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Editors

Work,
Subjectivity
and Learning

Understanding Learning through Working Life

Springer

WORK, SUBJECTIVITY AND LEARNING

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Technical and Vocational Education and Training:
Issues, Concerns and Prospects

Volume 6

Work, Subjectivity and Learning

Understanding Learning through Working Life

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INTRODUCTION BY THE SERIES EDITORS

There is a world-wide consensus that life-long learning and education for all provide the foundation upon which economic and social development, and the empowerment of individuals and their communities, is built. Nowhere are these pillars of learning more important than in the area of workforce and workplace education. For example, within UNESCO, concerning skills development for employability it is argued that lifelong education for all will not occur unless there is also at the same time universal access to high quality, lifelong technical and vocational education and training for all.

This important volume is concerned with exploring how we think about work and working life, with particular reference to lifelong learning; and with the important role 'subjectivity' plays regarding learning in the workplace.

Due to important, all-pervasive matters such as globalization and the increasing use of the new information and communication technologies, there is a need in the modern-day workplace for employees to constantly upgrade their existing knowledge and skills, and also to retrain and learn new types of skills, over time. This has become an essential, career long process.

This book explores in what ways workforce learning occurs, be it in the classroom, through on-the-job training or through informal and non-formal means. Although some of this learning is planned, much of it is incidental learning. The chapters present perspectives on the important role of subjectivity in achieving effective learning for work and work practices. This does not only apply to those employed in large firms, but also to the self-employed, since both need to continuously upgrade their knowledge, skills and understandings to be most effective in undertaking their work.

When considering subjective dimensions of learning in the workplace it should be remembered that this is a two-way, interactive process. Not only does work and learning help mould the identities of employees, but employees are not simply passive recipients since they can themselves be influential in affecting the characteristics of the work and learning being undertaken, and the workplace in which this occurs.

As the editors of this volume themselves point out, this book is but a starting point since the scope of the contributions (and contributors) represented in this volume are not representative of the full range of perspectives on work, subjectivity and learning throughout the world. Rather, the contributions focus on Western, developed countries, with little information on developed countries in other regions of the world, or on developing countries. Perspectives are also absent regarding those undertaking low-income and dangerous work, and young workers. This book never-the-less reports on interesting and provocative perspectives concerning employees' 'constructions of reality' regarding work and learning. As such it raises important issues and concerns which other researchers can further explore, to ascertain their applicability to other parts of the world, to developing countries and to employees in a wider variety of occupations.

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PREFACE

This book addresses issues about work and working life that are global, pervasive and are shaping conceptions of how we think about work, workers and their learning. These developments include the heightened concern within Western countries about maintaining their economic standing and stability in an increasingly globalised economy. Governments are consequently often found to be shifting their focus from schooling to emphasise educational processes and outcomes that are closely aligned to paid employment. These include processes of workforce development which respond to the need for workers to remain productive and competitive, and resistant to unemployment throughout their lengthening working lives. Private and public sector organisations are also increasingly concerned about their employees maintaining the currency of their skills. This concern is motivated by increasing competition in the production of goods or delivery of services, and in ways which will sustain and possibly develop the organisations that employ them. Individuals are now being expected to take a greater responsibility for the maintenance and development of their skills throughout their working life. So, there is a growing interest in and imperatives for individuals to learn for and through work and work life.

At the same time understanding how this learning might best progress remains uncertain and subject to new theorising as many existing theories are found wanting. The potential for their augmentation and integration with other ideas is currently bounded by disciplinary barriers. Procedurally, conventional workplace training approaches that emphasize instructional delivery and evaluation do not always account for how learning occurs outside of planned intentional learning interludes, which are often seen as being the most potent of learning experiences. Yet, efforts to understand the bases of this kind of learning, including its intentionality, direction and contributions are not explained by theories that privilege either the individual or social contributions to learning by excluding the other. This is because the knowledge to be learnt is not only a product of the social world, but its construction (i.e. learning) by individuals is premised on their construal and mediation of what they experience and how they engage with what is afforded them. So, the cognitive revolution with its focus on individual expertise premised on the effective manipulation of

individual cognitive structures is now being overwritten by theories that emphasise the social contributions of knowledge and learning. Emerging conceptions of learning for work seek to account for both personal and social contributions to understanding learning, work and individual's participation in the practice. At the centre of these is the agency of the individual as a participant engaged in work, learning and remaking work. Perhaps most saliently, that agency is itself given volition, direction and intent by individuals' subjectivities. Therefore, given these movements and this moment, it seems timely to gather, appraise and discuss perspectives that can inform the contributions of subjectivity to participating in learning for and through paid work.

To this end, this book comprises a series of chapters representing contemporary international perspectives on the role of subjectivity in securing effective work practices and learning for work and throughout working life. The authors invited to contribute to this collection are those seen as engaging in attempts to understand the relationships among work, subjectivity and learning. They bring quite different theoretical perspectives to this task and exercise their interests in diverse contexts. Necessarily, they are from a range of countries and continents. These authors were also selected because they had useful things to say about this subject: the subject. Their particular perspectives address the question provided here through different and, in places, quite distinct consideration of the role that individuals' subjectivity play in their work life. Beyond the introductory chapter, Tara Fenwick argues that self-employed professionals in Canada learn to work a dialectic of becoming 'fixed' in particular subject positions that they help to constitute and that advance their economic and social status, while preserving lines of flight from these subject positions. Margaret Somerville, argues that placing the body at the centre of our thinking about work and learning, shifts how we see the production of knowledge and subjectivities. She elaborates this through to the study of learning safety at work in order to illuminate some aspects of the relationship between subjectivity, work and learning.

Taking the Scandinavian concept of working life, Henning Salling Olesen aims to theorise subjectivity as being societal by proposing a theoretical framework for analysing work-related learning as individual, subjective experience without losing sight of its societal dimension. His chapter builds upon the life history project of studying individuals' learning in particular working life settings. Kathryn Church poses the question – Who do we think we are? – as a device to convey what she and her colleagues learned about their own subjectivity in the course of their research into the subjectivities and learning of disabled bank workers. It provides a focused and fresh account of the centrality of workers' subjectivities as manifested in considerations of attire. In their chapter, Hermine Scheeres and Nicky

Solomon focus upon governing the self in work. Much of the learning involves workers becoming subject to and subjects of various organisational practices in which they participate.

Lena Abrahamsson's chapter deploys gender as a concept and perspective to discuss learning and doing gender at workplaces. It explores the changing subjectivities of mine site workers whose work has been transformed by machinery and, in particular, the use of robots in underground mining operations. This transformation to mining practices disrupts and challenges the existing identity of the miners, who now conduct mining work quietly and safely from buildings above ground. In this dramatic remaking of mining work there are also issues of transformation in subjectivities about miners. From their early considerations of personal epistemology, Christian Harteis, Hans Gruber and Franz Lehner, identify how individuals' epistemological beliefs shape the work of university teachers. These include the understanding of the nature of knowledge and knowing and professional learning and development. The field of university teaching with particular reference to implementing e-teaching is used to provide empirical evidence on the nature and impact of epistemological beliefs upon teachers' work.

Stephen Billett and Ray Smith, in their chapter, similarly focus on issues associated with personal epistemologies and the salient role that subjectivity plays in learning to initially engage and understand the requirements for work, and then negotiate workplace transformations throughout their working life. They also use studies of workers' experience of work and their working lives over time. Using studies of teachers' development and practice in Finland, Anneli Eteläpelto and Jaana Saarinen's chapter examines the mutually constitutive relationship of the individual and the social context in work. In particular, it seeks to understand the individual nature of the subjective experiences of participants in socially shared activities, and the consequences of these experiences for learning.

Richard Edwards and Kathy Nichol propose that workplaces need to be examined for the spatio-temporal ordering of practices and the actors drawn into them in order to move beyond the totalizing discourses of for instance, the knowledge economy, globalization, performativity and even workplace learning itself. They hold that that there is no single trajectory for workplace subjectivities and that pedagogic practices are embedded in the actor-networks of specific workplaces.

Jan Allan describes a study of New Zealand farming women's sense of themselves as work partners and wives. She proposes that the role and place of farming women is essential to understanding farming families, farm life and farming communities. This is particularly so when changes to farming and rural communities stand to threaten their continuities

and prospect for survival. She discusses how the learning experiences and changes in subjectivity in both farming men and farming women are shaped by changes in farming life. Mary Alfred elaborates the complex issues of subjectivity for non-African blacks in American university settings in her chapter. She explores the ambiguities and challenges the transnational female minority scholar experiences in US higher education. It draws from narratives of women from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, who experienced the academy in various spatial locations in order to explore the interconnection and shifting notions of identity and place as they relate to learning and work in institutions of higher education. Catherine Casey explores ways in which renewed attention to the worker's subjectivity in the course of education, training and learning interventions can widen the personal and collective possibilities for workplace development and for enactment of decent work. Each author has defined their principle terms and premises for learning and subjectivity, which provide a set of diverse perspectives

Finally, Fenwick and Somerville in their chapter compare these views of subjectivity and learning in work taken up by chapter authors to identify the perspectives of subjectivity and processes of subjectification that are presented across this volume and how these are linked to work and learning. They identify and respond to key questions that place in prospect associations between learning and subjectivity. They conclude by returning to the centrality of the relations between the social and individuals in considering learning and subjectivity.

Clearly there are limits to the number and scope of contributions. It will be noted by the reader that many are based in wealthy, Western countries and employed in universities. Certainly, the attempt was made to be representative in terms of gender, backgrounds and contexts. Yet, the arguments presented here lack important perspectives from Indigenous and non-Western worldviews. Also absent is a balance in analyses of workers in low-income or precarious work, young workers, workplaces characterized by oppression and abuse, and contributors speaking from contexts of 'developing' countries. These and other absent perspectives may well expose further urgent issues for consideration of the intersections of work, learning and subjectivity. While there is a regret that not all voices could be heard in this volume, the work here is very much starting point, perhaps a base for those voices to critique and engage in dialogue.

CONTRIBUTORS

Lena Abrahamsson, associate professor, is a work organisation researcher at the department of Human Work Sciences at Luleå University of Technology, Sweden. She is currently doing research on organisational changes, workplace learning and gender – in some Swedish industrial companies and public organisations. She has been a consultant in the area of production and organisational change to industrial companies in Sweden.

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1

Work, Subjectivity and Learning

Stephen Billett

The significance of the relationships among work, subjectivity and learning is proposed here as a means to understand how individuals are motivated to and direct their learning throughout working life. This, it is proposed, stands as a timely and necessary activity required to inform policy and practice, and also identify the kinds of conceptual premises that are needed to advance our understanding about learning through work and throughout working life. In this chapter, some premises for the discussion within this book are elaborated. These include the centrality of subjectivity in understanding the relations between the individual and the workplace in work and learning related activities, and the relationships among them. These terms are also elaborated from the author's perspective and discussed in terms of how they are represented across and within perspectives that inform considerations about work and learning. In concluding, a typology of conceptions of self are advanced as a way of illuminating different disciplinary conceptions and evolution of the concept of self. These different conceptions of self are intended to open out, rather than constrain, the important emerging discussion about the relations among subjectivity, work and learning.

1.1   Work, Subjectivity and Learning

Maintaining and improving the capacity of individuals to be effective in their work life is now held as being central to maintaining and promoting individual, local and national well-being (OECD 2000). Such is the importance of this imperative that in contemporary times, governments and employers alike it is claimed are mobilizing individuals to participate energetically and resourcefully in a global economic competition against

counterparts elsewhere within their nation and those in other countries (Field 2000). That effectiveness is seen as workers' capacities to withstand or capitalise on an increasing globalised economy, respond effectively to transformations in technology and contribute to maintaining or developing further personal, social and economic well-being. Central to this mobilisation is the co-opting of individuals' abilities and interest to continually develop and transform their capacity to be effective in paid work throughout their working lives. So, beyond maintaining the continuity of individual employment and advancement, the purposes for mobilising individuals throughout lifelong learning includes supporting and promoting domestic economic goals associated with quality of life within nation states. This includes the prospects for the maintenance of welfare provisions that individuals or their families require now or later (i.e. education, healthcare and aged care). Yet, in countries with western style economies a growing imperative for individuals to 'help themselves' as governments seeks to 'enable' individuals, rather than provide for them, is also emerging (Edwards 2002).

However, without knowing more about how individuals engage in and learn through work and throughout working life, how they confront change and, are motivated to learn the kinds of capacities that governments and employers value, there can be little certainty about whether government and employer expectations of individuals are realistic. What initiates and directs individuals' learning throughout their working lives is far from being fully understood. Accordingly, we need to know more about how individuals learn throughout their working life, how they exercise their agency in participating in and learning through work and on what bases and for what purpose this agency is exercised throughout their working lives. In short, *what is it that directs individuals' learning throughout their working lives?*

Certainly, understandings about learning for and throughout working life have moved quickly in recent years away from a focus on workplace interventions as in training. Instead, there is growing body of work that focuses on learning as a component and outcome of individuals' engagement in work and work-related activities and interactions (e.g. Church and Luciana 2004; Fenwick 2001, 2002, 2004; Hodkinson and Hodkinson 2003, 2004). Such perspectives acknowledge a broader set of personal workplace factors that shape workers' learning and development, beyond those provided through intentional instructional interludes (e.g. Billett and Somerville 2004, Fenwick 2002). Consistent with this view is the recognition that learning through engagement in work is necessarily shaped by the diverse ways in which individuals elect to engage or participate in workplace activities. Principally, this engagement in work and work-related learning appears to be mediated by individuals' subjectivities

(Allan 2005; Billett and Pavlova 2005; Eteläpelto 2004; Fenwick 2002, 2004; Somerville and Abrahamsson 2003).

However, different conceptions of subjectivity emerge when analysts explain this engagement in work-learning. Most agree that individuals' conscious awareness and unconscious desires and attachments contribute to their adoption of a particular subject position. Most acknowledge that power works to produce subjects, and the debate continues about how to understand the intersection of power external to individuals (such as disciplinary norms and other social regulations) and power that appears to emerge from individuals, enacted as 'agency' or 'resistance' to subjection. Many recognize the paradox of power that brings forth at the same time that it represses the subject, and simultaneously produces the conditions for the subject's resistance. Indeed, some authors in this collection understand subjectivity as individuals' project of constructing conceptions and dispositions to use in their engagement in the social world. In this conception, subjectivity is individuals' manifestation and projection of a sense of self that stands to direct their agency and intentionally, by degree and direction, when engaging in work and learning throughout working life. Yet, through these very processes that sense of self is also prone to being transformed. Individuals' sense of self includes how they present themselves to the social world and make sense of that world, as in their gaze or through the discourses to which they have access (i.e. how they construe what they experience). It is also aligned to personal and social identity, which includes what social and cultural forms and practices individuals wish to be associated. Also aligned with the exercise of subjectivity in seeking to secure, maintain or transform the self (i.e. maintain ontological security) are individuals' personal epistemologies (Bauer et al. 2004; Smith 2005) through which this agency and intentionality is exercised in workplaces and working life. Together, considerations of subjectivity, self and personal epistemologies stand to inform the motivations for and processes of individuals' engagement in learning through work life and throughout working life. Other conceptions of subjectivity will be developed more fully through the contributions of this book.

Building upon these premises, this chapter proceeds by initially discussing the relationship among work, subjectivity and learning, followed by an attempt to define the terms subjectivity, work and learning from the author's perspective. Given how the relations among these are located in discussions about the degree of their embeddedness in either the social suggestion or individual agency, the following section seeks to elaborate how these ideas are discussed across key disciplines. This then leads to an attempt to illuminate these different conceptions by proposing

a set of views of self that are located in the literature aligned to subjects and subjectivity.

1.2   Defining Work, Subjectivity and Learning

Each of the contributors to this volume, including its editors, brings distinct disciplinary knowledge and conceptions to understanding work, subjectivity and learning. Some will experience difficulty or discomfort at attempts to categorise themselves as researchers, avoiding it most often, except in circumstances like this when it is necessary to define one's conceptions and terrain. I (Billett) will categorise myself as being a cultural psychologist.

1.2.1   Work

From a cultural psychologist perspective, work is individuals' engagement in the goal-directed activities that usually emanate from social and cultural purposes, although these practices have particular meanings for the individuals who engage with them, and are often shaped by the circumstances of their manifestation (Billett 2003). Therefore, while work has a cultural genesis and a particular situated manifestation, in particular workplace settings, it also has personal dimensions as it is engaged with and enacted by individuals. That is, while work can be seen as activities and interaction that are observable by others, its enactment is fundamentally realised through the deployment of human subjectivities that shape how the work is conceptualised, engaged with and conducted (Billett 2006b). So, ultimately the conduct of work activities comprises the personal construal and deployment of working knowledge.

It follows that work done in the home, community, workplace and educational institution, for instance, are not conceptually discrete except for the social and cultural bases of those activities and how they are manifested in the social practices of the home, community settings, workplaces or educational institutions. Importantly, it is how individuals construe and elect to engage in those practices that emanate from their negotiation with those social settings that constitutes enactment of that work. So while there is a blurring here between non-paid and paid work, in such arrangements, the focus within this book is on the paid work that individuals engage in throughout their working life. This focus necessarily needs to account for the complex of factors that shape individuals' working lives including social interactions, workplace communities, particular discourses and identification factors. These can comprise the particular social

and culturally-derived expectations about work activities, and their status, as well as how individuals participate in work and what performances are required in return for payment, and in particular workplaces. There is the need to meet a societal expectation, expressed as a cultural requirement or norm (e.g. doctors' competence includes being discrete about patients' health and treatment) and its localised manifestation (i.e. what it requires to be a competent doctor in a particular location) (Billett 2003). But, there are also the subjectively-premised bases of what constitutes paid work to the individual. This is shaped and mediated by individuals' sense of self. The subjective experience is that which most likely constitutes and regulates individuals' participation in and their enactment of work. For instance, paid work is widely held as being central to adults' personal identity and well-being (e.g. Noon and Blyton 1997; Pusey 2003), and, therefore, their sense of self is constantly exercised to be seen as being effective in that occupation (Billett and Pavlova 2005, Billett et al. 2005). However, for some, paid work is a merely a means to an end. A well-paid and secure job might also provide a platform for an individual to engage in activities outside of working life to which they are most committed (e.g. church community, hobby, non-paid vocation). In this way and for these individuals, paid work might well be an unwelcome, but necessary intrusion into their lives. Hull (1997), for instance, refers to Hispanic women in America who have to find relatives to care for their own children while they engage in paid employment looking after the children of wealthy American professionals.

So work is an important culturally-derived practice that beyond exercising culturally-derived need extends into the personal in terms of capacities and associations with supra-personal phenomena, such as social and cultural identity.

1.2.2 Subjectivity

The conception of subjectivity is used in different ways, in this book. It stands as an emerging concept and is not necessarily widely used. Others will use related conceptions, particularly identity, to account for how subjectivity might be seen to be used here. Therefore, it is important to define and differentiate subjectivity from other associated and perhaps analogous concepts. From my perspective, subjectivity comprises the conscious and non-conscious conceptions, dispositions and procedures that constitute individuals' cognitive experience (Valsiner and van de Veer 2000): our ways of engaging with and making sense of what we experience through our lived experience. It includes what some post-structuralists refer to as the personal psyche, and is shaped by and also shapes encounters with

both institutional and brute facts (Searle 1995), the contributions to experiences provided by both the natural and social world. The salience of this sense making is "perhaps the most crucial site of political struggle over meaning, given it involves personal, psychic and emotional investment on the part of the individual" (Weedon 1997:76). This experience continually develops over our lifespan and informs how we construe and construct what we encounter (i.e. our gaze) through our active, agentic and intentional engagement with the social experience: the social world and also the natural world (i.e. brute facts). Individuals' cognitive experience is both deployed in and variously shapes and, at times, directs our conscious thinking and acting and is itself also renewed, reinforced, refined and transformed through that deployment (Billett et al. 2005) (see also learning below). Hence, individuals' subjectivities comprise a set of conceptions, procedures beliefs and values and dispositions that are, in part, non-conscious (yet quickly become conscious when something we experience doesn't fit) and, in part, conscious. Therefore, individual subjectivities and the allied concepts of sense of self and identity are essential to understanding engagement in work and learning. Moreover, in many ways, this conception reflects the subject which seems absent in some popular theories about work and learning (e.g. community of practice, activity systems and distributed cognition).

Together, these bases of our subjective experience are central to both our learning and our working. They find expression in two forms. There is the individual's *sense of self* which guides the degree and intentions of our conscious thinking and acting strategically in seeking ontological security (Newton 1998). Like Piaget's concept of equilibrium, the sense of self is exercised to secure personal coherence in encounters with the social and brute world and to overcome disequilibrium it encounters, and does so from a platform of cognitive experience. Giddens (1991) suggests the problem for the self is in maintaining its security in a culture that threatens its stability and the reference points for that stability. This seems particularly relevant to individuals negotiating their self as a worker in contemporary turbulent workplaces. Indeed, like others, Knight and Willmott (1989) referred to the fragility of the self in attempting to cope with post-modernity. Yet, as Fenwick (1998) proposes, while permitting a role for individuals, this view positions them as anxiety ridden and their agency restricted to reflexive relations with culture, rather than individuals who have selves that are agentic and capable of mediating their own ontological security. Certainly, from studies of workers' participation in working life over time and through processes of change (Billett et al. 2004; Billett et al. 2005; Billett and Pavlova 2005) the evidence suggests that while constrained and shaped by situational factors, social practices and cultural mores, individuals are able to exercise their agency in ways aligned with

being and maintaining themselves, albeit negotiating their sense of self through these processes. So their sense of ontological security is not found in either the personal or social but in negotiations between the two.

In this way, the subject cannot be left out of considerations of work and learning, because the exercise of self is a process through which subjectivities are deployed, renewed and transformed.

Associated also with subjectivities is the concept of *identity* that has both personal and societal connotations. Socially, there are forms of institutional, normative and discourse practices that are associated with individual's identity. Occupations, for instance, provide examples of these, and are ordered and valued in particular ways. So, there are societal expectations about and identifiable factors associated with those who wish to identify as a car mechanic, medical doctor, nurse, hairdresser and so on, as indeed there are about broader social categories (e.g. masculinity). The other account of identity is that aligned with how individuals present themselves to (i.e. to identify with) the social world and with which social practices they wish to be associated. This is a product of how individuals present and negotiate their self to the social world, in terms of what they do and how they go about it. Analogously, Cronick (2002) aligns individuals' agency with personal control, which is not to emphasise a humanist conception of self, but recognises the salience of control in conceiving and securing a sense of ontological security. In this way, identity is seen as an outcome, a narrative construction that is a product of this process and, in ways, analogous to Heidegger's concept of Daesin – of being through reflection (e.g. Ezzy 1997).

1.2.3   Learning

Consistent with these perspectives on work and subjectivities, learning here is seen as an inevitable and ongoing process that occurs as individuals engage in conscious and non-conscious thinking and acting (Billett 2006a; Lave 1993; Rogoff 1990). There is no difference between participating in work and learning. That is, there is a cognitive legacy arising from individuals' engagement in goal-directed activities. It is more than the mere deployment of cognitive capacities, how individuals' interpret the world and use the discourses available to them. Instead, individuals' processes of the deployment of their cognitive experience and subsequent learning are of different kinds. This learning depends upon whether they perceive the activity to be something with which they are familiar, interested, can recognise or engage with and whether that experience refines and reinforces what they know, or whether that experience is something novel, thereby being generative of new learning. So,

individuals' engagement in work and the deployment of their subjectivities or their cognitive experience is aligned to their learning. Central to this learning is the negotiation between individuals, their experience and social experience encountered through work. The Billett and Smith chapter in this volume, elaborates these conceptions in particular the learning process that is referred to as a relational interdependency between social and personal. Yet, within these relations, individual sense of self and the agency with which it is enacted stand as mediating these relationships and, hence, their learning. Central here is what individuals experience and how they make sense of that experience – all of which suggests the significance of the inclusion of the subject in thinking about work, subjectivity and learning.

1.3   Relations Among Subjectivity, Learning and Work

It follows that to understand what motivates and directs individuals' learning through work and throughout working life requires careful consideration of the relations among work, subjectivity and learning. Certainly, it is important, necessary and timely to go beyond considerations of the kinds of learning proposed in some human resource development literature. These often uncritically deploy behavioural and neo-behavioural approaches to understanding learning through work and emphasise training techniques and evaluations of the efficiency of those techniques in terms of observable performance. These behavioural like accounts are often prized by governments for their purported capacity to measure human competence. Such approaches tend to deny that which cannot be measured, such as the subjectivities that direct and shape human experience and cognition. Similarly, it is necessary to go beyond narrow accounts of human performance provided in the cognitive literature. These often view performance in work (i.e. expertise) as being the clever manipulation of one's cognitive structures, thereby de-emphasising or ignoring both the social and physical context of the work being conducted and its contributions to cognition. This also includes a downplaying of individuals' dispositions and values that energise and directs their cognition in terms of focus, intentionality and intensity (Billett et al. 2005). Indeed, it is these kinds of disciplinary bases that are likely to be best able to advance, be inclusive of and accommodate the contributions of the personal and the social. This explanation needs to extend to an account of the intertwining and interdependence between the social and personal that offer the best prospect of understanding the relations among subjectivity, learning and work.

Moreover, at this time, a focus on relations among work, subjectivity and learning is consistent with convergences in disciplinary trajectories that are seeking to understand more fully the relations between the social and personal, as are reflected in the contents of this edited collection. This convergence is potentially powerful and highly illuminating because it goes beyond the narrow constraints of disciplines articulating either the social or the personal. Instead, it offers more comprehensive and richly augmented accounts of individual engagement in and learning of the purposeful activities that comprise their paid work and how that engagement is shaped in negotiations between personal and social factors. Yet, individuals' agency stands at the centre of all these negotiations. It mediates how social forms and structures shape individuals' ways of knowing and their sense of self in the processes of participating in and learning from work. These negotiations among subjectivity, work and learning are elaborated and illuminated by the contributors to this book. Consequently, the need for this book arises from both urgent social and personal imperatives associated with understanding working life and to account for and contribute to emerging conceptual premises being deployed in understanding further about learning through work and throughout working life.

1.4   Conceptions of Subjectivity

The conception of subjectivity has different meaning within different disciplines and traditions within those disciplines, some of which are rehearsed within this edited collection. A good place to start considerations of subjectivities is the commonly held assumption that they something being constructed by the subject (Mansfield 2000). A key point of distinction is, however, the degree to which the personal or social, or some combination of both, play in the construction of individuals' subjectivity, including how relations of power contribute to this construction.

An important concept arising from the Enlightenment was that of freedom and the unconstrained nature of the self. Rousseau (1968) emphasised the uniqueness, autonomy and absolute governing freedom of individual experience. In describing this tradition, Orner (1992) suggests that that the term subject can be seen to refer to something quite different than the common usage of the term 'individual'. Drawing on Sarup (1989) she suggests that the individual is conceptualised as a free, intellectual agent whose thinking processes are not constrained by historical or cultural circumstances.

> This view of Reason is expressed in Descartes philosophical work. Consider this phrase "I think, therefore I am." Descartes' 'I' assumes itself to be fully conscious, and hence self unknowable. It is not only autonomous but coherent; the notion of another psychic territory, in contradiction to consciousness, is unimaginable (Sarup 1989:1).

Similarly, Kant (cited in Mansfield 2000) claims that every experience individuals have, from those simple sensory perception to complex ideas can only be understood in terms of how the individual experiences it. Goffman (1990) would be seen as a more contemporary proponent of such a view. It is also these traditions, to a certain extent, that led to the development of theories of adult humanistic learning theories premised on self-actualisation (e.g. those of Rogers and Knowles). Yet, these perspectives may well overplay the role of human consciousness, by positioning the individual as being in some ways unique and being dis-associated from the social world.

Certainly, there are those who argue that there are socially structured determinants in the reproduction of subjectivities and culture (Luke 1992) and that individuals are subject to and subjugated by social structures (e.g. norms, practices, discourse etc.). Highly structured views, such as Foucault's earlier position, render individuals as mere placeholders in social networks (Mansfield 2000) because they are enmeshed in social structures and in ways that diminish and degrade their personal autonomy (Ratner 2000). Foucault (1979) suggests individuals are subject to pervasive social press and 'placed under' or subjected to the influence of cultural norms and practices, some of which act to monitor our behaviour. The individual here is seen to be produced by the social, not in relations with it. That is, the social is the condition of the emergence of the individual. Similarly, Bourdieu (1991) refers to battery of societal dispositions, comprising a habitus that orientate individuals' actions and leave an intra-psychological legacy (i.e. a learnt change in individuals). He cites, for example, how communicating with others through language shapes individuals' dialects. These are not born within us, but learnt through interaction with social partners that deploy these accents, yet become almost indelible learning. For Mansfield (2000) subjectivity defies our separation into distinct selves and helps us to understand why, our interior lives inevitably are seen to involve other people, either as objects of need, desire and interest what was necessary share as common experience. In this way, "the subject is always linked to something outside of it – an idea of principle of the society of other subjects." (p.3)

Yet, while such accounts address the criticism that the subject is missing (e.g. O'Doherty and Willmot 2001; (Luke and Gore 1992)), they may fail to adequately grant an adequacy to the role of the subject in

negotiating meaning (e.g. sense of self and identity). Equally, criticism can be advanced against other theories of thinking and acting (i.e. learning) that emphasise the social contributions to human cognition, yet in which the position of the subject is denied, minimised or otherwise underplayed, such as communities of practice (Wenger 1998), activity systems (Engestrom 1993) and distributed cognition (Salomon 1997). These kinds of accounts fail to consider how power relations between the personal and social are experienced and enacted (Newton 1998) including the role of the subject as both an exerciser of power and being subject to it (see Fenwick's chapter in this volume).

Indeed, Freud emphasised the unconscious as a way of comprehending human subjectivity and, suggests that there is probably an over determination of both personal and social (Mansfield 2000). Although Foucault's consideration of desire (1986) has been used to elaborate either his emphasis on power relations (O'Doherty and Willmot 2001) or to some his almost Rousseau-like conception of human freedom through separating pleasure from the relations of power (Burkitt 1993, cited in Newton 1998), it elevates the standing and potency of the subject's desire and pleasure as being disassociated with social forms. Indeed, in contemporary accounts (e.g. Hey 2002) the relations among sociality, desire, anxiety and psyche provide the currency for advancing such conceptions of subjectivity (see also the final chapter). Certainly, Weedon (1997) in her definition of subjectivity grants space for both the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, presentation of herself and her ways of understanding her relations to the world. She continues, that "whereas humanistic discourses propose that at the heart of all individuals is an essence which is unique, fixed and coherent and makes her what she is, the post-structuralist approach proposes subjectivity as being precarious, contradictory, and in the process, constantly being reconstituted in discourses each time we think or speak" (p.32). So, here, the uniqueness of individuals arise from relations between the personal and the social, whereas the humanist tradition is more about the individual arising uniquely and through personal negotiation and preference, with that development leading to attributes which remain fixed.

The sociologists of knowledge Berger and Luckman (1967) also provide a space for both of these possibilities, stating that socialisation is never completely successful. They argue that some individuals engage with the 'transmitted universe' (p.124) more so than others, that individuals are more or less able to engage with that universe, and that there will be idiosyncratic variations in how individuals engage with the social world. Also providing licence for both the humanistic and post-structural viewpoints, Taylor (1985) proposes that while humans are not alone in having desires and motives in making decisions and some capacity to

choose between desires, a particular characteristic of humans is the ability to form second order desires. That is, the capacity to evaluate our desires, and be self reflective in that evaluation. Further, Mansfield (2000) suggests that subjectivity is "primary on experience, and remains firmly into inconsistency, contradiction and unselfconsciousness. Our experience of ourselves remains forever prone to surprising disjunction and that only the fierce lives of ideology or theoretical dogma convince us we can be homogenised into a single consistent thing." (p.6)

In these ways, the idea of the immediate and ongoing experience of the social world as leading to socialisation is highly questionable. Certainly, Foucault claims that he never intended "to ruin the sovereignty of the subject" (McLaren 1997:112). This perspective is consistent with his emphasis on desire in later works (i.e. Care of the Self) and the claim that even the most intense monitoring and severe forms of repression cannot control human desire (Foucault 1979), and that power (e.g. the projection of the social) is relational, "not a 'naked fact' or an 'institutional right' or a structure which holds out or is smashed" (Foucault 1992:224). Bhaskar (1998), a philosopher, pointedly and importantly makes the claim that sociology is not about mass action but relations between individuals and social practices. Also, Giddens (1984) through his concept of structuration proposes a key role for personal agency in the social structuring of knowledge. The engagement of individuals and their agency seems necessarily agentic for social systems. The relational and intertwining of the social and personal are central to how both individuals and society transform. Indeed, Giddens (1984) proposes that "social systems do not reproduce themselves but require the active production and reproduction of human subjects" (p.11), thereby granting agency to individuals in changing society, as does Leontyev (1981). Yet, there are distinct views about the nature of the relations between personal and social. For instance, Rose (1990) refers to the enterprising self in which the individual self-regulates and self-subjugates themselves to the social world. Grey (1994), for instance, refers to how accountants mask and manipulate their 'sense of self' and present a particular kind of self in order to secure employment and promotion within an accountancy practice. Yet, others suggest that these individuals are not so constrained as to lose their sense of self and personal identity in this way. Instead, workers report being able to negotiate workplace activities while maintaining their sense of self: being themselves (Billett and Pavlova 2005; Billett et al. 2005), something that O'Doherty and Willmot (2001) claim is still shaped by the social in ways which deny comprehensive individual agency.

So these accounts lead to a consideration of not privileging either the social or the personal, but instead the relations between them, and the negotiating bases of self within these relations. This

might include individuals maintaining a sense of self or negotiating away part of that sense of self it to achieve particular goals (e.g. Grey 1994). Yet this very process of negotiation must admit the possibility that those goals and processes might coincide with individuals' intents and agentic actions. However, against such accounts, humanistic views tend to emphasise negotiation between the individual and social, and through consideration of human intricacies and idiosyncrasies that would inevitably arise through these negotiations. One way to read these accounts is to view their preoccupation as understanding the relations between the individual and the social. The individual can be seen as arising through onto-genetic development (Scribner 1985) that comprises processes of ongoing negotiations between the social and the personal, which are in some way unique both in terms of processes and outcomes. Yet, these negotiations represent an engagement and relational interdependence between the personal and the social (Billett, Smith and Barker 2005). Using the individual here seems important to delineate the likely unique qualities of personal experience that constitute the subject and her or his unique personal subjective qualities. So the individual is a person and body that has engaged with and endured both the brute and social world. Individuals' sense of self and subjectivities arise through both the unforgiving and irreversible processes of brute fact and through the ongoing and differentiated negotiations with the social world. In this way, the individual as a personal entity represents an epitome of the social because she/he evolves from a complex of social forms and practices that is both shaped by and shapes these social forms through its engagement with her/him throughout her/his life.

So from the above, there are traditions that favour particular use of these concepts which are helpful in appraising the completeness, orientation and coherence of one's own conceptions. Given that in a number of accounts the self is seen as reflecting the agentic qualities of subjectivity – the degree by which it is able to act – it is worth considering how the self is conceptualised across disciplines and in what ways this assists understanding the diverse perspectives on learning through work.

1.5   Views of Self

Drawing upon the discussions above, and the views of others, it is possible to advance four distinct concepts of self. These comprise: (i) Autonomous Self; (ii) Subjugated Self; (iii) Enterprising Self; and (iv) Post-structural Self (see Table 1). However, it should be noted that these conceptions of self are not comprehensive, wholly inclusive and would be subject to hot criticism by some, and perhaps many. They represent an attempt to identify threads of coherence in the history and developments in

views about subjectivity and self. Their limitations reside and are inherent in an attempt to categorise conceptions of self in this way, which stands as an artefact emerging from my attempts to make progress with and deploy these conceptions in understanding how individuals' agency and intentionality played out in their learning through working lives. Clearly, this artefact is not intended as a final position nor to curtail debates about subjectivity; indeed its very representation will likely precipitate and hopefully invigorate such debates. It is on these premises that each of these conceptions is now advanced to illustrate an attempt to apply them to understanding their particular orientations to work and learning. They are presented in a continuum that roughly reflects their development over time.

The Autonomous Self is where individuals are able to exercise their autonomy and freedom in realising their desired goals. The tradition here is humanism whose key ideas are found in the work of Rousseau (1968), the uniqueness, and absolute freedom of individual experience, Descartes' (Cottingham 1996) "I think therefore I am" and Heidegger's (1975) authentic individualism. Learning here is the free and spontaneous expression of self (Mansfield 2000) and the securing of self actualisation (e.g. Rogers 1969).

The Subjugated Self is where individuals are positioned as being subjected to social structures and social press. In short, the individual is embedded or enmeshed within social structures, with agency being granted through these social structures, and their press or suggestion. The tradition here is in the early work of Foucault and the view of Marx about individuals developing a false consciousness would be consistent with this view. Learning within this conception of self is about socialisation and subjugation – being shaped by the social world. The concept of subjectivity as being 'placed under' or being posterior to social structures is also exercised within the labour studies tradition, which leads to a consideration of the subject through a critique of the early Foucaldian position. Indeed, the Enterprising Self is where individuals both self-regulate and self-subjugate themselves while performing particular roles within and through their working life. The individual here might be seen as being entangled within social structures and the social world, yet playing a role in that entanglement. The tradition here is late modernity. The ideas of Rose (1990) about the entrepreneurial self, and Du Gay's (1996) view of individuals as autonomous, self regulated and productive individuals who are mistaken in their endeavours, stand as key conceptions of the Enterprising Self. The conception of subjectivity here is about the presentation of self. Learning here might refer to resolving regulated efforts which seek a fit between social norms and practices and individuals goals.

Table 1: Conceptions of self

	Autonomous self	**Subjugated self**	**Enterprising self**	**Post-structural self**
Definition	Individual exercising autonomy and freedom in realising their desired goals – 'being one's self'	Individual as a mere place-holder within social systems	Self reflexive, entrepreneurial individual formulating and maintaining identity agentically within yet also transforming social system	Individual selectively engaging and negotiating with social suggestions to secure, develop and maintain their identity
Relation to social structures	Autonomous from social structures – 'separated'	Embedded in social structures 'enmeshed'	Continuity found within social structures – 'entangled'	Negotiating selectively and relationally with social structures –'entwined'
Tradition	Humanist	Structuralist (early Foucault)	(Late) Modernity	Post-structural
Learning	Casting off social subjugation, being able to be oneself without being constrained by or having historical legacy to contend with	Social subjugation and shaping through engagement with the social world	Self-regulated efforts, subjugated to work force practices and outcomes, seeking a fit between personal goals and enterprise goals	Resisting, out-manoeuvring, avoiding strong social suggestion through locating a position and role within social practice which is consistent with individual subjectivity and identity
Concept of subjectivity	Free and spontaneous expression of self	Placed under social structures	Presentation of self	Open, reflexive, embodied quality of human agency

The Post-structural Self is where the individual selectively engages and negotiates with the social suggestion that is directed by the intention to secure, develop and maintain their identity and ontological trajectory. Key ideas here emanate from O'Doherty and Willmot (2001) about the reflexive and embodied quality of human agency and also Weedon (1997) who refers to the reflexivity of self. The concepts of subjectivity here is about conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions and ways of understanding relations with the world. Learning here is about resisting, out manoeuvring and avoiding strong social suggestions and locating a role, and sense of self which is consistent with individuals' emerging subjectivities.

These conceptions of self, while in one way reflecting sets of evolving ideas, have within them particular sets of emphases and values that suggest different kinds of relations between the social and the individual. As noted above, the privileging of particular kinds of emphases (either the social or the individual) is evident across theoretical perspectives within the major disciplines (i.e. philosophy, psychology and sociology) and beyond.

1.6   Work, Subjectivity and Learning

From what has been proposed and argued above, it can be seen that there are important procedural (e.g. policy and practice) imperatives for understanding what directs individuals' intentional learning through their work and throughout their working life. These are not trifling issues, premised on curiosity alone. The conduct of work, as repeated throughout this book, is important to individuals' sense of self and being. Moreover, learning moves hand-in-hand with their participation in work, not as some separate or discrete process. In this way, how individuals engage in work and work related activities has repercussions beyond the individual. The conduct of work that is salient and meaningful for individuals' sense of self and identity lies at the heart of effective work and learning practice and its effective conduct is increasingly essential to maintaining and developing workplaces' capacities in the turbulent and globalised contemporary work context. Important national goals about maintaining or improving the national standard of life are also aligned. Entwined through all of these is the importance of understanding individuals as subjects engaged in work, learning through that work and, in doing so, also, remaking work practice. In governments seeking to mobilise workers, on the one hand, and propose that they take charge of their own development, on the other, a great emphasis is being placed upon individual agency and intentionality in maintaining their effectiveness through working life. In effect, the mobilisation of self seems to be the core and perhaps most salient premise here. Yet this empowerment will not just be directed to reflecting government and employers' goals, if at all. It will most likely be enacted in the interests of the individual, his or her goals, interests and sense of self. It is these that will negotiate learning, realise the enactment of power and achieve the level of consonance among government, employer and individual intents.

Yet it is clear from the distinct contributions to this book that the conceptual bases informing individual's actions and motivations remain incomplete and tentative, in parts, and warrant urgent development. As well, the focus here on relations between the individual and social sug-

gests that concepts associated with curriculum and pedagogy may also need to be revised to include a central role for individual subjectivities, motivations and intentionalities. It is perhaps no longer sufficient to refer to learning settings such as workplaces as physical and social environments alone. What is also required is for the relations between the individual and those environments to be appreciated, understood and embedded within accounts of learning through work and working life. Hopefully, the contributions of this book can make a useful start and contribution through providing accounts, bases and premises for the further elaboration of learning through and for work to be more wholly elaborated.

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2

Escaping/Becoming Subjects: Learning to Work the Boundaries in Boundaryless Work

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This chapter explores the learning processes by which people come both to recognise and constitute their subjectivities at work. Subjectivity is realised through enactment: articulations meshed with the boundaries defining the conditions, activities, geographic locations and positions that they find themselves negotiating in different work environments. Always, subjectivity is produced by power and acted on by power. And usually the subject exercises power, sometimes to resist the very power that is shaping it, but always from within the socio-psychic forces and resources that constitute it. Agency, it is argued here, is articulated in the subject's recognition of both the processes of its own constitution, and of the resources within these processes through which alternate readings and constitutions are tivity, agency finds openings for resistance and subversion of these discourses. In this chapter, the focus is upon so-called 'boundaryless workers', those relying for their income upon a series of contracts with different employers. Drawing from a study of professional workers (nurses and adult educators) in boundaryless employment, the chapter examines their dual movements of constituting subjectivity through both lines of anchorage and lines of flight animating their daily negotiations of tasks, objects, knowledge and relationships. These dual movements of 'escaping/becoming' in work, and the boundary-constitution supporting them, are unlikely to be restricted to contract workers. However, their explicit activities of boundary work help amplify a phenomenon that may well be shared more broadly among workers in the new economy.

In poststructural renderings, the 'subject' is shown to be discursively constituted, malleable, positioned at the intersection of libidinal forces and sociocultural practices (Davies 2000; Hey 2002). There is no

central authentic 'self' who goes forth with agency and intentionality to author a life of meaning and accomplishment; there are no transcendental centres of consciousness, competence, or freedom. This poststructural denial of the unitary 'sovereign' subject opposes popular literature of workplace learning, much of which in fact is devoted to prescribing technologies of reflection and empowerment to educate worker selves. But these technologies simply produce certain kinds of subjects, argues Rose (1998), invented to serve the new economy well: cheerful seekers of self-reliance, flexible adaptors to changing corporate demands, and devotees to self-improvement. Is there then no escape from this subjection of 'docile bodies' constructed through discourses of globalisation and human capital and workplace structures of flexibility and productivity?

For Foucault, freedom is an exercise on or practice of the self that can be used to control others and govern oneself by taking up available practices in various ways. In different communities, activities and encounters, new subjectivities are made possible by expanding and breaking through habitual positionings, representations and self-regulatory technologies. These breakings-through are not the result of the heroically empowered individual, and in fact are not always transparent to actors, but are occasioned by a complex play of forces within and across their bodies and work. If learning is accepted to be expansion of capacity for 'more sophisticated, more flexible, and more creative action' (Davis et al. 2000), then this work of becoming aware of how one's subjectivity is constituted within these forces, and taking an active role in its constitution, is in fact a learning activity. This understanding is drawn from a view of emergence within nested systems, where cognition, environments and subjects emerge together through 'co-specifying' relationships in joint activity (Fenwick 2001). For Davis et al. (2000), learning is distributed and embedded in action, not centred in an 'individual', but learning is not simply the playing out of action. Learning is recognition, conscious or unconscious, of alternate, more expansive and generative possibilities: a recognition that is articulated *within* action, not outside it.

In this chapter, these ideas are considered in relation to a study of workers who leave organisations to pursue self-employment in what some writers call 'boundaryless work' (Arthur and Rousseau 2000). This tends to consist of a series of contracts for different activities with different employers in different contexts; hence the presumed absence of conventional boundaries defining one's position and place of employment. The discussion here is concerned with understanding how so-called boundaryless workers navigate the difficult and largely unrecognised labour of continuously negotiating their position, and what subjectivities emerge in the process. The dynamic of learning is viewed here as inextricably bound up with these workers' efforts to understand the forces affecting their subjectivities,

and their everyday activities and choices to inhabit a personally tolerable subject position. These choices can be understood at a concrete level as an individual's sense of personal need to 'set boundaries': in their tasks, contexts, expectations, scope of knowledge, and so on. Boundary-setting is a useful trope to capture the work and learning of establishing subjectivity, too: for constitution of subjectivity is an ongoing process of apprehending the boundaries distinguishing *who* one is from who others are. More accurately, this process ought to be characterised as working the boundaries rather than setting them, for particularly in boundaryless work the people and contexts are always changing.

The self-narratives of these boundaryless workers reveal a dual learning process: on the one hand, a realisation of their own fluidity continually escaping the fixed subject positions allotted by workplaces, what Davies (2000) has termed 'lines of flight'; and on the other hand, growing awareness of how their subjectivities become constituted, and their own role in producing these subjects. Freedom is evident in the new practices and spaces of subjectivity that open in their nomadic movements across organisations, knowledges, and working relationships. Therefore, the overall argument here is that these workers' subjectivities resist a subjection to 'docile bodies' constructed through discourses of globalisation and human capital and workplace structures of flexibility and productivity. Boundaryless workers, like all members of society, certainly are shaped in their actions and 'free' choices by these cultural discourses. However, they appear to be sufficiently aware of their position and consciously engaged in constituting it that they may be described as active in learning and working their subjectivity. Moreover, they do not work to produce a coherent narrative of their careers and identities, or an autonomous 'self'. Instead, they appear to flow into and out of structures defining their subject position, immersing in then breaking away from boundaries of knowledge, identity, community, and scope of practice. Amidst this flux can be discerned a central tension, a simultaneous attraction in two conflicting directions: towards becoming and anchoring a bounded subject position, and towards escaping or flying these boundaries.

2.1   Boundaries in 'Boundaryless' Work

Boundaryless work is a term that has been applied to flexible work arrangements ranging from contract employment to home-based teleworking. In this chapter, the particular form of boundaryless work under consideration is 'own-account' self-employment (no employees besides the owner-operator) in which individuals contract their skills to different employers in a variety of contexts. Terminology denoting self-employed

types of boundaryless work become blurry: 'freelance', 'contract', 'non-traditional work' and 'portfolio work' as well as 'self-employment' appear in career literature addressing this phenomenon. Three common elements that distinguish boundaryless work are (1) a commitment to long-term, rather than temporary freelance employment – as a way of life rather than a 'stop-gap' measure; (2) a sense of specialised expertise being developed and offered; and most important, (3) job mobility across multiple employers, erasing conventional boundaries defining one's job and workplace.

Boundaryless careers have been studied most often in terms of the personal transitions involved (Cohen and Mallon 1999; Gold and Fraser 2002; Sullivan 1999). Particular interest has centred on boundaryless workers' career identity. How individuals 'construct non-organisationally sustained accounts of their working lives' is a focus for Gold and Fraser (2002:583), who examined boundaryless workers' strategies for successful transition. But within critical circles, those concerned about the effects of 'flexibilisation' argue that such conditions are repressive (Garrick and Usher 2000). People whose jobs are declared redundant are forced to compete with others for each piece of work, sometimes from their former employers, adapting to the organisation's unpredictable needs without income protection or benefits. Further, individuals' desires for personal meaning and fulfilment are enrolled in ways that support flexible work. They may accept the popular rhetoric that the responsibility for their precarious career is their own, and that it is natural and inevitable that they must be entrepreneurial, marketing their own knowledge and labour, in what du Gay (1996) called 'an enterprise of the self'.

Overall as Smeaton (2003) summarises, the literature on general self-employment presents two opposing models of these conditions. One is a 'liberation' perspective that boundaryless work offers creativity and freedom from constrictive bureaucratic structures. The other is a marginalised perspective of boundaryless workers as exploited, unwillingly shunted from their jobs, and encouraged to view their resulting isolation as an empowering opportunity for which they must take responsibility. Those viewing it positively include Arthur and Rousseau (2000), who argue that boundaryless work has revolutionised employment. Boundaryless workers are supposedly mobile and active in designing their careers, exhilarated, able to enjoy personal meaning and personal responsibility for their work (Sullivan 1999), while contributing to continuous knowledge production (Bird 1996). Because such independent workers tend to form multiple networks, argue Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996), they enable wide distribution of learning across social groups and institutions. They project a positive social vision comprising multiple nodes of learning, and multiple connections among people, tools and environments created

through the unconstrained knowledge and unbound identities of boundary-less labour (Gee et al. 1996).

However, studies of self-employment have also highlighted its exploitive and damaging potential. Mirchandani (2000) shows the oppression resulting from blurred lines between home, family and work in home-based self-employment, which tends to dominate boundaryless careers. Sullivan (1999) reports risk-filled challenges posed by the boundaryless career, such as crossing boundaries between organisations and occupations, and creating new vocational identities. Critics argue that such flexible work merges subjectivities with the new capitalism. Individuals are required – indeed seduced to desire – to engage in a lifelong human resource project of self alteration, through reflexive self-assessment, shape-shifting and self-marketing, to adapt to organisations' changing need (Fenwick 2004). In their study of freelance translators, Gold and Fraser (2002) conclude:

> Transitions into portfolio work involve an anxious period during which organisational support dissolves and is replaced by the individual's own resources, skills, networks and entrepreneurial abilities, sustained only by a range of safety nets, such as savings, the support of a working partner and personal contacts. (p.594)

Yet Smeaton (2003) finds, from her analysis of three UK employment surveys, that the 'marginalisation' critique has overstated or distorted the views of the (boundaryless) self-employed. She found that they reject the possibility of returning to full (boundaried) employment and exhibit higher levels of satisfaction than employed workers: 'this form of freedom engenders heightened self esteem and work satisfaction even when self-exploitation in the form of long hours exists' (p.389). However, sufficient questions have been raised about the differential benefits of boundaryless work that the question of whether it offers more progressive or repressive work conditions remains ambivalent. As Billett pointed out, in 'boundaryless' work individuals' learning and labour is directed to generating their own boundaries for work conditions and subjectivity, and these boundaries can become more rigid than the spaces available within 'boundaried' work (personal communication, 27 January 2006). Learning for boundaryless workers is an enterprise of self-regulation and self-discipline (Hanson and Hagström 2003).

2.2 Understanding Subjectivity

Within this ambivalence, the questions at issue here have to do with what subjectivities are created in this boundaryless work, and what (learning) processes are involved in their constitution. And what is a subject? In

conventional Cartesian ontology, the subject has been construed as a self: an autonomous individual who has constructed or discovered an enduring inner personhood, distinct from others, and embarked upon a self-actualising project of developing its full capacity and agency. Feminist and poststructural writers, however, have debunked this unitary, universal self, showing that it cannot easily be disentangled from the web of relationships, meanings and social practices in which it moves and speaks, and from the multiple identity roles and changes that any one person inhabits. As Butler (1992:13) writes, the 'subject is neither a ground nor a product, but the permanent possibility of a certain resignifying process.' The agency of the subject lies in its ongoing constitution. Agency is articulated in the subject's recognition of both the processes of its own constitution, and of the resources within these processes through which alternate readings and constitutions are possible. Working from within discourses constituting subjectivity, agency finds openings for resistance and subversion of these discourses.

So subjectivity is not about 'the self'; nor is subjectivity synonymous with identity. Identity is an image, a symbolic code representing something the subject desires to belong to or possess: to identify with. The subject strives to perform an identity or various identities. Identity is ultimately a representation or mental conception that we ascribe to ourselves and to others:

> our *conception* of who we are, our identity, is constituted by the power of all of the discursive practices in which we speak in which in turn 'speak'; us. (Chappell, Rhodes, Solomon, Tennant and Yates 2003, p.41) [italics added]

Some suggest that the striving to perform this or that identity, compelled by desire for identification with an object, position, community or ideal, is driven by our ubiquitous lack of identity. Further, in our desire for unity, stability and continuity, we invent a monolithic, coherent even sedentary story of 'self', a Me, based on our consciousness and remembrance of identities we have inhabited and performed. Taylor (1989) links this drive with a desire to define and reach the good based on moral ideals of self-mastery and self-control. The result is a turn to reflexivity:

> The turn to oneself is now also and inescapably a turn to oneself in the first person perspective – a turn to the self as self. That is what I mean by radical reflexivity. Because we are so deeply embedded in it, we cannot but search for reflexive language. (p.175)

This turn to the 'self', with accompanying practices of self-improvement and self-control, energised by a drive for identity, is increasingly viewed as an important phenomenon by researchers of flexible

work. Drawing from Giddens' theory of reflexive selves, Brocklehurst (2003) suggests that boundaryless work demands self-construction which depends upon a sense of place: when geographic organisational boundaries are removed individuals are driven to somehow create the boundaries that enable their very existence.

Contemporary views of the subject concur that it is always in motion, and constantly produced in time and space. Subjectivity has no existence, per se, but is continually constituted and resignified. The subject is derived from and subjugated to practices and cultural discourses, including practices of identification and images of identity available in the (limited phallogocentric) cultural discourses. It is conjured into presence and then moves according to how it is positioned in joint activity, its encounters with others, and the gaze of these others – as well as the limits and desires of its own corporeality. Always, subjectivity is produced by power and acted on by power. And usually the subject exercises power, sometimes to resist the very power that is shaping it, but always from within the socio-psychic forces and resources that constitute it. This is

> …subjectivity without a centre of origin, caught in meanings, positioned in the language and narratives of the culture. The self cannot know itself independently of the significations in which it is enmeshed.… Meanings are always in play and the self, caught up in this play, is an ever changing self. (Usher, Bryant and Johnson 1997:103)

In the accelerated global competition and unstable, flexible employment conditions of the new capitalism, these meanings are hardly benign. Rose (1998) analysed the new subject of work as 'a complex territory to be explored, understood and regulated' (p.56) through 'engaging the employee with the goals of the company at the level of his or her subjectivity' (p.56). Individuals regulate their own subjectivities through a suite of technologies, such as career discourses, modelled images of the good worker/learner, surveillance, mentoring and other explicit guidances within particular social and political contexts. These are wedded to individuals' own desires for control, belonging, and so forth to produce their desires to become particular subjects desired by the organisation. Thus, subjection to production and efficiency continues but through complex psychological means governing how subjects move, speak and manage their own movements and speech. In an age celebrating entrepreneurial, risk-taking, self-responsible workers, the new subjectivities are expected to pursue meaningful work and autonomous careers through 'choices' in a biographical project of self-actualisation.

This governed view of worker subjectivity as passive, discursive and utterly dependent upon cultural regulation of its own choices is overly

deterministic, argues Casey (2003), and besides, people's behaviors and resistances at work refute the analysis. For Casey, subjectivation is the process by which one becomes an acting, self-creating subject in work, achieved through the will to act and be recognised as an actor (p.629). Devos (2005), too, in analyzing the subjectivities produced through workplace mentorship, draws upon Foucault's later work on subjectivity and McLaren's (2002) dialogue with this work to develop a feminist theory of an active subject. Subjects are produced through a 'complex process of subjectification in which the subject subjects herself but in so doing demonstrates her autonomy and her agency. She is the active self-constituting subject' (Devos 2005:123). The subject is still relational, formed in specific social, historical and cultural practices and relationships: but as it emerges, so emerges the subject's capacity to exercise political and moral agency. That is, within the fields of power and knowledge producing subjects, individuals choose among various diverse possibilities of behavior and self-enunciation in the process of this production. These choices, of course, as Rose (1999) has pointed out, do not float freely in some unconstrained bubble outside cultural discourses, but are actively shaped by the discursive, material, and libidinous conditions afforded by the context.

But to avoid sliding back into that seductive notion of subject as 'the individual' that still emerges, despite our recognition of its influence by cultural contexts and relational activity, as the agentic ultimately autonomous self, we need to examine more closely the interaction of subjectivity, agency and action. I turn here to Zizek, who conceives subjectivity within the continuous flux of action without dissolving the subject's political agency. Drawing from Hegel, Badiou, Althusser, Butler and Lacan, Zizek shows that the disparate chaotic flux of reality *becomes* events, meaningful actions, and possibilities – a 'positive objective order' – precisely through the intervention of the subject:

> The 'subject' is the *act*, the *decision* by means of which we pass from positivity of the given multitude to the Truth-Event and/or to Hegemony… 'Subject' is not a name for the gap of freedom and contingency that infringes upon the ontological order, active in its interstices; rather, 'subject' *is* the contingency that grounds the very positive ontological order, that is, the vanishing 'mediator' whose self-effacing gesture transforms the pre-ontological chaotic multitude into the semblance of a positive 'objective' order of reality. (Zizek 1999:158)[1]

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[1] Thus neither hegemony nor truth derive directly from any ontological set, but depend on the subject's action. A 'Truth-Event' is precise political experience bearing (signifiable and ideological) Truth for those engaged in it. Multitude may be considered the chaotic excess of the situation(s) from which the experience derives.

In this gesture, this act, the subject also comes into presence. Zizek cautions that this conception does not presume an ontological gap of contingency waiting to be filled by the subject's action. Rather, 'the subject is both the opening or Void which precedes the gesture of subjectivisation, as well as the gesture itself.… the subject's very endeavour to fill in the gap retroactively sustains and generates this gap' (p.159).

Hence, subjectivity becomes a space of possibilities. A subject is realised at the same time as a recognisable event. This realisation occurs through the subject's act or choice intervening in the multitude of symbols, technologies, ideas and activity available in that moment. This choice does not originate from outside this multitude, but is made available from a range of possibilities within it: from the tightly prescribed and oppressive, to the subversive and resistant. Power presumes counterpower. The subject's agency, the freedom that can be exercised within the action choice birthed in an event, is the recognition of possibilities that can rupture preceding hegemonies and sealed significations to engender the unexpected, the creative, the emergent.

2.3   Studying Boundaryless Work

The ensuing discussion of subjectivity in boundaryless work is based on a study which set out to explore the unique rewards and challenges of this work through the narrated experiences of self-employed individuals who contract their services to various organisations and clients. In-depth interviews were conducted in 2002–2003 with 31 men and women based in Canadian cities representing west coast, prairies, and central Canada. Participants were recruited from two general occupational areas: nurses (13), and adult educators (18), chosen because so many of their numbers were affected by job closures in the 1990s recession in Canada. The two occupational areas present very different tasks, contexts and client types to enrich a comparison of boundaryless work experiences. Nursing is highly regulated and unionised. The nurse participants provided clinical services (i.e. foot care, palliative care) and consulting (i.e. sexual health consulting, public health education holistic health care, sports health). Adult educators led training, leadership and programme development, evaluation, and organisational change. About half of all participants were contracted mostly with organisations, and half mostly with individuals (e.g. providing personal services like foot care).

Both groups were somewhat homogeneous in their economic and race privilege: all portfolio nurses but one and all but three portfolio adult educators were white. All enjoyed at least a moderately comfortable

income, and were 'mid-life' ranging in age from mid-thirties to mid-fifties. Most were well educated. Adult educators all held graduate degrees. Among nurses, eight held a Bachelor of Science, two held graduate degrees, and three held a nursing diploma. Thus, many participants in these two groups enjoyed a degree of mobility and social and cultural capital, though gender issues such as work-family balance were evident.

All participants had moved into portfolio work from employment in a small or large organisation. All claimed that they had freely chosen the form of self-employment here called boundaryless work. Their reasons are consistent with those described in self-employment literature, including 'push' motives (i.e. frustration with repressive organisational structures or difficulty finding full-time employment in their preferred practice), 'pull' motives (i.e. desires for flexible work schedules, freedom from supervision, or urge to create a personal practice), or a push-pull combination (Cohen and Mallon 1999). However, it is by now well-recognised that the notion of 'choice' is problematic, and may more accurately represent received cultural discourses emphasising individuals' responsibility for their own conditions than an individual's exercise of agency. Even though some of the interviewees here may have believed they freely chose to leave employment, they may in fact have had little choice in cases where work conditions were intolerable, no full-time work was available, or future staff cuts were inevitable.

Over half of the participants alluded to feelings of restlessness, seeking new challenges after working a few months or years in one place or type of employment. Yet amidst this apparent need for contingency, they also claimed to need a stable focus. This dynamic has been described elsewhere (Fenwick 2003): it seems driven partly by business purposes, to clarify a niche and build long-lasting relationships with particular clients, and partly by personal need for a sense of place, identity, security and boundaries defining one's life and work in the fluidity of boundaryless work. These two desires – for resilient, often intentional career contingency and for focus and stability – appeared to exist simultaneously as a central tension in the work and subjectivities of boundaryless workers (Fenwick 2004). Further, they experienced related internal conflicts *within* the most positive dimensions of boundaryless work. One was the work design element of portfolio work, involving negotiating boundaries in the structure, process, standards, environment and content of their work activities. Another conflicted area was client relations, requiring boundaries delineating credibility, reciprocity and mutual expectation to sustain relationships with multiple clients. In both of these areas, boundaryless workers talked of experiencing both freedom and repression simultaneously.

2.4   Working the Boundaries

To illustrate specific dynamics of negotiating or 'working the boundaries' in work and subjectivity, this section will describe briefly the experiences of two individuals in boundaryless work. Each case illustrates the sorts of work tasks, conditions and difficulties expressed more broadly among the participants in nursing and adult education, respectively. Catherine is a registered nurse practicing home nursing foot care in coastal British Columbia for both individual clients and institutions of long-term care. Brad is an adult educator offering workshops, university teaching and organisational development in urban Alberta.

Catherine began private practice as a homecare nurse in 1995 after her own children were in school. A former hospital nurse, she was firm about not wanting to go back to 'all the politics, all the union stuff' and the rigid shifts and patient overloads of hospital work. More important, she wanted to rediscover good nursing:

> In the facility I wasn't giving good patient care, I was giving out their pills and doing the paper work but I didn't have time to talk to them, I used to turn my back sometimes if I saw a patient walking down the corridor… I've got six dressings to do and I've got to start the ten o'clock meds and it's already nine thirty and I've got four doctors' orders to process and I haven't got time to stop and just talk to somebody.

So she deliberately rejected a subject position that Catherine characterised as 'pushing pills and paper' and created a practice where 'I give good patient care … most of it is one-on-one … I feel like I'm really connecting with people, I feel ethically good about my work at the end of the day.' Yet, Catherine juggles constantly. Boundaries of time that construct a typical day of work do not fit individual patients' needs for nursing care, which revolve around their waking and mealtimes. Home nurses are often required suddenly, at unpredictable hours that interrupt family and personal time. Catherine has teamed with others to construct work-time boundaries (4-hour shifts for each) to solve the problem, but she still retains sufficient control over these to escape when she wants to or allow herself more time with particular patients. Eventually she consolidated herself as a foot care specialist to arrange more predictable work patterns and more variation in clients.

Boundaries defining knowledge and scope of practice are another issue. Like other independent nurses, Catherine referred disparagingly to and tried to distance herself from the 'medical' model of knowledge, which she believed was fragmented and sometimes contradicted real healing. Yet her license to practice, her credibility and her very sense of

evidence-based knowledge depended on this 'medical model'. Nurses providing home care may face a patient with multiple medical problems for which they are not licensed to practice. Some require immediate attention; some are unwilling or unable to seek a doctor: the nurse is often torn about her ethic of care. Further, boundaries defining the health care system used to mean that private nurses had difficulty gaining entrance into hospitals. Specific areas of practice, such as foot care nursing, require special certificates and overlap medical practice (such as podiatry) in ambiguous ways that can create conflict over boundaries of knowledge and practice. Catherine's tales of navigating all of these boundary issues revealed above all a sense of continually re-creating her practice, escaping structures she dislikes while anchoring her subjectivity in pride of good nursing.

Brad entered self-employment in 1991 after 10 years as a mid-level manager in a government agency. He offers seminars, research and consulting services to organisations in worker learning and management development. His work, he believes, is inherently about finding and stretching boundaries: 'I tend to work on the edges … that is, pushing the boundaries of what is possible, seeking new approaches, challenging what is.'

This work is supplemented with sessional contracts to two universities to provide instruction in graduate courses. In boundaryless work, Brad explained, one needs to invent an identity or 'brand' that clients recognise: a specialised knowledge to market: 'How do you know who's out there who needs you? How are you going to communicate that? Are you going to wait for them to ask? Are you going to have a business card? A brochure? … "This is who I am and what I'm offering … if you've got this question you need me."'

This is the work of constituting a subject position. Yet the knowledge clients want shifts over time: Brad's specialties shifted accordingly from change management, to executive coaching, to future search scenarios: he 're-branded' or re-invented himself, with new certificates and language, according to what he wanted to do that would sell. Sometimes he shifted because he had become tired of a particular area of practice: 'I get bored easily'. Like other boundaryless workers, Brad claimed to thrive on the exhilaration of continual change, and positioned his work to escape routine, repetition and structure: "I hope to have an impact and to add value. But it is arm's length enough that I can observe and touch and hear and feel the sort of social and power systems without being drawn into them, or choosing not to be drawn into … the entanglements."

Yet this shifting must be balanced with a grounding focus or anchor. Clear boundaries defining a specific knowledge and practice, even if temporary, are important to avoid stretching oneself too thin and to sharpen one's image as a valuable specialist. The trick is not getting stuck

in this image. Meanwhile in the university contracts he conducted, his knowledge credibility depended on different sources entirely. In fact, Brad was finishing a PhD not because he wanted university employment but to improve his position: he was tired of being treated 'like a second-class citizen, an outsider' when teaching university courses.

Working these boundaries demarcating insiders and outsiders in organisations is labour-intensive, and exposes the forces constituting various subjectivities. Brad observed that as an 'outsider' he could often see the connections and bottlenecks, the prejudices and conflicts, that shaped subjectivities and their positions within an organisation. Yet, constituting his own position was tricky. A contractor like himself was expected to fly in and out of an organisation to fix a problem without requiring office space, induction, supervision or formal connection to its structures such as information flow. Yet, he was also expected to become part of the community, accepted and trusted by other staff, despite his invisibility. And because Brad, like many boundaryless workers, balanced multiple contracts in various sites and cities, his subjectivities shifted day to day. Brad explicitly talked about the contradictory pulls he experienced. After a day of energising planning with a great team, they all went out for a drink while he returned to a hotel room to prepare for the next day in an entirely different site and role: 'the loneliest place in the world'. Brad grounded his subjectivity in pushing others to become aware of their boundaries, to find new connections and solve their problems, but he continually made choices to escape entrenchment in the organisational tangles that he felt subjugated people.

2.5   Learning Subjectivity

Trinh Minh Ha (1991) wrote that

> what is at stake is a practice of subjectivity that is still unaware of its own constituted nature … unaware of its own continuous role in the production of meaning … unaware of representation as representation …and finally unaware of the 'Inappropriate Other' within every 'I'. (p.77)

The point of understanding what subjectivities are produced in work and through what process is ultimately, for me, towards opening opportunities for people to become aware of how their subjectivities are constituted, and to recognise how their own acts produce both their roving subject positions and the events in which they are implicated. This awareness is a learning process. It is in effect learning to refuse subjection to the

apparent inevitability of the global 'knowledge economy' with all its in-justices and new demands, and learning to reclaim some political agency in the organisation and activities of work. Those who argue that such po-litical agency is only possible through the solidarity of collective struggle (e.g., organised labour) exclude all those who labour in proliferating forms of boundaryless work. To ignore these forms is to deny the chang-ing structures of work and to leave unchallenged its regimes of truth and subjectification. Conversely, the awareness of subjectivity and the power of the subject's act breaks free from liberal encouragements of self-reflection, which reduce the subject's power and imagination to action upon and improvement of the self.

Among boundaryless workers, such as those participating in the study described here, there is not evidence of this clinging to a disci-plined/regulated self that ultimately diminishes one's awareness of the whole and one's sphere of possibilities for action. Yet boundaryless work-ers are actively constructing trajectories and boundaries for their careers and identities. The longer they are at it, the more comfortable they seem with their fluidity of their knowledge and position, a fluidity that seems to free them from career discourses of upward mobility. They become used to breaking into and out of self-representations, disciplinary technologies, and subjugating knowledge regimes. In doing so, they fashion their own boundaries defining their tasks and practices, their movement and position within work communities, and ultimately the meaning and scope of their work. They also confront regularly the question of what boundaries com-prise the knowledge that emerges in their work and the identities for which they are recognised. They seem able to articulate the different sub-ject positions they inhabit, and those they intentionally reject. Identity is an image that they play with, understanding its strategic construction and management for purposes of marketing as well as survival within organi-sations. Because they are compelled to confront or create boundaries all the time, 'boundaryless' workers appear conscious of their own continu-ous role in the production of their subjectivities as well as the activity networks in which they participate. They actively constitute boundaries, stretch them, ignore them, duck and escape them.

These dynamics, exposed by the heightened conditions of flexi-bility and identity-invention in which so-called boundaryless workers enact subjectivity, likely are not terribly different to those articulated by many workers. As pointed out by Casey, Edwards and Nicoll, and Billett and Smith (this volume), in these new times manufacturing flexible learning worker-subjects, people find all sorts of contradictory places for disruption, avoidance, and compliance. This magnification of boundary-less work serves to throw into relief an interesting dynamic that perhaps can be seen more broadly. That is, in working all of the boundaries of

organisational discourses and expectations, self-representations, shifting tasks and meanings of work, workers may occupy apparently contradictory subject positions at once. As this case of boundaryless workers shows, people attempt to both anchor or ground their subjectivity as an ontological structure apart from the flux of everyday, constantly present action; and they escape free from any ontological structures that threaten to capture and pin their contingency: organisational routines, occupational identities, even notions of a fixed self. Whether these two directions are held together in tension or enacted in oscillation or other mutual interaction is hard to determine and perhaps irrelevant. The important point is that part of this learning for all workers involves developing awareness of and strategies for constituting subjectivity in ways that both ensure some sense of continuity as well as new subjective possibilities that are not passive subjection.

2.6   References

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3

Subjected Bodies, or Embodied Subjects: Subjectivity and Learning Safety at Work

Margaret Somerville

> In this chapter, I will use the strategy of placing the body at the centre of inquiry (Grosz 1994) in order to articulate issues about the relationship between work, subjectivity and learning. I will refer to ethnographic studies about learning safety in mining and aged care workplaces, to explore bodies, spatiality and learning in neoliberal workplaces. Learning safety at work was found to involve the formation of embodied subjectivities in profound and fundamental ways. Studies of experienced mine workers and trainees in aged care revealed different aspects of the formation of embodied subjectivities. Using the feminist poststructural analytical strategy of storylines with this ethnographic data reveals collective storylines through which the workers take up their subjectivities. The collective storylines involve practices that are antithetical to learning safety. A vertical analysis of individual stories however, also reveals the ways in which some individuals change, resist and take up agency in relation to these collective storylines. Understanding the simultaneous processes of the subjection of 'docile bodies' and the embodied learning of physical actors, is necessary to address the practical problems of teaching and learning safe work practice and the theoretical problem of theorising the individual and the social in workplace learning.

3.1   Introduction

In *Volatile Bodies* (1994), Liz Grosz offers a powerful theoretical gesture, that of placing the body at the centre of inquiry, in order to address the mind/body dualism in Western thought. This was a feminist project, to uncouple our understandings of subjectivity from the determinism of the

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biological. Placing the body at the centre of our thinking, she claimed, shifts how we see the production of power, knowledge and subjectivities. Grosz applied it to that most fundamental bastion of Western thought, the discipline of philosophy. In this chapter I ask the question, what is revealed about work, subjectivity, and learning by placing the body at the centre of our inquiry?

The question of the relationship between work, embodied subjectivity and learning arose from the intersection of an intensely practical problem and a highly theoretical issue. In the context of the new discursive regimes of the neoliberal worker (Davies et al. 2005), a concern was raised by an aged care educator about the failure of manual handling training in an aged care organization. Several small studies were carried out of the impact of a range of different approaches to manual handling education. The results were confronting – none of the education programs made any changes to manual handling practice, as measured by a decline in the rate of injury. A review of the literature on manual handling education revealed that in all of the programs that had been developed to educate aged care workers in manual handling, no-one had asked the workers about their experience of manual handling in the workplace. A phenomenological study of nurses' experience of manual handling found that they had an absence of self-body awareness (Somerville and Bernoth 2001). While they performed the most intimate acts of daily care on bodies, and their learning included anatomy and physiology of the human body, they were aware only of other bodies and not their own. This study suggested that learning safety at work was not simply a matter of acquiring a set of skills, but involved the embodied subjectivity of the worker in profound and fundamental ways.

In poststructural theory, according to Davies (2000:57), "The experience of being a person is captured in the notion of subjectivity. Subjectivity is constituted through those discourses in which the person is being positioned at any one point in time, both through their own and others' acts of speaking/writing." The idea of a multiple and contradictory self-in-process, constructed through the discourses in which we participate, enables us to ask important questions about the relationship between subjectivity, work and learning (e.g. Fenwick 2001; Farrell 2001). Subjectivity in this theorising, however, is largely seen as constituted in language (e.g. Davies 2000), in analyses influenced by the theoretical work of Saussure, Derrida, and Foucault (Weedon 1996). In their work on the body most poststructural theorists have focussed on how the body is constituted through discourse (e.g. Davies 2000; Butler 1994). Poststructural theory, however, itself is heterogeneous and contested, especially in relation to questions of agency and the body. It is these problematic questions of agency and the

body that I am interested in exploring in relation to work, subjectivity and learning.

Working the in-between of binaries such as body/mind is an important feature of poststructural theorising. Feminist theorists working with Foucault, for example, have focussed on the in-between of his theorising about the body:

> The human body is the only irreducible in Foucault's theorising: it is the site at which all forms of domination are ultimately inflected and registered and it is the site of resistance. The human body is simultaneously a biophysical given and a cultural construct … The body as imprinted by history is a text on which are inscribed the forces of socialisation, discipline and punishment. (Suleiman 1986:2)

Bell (1994:91) draws attention to the way that Foucault understands the materiality of the real body as shaped by discourses through "deployments of power directly connected to the body – to bodies, functions, physiological processes, sensations and pleasures" (Foucault 1980:151-152). According to Foucault, this process occurs, not through ideology, but through practice: "through the organization and regulation of the time, space and movements of our daily lives, our bodies are trained, shaped and impressed with the stamp of prevailing historical forms of selfhood, desire, masculinity and femininity" (Bordo 1997:91). Butler, the most prominent translator of Foucault's views into feminist philosophy, has similarly pointed out the way in which bodies and discourses are co-constitutive: "I think that discourses do actually live in bodies. They lodge in bodies; bodies in fact carry discourses as part of their own lifeblood.… So, I don't want to say that there is discursive construction on the one hand and a lived body on the other" (Meijer and Prins 1998:282). The focus of her work, however, has been overwhelmingly about how discourses and discursive practices shape the physical body and somehow the lived body seems again to be erased. Keeping the lived body in view, through Grosz's strategy of placing the body at the centre of inquiry, enables an exploration of the ways in which workers are physical actors and subject to regulatory control.

Few researchers in adult and workplace education have focused on the body and even fewer on questions of bodies and spatiality. Beckett and Morris (2001:36) note in relation to workplace learning that "the highest status is reserved for the most abstract and immaterial learning … and the lowest status is accorded to concrete, material learning, much of which we learn in daily embodied actions." In a critique of current conceptualisations of experiential learning, Fenwick (2003:124) claims that "the body in some respects has been somehow banished from learning, along with the body's enmeshments in its social, material and cultural nets

of action." She suggests that "experiential (work) knowing must be theorised as fully embodied (not a reflective process where lofty rational mind excavates messy bodily experiences to create 'knowledge')" (Fenwick 2001:247). In vocational education and training, Mulcahy (2000:506) found that the erasure of the body resulted in "a thin conception of vocational competence and, sometimes, a thin practice of developing this competence." She suggests that embodied knowledge is "transmitted from person to person, … built up and passed on generationally, in a hands-on, in-practice fashion" rather than through codified textual practices employed in competency based training.

In a detailed analysis of embodied learning, O'Loughlin (1998:279) argues for a conception of the communicative body as: "that for which gesture, body orientation and proximity are the vehicle through which meanings are expressed. Thinking is undeniably embodied." This fact has implications for the relationship between embodied learning, subjectivity and work because "situated cognition … is not people thinking in different contexts, but subjects produced differently by different practices" (Walkerdine 1997:65). In a study of embodied cognition, Cheville (2005) employs two key understandings from Foucault about bodies and spatiality. The first is that physical space "produces habits of body from which attitudinal dispositions emerge." The second that "embodiment in any cultural space is a product of historicized technologies that inscribe, surveil, discipline" (Cheville 2005:91). These parallel ideas about the individual embodied subject as an actor in physical space, and the disciplining and regulation of docile bodies at work, is the in-between space that I want to unravel in this chapter.

3.2   Work and the Regulation of Bodies

Over the past ten years, and parallel to the development of the neoliberal work place (Davies et al. 2005), there has been increasing activity in the area that has become known as *Occupational Health and Safety, OH&S*. It is a recognisable aspect of neoliberal work practice and is driven by legislation, the cost of insurance, the profit relationship between the cost of injury and the cost of production, and possibly an increasing interest in safety and wellbeing at work by workers. This increasing interest could be due to the way workers are encouraged to take up the discourses of neoliberal work practices of the self regulation of 'docile bodies', but where personal safety and wellbeing are concerned, it also seems obvious that being safe at work is in the interest of workers. These new modes of regulating bodies are particularly obvious in workplaces with a high level of manual labour and a high rate of accident and injury such as aged care,

coal mining, building construction, and fire fighting (Somerville and Bernoth 2001; Lloyd and Somerville 2006; Wadick 2005). However, a new focus on issues of occupational health and safety is not restricted to manual work and those workplaces normally considered dangerous. A recent study, *Occupational Stress in Australian Universities* (2003), claimed academic workers displayed the highest levels of stress of any occupation. In areas of manual work, however, the solution is seen to be increasing regulation of bodies through textual practices in which workers are regulated by rules and procedures and 'trained' in how to work safely using competency based training. These practices involve a significant shift from embodied learning to codified knowledge practices, changing the meaning of what counts as knowledge and in the process challenging established worker subjectivities (Farrell and Holkner 2004).

These changing practices of regulation and control of bodies at work are apparent in the Australian coal mining and aged care industries which are the focus of the empirical work in this chapter. The coal miners in this study come from traditional intergenerational coal mining communities where they learned coal mining subjectivities from their families, and their work by working alongside experienced mine workers. However, in the course of their working lives, these coal miners have experienced radical changes in work practices from coal mining with a pick and shovel to managing Longwall mining where an automated machine moves slowly forward and shaves off the coal with huge rotating blades. For aged care workers there are some limited new technologies, such as mechanical lifters, but work remains fundamentally the same with the heavy manual labour of care work being carried out largely by minimally trained workers under primitive conditions. The major changes that both mining and aged care workers share in their work practice are changes associated with the performativity, control and regulation of neoliberal work regimes (Davies et al. 2005). The learning and practice of safety is a particularly salient example. In both kinds of workplaces, bodies are regulated by new rules, procedures and training. Workers are expected to learn new safe work practices and to be consciously aware of and responsible for the safety of their bodies and the safety of others.

How do these new regimes of neoliberal regulation, control and performativity impact on the relationship between work, subjectivity and learning for these coal miners and aged care workers?

3.3   Embodied Learning in Mine Work

'Ethnographic' studies were carried out in coal mining, and aged care workplaces. I use the term ethnography to describe the process of data collection through 'thick description' (Geertz 1975) in semi-structured

conversational style interviews and workplace observations. The partici-
pants were encouraged to tell their stories of learning safety at work. The
technique of analysis, however, used the feminist poststructural frame of
storylines (Davies 2000; Sondergaard 2002), an idea with a close affinity
to the concept of *discourse*: "A storyline is a condensed version of a natu-
ralized and conventional cultural narrative, one that is often used as the
explanatory framework of one's own and other's practices and sequences
of action" (Sondergaard 2002:191). The assumption is that there are a lim-
ited number of possible storylines available through which we interpret
our experiences: "[s]tories we observe, hear, read, both lived and imagi-
nary, form a stock of imaginary storylines through which life choices can
be made" (Davies 2000:81). Storylines "are realised and created/changed
in the more or less fragmented ways they are taken up by subjects as they
develop their own narratives" (Sondergaard 2002:191). In analyzing data
according to this concept, there are embedded assumptions about the na-
ture of subjectivity. It is assumed, for example, that within a particular
discursive situation, such as underground coal mine work, the stories that
twenty workers tell will be largely representative of the whole group of
mine workers and may also be representative of other workplaces with
similar discursive communities and practices.

Stories of bodies and spatiality were the most common for the
mine workers in this study. The mine was portrayed as a hostile and un-
predictable place, with dangerous remote control machinery, where sim-
ply turning up for work puts you in danger: *'cause you're dealing with
forces beyond your control.'* In this they included the daily grind of the
conditions of underground coal mining – dust, noise, cramped, awkward
and restricted spaces, mud, and uneven floors – as making the work envi-
ronment difficult for their bodies. For the mine workers, this brought the
whole discourse of 'safety' into question.

Participants agreed that the culture of mine work continued to be
one of aggression, competitiveness and risk taking, although these were
less extreme than they had been in early times. They related the levels of
aggression to the physical conditions and the stress of working in a dan-
gerous environment: *'I guess it's a bit of a release and a relief from the
pressure and the other stresses that just come with being underground,
being in a hostile environment.'* They described competitiveness as the
ongoing basis of the mining industry and commented on the conflict be-
tween production and safety played out in workers' bodies: *'To be com-
petitive, that's the system we use. If we're not competitive, the mine's closed
and that's where it is.'* Risk-taking continued to be prevalent, especially in
attitudes to wearing protective gear which is feminised as a sign of physi-
cal weakness*: 'A lot of people won't wear gloves even like – you tart,
y'know to protect their fingers.'* These worker subjectivities, characterised

by aggression/violence, competitiveness and risk taking, have all been re-inforced by organisational practices in the past when the ratio of the cost of production to safety was in favour of production.

Learning safety is embedded in the physical conditions of under-ground mining, including the machinery and equipment, the collective culture of mine work, and individual worker subjectivities. Miners ini-tially learned safety from experienced workers in the mine, but over time they learnt from their own experience. They described the most important aspect of their embodied learning of safety as *'pit sense'*, learned by the experiencing body in interaction with the physical and social environ-ments of the mining work/place. In pit sense all the senses are employed in a complex interconnected way to provide information about whether the body-in-place is safe. This includes sound, smell, touch, and kinaes-thetic sense as well as other senses that have no name such as a sense of the heaviness of the air, the particular feeling of the air on the hairs of the legs or the backs of the ears, as well as an uncanny sense of just being un-comfortable. This learning occurs over a long period of time and is ongo-ing as technologies change and mine work continues to be dangerous and unpredictable.

Under new work regimes the workers, who were previously told to *'leave their brains at the gate'* are now expected to engage in processes of learning and awareness, monitoring their bodies and acquiring new worker subjectivities. The solution to improving safety in the mines is seen in terms of the regulation of bodies through signs, rules and proce-dures and mandated safety training. The mine workers in this study were generally resistant to becoming this new type of worker and displayed a marked resistance to procedural or paper knowledge. They believe that pit sense resides in the body and cannot be codified and produced as paper knowledge. Where safety is concerned, mine workers trust their common-sense knowledge developed from experience rather than paper knowledge: *'No, I'm not, we're not using that because, on the paper it might look great. Down there, that's no good, if I stand there he's gunna bloody run into me or he's gunna drive into me. I'm not standing there.'* New safety learning is resisted, even if it might be seen as in the best interests of the mine workers, because their embodied subjectivity has evolved over many years of mine work.

As I undertook the collective analysis of the workers' stories, however, I became aware that not all workers shared this collective ver-sion in its various iterations. I could identity four workers from the twenty who were interviewed who told a different story. In order to answer the research question the company had posed about how they could change the relationship between hyper masculine subjectivities and learning safety, I became interested in also analysing these vertical, individual

storylines as opposed to the horizontal collective analysis. Of the four workers who told a different story, one worker had always been different than his work mates, but the other three had made radical changes during the course of their working life. These workers had changed in the direction of implementing safe work practices against the grain of both their previous behaviour and the collective practices of the mining work place.

3.4   Change and Intentionality

'Bob' described himself as *'a bit of a lad'*, and told stories about how he had enacted an aggressive masculine subjectivity in the workplace: *'I remember one particular deputy who was going to retire. …I picked him up in the air like that, and the other guy was probably here to the computer and, I threw him through the air, and the other guy caught him, and then he threw him back, and he was like a basketball.'* The decision to make the radical change from a coalface operations worker who enacted an aggressive hyper masculine subjectivity to a position as team leader, was instigated because of learning to read and write with the female communications teacher employed by the mine. In his Deputy work he planned to enact a new benign and safety conscious worker subjectivity where he valued the workers in his team. 'John' introduced himself as a mine worker who had made radical changes as a result of a near fatal accident: *'I'd broke me left femur in four places and I was partially scalped on the head and which required fifty stitches but, since then, that's when I really started getting involved and interested in the safety side of things, and has now led to the role that I play now and also the fact that I'm halfway through an Occupational Health and Safety degree at Newcastle Uni.'* Learning was also critical in John's transformation. He used the learning support offered by the Joint Coal Board to re-learn his body then moved on to workplace courses in safety and finally formal tertiary studies in OH&S. He has implemented new safety training courses in the Company. 'Mick' experienced radical change after undergoing open heart surgery. He described his past leadership style as *'a horrible way of dealing with people'* using public humiliation and shaming. He related his profound transformational learning to his experiences with a naturopath through whom he fundamentally changed his practices of body care. He understood that to change the way his workers approached the care of their bodies was to change the way they felt about their self worth and he advocated training for other team leaders to prepare them for a leadership role to support workers in this way.

In some important senses the changes were unintentional and unpredictable, and it is tempting to adopt enactivist theory (Fenwick 2001)

to explain the emergence of new subjectivities and learning in the interstices of a complex dynamic system. A workplace communications trainer is employed and a worker decides to improve his literacy skills; a major accident occurs; somebody has a heart attack that profoundly disturbs his sense of embodied self. But at some point, intentionality enters the picture and the worker makes a choice to change. John's workmate, for instance, also involved in the same accident, left his job, chose not to take up the challenge of unlearning and new learning in this workplace. Bob chose to engage with literacy education and then to apply for a Deputy's ticket. Mick decided to take up the changes in self-care only after a period of time, aware of going against the grain of collective worker subjectivities. Once this intentionality entered the picture, learning became profoundly implicated in the change process. They drew on all of the forms of learning available both within the workplace and outside. These included informal learning, semi formal learning support, formal workplace learning programs, and formal theoretical study. What the workplace did not offer, they found elsewhere. They became in fact, self identified lifelong learners integrating worker and learner subjectivities. Not only did they change their sense of themselves as learners but they became active advocates for continued learning for others, promoting learning in general, and learning safety in particular. The changes in these individual subjectivities impacted on the collective culture of the mine as a whole.

3.5   Embodied Learning in Aged Care Work

Ethnographic research with aged care trainees was able to reveal the formation of new worker subjectivities and learning in a way that the mining study was not able to because the mine workers had been working in the coal mine for many years. The trainee aged care workers group was made up of twelve females and one male ranging in age from new school leavers to fifty year olds. They had low levels of education and generally came from low socio-economic backgrounds. They had three weeks of initial training and then began normal work in the aged care facility which continued for twelve months with one day per week training support. The trainees participated in focus groups after three weeks (their first day of work), four months, and eight months. Three trainees also volunteered to be interviewed after four months and eight months of work.

While none of these trainees had had any previous desire to enter aged care work as a vocation, once they had started working in aged care, they quickly and easily formed subjectivities as aged care workers through the process of doing the work:

> *It's that rewarding. I actually washed a man's slippers the other day because they were really smelly and dirty. Anyway, I went and soaked them in the bucket and gave them a scrub and put them out in the sun cos it was a lovely hot sunny day. Anyway, its that rewarding and that, I feel like I'm that entwined with the position I'm in and the job that I'm in, when I was at home I'm thinking, 'oh no, I felt his slippers out in the sun, what if it rains?" you know, and I was gunna ring work and say ' look can you go and get so and so's slippers and put 'em in, and check 'em. You know, little things like that you always think.* (Trainee interview)

This was a common storyline for all levels of care workers in this study. Often, it was related to previous specialised experience in unpaid domestic care work such as being a single parent, caring for a disabled sibling, or an ageing parent. This storyline of self-sacrifice is the basis of care worker's engagement in, and commitment to, a low status, poorly paid job with stressful and often physically arduous working conditions. Trainees made comments such as *'you know people say "you know it's not much money", I said "well I don't care for me". The money helps but for me it's rewarding and I just love it. I just love it, I just love being with the residents. If I can make a difference in their life that's my reward.'* Understanding this process of entwining, through which workers take up care work as a part of their identity, is fundamental to understanding the relationship between work, subjectivity and learning for these workers. It is also the storyline they were offered in their training course.

And yet, these new workers are already aware of making conscious choices about their evolving subjectivities. When they were placed with 'buddies' who engaged in processes that were contrary to their new worker subjectivities, they expressed their resistance:

> *Beryl's got very good attitude towards the residents and I really picked on that, like picked that up, that her, she respects them, she doesn't talk down to them and things like that like I've noticed the others, I'm glad I got stuck with her, if it was someone else who wasn't – didn't respect the residents so much, which I've seen down there, I probably would have been very, oh my god I don't want to come back here tomorrow if they're gonna be like that or if I'm gonna turn out like that.* (Trainee interview)

This trainee expressed her understanding that in working alongside experienced workers, they are forming new subjectivities, and it is a largely unconscious process because much of the learning is tacit and embodied. In this study, the most powerful and resilient learning was embodied learning about bodies – their own, the bodies of other workers, and the bodies they cared for. All of this learning took place in a highly contested

community of practice with obvious and confusing contradictions between storylines of care and practice. Manual handling is the most common and everyday example of this embodied safety learning. Manual handling refers to the physical work of caring for aged residents with limited mobility and high care needs. Most of this work is carried out by Assistants-in-Nursing, the lowest paid staff at the bottom of the workplace power hierarchy. It is highly contested and trainees reported, for example, that they were often told, *'no you didn't see that'*, when safe manual handling practices were breeched:

> *I get along with everybody and I like to help everybody and I will be there to help everybody. But as I said, a lot of the times, you know I've asked for help with lifters, which is two people, and I've been told flat out 'no'. So where do you go from there?*
> (Trainee interview)

3.6   Exercising Agency: 'It's Like Moving a Mountain'

Where do you go from here' was indeed the key question. New worker subjectivities are powerfully formed very early in the process of beginning their work and these new subjectivities are reinforced by the practices they are taught in training. However, the storyline of self-sacrifice is not easily compatible with practices of self-care and they soon confront other unsafe practices when working with experienced workers. The learning at this stage is largely tacit, resilient to change and reinforced by relations of power between workers with different levels of experience and at different levels in the hierarchy of the organization. In the second focus group, at the end of four months work, the trainees spent most of the time discussing these issues of power and the repercussions if they challenged the authority of experienced workers. It was essential to provide ongoing, non-interventionist support for the trainees, as the same time putting into place other strategies for educating experienced workers and organisational change programs within the Facilities.

The three trainees who were interviewed took up these options for their evolving subjectivities in different ways. 'Nicole' and 'Helen' were happy to continue to negotiate their new work subjectivities and their work practice and saw this as an opportunity to continue their learning at a pace they felt comfortable with: *'You're gunna learn, you're gunna know more, and you're gunna be more knowledgeable to take it a little bit slower, just a touch slower, you know. Cos time, time will tell, time, yeah. It's like wanting to grow old quick, you know what I mean?'* They implicitly recognised that this meant conforming to current practice until they

had attained full worker status, possibly compromising the worker they would become.

'Francesca', the third interviewee, was unable to do this because she was too frustrated at her inability to change things. It is possible to interpret the differences between Francesca and Helen using Billett's very useful concept of ontogeny. Francesca's mother was an immigrant who struggled to overcome adversity and Francesca herself has already occupied a position as a manager in a retail outlet, a job she found unsatisfying. She came to aged care work with a strong sense of her own directions and goals for her work. Francesca presented a very long narrative description of a single manual handling event in which she had tried to engage the interest of a worker in the Facility who did have the power to change things:

> *We do OH&S risk assessments, We get 'Mary' down there [to the ward]. It took months and months for her to come down to this assessment on a resident who was a risk for us, an absolute risk for us. You know, and you don't have three staff members to get him out of bed and then the resident's wife is complaining, 'he's not out of bed. I'm sick of seeing him in bed', and you can understand that. He's a big man, and the lifter and sling, everything was wrong for him and, you know, it was, trying to change it was like – we finally, finally, finally, got her to come down. This is how much Frances comes down to our ward.*

Francesca's long story that followed revealed that learning manual handling is about the body shapes and sizes of the worker, resident and co-workers, the physical spaces and available technologies. It is influenced by the social dimension and power dynamics of the relationships between new and experienced workers who may have quite different values and practices. The complexity of learning manual handling as an intersubjective bodily practice cannot be separated from the internal politics of the organisation which allocates a low priority to Francesca's ward, and the broader political context of aged care which provides scarce resources for the care of the elderly. It is the essence of workplace learning in aged care. In narrating this event, Francesca was able to articulate her understanding of the complex material, spiritual, emotional and political dimensions of this seemingly innocent work practice. She was also able to articulate her frustration. After this event, Francesca began to withdraw from the work because the work practice was incompatible with her evolving subjectivity:

> *I just get so frustrated not being able to change anything. Trying, you know, it's like moving a mountain down there trying to change something and you get, although you do have support*

*and things like that and you think that, you know, things are be-
ing done, but they don't get done.* (Trainee interview)

Eventually, Francesca's growing subjectivity as a worker/learner in
aged care led her to withdraw completely from this workplace and take a
position as an Enrolled Nurse elsewhere. This position, and the associated
education, would give her more ability to exercise agency in her work
practice. Unravelling the threads of individual worker subjectivities and
the collective storylines within which they take these up reveals the way
trainee aged care workers are both subjected, and act as agentic subjects,
in their new worker subjectivities.

3.7   Conclusion

Taking up Grosz's challenge to place the body at the centre of inquiry has
the potential to disrupt received notions about learning safety and reveals
a constellation of relations between work practices, worker subjectivities,
and embodied learning. The workers in these studies work in traditional
workplaces that have changed through the imposition of neoliberal work
practices, one example of which is the regulation, control and performa-
tivity around learning safety. Despite these changed work practices, work-
ers learned to work safely through their embodied learning in the work-
place and mandated safety training contributed little to that learning. This
embodied learning was not easy and simple however, but an ongoing
process that involved the formation of worker subjectivities through the
practice of daily work. The physical and social environments of that work
were not the background context to embodied safety learning but were in-
timately intertwined with their learning and the formation of worker sub-
jectivities. A consideration of bodies and spatiality was crucial to under-
standing that learning. Embodied work learning, especially learning
safety, is specifically about learning the body in place. Body-in-place is
not context, it is the learning.

The different research questions, methodologies and focus of
analysis in each of the studies revealed different aspects of the doubled
question of subjected bodies or embodied subjects. Mine worker identities
were initiated prior to entering the mine through family stories in mining
communities. Worker subjectivities evolved as they learned their work
from experienced miners in the harsh and dangerous physical conditions
of the mine. Work learning for miners also takes place in the social rela-
tionships and work practices that constitute the collective of mine work-
ers. The storylines in these coal mining work sites offered certain fixed
subject positions around the taking up of strong aggressive, competitive

and risk taking masculine subjectivities. In the past, these fixed subject positions were in the interests of (the profits of) the coal mining company and were reinforced through community stories in relatively closed coal mining communities. When the coal mining company changed their approach to safe work practice and implemented new rules and training for the regulation of workers' bodies, workers resisted the new codified knowledge because it challenged these long established worker subjectivities, and what they valued as knowledge and learning

There was no sense, however, that the Company imposed external controls to produce aggressive, competitive and risk taking workers, but the subjectivities of the workers themselves were formed by the conditions, embodying these characteristics as they became experienced mine workers. They took on the work of regulating their own embodied subjectivities. Three of the twenty workers interviewed, however, underwent radical transformations during the course of their working life in regard to working safely and caring for their bodies. They employed all forms of learning in these transformations, exercising intentionality in the direction of change. Although each of the transformations was precipitated by unplanned events, they would not have been possible if the Company had not changed its approach to learning safety. The regulation of bodies through external means such as signs, rules and procedures had little effect on these workers who regarded safety as too precarious to trust codified knowledge practices. However, the spaces opened up by changing Company discourses offered new storylines and therefore new possibilities for worker subjectivities. Change and learning occurred in the interstices of a complex dynamic system (Fenwick 2001) but with the intentionality of the worker in the direction of change.

As noted, the aged care workers who participated in the research study did not choose aged care work as a vocation, but came into it in a serendipitous way and became aged care workers in a process of subject formation. The process of subject formation was evident in the research into trainees entering the aged care workplace in a way that it was not with experienced mine workers. Trainees valued their three week preparatory course, particularly the experiential and 'hands-on' components, but there was nothing to prepare them for the realities of the workplace. At the bottom of the workplace hierarchy in an industry at the bottom of societal value, Assistants-in-Nursing were extremely challenged by the complex learnings in their first year of work. The predominant form of their learning was embodied learning about bodies – their own, their colleagues and those of the residents they cared for. This learning involved fundamentally contradictory storylines of self-sacrifice and self-care. Manual handling represented a particular form of the embodied learning and was found to involve complex material, emotional, spiritual and political dimensions.

Their experience of embodied learning was contradictory, fraught and contested because experienced workers practised differently and experiential learning was powerful and resilient.

Although all of the trainees expressed similar difficulties in power relationships with experienced workers, they negotiated these in different ways. Interviews conducted during the course of the year revealed the formation of new worker subjectivities, as trainees quickly became experienced workers and took on the storylines and practices of the collective. Workers who were unable to take on these storylines and practices, exercised their agency by leaving the job. This was the case with Francesca who was unable to wait for the changes to take place and decided to undergo full nursing training which would give her better capacity to influence the conditions of her work. Billett's concept of ontogeny in the co-participatory relations between the individual and the collective work practice (Billett 2001) was found to be a useful concept for identifying the difference between workers who took up the collective storylines and those who refused them.

It is only by beginning to theorise the constellation of relationships between work, subjectivity and learning that the practical and theoretical problem of learning safety in the neoliberal workplace can be addressed.

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4

Learning and Experience

Henning Salling Olesen

Taking it's point of departure in some critical remarks to some of the most important recent theorizing of learning in the workplace, this chapter presents an alternative framework for theorizing learning as a subjective process in a social and societal context, based in life history research. Key concepts derived from European critical theory, *subjectivity* and *experience,* are briefly introduced with a view to their intellectual background. The chapter elaborates the implication of these concepts in relation to the understanding of emotional aspects of learning in everyday work life and in relation to the understanding of knowledge, based on examples from the author's research into professional learning (general practitioners). The pivotal role of language use and language socialisation is explained in brief, developing a psychodynamic complement to a language game concept of language use.

The study of work related learning needs a theoretical framework which can understand work as a subjective activity with subjective meanings, and see learning not only in relation to the immediate workplace, but also as a fundamental aspect of societal relations (Salling Olesen 1999/2001). Such a framework must integrate approaches from social sciences and human sciences – which might also offer some interesting perspectives for other domains of social sciences. In spite of many efforts and some achievements I think these issues remain highly relevant and deserve further examination. This chapter will offer a contribution to such a framework.

I will briefly outline a theoretical framework for analysing work related learning as individual, subjective experience without losing sight of its societal dimension, aiming eventually at the theorization of subjectivity as being societal. This approach originates in a life history project

(Life History project at Roskilde University[1]). Studying individuals who are learning under the conditions and impacts of societal changes and conflicts, this project is intended to understand motivation and participation in education as well as the dynamics of learning processes in their societal context. Very often, but not only, such changes and conflicts are related to work and employment. They include situations of technological shifts, new forms of work organisation and management, or of redundancy (or not obtaining access to the labour market at all). But also the specific types of pressure and workload in everyday life such as the 'double work' for women and environmental problems are part of it. We want to be able to understand the subjective meaning of these societal events and conditions for individuals in the context of their life experience and life prospects in order to understand more theoretically how learning is embedded in subjectivity of the learners. Biographical and life history research uses a variety of approaches that are guided and inspired by a conceptual framework of critical social theory, and helps focus on the *particular learning individual*, without abstracting them from the societal context of immediate social events and their wider, deeper societal dimensions. In the general references of the Life History project are noted empirical studies of learning in a wide variety of occupations and workplaces – including redundancy situations.

To avoid the usual dichotomy between the individual and the soci(et)al level of analysis is a key challenge for learning theory. But actually I think it has much broader resonance to social theory, politics and epistemology than can be discussed here (Leledakis 1995; Salling Olesen 2002a, 2002b). I think that the theorizing of learning may be a key to discussions about democracy in a globalizing capitalism and the role of knowledge in a late modern society.

It seems to us in the Life History project that not only is this conceptual framework useful for understanding work related learning, it also informs learning theory. This is because the ways in which 'work' is a context for the individual learner is like an exemplar, covering a concrete and specific life world at the same time as it is the central factor in the societal order and dynamic. That is, work related learning in the widest

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[1] The life history project at Roskilde University is a theoretical and methodological project. Based on a conglomerate of empirical projects we explore conceptual frameworks of analysis and try out of a variety of empirical methods for production of data and interpretation (Salling Olesen 1996, Weber, 1998). Depending on cases, interpretations are thematically centred on work and gender, assuming that these themes organize (the most) important aspects of learning. The project has received funding from the Danish Research Councils' Welfare Research programme.

sense also comprises the socialisation, or 'societalization', of the individual. I will take my departure in some recent developments that I see as the most relevant fellows in this endeavour – pointing out in unfair briefness some critical limitations in them, which I think can be resolved and complemented by my framework.

4.1   New Learning Theory with an Outlook to Worklife

Theorizing learning has previously been the business of schools and education. Most learning research has accordingly been instrumentalized by the perspectives of this cumulative, transfer-oriented mode of learning – sometimes widening the scope of attention to 'reality' and to students' real experiences, but then most often as a *tool* for more efficient education and training. Development psychology, instructional psychology, and theories of curricular structure have prevailed. The increasing interest of industry in human resources has boosted the interest in broader theories of learning and subjectivity. Much of the learning discourse on work related learning however remains 'ideological' in the sense that it deals with a truly important and novel issue in a very abstract way, when talking about individuals learning in contexts of 'organisations', 'tools', 'knowledge' and 'practices', not to mention 'creativity' and 'innovation' without specification.

But the new interest in learning in the work place and for work has also advanced new theoretical approaches. First of all it has exposed the significance of the social context of learning. Inspired by anthropological thinking about cultural transmission, learning is seen as the gradual inclusion in a community of practice, i.e. the group of people whose shared practice also forms a cultural framework and meaning making (Lave and Wenger 1991). The early anthropological or cultural theories of learning have, rightly, I think, been criticized for a conservative bias because they tend to mould the learner in the forms of the already established practice or organisation under consideration, often a work place. However, whereas the subjective meaning of the immediate workplace context is obvious, 'work' is a societal life condition; the meanings and conflicts related to that are effectively edited out. The societal outlook is pretty narrow. Wenger (1998) seems to move beyond this problem by generalizing the notion of community of practice so that is not, in his sense, necessarily a concrete social context. In his model learning is connected with the trajectory of the learning individual across and between a number of communities in which (s)he participates and negotiates meaning and identity. But it remains very vague how community of practice relates to all the interesting – and conflicting – social affiliations

of the worker in relation to the work place: formal organisation of a company, informal organisation(s) at the work place, professional affiliations, trade union, and family situation. I think this vagueness may be responsible for the fact that practical analytical application of the concepts tends to identify the subjective meaning making with one specific entity defined by task in the organisation, by work process similarity, or by location. Wenger's point of the trajectory across and the potential conflicts between different communities of practice is lost in application. In a more systems theory oriented approach of cultural learning theory this vagueness is promoted to a virtue of generalised relations, leaving no trace of the dialectic between particular (individual) perspectives and meaning making, and the organisational totality of systems' functionality (or dys-functionality) – which was the important innovation that anthropological or cultural theory brought into learning theory.

The anthropological inspiration does not provide useful answers to the other important questions in relation to a theory of learning: what are the driving forces and dynamics of the way in which the learning individual makes meaning of and 'negotiates' his/her identity in social communities already existing, and when can we say that this ongoing modification of identity and meaning making has the quality of learning and not just of change? In fact, Wenger's conception can be questioned as to whether it provides a theory of learning at all, or even a relevant account of (parts of) the social context in which learning may take place. To create a theory of learning requires theorizing the learner as a subject in its own right, and of the processes that s/he is undergoing.

Until now it seems difficult to connect the attention to social context in work related learning theory with the concepts of the individual learner and learning potential which are available in learning psychology and cognitive science. However, this connection has been attempted and some contributions are more rewarding than others. Billett (2001) in his book on workplace learning refers – critically, though – to the concepts of situated learning to frame the learning within the workplace, and combines them with constructivist learning psychology (Piaget and onwards), seeing learning as the result of practical problem solving in the work process in analysis of concrete cases. This brings out important insights: first the attention to the agency of the learner, and second the socially embedded and material nature of learning.

In this approach the workplace remains abstracted, and learning is seen in particular cases of interplay between the 'materiality' of the work process and the worker. This abstraction may have to do with the strategic, practical development perspective, and limits the theorizing of

the social context. But I also see some limitations in the understanding of the subjective aspects of learning.

The learning processes are understood as the cognitive aspect of problem solving (and knowledge building). This is eye-opening in the context of the theme of promoting learning in the workplace because it emphasizes the fact that workers are always learning all the time, and that there are endless possibilities to create work places which are more supporting and stimulating for workers' learning. The generalising distinction between routine and non-routine work does define work situations in relation to the experience of the learner subject, and hence their subjective status as problems to be solved or not. But this distinction also simplifies the possible meanings embedded in the materiality of the work processes to the dichotomy of routine or challenge. It seems likely that work 'means more' to workers, related to their subjective experience, than this distinction embraces. The possible learning outcome (or no outcome) of the interaction between the work task or problem and workers depends on the complicated relations between workers and perceived challenges.

Eraut (1994) has analysed professional knowledge and competences in terms of the ways of knowing and using knowledge in work situations. He provides interesting and distinctive discussions of theories of knowledge and knowledge use, and relates knowledge to the features of the work situation and the dependence on the type of work tasks being performed. In this way, he provides a useful corrective to generalizing theories of knowledge and professions, and especially emphasizes the procedural and contextual nature of knowledge use.

Indirectly, this is also a way of theorizing learning, in principle within a similar model as in Billett's analyses, namely by theorizing the ways in which knowledge is used and how knowledge resources are modified in problem solving processes of work.

But due to the point of departure this contribution to learning theory is restricted to (or at least strongly prioritizes) the cognitive dimensions. Eraut indicates obvious awareness of other dimensions – the personal experiences of the learner and the specific nature of the work – but these appear as ad hoc analytic observations and distinctions without being theorized. Eraut's mission is another one: to study development of knowledge and competence. I argue that this mission would gain strength by paying systematic attention to the dynamics of learning and to the subjective meaning of work and knowledge for the professional (Salling Olesen 2000).

Though Billett's and Eraut's approaches refer to different types of work, from manual low skilled to professional work, I think they can jointly contribute to a general understanding of work life as social practice, work tasks and knowledge use, and some aspects of learning. But

they share the tendency to operate with abstract learner subjects, individuals without history – both in the sense of an individual life history and in the sense of societal and cultural attributes such as gender. The ambition to theorize subjectivity of work and learning as a subjective process would not deny these insights but would in some respects re-interpret them and in some respects complement them.

The life history approach invokes, in a very elementary sense, the individual's life history as a live factor in the present context. The intention is not to create a causality track of the individual. Nor is it to echo the individual self account of learning biography and identity (Salling Olesen 2004). Instead, it is to understand how specific individuals experience their present in the light of their past and their subjectively projected future. The intention is also to see how the wider societal conditions are experienced in a particular context by this present subject. From this we hope to build a theory of the dynamics of learning.

Referring to the elementary context of learning in the social setting of the work place it is evident that workers learn different new skills and insights, and avoid others. I think that both the differences, contents and directions of learning can be best understood in the context of a concept of subjectivity that is sensitive to individual and social experience, and to unpredictable, but not coincidental, agency.

4.2   Subjectivity

Closely related core concepts in our approach are *subjectivity*, i.e. the way of relating to the world which is characterized by intention, agency and engaging interaction with something outside yourself, and *experience*, i.e. consciousness building through subjective processing of perceptions and impressions from the world. Subjectivity is a relation: individuals (or collectives) constitute themselves by making the world an object of reflection and action, and build *experience* in this interaction. In social philosophy and theory this can be termed a subject-object-dialectic in the Hegelian sense. The theoretical explanation of the concepts within the English language is quite problematic (Hodkinson 2004). So I think it is necessary to give a very basic presentation of these concepts. To think that this life history approach may contribute to a theoretical concept of subjectivity may be seen as a matter of grandiosity, but we see it as a recognition of the difficulties involved, and the need to bring these philosophical concepts into concrete research. Practically we do interpretations of life history narratives or other subjective expressions transcribed into a text by a hermeneutic approach, guiding the interpretations with basic conceptual frameworks and enriching them with knowledge of societal, historical and

psychic contexts. We try to understand the individual subjective expressions, but we also elaborate the conceptual framework to be sensitive to important differentiations and developments in the field (such as gender, ethnicity, and work identities: the identification potential in specific qualities of work processes).

In the following discussion a few aspects and implications of this position can be pointed out, hopefully establishing the relevance of this way of theorizing. Readers who find this presentation either too brief – or inspiring – may find a more elaborated version in Salling Olesen (2002a) and in Weber (2001).

We base our concept of subjectivity in the tradition of critical theory (the Frankfurt school). Critical theory understands human subjectivity as a product of socialisation in which a specific version of cultural and social experience is embodied, becoming a complex of conscious and unconscious preconditions for subjective agency and experience. Opposed to liberal thinking of the independent, free and rational subject, critical theory assumes that subjectivity is a historical and dynamic entity, which is only partly and gradually *constituted* in a learning relation to biological and historical reality. In order to understand this constitution process it synthesizes theoretical elements from Marxism, about societal and historical factors, and psychoanalysis, about the embodied and symbolic forms of psychodynamic processes characterized by contradictions and tensions. This theoretical synthesis helps us to interpret individual subjective reactions and consciousness in the context of culture, and to understand the dynamics of culture in their embodied and subjective significance. The psychoanalytical theoretical ground does not imply, as many people usually assume, an individual psychological explanation of subjectivity, and even less any form of biological or life course determinism. There are many quite different positions in psychoanalytical theory, and even more misunderstandings solidly based on ignorance and maybe a whiff of anxiety. The critical theory position views the psychic processes in which societal relations are mediated as not fully transparent and conscious, but rather unconscious and preconscious. This can be seen as the most fundamental theoretical contribution from psychoanalysis. Culture exists in socially articulated practices, meanings and symbols that are sometimes attached to artefacts or stabilised in social institutions, but they are also embodied in the agents of the culture, and (re)produced in their agency and consciousness. The second key concept, experience, can help us to understand the consequences for learning.

4.3   Experience

I suggest a concept of *experience* developed from this tradition by Theodor W. Adorno and Oskar Negt (Negt 1999)[2]. For the context of learning I have made this notion of experience operational in the following way: "Experience is the process whereby we as human beings, individually and collectively, consciously master reality, and the ever-living understanding of this reality and our relation to it" (Salling Olesen, 1989:6–7). This notion connects the immediate experience with its societal as well as its individual psychic dimensions. In order to understand learning you may specify, for simplicity, three aspects or modalities of experience. These three are relatively independent dynamics, which are mediated through each other in every agency and learning process: everyday life learning, life history experience, and cultural knowledge. Consciousness is being produced as well as presupposed in *social practice in everyday life*, which means it is a situated and embodied experience, but also that it is structurally determined as societal history (in this case by the development of societal labour). We can speak of an industrial experience, or an urban experience, or a female experience of double work. It also includes the objectivation of collective *cultural experience in the form of knowledge, symbols and norms (institutions)*. We can speak of crafts or professions as collective experiences that have been tried out and stabilized, and we can also see literacy and mathematical modelling in this perspective. And, most important in this context, it includes the individual experience building throughout *individual life history*, with the interference between cognitive and emotional aspects, which comes in a specific version in every individual. Every individual has a specific emotional and social experience which has sedimented a general view of the world and ways of seeing him/herself. I will elaborate how this concept of experience can give useful tools for understanding some dynamics of learning in everyday life.

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[2] Let me emphasize, especially in an anglophone educational academic context, that this concept is used here with a substantially different implication from that of Dewey (1916, 1934). Dewey advanced experiental learning as a critical concept of education, and his notion of experience was quite rational(istic), which was an adequate critique in that context. Using Dewey in a context of work related learning research calls for a development of the implications of his ideas which I have not yet seen. Learning ideas derived from critical theory (Oskar Negt's concept of exemplarisches Lernen) share much more with Paolo Freire's idea of pedagogy of the oppressed.

4.4   Emotional Aspects of Learning in Everyday Life

Learning is embedded in everyday life interaction, but it goes beyond. It is a progressive process, transforming collective cultural experiences (knowledge, skills and normative directions) into individual experience, by using them to enable subjective agency and understanding in the specific context. We want to understand the complexities of this process. We are particularly interested in the interference between cognitive and emotional aspects of the individual experience building in specific social contexts. Clearly the subjective handling of the social in everyday life is not a cognitive phenomenon only. Consciousness in practical interaction incorporates all its meanings for the experiencing subject(s), the emotions connected with this situation, the perception of one self and the situation. Learning is activated by and influenced by the emotional involvement, comprising moments of learning as well as moments of defence. The relation to routines is a good example.

Everyday life in work is characterized by collective and habitual routines. New as well as familiar phenomena are perceived through a basic mechanism of recognition and complexity reduction. However, this cognitive process is also guided by the social and relational emotions attached to these well known categories, to the situation, and to projected expectations within it. The observation and systematization of deviations and novelties – be they new phenomena or new contextual factors – is a process of cognitive as well as of emotional and social change of the learner. This change is challenging, it overloads the learner, and in some cases it is particularly threatening, because it activates life historical experiences or emotional relations in an anxiety-provoking way. In a life situation flooded with impulses and demands, individual and collective mechanisms of consciousness building preserve the individual from anxieties and ambivalences.

The maintenance of a routine is therefore not as passive as the notion seems to suggest. It is most often an active editing of perceptions and knowledge in accordance with possible practices: a defence mechanism. I call this form of consciousness 'everyday life consciousness', with a concept (Altagsbewusstsein) borrowed from Leithäuser and others (Leithäuser 1976, Leithäuser and Volmerg 1989). Leithäuser's theoretical framework for understanding the subjective dynamic of this consciousness as a defence mechanism provides a reverse complement to a theory of learning. The selection and interpretation of perceptions is a part of an active, psychic and cultural acquisition which define the situation in a practicable way, i.e. through active, partly collective defence mechanisms.

Defensive action is a mediated form of 'realism' with a limited scope or coercive focus. Routine may often mean more than simplification of practice and attention, for example when the subject attends to certain aspects of the interplay between social reality and inner dynamics and is less sensitive to social reality. But defences also hold the potential for seeing things differently and for alternative social practice. In the conflict preventing mechanisms of consciousness building is also 'awareness' of problems, unexpected impulses, alternative social practices, 'un-lived lives' from one's own life history, or painful experiences from the past. There is strong potential for a learning dynamic in defensive routines when cognition is linked with emotional and practical aspects of the learner's involvement in that situation. We can define an open, embracing attention to inner as well as outer realities as the emotional precondition for and sometimes also the outcome of learning. So reflecting and changing everyday life routines structuring work life may open very dynamic learning processes because they relate not only to the immediate situation but to more comprehensive life experiences.

It may be necessary to restate that we see all these elements in the psychic dynamic as socialized, installing societal constraints and self regulation in the human body. This is not to replace biological determinism with a social determination, but to view embodied life experience as conditioning the way experience is built throughout life and becomes a potential source of knowledge. Generally speaking the defensive and reality oriented aspects are dialectically connected in a way of knowing about the situation and the world, and learning takes place in this dialectic. These emotional dynamics can be conceptualized by the psychoanalytic concepts of conscious, preconscious and unconscious, but I shall leave the discussion of this subjective dynamic of consciousness(es) here, and move on to see some of its consequences in relation to knowing and learning.

4.5   Knowledge and Language(s)

In this section I focus on the relation between symbolic knowledge/experience and sensual/contextual perception, and the role of language in it. Developing a connection between a knowledge sociology perspective and the psychodynamic understanding of cultural symbolisation has implications for the role of cultural resources which are mediated in symbolic forms (languages) in the experience process of everyday work life, and also for the research methodology.

Knowledge is a social construct with a historical genesis and implication, always acquired and reconstructed by somebody in some context, as pointed out by sociologists of knowledge as well as post modern

philosophers from quite different angles. From this it follows that there is no *absolute* difference between 'scientific knowledge', 'formal knowledge', 'knowledges of social practice', 'everyday life consciousness', and 'life experience'. The questions about 'who', 'where' and 'when' of knowing and learning are mostly more productive than the typologies – the typological differences can be defined in relation to their genesis (who generates this type of knowledge), institutional contexts, power relations and hegemonies. The notion of experience aligns with this notion of knowledge and points to the subjective aspect of this knowing, and especially the question of how the media of symbols, meanings and language connects cultural meanings with the individual emotional and relational experience, informed by a socialization process.

For the individual subject, knowledge has the status of cultural resources of understanding, what we may call our life experience. Professions and well defined occupations (crafts) can be used as a simple case with a well defined body of knowledge. In my own empirical research about General Practitioners I study the subjective handling of everyday work situations with the use of a professional bio-medical knowledge base (Salling Olesen 2006). Sometimes this knowledge will allow the GP to understand and take action in a relatively unproblematic way, in other cases it does not provide a very helpful framework. There is an ongoing dynamic tension between collective societal experience (the bio-medical knowledge) and the clinical problem defining and solving experience of the GP. This tension is negotiated by individuals who are strongly subjectively engaged (by the professional obligation to omnipotent agency, by being there in immediate relation to another human being with a problem, by attendant anxieties, and so on). Since it is in the relation of the professional to the patient and to his profession to be able to take action, it sometimes means that the situation must be defined (by bio-medical knowledge) in a way that allows action (e.g. write a prescription), which is a defensive process, where as it may also at the same time lead to learning. The interpretation of the concrete situation is shaped by individuals' personal life experience and will contribute piece by piece, to their life experience as well as to the clinical collective experience – although this is an extremely slow process. I think professions expose an exemplary case for the interplay between societal knowledge and subjective learning in work situations, because the professional knowledge is societally assigned to the work situation, and the professional worker is subjectively involved in a complex practice in which (s)he is responsible for a knowledge based agency – which is in the end morally and politically related to the quality of the work product or the service provided. I think this point can be extended to the situation of workers in general. Some situations may be less subjectively engaging and the relevant knowledge resources

less well defined. General social knowledge can be very differentiated between individuals and groups, and this is essential for subjectivity (think about gendered skills and knowledges). Particularly in relation to work we draw on more or less specific knowledges related to professions and occupations, acquired by education, training and previous work career. Such differences just mean that the relation becomes empirically more complex.

Now the issue is to get a better understanding of the relation between subjective engagement and the societal meanings involved in this knowing and learning process. Language use in social practice is pivotal. In line with Wittgenstein's concept of language games we can see the meanings of language as defined in a social interaction, and being in continuous re-negotiation, containing the ongoing experience process of the participants in the language game and their communication. The problem solving in a work situation is, from this perspective, a combined application of the language resources to define, react to or deliberate the task, and an impulse that s/he can bring into the language game. We have already seen how this language use will involve not only the cognitive operation of the task and the situation, but also a complex of emotional investments which may heavily influence the cognitive operation.

We can develop this understanding of language by looking at the social 'production' of the language user. Alfred Lorenzer's materialist theory of socialization (Lorenzer 1972) offers essential links between individual subjectivity (the embodying of psyche), culture and language (the codifying of knowledge and collective experience in disciplines or discourses). The biological development and the (necessary) social interaction around the needs of the child gradually adjoin in the production of the individual subjectivity. The Mother-Child-Dyad is the first 'joint subject' for this production of patterns of practice. Later, through the gradual separation of the child from the mother, the interaction produces the *interaction patterns* of the child and its acquisition of language. Through the separation and the interaction with physical and social reality the child gradually builds up its individual subjectivity. The individual experience of being-in-the-world is built around the relation between a sensual bodily and social experience and the representation of it in societal language use. Later learning will elaborate this relation and the subject will engage in new language games on the basis of this experience.

Combining these theoretical elements we can develop a holistic endogenous framework of understanding subjectivity and learning. Learning can be seen as a situated adoption of language games, as signification of experiences of the learner subject. It should be emphasized that language is not just the one discursive language. Any social symbol

system which enables communication and shared meaning can be seen as a language. Different languages may have different features, and especially they may relate differently to the societal institutions of communication and work on the one side, and to the sensual and embodied experience of the language user on the other side. Music or poetic languages have alike been seen as languages with a particular potential for containing experiences that were not included/expressed in the ordinary, discursive language. They can be seen as different language games within or outside the ordinary language.

Learning and knowing is still about a subject relating to an objective reality, and taking place in a subject-object interaction. For critical theory the specific objective reality, such as work situation or specific qualities of work, is the decisive condition of and object for learning. However, the access to reality is not simple and direct. Epistemologically the subject-object-dialectic of learning theory is in a way similar to the reflections of the social sciences, to depart from naturalism without arriving in a relativistic constructivism. In Adorno's (1976) criticism of positivist social science he points out that empirical analysis in the context of critical theory should reconfigure the social 'fact' or action in its historical and subjective context, i.e. understand it in its dynamics rather that as a fixed, reified object. Since the experiencing subjects (the social scientist) are already also part of the social reality, this position reinstalls the historical and subjective nature of critical theory as an act of learning about reality and about the learning subject (the social sciences) at the same time. Although we are not pursuing a knowledge sociology or metascientific question here, this is a basic scheme for understanding learning as an experiencing process.

On the individual level learning is based in the dynamics of knowledge construction, and this is a subjective dynamic. In social practice the cognitive activity is conditioned in subjective dynamics, ex-emplified by the general practitioner in this consultation. The editing in-fluences of defensive patterns, or the difficulty to express certain aspects of the individual experience in the language games available or allowed in the situation does not mean that they are not there – actually it may often be a result of them. During meaning making in the language games, there are more or less conscious individual experiences that are not at all repre-sented in the language game, but still attached to it by individual partici-pants. Some experiences are represented in the language game in ways which do not express the full referential meaning or emotional quality of these experiences for some participants. For this reason social meanings established in language use are mostly surrounded by a 'halo' of surplus meaning which may be only partly social. This refers to the amount of experience which is very societally structured but not culturally recognized,

and so remains at the boundary of socialisable meanings. It is especially on and beyond this boundary of linguistic meaning making that resources for learning are to be found.

The fact that these experience building processes are partly conscious, and partly un- or pre-conscious can be traced in language use, and this is an essential reason to apply an 'in-depth' or 'reflexive' hermeneutic interpretation. We reconstruct and identify the experiences of social practice that are in the discourses and images of an interview. We can see the life stories and the very telling of them as a piece of identity (re)construction, in which a (new) position is taken in the culturally possible interpretations of and positions in this context. At the same time we are attentive to ambiguities, ruptures and remarkable aspects of what is told, and to some extent to the way of telling. The interpretation includes subjective meanings that are obvious and well defined in language games as well as those which are only vaguely or not at all articulated in the speech of the interview persons. These observations of the text may, informed by theoretical concepts and context knowledge, identify dynamics, uncertainties and ambivalent expressions. The materiality of work which is reflected in the moorlands between the bodily and conscious experiences and their linguistic articulation, between the individual and the cultural meanings, and the multitude and transformations of cultural meanings (e.g. academic knowledge) are the terrains in which subjective meaning making takes place and is articulated.

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5

Dressing Corporate Subjectivities: Learning What to Wear to the Bank

Kathryn Church with Catherine Frazee, Teresa (Tracy) Luciani, Melanie Panitch and Patricia Seeley

This chapter is an experiment in writing subjectively about subjectivity. It gives an account of a four year study that was designed to discover the learning strategies used by disabled employees within a major financial institution that I refer to as Everybank. By "playing" with the research team's experience as female academics – our bodies, our wardrobes, our clothing practices – I explore what my co-investigators and I learned of our own subjectivity in the course of researching "corporate disability." Even as we attempted to maintain an external focus on the learning practices of disabled employees, we were compelled to attend to what we ourselves were being taught through an unfamiliar set of relations. Inhabiting corporate spaces and interacting with corporate managers meant learning new practices of communicating and interacting: speaking, writing but also dressing. For members of the research team, passing through corporate environments has given new meaning to the term "self-study." I conclude that learning by watching and learning by doing have not yet given way to computerized self-directed learning, at least not when it comes to the acquisition of work-able workplace subjectivities.

5.1   Introduction

"Being disabled is a full-time job!" This is the claim made by a man speaking out about his life. What happens, then, when a disabled person takes on paid employment in the regular labor market? And what happens when that job is in the complex and competitive world of a Canadian bank?

These are the opening lines from a funding proposal that I wrote in 2001. In the study that I imagined, my colleagues and I would explore the work-learning relations that shape and are shaped by disabled employees in the financial sector. The problematic was completely new for us but preliminary reading alerted me to a couple of interesting trends.

In Canada, six banks employ a substantial number of people covered under the federally-regulated Employment Equity Act. In 2001, the "Big Six"[1], as they are known, employed 31% of all workers with disabilities. Banking would appear, then, to be a field of opportunity. However, in a close study of Employment Equity data, Kim England (2003) discovered that the percentage of disabled people employed by the Big Six was well below the national benchmark. The number of disabled bank employees has remained virtually the same over the past fifteen years.

Recent ethnographic study indicates a shift in the banking sector from collective, informal strategies for workplace learning to a more formal curriculum (Livingstone and Mitchell 1999). Employees are increasingly expected to learn job skills through self-study using written materials and/or computer software. With its appearance as involuntary and management-driven, this new curriculum is displacing voluntary and learner-driven learning strategies such as learning by watching, learning by doing, and working with a mentor. Bank employees continue to engage in informal learning in attempts to keep up with the rapid changes and new demands of their workplace but they engage in these activities on unpaid time and after-hours at significant cost of family and community life.

What is the effect of these changes on disabled bank employees attempting to keep their place within these increasingly competitive environments? Here the literature is silent. Researchers have created some knowledge of people with disabilities as "clients" of rehabilitation professionals in various kinds of sheltered settings or re/training programs. But we know little about them as learners in mainstream workplaces. Indeed, because disabled people are often portrayed as passive, and not engaged in growth or change, people tend not to think of them as learners at all – and certainly not as informal learners initiating and taking charge of what and how they want to learn. My colleagues and I set out to study this assumption. We wanted to construct a knowledge of disabled bank employees as active learners in corporate environments.

It is now several years later. We are older and, yes, considerably wiser. Officially, our data is derived from focus groups that we conducted

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[1] The Big Six banks in Canada include Scotiabank, Bank of Montreal, Royal Bank, Toronto-Dominion, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and The National Bank.

in two regional offices (east and west) and the central office of a large Canadian financial institution. I refer to it as "Everybank," thus arguing its merits as a good "stand-in" not just for other banks but for large corporations in general. The participants in our study were employees of Everybank, specifically, people with disabilities and their co-workers. Self-selecting into our focus groups, they illuminated our questions with their experiences and reflections.

As feminists, the research team claims a "tradition of attention" to "the actual occurrences that arise in [an] enquiry" and, further, to "the investigator's reactions to doing the research" including stages of investigation that are typically unexamined (Fonow and Cook 1991:3-5). So, it is not surprising that we were alert to data that we acquired from an unanticipated and unofficial source. I am referring to our direct experience of corporate management through the "common place" practices used by human resources (HR) personnel to facilitate, organize, re/direct, restrict and monitor our involvement with Everybank. Across a number of encounters, HR managers deconstructed and reshaped our research plan to ensure that it posed no threats to the corporation and more directly served its interests. One of our major discoveries has been the actual pathway along which our research could be conducted. This is in sharp contrast with the speculated or imaginary pathway of my initial proposal.

As the narrator of this process, my task is analogous to that of a dressmaker. The analysis made here, and the way it is made, is my own design. But the materials I work with are drawn from a small team of researchers, indeed, from the very fabric of our/their lives. Thus, using their actual names, I introduce you to my real-life colleagues: to Melanie and Catherine who are the study's co-investigators; to Tracy who is the research assistant, and to Patricia who moved with Catherine through it all, and also transcribed our interview data. I have taken individual swatches of text from each of these women and stitched them together. I have shared the finished product with them, reading aloud and watching their faces to see whether the fit is right. (In my mother's world, practice garments of this sort would be made from muslin.) I have also pulled threads of conversation from our focus group debriefings, and from the ongoing loops of daily conversation that underpin our working lives.

My own contribution begins with how ill-prepared I was to undertake research with a large financial institution. More familiar with marginalized groups than with elites, my intellectual and political disorientation found its parallel in the experience – repeated over and over – of being physically lost. To varying degrees, my colleagues shared this. As a team, we had to learn how to find, enter and move around inside a range of structures: from dizzying skyscrapers and maze-like office complexes to elegant older buildings and vast contemporary warehouses.

We have felt amused, confused, curious, frustrated, helpless, angry, intimidated, reassured, elated, surprised, and disturbed by and in these environments.

There was a moment where all of this came together for me. With Melanie and Tracy, I had taken a cab from our ocean front hotel to a downtown office tower that was the site for two of our focus groups. Entering through the revolving doors, we pondered the building directory as follows:

> ➢ Leasing Centre
> ➢ Everybank of Canada
> ➢ Everybank PC Lan System/P Mag
> ➢ Everybank Risk Management
> ➢ Everybank Trust Company
> ➢ Everybank Commercial Market, Greater Vancouver
> ➢ Everybank Securities
> ➢ Everybank Global Services/Corporate Banking
> ➢ Everybank Global Services/Financial Institutions
> ➢ Global Private Banking
> ➢ Everybank Private Counsel Incorporated
> ➢ Everybank Provincial Headquarters – General Inquiries

Such a list, we decided, definitely called for espresso. As we slipped out again, Melanie leaned way back to take in the imposing structure. "Who do we think we are?!" she exclaimed, laughing at the audacity of our impending assault on this space.

Who do we think we are? That is the core question of this chapter. And yet, I do not discuss subjectivity as a topic or a concept. Instead, by experimenting with writing subjectively, I attempt to convey what my colleagues and I learned of our own subjectivity in the course of our research. I attempt to reveal us as learners in the context of our own work, which in this instance is a study of (other people's) learning at and for work. Even as we attempted to maintain an "external" focus on the learning practices of disabled employees, we were compelled to attend to what we ourselves were being taught through a new set of relations. Entering and inhabiting corporate spaces and interacting with corporate managers meant learning certain kinds of practices – practices of speaking and writing, for example. But it also meant acquiring (some kind of) corporate subjectivity – even as we discovered through our study data that other people were doing the same. Over time, our direct experience became heavily entwined with what participants told us: one opening into the other opening into the other (and so on and so on) like a giant nesting toy.

5.2 Researchers as Embodied Subjects

> Sometimes, like a loving parent, a designer suit, or a house in the suburbs, the "normal" body can be just too seductively perfect. (Catherine Frazee, *Body Politics*)

"What are you going to wear?" For members of a research team, the question sounds like a piece of feminine frivolity. But we asked it seriously as we contemplated our first big meeting with Everybank. Each of us came to the project with a unique clothing history, orientation and material base. At the same time, we understood dress to be fundamentally inter-subjective and social (Entwistle 2001); self-presentation would be crucial for a successful corporate encounter. As we reflected on this, we opened our wardrobe doors. Bit by bit, we discovered how our social and professional roles get into our closets and ruffle things up. In this section, I play with this insight by positioning Melanie, Catherine and Patricia as literary "mannequins." On them I drape some of the complex intersecting subjectivities that have both enhanced and troubled our enquiry into learning among disabled bank employees. As I write, I feel their quizzical gaze over my shoulder.

5.3 Melanie Gets Dressed

Where does a study begin? Officially, this one started with the proposal that I wrote intending to latch onto a piece of a larger grant, located elsewhere, and a network of scholars investigating work and lifelong learning. In it I outlined a process whereby my colleagues and I would use our connections with a major financial institution to establish it as a partner in our enquiry. These connections were relatively new. They had emerged, unexpectedly, from the university's corporate fundraising campaign. When approached for a substantial contribution, Everybank agreed – but only if the donation would be directed towards disability studies.

Well before my proposal, then, our research was already embedded in the corporatization of the university (Strathern 2000; Reimer 2004; Shore and Wright 2004) and the history of corporate giving to "charitable" causes (Longmore 2005). For this reason, it is not too fanciful to suggest that our case study began on a beautiful day in June when Melanie, Director of the School of Disability Studies, rose from what was probably a restless night's sleep. Opening her closet doors, she began to dress for an impression-forming meeting with university and corporate officials. Her goal was to finalize the terms of the grant – bluntly, to tack

down the money. Her immediate task was to put a "face" to disability studies that was dynamic and engaging but also reassuringly appropriate to the company she was beginning to keep.

In my imagination, I watch Melanie taking the subway from her tree-lined house in Toronto's Annex to the gleaming towers of Bay Street in the downtown core. Without asking, what I know about this moment is that it troubled her politics. Here I am referring less to her materialist intellectual underpinnings than to her activist practice in critical disability studies. With its rejection of the individualist pathology paradigm, this field of study diverges strongly from conventional views of disability. Its orientation is fundamentally political: to create knowledge that documents, critiques and transforms the material and social conditions of disabled people's lives. Within this framework, financial institutions are not an ally. Part of Melanie's task that day was to hide the radicalism of her location. Had Everybank perceived it, would they have been quite so generous?

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that Melanie gave significant thought to the question of what to wear. Astute about signifiers of corporate belonging, she chose a suit in "banker's blue" linen, paired with a maroon-coloured shirt. The look was formal but the fabric suggested otherwise. It was intended to move and breathe and crumple with the wearing. Melanie's instincts and imagination pulled her towards this mix of structure and a more "relaxed, less structured, almost casual hint of play." She toyed with the tension between what is perceived as acceptable attire and a hint of underlying resistance: pant legs designed with "delightful drawstring ties around the ankles." When seated at the boardroom table, her non-compliance became invisible: concealed to others; known to herself.

5.4   Catherine Gets Dressed

But perhaps we need to go even further back. The fact is that Melanie's meeting might not have taken place at all without Catherine. I am not suggesting that Catherine was directly instrumental but I am surfacing her personal background as a significant influence in what became possible. Catherine grew up in a corporate family. Seated at the kitchen table of her childhood home, she ingested business talk along with the evening meal. Her first job was as a speech-writer for her CEO father. He is a prominent figure in the history of the financial institution that partnered our study. The continuously unfolding story of Catherine's career as a human rights

advocate is woven into this partnership.[2] Even as she enables the university to make a claim on corporate resources, Everybank claims her through its engagement with our work. Thus, Catherine is a lynch-pin. Amongst us all, she is the one most closely inter-twined with both corporate and university relations.

And yet, this does not capture her complexity. The missing piece is disability: the knowledge and politics generated by a life lived, hand in glove, with a wheelchair. Catherine uses an electric chair that she controls with a joystick. It is big, black and wired for everything: sound, motion, speed, and yes, power. So intimate is the connection between her and the chair that Melanie and I have come to recognize its whirs, clicks and gestures as a subtle layer of communication: Catherine's second voice. I have come to understand its sleek unencumbered lines as an expression of her style, a "look" that is integral to her overall aesthetic.

I have traveled many places with Catherine over the course of our research: walking beside her as she rolls, unavoidably talking down, sharing the perennial search for pathways into buildings, watching other people negotiate her difference, absorbing "the stare" by association (Garland-Thomson 1997; Titchkosky 2003).[3] This relatively modest being-with has taught me not so much the restrictions on her mobility (whereby we would be locked into talking about "accessibility") as the restrictions on her subjectivity. In the focus groups we hosted, Catherine was compelled to occupy the subject position marked "visibly disabled" with all its entrenched symbology.[4] Wherever she goes, her only real choice is to claim her "crip" identity strongly and positively, or be lost in other people's projections of tragedy and pity.

By contrast, unless other team members decided to disclose (something), we were consistently viewed as able-bodied. We could choose whether to enter any invisible impairments and bodily struggles into the discussion. I have the same choice in this writing. Embodying

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[2] I am playing here with the notion of Catherine's career unfolding in a "folded" state. As she has pointed out, "A lot of life has been lived – and lived well – in what the American essayist Nancy Mairs describes … as this 'folded' state. Such an abundance of felicitous living warrants careful thought about what it means not to walk" (Frazee 2000).

[3] In the context of a recently co-authored chapter (Ignagni and Church, forthcoming), Esther Ignagni notes that our use of "the gaze" departs from Foucauldian notions "in which subjecthood is produced through practices of surveillance." Further, we invoke "the stare." Following other disability theorists, "the stare" from one person scrutinizes another person for signs of difference and hardens one person against another. Staring enables disconnection which, in its turn, allows the viewer to avert his/her gaze and, ultimately, to turn away.

[4] As a university employee, Catherine can decide whether or not to officially identify as disabled for the purposes of an employment equity report. This is a question of balancing institutional support and accommodations with her disability politics. In fact, Ryerson University has only two faculty identified as disabled; Catherine is one.

into the discussion. I have the same choice in this writing. Embodying Catherine with my words, do I disembody myself? What space do I make for my own physicality with its invisible and fluctuating frailties? Writing Catherine's body in, have I in any way "en-freaked" her? If I draw attention to her hand as the one independently mobile part of her body, have I failed to reveal her nimble and expansive consciousness? And, marking the difference between the two, have I re-inscribed a duality that I want to eliminate? These questions, difficult and ongoing, warrant a high degree of scholarly reflexivity.

Sitting with disability at the cross-roads of university and corporation, Catherine takes the temperature of our engagement with the various parties who constitute our study. No surprise, then, that actual room temperature informed her clothing selection for the meeting that launched our study. Avoiding air conditioner chill, she donned a wool suit "dyed in shades not too aloof, but not too impassioned…" As usual, it had been "Styled for bodies longer and more symmetrical than mine…" But with a few snips here and there, cuts that pull apart, seams that are unseen, the suit was transformed to fit. "Behind every well-dressed cripple stands the persuasive power of scissors," Catherine wrote. "Straight up the middle of the back, slicing through the weave and warp, what comes apart behind, comes together in front, buttons buttoned, shoulders intact" – and all the alterations hidden from view.

5.5   Patricia Gets Dressed

The question that arises, though, is "Who wielded the scissors?" The answer is Patricia, the woman Catherine typically introduces as "my helper." Patricia is Catherine's personal attendant. Primary among several workers, she enables Catherine's movement through a wide range of spaces and places. In the academic literature, the basics of this job are conceptualized as bathing, toileting, feeding and caring. Essentials, no doubt, but the list barely scrapes the surface of what Pat actually does.

Images of Patricia's labour permeate my life over the past few years: clenching shoulders as she drives from Ancaster to Toronto through 401 ice and snow, fighting for a parking spot on Mutual, unclamping the sturdy straps that secure Catherine's chair to the van floor (clamping and unclamping, clamping and unclamping), chatting with her on the walk to the SHE building, waiting for the elevator that sometimes just does not arrive, negotiating the labyrinthian alternate route around the back, calling Security to complain about the elevator, collaborating on the document that makes the problem an official complaint, peeling Catherine out of the deep blue wrap that Patricia herself designed and sewed in two large

sections for warmth and elegance to be sure but also to keep the controls of Catherine's wheelchair alive and humming, fixing the wheelchair when Tim's big black bag accidentally bashes the joystick, calming his distress over the accident with her pragmatic presence, settling Catherine's reading glasses on her nose, finding that file that went missing but we only just had it the other day and we REALLY NEED IT NOW, teaching me how to use a digital recorder as I whip out the door to begin a new research project, mending the loose wires in Catherine's cell phone, then turning off the same phone when it squeals "restricted number, restricted number" during team meeting, listing this week's thousand tasks for Catherine in her black book while we talk, turning the pages of Catherine's speech during her public debate on citizenship with Michael Ignatieff and more tensely in the problematic debate over assisted suicide with Svend Robinson, rising gracefully to Catherine's yearly production of the disability arts and culture event, sharing Catherine's year end exhaustion and the prospect of summer in Nova Scotia, driving the van back to Toronto when that short heaven is once again over, and probably not minding about everything she does that I have just left out.

What should we name this complex work? How can we do justice to this extraordinary job? Even more perplexing, how do we speak and write about the people – most often women – who do it? For this, I draw on Catherine's eloquence. "My requirements for employment-related attendant supports are both extensive and very particular to my professional responsibilities, my public persona, and my embodied self," she wrote in a recent letter to university bureaucrats. Her subsequent description includes: "unobtrusively and efficiently making subtle adjustments in my physical positioning; correctly interpreting unspoken cues such as eye movements in taking directions for such tasks as note-taking, paper positioning, and food handling; intuitively assessing my capacities of strength, balance and stamina in a variety of situations; putting others at ease with her presence, or finding ways to 'disappear' as circumstances warrant; tolerating long periods of silence and inactivity while remaining focused and ready for periods of intense activity."

To do her job well, Patricia must manage her own body/mind to mesh with Catherine's. She must organize Catherine's life but in such a way that she does not control it or subsume the privacy of Catherine's separate existence. She must be highly instrumental but mostly in response to instruction. She must "help" without constructing Catherine as "the helped." She must know without being known as the knower. "By definition," wrote Catherine, "attendant support involves a degree of intimacy between two persons. It involves touch, empathy, intuition and connection.… It is nuanced and layered."

Informed by the actualities of Catherine and Patricia's lives, we can no longer discuss personal assistance as (only) bathing, toileting, feeding and caring. We can no longer limit our knowledge of it to domestic sites and labour. Personal assistance is also about the movement of disabled people away from/out of the domestic and towards, within, around a variety of workplaces. This situation, in which one person's job (and their knowledge) is simultaneously present in another's, is a significant challenge to the prevalent organization of employment around individuals. Vastly under-examined, such dyadic practices demonstrate a paradigm shift in conventional workplace relations.

Within Catherine's worksites, Patricia does her job by managing the location of her body in the room, by regulating her talk and her silence, and by using particular clothing practices. For our first corporate outing she dressed to become a background presence, a shadow presence. "Bank-meeting clothes," she wrote, "are for disappearing." Her task was to blend in. No wonder she typically chooses "something plain, but of good quality. Tailored, not flowery or flow-y. Buttoned-up, buttoned-down," she wrote. This absent-presence is the able-bodied subjectivity that people with disabilities desire of their attendants. This employer-first positioning is the labour relation that disability rights organizations promote as consistent with a philosophy of Independent Living. [5]

5.6   Learning to In/Habit the Field

Who do we think we are? I turn now to responses that began to emerge through the research team's encounters with our corporate partner. In preparation for our first meeting, I had worked up what I called a "(not) power point presentation." Lacking the necessary technical skills, I had reverted to the tried and true method of drawing the work plan onto a long piece of brown "butcher" paper using different coloured flow pens. I then rolled it up and carried it over my shoulder as I walked along Yonge Street to the meeting, leaving plenty of time to lose and recover my way.

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[5] I have been engaged for some years in scholarship on clothing practices and alert to the significance of dress/jewelry/shoes in social life, particularly for women. (Church 2003, 2001; Church and Church 2003) I am intrigued here by the link to my research on the wedding dress work done by women of central Alberta (makers and wearers) and their choices for self-presentation as brides. "Plain and simple," they said. "All I wanted was something plain and simple." The same kind of (gendered) absent presence is prominent in both of these sites. And yet, as the garments themselves lead to further analysis, what I see is how plain and simple gives way to extraordinary complexity in terms of the positioning and presentation of female bodies to the public.

In Everybank's main headquarters, where internet technology rules and computer skills are god, I unrolled my ratty drawing and actually stuck it to the boardroom walls with tacks and masking tape. Eyes popped; jaws dropped. In the same moment, by its very unconventionality, this rough chart enabled us to roll up our sleeves and tackle the necessary revisions to our initial plan.

5.6.1 Jackets

I recall clearly what I wore for that performance. It was a fitted jacket in a smooth, almost heavy, black fabric with burgundy corduroy inserts, most notably on the lower half of the cap sleeve. The design was by Annie Thomson whose shop I frequented when I worked on Queen Street West. There are about forty jackets in my closet. Only a few were purchased off the rack in mainstream clothing stores. Most have come from small stores run by women, like Annie, who either produce their own line or feature other designers. I am drawn to these places because I am the daughter of a small town dressmaker and she is the last in a long line of domestic clothing producers. I am drawn because of this intimate, defining relation in which – over the years, across the seasons, through her actual sewing practices – my mother taught me the texture, colour, cut, fit and finish of clothing. I am drawn in recognition of her invisible work, and because I know that, in the now global relations of clothing production, these places of craft and creativity are beleaguered. By my patronage, I take a weak stab at their rescue.

The jacket I wore that day intrigued me with its "haute" combination of two rough-and-tumble fabrics. The style mirrored my dilemmas at the time of its purchase: labouring for a poor people's organization by day; living an erudite café-life on The Danforth by night. It strikes me that I may have worn the piece as a subliminal in-your-face gesture to Everybank, a way of carrying my disadvantaged comrades beyond the teller's window where they try to cash their welfare cheques, up the central elevator and through the locked doors that open, with the right connections, into the elite space of the corporation's offices. But I was drawn, as well, to the jacket's sharply contrasting colours and their suggestion that, as the wearer, I was clearheaded and capable of making tough decisions. Paired with conventional black pants, the effect was simultaneously playful and serious. It communicated "professional" and undermined it at the same time. The yes-and-no of it radiated my history: my roots in western Canada, the journey of my feminism from high school athletics to sociologist, my family tensions and loyalties, my institutional ambivalences.

5.6.2 Cufflinks

I needed all the clarity I could get in the following months as I observed a group of Everybank employees whose task was to improve their region's response to disabled workers and customers. The members were mostly women. While they introduced themselves by position and title, each gradually revealed an interest derived either from direct experience of disability or close connection to a disabled person. Meetings were held once a month. They began at 8:00 A.M. sharp and ended precisely an hour later. Muffins and sticky buns were served with the coffee but I never saw any of the women actually eat anything.

The meetings were chaired by a high level manager who, while obviously invested in eliciting high performance from his group, demonstrated no feeling for the lives and problems under discussion. His clothing was expensive, sharply tailored and impeccable. I was captivated by the stark whiteness of his shirts, by their French cuffs, and by the cufflinks – heavy, gold and embossed with the corporate logo – that closed the fabric around his slender wrists. His body was trim and well-tended. Everyone in the room was tuned to the nuances of its movements. Except for oblique references to "the doctor," he ignored me, mystified by my silent presence. His attention was totally given to facilitating the agenda that had been laid out by the woman who organized the group. He structured discussion around a series of reports from the leaders of sub-groups responsible for the previous month's "deliverables." He directed attention towards the identification of clear, concrete and achievable next steps. Succinct feedback outlining clear evidence of "moving forward" would elicit his praise.

"Who makes it happen?" he would ask.

"We do!" they would reply.

And he would prompt a round of vigorous clapping.

5.6.3 Rings

The process was not completely uncomfortable. I have sat through plenty of meetings that could have used this kind of focus – and even a bit of praise or celebration. At the same time, I felt strange and uneasy. The clapping was especially unnerving. Should I sit on my hands and confirm my unspoken hostility – to him, to the classed and gendered relations of the group, to the way the group worked, and to Everybank as a profit–making institution? Or should I clap along and concede victory to the whole regime? (And were these my only choices?) In these moments of bodily confusion, I compromised by letting my hands lay quietly in my

lap while I smiled and nodded at the woman who had elicited the group's approval.

The depth of my struggle became evident several months along, at one of the regular meetings. I was tucked quietly into my observer role when I noticed – startled – that I was wearing a ring on the third finger of my left hand. It was a gift from my husband celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary, marking an achievement as well as a turning point within a marriage that ended the following year. Studded with gold stars, the chunk of silver crawled up to my knuckle. Why had I chosen to wear *this* ring to *this* meeting? It was well-loved but its meanings were mobile, its status in transition. Even so, only half-aware, I had slipped it on as I dressed. Was it to fit in with this room full of female executives, polished and crisp, with whom I was beginning to feel some reluctant affiliation? Was it an attempt to match the glittering diamonds that swallowed their fingers? Was it to be read as heterosexual and properly coupled in a gathering of wives? I cannot answer these questions but I knew the significance of the moment – and I knew how far back it started.

5.7   Tracy Gets Dressed

When I wrote the funding proposal for our study, I did not foresee that Everybank would want a formal partnership agreement. Nor did I take into consideration the amount of time it would take to put one in place. Initially, I viewed this legal process not as a site of struggle but as a mundane task that should be relatively straightforward. The situation taught me otherwise. I was actively engaged in negotiating the contents of this document for eighteen months.

My primary contact was a senior manager in Human Resources planning. (Behind her, invisible, were the corporation's lawyers.) Most of our exchanges took place by email. My messages tended to be longish and somewhat expository. In re-reading them I see myself looking for dialogue with my counterpart on the dilemmas posed by this troublesome text. But she never engaged at that level. Her messages were marked "privileged and/or confidential." They were short and to the point: questions, declarations and, finally, admonishments to get on with signing.

Early on, I grasped the fact that I was being managed, a process that I found singularly lacking in sociability. I was offended by the HR manager's failure to recognize me as a professional with an independent set of practices and sphere of influence. I tolerated her directives because I thought this kind of interaction was specific to one person. Later I came to understand that it was characteristic of corporate relations. I tolerated it

because I wanted access to disabled employees. I reminded myself continually that everything that transpired between me and Everybank was data. Through direct interactions with a highly competent professional manager, I was being taught how to behave in a corporate relation.

Some of that training spilled over onto the study's research assistant. Unlike Patricia, who deliberately dressed to disappear, Tracy disappeared from view because of her dress.

> Each corporate encounter precipitated a major "wardrobe moment" for me. Telephone calls to Kathryn thirty minutes beforehand did not always help with my clothing crisis. I constantly questioned what I should wear, how to fit in. With a closet full of predominately somber colours, faded jeans and fancy gowns my mother sewed that no longer fit, my wardrobe resembles garments found in many students' closets—comfortable, casual, worn-out pieces that marked my status. At each meeting, Kathryn reintroduced me to our contacts. Each time, blank expressions dulled their faces. No light of recollection, of recognition, appeared above their heads. "Odd. The woman from Human Resources looks different each time I see her. She constantly changes the colour of her hair along with her suits. Doesn't she at least remember the braces on my teeth?" (Tracy)

As with my experience, some of this disappearance was orchestrated through writing. Assigned by me to create a newsletter for focus group participants, Tracy struggled to produce something that Everybank would find acceptable. She laid out her first effort in columns to resemble a magazine or newspaper, hoping that a catchy format would enable readers to speed quickly through the document. Staying off the tricky ground of our emerging analysis, she focused on what we considered to be mundane, general descriptions. But even that was problematic. After months of non-response, our HR contact asked Tracy to produce a version that removed anything descriptive of researcher presence, place or environment.

Tracy's next draft complied but was also found unacceptable. Fortunately, by this time we were getting interested in what the HR manager revealed through her editing. For example, a sentence stating that our project intended "to explore the work-learning relations that shape and are shaped by disabled employees in the financial sector" was altered by insertion of the words "*to ensure their success* in the financial sector." This subtle yet powerful repositioning of emphasis was more in keeping with corporate priorities. In fact, were just as interested in disabled employees who, as Tracy put it, were "just scraping by."

In the end, Tracy wrote three versions of the newsletter, none of which circulated or "cascaded down" to study participants. The newsletter languished and, eventually, died. She was understandably disillusioned. Committed to academic research and writing that uses fiction, poetry, installation art, and photography, it was a blow to be told (taught) by Human Resources managers to write in a detached, objective and condensed way. In learning to "write corporate" she found herself reproducing academic practices that she has consistently challenged.[6] And, in that sense as well… disappearing.

5.8   Conclusion

As feminist scholars of critical disability studies, my colleagues and I are part of a renewed interest in the embodied experience of disability. Like Butler and Parr, we are interested in "… all sorts of people, with all sorts of different mind and body characteristics." We are interested in "… multiple aspects of their lives: their pain, their everyday geographies, their struggles, their positions within capitalist wage-labour relationships… how social and physical relationships are designed and built to exclude particular minds/bodies" (1999:9-10). Workplaces are particularly interesting. As Kim England argues, "Some bodies disrupt accepted notions of 'appropriate embodied employment.' [They] are constructed 'out of place' in the workplace" (2004:432).

Situated in this theoretical milieu, I began our investigation expecting to hear plenty about the "body troubles" of disabled people in the workplace and the management strategies they evolve in response. What I did not expect was the extent to which my own body, initially so lost in corporate spaces, would become implicated in the exploration. At first, I was simply frustrated by how all of this "got in the way" of implementing the study. Over time, as I developed a corporate "likeness," I came to understand my own subjective shifts as data that were richly informative.

Individually and as a team, my colleagues and I had to learn to enter and situate ourselves in relation to the executive offices of a major corporation. In a process that paralleled our formal conversations with its

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[6] In this sense, corporate and conventional academic textual practices mirror each other. As Laurel Richardson argues, "Knowledge is constituted as 'focused' problem (hypothesis) centered and 'linear' straightforward. Other thoughts are extraneous. Inductively accomplished research is to be reported deductively; the argument is to be abstracted in 150 words or less; and researchers are to identify explicitly with a theoretical label." (2000:927)

employees, we had to learn to behave properly in this world. We learned as we went, moment by moment, conversation by conversation, interaction by interaction as corporate officials demonstrated how to dress, speak, write – how to position our bodies in space and time. As a result, we can now perceive and better understand the "corporate disability" lived out by study participants. We have become alert to areas of employee experience that we might previously have overlooked: the anxious workplace dance, for example, between visibility and invisibility as revealed by our own clothing practices.

One of the conclusions I draw from this research is that, when it comes to the acquisition of work-able workplace subjectivities, the tried and true employee practices of learning by watching and learning by doing are alive and well. For members of the research team, passing through corporate environments has given new meaning to the term "self-study." While computer-based training may indeed dominate in the acquisition of specific job skills, the question that has come alive through our direct experience is: "What kind of self do I need to (learn to) become to be a successful worker in this environment?"

5.9   Acknowledgements

5.10   References

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6

The Moving Subject: Shifting Work(ers) Across and Beyond Organisational Boundaries

Hermine Scheeres and Nicky Solomon

> Contemporary changes in what constitutes work are producing different kinds of people in organizations and thus workers can be understood as engaging in ongoing identity work (Scheeres 2003; Solomon 2005). In this chapter we examine how this is played out in two workplaces focussing on one worker in each organisation. The first workplace is a further education institution that is increasingly commercialising its services. The second workplace is a large manufacturing company that is moving from being an autocratic hierarchical organisation to one where all workers are deployed in teams as part of the new participative management structures. Drawing on our ethnographic research and discourse analysis we foreground some of the complexities involved in worker-learner identity work, and in doing so problematise the idea that this identity work is transparent and that new identities are homogenous and easily produced. Further, work as a source of 'learning self', and as meaningful and as essential to self fulfilment (du Gay 1996; Usher and Solomon 1999) is seen as leading to a maximisation of people's capacities in the workplace. This can be understood as a kind of identity work that incorporates desires as well as disciplines. For Foucault (1988), this entails the complexities of technologies of the self and we use this theoretical idea to discuss how the two workers govern or take care of themselves.

6.1   Introduction

Contemporary changes in what constitutes work in both private and public organizations and, more specifically, what constitutes work for particular people in these organizations, is producing different kinds of people at

work. The point of departure of this chapter is that the changing demands on workers in the 21st century post-bureaucratic workplace (Heckscher and Donellon 1994; Iedema 2003) have lead to a significance being placed on governing the self. Workers are required to engage in on-going change and learning and much of the learning involves workers becoming subject to and subjects of various organisational practices. This process can be understood as identity work (Scheeres 2003; Solomon 2005).

In this chapter we examine how this is played out in two workplaces concentrating on two individual workers. The first workplace is a further education institution that is increasingly commercialising its services. Here we focus on one employee, an experienced teacher within the education sector, who is now also engaged in entrepreneurial activities with industry as part of her everyday work. The second workplace is a large manufacturing company that is moving from being an autocratic hierarchical organisation to one where all workers are deployed in teams as part of the new participative management structures. The focus here is on an employee who has been a production line worker for many years and who is now a team leader and facilitator.

Drawing on our ethnographic research and discourse analysis we foreground some of the complexities involved in the worker-learner identity work, and in doing so problematise the idea that this identity work is transparent and that new identities are homogenous and easily produced (Hall, S. 1996; Usher, R. and Edwards, R. 1994; Bhabha, H.K. 1994).

6.2   Understanding Identity

The theoretical understandings that underpin our discussion draw on a number of writers that can be described as taking a discursive approach to identity (Foucault 1988; Gergen and Kaye 1992; Hall 1996; Usher et al. 1997; Rose 1998). Their approach differs from theorists of the self who are concerned with the individual and social binary and the relationship between the two. Notwithstanding the importance of understanding the relationship between the individual and society, the approach taken here removes itself from understanding this relationship as a dichotomy or a dualism that needs to be overcome (Chappell et al. 2003).

Our interest is in understanding the self as configured contingently as it is subjected to, but also contributing to, continuing social and historical transformations. Identity, in our terms, is taken to be an ongoing discursive process that is neither quite complete nor ever unified. Identities comprise multiple processes that come about through different and often intersecting discursive practices that produce particular kinds of identity constructions. Further, much of the struggle around

identity is a struggle for closure, a desire to 'be' a specific kind of individual, such as, for example, an effective team facilitator/leader or a committed teacher. This struggle for closure leads to a homogenising and over-determined process of identity (re)formation which in turn leads to an engagement with issues of power and positioning; and a way of understanding identity in terms of subjects and subjectivities. For Hall (1996:6) identity refers to

> the meeting point, the point of *suture,* between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to 'interpellate', speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be 'spoken'. Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions, which discursive practices construct for us.

The suturing of a subject to a subject position is not a simple process of hailing a subject into place through the hierarchical or hegemonic operations of power. Rather, it includes people recognising their investment in a subject position, and enacting their productive power to capitalise on this realisation. It incorporates an acceptance of selves that are able to act as well as be acted upon differently in different contexts. Identities can therefore be seen as the positions that the subject takes up: a kind of naming or location for subject positions at some point in their life and/or work trajectory. These constructions should not be understood as enduring ones, rather as connected to current social concepts and contexts. In other words, certain kinds of identity do particular kinds of work that are productive in a particular contemporary moment. Deetz (2003:125) describes this flexibilisation of the self as:

> Identities in contemporary society are increasingly fragmented as the sequestering of experiential realms is reduced (we are simultaneously workers, managers, parents, children, calculators and lovers) and the inadequacy of presumed historically derived identities and category makers becomes more evident.

Multiplicity of identities or flexibilisation of self/ves has been taken up by writers particularly interested in the workplace and organisational studies. For example, Champy (1995) Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) du Gay (1996) Rose (1998) Chappell (2003) Scheeres (2003), whose attention is on the post-bureaucratic workplace, and understanding people in these workplaces as workers who are asked to bring more of themselves to work and invest more of themselves in work. Indeed they argue that the management of subjectivity, that is, the discursive construction of workers as 'subjects' of a particular kind, has become one of the central tasks of organizations. This management is not in the form of a top-down, overt, coercive policy; it is more subtle and

capillary-like (Foucault 1980). One way this occurs is through the current emphasis on culture and self through the discourses of belonging, and governing the self and self-change:

> In the new vocabulary of group relations, the intersubjective life of the enterprise could be construed as a vital mechanism upon which government should operate, not only binding the individual psychologically into the production process, but also, through work, linking the worker into the social order as a democratic citizen with rights and responsibilities (Miller and Rose 1993:96).

Workers are led to see work as a source of 'learning self', and that this is meaningful and essential to self fulfilment (du Gay 1996; Usher and Solomon 1999), This in turn works to help maximise people's capacities in the workplace. This can be understood as a kind of identity work that incorporates desires as well as disciplines. For Foucault (1988), this entails the complexities of technologies of the self.

This chapter goes on to explore these ideas through the case studies of two workers, Mary and Carol, who spoke to us about their work and, either explicitly or implicitly, their learning at work, and thus about their constructions of their identities.

6.3   Case Study 1

6.3.1   Mary: Moving Around an Educational Institution

The subject in the first case study works in a further education institution. The context of the case study is a research project that focussed on everyday learning at work. It was funded through one of the Australian Government's industry linkage schemes, where the university's research collaborator and partner was a large further education institution. While the business of both partners is education, the focus was not on teaching and learning in programs or classrooms. The further education institution is a workplace, and like most workplaces today, it is concerned with the professional development of its employees, and the various ways these employees and the organisation itself learn. It was these kinds of learning that were the focus of the study.

We explored four work groups across two colleges: a group of work-based learning teachers who worked in the commercial arm of a college engaging in entrepreneurial activities, a group of clerical and administration workers in the Human Resources Unit, a group of trade teachers, and a group of strategic planners. The purpose of the study was to 'uncover' existing everyday learning practices and to suggest how to

strategically take them up to promote more learning. Early in the study our research centred on finding and examining the employees' existing learning practices. However, during the study the researchers' focus moved from practices and activities towards a focus on exploring the identity work of these employees. This shift emerged as a result of (among other things), the rejection by the participants of the label 'learner' (Solomon and Boud 2003). Importantly, the shift can be attributed to the research methodology, that is, the theoretical resources of the researchers as well as the dynamics of the unfolding research process (which is discussed below).

The research methodology was a fairly conventional one. The researchers conducted one to one semi-structured interviews that explored how each individual learned and continued to learn their work, and on how they understood workplace learning. These interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed. The analysis was brought back to each of the groups, who were given the opportunity to explore the various issues raised. The aim of these group explorations was to identify a learning theme that was relevant to the professional issues of the group. For example the theme would then provide a site of collaborative work for the researchers and the particular group, and this work would involve the development of strategies that would improve some aspect of their everyday learning and work practices. The theme of the work-based learning group was 'learning through becoming'; the title exemplifies how the research became focussed on the formation and becoming of the participants rather than on their practices. This is not to say that identity and practices are separate entities, but rather it draws attention to the way the research process highlighted that these practices are subjectifying ones. In other words, when workers engage in different kinds of work practices they are also forming different social relationships and different understandings of what constitutes work: that is, they are becoming different kinds of workers.

The focus in this chapter is on one employee in the work-based learning group. Mary, an experienced teacher, is engaged in entrepreneurial activities with industry as part of her everyday work in the education institution. The discussion draws heavily on an analysis of the transcript of the initial interview with Mary, and is also informed by observations and other interactions with Mary during the research process.

The analysis concentrates on the way Mary positioned herself as she was at the same time being positioned by others within the workplace. The commentary draws on the discourses that Mary used to articulate the various struggles and pleasures that she experienced in her everyday work. The discourses demonstrate a management of self, that is, a particular set of technologies of self are drawn upon as Mary manages to

straddle teaching in the college in conventional classroom programs, at the same time as engaging in entrepreneurial activities where she acts as a learning consultant for other organisations. This latter set of activities incorporates an additional challenge in that the systems of the further education institution were organised around conventional teaching activities. The management of herself means that she has to navigate the various identities and discourses so that she doesn't 'lose herself' in the process: she has to care for herself.

6.3.2 Mary: Work/Life Discourses and Care of (Her)self

The interview transcript reveals that Mary is learning to successfully navigate the multiple identities that are required in her work. Her main strategy is to disentangle these identities by separating out the various discourses within which she operates. These discourses include those to do with her conventional teaching role and those to do with her entrepreneurial and commercial activities. Her work where these two discourses align is to do with the bureaucracy that manages and organises her workload, her pay and her hours. This is an uneasy fit in terms of her management/consultant identity and she manages this through working with the system. However, she also challenges it in small ways. In addition, or perhaps as a consequence of these tensions, one of the most interesting kinds of identity work that can be seen is the way Mary constructs herself through another discourse, a discourse where she articulates a way of sustaining herself as a person with a particular life trajectory that is both to do with work, but also one that is distinctly outside of work.

This life trajectory and the way she spoke about it, is marked by talk that suggests that life and work occupy different spaces, in that her 'life' identity is intact and is not in conflict with her identity as a committed over-stretched worker. There are, however, some tensions as she learns to do new work and to be a different worker. This is a person who came to this further education institution with the idea that it would be a shift into an easier, less intrusive space, and therefore it would be unlike her previous jobs. She understands it as a space that allows her to more fully engage with her home and family:

It allowed me to control my hours better.   [Data Extract 1]

While at times Mary spoke of the many stressful challenges of her job, she doesn't understand her soul as being governed (Rose 1993) by her workplace. Rather she understands herself as a person who is still on track. This is a track that keeps her desires of the future intact and is therefore one that still enables her to 'be herself' in the present.

Mary uses 'my life as a place outside of work' discourse at frequent points in the interview. These kinds of references to life outside of work were unusual in the sample of interviews with twenty eight employees. For Mary, it seemed to be a discourse that worked for her. We suggest that it was a technology that Mary drew upon in learning to take care of herself.

One example of this interest in her life trajectory can be found in Mary's responses to questions about taking up this particular job, such as:

Just a conjunction of opportunities at *a particular point in my life* [Data Extract 2]

as well as in her description of the changing nature of the organisation:

Mm. Evolving. Very definitely evolving into something quite different. When I first came here it was all mainstream teaching, most of it in the daytime, *which was great, because I could get home at night.* Now it's evolving and there's a great deal more ambiguity because we're dealing with new customers, new ways of teaching new courses. So evolving. It was good because I was starting to feel like I was becoming complacent and lazy from doing the same thing over and over again.

But on the other hand you deal with the uncertainties and insecurities, 'is this really what you wanted?*' I'm very conscious that in my career at this stage of my life,* I want to be in control of it and what I do, rather than just go along with the tide and be controlled by somebody else's decisions. So I'm always assessing 'is this what I want to continue to be doing?' because it is evolving so much. But it's because it is evolving that I'm still here, I think. [Data Extract 3]

These quotes illustrate the useful alignment that Mary makes between her work and her self. It seems that she assesses opportunities in terms of their usefulness to herself and 'this stage of her life'. Note here also her concern for control, and this control of herself and her choices are manifest in the pronouns that she uses. Early in the interview, in response to a question about what her job entails, Mary replied with:

It's a combination of what *we* call mainstream, where *we* teach students who come into learn any of the management type disciplines, including human resource management, and that's through normal face-to-face teaching in the classroom. It also includes some flexible delivery with some of those mainstream students. And then most of *our* work is dedicated to workplace learning. Which is actually going out into the workplace for clients who pay *us* on a commercial basis and doing, not so much training, but more facilitated learning with them, and their individual staff members, and accrediting and assessing them. It's a combination. [Data Extract 4]

Apart from the clear differences in vocabulary choices that Mary makes to talk about the different parts of her work – '*normal face-to-face teaching*' and '*workplace learning*' – the quote is also interesting in terms of her use of the word '*we*' (and the accompanying '*our*' and '*us*'). Who is '*we*'? It is likely to be Mary and her work group but it also possibly refers to Mary and the institution. This suggests an identification with the group and the institution which is symptomatic of a sense of belonging and ownership to the various activities. This use of '*we*' is repeated in all sections of the transcript that relate to talk about her actual work practice.

In Extract 3 Mary uses the pronoun '*I*'. This suggests that she (the '*I*') is both separate and embedded in the workplace, and while at times there is a sense of conflation of these two, the '*I*' is also distinctive, particularly at decision making moments about taking on new opportunities. Once an opportunity is taken up the '*I*' becomes the '*we*', but not beforehand.

This clarity for Mary about her desires, the significance of her 'life' plans and trajectories and how these are played out in her relationship to work and the workplace are highlighted in the following quote:

> Yes, because I'm at that stage where I could retire tomorrow if I wanted to. I can't imagine being out of work totally, I'd still have to be doing some form of work, because I need to keep up with some interest, but I'm still evaluating whether I want to be here for the hours, doing what I want to do, or whether I'd be better off getting into something else. But it's a double-edged sword in that it's evolving. As I said, if it hadn't of evolved, I think I would have died of boredom by now. Just teaching mainstream, particularly the day students. Because it's evolving, I'm still evaluating whether it's going in the direction that I want to stay here for. But so far it's ok. [Data Extract 5]

Mary's 'evolving' constitutes ongoing learning – not only learning material work but learning to manage herself. Her analysis and self-evaluation use her life trajectory as their point of reference, and indeed it is her 'life' that helps her make decisions, for example:

> Well the last time I did any casual work, I stopped doing because it was just too much. See, *my objective is to keep my home and work life very finely balanced*. I found I was getting drawn into too much work. And the last time I did any casual work at uni, I actually did it on contract because the casual pay rates have deteriorated too. *It just wasn't worthwhile*. So they let me do it on contract, or otherwise I wouldn't have been interested. But the casual pay rates here, attract people, but they don't tend to keep them for very long. Or keep the very good ones. *It worries me a bit, what's going to happen. And then I think, why should it worry me, I'll be retired by then. But I've got children, and you know.* But I do believe the calibre of

teaching at this place is probably pretty good generally. [Data Extract 6]

The way Mary chooses to manage her work and life distinctions and their overlaps is in some ways very clear-cut, but an interesting set of complexities also emerged in one set of exchanges. These exchanges were about how to name herself in relation to her job. She first offers *TAFE teacher* then adds that she has *Education Manager* on her business card, adding that she finds this embarrassing. She feels that it was placed there because *TAFE teacher* doesn't have a commercial orientation. She felt that this kind of thinking is '*like a cultural cringe*', yet Mary cringes when using the *Education Manager* card. It is not a name that she identifies with. After discussing other examples of difficulties in being named at work, she decided *that 'the nomenclature thing…. was just a familiarity thing'*. However, without any prompt this was closely followed by:

Mary: If you ask me what I'd like to be called, I really couldn't say – 'retired' perhaps, 'lady of leisure, tourist, traveller'.

Interviewer: Yes, the traveller would be nice. Do you think there's been a shift in the way you think of yourself from when you first started here?

Mary: No.

Interviewer: Same?

Mary: Semi-retired. That sounds like I'm not putting the hours in. But this is my semi-retirement job.

Interviewer: That was a quite a conscious decision.

Mary: Yes, I got out of a job that was using up just about every minute of my waking hours, into a job where I had the time to be with my family and do other things that I wanted to do. Sometimes when I've dragged home after three twelve-hour days, I question that.   [Data Extract 7]

This talk around wanting to be called a '*lady of leisure, tourist, traveller*' sits comfortably with Mary. There is no apparent tension for her in wanting to name herself as someone who doesn't work, in response to a question about an appropriate name for herself in her job '*lady of leisure*' is a label that is forward looking, yet at the same time it works for her '*now*'. It is part of what constructs Mary's subjectivity. This comforting narrative is a technology that sustains a comfortable sense of self, a self that is 'life outside of work'.

However the talk about being a lady of leisure and the fact that it is where she wants to be, triggers further discussion of retirement and reminds her of the need to regain control of her life, that is, to have work work for her, in contrast to work governing and controlling her. Thus:

Yes. I intend to, as soon as I can, cut it back to two days a week. Just to keep it as an interest. The problem with holding this job is that when I most want to travel, is when I can't, with this job. And I'm really restricted by the school holidays, because that's when I can do what I want to do, but everybody else does too. So I'm looking forward to being off the season with the TAFE holidays if we possibly can. So that sort of flexibility would be wonderful for me, and I was able to get a bit of that, whereas I'm going to take leave when TAFE is in session to make up for the work I did during the Christmas holidays. [Data Extract 8]

These quotes and the discussion around them illustrate the various technologies of self that Mary employs. On the surface Mary's job is a complex one. Mary operates within two overlapping professional discourses – each has its own set of practices and identities. At times these coexist, while organisationally they intersect. Her practices are filled with uncertainties, contingencies, problems and headaches. But Mary learns to manage herself by invoking a life discourse – a discourse that is familiar and has a perceived 'predictability' and 'certainty'. These give her a sense of control, a sense of governing herself.

6.4   Case Study 2

6.4.1   Carol: Moving Around a Manufacturing Company

The subject in the second case study works in a large manufacturing company. The project explored one Australian manufacturing company while it was in the midst of restructuring. It focussed on the changes in work and work practices and was concerned with changes in worker identity, and how the tensions produced through change processes constructed struggles about learning new ways of 'being' at work.

The organisation was developing from an autocratic, rigidly hierarchical enterprise to a workplace where the flattened hierarchies and operations of teams, and an emphasis on core values, hailed in management and organisational development literatures, (Peters and Waterman 1982; Champy 1995; Handy 1996; Kanter 1997) shaped what the organisation could and should be in a globalising marketplace.

Although the organisation in this case study was not an educational workplace, it was, nevertheless, concerned with the professional development of its employees and their learning, and it wanted to name itself as a learning organisation (Marsick and Watkins 1999). For example, all employees were expected to attend 2-day training

sessions to 'learn' the core values of the organisation and how to implement these values. As they were all to become members of teams they were also participants in half day training sessions on 'Becoming an Effective Team'. Thus, the investigation of changing work and changing workers included exploring how people learned new work practices and roles.

The research methodology was an ethnographically oriented case study that included semi-structured interviews with managers and production-line workers that were taped and transcribed; observations of work and analysis of company documents. There was also extensive taping of team meetings over an eighteen month period. During the research time one employee, Carol, became a key contact, and the discussion in this chapter focuses particularly on her using both interview and observational data, and team meeting transcripts. Carol has worked in the organisation for about 5 years. She began as a production-line worker; at the time of the project she had been a team facilitator for about a year.

Carol's two major 'jobs' in the organisation have involved taking up positions and being positioned by others as various kinds of subjects. What follows is an analysis and discussion of some of the discourses and practices Carol employed within her work and talking about (her)self and her work. The discourses produce Carol's multiple identities; like Mary she can be seen to draw on particular technologies of the self as she moves around the organisation and (re)locates herself in a new social space: the space of team meetings and facilitation, constructing new social relationships and learning ways to 'be' at work. Carol needs to do more than manage herself in organisational terms – she has to care for herself.

6.4.2   Carol: Work/Life Discourses and Care of (Her)self

Carol struggles to position herself in the organisation's staff structure. When outlining her previous jobs as production-line worker and leading hand, she was unequivocal about what the reporting lines were – the organisation had a traditional hierarchy. Now the senior managers were following contemporary management directions outlined in popular business texts, in particular, the suggestions regarding flattened hierarchies and participative management achieved through the instigation of teams, teamwork and team meetings. However, the new organisational unit, consisting of a manager and 5 facilitators, charged with implementing these changes did not fit neatly into the existing company structures. This is exemplified by Carol, who demonstrates some uncertainty regarding her 'level' in the organisation in comments such as:

> I come under [the production manager] um like [the facilitators'
> manager] comes under [the production manager] so he's higher
> than like the plant managers and then we're supposed to obvi-
> ously come off him but we're no higher. We are not higher than
> the managers and we're not higher than team leaders and really
> I don't think we're higher than people on the floor. I mean I see
> my level there on the on the factory floor with those that…with
> the teams. I don't…I don't see…plant manager any higher like
> he has any authority over me which he sort of does but I…it
> wouldn't work if he could boss me around. [Data Extract 9]

Carol struggles to articulate where she 'sits' in relation to the
more traditional positions of production manager and plant manager,
while at the same time she recognises that she is now part of the new
facilitative unit. Notably she also wants to keep her identity as a worker at
the same level as others '*on the factory floor*'. Her language moves
between definitive statements: '*I come under*' and much more tentative
ones: '*supposed to*', '*I don't think*', demonstrating her attempts to make
sense of her positions and social relationships at work.

Carol's main job is to organise and develop teams of mainly
production-line workers, and facilitate their weekly meetings. Even
though employees had experienced a team training session, most of the
learning for these new roles occurs on the job, that is, in the team
meetings themselves with Carol as the facilitator / leader / teacher. When
interviewed, Carol defines her work as:

> I look after teams within Plant 3. Um my job really is to try and
> change their culture, to try and um look at their work situation
> and improve on that using various tools and techniques like
> Problem Solving Plus and Station Control, and these can be
> improvements to the quality … to like the system, the proce-
> dures, um, streamline things. [Data Extract 10]

Carol appears quite sure of what her new work is and recognises
that it is involved with the formidable process of changing workplace
culture. In describing this work, she uses the language of the managerial
programs that have been supplied: her '*tools and techniques*' include
'*Problem Solving Plus*' (PSP) and '*Station Control*', both of which are
highly structured, step-by-step procedures designed to guide meeting talk
in such a way as to lead to tangible production improvements. After all,
increased productivity is the overall goal of the company, and any work
changes implemented have this goal as their key concern. However,
implicit in her description of her work is a pedagogical dimension – she is
familiar with the tools and techniques, and her job entails passing these
on, teaching them, to her teams.

Observing Carol 'at work' during team meetings sees her doing managing and teaching work where she takes up these positions through the discourses and practices of the specific problem-solving procedures. Most of the team meetings open with Carol 'taking the floor' (Edelsky 1993). The meetings foreground meeting room discourses that are aligned with the texts on the table: tally sheets with production figures and numbers of faulty machines, copies of previously written problem statements, and definitions and models of target statements. For example, in the extract from a team meeting below the team is focusing on a particular missing component, and they have spent the last two meetings talking about the 'problem' (describing, reporting and explaining), and translating the talk into a written text called a 'problem statement'. Carol introduces the next step, the writing of the 'target statement' (discussing and negotiating) as the current task. She encourages participation, and in particular she works to elicit responses. The target statement is expected to be composed by the workers as an outline of what they had previously agreed was a problem, and then include suggested ways of 'fixing' the problem:

> We're going to go on with the PSP. You have the tally sheets. Now the PSP, we follow the PSP. We've written our problem statements and now we're about to write our target statements and then we're up to stage two. [5 seconds] Okay? So, what should a target statement have? It says there the target statement is a written description of the results that you expect to achieve. Yeah. We wrote last week, the week before last, what the problem is. From there what do we want to achieve, what's our goal? Okay? The target statement must be specific and the target statement describes the following. Number one, what is it that you are going to achieve? So when we look at what we want to achieve, what did we have? [Data Extract 11]

Carol sets the agenda and her talk consists of a series of statements about what *'we'* have done and what *'we'* now need to do, interspersed with questions encouraging input from the team members. Carol's immediate task, then, is to produce new kinds of talk: not only the talk of a range of identifiable genres, but also talk that shifts interpersonally from following orders to offering knowledge, expertise and services. Through these discourses, she is teaching and learning - enacting new ways of 'being' a worker. The *'we'*, used in the meeting room, draws the process workers into new work as new kinds of workers – ones who, for example, devise and write problem statements and target statements, and ones who solve problems for the company. Her pedagogic self is moving these employees from the comfort zones of their production-line selves to the more uncomfortable team meeting selves.

Carol's work can be understood as moving from the 'doing work' of the factory floor to 'talking work' of training/meeting rooms; (Iedema

and Scheeres 2003) and also from production-line colleague to facilitator/teacher or even a kind of manager and teacher. Like Mary in the earlier case study, Carol's shifting work entails identity work. Carol and her team members are learning to negotiate their way through, and discursively producing, new identities.

Another way Carol negotiates these shifts – and the struggles – is through the construction of herself as an autonomous worker with strong views that she plays out in her work practices. During the time spent with Carol, both observation time and in interviews, she told stories about her work experiences. Many of these could be described as moral tales where a manager – often the plant manager – for example, tries to implement something which she insists won't work, then when it doesn't work, she is quick to say 'I told you so'. Carol positions herself as someone who knows about the work and workers, and as someone who is not afraid to say what she thinks or knows. In the extract below, Carol demonstrates how she deals with these situations:

> you know, sometimes I'd like to turn around and just say 'well, I'm not doing it and what're you goin' to do about that', you know, sometimes I do, sometimes I just and I've said it to [my manager] He'll say 'we're goin' to be doing this' and I'll say, 'well you're going to be doing it on your own because I'm not 'cos it won't work, you know'. *I think that helps me,* sometimes I probably, speak out of place with him but it's … I don't know [Data Extract 12]

Carol's talk is provocative in terms of lines of authority and social relationships. More interesting for this discussion is how it brings together work and life discourses. Carol introduces this anecdote as a desire, as something she would like to say to her boss that includes an ultimatum (probably a scenario that we are all familiar with), then she immediately moves on to describe how, in fact, she has played out this very scene more than once. When she follows up with '*I think that helps me'* we are unsure if she is referring to actual past instances, or to reflecting on what she would like to say, or indeed both of these possibilities. It does neverthe-less, lead to a further reflexive comment that shows Carol is aware of and perhaps concerned about how others might read her, and how she is learn-ing from these kinds of experiences and / or reflections.

That Carol has pride in her work and wants to be seen in particu-lar ways is made explicit at various times with remarks such as 'someone will say*, 'that was Carol's idea, she started that'.* Speaking of herself in the third person suggests a time when she is no longer part of the organi-sation. Similarly, Carol invokes a time when her (current) work is done – completed successfully – and she can move on:

> I want to be seen as a hard worker…I just want things to work…..some days things start to go really well and .. you know .. I think we're really there. And then I think to myself *I can leave now.* You know it's like *I don't have to be here anymore* because they can do it by themselves [Data Extract 13]

Carol certainly wants to do a good job and be recognised as a *'hard worker'* but at the same time she imagines a time beyond this work of managing and facilitating teams. Notably, the time when she *'can leave'* and she *'doesn't have to be here'* is when this work and her position have become superfluous. At other times, Carol comments less benignly on her working life:

> Sometimes I feel a bit trapped…. *I must always be able to have a choice* that I can..um.. leave this job if I want to go somewhere else or I can move on from that . I don't like to feel pressured or or or cornered into staying somewhere. This is why I had this thing with the money I think that…that can like if you've got a high mortgage um and you've got to work to keep that [2 secs] you don't have a choice then if you want to…but if it's almost finished if you want to leave you can just say 'well I've had it I want to leave'. [Data Extract 14]

Carol's practices all involve her taking up subject positions as well as being positioned by others whether she is leading a team meeting, or speaking up to a manager, or doing a good job and wanting to be remembered for it. All involve identity work that is characterised by struggles and negotiation. Through the working life discourses there is a sense of a life trajectory that involves but is not only to do with work. It is to do with a longer, broader life path beyond this organisation, and even beyond any kind of work. In the extract above, Carol admits she sometimes feels *'a bit trapped'* reinforced by feeling *'pressured'* and *'cornered'*. What is important is to feel that she *'has a choice'* about staying in the job or leaving – 'moving on'.

To have this kind of choice has financial implications. Carol is thirty five and is paying off her house as quickly as possible. She has invested in shares and talks about being financially secure and being able to retire if she *wishes 'at forty five'*. Even at this point in her life, she needs to be able to say *'I've had it'* and leave. Although Carol is much younger than Mary it is interesting that she, too, employs discourses of retirement and moving on and out. She can be seen as being 'on track' in similar ways to Mary.

Carol's work/life discourses can be understood as managing herself – managing her working life in terms of her 'whole' life. In this sense she is taking care of (her)self. She is learning to navigate various identity positions at work as she struggles with being a 21st century worker in the

organisation. She is unsure as to how many of her former factory floor workers now position her: *'I don't know what they see me as'*. In her major work activities of organising, developing and leading teams and team meetings Carol positions herself as someone who knows what she is doing and what she wants her team members to do. Her pedagogic self, discursively constructed during the team meetings, is made explicit in the interviews when she states: *'I want them all to want to learn'*. On the one hand Carol directs the teams towards their goals of increased production levels by working through specific problem-solving procedures, and at the same time she employs a discourse of desiring that the workers not only learn new practices, but that they will *want* to learn. Carol has taken on Miller and Rose's (1993*) 'intersubjective life of the enterprise'* where she and the team members/production-line workers are bound *'psychologically into the production process'*.

   In terms of management Carol has a sense that managers gene-rally see her as *'a pain in the bum'*. She demonstrates a strong sense of being an autonomous worker as she articulates clearly what she will and won't do. Similar to her confusion regarding her positioning by the fac-tory floor workers, she also expresses confusion as to where she is located in the company hierarchy in terms of organisational status. However, she knows her immediate manager is the manager of the facilitators, and she has no hesitation in approaching him with exactly what she thinks and how she is feeling. For Carol *'it won't work'* if she positions herself as someone who simply obeyed directives, and she related a number of anecdotes of specific experiences to consolidate this position-taking.

   At the same time Carol looks forward to a time when she has ac-complished her 'tasks' successfully, a time when she has done her hard work and can leave because her job is superfluous. However, this would only be possible if she was financially secure – for Carol this means hav-ing paid off a mortgage. She sees herself as wanting to do a good job then moving out and on – perhaps to retire at forty-five.

   Thus, Carol also operates within different work discourses – each with its own set of practices, social relations and identities. Her 'being' at work is complex involving ongoing learning and it is imbued with ten-sions, struggles and desires. Carol manages herself by invoking discourses of control at work - she is definite about what she will 'take on' and talks about walking out. She also sees herself as *'getting things going really well in the teams'* and then moving on. These discourses construct a predictability and certainty and contribute to a sense of caring for and governing herself.

6.5   Conclusion

The two women workers under focus in this chapter have different work/life histories and work in quite different organisations. Our discussion has explored aspects of their working lives in terms of how they learn to manage themselves through the shifts and struggles in their changing workplaces. Both women invoke discourses work/self management that construct control – being in control of their work and themselves. Mary's discourses produce work and life (family/retirement) trajectories that, at times co-exist, and at times overlap and even conflict. Carol's discourses also produce work and life (moving 'out'/retirement) trajectories that appear somewhat more linear – moving to early retirement.

The discussion challenges views of contemporary work practices as oppressive and disempowering, particularly for women workers. Our analyses highlight some ways in which these women make use of particular technologies of the self to position themselves securely. Both Mary and Carol talk about their shifting work and identities as active subjects – they learn how to take up and resist various positions. Each woman constructs predictability and certainties about their work / lives as they negotiate and work on their identities. As they learn to take on the demands on workers of the 21st century, their identity work at work is constructed in part through thinking about and desiring 'other' lives. Together these work/life discourses are ones in which they take care of themselves.

6.6   References

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7

Exploring Construction of Gendered Identities at Work

Lena Abrahamsson

This chapter presents gender as a concept and perspective by discussing learning and doing gender at workplaces. The focus is on workplace change, particularly technological change, and its implications for workers' subjectivity and construction of masculinity. The empirical base is a study on mine workers in an underground iron ore mine in Kiruna, in the very north of Sweden.

Changes at the underground mine in Kiruna during the last 50 years, with new technology and new qualification demands, have step by step challenged the local hegemonic masculinity rooted in the old type of mining work and identity. This has been met by restoring responses. Still there are a lot of old and new masculine 'hero stories' around that the male workers use to construct identities and to learn and to restore the connection between mining work and masculinity. This can be seen as an identity 'lag', as an asymmetry between structural changes and cultural changes. But it is not only a question of defending and restoring the old culture or identity. Workplace change necessitates the remaking of work practices and work identities and provides a space, and probably a need, for renegotiation of gendered identities. Some of this is done within the prevailing gender order, but there are also new types of masculinities (and femininities) that share the space with the old and perhaps fading macho-masculinity.

7.1   Introduction

This chapter explains gender as a concept and perspective by discussing learning and doing gender at workplaces. The focus is on workplace change, particularly technological change, and its implications on workers'

subjectivity. Construction of masculinity and masculine subjectivity is one central theme. To explore construction of identities at work places I look at the organisational level and the structures and the symbols of work. The links to individuals and work identity are most easily seen when there are change projects going on at the workplace. It could, for example, arise through the growth of the company, implementation of new production technology, new products, new knowledge, new surveillance or management systems or just new organisational ideas – all changes that more or less demand that the individual learn something new. Workplace change necessitates the remaking of work practices and work identities and probably provides a space, and a need, for renegotiation of gendered identities.

In order to explore transforming work and technology, empirical material is used from a case study on changing mine work at LKAB's (Luossavaara-Kiirunavaara AB) underground iron ore mine in Kiruna, in the very north of Sweden (Abrahamsson and Johansson 2005). The case study includes interviews, observations and current, as well as historical, documents from 1957 until today.

For a long time, the underground mining work at LKAB was characterised by a close relation between the worker and the rock. It was hard physical and dangerous manual work under difficult conditions. It also had a certain type of workplace culture, as in many other similarly male homo-social workplaces – a culture with a characteristic feature of 'macho-masculinity'. Today, the mine is one of the most modern underground mines in the world, at least according to their own analysis. The company has continuously invested in development of new technology to increase the efficacy of their mining. In this way, new mine work conditions have steadily been established. During the last 50 years, there has been a transformation from underground work close to the rock to remote control work from above ground. Nowadays, the face workers are located up on level 7 in an office building close to the mine. The workers can leave their job as clean as when they arrived. The contact with the rock occurs via machines controlled by remote technology. The modern technology has thereby created a new type of work, when it comes to competence and knowledge as well as workload. The 'old' type of macho work style has, therefore, been challenged and the workers have to find new ways of forming identity, which in some ways they already have.

7.2   From 'Dual Gender Work' to a Pure Male Work Identity

In order to provide a basis for understanding the masculinisation processes of today – and the eventually emerging de-masculinisation processes – I will use some historians' descriptions of the early mining work and its

old masculinisation process. Mining work has always been men's work, but not to the extent that it is today. Particularly during the pre-industrial period surprisingly many women worked in the Swedish iron ore mines. Henriksson (1994), Blomberg (1995) and Karlsson (1997) write that from 1700 up to 1850 women worked both above and under ground, in all production areas. This included participation in physically-demanding work as ordinary mine workers. In some mines, women accounted for as much as half of the labour force. This was during a period when mining was seasonal work for the whole household and often combined with other work, usually farming. The relatively well paid mining work was an important means of earning money for both married and unmarried women. It is true that mining work has never been a feminine job or 'women's work', but during a long period it was performed by both women and men. In 1850 women formed 15-20 % of the total labour force in the Swedish mines, but 100 years later, in 1950, the number had reduced to 1% (Blomberg 1995; Karlsson 1997). Today in 2006, 4% of mine workers at LKAB are women, a statistic that has remained stable during the latest 30 years.

How did the mining work become purely male? What happened for the mining work identity to become synonymous with a male identity? Around 1850 mining work for women started to be questioned. Their appearance and their morality was criticised and an upcoming and growing opinion said that mining work, especially underground work, rendered the women incompetent as wives and mothers. Discussions of the woman's true nature, the eternal femininity, were a general part of the public debate during the industrialisation period. In the year 1900, Sweden introduced a new law that forbade women to work underground, but by then women had already left the mines. According to Blomberg and Karlsson the very active exclusion of women from mining work can be seen as part of the construction of the male mining work identity.

When the iron ore mine in Kiruna was established in the early 1900s mining work had the purely male character that we know today. In the beginning there were no woman at all working as mine labourers, but more and more women came to the growing city of Kiruna, not only as wives and daughters, but also in search of work. They worked in the service sector in cleaning, restaurants and lodging, but also at the mine with hand picking and sorting, above ground. But this again was only for a limited period. The more the work became mechanised the less women were employed in the mine, just as in other industries during the industrialisation period. This process was parallel with the more discoursive or symbolic masculinisation of mining work (Blomberg 1995).

7.3   Construction of Gender and Identity

In this section of the chapter, I will present some of the conceptual framework that is used to discuss the links between technology, workplace culture, and work and identity. Acker (1990, 1992) and Gunnarsson et al. (2003) divide organisational processes into four levels or types – structures, symbols, relations and identities. *'Structures'* includes the production system's work organisation (structural divisions of labour and power) as well as the technical system, i.e. what people usually see as technology, work and work environment. *'Symbols'* includes more informal and cultural aspects of work, such as storylines, myths, ideas and perceptions about what a real mine worker is, what mine work or competence is. *'Relations'* means the concrete interaction between people, the practices, and the actions and also cultural norms of interaction. *'Identity'* means how the individuals create and recreate identity and self in relation to the structures and/or the symbols. This can also be understood both as socialisation and informal, and unintentional, learning (contextual/situated), i.e. a part of the process of becoming a full member of an organisation or the community of practice (Wenger 1998; Salminen-Karlsson 2003). Identity (individuals' sense of self or subjectivities) is seen here both as part of the human being and as a continuous and endless interactive process. Identity is, therefore, not fixed or stable, but rather something changeable that fills a function in a special context.

The four processes are of course deeply interdependent, but not necessarily similar. Often, they are asymmetrical with different changes in speed and pace, and sometimes even changing in opposite directions in different contexts (Gunnarsson et al. 2003). Changes in one process can be contradictory to changes in another and function as restoring forces, both conscious and unconscious. Abrahamsson and Somerville (2003) found that in Australian coalmines, the workplace culture was so strongly built on risk-taking, competitiveness and 'macho-masculinity' that it overrode the company's many years of work on education and teaching safety to the mine workers. But there were also indications of an emerging new type of worker identity and perhaps also a new form of masculinity. The double-edged attitudes towards safety, both romanticizing the old and promoting the new, can be seen as imbedded tensions in the community of practice.

Gender is an important part of identity in many ways and can be found in all of the four above-mentioned processes. The basic principle in this paper is that gender is seen as something people do and construct in social interactions (Gherardi 1994; Acker 1990, 1992). Gender has no biological core and it is not a social characteristic. It is more like an ever changing and local ideal image, something that individuals and groups

continuously need to learn and something they are striving for and guarding. Tacit collective agreements and a continuous dramatisation of gender both restore and change our ways of seeing masculinity and femininity. According to Butler (1990, 1993), this play doesn't become really visible unless the existing masculinity and femininity are threatened.

But even if gender is a dynamic concept it also has some stability. A lot of the attitudes, norms and cultural symbols at work that are learned through socialization at workplaces are connected to gender and the traditional gender order with gender segregation and gender hierarchy (Hirdman 2001). Ideas of gender, femininities and masculinities, are often conservative and can be troublesome during organizational changes and create restoration responses – both structural and cultural (Abrahamsson 2000; Hollway 1996; Collinson and Hearn 1996). Strongly gendered workplace cultures can create problems for organisational as well as individual learning and change. There could be restoration of existing structures and the prevailing behaviours and attitudes, in spite of the fact that the management aims to achieve the opposite. This is especially common when the companies start implementing new organisational practices or new technology that, as a side effect, fumble about in the prevailing gender order. Hirdman (2001) points out the recurring debate on true femininity as one way of restoring the gender order. The reconstruction of stereotypical and 'natural' gender differences can function as a scale that balances changes in structures and technology. Better gender equality – or at least possibilities for changes – at a structural level can be met with a strengthened inequality at a symbolic level.

7.4   50 Years of Changing Work at the Underground Iron Ore Mine in Kiruna

Before I go further with the discussion into changes in technology and work and into more modern times there is probably a need for a few lines on underground iron ore mining in Kiruna. The method LKAB uses in Kiruna is called sub-level caving. This method means that the ore is mined and transported via galleries and shafts, up to the surface level for concentration and converting. The process has two main parts: development and caving[1]. The basic processes have been more or less the same

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[1] Development means that holes are drilled straight to make horizontal parallel galleries into the ore body. Caving means that you mine out the ore between the galleries. In caving you drill up in the roof of the gallery in a fan-shaped pattern. Both the development and caving work consists of five work elements: drilling, charging blasting agents, blasting, loading (the ore) and transport/discharging.

over the years of the mine's operation, however the machines and the technology, and therefore also the work, have changed. In order to explore these issues and demonstrate their impact upon work identity and its gendered nature, in the following section of the paper I will 'visit' the underground mining workplace of LKAB in 1957, 1969, 1985 and 2005[2].

7.4.1 From Rock Skills to Remote Control

The newly started underground mining in 1957 was characterized mainly by hard physical work in an extremely poor work environment. There was a close relationship between the mining worker and the rock, especially in the development work. If he (at this time it was always a 'he') could judge the rock accurately, then he could minimize the drilling and save explosives in order to increase his earnings. The cave drilling elements of work tasks were already standardized, which made the individual work integrity less significant. In the rockslide loading, it was however essential to be able to read the mountain, both in order to optimize his earnings and avoid accidents.

In 1969 mine work was still physically very heavy even though the working environment has been improved, especially in terms of the loading. For the worker in caving drilling, however, the increased effectiveness of the drill rig meant that he (it was still only men) had to handle substantially more heavy drill rods during the same amount of time. A huge environmental problem had been introduced by the introduction of diesel-driven trucks and loaders that generate harmful gases. However, the danger of the rock fall remained. The place for the development work driller's expert skills, which were obvious in 1957, had diminished because the elementary work tasks had been standardised.

The mining work of 1985 clearly had another character than before – and we can catch a glimpse of modern mine work as we know it today. The mining worker had been transferred from the rock face to air-conditioned control rooms. This did not necessarily mean that the work environment was good, but it was decidedly better. Electrical power for rockslide loading trucks had decreased diesel gases. Working routines had been all the more standardised and large portions of the operation on the

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After discharging the ore (and the waste rock) is crushed and then transported up to ground level for converting and concentration.

[2] For a more detailed description see Abrahamsson & Johansson (2005) and Johansson (1986).

main level had been automated. A new element that was introduced during this period was remote chute loading. In this case, the chute loader was moved from the rock to a centralised control room underground where he (still almost only men) could manually manage the process via modern communication technology.

7.4.2   More Women Underground – But Only for a Limited Period

The prohibition of women working underground was in force until 1978. Yet, already by 1960 it began to loosen up and the mining companies could apply for exemption. The mechanisation and the better work environment was now said to make it possible for women to do the 'male' work tasks that they had previously been excluded from – and the mining companies wanted to also employ women. This change in the rhetoric had several sources: the gender equality debate, the expected lack of labour and the urbanisation that seemed to be slowly emptying the region. A survey from 1978 shows that the female mine workers regarded the mine work as interesting, well paid and less harmful than ordinary 'women's work' (Krekula and Lindahl 1978). In this year 3% of LKAB's employees were women working underground and they intended to raise that number to 20% and they also hoped to reduce the gender segregation and gender labelling of work tasks[3]. 30% of the new employees were women and a few years later the number of women working at LKAB was actually higher than the figures of today.

But this was not without opposition. Younger men were especially negative to the idea of women working in the mine. Even the trade union was ideologically negative. There seemed to be a limit to gender equality and to femininity. It was said in plain language that women, especially wives, were *not* supposed to work in the mine. This very open and direct opposition to women's work in the mine can be explained by the fear that the male character of mine work risked being soiled and challenged by the presence of women (Blomberg 1995; Karlsson 1997). If women and men could do the same work the male mine worker's identity process had to change and the culture seemed unready for that. However this never became an actual problem because the economic recession in Sweden in the late 1970s and 1980s forced the mining companies to start dismissing workers – and most of the newly recruited women had to leave.

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[3] LKAB's program for gender equality 1978.

7.4.3   A Move Up to the Seventh Floor in the Office Building

At the last visit, in 2005, the drill rig is still being run manually by an operator, but following a pattern shown on a computer display screen in the carriage. It can be programmed to run automatically, but it is usually better if the operator does it himself. He is bound to the rig because he has to leave the driver's carriage to change the drill cores at certain intervals and sometimes has to clean the holes with a pick axe. After one hour of drilling he moves the aggregate to the next location.

The differences are more obvious during caving. Drilling has been automated and is remotely operated from a control room underground. There are three operators controlling six drill rigs. These are monitored on screens and driven completely automatically, but the operator can take over and steer with joysticks if something goes wrong. It takes approximately 24 hours to drill a contour, after which the operator goes out and moves the drill rig a few metres to the next contour. During the night the drills operate automatically and stop if an error occurs to wait for the morning shift to come on duty and take care of the problem.

An even more recent development is that some loading machines are remote-controlled and the driver has been moved to the new production centre on the seventh floor of the office building *above* ground. The driver has thereby become an operator. The technology is totally independent of distance. The loaders travel automatically from the face to the ore shaft where they dump the ore and return to the face. When the loader machines are back at the face, the operator takes control to fill the bucket using joysticks. The operator can manoeuvre two loaders simultaneously. There is also a new process stage that has been introduced, called rock breaking. This entails placing a metal grid across the ore shaft so that larger rocks and boulders can be trapped. At the same point, there is a remotely-operated hammer that smashes the rocks. On the seventh floor of the office building above ground sits an operator controlling six such hammers using screens and joysticks. Even the chute loading operators have been moved up to the seventh floor. The loading is conducted in more or less the same way as in 1985 although the equipment is smaller and more modern. The large joysticks have been replaced with small fingertip-operated sticks. A chute loader operator can operate all the chutes single-handedly if he has to, but usually there are two workers. The operation of the transport trains has also been moved here and is conducted by just one man.

Work is accomplished in a clean and pleasant work environment with a beautiful panoramic view of the city. The workers have left their old blue-collar pals and moved into something that looks likes a white-collar environment. The mineworker can return home after work as clean

as he or she arrived. Another new aspect is that from the production centre at the seventh floor the excavation process is controlled and supervised by teams of operators. The previously separated categories of loaders, chute loaders and rock-breakers presently work at the same workplace. The operators on the seventh floor alternate between a variety of work tasks. Even though the remote-controlled technology implies a direct transition from solitary work in a machine carriage to joint operating teams in the control room, still no real changes have been made to the organisation, job positions and work allocation. Workers are still called loaders, rock breakers, chute loaders and train directors. However, according to the management this is under revision now. In the future a broader position will probably be created – the 'mine worker' will become a 'mine operator'.

7.5   The Modern Mining Work – Still a Purely Male Affair?

Yet another new element is the presence of women as loaders underground. But the number of women mine workers in general has, as mentioned before, remained at 3–4% since 1978, in spite of the fact that the new 'high-tech' production provides better and better possibilities for women to work in all parts of the production. From this perspective, the modern mining work still seems to be a purely male affair. During the last 30 years very few women have applied for jobs in the mine. The young women in Kiruna seem to choose traditional 'women's jobs' when they are making their choice of occupation and education. They do not see the mine as a potential employer for them, most likely because of the history of exclusion, but perhaps also because the surrounding local society still has very stereotypical views of women and men.

   Nevertheless, LKAB now really hopes to attract more women to the mine – at least as stated at the managerial level. The management are using four strategies. Firstly, they are doing several campaigns and projects to recruit and retain women within the technical field. This has been met with some success, at least when it comes to highly educated women. The number of women in expert positions is growing, and relatively many women have found managerial positions, for example the mine manager is a woman. Overall, this has gone smoothly, but in some parts of the mine there is still quite a lot of negative talk about recruiting women to the mine. Secondly, the company has started an upper secondary school programme (i.e. vocational training) where 50% of the students must be women – and that has, surprisingly, been accomplished. Thirdly, they are strategically targeting the surrounding society as well as their own organisation marketing an image of the modern mine work as something both women and men can do, a 'high-tech' production in a good working environment. The

company's internal publications[4] have a distinctly different message compared with the previously mentioned documents from the 1940s. Nowadays, in every edition there are a lot of pictures of women – professional women as mine workers, as managers, as engineers. Also, the local newspapers more or less present this image. Fourthly, the company is also discussing *internal* organisational and workplace culture changes when it comes to gender[5]. This is one important difference compared with the gender equality rhetoric of the 1970s. Having this fresh insight that the problem also can have its roots inside the organisation, LKAB is quite a typical Swedish company. Even if a lot of this is still mostly talk, it will eventually have an effect on the formation of mine workers' work identity.

7.6   Asymmetric Changes in Work, Identity and Gender

From a longer historical perspective there have been quite comprehensive changes for miners as a professional group. The study at the underground iron ore mine in Kiruna provides an illustration of how workers' subjectivities and identities can be subject to negotiation and transformation and thereby reorganising gendered work and the learning of it. In this section of the chapter the four 'visits' will be analysed together with some theoretical perspectives.

7.6.1   Changes in Technology and Qualification Demands

It can clearly be seen that the level of technology in the mine has increased constantly and, especially, rapidly during the last ten years. The development is moving towards the automation and remote control of more and more of the production processes. The increasing level of technology means that the individual's role in the technical system changes and that above all the relationship between the individual and the mountain

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[4] For example *Veckobladet* [The weekly paper], an internal newspaper/ information paper for employees at LKAB.

[5] For example the newly started research project on safety, attitudes and gender together with a research team (us) from Luleå University of Technology. The project will run for three years and is financed by LKAB together with a national research fund. In this project a doctoral student and I are working with mining workers, both men and women. The workers are in project groups discussing different aspects on organisation and workplace culture, for example macho-masculinity, work identity and competence demands, and how to change. The project has double aims; first, to reduce accidents and injuries, and second, to get more women as mining workers.

changes. Between the man and the rock there is always a machine and that machine has gotten larger over time to eventually become automated or controlled by advanced remote control technology. This has created new types of work where physical work environment improvements are obvious. Down in the mine, the majority of heavy lifting has now gone and stresses due to noise and gases have diminished. For many of the mineworkers the actual contact with the rock is now minimal. In the most extreme forms the operator makes only occasional visits to the machine that he or she remote controls. In the future there will probably almost only be service work underground.

These changes also include changes in qualifications, knowledge and skills. Using Kern and Schumann's (1974) concepts we can see a clear transformation from the crafts-like qualification in the form of autonomy, manual skills and sensitivity to material ('rock-sense') into more technical qualifications based on abstract knowledge necessary to handle the new advanced machines and equipment. This includes an ability to read and understand pictures and symbols and relate them to different measurement test results. There are new demands for teamwork, responsibility, autonomy, and comprehensive understanding of production flow. This can be seen as a movement from qualifications dependent on the process to more process independent qualifications.

What before was the mining workers' tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1967) is now formalised into theoretical knowledge, in the computer. In this we can see contradictory movements of 'upskilling' (i.e. rapidly changing skill demands, more theoretical and comprehensive tasks) and 'deskilling' (i.e. fragmentation of individual craft knowledge and whole tasks). One interesting effect of remote control is that the work tasks seem much simpler when they have been moved out of their traditional context, i.e. the physical place where the loading or drilling machines work. The work tasks are probably as simple or as complex as before, but since they do not need to be conducted in a difficult and tough work environment, the impression of 'job secrets' and tacit knowledge or craftsman like qualifications disappears, at least temporarily.

We can also see a form of 'reskilling'. It is true that the new type of work tasks are based more on theoretical or technical knowledge, but that doesn't mean that there is no need for manual skills and tacit knowledge. It is rather a new type of skills, not based on physical strength, but on concentration and tactile ability, for example to drive a truck via a tele monitor and joystick. These new qualifications or skills are in some aspects more abstract and theoretical than the old ones, but in other aspects still bodily and tacit, just in another way.

7.6.2   Changes in Workers' Subjectivity

Whether it is a question of upskilling, deskilling or reskilling, the transformation of qualifications has effects on workplace culture and identities. It is simply new things that are important today compared to yesterday, and people are adapting to them. It is probably a very different type of person and competence that the company will recruit in the future. Together the new technology, more 'women talk', a better work environment, and new types of work tasks will challenge old behaviours, attitudes and work identities – and will perhaps be followed by changed workers' subjectivity. This process is, however, not at all simple and not without resistance.

An interesting example of resistance, probably caused by the strength of the old workplace culture and old kind of worker's identity, was when the first front loaders were moved from the machines underground to the control room on the seventh floor of the office building to steer and control the machines remotely. The workers still saw themselves as miners, i.e. as underground miners, and continued changing clothes after every shift in spite of the fact that they were just as clean as when they arrived. After a year or so they stopped doing so, but it is understandable that they wanted to retain their 'old' mine worker identity. They wanted to be seen as real miners. The introduction of remote control, and especially the move up to level 7, has to some extent been met with a division of workers into 'us' and 'them'. The mine workers underground, especially those working with more manual work tasks, see themselves as *real* mine workers compared with the remote control workers who are seen as weaker and more feminine.

This 'identity lag' can be seen as an asymmetry between structural or technological changes and cultural changes. The mining company LKAB is a good example – the formal work structure can mean a modern, professional and 'high-tech' organisation with demands for new qualifications. At the same time, the symbols of the work can still be 'old-fashioned' in some aspects, based on the old type of mining work. In such cases parts of the individual's practices and interactions in work organisations can be more like symbolic actions following the old symbols, rather than what the new technology implies or what the 'company line' says, i.e. the official aims of the technological change. The identity and the symbolic aspects of work lag behind the more structural changes at the workplace, e.g. the new technology and new qualification demands. Another example from LKAB was when remote control was first introduced the operators wanted to have large joysticks that resembled the feeling of driving a heavy loading machine. Today, they want small joysticks and

this indicates that a new type of worker identity, and understanding of knowledge, is starting to emerge.

7.6.3   Masculinity as Stability

When it comes to gender, it is not simply a question of old times versus the present. There are modern ways of constructing masculinity and femininity as antipodes, and thereby restoring the stereotypical gender order (Hirdman 2001; Abrahamsson 2000).

The work and the workplaces in the mine are male in a concrete and obvious way since it is almost only men there. Only 4% of the mining workers at LKAB are female. Of the whole company (including secretaries and cleaners, most of whom are women) 9% are women. These low numbers have been constant during the last 30 years, in spite of the fact that the technological development in the mine has continuously reduced the work load. This indicates clearly that the construction of work identity is not only a question of changing technology that open up for changes; it also has a lot to do with symbolic aspects.

The mining workplaces are also male in a discoursive and cultural way because the work, the profession and the workplace culture have strong symbolic links to masculinity. In the mine you can find over-explicit expressions of a special type of masculinity, 'macho-masculinity', that is almost difficult to take seriously and analyse (Abrahamsson and Somerville 2003). One anecdotic example is that one of the most modern mining machines today is marketed as *"A Real Mean Machine"*. Many promotional movies for the products are similar, using language and images to clearly target men, by romanticizing mining work as work for real men, macho-men. It is clear that the strong connection between masculinity and technology (Berner 2003; Mellström 1999) still plays an important role at mining workplaces.

The fear of being seen as less masculine is a common theme in these kinds of workplaces. Here, more than in other workplaces, men find it difficult to be associated with competences, attitudes or behaviours that have a female gender-code (Eveline 2001, 1989; Abrahamsson 2000). But the constitution of masculinity is not only a negative mirror of femininity, it also builds barriers against other men and other masculinities – and especially unmanliness (Connell 1995). One example of this is when the mine workers underground at LKAB in Kiruna, especially those working with more manual work tasks, somewhat jokingly give the remote control workers nicknames such as 'the velour workers' and 'womanish workers' and call the production centre in the office building 'the seventh heaven'.

This can be seen as the men guarding the existing local gender order – and local masculinity. As mentioned before, the active opposition and exclusion of women from mine work – during industrialisation's early decenniums as well as in modern times – can be seen as part of the construction and reconstruction of the male mining work identity (Blomberg 1995).

What is regarded as masculine varies from time to time and varies in different cultures, countries, regions, companies, activities and workplaces. According to Connell (1995) 'masculinity' should rather be described as several parallel and interacting masculinities. It is also common in gender studies to use the term 'hegemonic masculinity' from Connell. That concept is used to illuminate the fact that one form of masculinity will generally have dominance over other expressions of masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity is mainly constructed as an ideology or discourse at a societal level, but also ordinary men in everyday life construct it. Only very few men, though, practice it in reality. A much larger group of men choose to be in these men's 'neighborhood', taking a subordinated position, but often glorifying, protecting and promoting the hegemonic masculinity-type. In this way, by just being men, they get some of the respect, the authority, the power and the material and economical benefits that follow with the top-masculinity, but without the risks that also follow with being in the frontline. Connell (1995) calls them 'complicit masculinities'. The same pattern could be found in mining workplaces, but on a smaller scale (Abrahamsson and Somerville 2003). Here, you still find 'mining hero stories' and some 'macho' men around whom the local hegemonic masculinity is built. But there is also a wide spectrum of individual expressions which might even be implemented in different ways within the workplace compared to outside of it. The majority of mine workers do not live or act fully according to the ideals and norms in macho-masculinity, but they all share the same picture of what a real mine worker is – at LKAB in Kiruna he works underground, close to the rock, at manual-like work tasks.

The storylines around macho-masculinity are part of the strong connection between work, identity and gender that is very common in gender homo-social workplaces, just like the underground workplaces in a mine. The workplace culture is based on male bonding, likeness and identification and the system controls and reinforces the similarities between workers (Roper 1996; Kanter 1993, 1977). Whether it is about power strategies or subordinated 'free-zones' (Kuosmanen 2001) the strong homo-social relations make it difficult to change attitudes and behaviour at the workplace at the organisational level as well as at the individual level (Abrahamsson 2000). There is also a kind of confusion of qualifications and gender. The central characteristic of hegemonic masculinity is that it is difficult to notice at workplaces and often so invisible that you do not see

it as masculinity, instead rather as competence. This is one explanation for why technological changes do not necessarily mean changes in the gender order. The negotiations around worker identity and subjectivities can be done within the prevailing gender order, within the 'old' local masculinity.

7.6.4   Changing Masculinities

In this chapter, I have discussed how workers create and recreate identity and gender when meeting new technology in a changing work organisation. Changes at the underground mine in Kiruna during the last 50 years, with new technology and new qualification requirements, have step by step challenged the local hegemonic masculinity rooted in the old type of mining work and identity. This has been met by restoring responses in the organisation and an asymmetry between structural changes and cultural changes. The cultural and symbolic aspects of the work are lagging behind the structural and technological changes. This can be seen as a kind of 'identity lag' where the workers lean on the old type of workplace culture rather than on the new and different 'high-tech' work conditions.

One main conclusion is that the symbolic and discoursive connections between mining work and masculinity, often the specific macho-form of masculinity, probably make the worker identity lag stronger and longer. It also explains the deep-rooted opposition towards women in the mine and the restoring of the connection between mining work and masculinity. The lesser workload, new competence demands and new attitudes ought to give more women possibilities to work in the mine, but that has not become evident yet. Still there are a number of old and new masculine 'hero stories' around that the male workers use to construct identities and to learn. In other words, learning can be linked to the worker identity 'lag' in two ways. First, the old culture is still an important base for workplace learning, i.e. a place where the workers learn and construct knowledge and skills. Second, the workers continue to learn the old workplace culture and by that interactively reconstruct identities and gender.

Nevertheless, it is not only a question of defending and keeping the old workplace culture or identity. In the new forms of workplace learning in the mine there is less and less space for the old type of competence, attitudes or ideal. Mine work has clearly changed and also the context for learning. The mine workers therefore need to learn and construct a new workplace culture and form a new type of worker identity. Another main conclusion is that the study also gives indications of change when it comes to constructions of gender. The masculinisation processes of today have taken new forms. There are new types of masculinities (and femininities)

that share the space with the old and perhaps fading macho-masculinity – not only in the mining workplace cultures, but also in the local surrounding society. If this is done within the prevailing gender order, or if we will see changes even here, that is a question for future research.

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8

Epistemological Beliefs and Their Impact on Work, Subjectivity and Learning

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Work, occupation and daily working life are important for adults in several ways. This chapter focuses on a single component of learning, professionals' epistemological beliefs which include an understanding of the nature of knowledge and knowing and professional learning and development, in order to analyse the individual parameters of work, subjectivity and learning: The field of university teaching with particular reference to the implementation of e-teaching is used to provide empirical evidence on the nature and impact of epistemological beliefs upon teachers' work. In this domain, epistemological beliefs play a two-fold role, because they influence both teaching concepts and concepts about learners and their learning (Hasanbegovic et al. in press).

8.1 Epistemological Beliefs

Epistemological beliefs are individuals' fundamental assumptions about knowledge, its nature, and appropriate ways to create it (Hofer and Pintrich 2002; Schommer 1994). Thus, individuals' epistemological beliefs influence their ways of dealing with and solving problems, especially if new approaches and heuristics are required. In this way an understanding of these beliefs is relevant for understanding paid work, because modern working life – as well as society more broadly – is subject to constant change. Hence, employees face demands to constantly develop their individual competence throughout their working lives (Harteis and Gruber 2004).

Epistemological beliefs have recently received much attention in the fields of educational and psychological research. The respective body

of research is increasingly expanding, with different lines of interest across different sciences. The concept of 'epistemological beliefs' originates from philosophy (i.e. ontology), and describes fundamental views of knowing and learning. In psychological research, epistemological beliefs are usually analysed with regard to their development and stability for individuals (Hofer 2004). Educational research tends to focus on how epistemological beliefs affect learning activities (Bauer et al. 2004). In this paper, the dimensions and significance of individual epistemological beliefs are discussed drawing upon both educational and psychological traditions in relation to work, subjectivity and learning.

8.2   Theoretical Conceptions of Epistemological Beliefs

When regarding epistemological beliefs as a general construct of assumptions about the nature of knowledge and knowing, the question of their limits arise: Are there a certain number of assumptions which are sufficient to circumscribe the nature of knowledge? Is there inter-individual agreement about the validity of the definition? The history of research shows that various authors came to different conclusions about the nature of knowledge and knowing, resulting in distinct perspectives that assume different dimensional structures of the construct. Epistemological beliefs are held now to consist of a number of independent components. The most influential theoretical account of epistemological beliefs as a multidimensional construct was developed by Schommer (1990). Initially, she differentiated between the following five more or less independent dimensions of epistemological beliefs: (a) simplicity of knowledge; (b) authority of knowledge; (c) certainty of knowledge; (d) innate ability; and (e) learning speed. Individuals who are identified as having a high level of agreement on items measuring these dimensions, usually are held to have a less elaborated system of epistemological beliefs: they believe that knowledge is simple, that it is delivered by authorities, that it is certain, that humans have stable innate abilities, and that learning happens quickly (or never). In contrast, subjects who reject most of such items are held to have an elaborated system of epistemological beliefs; they tend to argue that knowledge is complex in nature, that it is constructed in particular ways within communities, and is subject of permanent argumentation, and so on. Adequate development of epistemological beliefs is typically valued in terms of a change towards a more and more elaborated system.

However, the reliability and validity of these dimensions of epistemological beliefs is now in question. One reason is that replication attempts have failed, while another is the limitations in the theoretical foundations of the existing empirical instruments (Chan and Elliott 2002;

Moschner et al. 2005). A critical aspect that has not yet been thoroughly discussed is the role of professional contexts, that is, whether epistemological beliefs in professional domains are different from those possessed by school and university students.

Doubts about the transferability of the dimensions of epistemological beliefs across various domains lead to further critical questions: Is it plausible to conceptualise epistemological beliefs as a general basic construct? Are epistemological beliefs intrinsically related to domain specific features (like knowledge)? Can they plausibly be separated from assumptions about one's own and other people's learning processes in their respective fields? Are epistemological beliefs in nature context-bound and, thus, situated? Is knowledge about knowledge situated? It is plausible to confirm this assumption – thus leading to most interesting inter-individual differences in epistemological beliefs? A priority for future research is to investigate epistemological beliefs across a number of different domains of practice in order to appraise this assumption. The educational relevance of such research easily can be shown by analysing how differences in epistemological beliefs influence people's work and learning outcomes.

In this context, learning can be understood as a process of making sense of the world. Piaget (1966) developed the ideas of assimilation and accommodation. Both assimilation (using knowledge for solving the situation) and accommodation (configuration of new knowledge) could be seen as learning processes. Work life provides opportunities for assimilation as well as accommodation through involving people in routine and challenging new tasks (Billett 1996). The origin of this approach is the constructivist idea of learning which manifests the importance of subjectivity. As former experiences, prejudices, beliefs and so on influence learning and knowledge, it becomes clear that learning, knowledge, and consciousness they can be seen as individual entities forming a subjective model of the world – which makes sense for the subject. Thus, subjectivity as the autonomy of an individual's thoughts, views, and assumptions can be seen as the epitome of a person's dispositions and capabilities.

8.3   Impact of Epistemological Beliefs

As proposed, epistemological beliefs influence peoples' acting, hence they also affect work and learning. To date, the emphasis in empirical research has focused on how epistemological beliefs impact on learning for school and university students (Jehng et al. 1993). Schommer (1998) presented evidence that a less elaborated system of epistemological beliefs has many substantial negative implications:

- Students who believe that learning occurs quickly, tend to read texts more superficially.
- Students who believe that knowledge is certain, tend to learn facts by heart rather than understanding the meaning of the to-be-learned.
- Students who believe that learning capabilities are determined by innate abilities, show less interest in activities designed to master complex challenges.
- Students who trust authorities do not tend to challenge the sources of information.

Taken together, students who have a less elaborated epistemological belief system are proposed to be more prone to failure when learning requires complex, multi-perspective activities. They are more likely to relate new knowledge with prior knowledge or knowledge gained in different contexts, domains or situations. In contrast, an elaborated system of epistemological beliefs is associated with better learning performance (Hager 2004).

Even though little research has been undertaken in professional fields, it is plausible to assume that workers' learning and working performance analogously is related with the degree of elaboration of their system of epistemological beliefs. That is, the more elaborated workers' systems of epistemological beliefs are, the more they understand their workplace environment as a resource for learning and professional development. Yet, so far, little attention has been paid to epistemological beliefs in the work context, because such "subjective perspectives" on one's own development are often disregarded.

Epistemological beliefs significantly shape the conceptualisation of work problems. This is particularly true when no appropriate heuristics are available and, thus, when demanding innovative solutions are required (Korthagen and Kessels 1999). The impact of epistemological beliefs here is two-fold. Firstly, epistemological beliefs influence the processes used during the generation of a solution. Individuals who believe in the simplicity of knowledge, favour simple coherence between facts and tend to develop a simple solution. In contrast, somebody who is convinced of the complexity of knowledge might tend to take into account the fallibility of heuristics. Both views influence the scope of possible solutions – without predetermination of a favoured position. Secondly, there is an indirect impact on work, because epistemological beliefs influence help-seeking during the process of identifying an appropriate solution for the problem. Individuals with a less elaborated epistemological belief system might trust in information that can quickly be found, and consequently quickly present their final solution. In contrast, subjects with an elaborated system

might put more energy into cross-checking new information. Epistemological beliefs, thus, can be seen as an important component of subjectivity in working life.

8.4   Exemplary Field: University Teaching

Research on the cognitive determinants of teaching activities especially those referring to disciplinary knowledge has a long tradition, (Berliner 2001; Leinhardt and Greeno 1986). The impact of subjective theories of learning and knowledge in teachers' work is well recognised, even if the literature does not always use the concept of epistemological beliefs (Huibregtse et al. 1994). A well developed, differentiated system of beliefs is interpreted as a professional characteristic and teaching quality (Tenenbaum et al. 2001). For instance, such systems include the conviction that knowledge is principally changeable and thus of provisional character as well as the belief that learning demands intensive effort and does not occur quickly.

The important role of teachers' beliefs is perhaps most apparent when teachers are confronted by and engaged with changes to their practice. Currently, university teachers are experiencing significant changes in their professional activities through the development of information and communication technology (Caballero et al. 2004). Although the application of computer technology for teaching quickly reached the status of an orthodox requirement, the attitudes and habits of teachers may not adequately change to the same extent as technology is progressing. An example can be found in the reduced application of e-learning opportunities in university teaching (Wilson 2004). The push to implement e-learning can be seen as challenge, even for experienced teachers.

The design of instructional material has become very important in e-learning because of the need to compensate for the lack of face-to-face interaction. In face-to-face interaction, teachers have the opportunity to: (i) dispel misunderstandings; (ii) contradict certain argumentations; and (iii) suggest new ideas spontaneously. However, in e-learning, learners have to have opportunities to take over responsibility for these processes themselves. A lack of face-to-face communication makes communication processes more difficult, especially if only written communication occurs. E-learning communication demands greater efforts on the part of students to create a commonly shared basis of understanding. Without non-verbal components of communication, teachers may take much more time to elaborate a conceptual position.

Beyond these changes and challenges in the domain of university teaching, another line of professional development is based on the advent of constructivist ideas of learning and teaching. It follows that if the underlying premises about educational practices change, educational processes may need to be adequately modelled and expectations about professional behaviour of university teachers may change as well (Schoenfeld 2004). The changes arising from the constructivist perspective include that knowledge is being individually constructed and, thus, influenced by individual experience and subjective patterns of perception. It follows that:

- Knowledge cannot be primitively transferred from one person to another; rather, it is only possible to make offers which have to be accepted by the learners.
- The appropriation of knowledge arises from social negotiation; thus it is less evident which knowledge is accepted as being true and important.
- Consequently, teachers do not have (and do not need) a position of high authority. They are less the directing actors, but rather react to learners' activities in order to guide them through the learning process.

Such constructivist ideas were widely developed over the last 20 years in research on learning and instruction. However, they did not necessarily make advances into teachers' epistemological beliefs and behaviour. It is even unclear in many cases, if these ideas are reflected at all, especially in faculties outside the field of education and psychology. Constructivist approaches seem to be particularly fruitful for e-learning activities because they require increased learner activity and responsibility. Substantial drawbacks in the design of learning environments can result from epistemological beliefs that do not include elaborated aspects of individual construction. For the design of e-learning it is important to consider epistemological beliefs because face-to-face interaction as a natural corrective is missing. Hence, the effects of teachers' and learners' epistemological beliefs remain implicit and therefore quite powerful.

8.5   Research Questions

Teachers are crucial for the successful implementation of e-learning at universities, whom face multiple challenges of societal demands and technological change. Therefore, teachers' epistemological beliefs impact the perception of these challenges. They influence how far changes are seen as potential for the development of one's own professional life.

They also influence the understanding of the teacher's role and their own positions as representatives of knowledge and truth which in part determines the degree of freedom given to the learners.

These considerations were the starting point for a study about epistemological beliefs of university teachers of different faculties and at different levels in the faculty hierarchy. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between learning, work, and subjectivity in the subjects' working life by analysing their epistemological beliefs. The key questions were:

1. How do the subjects understand their role as teachers?
2. What beliefs about the nature of knowledge do the subjects report?
3. How do epistemological beliefs impact the perception and interpretation of constraints in working life regarding e-learning?

8.6   Research Method

We chose to use a qualitative approach in order to adequately analyse the subjectivity of epistemological beliefs. A semi-structured interview was developed and used for this study in order to gain information about the subjects' epistemological beliefs.

8.6.1   Participants

Twenty participants from several German universities voluntarily participated in the study after being contacted via email. Both professors and junior researchers were investigated. Fifteen participants had long experience in teaching and e-teaching. These participants had varying teaching loads besides their main task of research. Half of the participants worked at computer science departments, the other half at education departments. So the participants came from two different backgrounds each with their own distinct disciplinary knowledge.

8.6.2   Procedures

The survey was conducted with semi-structured telephone interviews based on a schedule of open questions which were consecutively processed. The interview commenced with questions about biography, career, and experience in e-teaching with the questions about epistemological beliefs following. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Then, the responses were subjected to qualitative content analysis. They

were subsequently categorised and the resulting category data were analysed quantitatively.

8.6.3 Findings

The findings are presented as a descriptive summary of the interviews. Verbatim phrases from the interviews are used to illustrate the participants' opinions.

8.7   How do Participants Understand their Role as Teachers?

The participants were initially asked to describe their role as teachers. They were allowed to refer either to face-to-face teaching or to e-teaching. All participants had sufficient teaching experience which enabled them to respond to questions and could also draw on their experiences as students. This was seen as a background to their current interpretation of the teacher role: "In fact, my student life under several teachers and professors impacted my current understanding as a lecturer" (participant 8).

Thirteen of the 20 university teachers reported that the teaching role includes the location of knowledge and transfer of information. Eight of these 13 participants were working in computer science departments. Such an idea indicates an assumption that teachers possess valid knowledge and act as sources of knowledge: "The teacher holds the key role: Not only that he [*sic*] is the source of knowledge and medium, he [*sic*] is also the administrator and IT-facilitator" (participant 19). "My role is to offer content … that learners know what there is to do" (participant 1). The teacher is a person "who is prepared for the lesson and [who acts] … as holder of knowledge" (participant 6). A logical conclusion of this point of view is a didactic understanding of teaching. However, these participants do not deny their task to inspire learners to activity: "I would interpret my role as a task to invite students to participate actively" (participant 6).

Fewer interviewees (9 participants) reported that the teacher's role includes support and attendance to learners' concerns. Consequently, they understood themselves more as coaches than as instructors. In this group of participants, five are working in education departments and four in computer science departments. There are people who describe their understanding of themselves as teachers exclusively as coaches as well as some who see the coaching task as one of several options. Participant 7 is an example for the first group: "I see my role as somebody who gives an offer, who implements rules, and who tries to support the learners to

learn". It seems from these data that across these teachers the constructivist perspective prevailed. Of course, the interviewees tend to detail more than just the two positions mentioned above. However, in addressing the basic interview questions, it is helpful to contrast these two positions as counterpoints of interpretation.

Many answers were clear-cut so that it was tempting to simply categorise them as representing one or other of these positions. Participants could thus be classified as either a 'process controller' – a provider of knowledge and structure, or a 'supporter' – an information gatekeeper, coach, facilitator, tutor, or source of truth.

Another question addressed the participants' need for control. They were asked for a statement about the importance of active control over learners and learning processes. Half of the participants indicated a high importance of active control; they were equally distributed between computer science departments and education departments. Therefore, engaging in the domain of teaching is not a predictor of the need for control. Eight of these ten participants showed a didactic approach to the teacher role. For instance, participant 1 attributed high importance to control, because the teacher has to intervene "if something goes wrong". This participant was allocated in the didactic teacher role. Another participant who attached a high level of importance to control was allocated to the coach category: "My understanding of controlling is process related, and it is certainly good to control learning processes" (participant 5). Examples of statements indicating control was of low importance include: "I have no idea why I should control, I try to make offers which induce learners to follow me" (participant 2), or "Control is not at all of importance – students are reflective people who can and should work independently" (participant 20).

8.8   What Beliefs About the Nature of Knowledge do the Participants Report?

The ideas most often connected with the nature of knowledge are those referring to information, cognition, and facts. Fourteen participants (eight from education departments, six from computer science departments) mentioned an understanding of knowledge which is expressed as certainty about knowledge. For these people, knowledge connected with cognition indicates insight into how matters are supposed to be in reality, that is, recognition of facts. This position can be called a naturalistic view of knowledge, because it is based on the idea that knowledge represents the world naturally without any subjective value.

Ten participants (five from each kind of department) related knowledge to application and activity. Some of them took the psychological distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge, some mentioned inert knowledge as a contrast to applicable knowledge, some were talking about know-how. The common idea of this position is appreciation only for such stocks of knowledge which can be applied. This position can be called a pragmatic view of knowledge.

Seven participants (five of them from education departments) emphasised quantity when talking about knowledge. "Knowledge is the sum of acknowledgements and capabilities that enables people to act" (participant 14). This is a perspective focusing on the individual and their stock of cognitions developed during their life histories and is, in part, independent from external authorities. Thus, this position can be called an internal view of knowledge.

Finally, the standpoint of two participants working at education departments who mentioned processes of social negotiation in connection with knowledge should be considered. "I guess that knowledge is nothing objective and that it demands a negotiation between participants on what to adhere to. And this is then valid knowledge in that constellation of persons.… I really would tell people [in sense of learners] that this thing has a subjective component" (participant 2). This statement clearly expresses a view inspired by the social constructivist approach.

Besides these four positions, participants also made the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge (already mentioned above), between factual, intuitive, and acting knowledge. One participant additionally mentioned meta-cognition as a further category of knowledge. In total, many participants used the terminology of current psychology of knowledge, even people with backgrounds different from education and psychology.

A further step of the qualitative analysis was to interpret answers on several questions of the schedule with respect to the classical characteristics of the epistemological belief system. These questions referred to the nature of knowledge, to changes in teaching processes by implementation of e-teaching, to students' attitudes on learning, and to teaching preferences. The participants' statements were rated in how far (a) they expressed ideas of security and simplicity of knowledge, (b) they brought knowledge into connection with authority or power. Thirteen participants (seven of them from education departments) mentioned the idea that knowledge has something to do with certainty. This was strongly related to the belief that one calls something knowledge only if the information concerned proved to be true or valid. Less attention was given to the idea of simplicity of knowledge: Only two participants (both from computer science departments) indicated this opinion. Four – the same participants

as above – again explicitly disagreed. 15 participants (nine of them from computer science departments) attributed authority to knowledge. 14 of these participants related knowledge with security. Such a connection is highly plausible when referring to a category of truth. Again, the same four participants who had disclaimed the ideas of security and simplicity of knowledge, also rejected the idea of authority. Five participants related knowledge to power. Two of these held the social constructivist view of the nature of knowledge. In fact, this reflects current theory that assumes that powerful people have advantages to assert their opinion (Selter 1997).

8.9   How do Epistemological Beliefs Impact the Perception and Interpretation of Constraints in Working Life Regarding e-Learning?

As argued above, epistemological beliefs impact upon the perception of what constitutes challenges, which is in particular crucial in a working field in which drastic changes in professional demands occur. It was investigated in how far participants' interpretations of professional challenges through e-teaching were related with their epistemological beliefs.

One question asked the participants to give a statement about possible limitations in opportunities of realising one's own e-teaching ideas. It was revealed that most participants seemed to work under optimum conditions: eleven participants did not perceive any limitation of developing one's own ideas (seven of them working at computer science departments). Four more participants (three from education departments) perceived "hardly any restriction", they felt "fairly free" in that respect. That means that only five participants perceived there to be restrictions.

Four of the five participants experiencing restrictions indicated an understanding of knowledge connected to security and authority. The fifth explicitly rejected security and authority as feature of knowledge. This last participant reported partial restrictions in realising their own e-teaching ideas which related to examination regulations that dictate shares of virtual and face-to-face courses. Beyond that "there is in principle freedom in the application of e-learning" (participant 18). Restrictions reported by the first four participants concerned curricula and financial concerns, complicated university administration, technical constraints in the implementation of e-learning, and restrictions in the freedom of teaching.

However, it is important to consider the four participants who explicitly rejected ideas of security, simplicity and authority in connection with knowledge. One of these four participants felt partly restricted by examination regulations, the others reported no significant restrictions in their daily work.

These findings suggest that two different groups can be differentiated according to their perception of limitations in the working field. The following section aims at a deeper discussion of that divergence of views and possible ways of accounting for it.

8.10   Discussion

In discussing the findings of the interview study, particular attention will be paid to two groups of participants:

- The group of four participants who explicitly did not relate the concept of knowledge with ideas of security, simplicity, and authority. They showed up with opinions which converge with that what the literature calls an elaborated system of epistemological beliefs.
- The group of five participants who reported the experience of restriction regarding self-directed realisation of e-teaching, whereas the other participants reported freedom in that respect.

8.10.1 Participants' View on the Teacher Role

Most of the participants showed an understanding of the teacher's role as one in which individuals hold knowledge and deliver worthwhile information. While appearing to conflict with their espoused constructivist beliefs, a closer examination indicates a more nuanced basis for their beliefs. First, in university contexts students have to pass examinations. Courses have amongst other functions, the need to prepare students for that purpose. Thus, university teachers are expected to define valid knowledge in the course context, as several participants confirmed during the interviews. In doing so, teachers aim to match learners' demands (e.g. preparation for examinations). Also, identifying credible learning content very well may support the development of students' interest. Second, by choosing that interpretation of the teacher's role the participants do not necessarily disclaim constructivist ideas. Furthermore, some of them either referred to students' expectations, or they argued in a differentiated way and combined the view of teachers as advocates of and practisers of the constructivist role as facilitators (e. g. participants 4, 11, 13).

Nine participants, however, held contrary views on the teacher's role to those above. Describing their role as a tutor, they manifested an empathic understanding of teaching which regards learners' subjectivity. Those mentioned above who referred to the key role of the teacher created a system of reference which is oriented on objectivity defined through the expertise in the discipline. It can be speculated that reference to subjectivity

or objectivity shapes concrete teaching activities, because even interviews do not deliver trustworthy data about behaviour. Nevertheless, when interpreting the interview data one has to consider that teaching usually is seen as a subordinated task because academic performance typically is measured through research performance.

A significant finding is that none of the four participants rejected ideas of security, simplicity, and authority, or interpreted the role of teacher with reference to objectivity. In this respect, this is a coherent pattern that argues for a reliable constructivist point of view which is associated with an elaborated system of epistemological beliefs. Nevertheless, all but one of the group of participants who reported restrictions in teaching related their view of the teacher role to objectivity. The exception (participant 18) only refers to the perception of restrictions in relation to guidelines for examinations.

8.10.2 Participants' Beliefs About the Nature of Knowledge

The majority of the participants shared what can be called a naturalistic view of knowledge. This might go back to the role of the university teacher as a person who defines standards for tests and examination. However, an important part of scientific life is debate of different approaches, discourse about methods and theories, and contradiction. Every researcher should have experienced that facts may change when varying the analytic perspective. Contemporary philosophers discuss the topic of truth under such a perspective of relativity: Truth and coherence are a matter of convention, but not of physical components (Janich 1996). In court proceedings – for example – a statement reaches (temporarily) more credibility when uttered under oath – independently from any real coherence. Thus, it is surprising that so many of the participants referred to the naturalistic view and only two participants mentioned ideas that could be thought of as conveying a social constructivist perspective.

In the answers expressing the pragmatic view of knowledge, a high degree of reflection was identifiable in many statements. Hence, when people distinguished between certain kinds of knowledge, this indicated that they had thoroughly thought about issues of knowledge. This might have been expected for education teaching staff, but not necessarily for computer science teachers, even if there are similarities between software engineering and knowledge transfer. The appeal of this pragmatic view also includes implicit knowledge, because unconscious stocks of knowledge play an important role especially for executing capabilities (Eraut 2000). This understanding of knowledge is not limited to matters which can easily be reproduced and assessed. Rather, it reflects

the constructivist idea of viability – an idea which acknowledges subjective approaches to problem solving and performing. At least half the participants shared this point of view on knowledge.

8.10.3 Impact of Epistemological Beliefs

Compared with the other research questions, the question about the impact of epistemological beliefs revealed the most distinctive findings. Two groups of participants could be identified with a specific pattern of answers: First, four participants rejecting ideas of security, safety, and authority in relation to knowledge, and second, five participants who perceived restrictions in opportunities to implement e-teaching.

When considering the first group, it is obvious that their specific position is based on the characteristic of their epistemological belief system. Impacts of this kind of belief systems can be identified where there are further communalities which can be theoretically explained. One interesting relationship was the one between the participants' epistemological belief systems and their interpretation of the teacher role. The four participants who interpreted the role of teachers as tutors of processes and learning coaches classified themselves in the context of constructivism in ways consonant with current demands about the professional behaviour of university teachers. Their belief systems provided a pattern of perception which resulted in the conviction of limited efficiency. As teachers they were not able to simply transfer or create knowledge didactically, rather they could only try to improve conditions for learning. They are not keepers of truth and wisdom, but rather providers of fallible perspectives which have to be proved by the learners. This perspective could be found in their conceptualisation of knowledge: all four participants mentioned that knowledge has to be proved, applied, or negotiated. Hence, the epistemological belief system and statements about the nature of knowledge were the same for these participants. It is plausible to assume that their understanding of the teacher role was influenced by their epistemological belief system.

The second group seemed to play a contrastive role, which can be defined through the perception of restricted opportunities for realising e-teaching. Within this group one participant seemed to be an outsider, because she/he did not respond to didactical, technical, or financial limits but rather to the examination rules which offered little room for interpretation. The other participants interpreted characteristics in their environment as given restrictions. One participant stated that if you just insist on your own planning, then many things become realisable. Such an approach did not occur in the statements made by the other participants

about restrictions. Their perception, however, was consistent with their epistemological belief system: they believed that knowledge is secure and, probably more importantly, they believed in authority. Under such a paradigm, the scope for freedom and realising ideas in the academic system really appears limited (Enders and Kaulisch 2005). Thus, these people are prototypical of how an epistemological belief system can impact on the perception of limited options.

8.10.4 Methodological Remarks

Most research on epistemological beliefs has used questionnaire instruments. In order to understand reliably the role of professional domains on the nature of epistemological beliefs, a different approach, using an interview technique, was chosen.

A first aim was to reconstruct the participants' subjective theories of knowledge, learning, and teaching. For this aim, a questionnaire would have been of limited use as the findings would have reproduced the researchers' modelling of epistemological beliefs. It is uncertain whether this perspective would have been shared by participants, and would have revealed whether participants had had a similar or different theory in mind. In order to receive such information, open interview questions were used, and interviewers asked for additional information only in order to clarify the participants' mental models. Such an approach seems more appropriate for reproducing subjective constructs, and it helps to add to the understanding of epistemological beliefs by enriching theory-derived perspectives.

Of course, even such methodological approaches are not free from researchers' assumptions, theories, and biases. This may be difficult when interpreting statements in order to classify them into categories. Therefore, a conservative interpretation was used whereby interview statements were not classified at all if there was no explicit indication for the assignment of one of the categories (e.g. security, authority, simplicity, power) in the participants' utterances.

8.11   Conclusions for Work, Subjectivity, and Learning

The interviews unearthed the subjective beliefs of university teachers with reference to an aspect of change in their professional field. The findings seem to be two-fold with respect to subjectivity: On the one hand, the participants reported differentiated beliefs and interpretations of the field of

knowledge, learning, and e-teaching, each of them in an individual way. However, even among twenty individual reports, much commonality could be observed between the participants.

It is difficult to confidently assert how greatly epistemological beliefs impact subjectivity from this study. Certainly – and that is a central idea of the theoretical concepts underlying this chapter – they impact the individual's perception of conditions for teaching and learning. However, it seems more appropriate to understand epistemological beliefs as a value of subjectivity – as convictions and beliefs on other matters do also reflect individual characteristics. As such, a certain pattern of epistemological beliefs seems to impact the interpretation of the opportunities for e-teaching.

The participants showed different patterns of epistemological beliefs. It was shown that it is not trivial to understand the extent to which these patterns really influence the teaching activities of the participants, because there always remains a gap between subjectivity (a within-subject concept) and work (a between-participants activity). It is very plausible, however, that understanding participants' epistemological beliefs facilitates an adequate understanding of their working and learning. There is much evidence in research on learning and instruction indicating negative outcomes on learning processes if a naturalistic epistemological view or an internal epistemological view guides teaching activities.

It is important to stress that differences in epistemological beliefs of course do not account for all of the differences in teaching behaviour. Many other matters influence teaching and restrict the influence of epistemological beliefs. In addition, categories of epistemological beliefs are theoretical in nature. Participants usually do not exclusively belong to exactly one these categories and they may differ across different times and contexts.

Nevertheless, the relation between the perceptions of professional restriction and the belief in security of knowledge and authority identified in the study stands as an example of how useful the investigation of epistemological beliefs is in understanding professional learning and development. It is evident that epistemological beliefs can substantially influence work, because they may constrain how actors perceive their scope of action. If individuals perceive professional restrictions as permanent and thus accept them, their development is likely to be different to those who see themselves as capable of influencing the professional field. It is a challenging task for research to explore the role of participants' epistemological beliefs on professional learning and development. Still more challenging is the task to find how to foster participants to change their epistemological beliefs in a way that is open to change and innovation.

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9

Personal Agency and Epistemology at Work

Stephen Billett and Ray Smith

> Drawing on studies of learning in workplaces, this chapter dis-
> cusses the central role of individuals' agency and epistemology
> to their participation in and learning through work, and the re-
> making of work practices. Learning through work is proposed
> as being the process and outcome of a relational interdepend-
> ence between individuals and the social practices that comprise
> their workplaces. This interdependence is necessary as neither
> the social suggestion nor individuals' agency alone is sufficient
> to secure the learning and remaking of the practices that consti-
> tute paid work. The social suggestion (comprising societal
> norms, practices and values, and their enactment) as manifested
> by localised workplace factors, is never potent or comprehen-
> sive enough to project its intent or secure the faithful and com-
> prehensive transfer of knowledge to individuals, should this be
> its intent. Therefore, the exercise of personal agency is required
> to make sense of what the immediate social experience com-
> prising the workplace projects. Moreover, rather than merely
> being subjected to what is experienced immediately (i.e. in the
> workplace) and culturally, individuals also exercise their
> agency in mediating their construction of what they encounter
> and how they respond to those experiences. Participation, learn-
> ing and the remaking of work are, therefore, active and person-
> ally and culturally transformative.

9.1   Subjectivity, Learning and Work

This chapter discusses the role of individuals' agency and epistemology in
the processes of engaging in and learning through work. It proposes that
to understand learning throughout working life (e.g. lifelong learning) and

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the remaking of the cultural practices comprising paid work requires bringing to centre stage the role and exercise of individuals' subjectivities and intentionality in engaging with the changing demands of work and working life. Subjectivities are defined here as comprising the conscious and non-conscious conceptions and dispositions that constitute our cognitive experience and shape individuals' gaze: how we construe what we encounter in the social and brute world. These subjectivities are manifested in individuals' ongoing and developing 'sense of self' that guides the degree and intentions of their conscious thinking and acting in seeking to comprehend and respond effectively to what is experienced, as in maintaining personal equilibrium. This formation and transformation of self is negotiated between individuals' personal subjectivities and the kinds of social experiences they encounter through work.

The associated concept of identity has both societal and personal connotations. Socially, there are forms that are associated with individual's identity. Occupations, for instance, provide examples of these, and are socially ordered and valued in particular ways. Identity as a personal concept is aligned with how individuals present themselves to the social world and with which social practices they might aim to be associated. As a product of subjectivity and manifested through a sense of self, personal identity will direct intentional activities.

Learning here is seen as an inevitable and ongoing process that occurs as individuals engage in conscious and non-conscious thinking and acting, inter-psychologically: between the personal and social. Moreover, learning also refers to the personal intra-psychological cognitive legacy arising from individuals' engagement in goal-directed activities. Importantly, both the process and the legacy are shaped by negotiations, acts of recognition, mutuality and orientation between the personal and social. These negotiations emphasise the need to understand and elaborate individuals' subjectivity, identity and intentionality, how these are engendered, exercised and transformed through engagement with work life. Further, as individuals construe and construct what constitutes their work activities, they are engaged actively in re-making work. Given that engagement in goal-directed activities is interpreted, constructed and negotiated, individuals do not merely reproduce work activities they are engaged in the process of actively remaking them. This remaking can comprise attempts to reproduce what others are doing or what is done in the workplace, or transforming those tasks through engagement. In doing so, in the two forms of this remaking both individuals' learning and cultural transformation are held to be products of interdependent relational inter-psychological processes (i.e. those between personal and social sources) (Billett 2006). Because the relational nature of this interdependence is

shaped by personal subjectivity, its role needs to be considered in accounts of learning through and for work.

In this chapter, investigations of different kinds of workplaces and workers–and, in particular, the role of personal subjectivity and agency in the processes of learning for work and remaking work practices are used to elaborate these propositions. Billett has identified how working and learning subjectivities are co-constructed through workplace affordances and individuals' participation (2004), and the relational interdependences between these dualities (2006). Smith (2004, 2005) has focussed on the construction of personal epistemologies of those entering employment. The chapter brings together their collective work to discuss the role of personal subjectivity and agency in learning through working life. It draws on studies of learning through work by new employees in a wholesale fruit and vegetable business (Smith 2004), and of year-long studies of workers' engagement in their work practices (Billett and Pavlova 2005, Billett et al. 2005). Four interrelated proposals underpin the case advanced here. Firstly, individuals' engagement with work is premised on a relational interdependence between contributions of both personal and social agency. Secondly, working and learning are synonymous. The processes of participating in and learning through work are the same and coincidental, (Lave 1993; Rogoff 1995) and include the formation and transformation of subjectivities through work and work-learning (Billett and Somerville 2004). Thirdly, this learning is mediated by personal subjectivities: their ways of knowing. What is experienced is premised in their ontogenies (i.e. life histories) and contributes to ontogenetic development. Fourthly, transformations in the workplace are the products of individuals remaking and transforming the cultural practice (Leonteyev 1981) of work, something not separate from or conceivable without individuals' active involvement and agency. It is through these processes that both individual and cultural change occurs. These propositions are elaborated in the following sections through discussions about work, subjectivity and learning.

9.2   Individual Engagement and Relational Interdependence

The process of individuals' participation in paid work comprises the coming together of both the social experience (i.e. what is projected by the social world) and individuals' cognitive experience (i.e. how individuals' perceptions and conceptions are projected and make sense of what they experience). The social experience includes the subtle, yet ubiquitous,

social suggestions that are encountered almost unconsciously in the con-
duct of daily life. These are pervasive forms of social suggestion that in-
clude social norms and practices that individuals are subjected to and rep-
resent potentially enveloping social press. They have been conceptualised
as habitus (Bourdieu 1991) – the battery of clues, cues and suggestions
that aim to guide conduct – or subjectification (Foucault 1979). It is these
forms of social suggestion that individuals elect to appropriate, transform,
rebuff or ignore (Valsiner and van de Veer 2000). Both close guidance
and the more distal forms of social suggestion are generative of a cogni-
tive legacy in the form of permanent or semi-permanent change in indi-
viduals: the intra-psychological outcome of learning that reshapes their
cognitive experience (Billett 2003). Indeed, Foucault (1979) claims it is
how individuals communicate with the social world arises through the
discourses and discursive practices of the social. That is, the subjugation
to the social is, in part, dependent on the social. This extends to how per-
sonal subjectivities are constituted through their engagement in work and,
hence, learning and the remaking of work (Billett and Somerville 2004).

       The subjectivities of coal miners, for instance, was found to be
constituted within a strong hegemonic masculine culture of aggression,
competitiveness and risk-taking which was at odds with training in safe
work practices (Somerville 2002). The culture of coal mining work is
handed down inter-generationally in mining communities. The mines as
workplaces are described as "closed communities" where workplace prac-
tices are highly regulated by the social pressure of subjugation. Billett
(1994) similarly found that these subjectivities shaped how coal miners
construed and constructed the mine site's management suggestion of more
safety training. The miners claimed that such training was to make miners
responsible for mine site safety when it was really the responsibility of
management. In another study, the subjectivities of metropolitan delivery
drivers were shown to value speed and accuracy as the key indicators of
performance efficiency (Smith 2004). Getting complete and accurate or-
ders to customers quickly through a tight schedule of delivery times and
difficult traffic conditions meant employer respect and the personal re-
ward of early finishing times. However, changing employer expectations
required drivers to engage more in customer liaison duties which they
held to be more of a sales role. In part, facilitated by the increasingly stan-
dardised use of mobile phones, drivers claimed the importance of their
driving and packing skills was being diminished in favour of sales focus-
sed communication and personal relationship skills that they were reluc-
tant to embrace. These instances exemplify the distinct contributions of
both the immediate social experience and the exercise of that over time
through immersion in a particular culture of workplace practice.

Yet there is interdependence between these individuals' experiences and that of the social world. This battery of social suggestion is experienced in different ways and/or construed differently (Newman et al. 1989). Some coal miners elected to defy the dominant localised culture and work to change it (Somerville 2002). The degree of adherence to mine site cultural practices was not uniform nor wholly shared, no more so than by those workers who were employed as supervisors and those who were becoming supervisors (Billett 2001). The social suggestion or press comprising societal norms, practices and values, and their enactment is never complete or comprehensive enough to secure socialisation: the faithful and comprehensive transfer of knowledge from the social world to individuals. As Berger and Luckman (1966) conclude and Valsiner (1994) proposes, the degree of social subjection encountered in the immediate experience is not uniform or uniformly impelling. Also, Valsiner (1994) and Bhaskar (1998), while acknowledging the breadth and ubiquity of social influence, emphasise the relatedness between individuals' interests and goals, and those comprising the social suggestion. Valsiner (1994) holds relatedness ranges from total involvement to being wholly disengaged. In keeping with this, Berger and Luckman (1966) hold that, "socialisation is never completely successful. Some individuals inhabit the transmitted universe more definitely than others. Even among the more or less accredited inhabitants, there will be idiosyncratic variations in the way they conceive the universe" (1966:24). Moreover, what is proposed as idiosyncratic by these authors is seen here as being the product of individuals' personal histories. These are the products of individuals' selective and interpretative engagement with the immediate social experience and the construction of learning over time (i.e. ontogenetically) (Billett 1998). The exercise of personal agency necessarily mediates individuals' participation and engagement with what is being suggested socially, because that suggestion is never complete or comprehensive enough to be appropriated with fidelity, even if the individual wanted to do so. Consequently, the social suggestion cannot determine how individuals engage in the interpsychological processes. It follows that, rather than being reciprocal, the interdependencies that constitute the relationship between personal and social practices, such as work, are relational. Rather than dualisms they are dualistic: inclusively separated parts of the system between which function processes occur (Valsiner and van de Veer 2000). To avoid confusion, the distinctions between dualisms and dualities warrant being made explicit. Dualisms are "two independent principles", whereas dualities are separate but interrelated principles. It is this very relationship that is at the heart of the ongoing structure and agency debate. Yet, even within theories emphasising dualism there is acknowledgement of both parallel and interactive dualism in the Penguin Dictionary of Psychology,

(Reber 1985:228-29); the Collins Dictionary of Sociology refers to current views emphasising a dialectic interaction between two kinds of things (Jary and Jary 1991:179) and the Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy refers to dualism as 'two-ness' rather than separation (Mautner 1996:152).

The relational nature of this duality is evident in the negotiations between two sets of continuities: workplace practices and individuals' intentions. Firstly, the social practice of the workplace likely affords opportunities in ways directed towards securing its continuity and development or those of interests within it. Workplaces provide opportunities directed towards advancing their goals and practices (e.g. maintaining the production/quality of goods and services)(Billett 2002). However, individuals' participation in the social practices of the workplace is also mediated by their intentions for continuity and development, albeit shaped by subjectivities about cultural or occupational identity. For example, a counsellor was able to transform his work practice, partially afforded by the professional standing of his work and, in doing so, secured personal and professional goals; whereas another worker was constrained by consensus based decision making which denied her the autonomy that the counsellor enjoyed (Billett et al. 2004). In the former, the individual could transform some workplace practices and continuities. In the latter example, the practices constrained both transformation and individual agency. The interplay between these two sets of continuities and the degree of their consonance or contestation underpins the relations that also constitute the parameters for its remaking. Therefore, an instance of social practice, such as a workplace, needs understanding in terms that include: (i) participants' subjectivities and agency: (ii) the goals and continuities of the workplace, including its affordances for participants (i.e. the possibilities for an active role in its remaking) and (iii) the degree of consonance between them.

It follows; therefore, that personal agency is held to be exercised within and through the social practices of the workplace, yet is not necessarily subjugated by them. Indeed, individuals may elect to appropriate and be subjugated by the social suggestion in ways describable as appropriation: the unquestioning construction of what is experienced. In these ways, individuals are always socially related, albeit through their idiosyncratic but socially derived subjectivities (Bhaskar 1998). Any action individuals' agency initiates, including action to transform society, most likely occurs from a social basis, albeit from earlier experiences – that comprised relational negotiations between social (i.e. situational and cultural) and personal (i.e. subjectivities) factors. In this way, bringing the personal to the foreground in conceptions of learning is to consider the interdependence between personal and social forms, including the role of socially-derived, but personally constructed subjectivities. These forms

represent suggestions that may be weaker or stronger dependant on its projection as well as significance to the individual.

Importantly, everyday, individuals engage with or transgress any number of social practices, mostly obliviously, and it is through these engagements that learning arises. This relational interdependence is inherent to and embedded within the simultaneous processes of thinking, acting, and learning at work (Lave 1993; Rogoff 1995) including the formation of identities about work (Lave and Wenger 1991).

9.3   No Separation Between Thinking and Learning

The proposition that there is no separation between thinking and acting and learning finds company elsewhere. The anthropologist Lave (1993) concluded that wherever you encounter practice you also identify learning. The socioculturalist Rogoff (1990) similarly emphasises the central role of participation in learning through the process of moment-by-moment learning or microgenetic development. Within cognitive views (e.g. Anderson 1993), the consequences of individuals' engagement in goal-directed activities are also proposed as being more than engaging in and completing those activities. There is also a cognitive legacy: change in cognitive structures shaped by these experiences (Anzai and Simon 1979; Newell and Simon 1972). So both social and individual constructivist perspectives hold that deployment of individuals cognitive resources (e.g. experience or structures) when engaging in tasks and interactions results in a cognitive legacy (Billett 1996). These and cognitive theories suggest the scope and character of this legacy is likely to be influenced by the novelty of the activity to individuals and the degree of effort they elect to engage in when undertaking the activity (Newell and Simon 1972), emphasising the role of personal intentionality and agency. Hence, these authors suggest that human cognition (i.e. thinking, acting and learning) draws on both personal and social contributions, albeit exercised by individual effort and intentionality. Across a range of industry sectors, (i.e. coalmining, food processing) workers reported largely learning their skilful work through everyday work activity (Billett 2001). Indeed, detailed analyses of the micro-social processes that individuals engage in and their social sourcing of the knowledge in the workplace elaborate this interdependent process of learning through combinations of workplaces affordances and individual engagement (Billett 2006).

Smith (2004) found new employees with no previous experience in the wholesale fresh produce market are initially overwhelmed by the diversity of factors that impact their decisions when selecting product to satisfy customers' orders. Learning strategies employed to

secure the information necessary for successful decisions about product suitability, quality, size, ripeness, flavour, colour and so on, could involve familiar practices of questioning and observing more experienced co-workers. Similarly, these could include observing and understanding the eating habits of co-workers who, for instance, were fond of snacking on raw chilli and would indicate the heat intensity of different varieties and shipments by their facial expressions. Noting this enabled one new employee, despite disliking chilli, to build a strong and reliable knowledge that was directly applicable to his duties. Also, the same kinds of processes lead to correctly reading the mood of the boss prior to necessary interactions with him. By adjusting behaviour and attitude accordingly, employees could avoid potential conflict that might result in dismissal when he was in a 'bad' mood. The boss, with his many years of experience and first hand knowledge of the needs and preferences of customers, was a reliable and authoritative source of information. One new employee would often forego potentially rewarding interactions with him for fear of failing to read him correctly. Conversely for another, more skilled in reading him correctly, through such clues as his demeanour, voice while on the phone and responses to other workers, interrupting the boss with a timely question could mean securing valuable information about a product or customer or occasionally being assigned favourable duties when he was in a 'good' mood. So figuring when and when not to interrupt the boss and how to value the personal habits of co-workers are instances of everyday workplace activities that in part determine access to important social sources of knowledge that are integral to successful performance and participation. Further, and particularly because these workers were new employees unfamiliar with much of their cultural context, they exemplify individual agentic responses to cultural experience that emerge from the relatively independent self, the "primary agent" (Archer 2000) with their established identity and drives to secure their selves as viable. That is, these actions are founded in the personal subjectivities that contend with the distinct social suggestion of the workplace, in this case for these workers, in the effort of securing satisfactory performance to maintain their employment, and also seek advancement.

There is little distinction in these accounts between the engagement in thinking and acting and the process and outcomes of cognitive change referred to here as learning. Importantly, these processes are not reserved for particular learning moments (i.e. significant events) or situations (i.e. those designated for intentional learning – schools). It is a product of everyday conscious thinking and acting as directed to secure personal and social goals. Giddens (1991) refers to individuals seeking to balance what they encounter with their own goals and interests. Similarly, Piaget (1968) and van Glasersfeld (1987) refer respectively to individuals

seeking to maintain their equilibrium or viability with what they encounter. Importantly, this drive to secure the self likely energises and shapes the direction and intensity of individuals' learning (Billett et al. 2005). Given that individuals play an active role in constructing meaning from what they encounter, this suggests that a focus on learning for change, working life, and participation in the workplace needs to account for individuals' sense of self and identity which are both shaped by and shape their agency and intentionality.

9.4   Importance of Individual Agency and Intentionality

Following from consideration of the relational contributions of the individual and the social, the role of personal agency and intentionality is held to be both central and necessary to the relational processes of thinking and acting. Individuals' subjectivities shape the agentic action and its intentionality that constitutes learning and the remaking of practice. The degree by which individuals engage with what they encounter and what learning arises, is in part, person-dependent, because of the uniqueness of each individual's cognitive experience (Valsiner 2000): their pre-mediate experience. This uniqueness arises from the distinct and individual pathways that constitute individuals' ontogenies. So individuals' construction of self is person-dependent, as individual ontogenies and ontogenetic development are idiosyncratic in some ways because their prior experience cannot be the same as others as it is individually negotiated through a lifetime of interactions with the social world. Moreover, as discussed, the social suggestion is never complete (Berger and Luckman 1966) or capable of a uniform effect (Valsiner 1998). Newman, Griffin and Cole (1989) suggest that if such socialisation efforts were effective there would be no need to communicate because socially-derived understandings would be uniformly understood. Further to this, Harre (1995) suggests,

> …personality becomes socially guided and individually constructed in the course of human life. People are born as potential persons, the process of becoming actual persons takes place through individual transformations of social experience. (p.373)

The diversity of individuals' personal histories and vocational pathways, and the process of negotiation they comprise was well illustrated in a recent study of learning throughout working life (Billett and Pavlova 2005). Each of the five participants had had highly varied pathways to their current work role, and reported that their pathways

had influenced how they thought about and engaged in their work. For example, during an interview about his working life, Jim a motor mechanic reflected upon both his and his subordinates' approach to work as motor mechanics. It was a conversation that emphasised the fluctuating relationships among identity, engagement in work and learning. He referred to the enthusiasm of school students' engagement in work experience programs at the garage, and their enjoyment at being allowed to undertake authentic work activities. Initially, first-year apprentices were keen to work after normal working hours putting cars away each evening for which they received overtime and were grateful for both the responsibility and the extra pay. They also willingly accepted responsibility for tidying up the workshop at the end of each day. Yet, as they progressed through their apprenticeship they came to resent these menial tasks and the amount of overtime paid for these additional duties. However, they remained enthusiastic about being given more complex and responsible tasks, such as conducting routine services on new vehicles, albeit under supervision. Later, they were eager to be offered tasks that were more complex than servicing new vehicles or the replacement of parts. As they progressed towards the completion of their apprenticeship, Jim noted that the apprentices were often disrespectful towards and dismissive of more experienced mechanics and were quick to leave at the end of the working day. He put this down to them being ready to move on to another workplace, where they could practice in a work environment different from where they had learnt their trade. So changes in ontogenetic development map changes in relations with the workplace.

Jim noted a time when after qualifying to become a mechanic he questioned whether this was what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. Just a year prior to the interview Jim had decided never to work as a mechanic again. Yet, having tried a few other jobs, a year later he had a job as a supervisor of a large motor workshop. He worked long hours, many of which were voluntary, derived much personal satisfaction and immensely enjoyed his job that included hands-on mechanical work. Other mechanics currently in the workshop had been through this kind of experience and had resolved their dilemmas and reconciled themselves to continue working as mechanics. Not that this was always a compromise. In ways analogous to his own commitment, Jim noted the older mechanics were more likely to be concerned to complete a job before leaving work. It was they, rather than the younger mechanics, who would request overtime in order to complete a job and be concerned about precision and thoroughness in their work.

The energy or agency an individual deploys when interacting with socially derived knowledge is likely to be central to what they learn: how they constitute the concepts and practices they encounter. Different bases

exist for those encounters and what individuals construct. Therefore, how individuals engage in workplace tasks is central to the learning that occurs. This engagement is, at least, in part shaped by and subsequently shapes individuals' subjectivities. As the workshop supervisor, Jim referred to the wavering and changing engagement of apprentices during their indenture and work beyond their apprenticeships. Similarly, hairdressers were quite strategic about selecting the kind of salons that they wish to work in (Billett 2003) and inexperienced market workers quickly identified and developed the particular skills necessary for their preferred aspects of the job (Smith 2004). Some sought to specialise in specific products, such as herbs, while others opted for warehouse management roles. This was associated with their preferred vocational identity as hairdressers and/or their situational identity as task specialists and the desire to practice in circumstances that reflected their self-construction of these identities. These instances provide different accounts of relationships between identity and learning. The mechanics engage in tasks enthusiastically that reflect their evolving identity as mechanics from work experience, through apprenticeship and in their post trade development. The hairdressers were considerate and deliberate in their vocational planning. The market workers selective of where they wished to best position themselves in the minimal options of their work.

These instances of epistemological agency (Smith 2004) – the wilful and effortful mediation of self in context comprise individuals' construal of what they experience (e.g. what constitutes welcomed or unwelcomed affordances), the degree of intentionality in their engagement in those affordances (e.g. activities and interactions) and their construction of meaning, procedures and values. This personal epistemological agency is seen as having two dimensions. Firstly, there is intentionality – that is the focus and direction of the engagement by individuals with what is experienced socially. Then, there is the degree of intensity – priority and potency of the exercise of personal agency. These dimensions highlight the diversity of interests and motivations that personally mediate workers' engagement in their work and evidence personal epistemology as a strong relational base of work and learning practices. Because of this, engagement is not a process inevitably leading to unquestioned appropriation or socialisation. Epistemological agency is the enactment of the personal mediations that in part constitute the relational basis for the participative practices of workers' engagement and learning. This relationship is founded upon the intensity of personal agency (e.g. the interests and dispositions), on the one hand, and the intensity of the social agency (i.e. the kind of affordances that are provided) on the other. These forms of agency are exercised and engaged in constructing the self and learning through work. The mechanics question the worth of their work and whether they

wish to continue to be identified with and engaged in the work of car mechanics. This elaborates a reflective process that characterises the exercise of epistemological agency through work and its basis in the internal mediations of personal and vocational values and motivations developed over time. By contrast, the market workers prioritise more seemingly immediate concerns that characterise their new employee status. The insecurity their relationship with the boss represents and the pressing need for accurate information to fill orders correctly highlight the demands of external mediations of the workplace culture on their exercise of epistemological agency.

In exercising their agency, individuals' actions have consequences additional to the transformation of identity and subjectivities. They also work to remake the cultural practices, interactions and workplace activities that constitute the workplace.

9.5   Individual's Remaking and Transforming Practice

Key issues for cultural practices, such as paid work, are their transmission and transformation over time. Following from propositions advanced earlier, these processes seem not to be achieved through some uniform wave of socially-derived change that propels each new generation of practitioners. Instead, it appears to be a process where individuals actively play a role in remaking, refining and transforming these cultural practices as they construe and construct the everyday work activities in which they engage, confront novel problems and adapt to new technologies and practices. As with learning, work tasks are not performed uniformly and machine-like. How they are enacted includes the subjective experience of workers and the particular ways of engaging in and performing these work tasks. This moment by moment remaking occurs hand in hand with individuals' microgenetic or moment-by-moment development. Leontyev (1981) proposed this process of remaking culture as being a product of individuals' active engagement in and appropriation of particular cultural practices and values. He claimed that "through activity, human beings change the environment, and through that change they build their own novel psychological functions" (1981:195). So, the cultural heritage is remade incrementally, individually and yet in ways that constitute a pattern of change as workers come to confront changes in work activities, ways of working and technologies (Billett et al. 2005). At the heart of this transformation are changing environments, requirements and technologies that are a product of evolving history. Structuralist views suggest that the social determines change and represents the locus of new learning or change. However, other views suggest that it is individuals' actions in shaping responses to

these changing circumstances that is generative of cultural transformation (Leontyev 1981; Valsiner 1998). Hodges (1998), for instance, when faced with practices that were contrary to her values and beliefs, elected to dis-identify and withdraw from that practice. There are other examples of workers who elect to participate in and attempt to transform practices that were inconsistent with their values and beliefs (e.g. Darrah 1996). The dramatic experience of an aged care nurse, through a workplace injury, led her to focus upon improving work practices in the industry sector (Somerville 2003). In a mortuary where coronial autopsies are performed, one counsellor succeeded in changing the processes of counselling the next of kin that transformed the operation and practice not only of the counsellors, but also other workers in the facility (Billett et al. 2004). That individual's belief about appropriate counselling, the opportunity to ad-vance his view and an invitational environment in which he was afforded professional standing all contributed to his capacity to transform the coun-selling activity in this workplace. In small business operators' efforts to learn about the new goods and service tax, it was found that the key fac-tors directing their learning included who was consulted and about what, and the degree of their agency deployed in learning about this new initia-tive (Billett et al. 2003). The response to this uniform taxation initiative was diverse in its scope, attention and enactment. Even when compelled to conform to particular practices, it was individuals who decided how they would respond which included how they construed and constructed their intents about this initiative.

    The point here is that the formation of self: the act of negotiating the kind of crises of identity that Jim the mechanic referred to as well as through everyday events as part of working life are likely to be salient for individuals' learning and their engagement in transformatory events, such as the remaking and transformation of work across their working life. The self both energises and directs the intentionality required for robust learn-ing from events individuals encounter, yet the self can be transformed by these very events. As Fenwick (1998) proposes, the self is not just reflex-ive of socially-derived subjectivities and practices, it has intentionality that is personally directive. So personal subjectivities can play more than a reflexive role in responses to these events (i.e. what is learnt) and in turn can be reshaped by particularly traumatic events (i.e. formation or rein-forcement of identity and even dis-identification).

9.6   Personal Agency and Epistemology at Work

What has been proposed above suggests that rather than being wholly sub-ject to change, individuals are actively engaged in their learning and the

remaking of cultural practices, such as those required for effective work practice. The change or learning that arises from everyday and novel events is associated with how individuals direct their intentionalities and agency when engaging with what they experience through these events. Sitting behind this is the personal subjectivities that direct their intentionality and agency in the process of learning and remaking of work practice and are sources of intentionality, agency and personal identity. Individual experiences in social practices, such as workplaces, will incrementally, and at times, transformationally contribute to changes in their ways of knowing and sense of self (i.e. subjectivity). In this way, individuals' subjectivity both shapes the kind of changes that occur and is itself shaped by events, particularly singularly dramatic events, because it shapes their response to those events. This reshaping of practice and learning is not circular, it reflects the ongoing negotiation between the personal and the social. As Rogoff (1990) suggests, the engagement of individuals in solving novel problems that are generated by culturally and historically derived knowledge is their confronting new circumstances through which culture and cultural practices are remade. So here the interdependence between individuals' agency as shaped by their subjectivities and the social suggestion are necessarily enacted and negotiated in work life. These, in different ways, lead to both transformations of the individual (i.e. their learning including their subjectivities) and the gradual change and transformation of work practices.

9.7   References

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10

Developing Subjective Identities Through Collective Participation

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This chapter explores the mutually constitutive relationship of the individual and the social context. In the analysis of our empirical data on teacher students we shall ask how individual students were able to exercise their personal agency in the two learning communities within a university context, and the context of authentic working life. We shall look more closely at the kinds of continuities and transitions that can be identified in a subject's personal goals, and how these relate to their learning and developing a professional identity. Based on a critical review of the conceptions of identity and teacher identity, the chapter addresses the critical characteristics of professional subjectivity and the emotional nature of teacher's work. Continuities and transitions in teacher student identity construction are described using three particular cases to exemplify the mutually constitutive role of the community and the individual subjects. Our cases demonstrate that in order to negotiate and redefine one's personal and professional identity in the learning community, there have to be mutually constitutive spaces for learning in terms of developing professional subjectivity. In such spaces, the learner's personal goals, plans and intentional projects come together in a favourable environment, one which offers resources for realising them.

10.1   Introduction

This chapter explores the mutually constitutive relationship of the individual and the social context. In particular, it seeks to understand the individual nature of the subjective experiences of participants in socially shared activities, and the consequences of these experiences for learning.

From our analyses of individual experiences of participation and learning within a university context, and also the context of authentic working life, we have found that the nature of participation is very context-specific, and dependent on the resources available within the context in question (Eteläpelto, Littleton, Lahti and Wirtanen 2005; Eteläpelto and Vakiala 2005).

Experiences of situations in which the community does not promote the subjectivities of its members have led us to try to identify the necessary conditions for community processes, and the conditions that can promote the subjectivities of individual participants. We shall analyse how the different kinds of resources available – both within the university learning community and the working life community – contribute to the construction of the professional identities and subjectivities of the individuals in question. The data were collected from teacher students' experiences in two different learning communities.

In the analysis of our empirical data we shall ask how individual students were able to exercise their personal agency in the two learning communities under study. We shall look more closely at the kinds of continuities and transitions that can be identified in a subject's personal goals, and how these relate to their learning and developing a professional identity. Continuities and transitions are analysed in order to understand the interactions between the sense of professional self and the growth of subjectivity in communities, which are supposed to develop the professional identity of teachership. On the basis of these analyses we shall discuss the relationships between personal and social power in promoting professional subjectivities, and their consequences for individual learning experiences.

In theoretical terms, we see professional identity as something that emerges through a subject's personal intentions, goals and ideals, all of them being intertwined with the subject's learning through the communities of professional education and working-life experiences. Our conception of identity is informed by authors discussing the role of personal and subjective aspects of identity (Archer 2001, 2003; Billett and Pavlova 2005; Billett and Somerville 2004; Lasky 2005; Sawyer 2002; Zembylas 2003). The individual's intentionality and agentic action within the community is seriously taken into account in our efforts to understand how teacher students actively construct professional identities and subjectivities in their learning communities.

Our conception of social communities is informed by sociocultural theories of learning communities (Rogoff 1990; Vygotsky 1978) and communities of practice (Wenger 1998). Professional identities are assumed to be constructed and negotiated through participation in and

engagements with subjects' practical activities and experiences in the communities. Learning and identity construction is understood as taking place through subject's participation and active construction of meanings in socially formed local communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). The building of an identity is assumed to consist of negotiating meanings of the experiences arising from membership in social communities (Wenger 1998). The resources of the communities are thought to be used as affordances for subject's learning and identity development in subject's active construction of professional identities. According to such conception, professional learning and identity construction are closely intertwined and thought to take place coincidentally with the participation in community. Learning through participation manifests in continuous negotiations concerning the nature and degree of participation within the communities.

The work of identity negotiation is understood as ongoing and pervasive. This means that the subject's self is constantly renegotiated in relation to experiences, situations and other community members (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004; Wenger 1998). An identity can thus be understood as a trajectory in time that incorporates both past and future into the meaning of present (Wenger 1998).

If we assume that subjects have an active agency in the communities, we could expect that this is manifested in some kind of continuities in how they bring their present interests and learning challenges to the community. The intensity of individual agency on the one hand, and the intensity of the social agency (the kinds of affordances provided by the community) on the other hand are used to construct the professional self in the community (Billett and Somerville 2004). In order to understand better the individual learning processes, affordances of learning communities and the interaction of the social and individual, we therefore need to elaborate what kind of continuities and discontinuations can be identified in individuals' learning trajectories when they move from one community to another. Evidence of individual continuities can be considered as demonstrations of individuals' active agency and subjectivity in their making and remaking of identities.

In the following pages we shall first undertake a critical review of the conceptions of identity and especially teacher identity. After this, we shall address the critical characteristics of professional subjectivity and emotional nature of teacher's work. Continuities and transitions in teacher student identity construction are described using three particular cases to exemplify the mutually constitutive role of the community and the individual subjects.

10.2   Conceptions of Identity: From Social Determinism to the Priority of Personal

In recent years, the concept of identity as a relatively unchanging core of an individual's personality has given way to a much more dynamic view of the self: the self is seen as something which is constantly being reconstructed and renegotiated in relation to the experiences, situations and people with whom we interact in everyday life (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop 2004; Moran and John-Steiner 2004). The negotiation of identity – and with it, professional identity - is seen as taking place through participation in authentic, culturally-constituted working-life contexts (Hargreaves, Miell and MacDonald 2002; Wenger 1998). The renegotiation and reconstruction of one's professional identity – for example, as a teacher – is also seen as an emotionally imbued personal process of growth (Hargreaves 1998; Myllyniemi 2004; Storey and Joubert 2004).

Within sociological approaches, the concept of identity has been discussed ever since Mead (1934) suggested the division between "I" and "me", representing personal and social aspects of identity. Nevertheless, recent approaches to professional learning have not made much use of the concept of professional identity. Theoretical approaches have mostly operated at the level of working systems and organizations (Engeström 2004; Nicolini, Gherardi and Yanow 2003). Although studies on these lines may analyse the interactive processes in working systems, they do not, on the whole, thematize individual subjects or their professional identities. Nor do they recognize individuals as developing subjects who define and redefine their conceptions of themselves as professional agents.

Socio-cultural approaches based on ideas drawn from Vygotsky and Bakhtin allow us to reframe the question of the constitution of the subject. The socio-cultural view of identity emphasizes the mutually constitutive relationship of identity and social context (Van Oers 2002). The dialogical principle, as proposed by Bakhtin, suggests that relationships with others, which are populated by many different "voices" and by the words of others, make it possible for the subject to achieve an individual constitution by speaking his or her own voice "in the chorus" (Smolka, De Goes and Pino 1995). However, it does not thematize the role of individual subjectivities and the subjects' personal agency, both of which are of decisive importance when individuals move from one community to another. Such a characterization is also limited to the sphere of language, and to those semiotic systems which are socially conditioned.

A similar "centrality of language" is present also in social constructionist approaches to learning and development (Edwards 1997). Archer (2001, 2003) has criticized such a social constructionist viewpoint,

arguing that in social constructionist approaches selfhood is perceived as nothing but a grammatical fiction, as simply a product of learning to master the first-person pronoun system. Pursuing Archer's line of argument, it can be suggested that social constructionist approaches neglect the vital significance of our embodied practice in the world. (Archer 2003; Billett 2004; Billett and Pavlova 2005; Billett and Somerville 2004). Similar critiques have been presented by theorists within post-structural feminist approaches (Braidotti 1994; Saarinen 2003; Weedon 1994).

The concept of identity and agentic action is widely discussed in the realist social theory proposed by Archer (2001, 2003) who criticizes Mead's conception of identity as being socially deterministic. Archer (2001) suggests that *social* identity is merely a component of *personal* identity, produced through internal conversation with the circumstances that are in place. Archer also rejects the idea of Cartesian subjectivism, i.e. the notion that humans exist because of their individual consciousness, separated from an objective or "real" world.

Archer's critical realism (2001) perceives human personal identity as primary to their social identity. Personal identity is thought to emerge from individual's emotional commentaries on his or her concerns, originating from three orders of reality – natural, practical and social. Archer (2001) argues that because our concerns can never be exclusively social, and since the balance of concerns is worked out by an active and reflective agent, personal identity cannot solely be the gift of society.

Archer (2001, 2003) suggests that our personal identity is thus worked out through internal conversation and emotional elaboration with the second-order emotions. Such elaboration includes figuring out our ultimate concerns, through highlighting and discriminating the actual and potential items of worth registered for consideration. Personal identity is for Archer something that emerges from the internal conversation. It entails discerning, deliberation, and finally dedication to our particular concerns.

10.3   The Journey of Constructing Teacher Identity Through Interests, Choices, Ideals and Intentions

In the construction of teacher identity, especially in the initial and thus still very fragile stage of seeking one's professional role, the subject's personal interests and choices are of central importance. When signing up for a certain field of study, the subject's personal preferences, goals, aims, and ideals have great influence on the choices between different vocational and professional areas. This is the case in teacher education also:

our students have to pass through an interview in which their motives and orientations are addressed. In addition, most of the students have had practical experience as school assistants before they apply for teacher education. Their personal preferences, goals and ideals have thus been shaped through such experiences, and their personal identity is already intertwined with their professional identity.

In terms of Archer's idea of an internal conversation, it is clear that the subject's initial professional preferences will emerge from their internal conversation and reflection on working life, and from its central social contexts. In a subject's decision to enrol as a student in a certain professional or vocational field, the processes of discerning, deliberation, and dedication will result in prioritization: the subject will attach personal meanings and importance to a variety of professional and vocational preferences, duties and responsibilities. In this sense, "dedication" can be understood as a central process in becoming a subject, taking place through the practice of active agency, within the development of a professional identity.

Active agency, which is based on subject's personal interests and motivations, is manifested as the subject's making vocational and occupational choices. This personal choice and its layers can be understood as a central component of a subject's professional identity. Furthermore, in regard to our own students, there is an emphasis on individualized study plans and working on individual learning goals, even when the students are acquiring formal knowledge of the field. There are no all-encompassing theories that we can assume would cover the learning experiences of all the students. Instead, a reflective orientation is promoted through self-evaluation and individual portfolios.

In our teacher education programme the idea of continuous learning and developing oneself as a professional provides a general framework for designing a personal curriculum. The more specific framework for designing such a curriculum consists of the teacher education program itself. This is written in terms of a process curriculum including five core competencies. The idea is that the students' personal evaluations should be included in their learning goals and strategies. Hence, their conceptions of themselves are closely intertwined with their goals and preferences (Lahti, Eteläpelto and Siitari 2004).

For their practice period, our students define their individual learning goals. In our case, they can also as a group take part in choosing and selecting their practice school environment. When they become familiar with the practice school, they can also choose a specific classroom. Our students had distinct preferences, regarding for example the level of class they wished for their practice. Furthermore, some classrooms applied specific pedagogical approaches, such as Montessori pedagogics,

and the integration of children with special education needs. As far as possible, we tried to obtain a match between the interests and preferences of each teacher student and the classroom conditions. This meant that the practice of the students in the classrooms was in many ways imbued by their previous orientations, choices, goals, and preferences – each of which is closely intertwined with the subject's personal identity.

The processes of reflecting on one's professional identity (and the construction of personal identity as an essential component of this) do not, however, take place only once while students are enrolled in a certain field of study. Our analyses of teacher students' concerns during their initial period in working life showed that their main concerns at this stage were connected to their professional future. Working and negotiation with this issue was very active, whether the students had received negative or positive experiences from their practice within the classroom (Eteläpelto and Vakiala 2005).

In a practical working-life context, the subject's professional future was the main issue of our students' negotiation and redefinition of their teacher identity. The conscious and intentional nature of these negotiations was illustrated in how they were closely intertwined with the students' understanding of their future ideals concerning the kind of teachers they wanted to become. While examining their own personal concerns, students often referred to their future goals and to their ideal conceptions of teachership. The question of the kind of teacher the student wanted to become was addressed in terms of the student's own personal characteristics, with possibilities of redefining conceptions of the self.

The role of the subject's personal identity or subjectivity does not, however, end when one enters working life and its authentic social contexts. In recent working life it is increasingly important for subjects to display their competencies, interests, strengths and preferences, that is, to give manifestations of themselves. This is connected with the need to provide evidence of qualifications, characteristics and competencies that previously might have been tacitly understood. Subjects have to identify their competencies and make them visible in portfolios (Evans, Kersch and Sakamoto 2004; Fenwick 2004). The need to reflect on and market one's personal competencies and qualifications makes it more important to manifest and illustrate one's professional self, and to make visible how it is intertwined with one's personal identity.

Individual's agentic action is needed for such working of one's professional self.

Archer postulates the individual's agentic actions as an intentional and goal-directed process, one which has relational autonomy in the subject's exercise of self. Billett (2003) and Billett and Pavlova (2005) have shown how important such an exercise of the self is for subjects' motivation

for learning across the transitions and continuities of work situations. The exercise of agentic action is understood as the construction by individuals of their ideals of learning for and through work, in relation to their subjective sense of self (Billett and Pavlova 2005).

Billett and Pavlova (2005) see continuities in the subject's sense of self as being achieved through the negotiation of subject's personal interests, goals and intentions, these also being components of their professional identities. However, despite social and cultural practices, institutional constraints, and the voices of social discourses, there exists a relational interdependence between what is socially suggested and what is enacted by individuals (Billett 2003). Learning throughout working life is thus aligned with the personal as much as with the social suggestion of the workplace. In this sense, the individual and the social world are co-constitutive (Billett and Somerville 2004).

10.4   Professional Subjectivity and Emotions in Teaching Work

In a teacher's work, the teacher's professional subjectivity is present in many ways. First of all, it is present through teacher's sense of purpose as a teacher, through ethical and moral concerns and the need for decision-making in everyday interactional situations. Secondly, the teacher's work can be essentially characterized as emotional work where the emotions have central function in regulating and monitoring teacher's everyday work and experiences. In the following we shall summarize some previous research demonstrating the dilemmas on the professional identity of teachers and on teaching as emotional work.

The evolving professional identities of teacher-students and novices have been found to be present in multiple selves. Roberts (2000) analysed the interplay between the notion of self, structure, and human agency within educational establishments. The analysis identified different voices or discourses: personal, professional, and institutional. The different voices or discourses give rise to stories about different kinds of identities, and they lead to an account of the ways in which subjectivities appear to be constructed.

Teacher's professional identity formation has been recently understood as an ongoing process of interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences in professional learning contexts (Beijaard et al. 2004). Such an interpretation includes taking an active agency and a reflection on experiences and situational conditions. The conditions themselves include the organizational culture of the workplace and the professional culture

arising from subjects' professional knowledge. It also includes the moral and ethical standards that apply to the work. Since a teacher's work can be centrally understood as work in which ethical and moral norms are involved in classroom practices, a teacher's professional identity represents emotionally imbued aspects of personal identity (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002; Zembylas 2003).   Personal and professional identities are thus closely intertwined with each others in a teacher's work; they cannot be separated from each other.

     Since a teacher's work is essentially characterized as emotional work, these aspects are bound to be present in practical teaching contexts. Emotional work is recognized as the ways in which professionals perform and manage their emotions in the workplace (Hochschild 1983). A teacher may contend with dilemmas faced by students and genuinely seek ways to help students overcome them. In so doing he/she experiences a variety of powerful emotions (Isenbarger and Zembylas 2006). Taking the time to listen to students' worries, giving advice or guidance to them, and showing warmth and love are all examples of emotional work in teaching. Even under great managerial stress in the context of school reform, committed expert teachers struggled to remain faithful to their sense of purpose as teachers. This included the purpose of creating trusting learning environments and being openly vulnerable with their students (Lasky 2005).

     In a teacher's work, the emotional aspects are also present in dealing with colleagues and in the construction of identity statuses within school organization. In the classroom context, the emotional aspect is present in the interactive relationships between the teacher and the children. In everyday discussion this is referred in terms of the importance of a teacher being "nurturing, supportive, nice, inclusive, responsive, and kind" (Isenbarger and Zembylas 2006). It has also been understood as commitment, intimacy and passion (Goldstein 2002).

     When our students were asked what their most meaningful learning experience was during their first practical internship as teacher-students, most of them mentioned that the most important thing was learning to manage their emotions in a challenging situation. Meaningful learning situations were thus situations in the classroom where the student had to use "boldness", "assertiveness", or "calmness" in order to "manage the surge of emotions". The management of emotions was manifested also in the teacher-students' descriptions of how, at the beginning of the practice, they took everything too personally and emotionally. Thus, one student reported how she almost started to cry after receiving negative feedback, but later had learnt to take the situation more professionally (Eteläpelto and Vakiala 2005).

10.5   Continuities and Transitions in Teacher Students' Identity Construction

In order to analyse the continuities and discontinuities of subjects' professional identities, we shall focus on three students from two successive learning communities, representing different kinds of identity statuses. We shall describe the transitions and continuities that manifest themselves in subjects' concerns, and in their projects for revising their professional subjectivities. The contexts in question are a university learning community and an authentic working-life context. We shall illustrate how the personal and social identities are manifested in the communities; also the kinds of transitions and continuities in professional identity construction that can be identified. In each case we shall also describe what the students perceived as the most important obstacles and, on the other hand, the most important resources within the learning communities.

The learning communities in question were very different from each other. The first was an intensive small-group-based learning community within a university context; the second was a working-life context of a primary school.

In the following pages we shall focus particularly on the subjects' transitions from the first community (university-based) to the second community (working-life-based). The three cases to be described have been chosen to represent the three different types of participation that we previously found in the university-based community. These cases in our previous study showed (i) decreased or minor participation, (ii) highly involved participation, and (iii) increased participation (Eteläpelto, Littleton, Lahti and Wirtanen 2005).

In the first two types, there were radical changes in subjects' participation when they moved from the university learning community to the working-life community. The third case, representing increased participation, showed a similar trajectory of participation in both communities.

10.5.1 Three Types of Identity Construction Occurring in the Two Contexts

This data were collected in the context of an authentic learning environment in a university department, which was carrying out action research over a three-year time frame. The participants in the community were a trainee-teacher group of nine students (seven females, two males). The students were aged 20–40 at the time of data collection, and they were completing the second and third years of their university studies.

The teacher education program in the university was based on socio-constructivist ideas of learning and studying. An intensive small-group learning community approach was used to promote teacher competencies. Students regularly wrote individual learning diaries and self-evaluative portfolios concerning their learning experiences. The group had considerable autonomy in defining such matters as the means and methods of learning. The group also had to reconcile individual- and group-level goals in the course of drawing up their study plans. (Lahti, Eteläpelto, and Siitari 2004).

The students had their practical internship (16 weeks) in a primary school, which was advanced in terms of inclusive education and the application of progressive pedagogics, including Montessori methods. The school principal had developed the school according to an active and inclusive learning model; for example, pupils with various kinds of learning difficulties were included in a normal classroom. If a child had a medical diagnosis related to learning difficulties, he or she had a personal school assistant to give individual support during the lessons. Because there were many children with learning difficulties, there were often several adults in the classroom.

The data concerning the practice period were collected using semi-structured interviews. In these the teacher-students were presented with questions concerning their main concerns and reflections during the internship, plus their learning experiences and most challenging situations; also the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats they recognized in their teachership. In addition, the interview addressed their ideals of good teachership, and changes which might have occurred in their conceptions (Eteläpelto and Vakiala 2005).

Based on an analysis of the students' trajectories over the two years of study in the university, three qualitatively different trajectories of participation could be identified. The first type was characterized by reports of high-level and relatively steady participation throughout the period in question. The second type was characterized by reports of increased participation, starting from a relatively low level and increasing over time. The third type was characterized by reports of either decreased or fairly marginal participation (Eteläpelto et al. 2005).

In the following paragraphs we shall take an individual student from each of the three sub-groups, representing different kinds of participation in the first (university-based) learning community. Thus, Alice is an example of a teacher-student who had minor participation at the university context, but a high level of participation in the working-life context. By contrast, John is an example of a student who represented highly-involved participation in the university context, but minor participation in

the working life context. The third student, Karen, is an example of increased participation in both contexts.

From minor participation in the university context to high-level participation in the school context – the case of Alice

Alice's participation in the university learning community remained very low throughout her three years there. She perceived her participation as low because she did not perceive the group atmosphere to be safe enough. Indeed, she perceived the atmosphere as fairly hard and conflicting, and this brought her experiences that were somewhat negative in emotional terms. Believing that a pleasant and warm atmosphere is very important for learning, she tried to influence the group atmosphere in order to make it more positive and friendly. However, she did not manage to change the situation.

Throughout the three years she spent in the community, Alice had made several attempts to construct an emotionally positive and inclusive climate in the community, one that applied certain constraints and ethical standards to what she perceived as acceptable in group communication. As a consequence of her futile attempts to construct an emotionally positive and inclusive atmosphere, she had adopted an orientation of withdrawal in group situations. Alice thus perceived her participating role in the group as very minor. In addition, her actual learning experiences in the community were affectively rather negative and harmful. She believed that the group had in many ways suppressed her own interaction skills and her belief in herself. She might previously have considered herself to be a sociable and pleasant person, but in the group she could sometimes *'feel like an outcast.'*

The practice period was perceived by Alice as a very positive experience, actually *'the best part of the whole teacher education'*. What she perceived as most positive during the practice period was the support and equal co-operation with the supervising teacher. Alice described her supervising teacher in a very positive way, as follows: *'She was a person who gave space for others, and she was also very broad-minded, and she allowed me to experiment with my ideas and then gave her comments … we had very good collaboration and trust in each other.'*

The model for using independent and child-centred method originated from the supervising teacher, who did not engage in much directive teaching from the front of the class. Rather she used "contracts" with the students, with independent contract work on task assignments for two-weeks periods. The principles of Montessori pedagogy, which emphasize individual goal-setting and self-control, were used as the main notion of classroom organization.

As her main learning outcome from the practical period, Alice maintained that she had learned to understand how to organize children's classroom learning on the basis of pupils' independent working rather than on traditional teacher-centred methods. Alice had previously been quite sceptical about child-centred methods, and therefore she had given a lot of thought to these pupil-centred ways of working. Alice commented as follows: *'I have always thought that the children should be supported in becoming independent learners, but I have also been sceptical as to how the kids would be able to do that kind of independent work.'*

Based on her experiences in the classroom, Alice reported that she was now thinking about it *'in quite a different way from before'*. Alice also mentioned that the goal for her further academic studies was to seek out new practical methods to maintain student-centred teaching practice. In her future academic studies Alice also wished to figure out how as a teacher she could create *'a good learning environment, and bring the kind of good aspects into the classroom that would lead the children to enjoy things and learn in the classroom'*.

In the classroom context, which Alice perceived as emotionally supportive and collegial, she could also start to solve her personal learning challenges with regard to facing aggressive situations. She reported that a positive learning experience in the classroom context was being able to use the other adults as a resource for her professional learning. As a significant learning experience in the classroom context Alice reported a situation concerning one boy's aggressive behaviour towards practitioners in the classroom. The boy was not, however, aggressive to the supervising teacher. Alice gave active thought to the question of why the boy was so aggressive towards her, despite the fact that she *'had been very kind in relation to the boy'*. Alice had discussed the problem with other adults in the classroom, and one of them, the school assistant, related how she had changed the boy's behaviour through giving him a certain kind of feedback. The school assistant had told the boy that she *'well understood that the boy didn't enjoy being here'*. She had continued by stressing that 'the boy was a good guy' and someone that she liked very much mentioning also that the boy *'had a lot of positive resources within himself'*. As a consequence of such feedback, the boy's attitude towards the school assistant had changed in a positive direction.

Alice herself did not get so far with the boy because the practice period was ending. However, she had conducted deep-level reflection on aggressive behaviour and the reasons for it. She had also given attention to how a teacher should interact with such children. Thus, she started to become an active agent in her personal and professional learning challenge, namely how to face aggressive people and situations involving strong confrontations. The same problem had been present at the university

learning community. However, there she had adopted an orientation of agential passivity after making futile attempts to affect the community. By contrast, in the safe classroom environment, where she received emotional and social support from the supervising teacher, she adopted an agential activity orientation. This involved formulating a project to solve the problem of facing aggressive behaviour and searching for ways to change the situation. The classroom context offered proper resources to proceed with this personal learning project, and it produced a learning experience that was important to her.

The example above demonstrates the mutually constitutive nature of the learning community and the subject's learning needs. Since Alice could not engage in meaningful learning projects within the conflicting atmosphere of the university learning community, she moved into a position of marginality in the community. However, she could engage in active agency when she entered a more favourable environment.

Moving from one environment to another also demonstrated the continuity of Alice's learning challenges. The most important restrictive aspect, the conflicting atmosphere of the university learning community, was carried over to the working life situation in which she had to face up to the problem of dealing with an aggressive child. In both communities, a challenge present in the situation had produced very strong emotions in her. Feelings experienced earlier caused the issue to remain a learning challenge in a subsequent environment.

Another kind of continuity of subjectivity was represented by a male student who was a high-level participant in the university learning context, but whose participation was lower and emotionally frustrating within the school context. In his orientation, John was the opposite of Alice, since John had strong theoretical interests.

From high level participation in the university context to minor participation in the schooling context – the case of John

In the university learning community John practised active agency through theorizing and conceptualizing. He also tried to arbitrate conflicting views, and to tutor the group. In the university learning community, John represented highly involved participants, people who mostly perceived the community and group working as having great significance for subjects' motivation to study. For those who had highly-involved participation, the community appeared to strengthen professional subjectivity. On the other hand, it did not greatly promote a reflective orientation towards the self.

For the practical period, John defined his learning challenge as being that he should use *'more concrete talk while speaking to others'*.

When John started the school practice, he had adopted a well-established notion of investigative project learning, and he wanted to test how this idea would function in an authentic classroom environment. In order to realize the project in the classroom, he first had to convince his student partner to collaborate with the conducting of this experiment. The other student was actually not so convinced of the applicability of the notion. In the classroom there were many pupils with learning disabilities, (e.g. children with an ADHD diagnosis) who had great difficulties in concentrating on independent work or in collaborating with other pupils.

In the classroom, John was active enough to carry out the investigative learning project. He tried to make the pupils work independently and to encourage their active questioning of the subject matter. However, John soon realized that it was very difficult to engage pupils in independent and active collaboration. Formulating questions was even more difficult for the pupils, who did not seem to be very motivated to engage in project working. As a consequence of this frustrating experience John reported that he become more realistic – or actually more pessimistic regarding the theoretical notions he had previously adopted so enthusiastically. He also perceived it as very difficult to find suitable materials for the project. Hence, he had started to understand the benefits of didactically well-organized study material. He also said that that he tended to understand better than before the advantages of teacher-centred methods.

The most serious shortcoming of the classroom experience, in John's opinion, was *'the change of supervising teacher during the practice'*. Since the new teacher was inexperienced, she did not serve as a resource for John's learning. Moreover, there was a lack of other adults in the classroom who might have served as resources for John's learning. Because of this, John perceived his practice period as rather unrewarding.

John is an example of a learner who is engaged in active agency while bringing a theoretically interesting experimental project into the classroom. Overall, since the classroom environment did not offer the resources he needed, his endeavour did not bring the kind of positive learning experiences that would have served his needs. The classroom environment did not promote his subjective learning goals in terms of receiving an affectively positive learning experience.

Increased participation in both contexts – the case of Karen

Karen represents the trajectory of increased participation in the university learning community. Her primary orientation in the university learning community consisted of pondering the nature and degree of her own participation in relation to community development. A self-critical stance

regarding her previous opinions and attitudes was characteristic of her orientation as a whole. Karen's secondary orientation included a contextually dependent stance towards the community, while attempting to arbitrate between conflicting opinions.

In a similar vein to her reflective stance towards herself, Karen displayed sensitiveness to the community in her evaluations of it. She further emphasized that she would like to have such *'sensitiveness within the classroom situation'*. Her wish was that as soon as she entered the classroom, she would like to work out her own position there. She would also like to become familiar with the children, and she hoped that the children would learn to know her before she embarked on the teaching. Such a creation of relationships with the children before actively starting on her own projects seemed to be a very conscious approach for her. All in all, she seemed both to favour and display the trajectory of a gradual movement from a peripheral to a central participant.

Within the school situation, Karen was someone who reflected on her own "stereotypes", her previous opinions, and values. Her aim was *'to learn flexible and situation-specific ways of working'*. Karen also very strongly identified with the notion of teachership, and *'the need for continuous learning in order to become a good teacher'*. During her practical period Karen perceived that she had developed in terms of flexibility in her actions and ways of working. As regards the resources she drew on during her school practice, she mentioned the supervising teacher, the other teacher student she collaborated with in the classroom, and also the children in the classroom. Karen mentioned that her parents were also teachers, and thus provided resources for the construction of her professional identity.

The learning outcomes reported by Karen within the university learning community included comprehensive changes in her conceptions of herself. In addition to this, she reported that she had made progress in developing sensitivity to group-level issues, such as the culture and atmosphere of the community.

The high-level learning outcomes which Karen could achieve in both learning communities involved her reflective orientation to the mutual relationships of the community, and to her own activities. For her, sensitivity to the culture of the learning community, and mutual adaptation in her interaction with the community, seemed to represent a condition for achieving increased participation in both communities. Her simultaneous concern for community issues and for her own related projects in the community seemed to produce significant learning outcomes in both areas.

10.6   Conclusions and Discussion

10.6.1 Implications from the Three Cases

The above elaboration of the three students showed that having an opportunity for mutuality in relation to the community seemed to be important for students' learning and identity construction. It also showed that in those situations where the students did not achieve an active agency in the community, they could not promote their professional and personal identities. This demonstrates the importance of individual's agency for learning and identity development. It also demonstrates the mutual constitutive nature of the individual and social context. The possibilities for students to solve their developmental learning tasks seemed to be dependent on the kinds of resources the community offered them.

The three cases above demonstrate the continuity of subjective learning projects across different learning environments. They demonstrate how subjects bring with them projects from one learning community to another. The projects might be conscious goals, but they can also be less conscious emotionally-imbued orientations and personally significant developmental tasks. Whatever their status, they seemed to become manifest from one context to another thus demonstrating their intensity. When moving from one context to another, the students aimed to utilize resources offered by the communities in question, in order to solve their dilemmas within the new context. In other words, the student brings along his or her individual learning projects and developmental tasks, in order to solve them in the subsequent environment.

Our students manifested great differences in their orientations. One student, John, was fairly theoretically oriented, and in this respect he could use the university context as a suitable resource for developing his professional identity. On the other hand, when he moved to the school context, he was no longer able to use cultural knowledge within the context for the construction of his identity (John).

Another student (Alice), who had a lot of experience of working with children, but who had less interest in theory, could not use the university context for the construction of her professional identity. Alice considered teacher education in the university environment too theoretically oriented, and she preferred a practical environment for developing her teachership. We were able to observe that she was indeed successful in utilizing the practical classroom context for her learning.

Our results imply that in order to negotiate and redefine one's personal and professional identity in the learning community, there have to be mutually constitutive spaces for learning in terms of developing professional subjectivity. In such spaces, the learner's personal goals, plans and

intentional projects come together in a favourable environment, one which offers resources for realizing them.

If learning goals are analysed from the perspective of an individual subject and his or her individual learning objectives, we have to ask how a given community offers resources for the practising of agency in the community. If we compare the three students above in this respect, we can see that personal discerning, and deliberating on the resources available in the actual learning community, were features typical of Karen in both communities. She seemed to have a conscious strategy at the beginning of her entry into a new community, i.e. that of being a peripheral participant, someone who tries to become familiar with the community before suggesting individual projects within it. Karen actually explored the atmosphere and resources that the community would offer to her before entering into active endeavours. Such a stance of initial peripheral participation offered her space to reflect on her own goals in relation to the community.

It is often suggested that individual subjects who find it difficult to work in a learning community have weak social skills, and that these weaknesses are more or less permanent features of individual competencies. Our results demonstrate that in many cases this is simply not true. A more productive approach would be to focus on the mutually constitutive relationships of the individual subject and the community.

10.6.2 Becoming a Subject in a Community

If the relationships of individuals and communities are analysed in terms of becoming a subject in a community, these relationships are seen as places where subjectivities emerge. Becoming a subject in a community means becoming an active voice, contributing to the discourse constructed by and maintained in that community. Phillips (2002) has perceived subjectivity as a battleground of competing discourses. The subjectivities that dominate acquire dominance by virtue of greater familiarity with the predominant discourse. Becoming a subject in a community therefore means becoming a voice of the community's discourse, reaching a point at which one's voice will in fact be heard.

Becoming a subject in a community means becoming an active and intentional agent within the community. In our cases, as we have seen, it entails engaging in subjects' personal learning projects, in which the subjects can utilize the social resources of the community (Billett and Somerville 2004; Phillips 2002). Given that there are situations where the community does not promote the subjectivities of all its members, we have to ask what are the necessary conditions for the promotion of the subjectivities of individual participants. In our earlier study, where we

focussed on dilemmas involved in the construction of professional subjectivities in an intensive long-term learning community, we found that perceived safety was a crucial characteristic of our intensive long-term learning community (Lahti, Eteläpelto and Siitari, 2004). For the construction of professional teacher identities during the internship, the supervising teacher of the classroom was the most important resource for our students (Eteläpelto and Vakiala 2005). The supervising teacher offered a role model as well as social and emotional support for the student. In addition, other adults working in the classroom and other students were perceived as an important resource for constructing one's professional identity.

From the perspective of developing professional subjectivities in the learning community, our observations imply that the community does not necessarily promote the subjectivities of all its members. This was particularly true in the case of those subjects who reported decreased or marginal participation; it was not evident that these students strengthened their professional subjectivities while in the community. This is also apparent from the emotionally negative experiences which they reported, i.e. experiences of dis-identification (Hodges 1998) which led students to suggest that they had turned away from the group in their attempts to construct a positive identity status. Those who felt that they had become central members of the community and managed to realise their learning projects perceived that they had strengthened their identity and had experienced personal growth in the direction of teachership. Those who were not able to do this seemed to turn to other groups outside the community in order to strengthen their identities. Our results imply that if students do not have the possibility of an active participatory role, one that would allow them to have an influence on community-level issues, their professional subjectivities are not promoted.

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11

Action at a Distance: Governmentality, Subjectivity and Workplace Learning

Richard Edwards and Katherine Nicoll

Drawing on the work of Foucault, Rose and actor-network theory this chapter examines some of the methodological and theoretical implications of this work for conceptions of workplace learning. We suggest that workplaces need to be examined for the spatio-temporal ordering of practices and the actors drawn into them in order to move beyond the totalizing discourses of for instance, the knowledge economy, globalization, performativity and even workplace learning itself. We argue that there is no single trajectory for workplace subjectivities and that pedagogic practices are embedded in the actor-networks of specific workplaces. These networks can be formulated as part of those actions at a distance associated with the development of governmental power in contemporary social orders. This is illustrated by way of a critique of discourses that posit a move from disciplined, Fordist work to flexible Post-Fordist forms of work. In this way, we seek to locate discussions of workplace learning within the wider debates in the social sciences about changing practices of governing and the differing forms of subjectivity associated with them. The chapter is intended to illuminative and is theory driven.

11.1   Introduction

The workplace as a site for learning is not a new phenomenon. Learning through doing and socialization through everyday practices has always been an inherent part of everyday working life. However, the naming and significance of workplaces and the forms of learning associated with them have changed over time. Recently we have seen traditional concerns over

the transfer of learning into work being met by concerns to move to a position in which work is translated into learning through work. Thus, we witness the discursive struggle to signify certain spaces as workplaces and certain practices as workplace learning.

The complexity of practices in and around workplaces and the differences between workplaces suggest some caution in trying to describe or explain what is going on in generalized terms. There can be no single discourse or categorization of workplace learning. This is not to say that generalizations are not important, but their importance may rest more in what they do rather than in what they purport to describe or explain. Notions of reflective practice or competency, for example, do rhetorical work in the positioning of certain social practices within particular discursive domains, as part of an imperative to act. In other words, we wish to point to the discursive inscriptions of workplace learning as a performative act in the language games in and around education.

Despite their many differences, people of very different political persuasions name the workplace as a key site for learning. For some, social inclusion is identified as a social 'good' to be supported through the provision of employment. For others, the workplace is and remains the key site for organizing struggle, not only in and around the conditions of work, but also as a basis for mobilizing the workforce for wider political purposes. In many of the discourses of work, the workplaces of people's everyday experience are entwined with certain forms of hyperbole, and workers are signified as a mass to be organized and ordered, either for work or for struggle. Often very specific workplaces are generalized as workplaces per se. The small and medium sized workplace and self-employed trades people might well wonder what this workplace is that adorns the pages of many books and articles. The agricultural labourer might not be able to locate themselves in discourses of the knowledge economy, nor many of those around the world for whom notions of work may be inscribed with different meanings to those of the OECD countries. And what of the paid and unpaid domestic workplaces of the home? That which is identified as work and certain spaces as workplaces remain central if contested concepts in the ordering of the social, even if the internal organization of some workplaces and their relations to wider social practices might be being reconfigured by, for instance, globalizing processes and information and communications technologies.

It is this ordering that is the focus of this chapter. Drawing upon actor-network theory (ANT) and the work of Foucault and Rose, we wish to explore some of the different ways in which the workplace might be said to be mobilized as a pivotal symbol of the economic health of nations and as a critical site in the attempts to translate the interests of states, organizations and individuals into realizable goals of economic competitiveness and, at least in some parts of the globe, social inclusion. In the

process, there is the attempt to fashion workplaces in particular ways and also for them in turn to fashion workforces with particular forms of disposition and skills. Indeed for some it is the emphasis on the formation of dispositions, values and subjectivities that precisely mark a key factor of 'new' workplace practices.

The chapter is in three parts. First we outline certain ideas from Foucault, Rose, and others, and ANT that seem to us to offer important insights into practices in and around workplaces. In particular, we explore Foucault's concepts of discipline and governmentality and what we think ANT can add to our understanding of the practices associated with these exercises of power. While ANT has been used quite extensively in the realm of organizational studies, little attention has been given specifically to workplace learning in existing literature. We are not faithful followers of these conceptual framings, but seek to utilize them in ways which we consider helpful. In particular, we are interested in exploring the uptake of workplace learning as one of those actions at a distance of contemporary governing. These actions at a distance are the "'indirect' mechanisms for aligning economic, social and personal conduct with socio-political objectives" (Miller and Rose 1993:76) through the capillaries of power. Second, we examine some of the practices through which these exercises of power may be said to be played out in certain workplaces, the subjects and subjectivities associated with them and the forms of learning that are mobilized to support them. Lastly, we seek to draw some insights from our discussion. The chapter is intended to be illuminative and is theory driven. It draws upon the insights from existing empirical studies but looks to develop differing frameworks of analysis as the basis for further empirical research. We are not suggesting that these are the only useful conceptual framings for examining workplace subjectivities, but we do think they provide useful ways of challenging anthropocentric and psychologistic approaches to subjectivity.

11.2   Action at a Distance – the Workplace

The workplace is one of the domains through which the social is ordered. Workplaces are governed and govern. They are part of those actions at a distance to which we have referred. According to ANT, they are ordered and order depending upon the complex networks of, for instance, people, spaces, artefacts, markets within which they are enmeshed. They are domains of much discursive work. Some see that there is a contemporary movement away from the disciplining of docile bodies associated with the Fordist production lines and Talyorist management principles of the industrial age. In such workplaces, mind and body are divided from each

other. By contrast, it is suggested that in contemporary workplaces there is an eliciting of certain dispositions to be an innovative and flexible knowledge worker, in which there is a requirement for the worker to inscribe their subjectivity in their work and be inscribed by it. Rather than the alienated subjectivity of traditional Marxism, the worker engages in technologies of the self through which they invest their subjectivity into their work and gain meaning from it. This is associated with the networked interactions of the post-Fordist, if not always post-Taylorist, knowledge economy. Both are over-generalized stereotypes of course, as time spent in any workplace will show. However, they provide a useful heuristic.

Foucault offers a useful way in which to explore workplaces, workplace learning and subjectivity, challenging as he does many assumptions, including that of the separation of knowledge from power. For him, 'power and knowledge directly imply one another... there is no power relation without the relative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations' (Foucault 1977:27). Power and knowledge are therefore correlative – power-knowledge formations – and are found together in regimes of truth. Pedagogic practices have always been associated with the inculcation of subjects into regimes of truth. They are disciplinary practices. Within this analysis, for workplaces to be mobilized as a site of learning through which to act at a distance from the specific power of the state it is necessary that disciplinary practices emerge with correlative power-knowledge formations and regimes of truth about workplace learning. Such practices are exercised effectively through the constitution of correlative inclusions and exclusions – the 'trained' or 'untrained', skilled' or 'unskilled', 'reflective' or 'unreflective', 'competent' or 'incompetent' – which make possible the operation of specific norms regarding the disciplined subjects (trained, skilled, reflective, competent).

It is through mobilization into regimes of truth that people are able to become active subjects with certain capacities to act. Forms of agency do not entail an escape from power, but a specific exercise of it. Capacities are produced and evaluated through the disciplinary processes of observation, normalizing judgement and the examination, the extent, criteria and methods for which are provided by the regime of truth about learning that is in play. As knowledge of learning changes, so do the practices aimed at framing behaviour and subjectivity, and vice versa. Thus in the ordering of the social in and through workplaces power is exercised, but this is not simply an oppressive power, as these practices are affordances for capacities to act productively and for certain forms of subjectivity to be fashioned. Agency is not the opposite of power, but is only possible through forms of order. Indeed this is one of the reasons that we would point to the

notion of subjectivity rather than agency as significant in the discussion of workplace learning.

The significance of Foucault's work is paradoxical for many educators. Modernist understandings tend to view the field of education as a slow process of discovery, an unfolding of knowledge and truth, a humanizing process, which results in individual and social progress and emancipation. However, what are we to make of the ever more extensive knowledge generated in and about learning, and which may not derive from the field of education? What are we to make of the fact that it is this knowledge, derived from elsewhere, that calls forth further dimensions of the learner to be framed for pedagogical intervention, including those in and around workplaces? Disciplinary practices might appear ever more intrusive, what Rose (1991) refers to as governing the soul. This is how subjectivity and not simply trained bodies becomes significant for workplace learning.

Wherever the learning takes place, 'learners' are required to bring forth their subjectivities for disciplining, to become a particular type of person. People become active subjects in becoming subject to particular disciplinary, vocational or workplace-oriented regimes of truth. Within the workplace the subjectivities taken up may appear more complex. In particular, where the workplace might be categorized as post-Fordist rather than Fordist; thereby offering a range of positions for a subject to adopt at any one time. The norm of the 'flexible worker' suggests the emergence of more complex forms of subjectivity than those associated with the clearly demarcated working practices and docile, disciplined subjectivities of Fordism and Taylorism. The understandings, predispositions and ways of doing things required may not be defined through tradition and there may not be codified knowledge clearly associated with such working practices. Thus, differing regimes of truth and practices co-emerge.

Some of the attempts to understand the significance of changes in contemporary workplaces draw heavily upon Foucault's later work, in particular his notions of governmentality and technologies of the self. Foucault worked with different conceptions of power: sovereign power invested in the monarch and exercised by law; disciplinary power invested in nation states, which has as its object the disciplining of individuals within a territory, and; governmentality that regulates populations as resources to be used and optimized. For Dean (1999), law as an instrument of sovereignty becomes transformed and linked to disciplinary and governmental apparatuses that are normalizing in their function, and concerned with the government of processes. Here law is no longer a coercive exercise of sovereignty, but a normalizing power. Norms are produced according to different forms of logic; of discipline, of probability and of communication. They are not only norms as values, but as a means of producing a rule of

judgement according to that value and the rule itself. They become intrinsic to the groups that discipline themselves through them. Norms remain revisable because they are not tied to values that are absolutes and are relative to the group.

It may be useful here to consider these tendencies to the reconfiguration of the productive arts of government within the workplace in terms of an example that is generalized in relation to those heuristics that we mentioned earlier. Taylorism and Fordism emphasize a strict hierarchy of command, and roles and responsibilities within the workplace. They require an individual to be found at a specific location, to be seen to be repeating a prescribed task, according to a preset timetable, an overall organized schedule of productive activity, and with a whole set of systems and procedures for the regulation of the quality of the work that is produced. Overlain upon this disciplinary system may be another, more explicitly pedagogical system for the extraction of the worker to a place of training (e.g. a human resource development or training centre) or education (e.g. education institution). A dual set of pedagogical and disciplinary mechanisms, organizing places and times in terms of observation, normalization and examination are quite evident in this. Here rights and responsibilities afforded to the individual are inscribed in part within a set of legal regulations regarding for instance, the employment contract and perhaps a right to access to training. These are to some extent regulations that are specific to the exercise of sovereign power. At the same time, their rights and responsibilities are tied to the exercise of bio-power, in, for example, the regulations that allow the worker breaks at regular intervals, occupational health checks, and visits to the doctor and so forth. But in that it is the 'human resource' of this population that is targeted and made productive through discourses that normalize the Fordist worker, there is a governmental aspect to power here also.

Within a post-Fordist regime, with a logic of increasing the flexibility of the organization in relation to the market, the individual is required to internalize previous disciplinary practices; in order that they may become more flexible and productive. There is an active subjective uptake and an increased requirement to reflect. Previous disciplinary mechanisms (observation, normalization and examination) that are specific to the organization of work within a Fordist regime are reconfigured and internalized through norms requiring self-observation, self-regulation and self-examination, often in relation to individual outcomes and targets. These intersect with and are derived from a disciplinary system that is oriented to the measure of the quality of work in relation to corporate norms and goals. Individuals are required to internalize these so that they are made more flexible and enterprising. It is these corporate norms and goals and their associated disciplinary systems that might be considered

as the expression of sovereign power within certain contemporary workplaces. Explicit pedagogical disciplinary mechanisms are reconfigured also. Rather than the norms around upskilling or retraining for those who were deemed less than competent, there are those of self-reflection, critical incident analysis, and self-evaluation for those who are not sufficiently enterprising. Disciplinary mechanisms are increasingly directly overlain and made to intersect within the body. It provides for a more flexible and enterprising exercise of sovereign power that leaves the individual accountable for self-care or self-fashioning; their own subjectivity is something with which they are required to engage.

For Foucault, governmentality is concerned with the conduct of conduct and this involves regarding 'the forces and capacities of living individuals, as members of a population, as resources to be fostered, to be used, to be optimized' (Dean 1999:20). Thus, as Dean (1999:12) suggests, 'to analyze government is to analyze those practices that try and shape, sculpt, mobilize and work through the choices, desires, aspirations, needs, wants and lifestyles of individuals and groups'. Here governing does not determine people's subjectivities, but elicits, fosters, promotes and attributes; it is not simply oppressive, but works on, through and with active subjects through the promotion of reflection and reflexivity. Nor is governing simple government. It refers to ordering practices. Thus, power is exercised both on and through subjectivities and bodies.

> One of the first effects of power is that it allows bodies, gestures, discourses, and desires to be identified and constituted as something individual. The individual is not, in other words, power's opposite number; the individual is one of power's first effects. The individual is in fact a power-effect, and at the same time, and to the extent that he [sic] is a power-effect, the individual is a relay: power passes through the individuals it has constituted. (Foucault 2003:30)

This suggests that rather than disciplined bodies where the exercise of power aims to individualize and render docile through techniques of observation, normalization, and examination carried out by another, disciplined bodies are increasing rendered as such through technologies of the self, where the pedagogue has a role to inculcate such techniques as a norm that is tied to a whole set of intersecting disciplinary regimes. Here reflective practice is a technology of the self through which to engage with one's own conduct in the workplace. This view is also explored by Barry (2001), who uses changes in the pedagogical practices of museums as analogies for the changing exercises of power in governing more generally.

He posits what he rightly indicates is a too simplistic typology. On the one hand, there is a disciplinary power aimed at producing docile bodies with the imperative to learn; what we might want to position as embedded in

behaviourist notions of competence. On the other hand, he posits interactivity, which encourages flexibility and offers the possibility of discovery; which we might position as embedded in certain notions of the reflective practitioner. It is not hard to see how these ideas about changing forms of governing relate to the workplace and workplace learning, in which elements of docility and the imperative to learn (or else) are to be found alongside the encouragement of flexibility and the invitation to discover. Both signify exercises of power, but the practices associated with them and the possibilities for forms of practice and subjectivity differ, as they ebb and flow in and around workplaces. It may be then that there are certain workplaces in which disciplinary power is more intensely exercised, and others where this is less the case, where power is distributed and exercised differently. Through the elaboration of the interstices between these forms of power and their differing practices, we may illuminate the complexities of those actions at a distance of workplaces as sites of learning and the forms of subjectivity associated with them.

One influential argument has been put forward by Rose who draws heavily upon the work of Foucault. He argues that the shifts in governing aim to fashion active subjects through the norms and values associated with responsible consuming and enterprise. Here, subjectivities are themselves re-fashioned in eliciting a particular image of human beings as enterprising.

> The self is to be a subjective being, it is to aspire to autonomy, it is to strive for personal fulfillment in its earthly life, it is to interpret its reality and destiny as a matter of individual responsibility, it is to find meaning in existence by shaping its life through acts of choice. (Rose 1998:151)

It is the ethos of enterprise that helps to re-shape subjectivity through self-fashioning. This enterprise, usually coded in the discourses of flexibility and innovation, can be found in the practices of certain workplaces and certainly in many policies towards employment and competitiveness. For Foucault, ethics are not formalized moral codes, abstract senses of right and wrong. They are construed as the practices through which one evaluates and acts upon oneself, what he refers to as technologies of the self (Foucault 1988).

> Ethics are thus understood as means by which individuals come to construe, decipher, act upon themselves in relation to the true and false, the permitted and the forbidden, the desirable and the undesirable. (Rose 1998:153)

Insofar as enterprise, flexibility and innovation are positioned as a principle of the 'good life', a range of technologies or pedagogic practices are deployed through which human beings are positioned as enterprising,

innovative and flexible workers. These technologies can only shape, and not determine, because people are subjects and therefore have the power to interpret, act and resist. Central to acting upon oneself is the capacity to learn and, as this is an ongoing process, there is the necessity for learning to be lifelong. This work is supported by 'experts of organizational life, engineering human relations through architecture, timetabling, supervisory systems, payment schemes, curricula, and the like' (Rose 1998:154). The social order is positioned as a learning order and different actors are mobilized to be worked upon to enhance their capacity to learn to choose and choose to learn in order that they are enterprising and flexible. Rose over-generalizes, but his analysis is illuminative in outlining indicative shifts in subjectivity and the exercise of power, including those of the workplace.

We face significant questions over detail. How is power exercised? What practices are associated with it? How and in what ways are subjectivities and objects mobilized in workplaces? This is a question of detail

> Although those who concern themselves with details are regarded as folk of limited intelligence, it seems to me that this part is essential, because it is the foundation, and it is impossible to erect any building or establish any method without understanding its principles. It is not enough to have a liking for architecture. One must also know stone-cutting. (de Saxe, quoted in Foucault 1977).

Where pedagogical practices are reconfigured, so too is the relation of power-knowledge. Actor-network theory (ANT) is useful in helping us to examine the details of the work done in these reconfigurations, in following the capillaries of workplace learning. It also enables us to explore explicitly subjectivity as not residing in the individual alone, but in their relationships with others, including the non-human. Subjectivity is not simply a human attribute or characteristic, but co-emerges within the networks of actants that enable us to be who we are.

ANT developed in the sociology of science and technology and is increasingly influential in the social sciences more generally. It is part of the shift from individualized, psychological approaches to the understanding of knowledge-building to more social and cultural interpretations. Knowledge-building is taken to be a joint exercise within a network that is spread across space and time and includes inanimate – e.g. tools, pens, computers, mobile phones, charts, machinery – as well as animate objects. The symmetry between inanimate and animate objects in ANT arises because 'human powers increasingly derive from the complex *interconnections* of humans with material objects.… This means that the human and physical worlds are elaborately intertwined and cannot be analyzed separate from each other' (Urry 2000:14, emphasis in original). To talk of

subjectivity then is to talk of the entwinements of the human and non-human. Subjectivity is not an essential characteristic of individuals, but develops through the hybridized relations of the human and non-human. What happens in workplaces is not simply the result of human intention or impersonal forces, such as capitalism or globalization, but is the result of forms of connection, interaction and translation between different actants that can always fall apart. In examining the actor-networks of specific workplaces we can point to those practices of action at a distance which are translated into workplace practices, learning and subjectivities.

Learning and subjectivity are themselves distributed through the range of networks within which one is interconnected. These networks 'expand, contract and shift configuration over time, and even the most stable and predictable of them are constantly being reappropriated and redefined by the nature of the flows that animate them …' (Nespor 1994:12). Workplace learning and the power exercised in and around it therefore can be seen as actor-networks in which actants and participation are ordered in time and space. The very ordering of space and time and the actants mobilized embeds a range of pedagogical practices. These may reside in the workplace alone, in the internal relations within organizations and in their external relations to for isntanc, markets, service clients, funding bodies. Workplaces are complex and contested organizational forms, which have to be constantly performed to exist, within which there may be many tensions between the different pedagogical practices at play. Some actor-networks will call forth docile bodies while others will elicit innovative and flexible workers, or more likely elements of each will be found in any specific pedagogic practices. Alternative actor-networks will struggle to inscribe particular meanings into workplaces. ANT therefore emphasizes the performative nature of knowledge-building. These performances are the 'translations' through which networks form, reform and dissolve.

> According to the latter [the model of translation], the spread in time and space of anything – claims, orders, artefacts, goods – is in the hands of people; each of these people may act in many different ways, letting the token drop, or modifying it, or deflecting it, or betraying it, or adding to it, or appropriating it.… When no one is there to take up the statement or token then it simply drops. (Latour 1986:267)

It is through translation or mediation that networks are formed. Without such practices, there is no network. ANT emphasizes the dynamic nature of human knowledge and practices and the actions through which power is exercised and subjectivity formed. It also provides a means of examining the ways in which action at a distance occurs, given the focus on the spatio-temporal and mediation. As such, it is useful for examining the dynamics of workplaces, including those of workplace learning.

11.3   Actively Seeking Subjects

In many of the discourses of workplace learning, patterns emerge that suggest attempts to mobilize subjects towards a more active engagement with their working lives, in which workers are more prepared to work upon themselves, including through learning, to make themselves more productive, despite the costs that might be associated with this in terms of ill-health and emotional stress (Burchell et al. 1999). Many practices of workplace learning can be seen as part of that pattern, even if it is never complete or inevitable, due to the instability of networks.

This type of analysis has been used by du Gay (1996) to examine workplace practices and subjectivities. For him, the ethos of enterprise is crucial to the development of discourses of flexibility among nations, organizations and individuals in support of economic competitiveness. Workers are subject to practices of management, appraisal and development that position them as enterprising, engaged in an 'enterprise of the self'. In this position,

> no matter what hand circumstances may have dealt a person, he or she remains always continuously engaged... in that one enterprise... In this sense the character of the entrepreneur can no longer be seen as just one among a plurality of ethical personalities *but must rather be seen as assuming an ontological priority*. (du Gay 1996:181, emphasis in original)

Exposure to the risks and costs of their activities are constructed as enabling workers to take responsibility for their actions, signifying a form of empowerment and success within the organization. Nor is this restricted to careers alone, as the whole of life is inscribed with the ethos of enterprise. Here 'certain enterprising qualities – such as self-reliance, personal responsibility, boldness and a willingness to take risks in the pursuit of goals – are regarded as human virtues and promoted as such' (du Gay 1996:56). Fashioning people's values, norms and dispositions therefore becomes a key dimension of organizational change. As with governing by states, therefore, in organizations there can be an increased emphasis on change through cultural transformation. Here the directions and processes of change are formed through the production of a shared ethic that both exposes all those within the workforce to the risks of failure and failing to change, but also tries to invest those within the organization with shared goals and aspirations. Thus national and international competitiveness have been

> recoded, at least in part, in terms of the psychological, dispositional and aspirational capacities of those that make up the labour force... Personal employment and macro-economic

> health is to be ensured by encouraging individuals to 'capitalize' themselves, to invest in the management, presentation, promotion and enhancement of their own economic capital as a capacity of their selves and as a lifelong project. (Rose 1999:162)

This recoding entails the mobilizing of different actants in and around workplaces, such as globalization, competitiveness and flexibility, through which to embed pedagogical practices that externalize the threat to future prosperity, while internally attempting to create a commonality of purpose. This recoding is only as successful as its performances.

The ethos of enterprise is both prescriptive and powerful. The practices through which it is produced may be many and varied. As Rose indicates, one of the calculations in which an enterprising self engages is that surrounding its own learning. One needs to adopt an active learning approach to life and calculate the learning through which one is going to enhance one's freedom and self-reliance. Learning therefore becomes a more explicit actant in relation to many workplaces, resignifying the workplace as not only to do with work but also learning. 'The new citizen is required to engage in a ceaseless work of training and retraining, skilling and reskilling, enhancement of credentials and preparation for a life of ceaseless job seeking: life is to become a continuous economic capitalization of the self' (Rose 1999:161). This mobilization of active, enterprising and flexible learning subjects can be thought of as part of the wider mobilizations in ordering the social, in which the range of interactivities and actants involved may vary from workplace to workplace. However, this complexity also raises questions about the extent and nature of the forms of subjectivity within different workplaces. From his analysis of UK case studies of health providers, a building society and manufacturing industry, Parker (2000) argues that workplaces are subject to spatial/functional, age/generational and professional/occupational differentiations. These will no doubt effect the learning and subjectivities within specific workplaces. Indeed workplace learning might explicitly seek to address and overcome such differentiations, but whether that is possible remains open to question, given that, despite all attempts, workplace culture and subjectivity cannot be mandated.

The issue of spatio-temporality of different workplaces is significant, as the forms of interaction and the enactment of place in specific workplaces give rise to particular possibilities for knowledge production, power and subjectivity. Here we draw an analogy between workplaces and universities. In his ethnographic study, Nespor (1994) contrasts the actor-networks of physics students, with their compressed spatio-temporal relationships and dense networks with those of management students, with their looser and wider networking, where course structure is mediated by student choice. The actor-network of academic physics is more tightly

bound than that of management and the mobilizations of time and space in some ways more restricted. A strong disciplinary subjectivity is mobilized, but it would seem to be somewhat insular and introverted. By contrast, the looser organization of space and time associated with the modular management program and the extensive networking beyond the university can be seen to mobilize a learner who is more active and enterprising. The management pedagogy therefore might be said to mobilize an enterprising rather than disciplinary subjectivity. However, a certain caution is also necessary in suggesting a too neat a categorisation, as both sets of students are subject to aspects of traditional disciplinary practices.

Nespor (1994) provides a detailed analysis of the use of space and time by the students he studied, which suggests the need for more extensive studies of the architecture of learning for the understanding of pedagogy. He contrasts the isolated, bunker-like spaces of the physics building with the newer, lighter, more open spaces of the business school. This indicates the ways in which subjectivities are formed through the spaces to be utilized as well as the utilization of that space. The mobilizations possible in a new, open plan building by contrast with one five hundred years old are very different and thus the learners and learning they make possible. 'Unlike the austere physics building, the business school wasn't geared solely to academic or scholarly activity.… [The] public interior space was organized in large part to simulate corporate spaces and function as a stage for the display of sociability' (Nespor 1994:111). This provides the possibility to develop the self-marketing skills and acquaintance networks necessary for success in the business world.

Similar studies could be done of workplaces to examine the spatio-temporal orderings that are practiced therein. Different architectures of different forms of workplace – e.g. mines, factories, shops, farms – and their external relations provide different pedagogic possibilities. Some may be more tightly controlled, others more open, with all the different possibilities for learning and subjectivity this entails. Atriums with coffee bars have very different affordances to enclosed offices. The very concern to develop more open, flexible and distributed forms of learning, in which the workplace is both a site for learning and acts as a basis for learning to loosen the spatial-temporal orderings or workplaces and education, and represents an attempt to fashion different actor-networks. In the process, different subjectivities are mobilized. Here learning itself becomes more diverse as different knowledge-building networks are formed through, for instance, the use of information and communications technologies. In such approaches, the spatio-temporal ordering of learning may be more complex, but much could be gained from the examination of the many mobilizations entailed. It may be significant that it is in organization studies rather than industrial relations that these issues are being explored, as the possibilities

for contest in the modernist spaces of enclosure of the factory become more problematic as workplaces take different forms and occupy different locations, some of which are more mobile than others.

11.4   Workplace Fashionings

At the beginning of this chapter, we pointed to some of the categorizations that are put forward, in part as ways to try to explain what is going on and what should be done in regard to learning in workplaces. What we have indicated is that the beliefs, values and regimes of truth that we come to accept as rationalities for what we do may not have the effects that we understand from them. To reflexively engage requires us to locate our subjectivities and regimes of truth within the capillary networks of power and understand who we are by considering what we do does. For us, this involves looking at workplace learning anew, in particular, through detailed ethnographies of the spatio-temporal orderings and mobilizations at play in particular organizations, although we are very aware that we have not engaged in this ourselves. Nor is the call for detailed ethnographies restricted to those who follow our particular theoretical path. It is a concern for all who seek to clarify the processes at work in workplaces, including those in and around learning and subjectivity (Alvesson and Willmott 2002). Pedagogic practices are embedded and embodied in different working practices, only some of which will be named and valued as learning, the success or failure of which is a matter of dispute.

As learning is fostered outside specific institutions of education, such as workplaces, the practices through which specific networks are formed become more complex, involving hybrid mobilizations of disciplinary and governmental power. Actor-networks are fluid and rely on the practices of mediation between different objects within a network. Thus, even as there are attempts to mobilize workplace learning and workers as learners in specific ways, they will be subject to diverse and unexpected shifts and changes. One aspect of action at a distance is that the mediations may result in subjectivities other than those expected.

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12

Integrating Life, Work and Identity: Farm Women Transforming 'Self' through Personal Struggle and Conflict

Jan Allan

> Knowledge of the role and place of farming women is essential to understanding farming families, farm life and farming communities. This is particularly so when changes to farming and rural communities stand to threaten their continuities and prospect for survival. The traditional family farm relies heavily on the 'farmer's wife' and her many roles for its very existence and its viability. Yet these women's roles are often taken for granted, without their full contributions and the impact of rural life on these women being understood. Here, the experiences and changes in subjectivity of farming women are learned from the women themselves. In an earlier study (Allan 2005a), the 'place of' and 'value of' farm women (farmers' wives) in a farming operation was repeatedly described by the men as one of 'helper' and 'sounding board'. These terms fail to empower the women or endow them with anything more than partial participation. Yet from these farming women different and distinct patterns of women's subjectivities emerge. A view arises of hardworking women who toil to support their farm and families in their many roles with little time left for self until over time for some, often due to emotional exhaustion, their positions cannot be maintained. Negotiation of tensions in their everyday life can shape transformative journeys to selfhood.

12.1   Integrating Work, Life and Identity

The challenge for farm women is to negotiate an integration of work, life and identity often within the environs of a social structure not of their personal career choice but rather through marriage. As a farm woman of

more than thirty years, I found disconcerting, the repetitive terms of 'helper' and 'sounding board' used by the farming men to describe their wives, along with the associated sense of disempowerment. Burning questions arose of 'what is happening to the sense of self and identity of all those women out there on farms whose contributions likely go beyond those used to describe them?' 'How are they maintaining their 'selves' as individual persons?' and 'how are they transforming their selves over time?'

Farming culture in New Zealand has a strong history of the hard-working, domesticated and resourceful woman 'standing by her man' and supporting him in his work. While one might expect that this attitude has been subject to change and there might be an expectation that women would now be valued more comprehensively and overtly, this doesn't appear to be the case. The women I have spoken to both as case studies, and also through ethnographic and everyday activities in farming communities, tell a different story. Earlier, I investigated the lives of farming men. Among other findings, these studies secured insights into what can happen when a farmer's son farms because of family expectations, out of loyalty or as an easy option. It seems that a lack of purpose, ownership, freedom and personal choice in their farming career can limit a farmer's ability to innovate and succeed, especially in times of adversity. Therefore, this finding suggested the need to understand the circumstances for farm women who farm as a result of marrying a farmer, and over time come to experience the often burdensome impositions associated with farming life and its work. Rural culture and its expectations are difficult to challenge, as many of the women have found to their detriment.

The evidence about the sense of self of farming women emerging from this study is confronting and disturbing, even for someone like myself who has been in farming for such a long time. I have been quite shocked by the amount of depression and unhappiness that has exuded from the farm women's stories. Some are aggressive and angry, 'I told him, "if you want to feed them you do it yourself, I'm going out and finding a life for myself"' while others are more subversive. Yet there is a yearning for their stories to be told. 'Fascinating' is the word most commonly used by farm women who ask about my study and although not wanting to say it too loudly or openly, they are interested and pleased to learn that 'their' story, or that of their mother, is not isolated and that their reality is being given a voice.

12.2 Understanding Everyday Life and Relationships within Farming Couples

This contribution focuses on issues of identity and self in relation to work, life and learning and the difficult struggles often of farm workers, and women partners particularly, to develop a strong sense of self. While focusing strongly on my more recent and ongoing doctoral research into changing subjectivities of farming women (Allan 2005b), I make some comparisons and seek relationships to my earlier study of male farmers, (Allan 2005a) in order to understand the unique links of subjectivity to the land, to family, to community, to gender relations and to the cultural history of farming. Knowing how identities are initially formed, continue over time and transform, is critical to understanding farm-life and its unique workplace culture as it is experienced in reality. From these studies, I see identity (i.e. the public self) as strongly socially and culturally influenced, while the person's subjectivity (i.e. their inner self) is more personal although embedded in their social history. Many of the women who resile into the roles expected of them as 'farmers' wives', like those farmers' sons who struggle with success in farming, strongly identify with the expected and often rigid behaviour of the historical cultural-norms. Other women though are forced to challenge these norms due to the conflict between how they know themselves (subjectivity) and how they experience their 'self' through others (identity) in their everyday rural life. Through living and working on a farm as a consequence of marriage, learning and a changing sense of self are often a point of conflict and turmoil between the social world and human agency.

The role of cultural expectations and their influence in both affording and constraining a person's ability to form, maintain and transform their subjectivity is not well understood. It is recognised though (Holland and Lave 2001) that new meanings need to be constructed regarding how a sense of self is maintained and transformed through individual, social and cultural inclusion or exclusion, throughout life's experiences. While farming men have choice in their career, albeit sometimes tempered by family expectations, the women are led by an emotional choice not directly related to their life's work or workplace.

In both investigations, multiple, detailed and lengthy interviews were conducted with selected cases while I myself was fully participant through personally living and working on-farm. I also attended farming field-days, seminars and other activities and was critically observant of my own situation and that of others while participating in a range of discourses in my everyday working and social life. While I spoke in depth to six men and nine women as major participants, my ethnographic involvement with a multitude of other participants through everyday ethnographic

fieldwork, became a dominant factor in investigating persons within rural culture. In the women's study, feminist methodology is incorporated with auto/ethnography as a means of inquiry, as both empower the subjectivity of the knower rather than relegating them to an abstract position (Smith 1999). That is, the woman's space and experience are legitimised as having value in their own right. 'Researcher as subject' and a more subjective relationship between the researcher and other participants, is reflective of both genres. As such this feminist research explores issues from the viewpoint of women's experiences (Stanley and Wise 1993), recognising the value of a person's history as its influence on the present (Roberts 2002). This seems wholly pertinent to a study that is seeking to understand women's experience, despite the fact that few of the women involved, would readily identify as feminists. Active partnerships are sought with participants in interpreting and creating meaning about their life experiences (Roberts 2002). While this chapter doesn't identify my story as separate from the other women's, my life and work on-farm in partnership with my husband, my daily experiences, observations, discourse and cultural participation are intrinsic to both studies.

12.3   Integrating Life-work, Work-life and Fragmented Selves

Central to the discussion about farming women is elaborating the place of a 'sense of self' in their complex, entangled work and life roles. In the earlier investigation (Allan 2005a), women farm-partners were identified as being very resourceful and powerful assets to their farming practices and farming lives, as well as the communities in which they farm. Yet many reach the point where they feel superfluous to the operation. In comparison, those men who had limited initial choice of career through family pressures accepted their position even when they reached a stage where there were other options. Typically, it seems only financial difficulties forced them to reluctantly leave their farm. This suggests some sense of self-worth and self-satisfaction in their situation possibly coupled with uncertainty of change and an inability to make the decisions required. As a farmer they have a certain status. The women though seem to lack status and are more commonly making choices as a result of lack of satisfaction, personal distress, a sense of worthlessness and feeling of being unvalued. They often describe their different modes of coping in ways that might be characterised as submissiveness and servanthood. While most women agree that they have initially at least, 'loved' being immersed in farm-life and work it seems this level of contentedness is limited.

These women often express a need to have more. As one woman put it, "we need and yes I'll use that word, 'need' to use our intelligence, need mental stimulation, not just helping and supporting." In search of this need, some go to work outside the farming business to forge their own identity, thus changing the dynamics of their farm-life; some leave the marriage and the farm in seeking new possibilities; while yet others accept their 'lot' as 'just the way it is' and 'make the most of' their situation. In effect, these latter women may resign themselves to a dissatisfied life often with extensive periods of unhappiness and depression, a common theme running through these women's stories. As one woman describing her pet dog said, "well I had to (get a dog) didn't I? He's (husband) never here and I need someone to talk to don't I? It's so bloody lonely…." This same woman though is ready at the 'men's' 'beck and call' if needed. She is typical of the women in that she will cook for 'the men' 'at the drop of a hat'; copes with what is often industrial level cleaning and laundry; answers business phone calls and deals with callers to the farmhouse; takes trips to town for machinery parts and the like; organises contractors and generally acts as the hub of the organisation. She fills in as the 'extra pair of hands' when needed – very much as a 'reserve army' labour unit. While in the early years this form of participation seems an important or even essential part of both 'becoming' a farm woman and gaining acceptance into a new culture, the evidence suggests that partial participation and auxiliary labour is not sustainable over time. It does not sustain the women's sense of value or place.

While some younger women are making bold and strong stands e.g. "I've made it clear I don't <u>do</u> farm work unless it's an emergency … I tell him to go and get his own seed … (and) I want <u>my</u> time for <u>me</u> when the kids are at school," it remains to be seen whether they maintain this strength and self-commitment over time. Most women spoken to are strong and talented women yet they are restricted to varying degrees by a pervasive social and cultural pressure with persistent patriarchal values and limited opportunities due to isolation and lack of access to viable alternatives. While some challenge this position over time, others resile to the expectations of others. As with the farmer's sons who 'fall into' farming, it is particularly in times of adversity, that these women seem to overtly question their standing, with some making decisions to change their circumstances either within or outside their marriage. These stressful times may be personal, family orientated, due to climatic extremes or economic pressures or merely a function of the woman's 'place' and 'space'. These women commonly live in relative seclusion within a historically conservative culture, with its defined gender roles and expectations. Both investigations reinforce the position of farming women as still fighting for

genuine visibility and real recognition for their contribution to the work and knowledge of their farming enterprises and farming lives.

12.4   Women and Men 'becoming' Farming Couples

> When a woman marries, she marries not only a man but also she marries his job, and from that point onwards will live out her life in the context of the job which she has married (Finch 1983:1).

The formation of self as a farm woman often coincides with becoming part of a farming couple and the accompanying culture. Motivation and reason for 'becoming' part of a culture is critical to continuity of knowledge and evolving identity. While one male farmer described his drive to farm as 'almost obsessive' and where he would do almost anything to achieve his 'dream', the woman's motivation commonly is likely to be one of living life with the man she has chosen as a life partner. The farm workplace, often distant and very different from her previous experience, is a consequence of that decision. In the past, a close rural infrastructure has eased and supported such transition, but the move to market-led economics in New Zealand, since the mid 1980s, has dramatically changed the economic and social environment in which farming families live and work. Farming is becoming increasingly a more competitive business with high capital input, high costs and subsequent economic and productive pressures. The long-established lifestyle component and close community living is now becoming almost illusionary. These changes, which have impacted upon farming families and rural communities in major ways with the loss of schools, hospitals and other infrastructure in rural servicing towns, have required major shifts in learning, subjectivity and work practices. Entry points are limited for women who have traditionally worked in rural hospitals and schools and subsequently met and married farmers, thus adding to the diversity of farming communities and farm practices. This valuable resource of potential women partners is at threat while progressive careers and other available identities for farm women themselves, are further limited. I'm repeatedly told accounts of a growing reluctance of young women generally, and more specifically those with university qualifications, to marry a farmer and live on-farm thus limiting their own career opportunities.

The farm women I've spoken to typically marry into a farming workplace and working life, with much enthusiasm and a strong sense of self, albeit a self that is often constructed outside the farm and farming life. In choosing their life partner their worlds change from one of living

in a female world with paid-work identities and relating to life as young women, to that of living in a man's world. Commonly, but with exceptions, this choice is not seen as a hardship, but rather as an exciting adventure full of hope for a fulfilling challenge. Life then typically changes to living in a 'blokey' world where most company on an everyday basis consists of males – most callers to the farm household from agricultural servicing firms and similar are men. While initially, particularly for those in-migrant women who have a strong urban identity, female friends and life in town or in the city are missed, over time the women are transformed into 'farmers' wives'. They 'become' and so accept and by many accounts enjoy the lifestyle and its privileged landscape and space for bringing up a family. It could be said that the landscape 'makes' them as they in return remake the landscape, in relationship. Talking to these women it becomes clear that they have felt a strong social press to 'join the culture', and to attempt to be accepted within the community. Although their journeys are individual and unique they have many common themes. Most women recognise that they became masculinised to some degree, which over time makes it more difficult for them to relate to other women, both within and outside the farming world. They often come to enjoy and prefer male discourse and a male sense of humour. This raises the question of why farm women do not then relate to each other in a similar way thus creating a collective and supportive identity. It is unclear yet whether this is a gendered issue, but for whatever reason these women seem not to have good, intimate and confiding relationships with other women as they did when they were single. They have been subtly and stealthfully socialised to participate in a male orientated world. This appears as a world where rather than the bulwarking of the companionship of other women, they engage in solitary journeys of geographical, emotional, social and genderised isolation. However, these journeys seem to be marked by phases of transition, and often include periods of doubt and despair.

The women vividly describe identifying firstly through their husbands, then their children and struggling eventually to identify as their 'authentic self', one that feels genuine and congruent with how they see their 'self'. Their previously 'known self', which was familiar and comfortable, has been engulfed in these other identities. As a 'farm wife', mother and member of a farming community a transitional self is formed, which lacks authenticity possibly due to being composite and enforced by cultural expectations. Some confronted particularly difficult transitions. Tensions and conflicts arise as the women seek to unravel themselves from intertwined roles and personae, in an attempt to be a person in their own right. Some reach points of desperation. For example, one woman left her husband and her young family and drifted into an unknown future alone due to extended farming family issues. At the time, she was incapable

of making any other decision. Fun, enjoyment and feeling valued are common ingredients these women describe as missing from their lives. Commonly, the women say they have never spoken of their personal crises to anyone but the process of this research provided them with a safe reflective experience that seemingly shocked their 'selves' as they heard their own voices unleashing the pain of well-buried secrets. Often, as they whispered their confessions, silent tears rolled down their cheeks as they stoically told their stories aloud for the first time. It was surprising and oddly cathartic for them to admit such 'failings' and to have them received as not shocking but more 'normal' or common than they had ever realised. Others have faced critical points later in life, often when their children have left home and they are left with a life of isolation and loneliness, a life lacking personal satisfaction. It seems that much of this dissatisfaction relates to the woman's 'workplace' i.e. the farm and extensions of that enterprise. This workplace is itself problematic as it is a world of intermingling household, kinship and production, often with some off-farm work or community work also involved. As these women are overwhelmed with the pressures of this entangled life, they are often unable to extricate themselves from their workplace without also leaving their marriage. This is a phenomenon not easily replicated in other workplaces.

12.5   Negotiating Identity through Empowering Decisions

The ability to negotiate and re-negotiate identity is critical to transforming one's subjectivity (Swann 1987). This negotiation requires a confidence and freedom, which is often hard fought, through struggle and making bold decisions. Those women who forge their own identity successfully within the marriage and farm, have negotiated personal choice for life and work requiring some dis-identification through their husband and farm workplace in order to enable discovery of new possibilities and new identities. As turmoil in loss of authentic identity becomes evident, these women are driven to discover congruence in their selves; a self that reflects the person they are or know they can be. This requires a hidden strength, risk-taking and decision–making. Many of those women, however, who continue to do what is expected of them are limited by social constraints and drift through life often unhappy and exhibiting depressive (or what one woman called 'repressive') symptoms. It is clear that the ability to make decisions, take calculated risks and face challenges add to their transforming sense of self, their way of knowing and their sense of success. Birden (2002) proposes such decision-making as energising in

lifting feelings of depression and transforming a sense of well-being. In both these studies of farming folk, the ability and power to make innovative decisions is seen as vital to sustaining and transforming a person's subjectivity. Often, it seems the place of 'work' in nurturing positive identity is related to feelings of success and empowerment for both the men and women.

However, there is a notion that career success as a vital component to one's sense of identity is more applicable to men. Foskey (2005) sees men who are not married, as being less satisfied with life, its purpose and meaning after retirement, but suggests that this does not apply to women who are not married. She sees this phenomenon as reflecting greater dependence of men on work and also on their spouses for emotional support, while women's support emanates more from family and friends. Likewise, Foskey identifies levels of available income correlating with levels of satisfaction with farming. Her research identifies a strong integration between work and identity for men, with enjoyment of work and seeing the results of their efforts sustaining their sense of value. Those who are not dependent on work for their sense of identity are more likely to accept redundancy or to exit the workforce for other reasons. However, from my experience and that of the farm women I have spoken to, these issues are as relevant to women's lives as that of the men. Work, marriage, emotional support and financial security are strongly interrelated to empowerment of all persons on farms regardless of gender. My inquiry of farm women strongly refutes an ideology that misrepresents for women issues of work satisfaction, available and adequate income and emotional support from their spouse, as being any different from men. It seems that the women who realise that they need no longer be dependent on their husbands for their sense of self are energised to make their own life choices either within or without their marriage and farm-life.

12.6   Intentionality, Agency and Empowerment

Central to the resolution of how farming women become themselves are their capacities for intentionality, agency and empowerment. An ability to negotiate or renegotiate a life for one's 'self' is entangled in the complex web of relations between farm, work, family and culture. While influenced by personal intent and agency, it is grounded within one's personal history. Intentionality is a critical concept to consider in attempting to isolate motivational drives, in seeking resolution to such dilemmas. Intention comprises individual agency exercised as personal choice, as opposed to social agency constrained in the form of pressure to conform and meet cultural expectations (Coupland 2003). One woman, a farmer's daughter,

vividly described an 'apprenticeship' in which as a young girl she was capable of feeding a workforce and running the farm household. However, a look at her young adult daughters reveals a new generation of farm daughters who are not only resisting this apprenticeship, they are not putting themselves in the situation where that might be expected of them. As they are university educated they are taking other options and negotiating other subjectivities. They question why their mother is not paid and challenge her to look at her 'work' as 'real work'. While this change in these young women is agentic in intentionality, it is mediated through social and cultural influences. They are not only socialised through their personal experiences of growing up on farms and seeing their mothers' labour, but also by being exposed to other ways of living and working as they leave their farming communities and participate in university life and work, in large urban centres in New Zealand and beyond. Through challenging their mother, they are effecting change not only for their 'self' but also for other women like their mother, as assumptions about their personal worlds are questioned.

The women repeatedly tell of their personal dilemma in seeking change for their 'self' in what is still a patriarchal workplace and culture. Some are better negotiators than others due to differing influences and constraints both personal and social, including gender relations. While for some women subjectivity is strengthened through participation and engagement on-farm and within their marriage, enabling choice and resisting domination, others are unable to negotiate such agency. One expresses a 'lack of tolerance' towards her depression from her husband, that she can't talk to him about it as 'he takes it personally' and that he 'has never liked being bossed about' and another reveals 'make no mistake about it, he's the boss – what he says you do!' Some women then bury their frustrations, isolation and feelings of being misunderstood and unvalued. While some accept this as their 'lot' several women spoken to have come to a point where they have exercised their personal agency by extricating their 'self' from both the workplace and the marriage. That is, they leave the farm, and in seeking dissolution of marriage and collecting their share of the estate, jeopardise the continuity of the farm that they have laboured so long to build. Some within the farming community see such women as 'moneymakers' who force farm sales through dissolution of marriage. They are often spoken of judgmentally as being 'unreasonable', 'greedy' and 'selfish'. This perhaps recognises the impact of women's agency in these actions, while ignoring or marginalising their contributions in others, and negating the legitimacy of their lives outside of the farm. To illustrate such a dilemma the experience of one participating couple is retold in vignette.

12.7   Kate and Ted's Story – One Farm Couple

Kate and Ted met each other in their youth at a country dance. Ted was working for a contractor driving large earthmoving machinery and Kate was working in an office. Kate had an urge to live in the big city but Ted's work was based in an isolated rural town. Kate had seen how her mother 'never had a life' and 'worked so hard', so although she had worked for her father as a landgirl she had no desire to ever marry a farmer. When she found that Ted had a deep urge to farm she thought "OH NO!" but then dismissed the idea as a pipe dream that would never eventuate. Their early marriage was very happy with Ted working and Kate busy raising four small children. Their evenings and weekends were their own and they bought an old house and proceeded to 'do it up'. They were happy. Then the bombshell came – Ted was offered work on a dairy farm in another location. Kate reluctantly but dutifully agreed to 'give it a go' because that's what Ted really wanted and she proceeded to pack up her treasured life and freedom and move to an isolated farmhouse. Kate didn't want to be there and she felt despondent. Ted went off to look around the farm, which was in total disarray. He worked till dark trying to create some order out of chaos.

> *What the hell do I do? And where do you learn to calve a cow; because at home when I was working for Dad whenever there was a problem with a cow calving he did it - cause he knew more about it than me. So the first time I calved a cow I didn't have a clue what I was doing… Never, ever calved a cow in my life (before). I'd pull the legs out, put the rope on and pull it and I made some mistakes - pulling calves out alive, then having the head hit the ground that hard that the skull broke and you'd think hell! And working on my own … Kate would come whenever I needed her – she was there but I – calving cows and that I'd do it myself. You soon devise a method for doing it on your own without killing the calf. And a lot of things were like that.*

Life was tough. Kate recalled:

> *A lot of it is you're actually tired.… they took all the furniture off the truck and sort of threw it in the house and off they went. And Ted – it was like 5 in the afternoon and he went out to have a look at the farm and there were cows calving and so he went out onto the farm and I don't know what time he got back in – but everyday he was gone at 4 in the morning and coming in for lunch and gone and here was me trying to organise the house and help him outside and these little kids and I remember – he was trying to irrigate – I mean there was a lot on him as well – but I remember saying to him 'you've got to get me help, I'm*

*just not coping', you know 'I need help'. (Tearful recalling)
And he'd say 'you're all right, you're all right.' And Mum
came up one day and I said 'look I need help I'm just not cop-
ing I feel as though I could screw the kids necks' and you know,
dreadful things I was thinking - with all this going on. And
Mum said 'Oh no you'll be right'. You know 'we'll help you
this afternoon and you'll be right'. And I managed to just get
through it – (I thought) I've just got to pull myself together you
know and I think Mum thought 'oh yeah, that doesn't mean
anything' you know.*

The next year they shifted to another farm as sharemilkers (where
they owned some of the cows, managed the farm and shared a percentage
of the profits with the landowner): It was about this time that …

*Well we had shifted down South onto another farm and we were
actually sharemilking and umm it was one afternoon – the kids
were mucking around outside and oh, we went for a walk and
we had you know you would have seen them the big irrigation
ditches? [Oh yeah] And umm I just thought ohhh – we were
walking along and the kids were all looking in it and I thought
to myself I'm going to come back here and I'm going to jump in
that ditch – I've had enough you know, and got home and
thought – you know I really thought I would (tearful) I would
go and jump in the ditch! A big ditch you know, you're gone.
And I got home and I thought 'no I can't I've got these kids,
I've got farm work to do' and I just ran out of time thinking
about it but you know I often look at those ditches and think
'shivers!' (Hushed). You know I could have easily just jumped
in there – amazing.*

Over time, they shifted to other farms as sharemilkers and then
into farm ownership. Timing was unfortunate as they struck droughts and
an economic rural downturn. They hung in there for 10 years. Ted re-
called, "… the whole bloody 10 years was one big mistake … that was a
failure from start to finish. Going there was a failure. That was the biggest
mistake I ever made … drought after drought … failure after failure." At
this time "we just didn't have any money." Kate felt the pressure from the
bank to live on a meager amount:

*It was like big brother sort of, that, you know and then you're
only going to embarrass yourself if you're going to go over – if
you can't cope when you feel that everybody else is coping....
And I suppose I probably didn't stick up for myself enough ei-
ther. I think you just get ground down so you don't. You know
even probably to Ted – probably a big bust up, a big scream up
or a big something would have probably been the way to go at
times and get your own way. Some way. But I'm sort of not a
person who did that, you know. I'd rather have the quiet times.*

Eventually, the farm was sold and a smaller one bought. Over time, neighbouring blocks were bought and the small farm became a big farm. The children were growing into young adults, well educated and leading very successful lives. By now, Ted was looked upon by his industry as a 'top farmer'. His production figures were hard to beat in the competitive world of dairying. To the outside world Ted and Kate and their children were a perfect, happy and successful family, but in reality the dream had died years ago. The children had all left home when the bombshell came for Ted. Kate wanted to now fulfill her dream of moving to the city and having some time for her 'self'. Ted resisted. He was enjoying his success and still had further farm development in mind. Although the atmosphere was strained Kate decided to move herself to the city to retrain. Ted found this hard to handle – *"why would she want to leave when life was so good?"* The only decision for Kate was *"Am I brave enough to do this?"* For her, it was a gutsy move; for him it was bewildering. A period of conflict and struggle ensued with irreconcilable differences and a gulf between meanings, understanding, needs and power. The marriage disintegrated, the farm was sold and each of the partners went their separate ways to pursue life. After several years Kate feels:

> *Like I'm starting a new life! Umm, it's amazing really.… I'm just so much happier in myself. And I mean I've done a lot more for myself. I dress differently. I look at things differently. I enjoy things more probably, you know leisure time and yeah. I don't know what it is.… I'm financially set up so I haven't got any of that worry and that's probably a big pressure off you anyway.… Umm I just know that I'm enjoying it a lot more. I probably enjoy cultural things a little bit more whereas you know I didn't really know what I really enjoyed, probably because you weren't exposed to it or anything but umm. Probably some of my new friends because I've got a lot of new friends here now, since I went through (a vocational course) and they have probably influenced me in some ways you know. They are just sort of a different type of people. They are not farming people and they've got a lot more to talk about. They are more interested in different things.*

Although both are now in new relationships, Ted still grieves for his farm and his 'perfect life' as he saw it. He no longer has his farm, his success or his 'happy' marriage to reflect his self-concept. With some puzzlement he says, *"I not only lost my wife, I lost my farm too."*

For some time Ted and Kate had lived parallel lives within the same house and running the same business. Their marriage according to Kate was a victim of side effects of the entanglement of farm and married work and life with financial pressures and "not having a life." Her new life depicts a psychic transformation (Birden 2002) that cleared away the

burden of depression and gave way to exhilaration and energy as she became both the 'maker of' and decision-maker in her own life.

This story illustrates two sets of conflicting intentions, values and subjectivities. Ted was driven by the need to fulfill his ambition. He had a need to be 'a top farmer' - anything else would be failure. His drive was overwhelming. When Kate disagreed with major economic decisions, he brought in the 'big guns', consultants and others with power who would then *"talk her around."* Over time, Kate felt unvalued, abused and powerless. Farm life worked for Ted as Kate supported him both emotionally and physically in his career. *"Why do I farm?"* said Ted, *"I suppose because I love it. I know it. I'm comfortable with what I am doing … I just love it … I love the challenge."* He wanted to be the best. Kate though was dislocated from her 'whole self' in subjecting herself to a life not of her choosing. She considered marriage to be 'for life' and that her children needed both parents. For these largely socialised beliefs she subjected herself to an untenable situation. She learned to live within tensions between needs of self and others, farm and marriage, husband and family, fragmenting self. But, then over time she dis-identified with her married and farm life, which enabled her to seek new possibilities through counter-identifying (Hodges 1998).

12.8   Contesting 'Possible Selves' Through Off-farm Challenges

Many women spoke of learning to meet the needs of 'self' by negotiating effective roles within or outside the marriage and farm combination; seeking at some stage, to actively disentangle themselves from conflicting identities and constraints. Although not entirely successful they forge a self-identity that resides within the complex issues of work, family and self. Involvement in interests or work outside the farm is often a first step in easing the somewhat consumed and restricted farm-wife identity that confines many of these women. Voluntary community work, especially in school governance (Boards of Trustees), Regional Health Committee work or environmental politics, are identified as some of the social agents in revealing abilities and desires to the women which they never realised. A self is reflected by others that is congruent with her known and possible selves. As one woman put it:

> *I loved it at the High School BOT (governance). That was the best of the lot – it was brilliant.… Umm (I loved) policy making, which most people wouldn't find exciting at all, but I really got into it. There were interesting things happening but I think the fact that they used to value you as a contributing member, was*

part of it also. I enjoyed talking with the teachers and I had a
good working relationship with the principal – probably felt
worthy – and it was for my brain – now that's probably it too it
was a bit of brain working. I think it made me realise that I can
read all that stuff – you know all the stuff you get. Heaps and
heaps and heaps but I could retain it and I don't know why …
And I think that probably made me feel better about myself, eh?
Yeah.… Mmm and it was something I never knew that I could
actually do either so it made me realise that I am actually a
really good (critical) reader … So its been a good skill to have.
I didn't know that I had it until (BOT Chairperson) told me that
I was good at this you see.

Such women are active in subjecting their self to these challeng-
ing roles and work hard to achieve recognition and positive appraisal
which assists in forming and revealing a new self. However, such change
can then manifest as relational tension in that the new self is not reflected
back by their partner in their farm workplace, marriage and family life.
Whether the woman accepts this and lives a somewhat parallel life as
"that's just the way it is" or seeks to improve the situation, may depend on
the relations within the marriage, workplace and (often) extended farming
family, including the distribution of power. Whichever response, it is a
form of agency or subjection while influenced by social beliefs, affor-
dances, or constraints underpinned by a sense of power or powerlessness.

These women's intentionality in committing to school governance
or other voluntary public service is initially manifested as a response to
community need, and involvement is socially driven. There is though a
subsidiary hope of interest, and a need to "mix with a different group of
people," with resulting intense benefits for self - challenging, surprising
and transformative. On completion of their term in public roles with con-
siderable responsibility and recognition, the women who challenged their
'selves' through accepting such roles, have a subjective drive to continue
to endorse and contest 'self', in ways besides their farm-life. This is prob-
lematic both for the woman and her partner. The husband may be con-
fused about this new, strong-willed woman who now has different expec-
tations. Yet, for the woman the cessation of the position leaves a void and
fragmented self as she misses the status and new self-meaning that her
public recognition gave her. For one, depressive symptoms became over-
whelming as she questioned her place and value in life. A lengthy debili-
tating period *("I spent two years crying")* ensued, followed by a new
challenge in environmental politics, which affirmed and validated her
newly avowed self; one that expected personal recognition and value.
Again, community work is the primary reason for this new position but
proving to be subjective in reward. The intervening period was subjected
upon herself as she avoided a possible self – avoided contesting self – but

within a power relationship. The support, recognition and challenge of her public 'self' was no longer reflected in her everyday private, farm work-life. Her new self-concept was not verified by her work and interactions on-farm and within the marriage and farm household. She felt unwell and depressed and while she blamed her 'age' it was clear from her account that she felt misunderstood, unvalued and unsupported, and questioned her 'place'. Yet, she could not discuss her position with her husband as he 'took it personally'. She knew she had other 'possible selves' but lacked the confidence and support to take the step.

12.9   Relationships Among Identity, Self, Structure and Agency

In the process of 'becoming,' an intertwining of roles and engulfing of self with others, form transitional identities. Subsequently, continuity and maintenance of the 'self' is problematic due to the burying of the 'known self' in this inauthentic and incohesive subjectivity. The 'known self' is not reflected nor verified by others, adding to conflict and tension. Thus, a gulf appears between the subjective 'I' known to self and the reflected 'me' as the identity known to others. There is difficulty maintaining everyday roles while seeking authenticity among these 'conflicting selves'. There is a sense that for some, a feeling of alienation is simmering under the surface (Fenwick 1999). For these women, this often manifests itself as sullenness, misery and depression. An interaction occurs between the social world and human agency as intentionality is tensely competitive between cultural expectations and personal needs. From a changing sense of self and a need to transform one's subjectivity, new norms or expectations are constructed albeit through much resolution and considerable struggle.

This study of farming women supports Fenwick's (1999) assertion that a strong and at times desperate search for coherence, authenticity and congruence, is the drive behind agentic questioning of one's place and situated constraints. Without empowerment to contest self, women who are vital to the concept of the 'family farm' are not sustained as fully participant human beings. As such, this current inquiry reveals a culture that is compromising its future through not valuing and sustaining the needs of farm women.

12.10 Acknowledgements

contribution. Both are especially valued due to the solitary nature of my work.

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13

Work, Subjectivity, and Learning in the Diaspora: Immigrant Women of Colour in White Academe

Mary V. Alfred

This chapter calls for a deeper understanding of workplace learning, one that expands from the local conceptualisation of learning in terms of literacy, skills building, and corporate training to a more global view informed by the movement of people in workplaces across national borders. With the increasing movement of people from developing countries to more modern societies, it is important to move beyond static notions of work and learning to discourses that acknowledge the subjectivities of foreign-born workers. Using narratives of immigrant women of colour in white academic spaces, this chapter highlights the shifting notions of identity and place as they inform realities of life and work across national borders. It makes the argument that workplace learning must be understood within the broader concepts of Diaspora and migration, place and the politics of location, and the negotiation and re-negotiation of identity.

13.1   Introduction

Notions of physical geography and its relationship to migration have become more fluid than they were in the past (Di Stefano 2002). This fluid reconceptualization affects how immigrants think about and experience a sense of place, identity, and belonging in the world of work. Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton (1992) find that earlier conceptions of immigration and migration "evoke images of permanent rupture, of the uprooted, the abandonment of old patterns and the painful learning of a new language and culture" (1992:1). Instead, they promote the emergence of a new immigrant population composed of those whose networks, activities,

and patterns of life encompass both their host and home societies. Under-standably, transnational migrants come to their new society with prior learning experiences, practices, and worldviews that shape their behav-iours, practices, and learning in the workplace. As they navigate new cul-tures, they tend to hold on to some of their earlier concepts of learning and notions of work as shaped by prior socialization and other experiences. As Fenwick and Hutton (2000) suggest, workplace learning is now viewed as a complex phenomenon entwining identity, desire, cultural communities of practice, discourses of work and success, multiple knowledges and spheres of life activity, and cognitive processes. For the immigrant woman in aca-deme, learning to learn and to work across borders must be understood within the broader concepts of Diaspora and migration, place and the poli-tics of location, and the negotiation and re-negotiation of identity. Making visible the intersection of work, subjectivity, and learning among immi-grant women of colour in higher education is the focus of this chapter.

This chapter draws from narratives of women from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, who were experiencing the academy in various spaces in order to explore the interconnections and shifting notions of work, subjectivity, and learning in translational contexts. Hence, I will first explore the notions of migration, identity, and home and examine how these dimensions influence learning and work in the Diaspora. Then, draw-ing from the narratives of immigrant women working in the halls of US academe and those preparing for work in such institutions, I will present the women's views of the learning that takes place as they negotiate iden-tity, place, and their roles as professionals in the White academy.

13.2   Identity, Migration, and the Politics of Place in Learning to Work Across Borders

There is a general agreement among scholars regarding the salience of eth-nicity for immigrants in the United States (Butterfield 2004). Similarly, those who study ethnicity are in general agreement that racial and ethnic categories are only meaningful when viewed within social relations and the historical contexts in which they are embedded. According to Olnek, (2001), ethnic identities are not inheritances or preservations, but are ongo-ing active constructions that emerge out of interactions among groups within socio-political and symbolic contexts (p. 318). An emerging dimen-sion of Olneck's assertion is the presence of individual agency in the crea-tion of one's identities. Noting the plurality of identities, one can also

assume that identities are contextual and that one evokes the most fitting from multiple identities in the construction and negotiation of everyday life events. For ethnic minorities in majority White organizations, the challenges of negotiating multiple identities are more critical. That is particularly true for immigrants of colour who are in a constant search for a safe place to work and to learn within the halls of academe. As members of a displaced population, they also yearn for a sense of belonging. Having a sense of belonging in the workplace influences the interpretation one makes of her experiences in such spaces. Therefore, the immigrant woman's subjective notion of herself in academic spaces influences what she learns, how she learns it, and how she uses that knowledge to leverage her position in the workplace. Acquiring a place in the academic workplace community represents what Fenwick and Hutton (2000) view as belonging to "cultural communities of practice", an element they find necessary to our understanding of the factors that can influence learning in the workplace. Moreover, one's positionality as defined by race, ethnicity, gender, and national origin, determines the extent to which she is welcomed to such communities of practice. Noting that such communal spaces provide a rich venue for formal and informal learning opportunities, alienation from such communities may create a barrier to full participation in the learning process. McDowell (1999) uses the term community

> to refer to a fluid network of social relations that may be but are not necessarily tied to a territory. Thus a community is a relational rather than a categorical concept, defined both by material social relations and symbolic meanings. Communities are context dependent, contingent, and defined by power relations; their boundaries are created by mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. . . . Whatever the criteria or characteristics of exclusion, certain groups of individuals are inevitably left outside. (p. 100)

Indeed, the narratives of people of colour speak to the dynamics of power inherent in predominantly White cultural communities of practice and their experiences of alienation in such communities (Alfred and Swaminathan 2004; James and Farmer 1993; hooks 1990). The subjectivities that emerge as a result of exclusion, real or imagined, influence the decisions individuals make about positioning themselves to work and to learn in such environments.

Papastergiadis (1998), however, reminds us that the context of thinking about where we belong can no longer be defined according to purely geographical notion of place and a historical sense of connection because our sense of who we are or where we belong has been influenced by a variety of global forces. Stack (1981) expanded this argument, noting

that transnational movements have created a situation whereby nation-states are becoming increasingly interdependent, and individuals no longer need to rely on the state for their main source of identity. What is being argued here is that as a result of globalization, one's place of origin should have little influence on her sense of self in the work environment, how one is perceived there by others, or how one learns and works in her cultural communities of practice.

While these arguments may have some merit, I argue that the reality of identification still rests heavily on one's location within the nation state. Thinking of ourselves as belonging to a nation, or as having a national identity is one the most common ways of positioning ourselves in relation to others. One's sense of nation and national identity are key tools for interpreting and behaving within the social environment. For those who originate from nations of power, holding on to the national identity is, in turn, an individual source of power; that is, power over others as evidenced by the nation state's ideology and practices of inclusion and exclusion. On the other hand, holding on to one's national identity could also be a form of resistance, a form of self and group preservation in the midst of oppressive regimes of power. This form of resistance, of holding on to the national identity, can often be observed among immigrant people of colour in the US who create national social spaces in the forms of enclaves and associations. These ethnic spaces represent sites of resistance, a means of holding on to the old traditions in the midst of modernity.

Herein lie the tensions and contradictions of holding on to the idealistic notion of the birth place as "homeplace" while partaking in and incorporating elements of various other social spaces within the host country. To minimize the tension that can result from such contestations, the answers to questions such as "Who am I?" "What am I?" and "Where and how I belong?" become fundamental in our understanding of workplace learning. Giddens (1991) argues that the question of "What am I?" can no longer be answered by identifying our place of origin and the time of living there. We can also argue that an individual's subjective notion of "Who am I?" and "What am I?" influences learning, social relationships, and subjectivity in the workplace. Based on that assumption, there is the need to expand the discourse on workplace learning to include the realities of the increasing numbers of foreign-born individuals who live and work away from the societies which they call "home". Therefore, by exploring how women of the Diaspora negotiate the culture of work, we can begin to broaden the concepts of workplace learning from the local to more global contexts. Narratives of immigrant women of colour in academe provide a small window from which to begin such explorations.

13.3 Tensions and Contradictions of Learning and Work in the Academy: Narratives of Immigrant Women of Colour

The position of an immigrant woman faculty of colour in the academy, though ambiguous, and often tenuous, is filled with challenge and hope. The complex identity of an immigrant woman of colour can be a source of frustration and confusion, and yet it offers opportunities for growth. She often is an object of sexism and racism because of her gender, colour, and her immigrant status. She suffers the chill and oftentimes brutal animosity from minority colleagues who believe that her position has taken away one slot from among the few available. Students who harbour their own biases from their upbringings often treat her with disrespect. They often challenge her knowledge and competence because of their unwillingness to understand her accent. However, those who survive, stand a chance to contribute to the depth and breadth of knowledge in the academy. Our contributions in research and service often transcend international borders, and our contributions to a rich and varied classroom discourse leave a mark that positively impacts both the university and the world. (Nomsa Geleta 2004:21).

Nomsa has opened a small window through which we can begin to understand the subjective realities of immigrant women of colour in academic spaces. Although there is emerging a strong presence of immigrants in the higher education workforce, their experiences remain buried. Therefore, for the remainder of this chapter, I will draw from the narratives of a small sample of these women who were experiencing the academy in various spaces to explore their subjective realities as informed by the intersections of changing identities, notions of work and learning, and a sense of belonging as a member of the culture.

13.3.1 Context of this Exploration

This project stems from the narratives of 14 women who were participating in US institutions of higher education in various capacities. The participants, who originated from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America, were initially invited to contribute to a book that explored immigrant women's experiences with US institutions of higher education and how they were faring in the academic culture. The book, *Immigrant women of the academy: Crossing borders, negotiating boundaries in higher education* by Alfred and Swaminathan (2004) highlights their

struggles, triumphs, and transformations in predominantly white institutions of higher education.

Using their narratives, I wanted to explore how the women learned to navigate the culture of work and how they viewed themselves in their communities of practice. As Olesen (n.d.) reminds us, participation in societal work shapes identities and communities and enables the feeling of belonging. Since one's subjective notions of work is influenced by her view of herself in the workplace, it was important to explore the process of identity formation and development within the context of their academic profession. For a group of women who were socialized to learn and to work within the cultures of their home country, I felt it useful to also explore the ways in which issues of race, gender, and nationality intersect to affect how they make meaning of their learning experiences in academe, what knowledges are acquired, and how such knowledge influences changing patterns of work and relationships. Finally, I wished to examine the women's concept of "home", how they negotiate the multiple constructions of "homeplace", and how they define home in terms of the academic workplace. Since most of them used the biographical approach in writing their experiences, I felt it appropriate to use the life history methodological framework to guide the analysis.

13.3.2 Life Histories and Women's Lives

The life history approach highlights the importance of recognizing how learning experiences, meanings, and identities are socially constructed and reproduced through particular structures and power relations (Domince 2000). The methodological perspective used in this project falls within the domain of narrative analysis (Rossiter 2002). The narrative perspective is a broad orientation grounded in the premise that narrative is a fundamental structure of human meaning and making (Sarup 1996). Therefore, identity formation and the interpretation of work and learning experiences can be understood in terms of narrative structure and process. Moreover, Sarup explains that when we tell our stories, not only do our stories unfold, but we also construct our stories and, hence, our identities. As a result, our identities and our subjectivities are revealed in the telling of our stories.

As I read through the women's narratives, I was reminded of Heilbrun's (1988) perspective on women's lives. Heilbrun explained that in telling the stories of women, one needs to allow women the space to talk about their everyday negotiations and hard choices that are very different from those experienced by men. According to Heilbrun, the disclosure of pain or anger along with expressing a desire for power and control over one's life has been forbidden to women, leading them to take refuge in the

language of chance or destiny to describe their success in the public domain. The very different stories that women tell in their autobiographies and in their diaries attest to this division between what is revealed to the public world and what is acknowledged in private (Swaminathan 2004). Therefore, it makes sense to use the autobiographical writings of immigrant women to understand their experiences of learning and work and their interpretation of these experiences.

13.3.3 Learning and Work within the Culture of the Academic Workplace

In analyzing the women's narratives, three primary themes were identified. The first focuses on the notion of self as shaped by both internal and external definitions. The second theme emphasizes the struggles the women face, the battles they fight, and it centralizes the various learning strategies and resources they use to craft a space to work and to learn in the academy. The third theme reveals a struggle to define "home" and their view of self at "home" in the academy. Overall, their stories reveal a commitment to social justice and the necessity to carve out a research agenda that educates and, ultimately, dismantles ideologies of white supremacy. This sense of activism supports Sparks' (2000) argument that it is through informal learning in the workplace that such social action is initiated.

Reconstructing self in the academic spaces: Who am I? What am I?

As Homi Bhabha (1990) asserts, the question of identity is "always poised uncertainly, tenebrously, between shadow and substance" (p. 192). According to Campbell and Lavelle (1993), to talk about our identity, we try to answer the questions, "Who am I?" and "What am I?" Stuart Hall (1993) argues that there are two kinds of identity: identity as being, which offers a sense of unity and commonality, and identity of becoming, a process of identification which shows the discontinuity in our identity formation. It is this experience of rupture, displacement, and discontinuity that constitute identity formation and reformation for people on foreign lands. As immigrants, they navigate their dual positions of "subject" and "other" and such positioning influence the concept of self within various cultural spaces. These shifting notions of self influence her behaviour and how she positions her self to meet the expectations of the workplace.

Not surprisingly, the women discussed identity in two ways: the first focused on the ways others defined them and the second had to do with the identities they constructed along the way to manage their bicultural life structures. Indeed, they reflected on their self-definition and how

they were externally defined by others as the result of their immigrant status. Many lamented that members of the host country had certain expectations of them as foreigners — expectations that were often framed from the stereotypical images of their race, ethnicity, and nationality. Zandille, for example, noted, "There is a certain image that people are looking for when you say you are from Africa. You must act African, whatever that means." Omi and Winant (1986) point out that how one is categorized is far from a merely academic or even personal matter. They posit that being named is a political issue that has an impact on access to opportunities as well as access to both public and private goods.

The women had learned and understood the politics of naming, and many resisted being named by others and chose names that they felt were safe. However, they soon discovered their idea of safety was an illusion, as they could not escape the external definitions imposed by others. Many, for the first time, were identified as a minority, and they were expected to take their places as such. Some initially resisted the identification, but later came to terms with the contradictions of internal and external definitions of self. Janice was a graduate assistant at the time of her writing, and her story shed some light on this on-going tension.

> As a Black Caribbean immigrant female doctoral student, I was categorized as a minority and had become an alien resident. . . . I had come from a society in which I did not know what it was to be considered a minority, and I resisted being placed into that category. I had never had to think about my ethnicity before, and now it seemed I had to define and redefine myself constantly as I struggled with the hyphens. It is within this sociohistorical cultural context that I began the educational journey that would put me in touch with diverse characters, texts, and a range of discourses that would contribute to my constructions and reconstructions of self.

Janice spoke of her annoyance at being identified as African American, for being submerged in an identity that was not her own. Yet, at the same time, she understood the possibilities for racial profiling as a result of her Black body. She noted, "I was filled with contradictions." Of course, Janice was in America, a country that Waters (1999) describes as a "contradictory place for the immigrants – a land of greater opportunities than their homelands, but simultaneously, a place of racial stigma and discrimination" (p. 79). Janice had to learn to manage the stigma and the discrimination she encountered in the new country, and one way of doing that was to embark on an educational journey where she could broaden her worldview and acquire knowledge about the cultures of difference and the politics of oppression.

Like Janice, Ming-yeh struggled with the constructions and recon-structions of self and sense of place upon entering US higher education. She, too, tried to resist the stigma of racism by positioning herself away from the "minority" label and adopting a national identity. She noted,

> As an international student from a racially homogeneous soci-ety, I had just begun to grapple with the meaning of race and ra-cism. When I first came to the US, I used to position myself as a Chinese student from Taiwan, or an international student, who did not self-identify with any one racial group. The label of be-ing a Chinese student from Taiwan, an international student, a foreigner, I believed, suited me better than "Asian-American" or a woman of colour, not only because I did not have American citizenship, but also because these non-American labels seemed to create a comfort zone to distance myself from the racial poli-tics and oppressions in the US.

The generic label of "international student" that Ming-yeh had adopted upon first participating in the US educational system was not only inade-quate but appeared to be hiding a host of complex webs of relationships and identifications. However, through her mentoring relationship with an African American professor, Ming-yeh's subjectivity began to shift. By witnessing the endless battles her mentor endured as a woman of colour, she, then, began to question her own self-definition, recognizing that she could not escape the stereotypical images that members of the academy has of her as an Asian immigrant woman. She wrote, "The longer I worked with Juanita, the more similarities I could draw from our backgrounds, cul-tures, and experiences. Eventually, I decided to identify myself as an Asian American and a woman of colour, adding a new layer to my changing identities and forming alliances with my respectable colleague and sisters like her." Like Ming-yeh, how some of the women named themselves changed as they understood their own positions in relation to local and global politics. Ming-yeh made the conscious decision to come from be-hind the mask of the model international Asian student and take on the identity of a woman of colour. As she later noted, I am Asian, an interna-tional student, and a woman of colour.

From the women's narratives, there was a revealing sentiment that identities were multiple, fluid, and contradictory, and that we often strate-gically evoke identities to help us negotiate particular spaces and contexts. For immigrant women of the academy, finding answers to the questions "Who am I?" What am I? and "How do I fit in with this community of practice?" become critical to successful performance within the culture of the workplace. It is upon such exploration that one can begin to understand what it takes to succeed in the academic culture and, therefore, plans stra-tegically to make that happen. In Ming-yeh's case, creating relationships

with a significant person in the community was an important learning strategy. Janice, on the other hand, chose to engage in an academic journey in order to satisfy her quest for knowledge and understanding that would help her come to terms with the contradictions of internal and external definitions of "self" as a participant in the academic culture.

Learning the culture of academe

People often speak of culture shock as they make entry into new spaces. This is particular true of immigrants who were socialized to learn and to work in the country of origin with values and ways of being that are often quite different from those of the receiving country. Geleta (2004) suggests that in the academy, an individual's lack of understanding regarding social norms—the rules that guide actions and help us to understand other peoples' behaviour—lead to feelings of powerlessness and meaninglessness. Such feelings, she argues, are the result of culture shock and can lead to a lack of self confidence in one's ability to meet performance expectations. Commenting on her own experiences with culture shock, Geleta revealed,

> My own first few years in the academy were filled with doubts about my own capability to measure up. I found that I was ill equipped to complete all the work expected. My cultural upbringing did not prepare me for the multi-tasking that is part of the American culture. The value structure that I had of when things ought to happen and how they were made to happen became a conflict. For example, I realized that even though faculty members are allowed to take off for lunch breaks, most colleagues use any or all of their free time for catching up on the myriad of tasks expected of a faculty member. . . . I saw that my colleagues were skilled in grabbing a bite of cheese crackers as they worked, then quickly washing it down with a soda on their way to the next class or meeting. In my culture, I was socialized to believing that eating is a necessary social activity, and I realized that the sanctity of setting aside such a time was a mismatch with the culture of the academy. I was hit with the realization that carving the time to connect with other colleagues and to reflect on my teaching was a rare luxury. I learned to multitask and to think on my feet, literally; otherwise, I would not meet my obligations of teaching, advising, service, and pursuing scholarship through research, securing grants, and presenting at professional organizations. (2004, p. 23)

Although she was in culture shock, Geleta learned that in order to manage expectations of the academy, she had to learn to embrace change as an essential survival strategy. She had to learn and understand the differences between the host culture and her home culture as they relate to

performance in the work place. According to Adler (1975), culture shock in mild doses can be important for self-development and personal growth. Therefore, through informal learning and by observing members of her academic community, Geleta learned lessons necessary to guide her success in the academic culture. She had to negotiate the knowledge acquired during her early socialization in the home country in order to meet expectation in the host country. Because of the transnational orientation of many of today's immigrants (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992), she had to maintain a double consciousness of remaining grounded in the knowledge necessary to interact with members of her home country while learning the skills necessary to perform competently in her communities of practice. It was necessary for her to maintain a bicultural life structure.

Several of the women evoked DuBois' (1990) concept of double consciousness to describe their bicultural existence in and out of academe. They described the process of entering academe as a foreign born who was socialized in the culture of origin, their struggles to make sense of the cultural dynamics of the host culture, their alienation and marginalization within their communities of practice, and the disheartening realities of an academic culture that encourages the subordination of ethnic cultures and worldviews for the more Eurocentric, elitist ways of knowing. They learned that their culture was subordinate to that of the host country and, therefore, felt alienated and colonized all over in their new life space. According to Alicia,

> Academia is a context of alienation which has never been an open institution. It is an elitist system that scrutinizes participants, duplicating the divisions and categories of the larger society by reproducing, even enforcing, immigrant status and colonization. As newcomers, signs of our culture, class, and other distinguishing origins make us different than most professors and students and, consequently, we feel self-conscious as outsiders. Thus, we are pressured to assimilate to the culture of academe. . . . Our success within the academic environment means losing much of our native power and grace (Alicia Chavira-Prado 2004:235).

To Alicia, a professor of Mexican descent who first arrived in the US as an undocumented immigrant, success in the academy means giving up her ethnic self. The conditions under which she came and the challenges she endured as she journeyed to the halls of academe left her with a sense of being perpetually colonized. As she further noted, "As immigrants become ethnics in society, similarly in academia, we pass from being immigrants to being colonized" (p. 235). What we do not know with any certainty is how our subjectivity within the culture of work influences our performance and, hence, our success within that culture. At the time of the

writing of her story, Alicia had made the decision to separate herself from the academy as she felt that the negative experiences had become unbearable. Her subjective realities of the culture of the workplace were in contrast with her personal values and ideologies of belonging.

In search of a safe home to work and to learn

How the women named themselves and their place in the world changed as they better understood their own positions in relation to global and local politics. As a result of their experiences of being an "Other", they learned of new ways to build social and political agendas that would connect the traditional home with home in the Diaspora. Otrude Moyo, in summarizing the experiences of the immigrant faculty of colour in academe, speaks of her scholarship as a place of resistance, a place where she connects the old home with the new home. She notes,

> As a scholar who is Black, a woman, an immigrant from Africa, I, too, have contended with uneasy paradoxes in my life and work, which often marginalize me in the U.S academy. However, instead of being buried in this paradox, I have been conscious of it. Through my experiences, I have developed a "knapsack of strategies" which allows me to engage my politics. Such an engagement begins from an understanding of practices and consequences of global regimes of domination, which are ever present in my day-to-day relations (Moyo 2004:72).

Learning and understanding the politics allows Otrude to reconceptualize her position in the academy and to strategically plan ways to create a space for her to work and to continuously learn within the culture. She sees herself as an insider-outsider because she has learned to use her research to bridge issues from Africa with those of the US to create new forms of knowledge, thus broadening the discourse in higher education. This strategy keeps her grounded as a Black African immigrant woman in White-dominated spaces.

Similarly, Xae also draws from her bicultural experiences as a Puerto Rican to weave a professional life that encompasses the possibilities offered by her two cultures. As she said, "Through my teaching, I help students reflect on the experiences of the 'Other' through dialogue. Reflecting on these practices is crucial for providing reliable information to shatter stereotypes about those of us who continue to be perceived as the "Other".

Drawing from the margins to inform the centre appears to be the overall agenda of these women's activism. By so doing, they are validating home in the country of origin while creating new images of home among members of the host country. The notion of place, therefore, continues to

be a powerful force that preoccupies immigrant women of colour in their continued search for home and the struggle to retain real or imagined images of home. Home, therefore, becomes a multilayered, permeable phenomenon. It is paradoxical, in that, various dimensions of home intersect to inform immigrant women's subjectivity about learning and work in the Diaspora.

I end this section with Helen's reflection of "homeplace" and what it means for her as a British Afro-Caribbean immigrant. To Helen, home is not just as a physical space, but a place where one can be true to self without having to succumb to external definitions or stereotypical expectations. She said,

> Lately, I have been thinking about "place" and one's place in the world, in the academy, and in teaching. This is a phase in life that everyone reaches as a combination of life's experiences. I have reached a point in my life where I need to be myself. The term "place" is used synonymously with "home" as the physical place as well as a place you might call the geography of the soul, where I can be free, a place where I would always feel welcomed or taken in.

Similarly, Papastergiadis (1998) reminds us that the question of belonging in the new country requires a fundamental shift of our thinking in relation to place. Therefore, as Helen noted, in our search for "home" in and out of the workplace, it may be appropriate to move beyond the physical space to a more spiritual place—a place that she calls the geography of the soul. Bell hooks (1990) sees "homeplace" as a safe place—a place where the marginalized can retreat from an oppressive and dominating social reality. Indeed, the workplace can be oppressive and dominating and constructing "homeplace" in the workplace must be a part of the discourse on work, subjectivity, and learning.

13.4   Conclusion – Expanding the Discourse
on Workplace Learning

Work place learning has traditionally been framed within the discourse of human resource development, focusing primarily on corporate training, workplace literacy, and skills building. The primary purpose of human resource development activities is to increase human capital for corporate gains. It is hardly a coincidence, then, that work and learning has been linked by modern capitalism. It has been argued that these activities take little regard for other social dimensions that greatly influence the work life of individuals. As a result, the chapter highlighted the need for a deeper

understanding of workplace learning, one that is informed by the realities of those working across national borders. With the transnational movement of people in search of better economic opportunities, today's workplace represents a tapestry of nations, cultures, and identities, all intersecting at various junctures to inform subjectivities, work, and learning. Therefore, it is important to move beyond static notions of workplace learning to discourses that acknowledge the subjectivities of a multicultural workforce. Using narratives of immigrant women of colour in white academic spaces, this chapter highlighted the shifting notions of identity and place as they informed the learning experiences of immigrants. It makes the argument that workplace learning must be understood within the broader concepts of Diaspora and migration, place and the politics of location, and the negotiation and re-negotiation of identity.

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14

Workers, Subjectivity and Decent Work

Catherine Casey

This chapter explores ways in which renewed attention to the worker's subjectivity in the course of education, training and learning interventions can widen the personal and collective possibilities for workplace development and for enactment of decent work. The chapter critiques the prevailing focus on techno-economic imperatives and of obscured managerial elite interests in organizations that currently circumscribe and delimit worker subjectivities and their learning at work. The chapter also critiques the managerial notion of the human resource and proposes an alternative conceptualization of the worker as agentic subject. It proposes that active worker subjects may re-imagine and re-orientate organizational and worker learning to improve work practices and generate expanded horizons for decent work and civilized organizations.

14.1   Introduction

The education of workers has been variously theorized and practiced throughout the 20th century. Within these debates notions of the worker as the subject of education, training and learning programmes, as well as the agent of work and production activities, have been erratically addressed and under-theorised. The vague, implicit assumptions that have underpinned many theories and practices of worker education and training, even those of a humanistic and worker-oriented persuasion, have unintentionally enabled the wide uptake of an economically instrumental conception of the worker as a "human resource". Now, not only in areas of management and organization studies, but widely in education and training fields, the worker as human resource is a near-taken for granted conception. This

development, however, is neither a neutral one nor unproblematic for workers and their accompanying educators.

Current debates in worker education, in lifelong learning, and in organizational development are marked by a very often prevailing economic perspective that places emphasis on constructing "learning organizations" and on "human resource" learning. These learning imperatives are principally in the service of organizational strategies for innovation and competitive advantage in economic activities in the currently extolled knowledge-based economies. However, economic and managerial models scarcely attend to the human subjectivity of the learner-worker and the worker's diverse learning interests. Broader socio-cultural ends of worker learning that were prominently articulated throughout the 20th century (Dewey 1916; Friere 1973; Delors 1996) – such as lifelong human development, improved work-life and participatory citizenship in democratic society – are now very often overlooked. Critical educators including notably Coffield (1999), Fenwick (2001) and Scheid et al. (2001), express concerns that the new knowledge-based economies and the organizational and employment relations reforms they stimulate may be used by employers to undermine workers' rights and foreclose opportunities for advancing worker development.

Moreover, in very recent years, there is much effort to elaborate and expand notions of human and citizen rights and to operationalize these notions across wider spheres of life. Prominent among these efforts, and on a hoped-for global scale, is the International Labour Organization's promotion of 'decent work'. This notion, with its many implications, is now the central focus of the ILO's current agenda. Decent work means more than the basic decencies of freedom from child labour and gender and racial discrimination, rights to adequate pay, tolerable conditions and health and safety – even as these basic rights remain scarce for much of the world's working people. Decent work means attaining and sustaining provisions for developing opportunities for human development, for personal and collective participation in the regulation of work, for greater dignity at work, and for more convivial relations of production (ILO 1999, 2001; ICFTU 2003; Zarka-Martres and Guichard-Kelly 2005).

Are there possibilities for creative, generative, alliances between worker education, current imperatives for learning organizations, and making real 'decent work' in today's workplaces? A key linkage, I propose, is the conceptualization of the subject of these activities – the worker. I wish in this chapter to add to the critical discussions of concerns arising from recent economic and technological developments. I wish to discuss two matters that have direct bearing on conceptualisations of worker education and decent work. The first is an exposition of some crucial flaws in current demands for learning organizations that are set in economic and managerial

discourses and the conceptions of worker-learners these models espouse. The second poses an alternative construct to the managerial framework that restores the working person to the centre of concerns, and which may stimulate practical possibilities for enacting socio-political agendas for decent work and convivial workplaces. Many critical adult educators and management critics have long shared these concerns (Baptiste 2001; Fenwick 2001; Grey and Willmott 2005). My effort in this chapter is to offer a further elaboration of these criticisms. To begin, the chapter offers a critical discussion of current conceptions of learning organizations and learning workers.

14.2 Knowledge-Based Economies, Organizations and Learning

Current drives in OECD countries toward achieving knowledge-based economies, characterized by increased production of knowledge and information-rich products through ever-expanding electronic and computer technologies of production, communication, and financial exchange (Beck 2000; Castells 1996; Harvey 1989; Heckscher 1988; Kochan et al. 1995) are effecting considerable changes to the world of work and organizations. These economic developments are generating changes to labour markets, organizational practices, to workplace life, and to workers' experiences of work. At the everyday level, they manifest, for example, in demands for organizational restructuring, for down-sizing, for flexible employment relations, such as temporary jobs, longer or shorter working hours, and for intensified worker productivity. Many of these developments occur in conflict with other social and cultural aspirations, such as for secure employment, social inclusion, community development, and quality of working life.

Economic and business leaders now promote an intensified drive toward product and process innovation and for knowledge-rich production of goods and services. At the political level, these developments are expressed in demands for developed countries to become "learning economies / learning societies". At the organizational level of this discourse new theories of organization and management place emphatic attention on generating "learning organizations" for the achievement of innovation and advantage (Boisot 1998; Senge 1999; Stewart 1997). The complex impact of these economic, technological, and organizational developments includes alterations to modern conceptions of organization and workers, and of workers' education and learning.

The concept of the "learning organization" is premised on an idea that human knowledge as human capital is now the principal productive force in contemporary capitalism (Boisot 1998; Harvey 1989; Senge 1990, 1999; Stewart 1997; Reich 1991). The learning organization is now extolled as the pivotal agent in technological innovation and competitive success. A heightened re-privileging of managerial agency in organizational design and behaviour represses recognition and legitimacy of the role of political action on the part of workers' unions and their demands – that were more visible in the latter 20th century – for participatory forms of industrial organization and for worker learning.

The humanistic, participatory forms of organizations which industrial democracy and adult education movements have long advocated, in which worker education enhanced both practical skills and personal development, have more recently given way to *strategic organizational learning* models serving singular organizational business imperatives. These find expression, for instance, in management decisions, including on the retention or discarding of labour, being oriented solely according to the organization's "core business" of profit making and shareholder satisfaction.

Strategic management's emphasis on learning in organizations privileges the organization as the learner – it is abstracted, collective learning in order for the organization to respond and innovate that is regarded as the singular imperative of learning organizations. The learning needs of the organization, as defined by management, override or occlude attention to the needs of individual learning workers. Individual learning is legitimated solely according to criteria for its contribution to organizational learning. As the influential European economists Lundvall and Borras (1997) put it, worker and organizational learning and knowledge, are for "the shaping of institutions and structures of production so that the innovation system becomes better suited to future market developments" (p. 64).

Moreover, in this model, even attention to interactive learning, which one might assume to be learning occurring among interacting human actors, has largely concentrated on the institutional level – on the effects of inter-organizational interactions on the functioning of economic institutions, particularly industrial organizations (e.g. Lundvall 1988; Lundvall and Borras 1997).

These current conceptions of organizational learning, which entail an acute abstraction of the individual person as learner, eschew competing approaches to work and organization, especially those that envision work, and workers, as more than instrumental economic activity. The definition and legitimation by economic and managerial elites of key concepts in contemporary debates on learning workers and learning organizations has immense implications for worker education, and for the prospects of revitalising socio-political aspirations for decent work and democratic participation

in the workplace. Most pressingly, are the implications ensuing from a further pivotal element in the hyper-rational managerial model, that of the "human resource".

14.3   The Human Resource

The trend toward hyper-rationalised models of production, organization and management, and for lean, tightly controlled operations, requires a correspondingly altered conception of the worker, and of worker learning. A principal concept of the learning organization, which underpins the successful shift of worker-focused lifelong learning to a managerial one, is the notion of the "human resource". The concept emerged in the 1980s (see discussions in, for example, Guest 1987; Kochan et al. 1995; Whittington 1993; Wright and McMahan 1992) and gained rapid popularity in economic, management, and organizational theory and practice. Although the concept clearly manifests a privileging of organizational system rationalities and managerial priorities, its use is now widespread and virtually taken for granted. It is even sometimes employed in traditionally more humanistic adult education literature (e.g. Knowles et al. 1998), but importantly remains refused by some critical educationists (Coffield 1999; Fenwick 2001; Howell et al. 2002; Schied et al. 2001). For many, though, the term has displaced former concepts such as personnel and staff, and encouraged a view of management as the legitimately dominant party in industrial management. With respect to current policies and programmes toward the development of learning organizations and learning workers, the widespread utilisation of the concept of the human resource affects conceptions of knowledge and learning and narrows the options for worker education.

The managerially-framed model of learning organizations conceives the worker, (which is a term evoking older connotations of an integrated relation between the person, her knowledge and skill, and the doing of work) as being more readily strategically utilised by rendering as a "human resource". As an abstracted component in the organizational production process, like other production resources of material and plant, the worker is rationalised into correspondence with rational management. As a human resource, the worker is an object of utility for the organization, and accordingly of its overtly privileged stratum of agentic management. The worker's human needs, interests, aspirations and irrationalities are eclipsed and rationalised by the technical resource imperative of the organization. The needs of the organization are, in this model, determined and normalised by a managerial cadre, which practices a strategic utilisation and management of resources toward their attainment (Porter 1991; Whittington 1993; Storey 1989).

The managerial organizational concept of human resource has direct implications for contemporary understandings of organizational learning and worker learning in a politically-promoted learning economy. Within the apparently widely accepted logic of instrumentally rational organization, the concept of human resource is put forward as a sensible, pragmatic organizational concept. An implicit convergence of managerial interests with organizational ones – a common ideology in contemporary managerialist organization studies – presents the concept as legitimate, descriptive and neutral. Indeed, while it may well serve to deligitimise or marginalise the demands of workers and trade unions for humanistic conceptions of the worker, the term is regularly employed by trade unions and worker educators.

The model of the ideal learning organization proposes a rational alignment of workers with the organization's rational techno-economic imperatives. The organizational level of learning in the managerial perspective requires institutional reform toward facilitating the strategic selection of innovative ideas, knowledge pursuits, technological developments and ways of doing things. Consequently, organizational learning is framed by a focus on learning directed to the tasks of selection, coordination and retention of practical and theoretical productive knowledge. It includes the extraction and codification of workers' personal capacities, tacit knowledge and affective creativity. It also includes strategic containment of worker knowledge. The strategic championing of selected knowledge forms is directed toward instrumentally-defined organizational goals pursued in organizational environments conceived as highly competitive and increasingly global. Illustrations of this approach are readily found in training programmes for organizational and workplace learning (e.g. Garvin 2000; Marquardt 1996; Senge 1990, 1999.).

However, the idealised managerial model of the learning human resource rationally aligned with the learning organization in a learning economy contains a fundamental oversight. Notwithstanding strong demands for technological innovations and economic efficiencies at the organizational level in the forced correspondence of the rationalised worker, organizations are also sites of myriad human activities and learning agenda. As numerous studies have shown workers, who rarely behave as ideal human resources, try to exercise various forms and degrees of control over their learning processes and those of the collective organization (Burawoy 1985; Casey 2002; Jermier et al 1994; Kunda 1992). As long as workers with the demonstrated propensity for diverse learning at work and in other arenas of adult life are reduced to the status of human resource for distant others' ends, and denied recognition of their multiple needs and motivations, underlying tensions will frustrate and delimit their learning potential – for themselves and the organization. Irrespective of remunerative

incentives, soft motivation campaigns, or more overt disciplinary and co-ercive means, workers performing a resource-defined role will find ways to contain and withhold not only their expertise but their commitment.

A widening and reframing of the currently dominant management approach, as some critical analysts are endeavouring to do (Fenwick 2001; Howell et al. 2002; Schied et al. 2001), allows for a reimagination of or-ganizations as sites for the development and practice of innovative human relations in the organization of production, work, and self-creation. Such a reconception of the managerially-framed notion proposes more convivial concrete organizations and personnel, and importantly enables a substan-tive realignment of the notion of the learning economy, currently extolled by the advanced industrialised countries, with socio-cultural development and democratic citizenship in which learning and education are more broadly conceived.

Recognising the limits of abstract instrumental rationalities em-bedded in the managerially-focused agenda for enhanced organizational learning allows for a response to diverse expressions of workers' interests and demands in their workplace experiences. Such recognition motivates a turn away from human resource concepts. It allows for a reconceptualisa-tion of knowledge beyond monological instrumental terms. It elevates a more complex notion of the worker learning as a subject of her or his life and work. The worker subject in all her and his complex humanity works in and co-constitutes a learning organization. A conceptual shift of this magnitude may enable a theoretical and practical expansion of what it means to do decent work and sustain convivial workplaces.

14.4   Workers: Subjectivity and Learning

The technical reduction of humans to organizational utility abstracts *in-strumental* rationality from a *substantive* rationality of socio-cultural ends. It elides an ethic of human subjectivity as an end in itself into an undiffer-entiated instrumental rationality. This ethically devoid utility not only de-bases the human experience of organizational work – even if production efficiencies and market advantage are expanded – it ultimately truncates the potential for human initiative and creative imagination. It is the latter that comprise rich resources not only for innovation and organizational success in strict economic terms, but for organizational transformation in more comprehensive ways. The facilitation of greater development of per-sons working for more than a singular rational and economic imperative recognises work as potentially self-fulfilling and socially participatory.

The everyday life of organizations readily exhibits to any close observer myriad competing rationalities among individuals and groups of

workers. These competing rationalities and currents of interest manifestly challenge and interrupt the officially, solely privileged instrumental rationalities of economy. As adult educators have long known, the learning gained and pursued by workers is diverse and oftentimes contradictory to that desired by organizational managers and trainers (Casey 2002; Istance et al. 2002; Jarvis 2000; Lewin and Regine 2000). The challenge in the arena of education for workers within a learning-seeking organization is to recognise, address and accommodate multiple motivations and agenda in learning needs and aspirations.

This suggestion does not require that the realist recognition that an organization comes together by and large for the pursuit of a primary set of rational purposes be set aside. But it does require recognition that the pursuit of a primary set of purposes – especially when those purposes are determined by controlling elites – is always in relation to intersecting and competing unofficial purposes with varying attachments and investments. A managerial view of this form of organizational diversity regards it as a problem for organizational managers faced daily with the task of achieving more or less a rational order of things and outcomes. But recognition of these diverse interests is a necessary step for a creative repositioning of the dominant and impoverished managerial view. Surrendering the singular privileging of instrumental rationality, and its concomitant conceptions of organizational design and process, which drives contemporary learning economy and learning organization imperatives opens up rich possibilities for organizational life. A concept of the learning organization that goes beyond an instrumental logic entails a restoration of person-centredness to learning. It recognises that workers have multiple life interests in which their performance of organizational labour is just one.

As a first step in moving organizational learning and worker education away from conventional managerial models, and in opening up possibilities for richer educational opportunities in the workplace and beyond it, I propose an alternative concept of the learner as a worker and as a subject. This concept imagines the learner, not as a rationalised, abstracted human resource and object of organizational utility, but as a subject who works, desires, and learns. I turn now to elaborate this concept and explain its vital role in organizational innovation and in the restoration of democratic citizenship in the so-called learning economies. The questions orienting this discussion are: Who is the learning-worker? What is her/his relationship with the learning organization?

The conventional answer to those questions can be readily discerned in prevailing organizational approaches to education and training of

workers. In privileging the organization's needs for particular developmental trajectories, for skills and competencies generating product innovation and production efficiency (Archibugi and Lundvall 2001; Garvin 2000; Marquardt 1996; Senge 1990, 1999) the learning worker is rendered simply as a smart component. Moreover, in serving economic organization needs, much of vocational education, worker training, and human resource development has focused on socialisation and training of individuals for participation in industrial institutional roles specifically for employing organizations and generally in a work-based society. As critics have pointed out, these approaches have practised a schooling-type socialisation function of the under-socialised adult worker into either occupational roles or, more specifically, predetermined organization roles as employees (Casey 1995; Istance et al. 2002; Jarvis 2000; Leymann and Kornbluh 1989). While this social reproductive model has been much criticised in recent decades in the education of children (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990; Popkewitz 1987; Wexler 1987), critical voices in organizational learning and worker education and training have scarcely been heard. Instead, a heightened emphasis is placed on organizational systemic needs for specific learning and knowledge utilisation directed toward optimisation of production (Lundvall and Borras 1997).

The contemporary dominant, hyper-rational, model of organization that reduces human actors in organizational activity to objects of utility, runs contrary to humanistic theories and practices of education, especially the principles of lifelong education. For lifelong education to include learning and development in the workplace – where the vast majority of adults spend much of their lives – these impoverished and one-sided conceptions must be redressed and surpassed. But the challenge, as other critics have recognized (e.g. Coffield 2000; Fenwick 2001), to surpass hyper-rationalised conceptions is considerable. I offer below a contribution to that effort. I endeavour to outline a reconceptualisation of the person at work, and of the learning worker. In particular, I draw on the thought of French sociologist Alain Touraine (1995, 1996) in ways that bear direct application to the tasks of organizational reconceptualisation beyond the neo-rational model, to the education of workers in full recognition of their subjectivity.

Central to Touraine's extensive sociological ouvre has been the development of the notion of the subject – of the human actor in history that modernity has engendered. Arising from a tradition in French philosophy that Touraine complexly traces to include significantly Marx and Rousseau, St. Paul and Augustine (Touraine 1995), Touraine's thesis comprehensively critiques modernity and simultaneously rejects postmodern subjecti-

fication[1]. This complex philosophical path has lead to his theorisation of a concept of the Subject. The Subject, for Touraine, is an idea of the human person that refuses reduction to rationalisation. The subject is neither a product of power as conceived by contemporary structuralist and Foucauldian theorisations, nor is it reduced to a rationally-choosing economic agent as neo-liberal theorists purport. Touraine's subject refuses both traditional identifications and subjectifications and the rationalisation and instrumentalisation of personal and collective life (1996:297). Rather, the human subject is, for Touraine, one who seeks freedom and creation, autonomy and relatedness, reason and affect and spirit. It is this subject – the resistor of the demands of instrumentality – who is able to act and to create.

Subjectivation – the process by which one becomes an acting, self-creating, subject – is achieved through "an individual's will to act and to be recognised as an actor" (Touraine 1995:207). Subject-actors, striving beyond the received conditions of tradition and instrumental rationality, construct personal self-projects through the events of their lives. They strive to create spaces for autonomy and freedom. For Touraine, in the process of subjectivation the individual constructs its individuation against the world of economic rationalities and commodities and the world of community, and it succeeds in its individuation as it is able to unite instrumental rationality and relational identity. The subject strives for its subjectivation in all dimensions of life, not least in its working life.

This notion of a complex, acting Subject who resists and appropriates rationality and affectivity is an important one for the theory and practice of lifelong education. The recognition of contemporary workers seeking subjectivation – against long class histories of *subjectification* at work – demands a substantive shift in the conception of workers and in organizational arrangements accommodating them. Notwithstanding, or in spite of, the demands of hyper-rationalised organizational workplaces, a number of researchers of contemporary work practices (Casey 2002; Handy 1997; Lewin and Regine 2000; Rifkin 2000) observe much evidence that many people are demanding, often in idiosyncratic ways, self-expressive, self-creating space. In addition to the demands for economic remuneration and collective conditions, the efforts of many contemporary workers include improvements in bodily and affective well-being (as in various mind-body therapies, Yoga, alternative health practices and so forth), spiritual quests,

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[1] A full explanatory discussion of this notion must be deferred here. Suffice to say, perhaps, is that in rejecting Foucault's notion in particular of ineluctable subjection to diverse power schema and structural forces in which persons and their subjectivities are always already subjugated, Touraine proposes struggle, individual and collective movement, and socio-cultural change.

and identity constructions around sexualities, ethnicities, and ecological sensibilities, and community building. These efforts indicate self-creation struggles and alternative value setting to that privileged in an overly rationalised technocratic workplace. Their practitioners are seeking agentic subjectivation in creating their lives and acting in the world. In addition to these self-expressivist aspirations, there is evidence of growing collective demands for work-life balance, for family-friendly workplaces, and for more relationally satisfying work environments.

If we take this notion of the subject into organizational life, we are faced with a very different notion of the worker, as an agentic, learning, relational person whose actions and choices are more than instrumentally rational. The managerially defined human resource, a notion that epitomises the reduction of the person to a commodified object of instrumental utility is disrupted. The conventional strategic management conception of the human resource and its concomitant conceptions of organizational learning and human resource development must be rescinded. A reconceptualisation of the learning worker as a subject at work – as a Subject-worker – makes possible the stimulation of new concepts and forms of knowledge. It demands theoretical and institutional changes toward a more complex grasp of learning and development in a social economy. This turn of the subject-actor, for which there appears growing evidence in the rise, for instance, of identity movements, religio-cultural value demands, and political-economic pluralisms (Casey 2002; Castells 1997; Lewin and Regine 2000; Melucci 1996; Rifkin 2000), makes possible the stimulation of participatory processes in organizational life which are vital to the reinvention of organizations and work practices, and of democracy in post-industrial societies.

14.5   Subjects, Learning and Decent Work

Having sketched out a moral ideal for organizational worker-learners to be reconceptualised as subjects, possessing complex desires and imperatives for agency and creation, let us turn to consider how production organizations – and educators working at the organizational level – may accommodate and utilise a new concept of learning workers, and of learning organizations. Managerial approaches to learning and knowledge creation focus on rational and strategic learning. A richer conception confronts the challenge of facilitating and shaping multiple learning agenda. A vision of life-long education encompassing workplace learning recognizes the validity of both rationally useful and intrinsically developmental learning. As such it demands a congruence of organizational and production activity with substantive socio-cultural values. That is, rational production imperatives must be met alongside the subject-worker's demands for personal value

and active participation in organizational life. In organizations which con-
tinue to practise a narrow agenda of management-defined instrumental
learning among workers, and retain the transmission of education and
training of workers in traditional ways, e.g. via expert professional to defi-
cient worker, the learning accomplished will reflect that model. It will
typically produce specific and delimited knowledge for problem-solving
within conventional frameworks. Conformity and compliance to alienating
production systems generate expected outcomes which include a measure
of productivity gain, but exacerbate rebelliousness, dissent, and strategic
withholding of worker commitment and intelligence.

A conventional managerial approach to worker learning which
fails to recognise the more complex needs and interests of worker learners
and obstructs efforts toward worker participation and organizational de-
mocracy produces only conventional learning outcomes. As a conse-
quence, neither the organization nor the worker learns in ways more ap-
propriate to contemporary post-industrial conditions. In other words,
despite growing complexity in production and trading systems in globalis-
ing markets, the expansion of post-Fordist, flexible, contingent organiza-
tions, and growing socio-cultural diversity, a narrowly conceived instru-
mental, resource-based model of organizational learning fails to deal with
contemporary complexities and diverse currents of demands – in effect de-
nying or suppressing the realities of both.

For Touraine, the idea of the subject and its relation to social insti-
tutions requires in the first instance a refusal. The worker as Subject re-
fuses the monological instrumental rationality privileged in the organiza-
tion's reduction of labour to an apparatus of production. This refusal
entails a rejection of concomitant notions of worker learning. Notions of
worker learning and organizational learning which are conceived solely in
terms of their strategic functionality or dysfunctionality for the organiza-
tional system are rendered grossly inadequate and redundant. A more ap-
propriate conception for the development of education and training in or-
ganizations recognises that the worker is neither an anonymous object of
utility, nor a disengaged, a-social individualist. Rather, the worker con-
ceived as Subject is a relational person with individual and collective de-
sires and goals, selectively employing instrumental rationalities, affective
sensibilities and substantive socio-cultural values toward her/his self-
creation projects.

The recognition and facilitation of a complex learning agenda,
rather than its suppression and denial as in managerial models of organiza-
tion and human resource learning, enables a conception of production or-
ganizations which are constructed according to the dynamics of participa-
tion, negotiation and collective goal setting. The rejection of human
resource models opens admission to organizational complexity beyond

both functionalist utility or elite ideological control. It conceives the ability of individuals to combine their diverse skills and imaginations for the attainment of common, collectively negotiated, goals. Their collective productive intelligence depends on coordination, mutual adjustments and personal initiatives in common work. This alternative ideal of learning workers and their production organizations – as an accomplishment of re-vitalised models of lifelong education in conjunction with organizations – engenders an expansion and revitalisation of democratic process within organizational life and potentially in social life more broadly.

Relinquishing concepts of knowledge as solely an instrumental re-source that must be abstracted from commodified workers enables a vital organizational innovation. Concomitantly, the admission of an ideal in which the person at work is conceived as a subject with life interests and personal projects beyond those of the world of work and employing or-ganizations allows for a legitimate but morally delimited role of instru-mental rationalities and their institutionalisation in contemporary organiza-tions. It delimits the demands for education and training for innovation and organizational competitiveness. And it repositions the elevated, ideological position of managerial control over worker knowledge.

The organization that integrates these cognisances and institution-alises these values produces and allows dynamic action capable of trans-forming the organization beyond the industrial vision. It breaks with the instrumentally congealed modernist conceptions of organizations and takes up the collective task of creating learning organizations appropriate to a post-industrial society. It makes possible not only new forms of socially constructed organizational action for productive and economic goals, but action admitting new dynamics of creativity. These dynamics are the key to practical innovations in technology and labour process, as they are key to socio-cultural innovations resulting from the value demands of subject-workers, and subject-citizens. A generative interface between political no-tions of a learning economy and socio-political aspirations for expanded notions of decent work, beyond the enduringly necessary fair pay and safe conditions demands, and beyond juridically defined notions is conse-quently opened up.

Of course, these demands for organizational reconceptualisation and relinquishment of managerial holds over the terms of debate are scarcely palatable to managerial interests and to organizational learning models conceived in that framework. Nonetheless, it is to organizational developers and educators, as well as academic commentators, that I direct these theoretical propositions. A dynamic conception of organizations rec-ognises that setting the terms and agenda of organizational learning is a political process and not necessarily a forgone conclusion of managerial privilege and workers' acceptance. When participatory avenues are closed,

consequences manifest in the passive demands of disaffected employees in the withholding of competence and the pursuit of alternative self-satisfying expression[2]. Such outcomes are typically seen as obstructions to organizational learning and innovation. But a reconceptualisation of organizational knowledge and worker learning in accordance with the recognition of the subject status of the working person can mitigate those obstructions and contribute to the construction of new organizational institutions, including those for participatory structures of governance and management. Recognition, rather than suppression, of the political contest over the stakes of organizational life is a key condition of these changes.

A learning organization conceived as comprising learning worker-subjects is capable of institutional transformation of a nature rarely admissible by instrumentally driven conventional organizations. In this model, managerial power, notwithstanding its currently reasserted privileging, is recognized as one important force among others in organizational and workplace activity. Workers, trade unions and worker educators gain more socio-political space for a renewed assertion of their agenda for the education of workers for agentic participation toward plural goals in organizational life. This plurality of goals, which include economic goals and non-economic, cultural goals; emancipation and self-determination, rests on a full recognition of the needs of workers in plural, democratic societies. Furthermore, a rejection of the conception "human resources" and a reconceptualisation of learning in organizations to reflect the moral ideal of the worker-subject make possible a renewed and effective link of organizational practice with broader cultural notions of persons and citizenship. Conceptions of decent work are expanded to a demand for a correspondence between citizens of civil society and citizenship in organizational workplaces. Development of capacities for self-directedness, cooperative endeavour, trusted utilisation of expertise, and for participatory management relations in the workplace reflects and encourages the revitalisation of models of civil, democratic society.

14.6   Conclusion

The subjugation of notions of personhood at work, and of substantive socio-cultural ends of rational economic activity, is commonplace in today's workplaces. Their prevalence makes critique and reconstruction even more imperative. Reconceptualising the worker, who is the subject of

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[2] Numerous examples of these include deliberate mediocre performance, elaborate practical joking and playing fantasy games on the Internet. See, for example, Casey (2002); Jermier et al. (1994); Kunda (1992) for further discussion.

work and of learning in contemporary knowledge-based economies, is vital for both the articulation of a moral ideal, and for the imagination of learning organizations beyond their currently truncated conceptions. The idea of the worker as subject is a principal key in the conceptualisation of both new forms of knowledge and the substantive socio-cultural ends of knowledge. This subject, as I have outlined above, is increasingly demanding new and reimagined social arrangements. Cultural currents of self-expressivism, identity movements, ecology and ethical debates represent some iterations of the newly demanding subject. Articulation of these demands in workplaces contributes to a widening of the agenda of decent work and practically advancing it in concrete situations.

Within a movement toward a globalising learning economy a sophisticated organizational strategy arises in the recognition of the demands of the aspirant- subject and a strategic alignment with the moral ideal struggling for articulation in these demands. Proponents of organizational learning and worker education may find much that is useful in a conception of the worker as agentic subject who brings her rich capacities for life – as a desiring, creating, relational person – into her working life and organizational participations. Such a recognition may contribute to the development of innovative and sophisticated organizations. In turn, innovative organizations practicing decent work may stimulate renewed potential for a revitalisation of democracy and the reduction of social fragmentation on a global scale.

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15

Work, Subjectivity and Learning: Prospects and Issues

Tara Fenwick and Margaret Somerville

Work communities are powerful sites of identity, practices and knowledge systems in which individual workers' desires for recognition, competence, participation and meaning are imbricated. In the new times of increased flexibility and rapid transmission of information, people and capital through globalised networks, worker subjectivity arguably has become a primary target of work learning to ensure organisational survival. The researchers contributing to this volume have explored how particular subjectivities are constituted among these varied coordinates, and how learning processes are implicated in individuals' subjections, negotiations, assertions and shifts of subjectivity. Butler (1992:13) maintains that the 'subject is neither a ground nor a product, but the permanent possibility of a certain resignifying process'. In this possibility, in this ongoing constitution, lies the agency of the subject. Subjects are intertwined with the social practice of work in which they participate and from which they learn, reflecting a complex interaction between subjects' sense of knowledge, agency and desire with their immersion in cultural images, invocations and social activities that bring forth practices of subjectivity. These shape how people engage with and make sense of what they experience and perform socially. But clearly, subjects participate in their own constitution in psychic, social and material ways, raising questions about the precise nature of agency and the possibilities of freedom.

Thus there are diverse perspectives of this subjectivation process and its centrality to the processes of learning throughout working life. Some authors in this book view subjectivity as formation of an autonomous identity or sense of self, and propose a direct role for individual agency and intentionality in work and learning. Others view the subject as derived from and articulated in participation and learning through practices, shaped by particular spatial-temporal arrangements of workplaces. Some view agency as a product or effect of discourses intersecting

with material practices: an exercise of power, not an escape from it. As Edwards and Nicoll state, 'Agency is not the opposite of power, but is only possible through forms of order.' Others view agency as an individual's internal resource fashioned as will, intention and capacity to act.

But as Jean-Luc Nancy (1991) has suggested, theorising about the human subject in terms of *what* it is closes down possibilities for subjectivity, rather than opening them up or at least keeping them open. And in the chapters here, authors focus not on definitions but portrayals of subjectivity in motion: desiring and resisting identifications, becoming aware of subjectivation processes, learning consequences of various positionings, sliding in spaces between possible identities, discerning and pursuing what Davies (2000) calls 'lines of flight'. Most authors are concerned that these vital struggles and movements of subjectivity, sometimes at the most intimate levels, are often lost in broad discussions of work learning in which people are reduced to abstractions, or in which learning and subjectivation processes are ignored in a workplace press for productivity and performance. Most authors here are fundamentally interested in promoting more rich possibilities for subjects: confirming the actual and often occluded struggles of subjectivation going on, seeking new figurations of the subject, and opening or keeping open new sites of action and subject constitution, towards new notions of solidarity and community. In this chapter we examine these different perspectives of worker subjectivit/ies emerging in changing contexts of work, and highlight issues of learning and subjectivity towards which authors in this book direct their primary concern. Finally, we look forward to future questions for inquiry: both those raised in the chapters and others waiting to be uncovered. Our readings of these chapters are, of course, partial and idiosyncratic. We do not presume to summarize the authors' arguments, which are far too complex and nuanced to be reduced to a few sentences. We gesture to these arguments, through our limited interpretations, by way of working out our own understandings of work, learning and subjectivity.

15.1   Changing Contexts of Work

One of the main imperatives for considering the relations among work, subjectivity and learning has arisen from discourses about the changing nature of work. Edwards and Nicholl have suggested, for example, that we have moved from 'Fordist production lines' to contemporary workplaces where 'there is an eliciting of certain dispositions to be an innovative and flexible knowledge worker'. Apart from the two theoretical chapters, the empirical work that informs each chapter is located in particular work

contexts. It is important to ask: how do those changing contexts affect the subjectivities produced there?

A wide range of different work contexts are considered in this collection, including farms, factories, banks, schools, TAFE colleges, universities, mines, aged care facilities, and fruit and vegetable markets. These work sites are generally characterised by a continuity of traditional work practices, but in most cases it is clear that the context of work is changing. For example, academic work now encompasses e-learning; miners have moved from mining with a pick and shovel at the rock face to mining by remote control in an office block; and farm wives struggle to negotiate new gender relationships. Even where workers have initiated new flexible work arrangements such as those of portfolio workers, many elements of traditional work practice remain. One of the portfolio workers practices homecare nursing, a continuity with much of women's unpaid care work, and another offers graduate classes in two universities as a sessional contract worker. These aspects of traditional work practice are mixed with new characteristics across all of the workplaces.

The predominant change in the work context appears to be in the type of subjectivities 'called forth' in each of these workplaces. Almost all of the workplaces, from the more traditional to the more fluid and contemporary work situations, are characterised by changing discourses of subjectivity. Learning is fundamentally implicated in the process of changing subjectivities. What counts as knowledge has changed, how workers learn has changed, and acquiring new or modified subjectivities requires processes of learning.

15.2 Issues of Subjectivity in Work

As many have pointed out, the global forces of what Bauman (2000) has termed 'molten capitalism' combined with various forces of individualisation in work and other sites have fashioned an ideal neoliberal subject. This is the self-made person, flexible, fast and innovative, infinitely capable and mobile, facing eternal choices and personally accountable for making them and suffering their consequences. Alongside this subject persist many other subject positions alluded to in this volume, from aggressively tough masculine labourer (Abrahamsson) to cuff-linked corporate doll (Church). These positions are not closed and in fact, naming them only fixes them momentarily: each represents a complex interplay of discourses and effects, and each intersects with other subject positions. And subjectivity is far more than a process of desiring and inhabiting particular subject positions, or struggling in spaces between them. Nor are people simply subjected to a particular subjectivity, even one as pervasive and compelling

as the ideal neoliberal subject. Desire is a critical dynamic in the process, to possess not just things or states of mind like mastery, but to belong to particular communities and ideologies. Self-regulation is another, for as Edwards and Nicoll show, power works fundamentally through internalised governance. Learning is implicated in all of these dynamics, and some of the most interesting questions are about how subjects learn desire and strategies of self-regulation, how they learn in their activity together to constitute and to recognise these constitution processes of subjectivity, and how they learn alternate passages and articulations.

As Foucault enjoined us, the task is to understand material constitution (and reconstitution) of subjects: 'we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts, etc' (1980:97). Further, the task is to deconstruct subject positionings, to apprehend openings for freedom, and at the same time, as Davies (2004) emphasises, to acknowledge the situated contingency of such investigations: 'all attempts at truth-telling about subjectivities are potentially productive of new or altered subject-positionings'. Bearing in mind this contingency, we turn now to examine the truth-telling of authors represented in this collection.

15.3   Constitution and Mobilisation Processes of Subjectivities

Authors here explore issues about how subjectivities are constituted and mobilised in contemporary work contexts. Thrift and Pile (1995) have categorised six elements of these subjectivation processes: positions and politics of location, movement, social and material practices in particular sites, encounters, representations and aesthetics, and regimes of the visual. While Thrift and Pile are working from a cartographic perspective, 'mapping' the subject using constructs of cultural geography, these elements are evident throughout the chapters here and thus make a useful organising device to examine these authors' issues of subjectivity in work.

15.3.1 Positions and Politics of Location

From the range of subject positions available in work (within relationships, occupational disciplines, organisations, etc) subjects all confront the task of finding an acceptable position in which to pronounce and live subjectivity. 'Position' is a misleading signifier, for it implies a certain singularity and fixity that, even if desired by a subject, is always elusive. Subjects are

always in movement, mobilised by spatial and temporal work arrangements as well as by identificatory desires: to belong to this group or inhabit that identity. Hey (2002) shows that some subjects long for recognition by particular groups, to be/long, and will desire and identify even with positions representing what they loathe. Workplace communities work on these longings to inculcate the subject's desire to self-manage an identity required for the community's continuity. Eteläpelto and Saarinen's study of student teachers seeking to enact a 'professional' teacher identity illustrates this dynamic. In these authors' interpretation, the extent of the students' subjectivation depended on the extent they were able to actively participate in the community. Participation referred to the convergence of the learners' personal goals, plans and intentional projects in a 'favourable environment', that is, that offered resources for them to 'practise agency' within the community. The extent to which students had come to desire the necessary self-regulation to enact the subject position of 'professional teacher' is revealed in their narratives of 'learning': when asked what was their most meaningful learning experience, most mentioned learning to manage their emotions in a 'challenging' situation.

More generative questions of learning tend to examine how subjects become aware of alternate positions, what resources they draw upon to constitute their different positions, or why they do or do not take up different discourses of self. Abrahamsson's study of miners shows that their desire for continued recognition and approval by the traditional mining brotherhood, shifting to a growing awareness of the possibility to belong to an altered masculine identity, mediated their desire to learn the new technologies introduced in the mine. Ultimately learning might be viewed as seeking new figurations, finding new hybrids, even influencing spatio-temporal arrangements to open new possibilities, of subjectivity in work. Alfred's analysis of immigrant women shows how they navigate various positions of self and other, here and there, imagined past identity and excluded present identity, while pursuing a sense of belonging – of home – in their work. This pursuit for Alfred's women was complicated by racism, by external namings of their identity in the US (Black, African-American, minority) that refused the nuanced Caribbean subjectivity they struggled to enact.

15.3.2 Movement

Thus living subjectivity in work is a process of provisional and open-ended movement. Despite repressive positions and identities invoked by work arrangements and discourses, living subjects can and do disrupt limiting significations. Some authors view this as 'full participation' or learning,

believing that agency is exercised in this movement. But as Alfred's stories show, these confrontations and escapes are not without pain. The more contingency and dislocation experienced by the working subject, it seems, the more compelling becomes the desire for 'home' in work. Allan's study of farm women in New Zealand reveals the flip side of this: their isolated home with its rigid gendered codes was the centre of their farmwork and the prison of their subjectivity. Out of deep distress some of these women struggled to identify, open and inhabit dynamic subject positions that their conservative communities and husbands would recognise and approve. In doing so they risk becoming caught in a no-space between the subject positions on offer in a rural community and those aspired to by these women. At the same time, the alternate subjectivities they began exploring invoked responding changes around them, particularly in their interactions with their husbands.

So another learning issue is what strategies subjects learn in order to move amidst the dislocations and contingencies created by contemporary work arrangements, whether transnational migration influenced by growing interdependencies of nation state, changing cultural patterns, or new subjectivities such as the neoliberal flex-worker. The task appears to be on the one hand learning how to maintain continuity while avoiding becoming assimilated into fixed positions, and learning to find fissures within the existing ordering of practices for new expressions. Fenwick's study of self-employed professionals, moving among different organisations and contracted activities, found them longing for continual change in work and identity – novelty – while responding to a countervailing desire for fixity. Their awareness of the constitution of this subjectivity extended only to a desire for self-reflective understanding of their choices, sometimes drawing upon discourses of 'authentic self', to sustain a sense of 'home' amidst the exhilarating but unsettling and fragmenting movements of the perfect neoliberal subject.

15.3.3 Social and Material Practices in Particular Sites

The issue examined here is how the emergence of particular 'subjects' and subjectivities are interrelated with joint activity, particular work tools, spatial arrangements and technologies. In this examination, learning might be argued to include both subjection and resistance to these practices, awareness of them, and play with their boundaries. Learning in this practice-based understanding would be understood to be inseparable from practice itself. People articulate subjectivities, and uncover new possibilities, through various practices. Edwards and Nicoll argue that workplaces need to be examined for the spatio-temporal ordering of practices and the actors

drawn into them. In these practices are played out the exercises of power, 'the subjects and subjectivities associated with them, and the forms of learning that are mobilised to support them.' In particular, these authors focus on the ascendance of enterprise discourses in contemporary work arrangements, supported by discourses of innovation and flexibility. They argue that a 'learning order' in work and society more broadly mobilises different subjects to 'choose to learn' to be flexible, innovative and enterprising. We can see this learning order materialising in and exercised through workplace architectures such as the Bank's self-learning e-stations (Church) or the miner's new tiny electronic joysticks replacing enormous coal diggers (Abrahamsson). New temporal arrangements, where bodies and knowledge are dislocated from joint activity or continuity, such as experienced by self-employed professional contractors (Fenwick), order practices that demand continuous learning as the only possible participation. In these portrayals we see struggles both to learn and to resist learning the 'appropriate subject' demanded by the workplace.

15.3.4 Encounters

How do subjectivities exert themselves at the point of encounter with Others at work (knowledge, persons, new technologies)? According to Thrift and Pile (1995), these encounters provoke different subject expressions, ranging from more sovereign to more subjected. The learning issues then might be what kinds of subjectivities are produced within these encounters, what transformative possibilities open within them, and how subjects become aware of the subjectivation dynamics and openings within these encounters. In work activities, subjects perform in a range of social encounters that are not only marked with multiple power relations but also emotional, sometimes intimate investments. Subjectivities shift moment-to-moment in enacting this sociality in ways that Hey (2002) argues cannot be captured by the 'slower velocities' of theoretical abstractions. Within these encounters and workers' accounts of them we can pose questions about the absence or presence (positioning) of gender, social difference and subjectivity. An example is Billett and Smith's narrative of encounter-reading among workers in the wholesale fresh produce market. Encounters with customers invoked a host of diverse decisions that were overwhelming until workers learned to 'read' the other's intentions. Encounters with the same supervisor evoked different subjectivities for different workers: one acted in ways to gain the boss's approval by learning to 'read' cues of his desires, including desired responses from the worker.

In a different vein, Harteis, Gruber and Lehner examine what happens when university teachers encounter new ('constructivist') knowledge

paradigms entering their work. Their question was the extent to which these subjects engaged in the new paradigms, and how the encounter affected their subjectivity. The findings showed a contradiction between what the university teachers espoused and what they practiced in their 'epistemological beliefs'. But a closer look reveals that these teachers were caught between an ambivalent ideology of 'constructivist teaching' and a contradictory institutional ordering arrangement mobilising them as knowledge keepers, delivering and testing knowledge. What the authors don't draw attention to is the additional subjectivity mobilised and captured by researchers demanding a rational articulation of guiding epistemic beliefs within rigid classifications.

15.3.5 Representations and Aesthetics

Practices of dress and symbol inscribe subjectivity but also open sites of play and interruption where new subjectivities can be learned. Church shows how rigid discourses of success are coded in political semiotics such as dress distinct to communities like the corporate Bank she studied. Yet she also shows how subjects become aware of these codes and then choose a position somewhere between compliance, resistance, and bending the codes. Those exercising choice in playing with these dress symbols are, significantly, subjects aware of their outsider status: researchers who don't belong socially or ideologically to the corporate community, and persons with disabilities who manage outsider positions everyday. Church's analysis of the subjectivities resulting from the meetings of these people in the bank shows the conscious struggle to occupy between-spaces (adopting just enough of the bank-coded subject position to be acceptable to the community while retaining codes of ideological distance). She also shows the unconscious articulation of symbols, such as an expensive ring: and the resulting positional signaling and various potential (mis)readings of these which alert subjects to both the subjectificatory codes and the spaces for freedom in particular work communities. At work is what Church calls 'the anxious workplace dance, for example, between visibility and invisibility as revealed by our own clothing practices'.

Salling Olesen points to aesthetics as a realm where experiences are not brought into discursive language, and therefore remain unsocialisable. This is an important observation, pointing to spaces where alternative subjectivities can be enacted. Symbols of identity are embedded in these aesthetics of dress, images, humour, tone, colour, furniture, and so on. From her examination of a mine undergoing rapid change, Abrahamsson concluded that these embedded symbols of identity often become clear during large changes in production or organisation. At the point of their

identification, new and sometimes frightening possible subject positions are opened.

15.3.6 Regimes of the Visual

The issue here is the constitution of subjectivity within the gaze of others, raising questions of who is viewing the subject. Critiques of pedagogical interventions in workplace learning, such as human resource development, have shown how the managerial gaze constitutes a performing, efficient and accountable worker subject. But of course workers are subject to, and self-regulated by, the gaze of all others in a work community. Those seeking recognition from and belonging to particular groups learn to attach themselves to a particular gaze. They also learn to give or withhold recognition as the projectors themselves of the approving gaze of a group. Further, as subjects formed within a gaze, they can learn to look back to resist scrutiny and constitute the gazer subject in particular ways. Fenwick's study of contracted professionals found this hall of mirrors of looking/looking back as subjects named different subject positions that they could choose to occupy or slip out of, according to whether they wanted to attract or avoid scrutiny, dispense recognition and classification or be recognised. In a much different way, Church plays with visual regimes constituting dis/ability in workplaces, turning the gaze onto the abled.

Finally in discussing subjectivity constituted within regimes of the visual, we must remain particularly attentive to the research practices evident in these chapters and in the very writing of this one. As Salling Olesen reminds us, listening to narratives of people takes us into inside encounters with experience, which has its limitations, particularly as we move, as analysts, to a more distant position to interpret the broader discourses that we think we see reflected there. Indeed, subjectivities are opened and closed through these research practices: 'the very telling them as a piece of identity (re)construction, in which a (new) position is taken in the culturally possible interpretations of and positions in this context'.

15.3.7 Learning New Configurations of Subjectivities
in Work

So far this discussion has been concerned with what subjectivities are mobilised, how and where they are positioned, and how they are constituted. In considering elements of these subjectivation processes together – location politics, movement, practices, encounters, representations, and visual regimes – questions are suggested around the learning dynamics threaded

through these processes by which subjectivities are constituted in contexts of work activities and organisations. How do subjects become aware of their own constituted nature? What new configurations and positions of subjectivity are possible? How can people learn these new possibilities and subjectivities? These questions touch upon the nature of agency. The wide variation of subjectivities evident in any particular cultural environment indicates that, clearly, human beings are not puppets slavishly yoked to cultural prescriptions and pre-determined identities shaping whatever subjectivity they are compelled to enact. But to presume that agency is some sort of intrinsic force bubbling from within the autonomous individual is to blackbox it: portraying the source of purposeful action as somehow mystically free from socio-cultural webs and discursive constitutions of self, intention, knowledge, and identity.

Davies (2004) suggests another reading of agency, as 'the capacity to recognise that constitution and to resist, subvert and change the discourses themselves through which one is being constituted' (p.4). Agency, in such a definition, comes from the freedom to recognise multiple readings such that no discursive practice, or positioning within it by powerful others, can capture and control one's identity. In this reading, autonomy is 'the recognition of counterpower and counterforce within power and force, and the awareness of new life forms capable of disrupting or even overwriting hegemonic forms'. With this reading in mind, we turn to questions of learning and subjectivity.

How do people learn new subjectivities? (What and how can they come to recognise constitutions of subjectivity and their own capacity to influence these?) What new possibilities can open for this learning?

In this volume, authors have explored a variety of possibilities for learning new subjectivities in work. Each suggests a particular conception of human agency and freedom within workplace practices and structures, including discursive and space-time arrangements. Or to be more precise, as Edwards and Nicoll point out, these arrangements open certain possibilities for subjectivity while they close others. In tracing these openings and closings, Casey shows how what she calls the worker-subject refuses reduction to the hyper-rationalisation of organisational production. In her observations, workers increasingly bring complex desires and imperatives for agency, freedom, self-expression and creation. These can become attached to prevailing arrangements and discourses, but workers also are 'newly demanding', resisting these to imagine alternate social arrangements. Salling Olesen indicates that even while human consciousness seeks harmony and avoids conflict, embedded in these mechanisms of consciousness building is

awareness of problems, alternative social practices, 'unlived lives' from one's own life history, and painful experiences from the past. This awareness holds the potential for seeing things differently and for alternative social practice: that is, the potential for learning is embedded in everyday life practice.

For Eteläpelto and Saarinen, subjectivities are shaped at the same time as agency (independent purposeful action) is enabled through participation in collective experiences. If people do not experience agency they will not construct the 'positive identities' that enable them to take full advantage of the opportunities afforded in workplaces to develop 'rich' subjectivity. The priority for Eteläpelto and Saarinen is to identify the work conditions that help promote individuals' full participation, thus enabling new and rich subjectivities. In circling around similar issues, Billett and Smith examine how work culture is transformed through particular forms of individual participation. Their issue is: How do combinations of personal agency (constituted by subjectivity) and socialisation determine the ways people participate in work communities, such that this participation contributes to transformation of practices and culture?

Migration across cultures is increasingly a learning space for this transformation of work communities as well as new subjectivities such as the hybrid identities that Alfred describes. Migrant subjectivities belong to more than one world, speak more than one language, have more than one home, can negotiate and translate between cultures, and can speak from the in-between of cultures, unsettling the assumptions of one from the perspective of another. In these unsettlings and in-between spaces – not just in-between cultures but also multiple discourses and subject positions in work activities and communities – people appear to be apprehending.

What strategies do people learn in order to cope with repressive regulations of subjectivity?

Authors in this volume have stressed various regulations of subjectivity in contemporary workplaces, which often have repressive effects. The dominant neoliberal worker subject is flexible, entrepreneurial, independent, constantly learning and self-responsible. Workers are pressed through a variety of technologies and pedagogies to sublimate their own desires and attachments with this prescribed subjectivity. Walkerdine (2003) maintains that women in particular are the new target of the neoliberal subject. Women become caught in the desire to be that subject, that Other, of the mobile, self-made successful worker. Walkerdine offers an example of a young woman working ceaselessly in unpaid overtime, always feeling

'behind' the load of work which increases daily, longing to maintain her reputation as highly efficient, responsible and capable. Walkerdine's explanation shows that any possibility of the woman recognising her own exploitation is occluded by, on the one hand, her sense of success being inscribed as entirely self-managed and, on the other hand, her projection of obvious problems leaking out from this identity (e.g. stress, illness, despair) to psychological pathologies which, again, were to be privately managed. In fact, Walkerdine shows that ultimately, it is impossible to achieve any simple classification such as the unitary subject of neoliberalism: 'I am this'. The subject experiences this as a perpetual and anxious failure to become the subjectivity that one continues to desire. Butler (1998:20) argues that at this point, when choice is impossible, the subject pursues subordination in order to exist, to be, something.

Yet other choices do appear to open for workers, in the form of strategies adopted to manage their subjectivities. In their case studies of two women (a teacher and a team facilitator in a manufacturing plant) Scheeres and Solomon show how these workers construct multiple identities from available discourses: they carefully work out their positions as authorities and knowers in their shifting work situations, and interweave these identities with discourses of retirement, financial security, and life outside work. These women are caring for as well as governing themselves, in Scheeres and Solomon's analysis. In the case of 'boundaryless' workers moving among different contracts and activities simultaneously with multiple employers, Fenwick also finds people managing their subjectivity in ways that provide both security and novelty. Through a dual movement these workers created an anchor of identity, a fixed image of self and set of stable locators, and at the same time inhabited various moving subjectivities constituted according to the needs of particular organisations and their flexible adaptation to these. Even in the more conservative and static work conditions of farm labour, Allan indicates that amidst the rigid gender identities available to rural farm women, some manage to use humour, to resist the prescribed subjectivity without risking complete rejection. They develop a subject location that is recognisable to themselves as well as to the conservative others in their community, from which they can participate more fully.

Thus, people do find coping strategies and spaces of resistance to processes of subjectivation in work. These include adopting dual or multiple identities, following dual trajectories of simultaneously grounding and dispersing their subjectivity, practices of playful subversion, crossdressing, and rhetorical strategies to insert new signifiers or reinscribe existing terms of received identities in work communities.

What is the relation of the body to individual's constitution of subjectivity as well as their priorities in learning to move as particular subjects?

Critical geographers such as Soja (2000:361) view 'the space of the human body [a]s perhaps the most critical site to watch the production and reproduction of power'. This perspective applies as much to the workplace as any other social site. In her chapter, Somerville has suggested that the body is a useful meta-category through which to view the constitution of subjectivities at work. If we examine the contributions in this collection from the point of view of the body we can see changing bodies and materiality in new work practices.

Drawing from psychoanalysis, Salling Olesen regards individual subjectivity at work as having embodied, material and cultural elements that impact on a theory of learning at work. This means that the individual subject will not necessarily have conscious awareness of the forces that impact on embodied learning which is often largely tacit and unconscious. Focussing on bodies and spatiality of work in mining and aged care workplaces supports this idea as Somerville demonstrates how the subjectivities of workers are formed in the dynamic of bodies, space and workplace cultural practices. Edwards and Nicholl also draw attention to the materiality of workplaces and the dynamic 'entwinements' of the human and physical worlds in the constitution of working subjects. They describe the physical world as including 'tools, pens, computers, mobile phones, charts, machinery' in networks of connections and emphasise the significance of the spatio-temporal orderings of the places of work 'to particular possibilities for knowledge production, power and subjectivity'. The application of this broader understanding of subjectivity can be seen in both mining work sites discussed in this collection (Somerville and Abrahamsson) where the subjectivities of miners are inseparable from the changing technologies with which they do their work. Materiality can be equally important, however, in the constitution of subjectivities 'on the fly' (Fenwick 2001) as portfolio workers move from one site of work to another forming mobile and shifting work identities.

The physical world for Church includes dress, jewellery and wheelchairs in her consideration of how the research team presents their (dis)abled female bodies in the public work space of the bank. Clothes in this study stand in for the body. A detailed micro analysis of dress enables her to take up these issues of body and presentation for the whole team and to call into question the binary of abled and disabled bodies through which 'Some bodies disrupt accepted notions of 'appropriate embodied employment,' The dress practices of mine workers also reveals the changing subjectivities of mine workers in Abrahamsson's study. When they moved from working at the rock face in heroic versions of masculinities to the

7th floor of an office block – to remote control of the mining processes – the mine workers continued to change their clothes after every shift in spite of the fact that they were 'just as clean as when they arrived'.

Bodies and place are also critical in Alfred's analysis of 'women of color' in academe. The opposition of white and black bodies and cultural systems is used to symbolise the marginalisation of migrant women in their academic workplaces. The idea of 'women of color', however, problematises the imposed black white dichotomy and her interviews reveal the complex identity work required for these women as they 'negotiate their identity, place, and their roles as professionals in the White academy'. The major category here, however, is not the body, but race, and these meta-categories of race, class and gender are significant in several of the studies of work subjectivity and learning in this collection.

What are the influences of discourses of class, gender, race and disability on individuals' struggles to constitute identities?

Theories of workplace learning have been described as 'gender blind, issuing prescriptive and descriptive statements concerning a seemingly homogenous workforce, irrespective of issues of class, race or gender' (Butler 1997). Class, race and gender feature in several of the studies in this collection. Alfred, as discussed above, employs several strategies to disrupt the black/white binary. As women of color, these women celebrate their blackness and their cultures of origin, privileging the degraded side of the binary. They also disrupt the binary in their ability to cross the borders between their homeland and their new culture. Common approaches to the oppressions inherent in class, gender and race binaries include equalisation, as in Church's chapter on (dis)ability; centring on the degraded side of the binary, as in Allen's chapter on farm women; or deconstructing the binary, as in Abrahamsson's chapter on changing masculinities. All of these approaches may be present at once, in different combinations and different degrees and all have been used as successful strategies in the workplace learning and change.

Church, as described above, disrupts the category of (dis)ability by reading against the grain, focusing on clothes and asking questions about the extent to which her own disabilities are concealed and her colleague is constructed as disabled. Allen uses a different strategy in her examination of gender relations in the lives of farm wives, privileging the degraded term of the binary pair and making visible the struggles of these women to negotiate a viable identity. Abrahamsson works to disrupt hegemonic masculinities in her analysis of changing discourses of male and female work when the traditional work changes from hard, dirty and heroic work at the rock face to clean office work managing remote controlled mining processes. The

issue of class is not explicitly addressed but permeates the stories of coal miners and aged care workers. The intersection of strong working class and highly gendered subjectivities produces resilient embodied subjectivities that are resistant to change, even when the changes appear to be in their interests. These analyses that deploy meta-categories of class, race, gender and ability make apparent the modes in which power is realised, taken up, and resisted in contemporary workplaces, for as Edwards and Nicholl remind us, agency is the exercise of specific forms of power produced by particular forms of social ordering.

15.4 The Individual and the Social in Subjectivity and Learning

In considering the relationships among work, subjectivity and learning, all of the authors focus to some extent on the question of the relation between the individual and the social. They see the individual and the social as in some ways imbricated in each other and struggle to articulate the nature of this relationship. It seems useful, therefore to offer an overview of approaches to the question of the relationship between the individual and the social in considering work, subjectivity and learning. For the purposes of such an overview, notions of 'subjectivity' can be taken to address the question of the individual; 'work' can be seen as representing the social; and learning mediates between the two. Using this idea of the relationship between the individual and the social, as mediated by learning, the contributions in this collection can be roughly organised on a continuum with the two theoretical papers by Salling Olesen and Edwards/Nicholl at each end of the continuum. Salling Olesen views the relationship between the individual and the social from the perspective of how to theorise individual subjectivity and Edwards/Nicholl from the perspective of how to theorise social formations that produce those individual subjects.

The 'life history approach' to individual subjectivities proposed by Salling Olesen is underpinned by critical social theory and ideas from psychoanalysis. In this sense his focus on the individual moves away from the autonomous rational individual of liberal humanism (Davies 2000). In this approach, individual human subjectivity is understood as constituted through conscious, preconscious and unconscious psychic processes which include materiality and the social. This dynamic process is conceptualised as a process of *learning* in relation to a biologically and historically produced reality. The lens is through the perspective of the individual and learning through experience at work is seen as an individual achievement of meaning making. While Edwards and Nicholl also argue that workplace

learning is a process of producing particular subjectivities, their interest is in how regimes of social ordering produce particular subjectivities: 'Wherever the learning takes place, 'learners' are required to bring forth their subjectivities for disciplining, to become a particular type of person'. Actor Network Theory elaborates the conditions in which different subjectivities are produced through different spatio-temporal orderings. Their lens is the social, and their aim to understand how the social produces different subjectivities through the different technologies of workplace learning.

The empirical chapters in this collection differ widely in the theoretical tools that they bring to the analysis of their data. These theoretical tools include postcolonial theory, life history and biography, feminist poststructuralism, gender analysis, Foucaultian discourse analysis, and theories such as communities of practice informed by social psychology and anthropology. The deployment of these theoretical frameworks, in turn, provides a distinctive theoretical lens through which the relations between the individual and the social are articulated. The chapters that are more focussed on individual subjectivity reveal the way individual subjects negotiate complex identities in relation to the social. In Allen's chapter on how farm women negotiate their gendered identities, for example, we can see the struggle of these women to negotiate a meaningful and viable identity within a conservative farming community. In the chapter on the formation of new subjectivities for practising teachers, we are able to see how different individuals take up the learning and experiences of teacher preparation differently within the same regime of preparation (Etelpälato and Saarinen). Alfred demonstrates how 'women of color' negotiate diasporic identities in the white academy and for other academic workers the epistemological beliefs of teachers is shown to be implicated in the take up of e-learning (Harteis et al.). All these chapters illustrate different negotiations between the individual and the social from the perspective of individual identity.

Billett's and Smith's chapter appears to be positioned in the middle of the continuum with Billett's theory of co-participation and relational interdependence. In a large number of studies including coal miners, hairdressers, counsellors, motor mechanics, Billett has developed the idea of a workplace learning as the outcome of a relational interdependence between individual ontogeny and workplace affordances, such that each is constitutive of the other. Smith contributes an understanding of the role of epistemological agency in individual ontogeny, as seen in the learning through work of market workers (Smith 2004). This provides the ground for a focus on individual agency as the neglected focus in communities of practice. However, in Billett and Smith's formulation, individuals and social practice are still conceived as separate entities, albeit linked by the concept of relational interdependence.

The contributions that take up a postructural or Foucaultian theoretical analysis view the individual and the social as mutually constitutive. There is no individual separate from the social, nor a social that is separate from the individual. The questions addressed by these studies focus on how regimes of social ordering produce different subjects. An ongoing concern of these studies, however, is also to identity sites of individual resistance and agency in the 'cracks and fissures' of mobile networks of power. These studies tend to work to disrupt hierarchical binaries and to be interested in contradiction, paradox, and playful resistance. Scheeres and Solomon, for example, using a Foucaultian discourse analysis identify the ways two women employ discourses of non-work to flourish in contemporary work situations. Portfolios workers are described as 'boundaryless' but Fenwick tracks the work of boundary making, in their contradictory subjectivities. Coal miners and aged care workers negotiate precariously in embodied learning through collective practice and miners in Sweden juggle new worker identities and old masculine storylines in the context of new work technologies. Church extends playful resistance to the work of researchers destabilising fixed categories of abled and disabled in the conservative corporate context of the Canadian bank.

The purpose of such a typology is to assist in providing an overview of theoretical formulations of the relations among work, subjectivity and learning and to gain insights into what different perspectives offer. Research that privileges the individual tends to offer a greater understanding of individual meaning making, throughout the course of a life spanning many years of work, in different workplaces, through changes over time, and in identities across work, home, and community. The individuals in these studies are understood as bounded individuals in their relation to the social. The research questions addressed by these theorists focus on the negotiation of individual identity. Billett has offered the most comprehensive and elaborated formulations of the relationship between the individual and the social, in his work on co-participation, relational interdependence and workplace affordances, however the individual and the social remain separate, albeit interacting, entities. Research that focuses on the social in this collection is influenced by Foucault and related poststructural theorists and operates from the assumption that there is no binary between the individual and the social, but that each are mutually constitutive. In these contributions, the challenge is to identify the sites and mechanisms of agency and resistance because ideas of the social are highly deterministic. These contributions identity spaces between binary constructions, such as between bounded and shifting identities, between docile bodies and embodied subjects, as fissures where there are possibilities for agency, change, and learning.

15.5   Concluding Comments

Increasingly, accounts of work learning are recognising that along with systemic analyses, considerations of subjectivity are vital to understand processes of development and change in work knowledge, practice, relations and culture. As work activities and structures become transformed in these new times of knowledge work, globalisation and liberalisation, new forms of subjectivity are induced and articulated. Authors in this volume represent a range of theoretical positions which they have brought to their examinations of subjectivity, learning and work in these new times. They explore how worker subjects live the new times, with real concern for disordered dispositions as well as possibilities for self-invention. Authors also examine the sorts of resources making up subjectivities, what new subject positions and subjectivities are opening up in work and how subjects seek them. Some like Church, Somerville and Allan have also explore the resources drawn upon by subjects to take up or refute subject positions as gendered, classed, raced or disabled.

Some literature (e.g. Rose 1999) has painted a depressing picture of governed subjectivities, but these chapters indicate many playful or liminal spaces and strategies available in work settings that people are using to manoeuvre their subjectivities in work and gain a sense of control and security. There also seems to be greater awareness than ever among individuals of the subject positions they occupy and how they are constituted as subjects, and there seems to be increasing recognition of and play among difference in subjectivities and their interaction in work activity. As Salling Olesen points out, social meanings established in language use are always surrounded by a 'halo' of surplus meaning and experience that is not socialised, and therefore remains at the borders. In this surplus seem to lie new, less socially-regulated, even transgressive possibilities for subjectivity. Much of the 'work' conducted in labour is arguably the work of subjectivity, managing multiple identities and inventing new ones by drawing upon various discursive, psychological, social and material resources.

Of course, additional questions arise from these chapters that require further consideration. How do generational differences influence the articulation of subjectivities, and how are these changing as cultural norms related to concepts of career and aging are shifting? What forms of subjectivity are learned, enacted and subverted in forms of work that require transmigration or involve transnational communities? What new subjectivities are negotiated amidst dynamics of institutional racism and colonialism? How do non-western or indigenous worldviews conceptualise the signifiers of and relations among subjectivity, learning and work? And, what subjectivities are we enacting as we focus research on the constitution

and emergence of new articulations of subjectivity? Indeed, as we continue to inquire into these questions, we may well recognise that the dynamics under study slip the bonds altogether of these categories of work, subjectivity, and learning. Our own articulations surely must be recognised as constituted by our object of study, which we must allow to shift even as we explore new possibilities of articulation in this work of learning about subjectivity.

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