as if we were in an amusement park with its unusual design structures, distorted mirrors and merchandise to name a few examples. Thus, we were curious as to how the retail servicescape had contributed to our memorable emotional experience. During the first two visits to WEEKDAY we shopped at the store and observed customer and staff interactions with each other and the servicescape making lists of anything that peaked our interest. Following these exploratory visits to WEEKDAY came two more days at the store where our team prepared for our official in-store observation where we, introduced our selves to management and employees so that they knew who we were and what we were doing as well as becoming familiar with the overall

layout of the WEEKDAY retail store in Malmö. We spent three consecutive days conducting in-store observations from a Wednesday to Friday observing different part of the store that we of interest to our team and recording what was happening there in terms of consumer interaction with the servicescape and each other. It was payday in Malmö on the Friday that we conducted observations; therefore, we believed that our observations represented a cross section of the different types of shoppers. Wednesday and Thursday generally tend to be days that are less busy for the WEEKDAY store, while Fridays and in particular, payday are very busy times for the store which may have an impact on the varying levels of consumer interaction in the store. Most shoppers we observed looked to belong to the student body age group of fifteen to thirty, although not excluding many shoppers younger and older than this group who also were observed to interact, although in smaller populations, within the servicescape. Observations were recorded on printed copies of the WEEKDAY floor plan that was initially divided into the second floor and main floor of WEEKDAY (see Appendix A). Equal amounts of time were spent observing the main floor and the upper level floor of WEEKDAY. A total of 72 observations were recorded during the course of our in-store ethnographic observations at WEEKDAY. For each part of the store environment that we found interesting as an observer, we considered them as different scenes playing out on the retail stage of WEEKDAY where we observed and eventually deconstructed in our analysis.

Examples of our categorization of scenes taking place at WEEKDAY included the changing rooms, the angular and distorted mirrors located throughout the store, the structural form and the elements that comprise the ground floor and the second floor. With each scene we considered the interplay of various atmospheric elements such as visual characteristics and positioning of the props/merchandise and the interactions that customers had with them when applicable.

Kenneth Burke's contribution to Dramatism analyses the processes of the interpretation of signs and symbols in ones environment. In our particular case, we are interested in interpreting what is going on at WEEKDAY. Thus, we have to chosen to draw extensively upon Burke's conceptual literary body of work to direct our investigation and analysis. Our investigation drew upon the five terms of Burke's Dramatism and was used to guide the descriptions of our qualitative in-store observations that we conducted at WEEKDAY.

Using Burke's five terms or what is referred to as the Pentad was used to guide our observations. This choice complimented our approach to adopting the theatre metaphor when revealing the effect that the setting of the retail stage may have on the ways in which actors interact and the roles that they adopt on the stage. As mentioned earlier, just as a change of set (scene) during a stage play implies a motive for a different drama to unfold (act), the agent, as if commanded by the set (scene) is motivated to behave differently than the scene previous. Burke refers to this as the scene-act ratio and for which our research primary focuses on.

Kenneth Burke's Pentad

We attempted to answer the specific questions that are posed in Burke's Pentad for Dramatism during our time of observation of the WEEKDAY store as well into the extrapolation stage of our WEEKDAY field notes.

Act: We observed and answered the question: What is happening and what was done in the scene by key agents? Our key agents in this study were primarily customers and to a lesser extent, the staff of WEEKDAY. When observing the act, we recorded customer movement and their social interactions that took place within the servicescape.

Scene: We observed and answered the question: When/Where are our observations at WEEKDAY taking place. We provided detailed written accounts of the various atmospheric and design elements for each respective scene in question. In the scene is where detailed descriptions were made of the store's structural elements, design layouts and props. Date and times were also recorder for each scene taking place.

Agent: We observed and answered the question: Who are WEEKDAY's customers and when applicable, who are the store employees the customer's friends? Demographic information such as age bracket, sex of customer, customer type (new or repeat customer) were observed and recorded during our in-store observations. Physical characteristics, attire/costume descriptions and emotional cues were also detailed of each customer that we chose to observe. A description of a staff member was considered when they had interaction with a customer.

Agency: We observed and answered the question: How did he or she do it? Describe the means or instruments used by the agent. We considered the props/merchandise that customers/agents interacted with in a scene such as clothing/costumes, shoes and mirrors.

Purpose: We analysed the interplay of Burke's Act, Scene, Agent and Agency to interpret: Why is all this done? At this time, we attempted to explain what the customers/agents were trying to accomplish or what Burke would refer to as their motive via our observations of their performances and the interactions they had with other customers, staff and the retail store environment. However, as we analysed the interplay of the elements, more focus was placed on the interplay of the Act and Scene or what Burke refers to as the scene act ratio.

Field Impressions

One of the distinctive styles of ethnographic researchers is to attempt to be immersed into a setting and to become part of the subject being studied (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002). Thus, the personal appearance of our research group was carefully considered while conducting on-site observations. Personal appearance was a salient consideration necessary for us as researchers to dress in such a way as to not appear to be intrusive with our subjects and to gain a level of

indirect trust with them during our overt research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Our group did not want to distract the customers in their natural environment nor did we want to stand out as to elucidate the fact that we were observing certain customers at the store, thus we dressed in casual attire such as such as dark denim and t-shirts and at times, placed headphones in our ears so as to look like we were listening to music as well as conduct observations in groups as well as individually. We were aware that we could not completely blend in as a regular customer as we were taking notes in the store or nor did we try to present our selves as a WEEKDAY staff member. It was obvious that we were recording data while on-site and as a result, we attempted to compensate for that by appearing as if we were examining the structure of the store where we sketched out the floor plan, hangers, mirrors and display casings to make consumers believe that we were observing the structure rather than their behaviour.

Limitations of Ethnographic Research

As micro-ethnographers, we understand that our data is produced socially and is not without possible discrepancies concerning neutrality or purely transparent/ objective representations of social reality. The analysis of our group members' interpretation and understanding of the retail environment does not seek to generalise our findings to the general public or generalise the motives of consumer behaviour rather, we wish view our phenomenon of interest as inherently interpretivistic. It must also be acknowledged that the interpretation and understanding of the retail store and the communication of the retail store environment by each group member of this thesis project will vary in nature as each member of the group has been subject to different levels and modes of social interaction, political and cultural experiences. It is also acknowledged that the interpretations of our subject matter represented the views of three females; inclusion of a male perspective may have enhanced the diversity of our observations. Although our research design may be generalisable to other researchers for further studies in retailing, the data that we generate will not be.

Future researchers can go to the WEEKDAY store and, knowing what we have written, look at the terms or symbols on the stage in their own way. Another limitation of our research was that since we did not conduct consumer surveys or interviews, we could not for certain determine the customer's motive or purpose, but rather interpret possible motives of the shopper by observing their non-verbal cues while shopping at the WEEKDAY store. However, it should be noted that the goal of our research was not necessarily to determine the purpose of the shoppers according to Burke's pentad but alternatively, an emphasis was placed on analysing each scene according to Burke's scene-act ratio.

Analysis

Using the metaphor of retail theatre, the retail space that will be analyzed in this section will be looked upon as a drama taking place upon the retail stage. Written as four acts, each one explores different themes of the retail servicescape at WEEKDAY. The physical space of each scene has the potential to help produce an act, or interaction, and, using theatrical terms our research will analyze the drama in each scene.

Using Burke's pentadic terms, the actors in each scene described below can be referred to as agents. The employees, friends and other people interacting with the agent can be described as co-agents and the store merchandise may be referred to in theatrical terms as props or costumes. Using Burke's pentad to reveal how the scene on each stage of the retail theatre stimulates interaction, you will find a section after each scene that will make the connection between the observation and the use of the pentadic terms clear. In addition, each act will provide a summation of the analysis, highlighting what we as researchers found important when doing our observations.

Act I – Entering the Servicescape

Act I, Scene 1 – Meeting WEEKDAY



The WEEKDAY store in Malmö is situated on Södra Vallgatan nearby the walking street, Södra Tullgatan, which runs through the city center. WEEKDAY is close by many other clothing and design stores like MQ, JC and Designtorget. During the three days we made our observations the sun was shining and many people were enjoying the weather while sitting on the steps that led down to the canal in front of the store. Somehow, it seemed that during those three days the store and its consumers were spilling out onto the picturesque street and steps to the canal enjoying an ice cream cone. Some of these same people were noted to patronize the interior of the store before or after enjoying the sunshine. It was as if the store expanded out on the street, where one of the sales staff was also noted sitting during a break. I made a note of this because I did not think that people would normally hang around outside a store and interact with friends and others in order to see and be seen.

When turning around from the stairs of the canal you face the store. Not the same amount of people pass by like on the main walking high street. The store is the last one on Södra Vallgatan. When looking towards the store windows it seems like the store is almost closed and only the store logo is situated over the door. The logo says MTWTFSS WEEKDAY. The MTWTFSS represents the first letter of each day of the week. When the sign is lit, it shines in a bright white light, and it gives the same impression as the facade, one of a sterile environment.

The following scene describes an observation made by a member of the research team:

I am standing on the main floor observing the windows and the action on the street outside unfolding and I observe an agent, an elderly woman in her 70's, who seemed curious about what the store had to offer, and if it was something for her to pursue further. She stood outside the shopping window, pressed her nose against it

and framed her hands along her cheeks and peered inside. She stood like this for about half a minute and then she decided not to approach the store and left the scene.

Scene 1 takes place just outside WEEKDAY, by the entrance and the display window and further when entering into the store. The agent, an elderly woman was prompted by the absence of physical material in the scene to act inquisitively by pressing her face up against the window to gain a clearer picture of what was inside. Again prompted by the material in the scene before her, the honeycomb structure and accompanying ramps inviting her to come in, the agent exhibited avoidance behavior, and acted by leaving the scene back to the walking street that she had entered from.

In the article Creative space Kent writes about window display as following (2007, p 737), “Window display and visual merchandising were drawn together with the emergence of lifestyle retailing, with its emphasis on the retail brand and coherent communication through close attention to design throughout the store environment”.

In the conventional way the store window is used to display things that you will find in the store in order to draw people inside. In WEEKDAYs case they do not display anything in the store window. You can only catch a glimpse of the honeycomb and if the door is open you can see some displayed clothes on the green ramp that meets you when entering the store. This makes it hard to know if you want to enter the store or not and you must take the plunge and go inside to see what’s there. The old lady and her avoidance behavior is a good example of this as it appeared that she did not see anything inside the store that interested her and did not wish to take the chance of exploring the servicescape inside. If you choose to enter the store you will be met by a completely different scene than the one you might expect when standing outside the store window.

Act I, Scene 2 – Choose your own adventure



When entering the store a display housing jeans is constructed on a ramp that has graphic skeletons on the side in mass quantities laying over each other to greet you and welcome you inside. You then must choose your way, right or left, to get into the honeycomb. Here the structure of the entrance welcomes the consumers into a chaotic disorder which serves to confuse. Which direction should they take, what should they make of the skeletons, and what do I do next are some of the questions that meet you upon entering WEEKDAY? Consumers now have a choice and they can either approach and interact with the servicescape and choose their own adventure throughout the honeycomb of the main floor or reject it and leave through the entrance.

How do people act when they enter the WEEKDAY store? Following are some observations that we made when people entered and spent there first minute in the store:

A woman in her twenties enters the store with a friend. She walks to the left when she has to choose what way to go. Looks at some of the jeans and talks to her friend. They leave the same way they came in; through the entrance.

Here the agent enters the store with a co-agent, and, presented with the maze provided by the scene, she acts by walking left and approaches a display. The agents then exit the scene and return the way they entered.

The following is another observation made by one of our researchers in the same space:

With a smile on her lips a woman in her twenties enters the store. She chooses to go to the left in the entrance and then she walks straight over to the stair and leaves the scene for the upper floor.

The scene presents the female agent with a number of directions in which to navigate the main floor. Motivated by the structures the scene presents, the agent acts by turning left and walks over to the stairs where she exits the scene for the upper floor.

In our observations most customers chose to go to the left, where the jeans were more visible and customers chose to go to the right if they had intentions to go upstairs or look and interact with the new shoes downstairs. If you don't know what the shop contains, you might enter it and when finding out what is inside you might chose to avoid it and not interact with the servicescape at all, exhibiting classic avoidance behavior, as in the observation of the woman and her friend. You can leave the scene of the main floor through the front door or alternately, you can choose to go upstairs where there is another spacial layout offering different clothing and a different experience which shoppers may prefer over the downstairs. This was the choice of the smiling woman that entered WEEKDAY.

Act I Summary

Act one presents a counter to the way display windows and entrances are normally constructed in a retail setting. Using the front windows as display space to draw people passing by inside is normally viewed as a great way to maximize exposure for the store and product line. By not using the display window as a way to show people what products are in the store you could say that WEEKDAY is in conflict with the "proper" way of using a display window. In scene one, the empty windows appear to act to build a scene that motivates curiosity form onlookers, at times drawing people in or the opposite. If the product line had been placed in the window it is possible the elderly agent in scene one would have passed by uninterested in the products offered. The opening scene at WEEKDAY presents a friction point where you are invited to come in. From the outside WEEKDAY looks unimpressive and sterile, but with a peep through the store's window shows something completely opposite. WEEKDAY's eye catching interior design such as the honey comb structure seemed to excite strong reactions in agents who walked past the store but not everyone was ready to personally experience what this unusual store had to offer if they had stepped inside. You must enter to find out what treasures may lie inside or not enter if you are not in the mood to be presented with any unknowns. Once inside you are presented with the choice to navigate the store in whatever direction you please. Since the display windows are not necessarily revealing a story of what lies ahead, you must advance into the servicescape and go beyond the blank façade to find out more.

Act II - The Honeycomb

The following Act, describe agents who decide to take a chance and dare to step further into the WEEKDAY servicescape to experience its wildly entertaining and thought provoking elements provided by each scene. Inspired by the interview with store designers at Electric Dreams the article Daydreams and its references to the stores structure guides the following analysis in Act II (Ralphs, 2007).

Act II, Scene 1 – Buzzing About



As agents first enter the ground level of the WEEKDAY stage; they are exposed to clean white ramp like structures on either side of them that are elevated, angular and with brightly lit sheets of energizing green plastic on top. These elevated ramps resemble that of a landing strip one might view as an airplane touches down, only the landing strips at WEEKDAY are elevated to varying heights and do not seem to indicate any particular direction for which the agent should go as the strip soon turns into an amalgamation of twists and turns similar to that of a maze. Placed on top, and in the hallow of these ramps are props consisting of jeans and fashion accessories stacked and folded in various ways in an uncluttered fashion. A variety of styles, prints and colored jeans spanning an entire rainbow are dispersed across the entire main level of WEEKDAY.

The unusual structure of the ramps spread throughout the main floor and connected to the change rooms; created a non-linear flow for the agents and seemed to orchestrate casual yet chaotic movements within the main level of the WEEKDAY stage. The non-linear spatial

format of the honeycomb structure encouraged agents to move about in the WEEKDAY servicescape however they saw fit. With no right or wrong direction for them to move but rather, an individually customized movement for every agent who enter the WEEKDAY stage. According to Aubert-Gamet, space in contemporary postmodern settings is the “site of dimensional mutations” (1996, p 30) as opposed to the modern space that encompassed direction, area and linear shapes and patterns that were considered as objective, measurable and ultimately pinned down (Aubert-Gamet, 1996).

If one was to view the store from a birds-eye view, one would see that the structure of the ground level of WEEKDAY is in the shape of a honeycomb (Ralphs, 2007) where customers can be seen ‘buzzing’. The creatively charged and unusual store layout of WEEKDAY’s main level, encompass shapes that seem to repel against long, linear lines so as to encourage chaotic ‘buzzing’ around motion of customers as if they were honey bees going from comb to comb looking for a new pair of jeans. There are also mirrors along various walls of the honeycomb structure so as to not only give the allusion of a larger space but, give opportunity for agents to watch others as well as be watched. In Absurd retail theatre, the roles of agents are seen as connoisseurs where there is an open invitation to personally interpret the servicescape and in this case, the honeycomb structure however they see fit. In the case of the Absurd retail theatre, there is no right or wrong way to view or interact with the stage and the props that inhabit it thus, the role of the retailer is to present the store layout and props in “the most thought provoking manner possible” (Baron et al, 2001). In the case of the WEEKDAY store, it seems that Electric Dreams (Ralphs, 2007), the appropriately named stage designers responsible for the honeycomb structure at WEEKDAY have achieved aspects of the creatively charged and interpretive aspects characterized by Absurd theatre. Displays in Absurd theatre emphasize designing abstract imagery that promotes creativity and artistic expression that excites individual interpretations of the store layout, creating a journey from beginning to end.

Baron et al, (2001) also adds that a minimalistic approach to the props displayed in the store will also increase the intellectual commitment of the agent such as in the case that the jeans featured on WEEKDAY’s main floor was exclusively by the in-store label, Cheap Monday. Although Cheap Monday jeans offered an impressive selection of prints and colors, the style of the jean remained largely the same; the skinny jean.

According to Debord (1983) society has become increasingly fixated by the glamour of the spectacle that everyday reality has become devalued and undermined. Baudrillard (1994) and (Sherry Jr. et al, 1991) also explored similar themes on the power of the spectacle in contemporary society when they expressed that the unreal is praised and celebrated above reality.

Below follows an observation from one of the members of our research team who acts as both observer and co-agent in the following scene:

I observe one female agent, exuding a hippie-like presence and casually attired in a knitted shapeless hat, high top sneakers, jeans and a t-shirt enter the WEEKDAY

stage, strolling in at a relaxed and steady pace stopping at a display/ramp to pick up, touch and carefully examining a pair of black jeans near the door that she had just entered. She proceeds to walk at a steady pace, past numerous displays of jeans on either side of her until she reaches the back of the store, she identifies another pair of jeans that peak her interest and crouches down to seek a size and color that she carefully examines and touches. By now she has one pair of black jeans slung in her arms and she proceeds to revisit the display that she had originally stopped at when she first entered the store but is now standing on the opposite side of the ramp where she had originally stood. She picks up a second pair of black jeans and veers to her left where she eventually reaches the back corner of the store to locate a staff member for help. As they interact for a few minutes in friendly banter, the young female enters into a change room to try on her black jeans. The female's movements throughout the scene on the main floor have been sporadic and no identifiable pattern has emerged, but as her movements are relaxed and her facial expression calm, it does not appear that she is frustrated or confused when navigating about the constructed maze-like honey comb structure. The female seems to be entertained by her visit to WEEKDAY and accepting of the chaotic and non-linear structure of the honeycomb and conforms to the contradictions the space offers as I watch her interact and touch numerous jeans that are on display as well as talk to staff on numerous occasions in an upbeat manner.

As I enter a change room across from the female I observe the door of the change room is nothing more than a piece of fabric hung low and well below neck level for many agents who may enter the change room. The loosely hung fabric cover of a door along with the angular mirrors on either side of the triangle shaped change rooms does little to hide the agent from other co-agents who may be defined as staff, friends, or strangers that periodically walk by challenging and raising questions that deal with the separation of the public from the private domains within a retail servicescape. The angles of the mirrors in the change room as well as on the walls of the ramps are placed in such a way so I, as an observer, may see everything that she is doing and vice versa. Although there are a few moments where I notice her looking at me by starring at the reflection in her mirror, she does not seem too bothered by my presence or perhaps she is pretending to not be conscious of the fact that patrons such as me are able to view her in the 'public' change rooms. I on the other hand, feel challenged and at times uncomfortable knowing just how much of the young female is exposed to me by the structure and shape of the angled mirrors and the loosely draped doors of the change room.

I self-consciously tell myself, I can see so much of her body and wonder, is she watching me as well? Did she notice me writing notes in my change room? All of a sudden I feel my face get warmer. I reluctantly try on a pair of jeans faster than I usually would as if to appear less inconspicuous and play the role of a customer as I am aware of the possibility that she may be watching me and I am curious as to whether or not she just saw me changing into a pair of jeans? As the female tries on her first pair of jeans, she comes out of her change room to model it for the staff member that she had originally talked to. They reciprocate each other well and

continue to engage in playful conversation and laughter. As she enters back into her change room, she spends a lengthy time in the change room looking inquisitively at her in the mirror evaluating her face, her body and her black jeans in the mirror. Her entire body, facial expressions are all visible to me and others from my change room across from her because of all the angled-triangular position of mirrors in our change rooms and the large open gaps in the fabric drapery that is used as a door cover. After over 20 minutes spent in the change room and two additional visits with staff members, she leaves the change room with a pair of jeans in her hands that she eventually purchases. After the young female had made her purchase, she continues to buzz and weave around jean displays that are located near the door she is about to exit and continues to pick up, touch and examine a few more pairs of brightly colored jeans until she does exit the scene of the main floor.

The scene of the honeycomb presents the female agent with the physical space in which to interact with the displays before her. Motivated by the physicality's of the props, jeans, she has selected, the agent interacts with co-agents, staff, as to the likeness of her selection. Further interaction with another co-agent, the researcher, is experienced when the two agents make eye contact and experience each others presence through the assistance of the placement of the rooms and their own position in the scene and the mirrors. After a lengthy amount of time in the change room the agent exits the scene after further navigation of the store, even after purchase.

In total the female agent spent close to one hour at the store where she touched and interacted with the honey comb structure, merchandise as well as various staff members at the WEEKDAY store and continued to savor her entertaining escape in as well after her final purchase. This agent moved around in no particular pattern but instead, demonstrated the 'buzzing' movement within the honey comb structure described previously. The postmodern individual such as the young female described here may be described as one who seeks out service settings more for their "linking value" than for their use-value (Cova, 1997) to satisfy a need for community. According to Cova (1997), postmodern consumer behavior on a global scale calls for a redefinition of the role and value of servicescapes as a place where the community gathers or links together. A communal exchange where the customer seeks a linking value in interacting with not only other clients but also personnel corresponds to aspects of contemporary tribal marketing where the servicescape houses predominantly societal exchanges, although with economic effects.

The main floor's maze-like honey comb structure encouraged agents who entered the store to buzz around in no particular order in a casual yet chaotic manner however; the agent observed seemed to enjoy the organized maze-like adventure as she casually strolled throughout the main floor. The mirrors in the change room attached to the honey comb structure also seemed to challenge the separation of public Vs private domains in a store servicescape however, the

female agent observed did seemed to be comfortable or at least accepting of the blurred boundaries of the exposing mirrors.

Act II, Scene 2 – Come Inside. Relax

The honey comb structure of WEEKDAY's main floor also represent another aspect of the post-modern shopping experience, where the layout among other elements within the store seem to promote an outlet for which shoppers congregate to socialize.

The following details an observation made by one of our researchers:

I observe a teenage skateboarder hanging out with two of his skater friends who have arrived at the store well before his arrival. As the teenager greets his friends, he then looks at a pair of jeans and proceeds to show his skateboard to his friends while resting his entire body on the walls on the honey comb structure. He then watches, gives advice to jeans styles that his friends are interested in and waits patiently while his other friends enthusiastically browse and touch the jewelry displays, running shoes, and jeans. After his friends sift through various displays of folded jeans, one of his friends purchases a pair of jeans and they leave together.

The scene of the honeycomb welcomes the agent and his co-agents, friends, to peruse the displays and interact with the products. The agent, stimulated by the structure of the scene is compelled to interact with environment by leaning on the wall and observing the actions of his co-agents. Further interaction with the scene includes touching the props, jeans, he is holding, and conversing with his friends about their product choices. The agents exit the scene of the honey comb through he exit after a co-agent purchases a pair of jeans.

It appeared as though the skateboarder I observed had come to WEEKDAY above anything else, to socialize with his friends, he was definitely interested in spending time with his skateboard and his friends on that sunny Thursday afternoon more so then he was in the jeans displayed at WEEKDAY. It was common for many of WEEKDAYs customers to enter the store in groups in a relaxed fashion where they appeared to browse casually at the props where it seemed apparent that the store had become a social meeting place for patrons as much as it was a space to fulfill customer's retail desires. As the postmodern consumer seeks adventure and authenticity in the experience, while satisfying their product or service needs, often times, this also includes a desire to be people to be connected to others who share similar interests. Cova (1997) stated that consumers not only need seek products and services that can 'liberate' them but also products or services that may link them to others, such as a community or a tribe. In the case of the teenager mentioned above, the WEEKDAY store on the main level became the social outlet and meeting place for the skateboarders where they not only united in their common interest in the skateboard sport but as well, the tight fitting

Cheap Monday jeans that we had seen many skateboarders wear during our in-store observations.

Act II Summary

The observations for honeycomb scene described the agents as a young woman and a teenage skateboarder who both came in the WEEKDAY store emitting a casual disposition in movement, attire and attitude. In this scene taking place in the honey comb structure of the main floor, the young agents were observed to be navigating throughout the honeycomb structure in non-linear buzzing movements of no identifiable pattern of action. This non-linear way of moving around can be seen as being in conflict with the normal store layout which wants to make people move in a linear manner in order to maximize the profit by having many people follow the same path, one after another. This scene includes the mirrors and change rooms attached to the honeycomb as well as the various Cheap Monday jeans that the agents touched and tried on. As the female agent tried on various props picked up off of the displays on the honeycomb for extended periods of time in the very 'public' change room, she continued to shop and interact with props on the ramps even after her purchase and took advantage of many opportunities to casually talk with WEEKDAY staff – the co-agents.

In Scene 2's observations, the honeycomb structure seemed to invite agents to come in and socialise with others where the honeycomb served a dual role as social meeting place as much as it was to facilitate retail purchases. The honeycomb structure seemed to become an entertainment element for the young woman as much as it was used to meet her retail needs as demonstrated by her continued interaction with props even after her purchase. The honeycomb structure for the boy on the other hand was purely a social structure; he was comfortable enough with the honeycomb that he rested his body on it in a relaxed fashion while he waited for his friends to patron the store. You could also say that the store had linking value where he could feel a belonging to the people around him.

Act III -Setting the Stage

Act III, Scene 1 – Suspended Hangers



As agents enter the upper floor of WEEKDAY, they will find that they have entered a completely different stage offering a large variation of costumes for men, woman, and children. As agents reach the top of the stairs, they are exposed to different materials used for the creation of the upper floor. While green plastic, white surfaces and glass embody some of the materials used to create much of WEEKDAY's main floor stage, metal, mirrors and similarly, glass, are the structural materials that occupy much of the upper level. Although there are still remnants of the energizing green plastic and white-painted displays found on the upper level, they seem to be over shadowed by the shiny metal hangers and the change rooms looking like they belonged in a carnival. The change rooms are splashed with sheets of silver and pink metal have mirrors both on the outside and inside of the rooms. The windows spanning one entire wall of the stage allow for natural sunlight to beam off of the metal hangers that are suspended from the ceiling and dispersed throughout the upper level stage. These hangers appear to resemble giant versions of the triangle instrument but with longer, graceful yet sturdy necks. Following the tradition of non-linear themes that run rampant on the WEEKDAY stage such as the distorted mirrors and the honeycomb structure, these triangular metal hangers take on different sizes, shapes and positions throughout the store and similar to the honeycomb, offer an opportunity for customers to weave around each hanger rather than walk from aisle to aisle as one would in a super market. On each of the triangles are various types of costumes that seem to be grouped by color palette or brand with the exception of the hangers carrying a selection of second hand costumes are at the rear of the upper floor.

A young woman entered the scene in a casual way when coming up from the stairs. She turned left and began here journey among the hangers. Was cruising back and

forth, and seemed to have an unplanned trip ahead. She stopped at different places among the woman's clothes; touched and picked up clothes at many of the stops that she made. When approaching the second hand clothes she stopped for a couple of seconds and looked around. Turned around and continued her journey among the hangers. Before leaving she also took a trip among the display tables near the windows. Touched and picked up some different jeans. She left the scene in the same casual way that she had entered it.

The scene of the upper floor presents the female agent with a maze of hangers to navigate through. Without offering a straight line, the physicality of the scene stimulates the agent to act by walking back and forth between hangers in no particular order. The agent exits the scene through the staircase.

Another agent enters the scene at another time. She comes up the stairs, stops and slowly pirouettes around so she can make up her mind about which course to take. Went straight over to the hangers with second hand clothes. Picked up something, held it up in front of her and looked into the mirror. Was talking to a friend while standing by the second hand shoes on the floor. Tried a pair of the shoes on and laughed. Before continue her journey to a changing room, she put back the shoes on the floor. After trying the clothes on she put it back on a hanger. Cruised over to some friends where she stopped. Was smiling and talking when she interacted with the co-agents. Took a last look by her self before leaving the scene.

Upon entering the same scene of the upper floor, the physicality's present the female agent and a friend, co-agent, with a myriad of choices of how to navigate the space. Mazes of hangers hang silently waiting for discovery. The agent went into action here by approaching the space, touching props, watching the scene, and socializing with the co-agent. The agent then exits the scene through the staircase.

When you think about being on a holiday or a day at the fair spontaneity might come to mind. Deciding from moment to moment where to go and what to do is often the fun and free part of our lives at large. Not having a pre-designated plan of action but improvising as you go along is a freedom many of us enjoy. After many observations, including the one's above, it has been noted that the spontaneous actions of the agents was what was interesting to us in these situations and not the route that anyone had taken. Although we tracked many agents meanderings hanger by hanger, what was more interesting to us was how the scene provided stimulus for the agents to interact. Many were observed to be browsing, talking, watching, and laughing. In this scene, no two patterns were alike in the routes the agents chose. There is a straight line running through the upper floor that many did end up on, even if for a short time, that takes you through the scene at any time to another section of the upper floor. Many did not appear to have pre-planned routes, and chose instead, to stay off the straight-away and buzz around the hangers in a non linear fashion.

Act III, Scene 2 – The Wall



Upstairs there are two display walls, one large one that is situated between the men's and women's clothing. The smaller wall is near the second hand clothes and is used to display second hand accessories. In our analysis I will focus on the larger wall between the men's and women's clothing sections.

Like "Absurd" theater, this scene is set up to evoke response from the consumer on an emotional level (Baron et al, 2001). The wall has small treasure boxes in various shapes and sizes within its structure. The green color of the boxes contrasts nice to the stark white wall. Behind the boxes there is a light that illuminates the green Plexiglas boxes. The treasures that are displayed in the boxes are varying props and include shoes, books, jeans, T-shirts, bags, footballs and so forth. When coming up the stairs you have the wall behind you, but if turn around you can't miss it. For me, it stood out and when it comes into your line of sight you want to approach it and go closer to look at all the things displayed, to see if there are any treasures to be found. I approached the wall out of curiosity. I stopped half a meter from the wall, looked at the boxes that were at eye level, looked down and at last I looked up. I experience I had was emotional; the wall gave me the impression that it was on its way down

to fall over me. I looked down. What was this? I asked my self. Am I just a little bit dizzy? I found out that the whole wall was tilting to the right, and as that was not enough it also tilted out over you. It was a feeling that I had never felt before when interacting with a display wall in a store and an emotion that I would say is conflict with the nice experience that I'm looking for when going shopping. Even if it made me feel uncomfortable it aroused an interest for the design of the structure of the store and made me look more closely at the displays and props. By setting up a scene that is influenced by "absurd" theater you are trying to provoke an individual response in every agent that enters the scene. Inspired by my own experience, I made the following observations using the wall area as a scene in which to observe.

On the Thursday I observed a woman in her twenties. She walked around among the hangers extensively and interacted with the clothes on display. Picked them up looked at the price on some items. She was taking her time to look around in a calm way, like when you are alone and you have enough time to be in the moment and interact with the environment. At her own pace, she interacts with the props that are on display. Before leaving the upper floor she walked by the wall and did not even turn her head to look at it when she walked by then went through the men's section before going down the stairs.

Stimulated by the hangers and props in the scene, the agent, a young woman, interacts with the hangers and props by touching and picking up the clothes, and by continuous approach behavior moves from hanger to hanger. The presence of the wall in the scene however, did nothing to motivate any interaction with the agent. The agent leaves exits the scene via the staircase.

This was a typical interaction with the scene during Wednesday and Thursday. Some people that walked by and interacted with the wall by looking at it as they walked past, but nobody stopped to interact with the treasure boxes that were displayed. On Friday when it was lönedag, or payday, the scene that included the wall appeared to stimulate interaction.

Before, the woman in her twenties, entered the scene she interacted with the clothes that were displayed on hangers, tables and even the shoes on the floor. When entering the scene she stops and looks at what is displayed on the wall. Does not touch anything, and then leaves the scene.

The scene of the hangers and wall stimulates the woman to look interact with the props, clothing, displayed on the hangers. While passing by the wall, she is motivated by it's structure to pause and gaze at the props, items, on display. The agent exits the scene via the staircase.

Another agent that was observed at a different time on Friday was a woman in her twenties that was accompanied by her boyfriend. The following act took place in the scene that includes that hangers and the wall after her boyfriend had entered the change room in the menswear section.

She walks over to the wall where she stops. Is there any treasure to be found? She sits down and looks in one of the boxes and interacts with the props within it. She finds a pair of men's shoes that she picks up. She leaves the scene with the shoes and leaves them to her boyfriend in the changing room. She enters the scene after a while and puts back the shoes in the box.

In the same scene containing the wall and the hangers that border the men's and ladies section, an agent, a young woman, accompanied by a co-agent, a young man are observed. Stimulated by the appearance of the wall, the agent acts by sitting down on the floor, acquainting herself with props, items, in the display. Holding a pair of shoes, the agent exits the scene to return minutes later to place the prop back into the display box. The agent exits the scene and goes into the menswear section.

What we found interesting when observing different customers and their interaction with the wall was not how they interacted, rather, *when* they interacted with it. During Wednesday and Thursday there was no interaction in form of touching and trying on the props that were on display, although a few people stopped and looked at the displayed merchandise. On Friday customers interacted with the wall, even picked up things and tried them on. Why there a difference between the days? Unfortunately we are not able to answer this question, because we did not do any interviews. One explanation can be the free choice we make in our daily life. A citation from one of Cova's (1997, p 304) articles might be an explanation; "... for the postmodern person, the leitmotiv is: 'It is as I wish and when I wish' according to the mood of the moment". According to Bitner (1992) an individual response to the environment can vary from day by day, even from hour to hour depending on plans and purposes for being in this environment, in this case WEEKDAY. On a Friday were most people had money and with the weekend coming, a customer might be looking for some extra nice clothes and accessories for weekend. Every Friday afternoon WEEKDAY has a disk jockey so the live music could also play a factor in the level of interaction in the servicescape.

The most remarkable findings in the observing the interaction between the agent, the scene and the props, was that it differed so much between the different days. The agents were much more into treasure hunting on the Friday. I would say that this is in conflict with what I would expect. When I don't have a lot of money in my pocket, I'm usually looking for small things to buy, and might look at small items like the ones displayed in the wall. What I noted most between these observations was that the consumers interactions with the space were unpredictable.

Act III Summary

The scenes described in Act II all seem to point to contradicting elements that have been identified throughout WEEKDAY's upper level stage. The wall is an example of the commonly flat wall versus unusually angled structure that made one researcher feel uneasy, perhaps illustrating a rejection of WEEKDAY's disruptions from more common retail structures. WEEKDAY's props exude themes of contradiction and cultural resistance (Webb, 2005: 121), it should be noted that it did not seem to deter the agents from continuing to patronize the WEEKDAY stage, instead what happened was that the props seemed to provoke initial interest and thought in the scenes as the agents curiously examined them. In addition, unpredictable levels of interactions that took place on the wall from Wednesday to Thursday perhaps indicates that differences in the agent's mood on any given day is largely unpredictable and sporadic and contradicting, much like the store structure of WEEKDAY. Even if the props and the scene motivates the agent to a certain act in form of interaction between the different terms in the pentad; the act that took place between the agent-wall and agent-hangers was performed in different ways.

Act IV - The Scopic Gaze

At WEEKDAY, the use of mirrors in the design concept is used to synergize and facilitate interaction between shoppers. Like a house of mirrors in a carnival, the mirrors reflect distorted illusions of space in the store, and in some locations, our bodies. The mirrors also create confusion regarding your orientation in the store. Both the main and second floor employ this effect and when standing in numerous locations one can use the reflective nature of the stores design to observe the environment. Here, experience is the product and the mirrors are a medium that enables shoppers to interact with and survey each other and the clothing. By standing at various locations shoppers are able to watch different parts of the servicescape, including the changing rooms.

“The scene of the carnival, where there is no stage, no ‘theatre’, is thus stage and life, game and dream, discourse and spectacle. By the same token, the carnival is proffered as the only space in which language escapes linearity (law) to live as drama in three dimensions” (Moi, 1986, p 49). The metaphorical retail stage at WEEKDAY creates a space in three dimensions that encourages moments where shoppers can approach the servicescape and be as interactive as they like with the environment and each other, or, interact simply by watching and being watched. Scopophilia is defined as the pleasure derived from looking and the vision-centered orientation of western culture has been widely acknowledged (Sherry et al, p 469). The scopic drive has been captured by theorists such as Lacan, Sartre, Foucault and Baudrillard and contemporary consumer researchers by the notion of the “gaze” (Sherry et al, 2001).

Nineteenth century thinker Jeremy Bentam's panopticon was a design for a perfect prison in which a round, hollow building was constructed with only a tower at it's center (Sherry et al, 2001). With a supervisor placed in the central tower and with the proper lighting, the supervisor could watch every cell, and the prisoner interred within would never know when he or she was being watched (Sherry et al, 2001). Foucault (1995) compared the cells to a multitude of small theatres in which visibility was a trap (Sherry et al, 2001). At WEEKDAY, the strategically placed mirrors allow the shoppers to employ this panopticon in reverse, viewing themselves and each other as part of a theatre while allowing for a variety of personal interpretations and leisurely wanderings of the constantly changing images appearing before and all around them.

Aside from other interpretations, this scopic gaze has been characterized in terms of power dynamics, identity politics and erotic energy (Sherry et al, 2001). In terms of the use of mirrors, the power dynamics at WEEKDAY have been democratized so that not only shopkeepers can gaze at the actions of shoppers, but can also include the reverse. Usually, mirrors and surveillance in a retail setting are used to watch shoppers in the event that they shoplift or act inappropriately. The use of mirrors here at WEEKDAY is for everyone to employ to watch themselves, the products, and each other and to incite interaction between the servicescape and the people inside it.

Act IV, Scene 1 – False Eyed Insects



On the main floor there are large illustrations of insects with false eyes on their back, wings, or antenna staring back at you while the insects true eyes are watching you from a different location on there body; tricking you into thinking you are being observed by one gaze while signifying the fact you are being watched from another. These insects can be seen through many of the reflections from the mirrors on the main floor, serving a serious and playful parody about the scopic gaze on the environment and the notion of someone or something always watching you.

I follow a young boy of about sixteen years as he wanders the main floor in search of jeans. He uses the scene of the honeycomb on the main floor upon which to interact with props, namely over 20 pairs of jeans. Picking some up and holding them up to his body, putting them down and moving on to the next display. After more than 5 minutes of similar action he is drawn to the sight of the insects on the wall. He approaches the murals and stops to look back at them for about 10 seconds. His facial expression is one of confusion and interest. He then turns and interacts with a pair of blue jeans and then gently paces them back neatly on the display and turns his gaze again to the insects before slowly wandering over to them and pausing to gaze at them again. He then exits the scene by leaving the store.

Here the teenager did not appear to notice me watching as he was busy observing the scene and the props within it. In addition, it is not clear whether or not the boy understood the conotated meaning of the insects as he would have had to have been familiar with the notion of false eyed insects and the signified meaning attached in order to act with or against the

grain of the scene, thereby accepting or rejecting the notion of being watched. Here the agent did neither, and simply interacted by acknowledging the mural and its images by making it a point of interest in his interactions with the space. As an observer himself, absorbed and confused by the images before him, he co-produced his own meanings and experience.

Saussure believed that one of the most important considerations of semiotics was to consider sociological-cultural implications when analysing signs and here the insects and their false eyes serve to dissolve the contradictions of public and private space through their symbolic representation (Saussure as translated by Harris, (1983). The scene of the honeycomb that supplies the structure for the reflections of the insects and mirrors to interact attempts to make comments about WEEKDAY providing a very public space in which to both shop and change in, where other retailers provide a public space to shop in and a private space to change.

The scene of the honeycomb and the mural of the false eyed insects produce the act through the sheer presence of material factors, or, props within it. The agent, a teenage boy is motivated into action when presented with the mural of artwork during his wanderings through the scene. The agent is stimulated to exhibit approach behaviour as he stops and consider what it is the image before him? Appearing confused and interested, the agent then acts by approaching one false-eyed insect for closer inspection, drawn in to gaze onto the insect with one large false eye on it's back. The mural provides fodder for this young agents interaction with the scene. Repeat interaction with the mural is noted as he acts again by pausing a second time, examining the insect while sifting through various pairs of blue jeans. The agent leaves the scene through the exit on the main floor that leads out onto the street.

Act IV, Scene 2 - Reflections on the Main Floor



There are eight change rooms on the main floor which are all constructed differently and reflect different parts of the scene for viewing. With white cloth curtains covering most of the room, it is at the same time hung low enough to make it easy for someone passing by to see what is happening in the change room and vice versa. This person passing by would according to Burke, be defined as a co-agent, and in this case could be staff, friends, or a stranger.

While standing well inside the entrance, near a display rack of jeans I looked straight ahead to a mirror that reflected the image of an agent, a young man in his early twenties, trying on a pair of jeans in a change room at the rear of the main floor. With another observer strategically placed in front of me so I can hide behind her and not look so obvious, I watch and record the action of the change room as I pretend to have a conversation with her about a pair of brown jeans. The mirror behind him reflects directly across the store, and depending on my vantage point, I am able to share his experience by watching. At the same time, his companion was peering over the change curtain to give her opinion as to the style and fit of the jeans. Not only can I see the false-eyed insect in the reflection of the mirrors in the change room, but also the full image of him changing.

I am nervous as I feel this may be unethical to watch someone change in a public space. However, the scene that is providing me with the image creates a setting that is dissolving this notion of right and wrong before my eyes. He opens the drape to discuss the fit with his friend and returns to change room to disrobe again. While standing in his underwear he speaks at length to his friend who is standing in front of the change room while his image is reflected around the scene of the main floor

for me to see from my exclusive vantage point. After changing back into the clothes and his co-agent leave the scene of the change room to purchase the jeans he had tried on.

This scene takes place on the main floor at WEEKDAY in a change room near the back of the store close to the sewing machine. The agent, a young man is accompanied by a female co-agent. The scene, comprised of change room and a pair of jeans, function as a stimulus to act as the agents changes into the pair of jeans. The agent then interacts with his co-agent by conversing back and forth with her showing her his new garment. After changing back into the clothes he entered the scene wearing, the agents exit the scene with the pair of jeans as they walk towards the cash register to purchase the jeans.

Instead of occupying a space where a voyeur may watch unsuspecting people in the change room, this scene provides a friendly confine where people are encouraged to interact with the images surrounding them. Instead of feeling constrained or violated, the agent in this instance did not react with avoidance behavior to his own reflections being strewn about, rather, he embraced the contradiction of his own reflections as the space provided him to participate in drama in three dimensions; something that in everyday life, we often do not get to do. In effect, the scene provided liberating circumstances in which to interact with the scene, its props, and co-agents without concerns about privacy. As shoppers get more used to this environment, we observe that the blended notion of public and private become very casual.

Act IV, Scene 3 – My Own Reflections



The scene of the change rooms on the second floor are designed to allow the shopper to see their reflection from any angle and since they have a neighbor on one side, they can also view, like a small theatre in the next change room, the person in the neighboring room and vice versa. With mirrors on both the inside and outside of the rooms, the change areas are enclosed with a mirrored material that reflects back a highly distorted set of images all around the inside and outside of the change room, often casting over into the next room. Unlike a regular mirror in a change room in another store or the ones on the main floor at WEEKDAY, these mirrors are like a fun house in a carnival. The mirrors distort the view of others and ourselves and perhaps seek to serve the shopper to question their appearance and the concept of the importance of physical appearance itself. Since we cannot fully gauge how an item of clothing looks on us through distorted mirrors we are limited in our usual actions. Does this look good? Becomes a silly question that becomes impossible to answer because of the distorted reflections. How important is it to have complete privacy while changing? Something we are accustomed to in other retail servicescapes. The mirrors at WEEKDAY serve to make us as consumers ask questions about the private and public sphere. The level of privacy here at WEEKDAY is negotiated by which change room you choose, anyone in the middle has the possibility of having a neighbor of whom they would share their image(s), and, if you choose

the rooms on either end, then you can reduce the image you share as it will not have a neighbor and will only share images with the people(s) outside.

As an observer, I decided to try on clothes in the upstairs room and entered a change room in the middle with 2 pairs of pants. Soon after a young man arrived also with two pairs of jeans to occupy the room next to me. Suddenly, I was very aware of all my actions and even more, my image that I was watching in the next room that he occupied. Speedily, I tore of my jeans and tried to hide my lower body from view as I maneuvered to try on the new pants. I could hear and see my neighbor doing the same. I normally would take my time in this instance if I was alone, admiring the new pants and how they might look on me. This time however, I could not change fast enough knowing that there was someone of the opposite sex beside me who could be watching. Awash with images of myself and my neighbor, I left the change room to consult with my team of observers as to the fit of the pants and to my experience.

Nervous and charged with awkward energy I returned to the room where my neighbor was still there. I tried the second pair of pants while my neighbor did the same. This time I am no longer shocked in regards to the images I am seeing and feel as though I am being watched as I myself am watching the reflections. I feel that both of us are avoiding eye contact as we try to pretend we can't see each other. With an unpleasant fit I left the room to seek privacy outside the change room and again consult the other observers in my team. Minutes later I return to a room without a neighbor and am relieved to change with the distorted images of my body alone. Upon leaving the change room I begin to feel nauseous and continue to feel ill for the next hour and a half. I can compare it to the feeling of sick feeling you get from being on a thrilling yet disorienting ride at the fair. This experience made me question why it made me so nervous to change next to a stranger? After all, is it such a big deal to share my image with perfect strangers at WEEKDAY?

In this instance I was trying to uphold the contradictions that the store was trying to dissolve. By changing quickly and trying to hide my image I was going against the grain of what the store design was providing as I tried to construct my own private space within the more public space of the change area. I rejected the notion of having a space where strangers meet to share a moment where private space becomes, in this scene, public. My neighbor also seemed quite nervous by his hurried behavior, going against the intended grain of the scene that is trying to dissolve the self-conscious nature that we have been taught to have outside the privacy of our homes, ourselves, and people close to us. This scene enacted constrained consumer behavior and went against the objectives of the scene, but also served to have us both question our levels of comfort around strangers in the public sphere. This scene creates a space where the public and private become very controversial and seeks to question, why our privacy is so sacred to us and why we need to have our very own space at all?

The scene described above takes place in between two change rooms on the second floor of WEEKDAY. The mirrors in this scene are revealing, distorting and sometimes disorienting and reflect between the two change rooms. The two rooms could be considered two scene's interplaying at once, but for the sake of this description, we will consider this as one scene reflecting two rooms together. The agent here is a female researcher who decided to take on the role of agent and observer at once. The co-agent is a young man who occupied the room beside the agent.

At first, the agent is alone in the scene, although once the scenic changes have taken place and the co-agent occupies the next room the motivating principles of the scene quickly serve to effect the subsequent acts of clothes changing taking place for both agent and co-agent. The enclosed rooms that reflect each others images become the motivating principle of their subsequent act of hurried changing. With another scenic change for both agents in new costumes and an option to keep gazing at the images, to change again, or to exit, the agent is motivated to exit the scene to escape the images before her and consults her other co-agents, researchers, who are outside of the scene.

Upon re-entering the scene the agents repeat the act of changing into the second costume, jeans. Her co-agent does the same. Presented by the images of each other in the scene, the agents observe and consume the visual display before themselves without interacting directly or making eye contact. Again, the agent exits the scene to retreat to her other co-agents as to the fit of the jeans. The agent re-enters the scene and this time her co-agent is gone. Stimulated into action by the images before her of herself alone, the agent takes her time to change and gaze comfortably at the images of herself strewn about the scene. The agent exits the scene into the menswear section at WEEKDAY.

Act IV, Scene 4 – The Exposed Production Areas



The open design of production of dyeing and silk screening room encased behind a large glass window on the second floor at WEEKDAY allow the customers the scopic gaze upon the process of design and production of jeans and t-shirts unfolding before their eyes. The same concept is used for the sewing machine on the main floor where you can watch your jeans being hemmed right before you without any surface between you and the machine. This design, in effect, brings the producer consumer relationship closer together and enriches the consumer experience by allowing them to see the personalization of the product offering in both production and consumption modes, appealing to our urge to have communal experiences and a closer relationship with the goods that we consume. This serves to authenticate our shopping experience in a time where we are very aware that the goods we consume are easily replicable and produced by people we don't know personally. The presentation of these exposed production areas also include the interaction of agents who make regular use of the production areas before us, infusing drama into the scene for us. Even though some of the clothing is produced in faraway factories abroad, we can feel as though the whole process could be housed right inside the building at WEEKDAY and gives us a moment to share the sense of community with strangers who share common beliefs of consumption and the shared experience of perusing the same servicescape and sharing the same brands (Aubert-Gamet and Cova, 1999).

After spending three days observing, I did not see anyone interact with the exposed production scenes mentioned above. I did however, observe staff as agents within the scenes and thought that it provided an action packed space for which another agent, a shopper, could feel authenticated for being a part of. In the absence of any consumer observations I cannot

share data that I have recorded and instead can only offer a description of the scene and possible implications of the space these areas provide; and these are mentioned above.

Act IV Summary

The false-eyed insects, mirrors, change rooms and the exposed production areas present a space where there we may experience conflict with the images displayed before us, rejecting or accepting them. Challenging, distorting and confusing the lines of the norms of public and private that we are used to, the space allows consumers to question the images before them while begging new thoughts and behaviors by presenting contradictions in space for us to interact with.

Compared to more typical retail servicescapes the space at WEEKDAY draws a fuzzy line between public and private, observer versus observed and production versus consumption. The physical space at WEEKDAY helps us to challenge our rational notions of how to behave in this setting. The observations of the interactions taking place as illustrated throughout much of scenes in this analysis points to varying levels of resistance of the agents to the boundary bending experience that is instigated by space at WEEKDAY. In the reverse panoptical scopic gaze that the space provides, consumers are encouraged to watch each other within the servicescape, as well as be aware that they themselves are being watched as they watch, perhaps questioning why we watch each other and making the spectacle of the scopic very public.

The scene of the honeycomb that supplies the structure for the reflections of the insects and mirrors to interact attempts to make comments about the public space at WEEKDAY an in general. The scene presents stimulus in conflict with other retailers by making private areas public for viewing. By providing a very public space in which to both shop and change in, we may be motivated to questions the conventions we hold about watching and being watched, and public and private.

Conclusion and Findings

In contemporary consumer society, time is scarce and entertainment is viewed as a vital and necessary force in addressing the 'emotional needs' of post-modern life. The prevalence of entertainment in shopping thus complements such a society that views shopping as a leisure activity in itself where spectacle and entertainment are fulfilling an increased consumer need driven by consumer interest for more community, leisure, and escapist relaxation (Wolf, 1999). As more and more retailers deliver experiential entertainment on-the-go, the space at WEEKDAY provides a one stop temporary carnival shopping experience in the heart of city life without an admission fee. Costumes are provided with props in store for interaction and entertainment and can be purchased for home and further public use.

Presented on the retail stage at WEEKDAY, the servicescape takes the form of an act, playing out in several scenes throughout the store at any given time. Using the metaphor of the retail space taking the form of a stage and written as an act has allowed us as researchers a better vantage point to see the drama unfold around us as researchers and in effect, allowed the process of observing to be more creative. As presented in our analysis, using Burke's pentad we attempt to reveal how the interaction on the stage of the store serves to invoke drama in our everyday life while providing a space in which to shop for clothing, interact with the servicescape and each other, question rational and traditional norms, and watch moments of drama unfold around us.

In our study of WEEKDAY, we have observed how the producer-consumer relationship is interdependent and co-reliant on each other and validates itself through the producer, defined as stage designers and retail managers, providing the space in which the consumer is stimulated to improvise, interacting with the servicescape according to their own mood and desires; in effect weaving their own authentic experience via their interactions. As post-modernity emphasises that individuals be given the opportunity to customize his own participation in his social world (Aubert-Gamet, 1996, p 30), so did the structures at WEEKDAY; stimulating individually customized scenes where individuals could interact socially on the stage at WEEKDAY. The retail space provides a place for leisure and socializing, providing an important medium for interaction, "[...] as well as arenas for synthesizing leisure and consumption" (Kent, 2007, p 737).

The acts of the theatre at WEEKDAY are comprised of individual scenes that explore that conflict between the set and the actors and sometimes even the observers. In each scene we observe, we look for moments of drama, or signs of struggle between the space and consumers. Through this process, as researchers, we have looked at the space in the store as one that is similar to a carnival. Like a carnival, WEEKDAY is a place where you go to escape, play and have fun. Carnivals though, are not all fun and games and often present a

conflict or friction that ignites dialogue. The carnival has a more serious undertone besides the silly and outrageous notions these fairs have when the image first comes to mind. In discourse, the carnivalesque disputes law and, at the same time, is a social and political protest (Moi 1986, p 36). The carnival challenges traditional western thought and the resulting institutional rules and behavior that goes along with rational and traditional thinking including beliefs about god, authority and social law; the carnival in nature is rebellious (Moi, 1986, p 49). Using Burke's pentad to see the retail space in dramatic terms, we can compare these at times seemingly nonsensical and ridiculous design concepts and props at WEEKDAY to this same rebellious nature of the carnival. Again, using Burke's ratio of the scene stimulating the act, the carnival can be viewed as encouraging or inciting behavioral response. This sensibility can be viewed in the design concepts at WEEKDAY, presented in conflict with the traditional ways of designing space and structures in retailing in order to stimulate consumer interaction and provoke dialogue about the conflicting nature in the physicality's of the space in the store.

The carnivalesque structure of anti-traditional and anti-rational pushes towards new perspectives and the space at WEEKDAY and encourages a point of rupture between traditional thought and new ideas through a space where consumers can attempt uphold the contradictions of rational thought presented by the space or push through them to define new ones (Moi, 1986, p 50). We present these points of rupture in the analysis while contributing to our original insights in the analysis of the blurring of boundaries of public versus private, production versus consumption, and order versus chaos. For example, consumers can choose to uphold the traditions of the conflicting notions of public versus private with reverse panoptical gaze provided by the mirrors at WEEKDAY by rejecting the notion of being watched and avoiding the scopic gazes of others via their own placement in the servicescape or simply by leaving, thus upholding their rationally held notions of privacy in public space. Alternately, by engaging and interacting with the images, consumers can push through the barriers of the norms of rational thought and stimulate new experiences and ideas, celebrating the point of rupture that the conflicting nature of carnival provides while reconsidering their notion of privacy in a retail setting and perhaps in general. These points of rupture can be viewed as a space where culture forsakes itself in order to go beyond itself and can serve to stimulate dialogue that abolishes the black and white parallels that are presented through the norms of rational and traditional ideals (Moi, 1986).

The three dimensions of space at WEEKDAY invoke drama through the design of the servicescape, and serve to disorient consumers while challenging the notions of traditional interaction that we bring when we enter into the servicescape. The ideals of the carnival are presented in various scenes on the retail stage. The fun house style mirrors, the honeycomb structure that resembles a maze inviting you to come and explore, and the wall upstairs, to name a few, all challenge the norms of how retailing is presented. Presenting a conflict in the store design for consumption, the store space invites a point of rupture with the consumers as they have the opportunity to break through conventions they hold of retail store design and also to break through the conventions of whatever else they bring in the store with them, whether it be mood, ideals, or values. Cova (1997, p 304) writes "...for the postmodern

person, the leitmotiv is: 'It is as I wish and when I wish' according to the mood of the moment". Often times, the mood or the moment will include a desire to be connected to others who share similar interests to us. Consumers that have share a communal interest in breaking through norms and traditions may find the opportunity to share a space with others that hold similar ideals at WEEKDAY. Cova (1997) argues that consumers are not merely looking for products and services that will liberate them per se, but also products and services which can link them to others, such as a community or a tribe. It is even claimed that the postmodern individual seeks out service settings less for their use-value (functional or symbolic) than for their "linking value" in order to satisfy his/her need for community. Many consumers observed seemed to occupy the space at WEEKDAY for communal reasons, often leaving the store without a purchase but perhaps leaving with a sense of belonging and further, a new dialogue about traditional and rational thoughts to decommoify after leaving. Further, Cova (1997) says that on a global scale this postmodern consumer behavior calls for a redefinition of the role and value of servicescapes as a place where the community gathers or links together. At WEEKDAY consumers are linked together by the space that holds the sensibilities of the carnival and can experience a communal exchange of dialogue and ideas as they question the space around them. By consuming and interacting with the space, the consumer not only has the chance to participate in boundary breaking with the norms suggested by commonly held retail conventions, their interactions also leave room to co-create their own experiences and emerge with new dialogues with themselves and each other as they write their own act, scene by scene throughout their interactions in the servicescape.

Our analysis reveals that the post-modern consumer is difficult to predict, encouraging us to rethink the value of traditional consumer behavior research methods and what they can effectively tell us. The data we recorded implies that the themed servicescape suggests ways in which the consumer can interact with the space, but ultimately, the consumer decides whether or not they confound or conform to the stimulus suggested by the space. Our data also implied that the servicescape provides a social space, for people who share similar interest in the brands they consume, in which to interact and be creative with each other.

In our study, we did not focus on many aspects of the retail environment that influence consumer behavior like scent, music and color for example and focused on the space and structure primarily. Using Burke's pentad to guide future research on consumer behavior may help to illuminate further consumer interactions in a retail setting with other experiential aspects of consumption. With the notion of the carnival in mind, further research into the planning of retail settings that design retail space that is engaging and rebellious in nature could contribute to the body of research into themed post modern consumer spaces. For retail store designers, the consideration to use dramatic carnivalesque designs in the store structure may assist in providing a space where people can interact, encouraging people to return for the value of the experience and to satisfy their need to feel belonging within a community. A residual effect of this of course is economic benefits to the retailer as consumers may not only take the experience away with them but also some of the props for future use.

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Appendix A - Floormaps

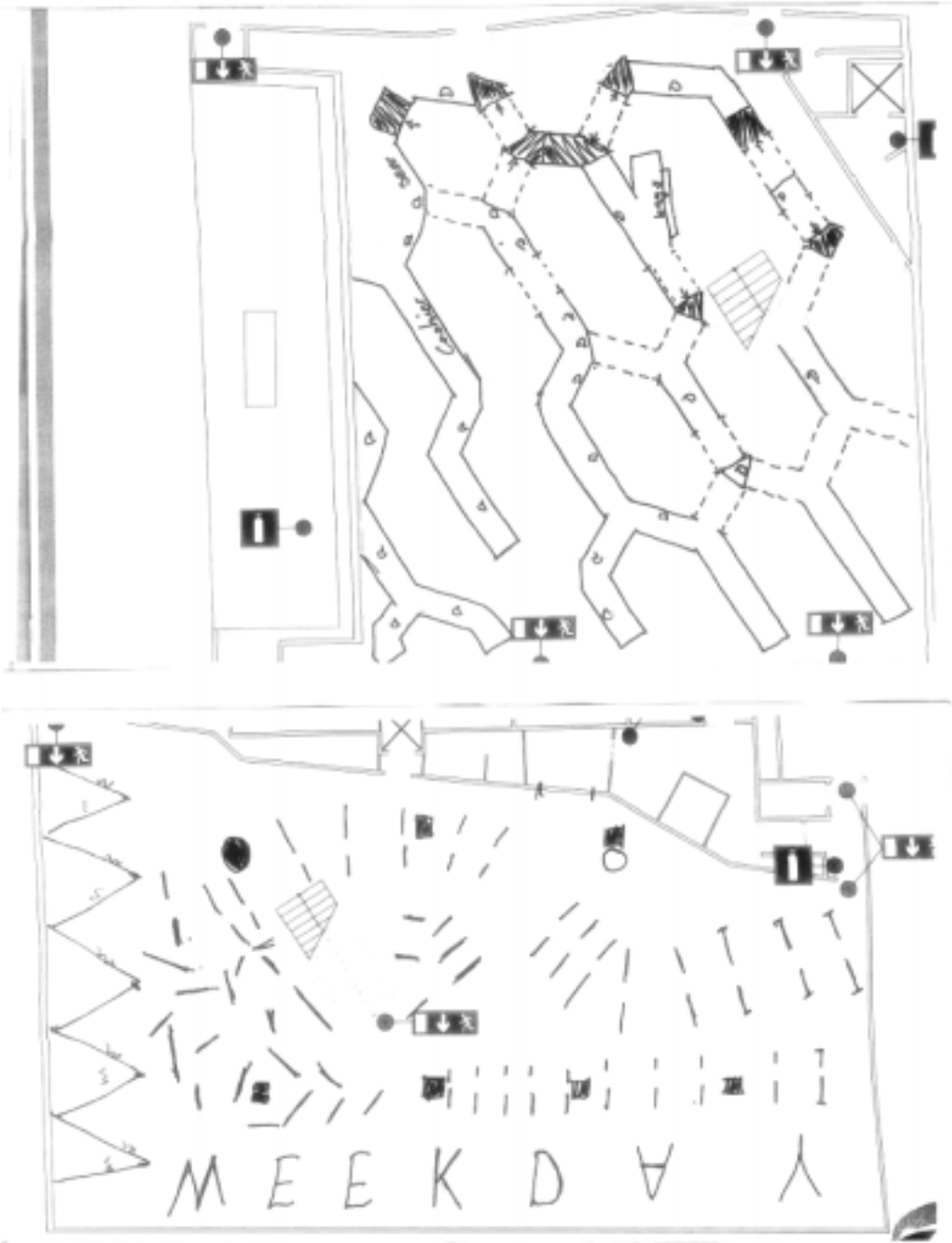


Figure 2 (Top to bottom) Ground floor and Upper floor