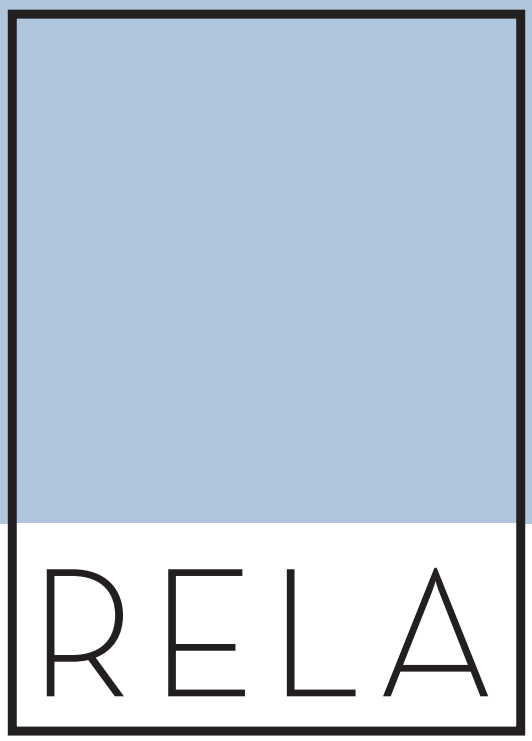
This issue: Mapping power in adult education and learning



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Editorial: Mapping power in adult education and learning

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Power is imbued in adult education and learning practices at all levels and in all instances where learning occurs or is said to occur. Power is manifest at the level of policy making where decisions are made of how adult education should be shaped, financed and carried out, in the interaction among students and with the teacher, or, in a learning conversation at the local coffee shop. Historically, power has been an important concept for adult education researchers, as a way to theorize coercion, oppression, repression and the possibilities for resistance to power and empowerment, or map the workings of power and its limitations. Today is no different, as 'old' and 'new' concepts of power are used, introduced or re-shaped and put to work in adult education.

Even though power has been on the agenda for researchers, current change calls for further consideration of how it permeates and reshapes practices. With the emergence of lifelong learning as a central policy concept from the end of the 20th to the beginning of the 21st century, learning rather than education has become a central notion of policy discourse. Learning is no longer confined to institutions, but signifies all aspects of public and private life. This change is reinforced in current European policies where the integration of work and education as a lifelong learning process is called for (see e.g. European Unit, 2010). This shift in policy has supported new and reconfigured adult education practices, integrating education and work; through the proliferation of practices for the recognition of prior learning and those of work integrated learning (cf. Nicoll & Fejes, 2011), for example. Thus, redefining the lifespan as a lifelong learning process has had significant effects both for policies and practices of education and learning, both in and out of the work-place. This calls for further scrutiny in terms of power.

Power as a contested concept – some examples

Power is a contested concept, studied in a number of scientific fields. In the political sciences power has been viewed as both a subjective and objective construct; power-to and power-over, power as ability or power as influence. In Robert Dahl's view, the very discipline of political science is defined as the study of power and is about getting others to do things they otherwise would not do. Morriss (1987) created an analysis that bridges social sciences and philosophy, defining power not just as the capacity for intentional action but introducing the semantics of 'influence': power defined in terms of a capacity to make one's aims concrete. From this internalist perspective, people

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should be concerned both with their capacity to effect aims and affect others willingly (Murphy, 2011).

Historically, it is possible to trace approaches to power related to the individual, class and the state. Yet some of the theories provided by traditional understandings of power, such as functionalism or symbolic interactionism, fail to adequately place or explain lived experience within those frames. Power is also commonly theorised as something that gains visibility when exercised. In this sense it is essentially associated with coercion and repression. The centrality of coercion as the very nature of power, however, was challenged a long time ago as for example in the writings of Antonio Gramsci in the 1930s. Hegemony was defined by Gramsci as a social condition in which all aspects of social reality are controlled by a single class. It was based in the idea of steering (as opposed to domination), to stress the capacity of a class to steer the political, intellectual and moral direction of society. So, although domination without direction is possible, hegemony is generally achieved by force together with the creation and organisation of consensus (Mayo, 1999). In this framework, dominant cultural relations are maintained through the active participation of social actors. As Wilson argues:

> With these normalised power relations as the central reality of modern life, the new social analyses focus on revealing relations of domination and subject positions by asking the questions of how discourse is involved in the construction of knowledge, power, and identity. (Wilson, 1999, p. 87)

Habermas (2003), a more contemporary writer, and one of the members of the second generation of the Frankfurt school, has a different approach in his project to find ways to provide norms for non-dominating relations. By accounting for the pathologies of the contemporary society, he argues it is possible to identify a communicative rationality (and a communicative action, free and critical) that offers positive resistance to instrumental rationality, in the sense that it is arrested by an instrumental logic that uncovers domination. For Habermas (2003), although power cannot act unless legitimated by law, at the same time it generates law, and the necessary authority to exert power is generated through political power. The political organization of citizens, not only holds legitimacy as the basis of the state administration, but could or should guide political power. So power is expressed through convictions that are produced by shared inter-subjective discourses, demanding a public space in which free communication exists as a right. In short, power can be constituted as a means of political emancipation, or as social power, when citizens are free to use their participation and communicative political rights.

From a very different perspective, Foucault (1980, 2007) has convincingly argued that power is not coercive but constitutive, deriving from and being exercised through, technologies of sign systems, of production, technologies of power and technologies of the self. Foucault brings us notions of power in which the destructive, repressive or excluding visions of power are tactically substituted by its creative possibilities. There is no one who ‘holds’ power. Rather, power is relational and operates through actions, in the same way as action modifies other actions within the relationships of groups or individuals. Rather than asking who holds power, what is power and where does it come from, Foucault asks the how questions of power. By asking ‘how’, the focus is on how power is exercised, the means by which it is exercised, what happens through this exercise of power and its effects. It is through the operation of power that people are produced as subjects and come to know who they are. Maybe one of Foucault’s main contributions is to show us how the exercise of power is done through simple

instruments, and he helps us to discover everyday human mechanisms closely related to our own subjectivity (cf. Fejes & Nicoll, 2014).

These are just a few notions of power available to take up, reshape and mobilise in research. They bring different foci to the fore of researchers interest, may it be in the uncovering of power and its consequences as a way to pave way for disadvantaged groups to free themselves of oppression, or a focus on spaces where people can freely use their political rights, or on how discourses shape our subjectivities. They are based on different epistemological and ontological starting points, but what brings them and other notions of power together, is their potential to do something to our understanding of practices of the education and learning of adults.

Mapping power in adult education and learning

In adult education and learning research many different notions of power have been taken up from writers such as Gramsci, Habermas, Foucault, Latour, Mouffe etc. Some authors have had a substantial impact on practices of adult education, e.g. the work of Paulo Freire, who's writing, although not referring explicitly to theories of power, defended those who, in simply reflecting imperial voices, do not have a voice (Freire, 1987). The processes posited for the liberation of the oppressed where closely linked to a shift from what Freire (1972, p. 45) called 'a banking' education, 'where the students are depositories and the teachers is the depositor' to an education for liberation, which was not neutral nor denied the political dimensions of education. This shift involved a process of 'conscientisation' that not only made people aware of dominating structures but also implicated collective action in the pursuit of social transformation. Conscientisation was therefore conceived as an educational dialectical process, involving mutual learning processes, based in 'dialogical' relationships (Freire, 1997).

Power is then a contested terrain where different notions of power are put into play and debated by researchers. And current change in adult education and learning policies and practices calls for further such debate. We have used the concept of 'mapping' as part of the title for this thematic issue, so as to signify the need to map power, i.e. to describe the working of power within practices of adult education and learning. To create debate, there is a need for 'description', made by drawing on the different theorizations of power. For this thematic issue we have thus invited papers that engage in mapping power in adult education and learning.

The articles of this issue

The articles included in this thematic issue map a diversity of research approaches and different ways of analysing power. However, and maybe not so surprisingly, the notions of power mobilised in the articles are inscribed in critical pedagogy or poststructuralist traditions (for a discussion of the field in terms of 'theory' see Fejes & Nicoll, 2013).

Within a critical theoretical tradition, drawing on neo-Marxist notions of power, David W. Livingstone explores relations between professional power and social recognition of specialized knowledge. More specifically this is an exploration of the relations between professional groups and workplace power, in relation to differences in professional schooling and further education. It is a class analysis in which the author argues that class positions should be generally incorporated in studies of professional power and particularly in examining variations in professional learning. In another context, although also within a critical theoretical tradition, António Lopes looks at the

events of May 68 in France to question the power and social role of the University. Drawing on Althusser and Foucault, his paper reflects on the power-effects of the scientific discourses of the University and on how power was contested in a period of deep ideological and political fracture that contributed to the democratisation of higher education.

Three articles, in different ways, draw on the work of Michel Foucault in analysing different practices of the education and learning of adults. Kerry Harman traces the different realities of workplace learning using a Foucauldian notion of power as distributed, relational and productive. She argues that in examining workplace learning the notion of multiple realities goes beyond a single, fixed angle of reality, to a notion of reality as performed in and through a diversity of practices. Liselott Aarsand draws on Foucault's notion of governmentality to investigate the case of parenting, and so as to highlight selves and self-work in narrations of family life in Norway. She argues that parenting is a powerful educative practice in the fabrication of the capable citizens of contemporary times. Susan Holloway and Patricia Gouthro, use a Foucauldian notion of power and of the 'author function' to problematise the relationship between fiction, citizenship, and lifelong learning. Their article analyses the ambivalent outcomes of shifting elements of power in Canadian publishing, stressing the importance of fiction and adult learning in shaping discourses of citizenship and critical social learning.

Rather than drawing on a specific notion of power, Sigrid Nolda stresses the importance of interactional studies when observing and identifying power based on various types of data. Observation in adult education classrooms and counselling sessions depends not only on the notions of power underlying the studies, but also on the data types produced and methods applied for their interpretation. Nolda raises the critical question of whether the identification of power by adult education researchers can be considered a power practice.

The last paper in this issue is an open paper. Here Juan Carlos Pita Castro, drawing on a biographical perspective, focuses on processes of art school graduates bifurcation in their movement from initial training to work. Bifurcation signifies a need to work on the self, rather than indicating a 'predictable stage in a trajectory' as does the concept of transition. He has a specific focus on the links between identity, agency and the social environment and illustrates how a loss of certain elements in the environment lead to the realisation that identity and agency are related.

Ending note

The articles in this thematic issue, only represents a few of many notions of power, and ways of mobilising power in adult education and learning research. However, with their differences, they are also contributions in the work of mapping power in adult education research.

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Interrogating professional power and recognition of specialized knowledge: a class analysis

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Abstract

This article explores ignored dimensions of relations between professional power and recognition of specialized knowledge, specifically the relations of professional class positions and workplace power with advanced professional schooling and further education. Professional class positions, mediated by association and union memberships, are posited as and confirmed to be important determinants of both advanced educational certification and further education. The evidence is drawn from unique national surveys of the working conditions and learning practices of entire Canadian labour force including especially a 2004 survey with a large number of professional respondents. The major implication is that class positions should be incorporated in further studies of professional power generally and variations in professional learning in particular.

Keywords: professional classes; workplace power; professionals' specialized knowledge; further education

Introduction

Let me start with a few contextual facts about professionals' power and recognition of their knowledge in a "knowledge economy" in the advance capitalist world:

- growing majorities of jobs, and of tasks in jobs, involve information processing with increasing amounts of the information being mediated by use of computers while declining minorities of jobs are in manufacturing and materials processing occupations;
- growing proportions of jobs are designated as professional and technical occupations distinguished by forms of specialized knowledge;
- growing general proportions of labour forces are attaining post-secondary education;
- participation in further education courses is also increasing throughout the life course.[1]

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The most pertinent point is that professional occupations constitute a growing proportion of the employed labour force at the same time as non-professional occupations and people in general have been increasingly likely to obtain some higher educational credentials themselves, whether or not they are able to use such qualifications in their jobs. In short, we have an "educational arms race", with those in professional streams trying to arm themselves to defend professional statuses, while others seek the most relevant knowledge certification they can to sustain themselves in a credential-oriented society.[2] My discussion will focus on the class positions of professionals, basic dimensions of their workplace power, and the relations of their class positions and workplace power with wider recognition of their specialized knowledge as indicated by their formal educational attainments and further education course participation.

Class analysis of professional occupations

Most prior comparisons of professions have focused on the strength of their claims to possess a specialized body of knowledge but have ignored important aspects of underlying *relations* of workplace power that heavily influence any given profession's capacity to assert such claims. Most of the research has distinguished professionals by relying on three conventional criteria: organized educational programs for advanced academic education; legitimate group associations; and self-regulatory licensing bodies (see Adams, 2010). A review of the literature review reveals few *comparative* empirical studies of professionals' working conditions and job control. Chan et al. (2000) conducted a rare comparative study of stress levels across six professional occupations and concluded that stress affected each occupational group differently depending upon the hierarchical structure of the employing organization. These differences are likely a reflection of the employment class locations of these different professional occupations. More generally, the literature on professionals' workplace power has been divided between those who argue that professionals are asserting ever greater control of modern workplaces and those who suggest that professionals are losing much of their control. These approaches can be termed *professionalization* versus *proletarianization* or *deprofessionalization*.

Professionalization theorists tend to presume the emergence of a 'post-industrial society' or 'knowledge-based economy' and see growing numbers of professionals with growing control of their work and with increasing centrality of their specialized bodies of knowledge in workplaces (e.g., Machlup, 1980; Cortada, 1998). Bell (1976) most influentially argued that the post-industrial society has placed professionals in a privileged position with increasing power because of the specialized knowledge they possess to contribute to this information-centered work. Conversely, other theorists see professional occupations as increasingly fragmenting and falling into more constrained working conditions with less control and autonomy: a situation described as either *proletarianization* (e.g. Derber et al., 1990; Carey, 2007) or *deprofessionalization*.[3] Advocates of the deprofessionalization thesis argue that professional occupations are experiencing an erosion of their control over their specialized knowledge (Haug, 1973). There are two key components of this thesis. First, general technological standardization of working conditions is seen as impeding the provision of direct services to clients and undermining control over work (e.g. Easthope & Easthope, 2000; Lewis et al., 2003; Dickens et al., 2005; Lingard, 2003). Secondly, the general advancement of knowledge of laypersons in society aided by accessible information technologies is considered to

make it more difficult for professionals to enclose their control over a specialized body of knowledge and exclude the general public from an understanding of the profession when a growing proportion of this knowledge is no longer mystifying (Haug, 1975). Toffler (1990, p. 8) suggests that 'closely held specialists' knowledge is slipping out of control and reaching ordinary citizens.'

The dispute between professionalization and deprofessionalization claims persists in terms of tendencies toward greater control from within occupational communities versus control from above by employers and managers of the service organizations in which many "professionals" work (see Evetts, 2003). But, as Terence Johnson (1977) has observed in a much ignored earlier contribution on the subject, these views have quite antithetical implications for professionals' place in the class structure of capitalist societies and neglect the dualism in the organization of knowledge as work. In his view, in advanced capitalist societies, those in professional occupations may play primarily a part of the global ownership and managerial functions of capital, or be primarily part of collective labour in a complex co-operative labour process, or be a combination of both. Professional occupational categories *per se* will not reveal the *class positions of professionals* without further examination of their relations in the production process.

Neo-Marxist conceptions of classes in contemporary capitalist societies in terms of production relations have identified ownership classes of a capitalist bourgeoise as well as a petty bourgeoise of self-employed, a proletariat or working class of wage labourers, as well as intermediate or contradictory class positions combining capitalist managerial functions and specialized collective labour roles. Two particular intermediate class positions have been clearly distinguished. Wright (2005) identifies "managers" who exercise some of the powers of capital, hiring and firing workers and making specific production process decisions, and "professional employees" whose specialized skills and credentials confer semi-autonomous power over aspects of their own jobs. It should be noted here that the notion of a "professional-managerial class" promoted by some as an emergent force in advanced capitalism (e.g. Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1978) conflated these two groups with quite different potential power. A variety of other schemas continue to be developed to reflect the complexity of class locations. Many of these focus on consumption relations and levels of wealth (e.g. Savage et al., 2013) rather than production relations in workplaces, the focus of the current research.

Various occupational groups that have gained control over access to specialized training programs and development of a complex codified field of knowledge have been able to effectively enclose such fields of knowledge. Self-regulation by a governing professional association has generally been regarded as the optimal means to control standards for entry into and adequate performance in professional practice (Friedson, 1988). However, we will argue that beneath and beyond the conventional features used to identify professionals, other *class-based* distinctions should be made among professional occupations in order to understand the differential capacities that professionals have to exercise power within and beyond their workplaces, as well as to have their specialized knowledge claims widely recognized as legitimate. We suggest that there are now four basic types of professionals: *professional employers; self-employed professionals; professional managers; professional employees*.[4]

Prior analyses of professional occupations and workplace power have tended to treat professional occupations as homogeneous groups and for the most part ignored employment class positions. Workplace power can be defined as the capacity to direct oneself and/or command others to achieve desired goals in an organization, a social entity linked to an external environment. *Professional employers* own either large or small enterprises and possess ultimate control over their own work and the goals of the

organization, and managerial prerogative over hired workers, subject mainly to environmental contingencies. *Self-employed professionals* without employees have ultimate control of their own work, although they may now contract themselves to larger enterprises at times. *Professional managers*, without the privilege of ownership, lack the power of complete control over the collective goals or command of their organization but do possess a relatively high level of decision-making control within the organization compared with professional employees. *Professional employees'* relatively high level of specialized knowledge to perform the job makes them more secure and difficult to replace than most other non-managerial employees; but they still remain vulnerable as sellers of labour without control over the final product/service.

Specific institutional histories of various professions may vary considerably between different jurisdictions, but we suggest that the general pattern of relations between the power of professional classes and recognition of specialized knowledge found in this Canadian study is likely to be found in most advanced capitalist societies. Labour force surveys in most of these countries have found that professional occupations overall have increased significantly as a proportion of the employed population in recent decades (e.g. Lavoie & Roy, 2003). However, data from a series of Canadian national surveys permit assessment of professional occupations in terms of class positions as well as knowledge requirements.[5]

Basic research method

The 1998 New Approaches to Lifelong Learning (NALL) survey and the ensuing Work and Lifelong Learning (WALL) surveys in 2004 and 2010 were designed as integral parts of research networks intended to generate deeper, more inclusive understanding of the relations between work and learning. These networks were led by the author. The 1998 NALL survey of adult learning was the first large-scale survey in Canada and the most extensive anywhere to attend to the array of adults' self-reported learning activities, including formal schooling, further education courses and informal learning, and also to address paid and unpaid work. The 1998 survey included 1,562 Canadian adults. The much larger 2004 WALL survey included 9,063 adults. The 2010 WALL survey included 2,028 adults. These surveys all contained sufficient information on professionals to distinguish the aforementioned class positions. In each survey, the focus has been on adults' over age 18 because this age was a practical selection criterion for national survey samples. The samples were limited to those who speak English or French, and reside in a private home (not old age/group homes/penal or educational institutions) with a telephone. All Canadian provinces and households and individuals within households were given an equal chance of selection using random digit dialling. The final response rate for the 2010 survey was 40 percent including all eligible households, or 45 percent if including only completions plus definite refusals—as many survey organizations now do (Northrup and Pollard, 2011). The comparable response rates for the prior surveys were 52 percent in 2004 and 60 percent in 1998. Response rates are increasingly challenged by the proliferation of cell phones and commercial market research. The data presented in these reports are weighted by known population characteristics of age, sex, and educational attainment to ensure profiles are representative for Canada as a whole. The interview schedules, an integrated codebook and summary reports of all basic findings are available at www.wallnetwork.ca. In addition, a national Canadian survey conducted in 1982, the Canadian Class Structure

Survey (see Clement and Myles 1994), provided comparable information on the distribution of professional classes.

Survey findings

As Table 1 summarizes, the distribution of these expanding professional occupations across employment classes appears to have altered somewhat over the past generation. Between 1982 and 2010, professional employees may have declined as a proportion of all professional occupations (from 73 to 63 per cent), while the proportion of managers increased from (11 to 23 percent).[6]

Table 1
Distribution of professional classes, Canada, 1982-2010 (%)

Professional class	**1982**	**1998**	**2004**	**2010**
Professional employer	2	5	5	2
Self-employed professional	14	15	13	14
Professional manager	11	10	14	21
Professional employee	73	68	63	63
N	242	191	1173	314

Sources: Clement and Myles (1994); Livingstone (2012).

During this period of expansion of professional occupations as a portion of the labour force, professional employers and self-employed professional business owners remained at around 15 percent of all professional occupations, but the proportion of all owners with claims to specialized professional knowledge grew and thereby enhanced their entrepreneurial claims and managerial prerogatives. Both the proportion of the labour force who were managers and the proportion of managers who were professionals grew, creating a greater presence of managers with claims to professional specialized knowledge. Conversely, the decreasing majority who remained professional employees became more vulnerable to overarching direct control or influence by employers and professional managers. Most professionals are in the employee class and increasing proportions are being managed by professional managers.

Dimensions of professional power

A basic distinction should be made between the *power to negotiate or bargain terms of provision of service or labour and the power to make decisions within the labour process of an organization* (Livingstone & Raykov, 2008). ”Negotiating power” for those who own their enterprises refers to the capacity to set terms of price, quality, type of product with possible clients; in addition, employers as well as their employees must negotiate terms of wages and benefits. “Organizational decision-making power” refers to capacity within the labour process to determine the design, content and pace of work; owners have managerial prerogative; they may or may not delegate organizational power to employees.

Negotiating power for professional occupations has been conventionally treated as capacity to set terms for provision of services to clients while maintaining effective ownership of these services (e.g., doctors, lawyers). But for those in professional occupations who are employees, negotiating power can be more limited to the extent to which they can bargain with their employers for workers' rights and benefits, including relative autonomy, typically through associations and unions.

Organizational decision-making power within the labour process primarily involves the extent of power one can exercise in relation to others' labours. Once again, differences between owners of enterprises and employees are commonly distinguishable. Those professionals who own their enterprises have managerial prerogative over the labour of others they hire. The organizational power of professional employees beyond their immediate work stations remains delegated power from their employers, even if many professional employees remain relatively secure by the specialized knowledge and may exercise significant power over other workers.[7]

Both negotiating power and organizational decision-making power need to be considered in the capacities of professionals. In the following empirical comparisons of professional occupations, we will examine organizational power in terms of the extent of reported participation in organizational decision-making, and negotiating power in terms of union and association membership strength.

Professional classes and organizational decision-making power

Respondents in these surveys were asked whether they participated in organizational decisions about types of products or services delivered, budgets, workload, and changes in the way jobs are performed. The general differences in organizational power between professional employers, self-employed professionals, professional managers and professional employees are summarized in Table 2. Trend inferences can only be made tentatively because of the small numbers in all surveys except 2004, particularly for the small minorities in professional employer and self-employed classes. All professional employers appear to have consistently participated in such decisions and retained managerial prerogative over their employees. Self-employed professionals may have been losing organizational power, with participation rates declining from nearly 90 percent in 1982 to under 60 percent in 2010. Self-employed professionals retain their own-account enterprises but increasingly contract their services to larger organizations in which they have more limited organizational power. A growing majority of professional managers may be increasing their organizational decision-making roles during this period while only a minority of professional employees continue to indicate participation in organizational decision-making.

Table 2
Professional class by organizational decision-making power, Canada, 1982-2010 (% who participate)*

Professional class	**1982**	**2004**	**2010**
Professional employer	100	100	100
Self-employed professional	87	71	58
Professional manager	73	75	83
Professional employee	44	45	40
All professional occupations	51	58	50
N	242	1173	314

Sources: Clement and Myles (1994); Livingstone (2012).
*Comparable decision-making questions not asked in 1998 survey.

The larger 2004 survey permits some further inferences. About two-thirds of professional managers directly made significant organizational decisions, usually as members of a group. In clear contrast, most professional employees had only advisory roles as part of a consultative group. Professional employees had significantly less organizational decision-making power than employers, self-employed and managers. In addition, related analysis of the 1982 and 2004 surveys has found that increases in the participation of service and industrial workers are bringing them closer to the extent of organizational decision-making power of professional employees (Livingstone, 2009). But the most general conclusion from these surveys is that the organizational power of the growing proportion of professional managers is increasing while the organizational power of the declining proportion of professional employees is not. Theses about professionalization and de-professionalization should take account of these differences.

Only the large 2004 survey with over 1,000 professional respondents was large enough to permit reliable statistical comparisons between these four professional class groupings. Hopefully, future targeted surveys of professional occupations can further verify these patterns. Further findings in this article will focus on the 2004 survey.

Specific professional occupations differ widely in the extent to which they have ownership of the organizations in which they work. For example, most doctors and lawyers (and others including dentists and architects) have ownership status, most operating either as small employers or self-employed. Few other professional occupations have more than 20 per cent with ownership status; most of these are self-employed without employees. The fact that most in these professions own their own firms or practices gives their professions significantly more economic power than most other professional occupations. In contrast, most teachers and nurses remain professional employees. Most are employed by public sector organizations without any prospect for ownership of their practices. Teachers and nurses now tend to be well organized in occupational groups but, given their dominant class position as employees, there is continuing priority within these groups to act as employees' unions bargaining with their employers rather than establishing self-regulating professional field claims with the general public. Simply viewing professional occupations in terms of general claims to authority in their fields of knowledge misses the underlying class dimensions of ownership control and managerial power or conflates them with claims to specialized

knowledge. The extent to which respective professional groups succeed in achieving self-regulatory power over a field of professional knowledge continues to be intimately related to gaining legal ownership.

In sum, prior studies of professionals' status and power have tended to focus on the conventional criteria of control of entry into the specific occupation: advanced academic education, association membership and licensing requirements. However, most of these studies tend to ignore the fact that economic class relations still have a major influence on what occurs in paid workplaces. Ownership of the means of production, whether by large corporations or small firms, still counts. The fact that such professionals can command direct fees for their services, own their own business firms or practices and often employ others is hugely consequential for their organizational decision-making power and for the sustained as fully developed status of their professions.

Professional classes and negotiating power

When we look more broadly at the power to negotiate terms of provision of service or labour (e.g., price, quality, type of product), we can see that this power is commonly mediated today through membership associations and trade unions. But the roles of these organizations are complicated by the class composition of their memberships. When a professional association is comprised mainly of those in class positions with effective ownership of services provided (e.g., doctors, lawyers), negotiations are mainly with either clients directly or state regulators about matters of price, quality, type of product. When the professionals are mainly employees, bargaining with employers may include issues of discretion over work processes but it is contingent on the extent to which they are able to mobilize into either an association or a union and, especially in times of financial constraint, bargaining tends to focus on workers' rights and benefits.

Table 3 summarizes association and union membership status for professional classes, as well as for others in the same general employment classes. While general class positions involve a variety of specific conditions and some people combine different class positions, a few points are evident:

- professionals generally are more likely than others in the labour force to be members of either associations or unions;
- professional employers are most likely to be members of associations;
- professional employees are less likely than professional employers to be members of associations, and more likely to be members of unions than associations;
- non-professional employees, most of the labour force, are more likely to be members of unions than associations but less likely to be organized than professional employees.

Table 3
General employment class and professional class by association and union membership, 2004 (%)

	Association member		Union member		Association or Union Member	
General employment class	**Professional class**	**Other labour force**	**Professional class**	**Other labour force**	**Professional class**	**Other labour force**
Employer	64	34	9	7	68	39
Self-employed	36	25	15	7	45	30
Manager	46	23	25	4	57	33
Employee	24	15	51	43	62	51
Total	33	19	40	28	60	42

Source: WALL 2004 Survey (N=5,800)

The power of professions such as doctors/lawyers to negotiate terms of service is mediated by their self-regulating professional association membership (i.e., about two-thirds exclusively association members and few employee-based union members) but grounded in the prevalence of the professional employer class. Whether professional employees are members of associations or unions, where they predominate, workers rights and benefits are typically the focus of negotiations.

The struggle by increasingly well-educated progressive popular forces for socialized provision of human services, notably medicare and public education, led to increasing state funding and regulation of such services through most of the twentieth century. Conflict over socialized versus privatized provision continues, as well as conflict over control of the specialized knowledge contained in such services and the consequent professional status of their providers. Even doctors and lawyers have faced more extensive oversight of their services (Krause, 1996). But, with the negotiating power of their self-regulating associations, many continue to be paid their fees and retain prerogative over their use, as distinct from most professionals who are paid salaries determined in negotiations with their employers and are more prone to challenges to their knowledge and status.

Professional status certainly needs to be understood partly in terms of the degree of technical skill and unique knowledge to perform particular specialized work, as well as the conventional entry criteria. But the relationship of this specialized work to employment class positions rather than to specific occupations per se should be considered both in assessing the power the profession is able to exercise in the workplace and in understanding the limited success many occupations have had in asserting their claims to full professional status.

It can now be appreciated that both professionalization and de-professionalization theses are serious simplifications with regard to the power of current professional occupations. The empirical evidence suggests that professional occupations are gradually increasing as a proportion of the labour force. But it also suggests that increasing class polarization of professionals is occurring: on one hand, professional managers are gaining relatively greater workplace power; on the other hand, professional employees are losing workplace control and facing continuing challenges to asserting wider claims to professional status. Professional employees may continue to claim significant "expert power" commensurate with their use of their specialized credentials to cope with situations of uncertainty, but such organizational power has been continually undermined by their consequent contributions to development of bureaucratic rules (Crozier, 1964; Reed, 1996), and is now increasingly threatened both

by professional managers' oversight and a more knowledgeable general labour force and general public.

Professional power and specialized knowledge

We can distinguish four forms of intentional adult learning: formal schooling; further or continuing education in formal courses; informal education from mentors; and self-directed informal learning projects. Of course, there is a great deal of tacit informal learning that occurs beyond intentionality. The intentional and tacit informal aspects of adult learning continue to constitute the massive, mostly hidden part of the "iceberg" of adult learning. But the general incidence of participation in both advanced formal schooling and further education has increased very significantly in recent times.[8]

The threshold for entry into professional occupations increasingly entails higher credentials to differentiate entrants from an increasingly well-educated general public. The threshold for professional occupations' participation in continuing further education courses is also now relatively high because continuing re-legitimation of specialized knowledge through re-certification is now widespread among most professions; in addition to the increased role of the state in standards regulation, the growing recognition of the role of formal knowledge in contemporary work has led to heightened certification requirements across the board (Evetts, 2002).

Prior studies of professionals' continuing learning have found that professionals tend to be highly involved in continuing formal professional development courses and are similarly highly involved in informal collegial learning practices. Prior studies for the most part have paid little attention to differences in schooling and further education between professional occupations or between professionals and other workers. The few comparative studies of professions have stressed a widespread imperative for formal upgrading and recertification courses, as well as high motivation to confirm new knowledge through relations with colleagues and clients (Cheetham & Chivers, 2001).

But there has been little attention to differences in power among professional occupations that may affect their respective formal learning activities, not to mention the varied power dynamics between class positions of professional occupations. Since display and affirmation of certifiable specialized knowledge is central to professionals' legitimacy, one might expect that their participation rates in both advanced formal schooling and further education will be greater than most of the rest of the labour force. But we also expect that some differences in opportunities for advanced schooling and further education will be associated with the differential power of specific professional occupations and the class positions of these professionals.

In this section, we will briefly examine relations of professionals' class positions and negotiating and organizational power with variations in their formal educational attainments and further education/ professional development. Our general perspective posits that greater power is associated with more advanced educational credentials for entry and greater opportunity for further professional development. Professionals who are predominantly in proprietorial class positions and in self-regulating associations can have great direct influence on entry training requirements, as well as discretion to take further education courses of their own choosing. Among professional employees, the greater negotiated bargaining power *with* their employers and the more delegated organizational decision-making power *from* their employers, the greater opportunity there is likely to be for participation in formal continuing professional development

courses. Table 4 summarizes the basic patterns of degree attainments and further education by professional class and general employment class.

Table 4
University degree attainment and further education course participation by general employment class and professional class, 2004 (%)

	University degree		Further education course	
General Employment class	**Professional class**	**Other labour force**	**Professional class**	**Other labour force**
Employer	63	15	75	41
Self-employed	51	16	56	44
Manager	58	32	77	67
Employee	41	7	65	48
Total	46	13	66	51

Source: WALL 2004 Survey (N=5,800)

Again, a few points are evident:

- professionals in all classes have higher educational attainments than others in the labour force regardless of their general employment class;
- professional employers are likely to have the highest degree attainments as well as highest participation rates in further education;
- the gap between professionals and others in participation in further education is much less than differences in degree attainments.

More specifically, the majority of professional employers have at least an undergraduate university degree. Self-employed professionals, professional managers and professional employees have slightly lower levels of university degree completion. But all four professional classes are distinct from the rest of the general labour force in having much higher levels of university-level formal education. Each of these professional classes is also distinct from non-professional members of their general employment class positions: professional employers are three times as likely as other employers to have a university degree, as are self-employed professionals compared with the other self-employed; professional managers are at least twice as likely to have university degrees as other managers. Professional employees are distinguished from working-class employees primarily on the basis of their advanced academic education, so it is not surprising that they are at least five times as likely as working-class employees (i.e., service and industrial workers) to have a university degree. But the fact that substantial and growing numbers of those in working-class positions, as well non-professional fractions of employer, self-employed and managerial employment classes have obtained university degrees should be noted. As suggested by advocates of the de-professionalization thesis, the claims of those in professional class positions to exclusive specialized knowledge are weakened by the existence of growing numbers of other workers with versions of advanced formal education that had been a primary basis of professionals' status claims.

As predicted, those in professional class positions have higher rates of participation in further formal education than the general labour force. As Table 4 summarizes, three-quarters of professional employers have taken a further education course in the past year, followed by lower proportions of professional managers, professional employees

and self-employed professionals, respectively. The rest of the labour force generally has somewhat lower participation rates in further education, around 45 per cent. The gap in further formal education is much narrower than in levels of formal schooling, but professionals generally still have greater participation rates than the rest of the general labour force and also compared to non-professional fractions of all employment classes. Further education may be helping to close the credential gap between professionals and the rest of the labour force but only very gradually.

But, as Table 5 illustrates, there are significant differences between professionals in extent of both formal schooling and further education. There are now majorities in numerous specific professions with university degrees. For example, virtually all doctors/lawyers and teachers have university degrees, compared to over 80 per cent of engineers and nearly 60 per cent of computer programmers. Slightly less than half of nurses have university degrees. Of these professions, only majorities of doctors and lawyers have post-bachelor professional or graduate degrees. About a third of engineers and teachers have post-bachelor degrees, compared to 15 per cent of computer programmers and less than 10 per cent of nurses.

The greatest differences among professionals in formal schooling are between professional occupations dominated by proprietorial classes with well-established self-regulating associations and the rest. As Table 5 shows, only doctors and lawyers among the selected professions have majority membership in professional associations with little membership in unions. Doctors' and lawyers' associations have been *much* more successful than these other, mainly non-proprietorial professional occupations in requiring advanced formal education for entry. Among the mainly non-proprietorial professional occupations, engineers and teachers have been more successful than computer programmers and nurses. Engineers have relatively high numbers in managerial class positions and relatively high numbers in self-regulating associations. While teachers are very predominantly professional employees, they have nearly universal membership in strong unions with well-established bargaining processes with their employers. While nurses are also employees with high union membership rates, they have more precarious working conditions and remain subordinate to doctors in their workplaces. While computer programmers may have very pertinent specialized knowledge, they have yet to mobilize much collective negotiating power or be delegated much organizational power. These differences in extent of advanced certification of knowledge appear to be quite closely related to both professional class position and workplace power.

Table 5
Union or association membership by post-bachelor degree and further education, selected professional occupations, 2004 (%)

Occupation	Union or professional association member (professional association without union)	Any university degree	Post-bachelor degree	Further education
Doctors/lawyers	87 (72)	96	79	64
Teachers	95 (5)	94	32	65
Engineers	59 (46)	82	33	45
Programmers	29 (12)	58	15	47
Nurses	97 (12)	47	9	67
Other professionals	59 (24)	64	28	55
Other labour force	42 (15)	24	8	39

Source: WALL 2004 Survey (*N*=5,800)

Research on relations between non-managerial workers' power and intentional learning practices has found that higher levels of negotiating power (as indicated by union or association membership) as well as greater delegated organizational decision-making roles are associated with higher rates of further education (Livingstone & Raykov, 2008). The current findings on further education rates also suggest some differential effects of workplace power among professional occupations. Most notably, as Table 5 shows, greater negotiating power appears to be associated with higher rates of participation in further education. Doctors/lawyers, nurses and teachers, all of whom have nearly universal membership in either professional associations or unions, have majority participation rates in further education. Engineers and programmers, who have lower membership rates, also have minority participation rates. Doctors' and lawyers' negotiating power comes distinctively from their prevalent proprietorial class position and very high membership in self-regulating professional associations without need for dependence on union membership. Nurses and teachers depend very predominantly on high union membership to deal with their employers. Engineers are less likely than doctors/lawyers to be in professional associations, programmers much less so, and very few engineers or programmers are in unions; therefore, their collective negotiating power for further education provisions is more limited.

Doctors and lawyers, with their high levels of certification and professional association membership, are expected by their self-regulating colleges to frequently confirm the currency of their specialized knowledge. But, as predominantly employers and self-employed, they typically have wide discretion in their choices for professional development. The similarly high further education rates of teachers and nurses are consistent with requirements of both their colleges and their employers to continually upgrade their knowledge. But, as predominantly employees with near-universal union membership, they are typically expected to take more standardized or compulsory forms of retraining. Engineers' and programmers' lower rates of further education are consistent with their more limited associational strength and re-certification requirements. As such, they are less encouraged or compelled than these other selected professionals to participate in further formal recertification studies.

Differences in organizational power may also mediate participation in further education among professional occupations. For example, the small numbers of teachers who have delegated organizational decision-making roles are more likely than others to

have taken a course. But, as in prior general research (Livingstone & Raykov, 2008), delegated organizational power is found to be less pertinent than negotiating power in variations in further education. Furthermore, although teachers and nurses participate in further education at similar general rates as doctors and lawyers, there are substantial differences in accessibility of further education associated with their different class locations and workplace power. Nurses and teachers are more likely to cite barriers, such as the expense of the course, the inconvenience of the time and place of the course, as well as the lack of employer support, as obstacles to further professional learning. Conversely, doctors/lawyers reported low levels of concern over matters such as cost, inconvenience, or support as obstacles to further education (Clarke, Livingstone & Smaller, 2012). Clearly, the proprietorial negotiating and organizational powers of most doctors/lawyers afford them better control over their time, as well as the financial means to support further education.

Concluding remarks

Professional occupations are more dependent than most others on formal educational qualifications for entrance into their jobs. So it should be little surprise to find that they also tend to participate more highly than most others in further education to maintain these qualifications. However, the "arms race" for educational credentials has become increasingly intense (Livingstone, 2009). Among the consequences are a narrowing gap between the formal educational attainments and further education of professionals and the rest of the labour force, and growing general underemployment of formal education in relation to job requirements. There may be a diminishing reverence for the special character of many professionals' knowledge, not so much because of "de-professionalization" *per se* but the relative increase of the formal educational attainments of others and their greater accessibility to particular forms of knowledge.

There are some substantial differences in the formal schooling attainments and further education of particular professions, differences that can be understood in terms of differential class positions and workplace power. For example, doctors and lawyers have attained much higher levels of completion of post-bachelor degrees than the other specific professional occupations we have examined. They also maintain participation rates in further education that are as high as any other profession. The high rates of advanced degrees are intimately connected with similarly high memberships in self-regulating professional associations. We have further argued that this high level of self-regulation is grounded in the predominantly proprietorial class position of doctors and lawyers which has served to ensure relatively direct control over sale of their services as well as training requirements for entry into their professions. Their proprietorial position also means that they are most likely to take only further education courses highly relevant to their particular needs.

Proprietorial classes generally have managerial prerogative over the working conditions and further education requirements of their employees. For example, doctors have retained considerable influence over the working conditions and further education requirements of nurses, whether as direct employers or as advisory authorities. Most of the specific professional occupations we have examined are mainly in the class position of professional employees whose working conditions and formal educational provisions are subject to negotiation with their employers. While a university degree has become a nearly universal criterion for entry into most professional occupations, variations in further education appear to be more related to differences in collective negotiating

power with employers than to previous educational attainments. For example, nurses have relatively low completion of post-bachelor degrees. Their relatively high rates of participation in further education correspond more closely with their high rates of union membership. The relatively high further education rates of teachers also appear to be more closely related to their high unionization than to their level of post-bachelor degree completion.

Delegated organizational decision-making power to professional employees is also associated with and apparently enables somewhat greater rates of participation in further education. But it should be kept in mind that professional employees' greater general level of further education participation than working class employees is also influenced by employers' relatively high financial support for it. In any event, variations in further education related to delegated organizational power seem to be minor compared to those related to differences in collective negotiating power (Livingstone & Raykov, 2008).

Differences in professional class positions, negotiating power and organizational decision-making power of professional occupations have rarely been considered in prior research on professional learning. The current findings suggest that this has been a serious oversight.

A striking finding in terms of professional development programs is the very low importance accorded by most professional employees to further education courses in relation to on-the-job informal learning (see Clarke, Livingstone & Smaller, 2012). While many who take further education consider such courses to be helpful, they tend to see their job-related informal learning as much more important and recognize it as far more extensive. There is a challenge in many professions to more effectively integrate formal professional development with informal learning. The evidence from this comparative analysis suggests that further genuine empowerment of professional employees may be one of the most likely ways to narrow this gap. A clear implication is the need for job-related further education programs--not only for professional groups but all workers-- to give greater recognition to prior learning as it relates to everyday work practices.

At the same time, it should become increasingly clear that professionals' power based on their class positions and mediated through their association or union memberships has strongly influenced the extent to which their specialized knowledge is regarded as legitimate by those in their social networks, including their clients and themselves. Making these power bases of recognition of professionals' knowledge more visible may assist in valorizing really useful knowledge of those in less powerful class positions for benefit in their jobs and lives, while also increasing more specific appreciation of the truly complex aspects of professional knowledge in increasingly knowledge-based economies and societies.

Notes

[1] For critical analyses of the features of the "knowledge economy" and its' relation to the "knowledge society", see Livingstone and Guile (2012).

[2] The proliferation of credentials may be leading to their devaluation while more informal learning is increasingly stressed in knowledge societies. Nevertheless, popular demand for higher credentials shows little sign of diminishing.

[3] These two terms both refer to the loss of control of working conditions. Deprofessionalization is more specific to loss of control by those with credible prior claims to professional status and will be used generally in the rest of this text.

[4] For a full discussion of the more general analysis of economic classes on which this discussion of professional classes is based, see Livingstone (2009).
[5] For the most accessible descriptions of the design and general findings of these surveys, see Clement and Myles (1994) for the 1982 survey and Livingstone (2012) for the three more recent surveys.
[6] Statistical differences reported in this paper are significant at least at the .05 level of confidence, unless small sample size is noted. For further details on the data sources, see Livingstone (2009, 2010).
[7] For a more detailed analysis of the characteristics of different professional classes, see Clarke, Livingstone & Smaller (2012). Some of the material presented in this paper is drawn from chapters 1 and 2 of this book.

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The University as power or counter-power? May 1968 and the emergence of a new learning subject

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Abstract

The events of May 68 in France constituted a moment of questioning of the power and of the social role of the University. Two of the philosophers who contributed the most to that questioning were Althusser and Foucault. Their thoughts on the way in which power, discourse and social institutions are articulated played a major role in awakening the students' political consciousness and in opening the doors of the University to social movements that had been, until then, left out of academic discourse. Their positions on the events triggered passionate reactions that ended up changing the institutions of higher education from the inside. The Faure law, issued in the aftermath of the protests, on November 12, 1968, finally acknowledged that higher education should be available to mature students. Taking into account the points of contiguity between conceptual apparatuses of these authors, this paper intends to offer a reflection on the power-effects of the scientific discourse issued by the University and on how its power was contested in a period of deep ideological and political fractures, leading to a paradigmatic shift that democratized the institution and to the emergence of a new learning subject.

Keywords: University; May 1968; Foucault; Althusser; adult education

Introduction

May 1968 is still shrouded in polemics. However, despite the many interpretations about what actually happened and the inability to reach a final balance sheet of eventual gains and losses, one outcome remains undisputed: for the first time in the history of higher education in France the university opened its doors to non-traditional students. It is important to determine the reasons for this major shift, all the more so because the university had until then remained one of the bulwarks of elitism, immersed in its age-old mores and institutional practices, exerting a considerable power not only over the means for the production of knowledge, but also over the mechanisms for its reproduction. Nevertheless, what makes this question far more pressing is that these historic changes, which led to the empowerment of social groups customarily excluded from the structures of knowledge, were not imposed from outside—from social or political forces alien to the university, trying to enforce a specific educational agenda—

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but from within, with the students mobilizing themselves for a project of social, cultural, and political transformation. The University of the sixties, in spite of its resistance to change, was able to beget its own wave of contestation that ended up precipitating a ground-breaking renewal of discourses and practices, and ultimately of social identities and political subjectivities (c.f. Blackman, Cromby, Hook, Papadopoulos & Walkerdine, 2008; Lefort, Morin & Castoriadis, 1968).

Without losing sight of the historical circumstances that framed the events of May 1968 in France, this paper aims to shed some light on the causes of this shift in educational policy by taking into account the role that two leading intellectuals in the French academy played in arousing the political consciousness of the students, namely Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault. I shall analyse and compare the theoretical apparatuses of both authors as regards the relation between the concepts of power, knowledge, and education. I will also examine the reasons why one of these intellectuals—Althusser—, despite his insistence on the need for a revolutionary rupture, was unable or unwilling to recognize the revolutionary potential of the events and dismissed the students' struggle as little more than a bourgeois fad (Macciocchi, 1973), whereas the other one—Foucault—, more dedicated to identifying the historical configurations of power at the institutional level, took a different course of action and ended up siding with the students and confronting the police (Eribon, 1989/1991). I will also look into some of the benefits that the students' struggle brought about. The Faure law, issued in the aftermath of the protests, constituted the first stepping-stone in the promotion of adult education in the universities as it finally acknowledged that higher education should be made available to mature students and that universities should put into practice measures to promote 'l'éducation permanente'.

Now that the neoliberal discourse seems to have taken hold of higher education, redefining its goals and policies, reducing it to a kind of market transaction (see Biesta, 2005; Crowther, 2011), one should revisit a period in which the French university challenged the tenets of capitalist society and sought to reinvent itself, becoming one of the strongholds of a culture of democratic participation and of valorisation of the human being.

The French University as a locus of contestation

In the spring and summer of 1968, the French university—the repository of knowledge and the regulatory authority for the production of scientific statements, enshrined in its own rituals and mores—was shaken to its foundations. The intellectual and political ferment that ended up reshaping French society did not occur *in spite of* the university and the control that it had of the truth, but rather *because of* the university and the truth-effects that it generated (Swartz, 2004, 2013). Somehow, the critical thinking about society that was being imparted in the French lecture halls was seeping its way into the students' discourse and was pushing for social change. Althusser and Foucault's reflections on the relationship between power, discourse and social institutions, contributed in a special way to this heightened sense of political consciousness.

Of course, this is not the only cause of the protests of 68. A conjugation of historical circumstances concurred to precipitate the conflict (see Horn, 2008; Jackson, Milne & Williams, 2011; Jones & O'Donnell, 2010; Klimke & Scharloth, 2008; Kurlansky, 2005; Quattrocchi & Nairn, 1998; Ross, 2002). The armed stasis of the Cold War formed its most conspicuous backdrop. Although inducing a relative political stability between the two contending blocs, the permanent state of crisis bipolarized

Europe and helped to develop a siege mentality. The impending threat of the nuclear warfare produced a sense of doomsday, which materialized into demonstrations from the 1958 onwards. In the meantime, wars of national liberation in Africa and Southeast Asia, a by-product of the Cold War, were starting to wipe off the last vestiges of colonial pride still subsisting in Europe, and the decolonization process that ensued transformed the social fabric of the metropolises. Labour disputes also formed part of the picture. There were a series of violent factory-strikes that broke out all across France from the mid-sixties onwards, directed against employers and trade union leaders, often resulting in physical confrontation with the police (Ross, 2002). Pressed by a stagnant industrial output, a slower growth rate, increasing foreign competition and more restrictive financial conditions, companies were forced to rely less and less on the labour force. Unemployment was on the rise and the ghost of job insecurity came back to haunt both the young and the middle-aged worker (Singer, 2002). The Left was also being challenged. On the other side of the Iron Curtain, the Hungarian Uprising (1956) and the Prague Spring (1968) reduced to rubble the confidence that many Western communists had in the Soviet Union. The political pot of the period was also stirred by the rise of the second-wave feminism—which brought the subject of male oppression and women's rights onto the political agenda and induced new modes of critical representation of women—, and the emergence and consolidation of an independent youth culture, which widened the generation gap and encouraged new forms of political activism (Marwick, 2007; Siegfried, 2007). To this newly conquered sense of independence contributed the expansion of higher education in Europe (Breen, 2010; Kyvik, 2004). In France, the number of students completing their university degrees throughout the sixties rose significantly, with an increase of 275 per cent from 1960-1961 to 1970-1971. This phenomenon caused universities to be overcrowded and has been cited as one of the reasons for the students' protests (Macey, 2004). The Fouchet commission attempted a reform that was highly contested in 1967 and it took the events of May 1968 for Edgar Faure, then minister of education, to propose the creation of a network of comprehensive universities ('universities de proximité') in addition to the already existing seventeen traditional universities (Goulard, 2007; Picard, 2009), which helped to defuse the tension.

The inability of representative democracy to engage the movements of contestation and to absorb their political subjectivities and demands into the fabric of its discursive practices was bound to lead to a point of near collapse. It seemed that the conditions for 'a ruptural unity'—as defined by Althusser—had been met. Although Althusser himself rejected that possibility, one could always argue that there were 'currents' or 'circumstances' bringing together different groups, each with its own set of demands and interests, and which appeared to be 'fusing' into a ruptural unity aggregating the vast majority of the popular masses 'in an assault on a regime which its ruling classes are unable to defend' (Althusser, 1965/2005, p.99; see also Bell, 1997). But on close examination, the political and ideological demands of the so-called new social movements in the sixties could hardly be said to have been determined *in the last instance* by economic factors or simply by the dynamics of class struggle. They cornered the regime and called into question statuses, institutions and values. The negation of the instituted order also entailed a refusal not only to go along the lines of the traditional political discourses of parliamentary democracy (Sartre, 1972) argued that the students' power lay precisely in their refusal of speech), but also in some cases a refusal to walk down the Communist path. People demonstrated against capitalism, the authoritarian Gaullist state, American imperialism, the Vietnam war, the nuclear threat, and the inability of democracy to represent the people and to overcome

inequalities and social injustices; but they also protested against the 'obsolete Communism' and 'bureaucratic interests' of the French Communist Party (FCP), in search of a new Left alternative (Cohn-Bendit & Cohn-Bendit, 1968/2000; Mendel, 1969). The ideological fractures were not running along the fault lines of the ruptural principle established by Althusser. These apparently lesser contradictions were overrunning the general contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production.

The slogans of the university students that invaded the streets attested not only to this refusal to adhere to the traditional political discourses, but especially to the need for a radical transformation of the political culture. Inevitably, the university was seen as standing in the way of such change: 'Fin de l'Université'; 'Professeurs vous êtes aussi vieux que votre culture, votre modernisme n'est que la modernisation de la police'; (mimicking the *Internationale*) 'Debout les damnés de l'Université'; 'Et si on brulait la Sorbonne?'; 'Le pouvoir avait les universités, les étudiants les ont prises. Le pouvoir avait les usines, les travailleurs les ont prises. Le pouvoir avait l'O.R.T.F., les journalistes lui ont pris. Le pouvoir a le pouvoir, prenez-le lui!'[1] (see Enragés anonymes, 1998; Piquemal, 1998).

André Gorz, one of the co-founders of the *Le Nouvel Observateur*, added fuel to the fire when he denounced this dissolution of the political potential of the students inside the university and called for its annihilation. This sort of institution, he claimed, 'dispenses neither a "useful culture" nor a "rebellious culture" (which, by definition, is not dispensed); it dispenses a university culture, i.e., a knowledge separated from any productive or militant practice' (Gorz, 1970). That is, the university is socially and politically dysfunctional because it serves neither the demands of capitalism nor the project of those aiming to overthrow it. He thus concludes:

> It can thus not be a question of reforming the university, but rather of destroying it in order to destroy all at once the culture separated from the people it incarnates (that of the mandarins) and the social stratification of which it after all remains the instrument. (Gorz, 1970)

For Gorz, the root of the crisis of the bourgeois university and of the capitalist division of labour was, first and foremost, of a political nature. Therefore, in a crisis like this, the violence of the student movement could be dismissed neither as sheer 'vandalism' nor as 'perverse taste for objectless violence', but was in fact the expression of a political necessity which the academy, the political parties and the traditional working class movement organizations, entrenched in their long-standing political discourses, failed to come to terms with.

The university as power: the contrasting views of Foucault and Althusser

Despite Gorz's condemnation of the 'bourgeois' university, it had been inside the latter that the debate about the relation between power and higher education had started. One of the most important voices in that debate was Foucault's. It was he who advanced that power can be regarded neither as 'a phenomenon of mass and homogeneous domination—the domination of one individual over others, of one group over others, or of one class over others', nor as something 'divided between those who have it and hold it exclusively and those who do not have it and are subject to it'. On the contrary, it 'must be analysed as something that *circulates*, or rather as something that functions

only when it is part of a chain' (Foucault, 2003, p. 29; my italics). Therefore, what mattered to Foucault was the study of power not as a form of coercion exercised over individuals or groups, but as a key factor in the structuration of the social body and of its institutional apparatus. Foucault's *circulatory* metaphor serves to emphasize this concept of the relational dimension of power, which not only underlies every governing action, but also constitutes one of the driving forces behind the dynamics of social practices and the construction of subjectivities.

Foucault identified at least two structural elements that provide the framework within which power keeps its momentum, namely the rules of right and what he calls the truth-effects (Foucault, 2003). These elements are interlocked and play a determining role in guaranteeing that the mechanisms of power do not sink under the weight of random social pressures. His enquiries of a more empirical nature into subjects as diverse as the political use of psychiatry and the madhouse (Foucault, 1961, 1962), the birth of the social medicine and the hospital (Foucault, 1963), the historical developments of the judicial system and the prison (Foucault, 1975), or politics, education, and the interdiction of sexuality (Foucault, 1976, 1982, 1984a, 1984b), sought precisely to demonstrate the inner workings of power, be it as the materialization of such rules of right (the institutions), be it as the truth-effects of a given discourse (religious, scientific, political), be it still as a crucial factor in the processes of constitution of identities.

Foucault further maintained that scientific discourse, in its complicity with power—through the various institutional forms that such complicity takes—, acts in order to guarantee its own continuity through mechanisms of submission and exclusion. The most obvious instance of this 'institutionalization' of scientific discourse was precisely the modern university (Foucault, 2003), whose emergence he traced to the late eighteenth century, at a time when the belief in reason had given rise to 'the disciplinarisation of polymorphous and heterogeneous knowledges' (Foucault, 2003, p. 182)—something that not only evicted the philosophical discourse from science, but also levelled to the ground the project for a *mathesis universalis*, a universal science based on mathematics. The Napoleonic university did not simply emerge as yet another institutional materialization of knowledge, of truth, but especially as an attempt to control it, to tame it; in other words, to turn it into something tractable, disciplined, dominated. A project of this nature was bound to ghettoise philosophy, whose critical and self-critical edge could hardly have suited a system of knowledge based on discrete or compartmentalized forms of classification of the world. The appearance of *knowledges*, each with its own terminology, method, scope, apparently well-defined object, etc., derived precisely from this sort of *cladogenesis*, i.e. this branching off of something that was once believed to be unitary and universal. Philosophy, unable as it was to continue to play an organizational and regulatory function within the new scientific system, was gradually forced to pull back.

The compartmentalization of knowledge also brought with it new claims to the monopoly of the truth: no longer that truth that Plato spoke of in his *Republic*—*aletheia*, or the *unhiddenness* of things (Plato, 2000; Heidegger, 2004)—, but that other truth which is much closer to what Heidegger (2004) conceptualized as the correspondence between the proposition and the thing, a truth whose existence hinges on a series of discursive realizations. The monopoly of truth that the university then claimed for itself was the monopoly of a set of discourses over the others. Therefore, the function of the modern university was, from the very outset, to select—which is also to say, from a different perspective, to exclude—discourses, to arrange their distribution and articulation, to apply the rules that guarantee their quality, and to establish a scientific

community to oversee these processes and to make sure that consensus was reached. This, nevertheless, is not to be equated with sheer orthodoxy. As Foucault (2003) points out, the disciplinarisation of knowledges did not end up in crystallized, immutable truths—quite the contrary: since such disciplinarisation rested not on the *content* of statements, but on their *regularity* and on a grammar, i.e. a series of *rules* for the production and validation of enunciations, it gave way to an unlimited multiplication of statements that allowed discourses to regenerate themselves from the inside through various accepted methodological procedures without running the risk of collapse.

Another role that Foucault ascribed to the university is that of using 'directly or indirectly, State apparatuses to centralize knowledge' (Foucault, 2003, p. 183). This does not mean, however, that the university exists as a separate institution in relation to the system of State apparatuses. It may indeed take advantage of other apparatuses to secure the conditions for the monopolistic appropriation of the truth, but it is not autonomous. The university is, to use Althusser's terminology, already part of the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), and therefore its social function cannot be discussed without considering a whole series of mutual dependencies and determinations that develop over time between such apparatuses.

Ideological state apparatuses

In order to better grasp the nature of the university from an Althusserian perspective, an explication of the workings of the ISAs—and in particular their incidence in the spheres of higher education and adult education—is in order. ISAs form part of processes of reproduction of the productive forces and of the relations of production within a given social formation. Marx had already argued that the stability and continuity of the formation arising from a dominant mode of production hinges on its ability to guarantee that the means of productions, i.e. the material conditions of production, can go on being replicated at different levels of the productive chain (Marx, 1990, 1992). What Althusser now sought to do was to understand how reproduction works at the social level of the productive forces, which is to say of labour power.

Althusser identifies two conditions for such reproduction to take place (Althusser, 1971). The first is the provision of the material means to ensure the subsistence of the worker, namely through wages. The value of such wages corresponds to just a fraction of the value generated by the labour power of the worker himself. Wages allow the worker not only to go on employing his labour force for the enterprise, but also to reproduce himself through the children that he raises and that will also step into the production process later on. The wage alone, however, does not suffice to make the worker truly productive. In a mode of production of such complexity as ours, markedly characterized by a highly developed socio-technical division of labour, the wage-earner must possess the skills, techniques and knowledge required to maximize his contribution to the generation of wealth. He must also be taught the rules that govern the relations between the agents in the productive process—a sort of social grammar that ultimately stipulates his position within a social order structured according to the logic of class domination. This is the second condition. Here the education system fulfils two fundamental functions. On the one hand, it provides the know-how—the *epistêmê* and the *technê*—required for the inclusion of the individual in the productive process. On the other hand, it subjects him to the rules of the social order, be it by imposing the dominant ideology upon him, be it by giving the agents of repression and exploitation the power and the ability to enforce such order, since the reproduction of the productive forces is not simply a matter of imparting knowledge or teaching skills, but also a question of ensuring the ideological subjection of the individual, that is, his

acceptance of the existing relations of production, of the rules of the dominant classes, and of the various mechanisms of reproduction. The way the State is organized contributes to the perpetuation of this situation, in which the worker accepts the ongoing extortion of the surplus value that he produces (see also Heinrich, 2009; Cole, 2008). The main function of the State Apparatuses is precisely to safeguard the interests of the ruling classes against those of the working class either through repression, or through ideology. Althusser maintains that, besides the Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs), such as the police, the courts, the prisons or the army, which may every now and then resort to violence and are centralized under a commanding unity, there are other specialized institutions—religious, educational, family, legal, political, trade-union, communications and cultural—, operating at a more or less unconscious level and which play an important part in conditioning the thinking and the attitudes of the individual. Althusser refers to the ensemble of these institutions as Ideological State Apparatuses, which are:

> relatively 'autonomous' and capable of providing an objective field to contradictions which express, in forms which may be limited or extreme, the effects of the clashes between the capitalist class struggle and the proletarian class struggle, as well as their subordinate forms. (Althusser, 1971, p. 149)

Despite the diversity of ISAs, all of them play from the same score—the ideology of the ruling class—and their effectiveness lies in the apparent invisibility of their effects. Althusser foregrounds the school as the ISA that has the most pervasive effect on the social organization of the capitalist formation by 'drumming into' the individuals the main roles of class society: those of the exploited, the agent of exploitation, the agent of repression and the professional ideologist. Althusser's description of the education system is clearly marked by the historical context, but is nevertheless a very straightforward portrait of an education oriented towards capitalist priorities: the lower levels of education eject the vast majority individuals directly into the production process; others may eventually reach positions of middle technicians or middle executives. There are, however, those few who reach

> the summit either to fall into intellectual semi-employment, or to provide, as well as the 'intellectuals of the collective labourer', the agents of exploitation (capitalists, managers), the agents of repression (soldiers, policemen, politicians, administrators, etc.) and the professional ideologists (priests of all sorts, most of whom are convinced 'laymen'). (Althusser, 1971, p. 155)

This 'summit' is the only reference, albeit metaphorical, that Althusser makes to the university. He prefers instead to speak of the school in more general terms. Here he admits that he took his inspiration from Gramsci. In the Gramscian model of the ethical (or cultural) State, the school in particular is ascribed a 'positive educative function'—in contrast with the 'repressive and negative function' of the court. Although the Italian thinker considered the former to be positive and the latter negative, he still believed that both play an important part in the preservation of the cultural and political hegemonic status of the ruling class (Gramsci, 1971). Althusser, on the other hand, is less optimistic about the benefits or 'positive' effects that the educational apparatus may generate. Education serves the needs of the capitalist economic system through selective processes. In this light, adult education is little more than the development of technical skills and the acquisition of a specialized knowledge meeting the demands of the capitalist division of labour. Althusser subsumes ethics under the category of practical ideologies—which include religion, politics, law, and aesthetics—and which serve no

other purpose but to perpetuate the roles of the exploited, of the agent of exploitation, of the agent of repression, and of the professional ideologist (Althusser, 1971). Therefore, his principal thesis concerning education makes no concessions: 'all Ideological State Apparatuses, whatever they are, contribute to the same result: the reproduction of the relations of production, i.e. of capitalist relations of exploitation' (Althusser, 1971, p. 154). If this holds true for the school, it should also hold true for the university, but in his most relevant writings published around the late sixties, early seventies, Althusser, unlike Foucault, steers clear of the subject, notwithstanding all his preoccupations with scientific discourse and the way in which it could counter the effects of ideology. We can only speculate why an intellectual so actively committed to exposing the logics of State power and the mechanisms of reproduction of the relations of production made such a glaring omission of the ideological function of the university, especially in those years when this institution became the hotbed of ideological and political dissent.

Comparing Althusser and Foucault

Althusser's hesitations to undertake a thorough examination of the ideological role of the university properly speaking makes it difficult for us to establish a dialogue between the theses he advanced and the ideas put forward by Foucault. There are tangible theoretical divergences between both philosophers that cannot be satisfactorily bridged.

Foucault's main concern was the analysis of the historical conditions for the emergence and consolidation of scientific discourses and their effects on social practices and power relations, whereas Althusser was more focused on the role that ideology plays in the construction—through processes of recognition and misrecognition—of the knowledge of the world, including scientific discourse and educational practices. This, in turn, also implies a difference in scope: Althusser preferred to examine the role of the school as an ISA and to discuss how the education system not only conditions the representations of the world and of the individuals, but also serves to secure the preservation of the functions of the capitalist mode of production; Foucault, on the other hand, was more interested in the specificity of the university as the institutional embodiment of scientific discourses, and therefore tried to understand how the rules stipulating what is to be authorized, sanctioned, excluded and prohibited come into being.

Finally, another dissimilarity of some import has to do with the way in which they conceive power itself. For Althusser, power is ultimately materialized in the State and the final objective of the political class struggle is precisely the conservation or seizure of State power. This objective power can be secured as long as the State Apparatuses, both repressive and ideological, remain in the hands of one single class (Althusser, 1971). Foucault's power, on the other hand, is more evanescent and far less easy to grasp. As he argues in one of his defences of *The History of Sexuality*: 'The reason why we have seen the development of so many power relations, so many systems of control, and so many forms of surveillance is precisely that power has always been impotent' (Foucault, 1994a, p. 629). This oxymoron is not entirely innocent. Foucault knew that resistance to power is a central feature of human societies and that the institutionalized forms of power can always be contested and disrupted.

Having said this, despite differences in vocabulary and conceptual architecture, there are some parallels that can be drawn between both philosophers. To begin with, they both sought to denounce the French education system—and, in Foucault's case in particular, higher education—, as a State apparatus that serves power, first and foremost. It either segregates individuals, pushing them to the margins of the system, or assigns them a specific role or function within the social structure, including that of

safeguarding truth or scientific knowledge. By opposing offbeat theories and resisting discourses emerging from the fringes of mainstream science or of the dominant culture, the education system is there to lessen the potential for change by reinforcing already existing meanings and values, at the same time as it perpetuates the relations of power within the social order. In other words, the different forms of knowledge conveyed by the education system not only shape the individuals and determine their function in capitalist society, but also corroborate the existing social organization, including education itself.

On the other hand, Althusser and Foucault tried to demonstrate that the power of education institutions is socially effective precisely because (a) it results from the straightforward imposition of scientific discourses coming from above or irradiating from an easily identifiable centre, and (b) it acts through the invisible dispersion of its effects in the social body—a power that goes on working at an unconscious level, operating under the surface of language and disguising social contradictions as obviousnesses. As a consequence, they dismissed the notion that it is only through repression or dogmatism that power can be preserved. This is not to say that they underestimated the role of repression in the control of individuals. However, they preferred to throw light on those manifestations of power that do not take on an overtly repressive or violent character and that, because of this, are more effective in subduing individuals and groups.

The two philosophers also attempted to explain the mechanisms that guarantee the longevity of such institutions, be it through a mere process of reproduction (Althusser), be it through the stipulation of the sets of rules for the validation of discourses (Foucault). In order to do that, they traced the evolution of such mechanisms through the historical transformation of the institutions dedicated to education or to the control and validation of truth (the Church or the State).

Finally, they both admitted that it is still possible to counter the effects of the equation between power and scientific discourse (embodied either in the university or in the school) by means of a *critical epistemology* that allowed us to unmask hidden relations of power and deconstruct mechanisms of domination: in Foucault's case through the concept of 'genealogy', which is presented as 'an insurrection against the centralizing power-effects that are bound up with the institutionalization and workings of any scientific discourse organized in a society such as ours' (Foucault, 2003, p. 9); in Althusser's case through 'the (scientific) knowledge of the mechanism of [ideological] recognition', which must be reached so as to start outlining 'a discourse which tries to break with ideology, in order to dare to be the beginning of a scientific (i.e. subject-less) discourse on ideology' (Althusser, 1971, p. 173; see also Ryder, 2013).

Thus spoke the philosophers: Althusser and Foucault's views on May 68

Althusser, who was at a psychiatric hospital during the protests, remained shrouded in silence for a long time. When he finally tore the veil and spoke about what had happened, his appraisal disappointed many left-wing radicals (Hewlett, 2010). Though a Marxist, he seemed to incarnate the scholars' inability to understand the university as a privileged locus for challenging existing power relations. Instead of exploring the students' subversive potential to the benefit of the FCP, he saw their actions as a manifestation of their ideological subjection to the bourgeois state—hence his criticisms that the events of May 68 were merely 'bourgeois' and 'counter-revolutionary', and that the students had fallen victims of 'infantile leftism' (Collins, Glaberman & Hamerquist,

1978; Jones & O'Donnel, 2010). In his correspondence with Maria Antonietta Macciocchi, a member of the Italian Communist Party, Althusser emphasized that whatever had happened was not a moment of *fusion* leading to a 'ruptural unity', but of historical *encounter*. He went on to explain that 'an encounter may occur or not occur', but when it does, it 'can be a "brief encounter", relatively accidental, in which case it will not lead to any fusion of forces'. Althusser argued that this had been precisely

> the case in May, where the meeting between workers/employees on the one hand and students and young intellectual workers on the other was a brief encounter which did not lead, for a whole series of reasons . . . , to any kind of fusion. (Macciocchi, 1973, p. 307)

One may always discuss what exactly the consequences of this 'brief encounter' were, in particular on the ideological, discursive and political planes, and speculate about the legacy of May 1968. However, to downplay everything that had happened, as Althusser did, as 'a brief encounter' of social actors lured by some form or another of 'infantile leftism', especially after having advanced the thesis of the 'ruptural unity' which was required to start a revolutionary process, is a move that could only have led to the discredit of his entire theoretical edifice. He even supported Edgar Faure's politics not so much because he subscribed to the principles of the reform proposed by the latter, but because 'the (bourgeois) intelligence of E. Faure' contributed to the 'disintegration' of the student movement (Macciocchi, 1973).

Althusser's arguments earned him the bitter opposition of one of his disciples, Jacques Rancière, who set out to denounce Althusserianism as 'a philosophy of order' (Rancière, 1974/2011). In his discussion of the lack of articulation between the theory and political praxis of the Party, Rancière struck home by arguing:

> In May 1968 . . . everything was suddenly and brutally clarified. As the class struggle broke out openly inside the university, the status of the 'theoretical' was thrown into doubt, though not by the perennial blabber about praxis and the concrete, but by the reality of a mass ideological revolt. Thenceforward, Marxist discourse would no longer be able to rest its entire case on the affirmation of its own rigour. The class struggle made the bourgeois system of knowledge an open question because it raised, for everyone, the problem of knowledge's ultimate political meaning, of its revolutionary or counter-revolutionary character. (Rancière, 1974/2011, p. 129)

This passage is crucial to the debate about the relation between power and the university for two reasons. Firstly, it confirms that the university—here referred to as 'the bourgeois system of knowledge'—does indeed offer yet another stage where the class struggle can be fought out through contending discourses and practices. So much so that even Marxism, which is supposed to provide the conceptual framework for the critical evaluation of that struggle, is drawn into the contention. Secondly, it became clear to Rancière that, in the period that followed the student uprising, the Althusserians' defence of academic knowledge also corresponded to the revisionist offensive against the fundamentals of the political struggle on which the students had embarked. Hence his accusation: 'the link between the Althusserian reading of Marx and political revisionism was not just a case of equivocal coexistence – it was an effective theoretical and political solidarity' (Rancière, 1974/2011, p. 129). Thus, since it was not the result of a carefully planned course of action drawn up by the unassailable logic of Marxist orthodoxy, the revolutionary thrust was looked down on as the unwanted child of circumstances, which had no place in the Marxist science as conceived by Althusser. 'In the end,' claims Rancière, 'Marxist discourse resolves to be the justification of academic knowledge and of the authority of the Central Committee'. Worse still:

''Science' becomes the slogan of the ideological counter-revolution' (Rancière, 1974/2011, p. 154). Despite also acknowledging the contradictions surrounding the events of May 1968, Foucault took a different view of the movements of contestation that took to the streets of Paris, arguing that they could not be read, regardless of Althusser's best attempts, in the light of the Marxist problematic. Not that Foucault as a philosopher rejected Marxism downrightly. As he once stated, 'I am neither and adversary nor a partisan of Marxism', although there are authors who do not hesitate to label him a 'historical materialist' (Olssen, 2006, p. 37; Stickney, 2007, p. 73)—recognizing nevertheless that he does not fit the mould of either classical or structural Marxism (see also Smart, 1983/2010). Althusser, his former tutor at the *École Normale Supérieure*, had once encouraged him to join the FCP, which he did together with Gérard Genette and Jean-Claude Passeron. However, the Party's doctrinaire positions soon proved to be incompatible with Foucault's own understanding of Marxism and he decided to resign his membership in 1953 (Macey, 2004; Mills, 2003). This short association with a radical political organization did not turn him into a revolutionary and even Sartre believed that he was a conventional, conservative professorial 'mandarin' (Miller, 1993/2000). It neither prevented him from becoming involved in government-related initiatives later on: in the mid-sixties he took part in a commission established by Christian Fouchet, de Gaulle's minister of education, to map out the reform of higher education (precisely the reform that fuelled the students' protests in 1967 and 1968) (Miller, 1993/2000), and in 1976 he joined another government commission to work on the reform of the penal code (Mills, 2003).

In an interview Foucault gave in 1984, he admitted that he had not witnessed the protests of May 1968 first hand since he was in Tunisia at the time. He thus saw himself as 'an outsider' (Foucault, 1994; Raber, 2004) and declined to engage in the type of polemics that had set his former tutor and the students at loggerheads. As he later stated: 'If I open a book and see that the author is accusing an adversary of "infantile leftism" I shut it again right away' (Foucault, 1997, p. 111). He justified his censure with something that should remain unaffected by such quarrels: the quest for the truth. According to Foucault, Marxists were unable to pursue this quest because of their permanent attempt to determine the admissibility or validity of the statement in the light of their doctrine—an attitude that had prevented them from clearly perceiving the motivations of the various movements that stood behind the May rebellion of 1968. Besides, these events were far more complex and posed far more challenges to the politics of the period than what the categories of structural Marxism were able to account for. The 'powerlessness' that Marxists were experiencing in their endeavour to provide adequate answers to the questions that were being brought up with reference to women's rights, the environment, minorities, the nuclear threat, etc., was, in Foucault's opinion, a consequence of the 'liberation of the act of questioning' which gave rise to 'a plurality of questions posed to politics rather than the reinscription of the act of questioning in the framework of a political doctrine' (Foucault, 1997, p. 115). From this moment onwards, the dogmatic framework of Marxism gradually ebbed down and finally new political and cultural issues related to the personal sphere were taking on a growing importance on the social agenda. It was this that allowed Foucault to consolidate the position of his theoretical work amongst the French intelligentsia (Foucault, 1997). In any case, when he was appointed the first head of the philosophy department at the new university of Paris VIII, in Vincennes, he did not let his reluctance towards Marxism cloud his judgment when it came to appointing left-wing radicals to teaching positions there (Mills, 2003). Despite having served in the Fouchet commission, which had given rise to the students' discontentment, Foucault, unlike

Althusser, took a sympathetic view of their demands and wants. The students' uprising in Tunis in March 1968, which he witnessed first-hand, had already left a vivid impression on him and made him more sensitive to their expectations and pressing needs (Eribon, 1989/1991). So much so that when things came to head shortly afterwards his appointment to chair the philosophy department, Foucault did not hesitate to take part in the student occupation of the department building. By then, he was becoming 'a typical central figure in the counter-culture' (Watson, 2002, p. 627), with his involvement in the gay liberation movement and in the anti-Vietnam war demonstrations and his consumption of drugs. He was determined to show that his previous involvement with the government was not going to compromise his intellectual integrity. Commenting on the intention of the minister of education, Olivier Guichard, to withdraw the title of *licencié d'enseignement* from the students of the department of philosophy, he presented a defence of the role of the philosophers inside the education system that might be read as the defence of a university without dogmas and open to plural thinking. As he stated, 'with the role that they [the *licenciés*] have been assigned, what they teach should be a philosophy of conscience, of judgment, of freedom.' By this he meant 'a philosophy that safeguards the rights of the subject in the face of all knowledge, the supremacy of all individual conscience over politics' (Foucault, 1970, p. 34; my translation).

Après Faure: Towards the construction of a new learning subject

Foucault's proposal for a 'philosophy of conscience' necessarily entailed a new perspective of the university as a place of dialogue, inquiry and an open-minded exchange of ideas in the process of construction of a democratic space. By the time Foucault made this comment, this renewal of higher education was already underway thanks to the efforts Edgar Faure, the man who set out to bring to an end the Napoleonic university Foucault was so critical of. As he declared, 'the Napoleonic conception of centralised and authoritarian university is outdated . . . it is necessary to make its last traces disappear as quickly as possible' (Faure, 1968, p. 18; my translation). The university that was to rise out of the rubble of the Napoleonic institution should rest on three pillars: autonomy, participation and openness to the world. Despite the terse criticisms that André Gorz made of the Faure reform—that it only served 'the fiction of the chance of social promotion offered to all via the free access to studies' that 'lead nowhere' (Gorz, 1970)—, it signalled the turning point in the history of higher education and adult education in France as it valorised autonomy and multidisciplinarity, and opened the doors for the participation of other social actors in the university community.

The debate on the reform of higher education, however, was not new. The 'reform coalition' of the Colloque de Caen of November 1966 had already defended a higher level of administrative, budgetary, scientific and methodological autonomy. The Colloque d'Amiens (March 1968) had also denounced the maladjustments of education, the issues of institutional isolationism and lack of communication inside the institutions, and the rigidity of the school system, proposing instead the setting-up of a system of continuing education, the implementation of a national policy of educational renewal, an emphasis on the preparation for working life, the investment in interdisciplinary research. It also stressed the necessity of a more detailed examination of the real needs of children, adolescents and adults (see Faucherre, 1992). And yet, the awareness of such problems on the part of the university reformers did not prompt any closer

cooperation with the education ministry. Besides, modifications that were underway when the uprising started (Prost, 1992) did not correspond to any substantial reorganization nor provided a satisfactory response to the proposals of the reformers. Neither were they meant to address the demands of the *Union Nationale des Étudiants de France*, which, besides calling for the end of the *numerus clausus*, pushed for the modernization of teaching contents, the offer of all-round training and a higher education system prepared to meet the long-term real needs of the economy (Wilson, 1987).

The Faure Law sought to address all these issues. It acknowledged that the universities should provide opportunities for continuing education to all sections of the population, and that it should remain open to former students, as well as to all those who had been prevented, for several reasons, from pursuing their studies. It also took the power from the hands of the teaching staff. Nineteenth-century republican reformers believed that the university should be, above all, a professional organization of professors, who alone were invested with the authority to decide on the fate of the institution. Edgar Faure, however, was a stern advocate of the Gaullian principle of 'participation' and maintained that ultimately the universities should be run jointly by students, teachers, administrative staff and external stakeholders 'external personalities chosen for their competence and in particular for their role in the regional industries', (Loi d'orientation de l'enseignement supérieur, 1968; my translation), as materialized in the deliberative body of the 'Conseil d'Université', thus guaranteeing the sharing of the decision-making power among a wider diversity of actors. Another important development was the insistence in the idea of transversal cooperation and multidisciplinarity, which was translated into the collaboration between disciplines and the teachers' involvement in joint teaching and research activities, thus tackling the problem of the excessive specialization by discipline. The idea of transversal cooperation thus took over the myth of integration of all knowledge around a single organizing principle (see Musselin, 2004).

Edgar Faure's reform reflected, though partially, a series of concerns about adult education which he would later explore in the UNESCO 1972 report entitled *Learning to be: The world of education, today and tomorrow*. Despite the several criticisms that have been addressed to this document and the distortions that have been made of its major ideas (Lee & Friedrich, 2011; Boshier, 1998; Collins, 1998), the stress that it laid on the master-concepts of *lifelong learning* and the *learning society* has left an indelible mark on educational policies worldwide in the past few decades. As Faure et al. argued back then, 'all that has to be learned must be continually reinvented and renewed' and therefore, if

> learning involves all of one's life, in the sense of both time-span and diversity, and all of society, including its social and economic as well as its educational resources, then we must go even further than the necessary overhaul of 'educational systems' until we reach the stage of a learning society. (Faure, Herrera, Kaddoura, Lopes, Petrovsky, Rahnema & Champion Ward, 1972, p. xxxiii)

This conceptual leap towards lifelong learning is as much indebted to Faure's progressive and humanistic agenda, as it is to the ideological crisis of May 68, which showed that the university, too, 'must be continually reinvented and renewed'(Faure et al., 1972) One must note, however, that the very concept of lifelong learning was no novelty. John Dewey had already proposed it back in 1916 in his *Democracy and Education*, when he argued that education was 'the enterprise of supplying the conditions which insure growth, or adequacy of life, irrespective of age' (Dewey, 2012,

p. 35). Shortly afterwards, the 1919 Report on adult education drafted by the Adult Education Committee of the British Ministry of Reconstruction, chaired by Arthur L. Smith, maintained that adult education 'should be both universal and lifelong' (British Ministry of Reconstruction, Adult Education Committee, 1919, p. 5). And yet, despite the soundness of their argument about adult education being 'a permanent national necessity', much remained to be done (see Jarvis, 2004, p. 63). The Faure report of 1972, which takes the idea much further, seems to have finally embodied many of the concerns and ideals that had paraded down the streets of Paris in 1968:

> . . . most education systems do not help their clients—whether they be youngsters or adults—to discover themselves, to understand the components of their conscious and unconscious personalities, the mechanisms of the brain, the operation of the intelligence, the laws governing their physical development, the meaning of their dreams and aspirations, the nature of their relations with one another and with the community at large. Education thus neglects its basic duty of teaching men the art of living, loving and working in a society which they must create as an embodiment of their ideal. (Faure et al., 1972, p. 66)

But the report also appears to be a direct reply to the criticisms made by André Gorz to the Faure Law, when it stated that

> whatever power education has, or has not, to alleviate in its own domain inequalities among individuals and groups, a resolute social policy to correct unfair distribution of educational resources and effort is the obvious pre-condition for any progress in this respect. (Faure et al., 1972, p. 73; see also p. xxvi).

Biesta highlights the importance of the report, claiming that it configured 'lifelong education in terms of solidarity, democracy and "the complete fulfillment of man"' (Biesta, 2005, p. 2). However, he also admits that it resulted from a context of optimism, when, in the aftermath of the students' protests, people believed that it was possible to intervene and change things for the better (in Macherey's words, 'everything or almost everything seemed possible . . . we still thought we were going somewhere') (as cited in Ross, 2002, p. 114). Biesta recognizes that Faure's humanistic vision remains to be fulfilled and that the very concept of lifelong learning has been taken hostage by the advocates of the economic imperative, who have relegated the democratic and personal functions to a subordinate position (see also Fejes and Nicoll, 2008).

This problem of subordination of lifelong learning to the demands of the global economy throws into sharp relief the problematic of the *subject* with respect to degree of freedom that he enjoys within the social order. As we have seen, Faure sought to defend an education aiming at the emancipation of the individual and his fulfilment as a human being, and yet, in the decades that have followed, such vision has succumbed to the dictates of the neoliberal agenda (see also Cunningham, 1998). Is it possible for the human subject to claim some freedom of action through education, within the current framework of economic relations?

Here Foucault and Althusser would take different views. For Althusser, the *subject* is little more than the ideological effect of the reproduction of the relations of production and of the socio-technical division of labour: through ideology the individual is led to believe that he is a free subject, so as to guarantee that he will not oppose his own subjection, i.e. the acceptance of his own subordination to the productive apparatus. There is no place for resistance against that condition, for 'an individual is *always-already* a subject, even before he is born' (Althusser, 1971, p. 176). Not even

science can be expected to rescue the human being from that predicament (see also Rancière, 1974/2011). And in terms of adult education, Althusser's claims about the inescapability of ideology drive us to a cul-de-sac. Those conscious efforts we make in the educational process to escape subjection to the ruling ideology—the belief that emancipation can be achieved, the conviction that the relation between exploited and exploiters can be supressed, etc.—are themselves an ideological effect. As Stephen Brookfield states: 'teachers believe that they are imparting values of self-determination to students who are making a free choice to accept or reject these', but the fact is that 'neither group can see the ideological web in which it is caught' (Brookfield, 2005, p. 75).

The Althusserian subject, being devoid of power and of independence of judgement, a reproducer of the very system that keeps him in bondage, is incapable of a radical transformation of his educational practices and of unveiling the obviousnesses that condition the teaching and learning process, and of fighting the exclusions begotten by the education system of the capitalist society. However, Brookfield believes that it is precisely through adult education that it is possible to escape the Althusserian cage, since it is 'in adulthood that the pile of empirical inconsistencies that call ideology into question mounts higher and higher until . . . the whole stack of commonsense realities topples over' (Brookfield, 2005, p. 81). The cynicism and scepticism that life experience teaches us are, according to Brookfield, the best starting point of every ideology critique. Adulthood gives individuals a more mature perception of the problems that afflict society and allows them to become not only more aware of the contradictions inherent in discourses and social practices, but also more sensitive to the different forms of power commanding their lives.

Like Althusser, Foucault would argue that the subject is but the result of forms of power that 'categorize' the individual, and tie him down 'to his own identity' and force upon him a law of truth on which 'he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him' (Foucault, 1982, p. 781). However, unlike Althusser, Foucault believed that the time had come for the individual to face the challenge of freeing himself from type of 'individualization' imposed by the power structures, including those attached to education via disciplining processes. Echoing the tone and content of the May 68 slogans, he would claim that 'the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are', that is, to discover 'new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries' (Foucault, 1982, p. 785). But if even the pedagogic institutions serve to perpetuate power relations, how is that refusal ever going to assert itself? Richard Edwards (2008) argues that since power relations are a constitutive element of the social whole, one must learn to make use of them to turn individuals into subjects capable of action, by means of disciplinary practices and discursive regimes of truth that mobilize them to 'become active subjects inscribed with certain capacities to act' (Edwards, 2008, p. 24). This construction and mobilization of subjectivities through education that Edwards proposes matches Foucault's description of the way in which power shaped the subject through educational practices. At the same time, however, this construction, based as it is on the subjection to given disciplinary regimes, calls into question the belief in lifelong learning as something that necessarily leads to 'individual and social progress, enlightenment and emancipation' (Edwars, 2008, p. 25).

So, what is at stake here is the ability to rethink the social role of the institution and make a critically informed use of its power over the regimes of truth to invest in the construction of subjectivities—that of the lifelong learner, for example—actively and permanently seeking access to knowledge and to a critical understanding of the social

and political reality in which they inscribe their actions, which implies a university continuously deconstructing those discourses that determine the emergence of subjectivities simply serving either the interests of the state or of the productive apparatus. On the other hand, it also entails a negotiation of meanings between the university and the learners, in a dialogue where their demands and interests are not subordinated to, but articulated with the institution's educational (which is also to say transformational) potential. If anything, the future of lifelong learning and of the institutions that sustain it depends more and more on this move towards a customised and participatory learning (see Davidson & Goldberg, 2010).

Concluding remarks

The philosophical proposals of both Althusser and Foucault survived the turbulent months of 1968. However, the way in which they positioned themselves in relation to the events left indelible marks on how their theoretical apparatuses were to be appropriated from then on. In any case, their influence on the students' perception of power relations in French society is still visible nowadays. What these two intellectuals did was—if I am allowed to borrow Jim Crowther's phrase—to 'make power visible' (Crowther, 2012, p. 133) by bringing to light its inner workings. In fact, the critical moment came when the students realized that the university, as it stood, was above all a construction of power which contributed to perpetuate the existing social inequalities and political vices, thus constituting one more stumbling block in the path of the political changes that were being called for in the streets. The fight waged by the students in the late sixties came as the materialization of a politics of contestation born and bred inside the university which not only sought to revolutionize the institution from the inside, but also to induce major changes in the social body as a whole.

It was against the ideological pull towards a culture centred on capitalist commodity production and consumption, as well as against the role played by the university in underpinning the power relations that resulted from the capitalist division of labour, that the French students were moved to act collectively in May 68. In order to be able to imaginatively project social and political alternatives in the context of a democratic regime that was beginning to show alarming signs of erosion, it was imperative to deconstruct the discourse of the academe, exposing its fallacies and its tendency to perpetuate forms of elitism and to impose mechanisms of exclusions, and finally to make the university more receptive to the demands of the new social movements that had already begun to challenge values, attitudes and practices. Despite its 'bourgeois' character, the French university became a privileged locus of negotiation of meanings and of construction of new political subjectivities and was now starting to adapt to the new circumstances. The conditions had been met for the emergence of a new learning subject.

May 1968 marks a defining moment when the university started to adjust itself to the specific demands of social groups that had until then been left out of the system, in a positive response to the increase in civic activism and a more participatory culture. The emergence of the students' critical awareness of the role of the French university in the constitution of power relations ended up leading to a paradigmatic reconfiguration of the goals of higher education and of adult education in Europe from the late sixties onwards. The aftershock of the events of May 1968 brought the university system under close scrutiny and compelled it to respond to a changing context, marked by a dramatic rise in the number of students, the diversification of interests and the demands of under-

represented groups. In this respect, the 'universités de proximité' constituted a major step in widening the participation of individuals from lower socioeconomic strata in higher education (Goulard, 2007). Moreover, several institutions (e.g., Université Paris 8) sought to adapt their teaching methods to different types of audiences so as to provide educational opportunities to people at every stage of life. The changes made in the system sought to encourage adult learners to pursue their own education, regardless of their backgrounds and academic preparation.

But May 1968 also crossed borders and prompted reflections on higher education at the most important international forums, resulting in pathbreaking reports (Lengrand, 1970; Faure et al. 1972; OECD, 1973), which projected into the future the concept of lifelong learning as a key issue in educational policy worldwide.

Notes

[1]'End to the university'; 'Professors you are as old as your culture, your modernism is only the modernisation of the police'; 'Arise, you wretched of the University'; 'And what if we set the Sorbonne on fire?'; 'The power had the universities, and the students have seized them; the power had the factories, and the workers have seized them; the power had the Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française, and the journalists have seized it; the power has power; seize it!' My translation.

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The multiple reals of workplace learning

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Abstract

The multiple reals of workplace learning are explored in this paper. Drawing on a Foucauldian conceptualisation of power as distributed, relational and productive, networks that work to produce particular objects and subjects as seemingly natural and real are examined. This approach enables different reals of workplace learning to be traced. Data from a collaborative industry-university research project is used to illustrate the approach, with a focus on the intersecting practices of a group of professional developers and a group of workplace learning researchers. The notion of multiple reals holds promise for research on workplace learning as it moves beyond a view of reality as fixed and singular to a notion of reality as performed in and through a diversity of practices, including the practices of workplace learning researchers.

Keywords: ontological politics; workplace learning; power; networks

Introduction

The distinction between workplaces as the domain of practice and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as the domain of knowledge production, theory and learning are no longer as clear-cut as they once might have seemed. Learning has escaped its traditionally understood setting in educational institutions and has been located in other sites, including workplaces (Billett, Fenwick & Somerville, 2006; Gherardi, 2006; Hager, Lee & Reich, 2012; Wenger, 1998). Indeed, as far back as the early 1990s, workplaces were named as 'the Learning Organisation' (e.g. Garvin, 1993; Marsick & Watkins, 1990; Senge, 1992). Similarly, work has crossed institutional boundaries and is increasingly counted as learning within the academy. For example, many undergraduate degrees incorporate a work-based learning component, professional doctorates are now available in various disciplines and work-based learning sometimes comprises entire degree programmes (Boud & Solomon, 2001; Garnett, Costley & Workman, 2009). It could be said that work has been *translated* into learning and learning *translated* into work. It is to the almost seamless translation of learning into work, as objects of knowledge move between these domains and particular modes of

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subjectivity are produced as seemingly natural and real, that is of interest in this paper.

The contemporary intersections between the institutions of work and Higher Education (HE) both give rise to and come out of research and theory development on learning at work and, as various authors have pointed out, this is a heterogeneous field (Corradi, Gherardi & Verzelloni, 2010; Easterby-Smith, 1997; Fenwick, 2006, 2008; Hager, 1999). Yet, while learning at work is understood in multiple ways, the terms learning and learner are often used generically as if they had a fixed and shared meaning, both in government policy documents and in much of the literature on learning at work (Edwards & Nicoll, 2004; Fenwick & Edwards, 2011). For instance, Fenwick (2010, p. 80) points to an ongoing failure in the workplace learning literature to provide definitions of what is meant by learning and the purpose of learning, which contributes to the assumption that 'learning' is a single object, self-evident and mutually understood'.

The move to singularity and cohesion through the generic use of *learning* and *learner* can be problematic as it tends to mask the politics of learning at work and the various purposes to which discourses of learning might be put. For example, Boud and Solomon (2003) have drawn attention to the politics around naming oneself as a learner at work. They suggest that 'being a learner is a risky business as it can position one apart from the group' (p. 330). For instance, employees may feel vulnerable identifying as a learner with their managers and, at times, with colleagues. Moreover, drawing attention to diversity and difference in workplaces, Edwards and Nicoll (2004, p. 160) also suggest that 'the notion of workplace learning itself needs to be used cautiously, lest it results in unsustainable generalizations'. For instance, variations in the organisation of workplaces such as: large, medium or small; heavily bureaucratised to 'virtual'; team based forms of organising work to more individualised modes; produce very different practices. They conclude that grouping the multiple and varied practices in workplaces under the general banner of workplace learning overlooks 'the complexities ordered in the actor-networks of specific workplaces' (p. 172).

Furthermore, the notion of difference in terms of what learning *is* tends to be overlooked in the educational policy arena with a push by governments in a number of countries for the formation of HE - Industry partnerships in the design, delivery and assessment of higher education programmes (Nicoll & Fejes, 2011). For instance, recent policy documents in the UK speak of learning, both in HE and in workplaces, primarily in terms of skill development and employability and it is the desire of government, both the former Labour government and the current conservative government, for HE to be active in the provision of continuing professional development of employees (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2009, 2011; Wedgwood, 2006; Wilson, 2012).

While some workplace learning research has engaged with variation (e.g. Nerland, 2012), Fenwick (2008, 2010) has pointed to the ongoing failure in much of the literature to recognise and work with difference and diversity. Diversity and plurality draw attention to the politics of learning at work, which raises a set of questions that tend to be overlooked in the literature including: Who is able to speak about learning at work? And what is able to be said? How is learning at work able to be known? And what are the material effects of knowing learning in particular ways? For example, what modes of worker subjectivity are produced as seemingly natural and real through particular ways of knowing learning at work (e.g. Usher & Solomon, 1999)?

More recently, Fenwick has proposed Mol's notion of Ontological Politics as a useful starting point for conceptualising difference and multiplicity in Workplace Learning (2010). Mol (1999) suggests that different practices produce their own

material reality. Thus, rather than understanding reality as fixed and singular (an underlying premise in most social science research), there are multiple reals. Fenwick (2010) extends this concept to the field of workplace learning and suggests there may be multiple reals of learning produced in and through different practices. This is more than the claim that that there are different perspectives on learning, rather that learning is different in different locations.

This paper explores the multiple reals of workplace learning by drawing attention to alignments and contestations in a collaborative industry-HE project examining the significance of everyday learning at work. The project was conducted in Australia in the early to mid 2000s. While the research was undertaken in Australia, the industry-university collaboration can be understood as an example of a broader shift to the co-production of knowledge between academics and industry partners (Antonacopoulou, 2009; Nicoll & Fejes, 2011). The first part of the paper introduces a poststructuralist analytic framework for examining actor networks and the multiple reals of workplace learning. Next, various actors in the research project are introduced. Then, the assemblages of the project are traced and the ways knowledges and power sit within networked relations to produce particular modes of subjectivity as seemingly natural and real. The final section considers the implications for workplace learning researchers and openings for workplace learning research.

Conceptual framing

The approach for examining the multiple reals of workplace learning is underpinned by a Foucauldian notion of power as relational, distributed and productive (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). Detailed discussions of a Foucauldian perspective on power and what this approach enables for research on lifelong learning (e.g. Fejes & Nicoll, 2008) and workplace learning (e.g. Edwards & Nicoll, 2004) have been provided in the adult education literature and only a brief introduction is provided here.

Rather than power residing with an individual or group such as the sovereign, the church or the academy, Foucault proposes that power in modern times should be understood as distributed across social institutions and practices. There is no longer a single authority. Furthermore, rather than thinking of power as only repressive, it is also productive.

> If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (Foucault, 1980, p. 119)

A Foucauldian conceptualisation of power as networked and functioning through the production of particular objects and modes of subjectivity as seemingly natural or real, underpins an actor network approach. Indeed Law (2008) refers to actor networks as scaled down, empirical versions of Foucault's discourses. Law (2008, p. 145) proposes that an actor network approach enables the 'strategic, relational, and productive character of particular, smaller-scale, heterogeneous actor-networks' to be examined.

Fenwick and Edwards (2011) detail the usefulness of an actor-network approach for examining the ongoing 'press for similarity to overcome difference' (p. 709) in

educational policy. Following Law, they argue it enables 'matter-ing processes' to come into view through examining 'the political negotiations going on at micro levels that mobilize particular attachments and uptakes' (pp. 711-712). This introduces an important concept in actor-network approach, which is translation. Latour used the concept of 'the token' (1986, pp. 267-268) to illustrate translation and the ongoing renegotiation of objects in networks:

> 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…the chain is made of actors…and since the token is in everyone's hands in turn, everyone shapes it according to their different projects. This is why it is called the model of translation.

What is of particular interest in this paper is the ways learning (as a token) is taken up and translated as it moves from HE to particular workgroups beyond the academy.

Rather than assuming a unified and fixed reality, an actor network approach provides the analytic space for exploring multiple reals (Law, 2004). For instance, using an actor network approach Mol (1999) directs attention to the ways different practices in the identification and treatment of anaemia (clinical, statistical and pathophysiological) produce different reals, including the real of sex difference. It is the ongoing enactment of particular realities in and through practice that work to stabilise the real and enable it to appear fixed.

The concept of multiple reals problematises the notion of a single truth produced through cohesive representations in research accounts, thus opening these truths to examination. While other conceptual approaches such as perspectivalism and constructivism work with plurality, Mol (1999) proposes a useful distinction between these approaches and ontological politics. Ontological politics directs attention to action rather than observation. It enables 'a semiotic analysis of the way reality is done, from studying performances, from making a turn to practice' (p. 87). In drawing attention to performativity, the performative practices of workplace learning researchers are able to come into view in accounts of workplace learning.

The industry-university research collaboration

A three year, industry-university research collaboration undertaken in an Australian workplace provides one site for empirically exploring the multiple reals of workplace learning. In this research partnership, a cross-institutional and multidisciplinary research team of workplace learning academics and professional development practitioners set out to examine the significance of learning embedded in practice in a large public-sector workplace. The organisation, referred to as PSE in this paper, provided post-secondary education and was the workplace of both the professional development unit co-researching workplace learning and four work groups participating in the research project. The four workgroups were a group of senior managers, a group of HR administrators, a group of trade teachers and a group of business teachers providing training and development in various workplaces. The author was a member of the research team and the project provided the research site for her doctoral research.

The project was conducted in two stages. Stage One involved initial interviews conducted with individual members from each of the four workgroups. Twenty three interviews were conducted, each approximately one hour in duration, where employees

were asked to speak about the challenges and changes involved in their work. The interviews were transcribed and analysed and the findings were reported back to each of the workgroups at the completion of Stage 1. During Stage 2 of the project, a series of meetings were conducted with two of the workgroups to explore particular learning themes arising from the Stage 1 interviews. The project findings were reported in a range of documents including a project report for the organisation and various journal articles.

One way of understanding the project is that the 'truth' of workplace learning was established through following a typical model of social science research where researchers enter the research site, collect data, analyse the data, and then report the findings to research partners, academic communities and other relevant stakeholders. An actor network analysis, however, enables the project to be understood as a site for exploring assemblages connected with the production, circulation and consumption of learning knowledges; and more specifically in this paper, an analysis of the intersecting practices of adult education and professional development.

The professional developers

A representative from the professional development unit was a member of the cross-institutional research team and participated as a co-researcher on the project. This involved participating in the project planning meetings, collecting and analysing data and contributing to the preparation of various publications from the project. The professional development unit were part of central services at PSE and provided professional development knowledge and expertise to each of the colleges throughout the state. The actual provision of staff training was generally conducted at the college level, usually by professional development staff within the college. The professional developers described their role in PSE, in the following way on the PSE intranet:

> The [Professional Development Unit] is committed to supporting [PSE] staff in acquiring and maintaining the skills and capabilities essential for [PSE] to maintain its position as the leading [post secondary] education and training provider in Australia.

Thus, the professional developers were interested in the skill development of PSE employees for the purpose of enhancing organisational performance.

The workplace learning academics

The workplace learning academics were located in a department of Adult Education in a metropolitan university in Australia. The academics had an interest in learning in and through practice, which was, in part, connected with the provision of Work Based Learning programmes in the department. These programmes had been discontinued at the university, however, by the time the project commenced. While they were a cross-disciplinary group, there was a strong Adult Education ethos in circulation whereby learning is understood as lifelong, and taking place in multiple sites, including beyond the walls of the academy. The workplace learning academics were interested in mapping and making visible the everyday learning of workers in the PSE workplace.

Re-configuring workplaces as sites of learning

Law (2004, p. 21) proposes that 'Realities don't exist without their matching inscription devices and such inscription devices (and their particular products) are elaborate and

networked arrangements that are more or less uncertain, more or less able to hold together and more or less precarious'. Thus, taking a Foucauldian perspective that knowledges are never neutral, the knowledge products of the project can be examined for the objects and subjects they brought into effect. For example, the inscriptions of workplace learning produced throughout the project provided a language for talking about work and workers, and making workplaces and workplace learning imaginable in particular ways (and not others) (Rose, 1999). And it is in this sense that the knowledge products were not mere reflections of a pre-existing reality in the PSE workplace but instead worked to produce particular reals. This theme is explored by examining the alignments of the project as well as contestation and resistance.

The textual products of the project, both written and spoken, were multiple and varied and included an initial project proposal for the funding body, the project planning meetings of the research group, feedback sessions with PSE representatives, written reports to PSE, a brochure for distribution in the PSE workplace, everyday conversations of the researchers, the meetings with the four PSE workgroups, journal and conference papers, including this paper,…. the list goes on. In many of these texts the PSE workplace was re-presented as a site of learning and workers as workplace learners.

While this might seem unsurprising, the aim of the project was after all to produce knowledge about workplace learning, it is to the almost seamless translation of the PSE workplace into a site of learning through the knowledge products of the project that I seek to draw attention.

Aligning institutions

The project was undertaken in the early to mid 2000s and was funded through the Strategic Partnerships with Industry – Research and Training (SPIRT) programme. At that time, higher education institutions in Australia were increasingly being called on by the federal government to operate along commercial lines (eg. Fullerton, 2005; Gallagher, 2000), and the government had implemented the SPIRT programme to encourage industry-university research partnerships (eg. Nelson, 2002; "Strengthening Australia's Higher Education System", 2004). The aims of SPIRT included the development of 'long-term strategic research alliances between higher education institutions and industry in order to apply advanced knowledge to problems...', as well as providing 'industry-oriented research training to prepare high-calibre postgraduate research students' in order to 'produce a national pool of world-class researchers to meet the needs of Australian industry' (Linkage - Projects, 2005).

The SPIRT programme could be read as a programme of government, which aimed to shape worker conduct in particular ways (Edwards & Nicoll, 2004; Miller & Rose, 1993; Nicoll & Fejes, 2008). For example, it attempted to shape the conduct of academics through producing enterprising subjects and more commercial modes of operation in universities. The programme also potentially opened up a position for industry partners as co-researchers and knowledge producers. Furthermore, the aim of the project, which was to produce knowledge about everyday learning at work, can be understood as interconnected with the ongoing desire by workplace managers to govern worker conduct through the alignment of individual employee goals with broader organisational goals and objectives (see Rose, 1999).

Aligning individual and organisational goals

The problem of employee alignment has been an ongoing theme in managerial literature for decades, with top-down managerial techniques no longer understood as effective

strategies of government. For instance in 1985, Walton wrote an article in the Harvard Business Review called 'From control to commitment in the workplace'. This trend has led Rose (1999), amongst others, to suggest that the successful government of workplaces will be achieved through harnessing worker subjectivity rather than through its suppression. This is evident in the trend in managerial texts to call on learning as a technique for producing alignment, with communities of practice being the latest in a number of versions of this theme (e.g. Garvin, 1993; Senge, 1992; Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002).

A community of practice discourse was a dominant learning discourse in circulation at the time of the project (Contu & Willmott, 2003; Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996) and this discourse was drawn on by both the academics and the professional developers at the outset of the project to speak about learning at work. From a communities of practice perspective (Wenger, 1998), learning at work is understood as identity work, whereby workers move from peripheral to full participation in communities of practice and in so doing take up an occupational identity such as the teacher, the manager, the researcher, and so on. In other words, learning is understood as the socialisation of workers through their participation in communities of shared practice in workplaces.

A community of practice discourse appealed to the academics as it enabled workplaces to be understood as sites of learning through directing attention to learning in and through practice. It also appealed to the professional developers as it was a discourse that potentially put learning on the managerial agenda as a strategy for managing the conduct of employees. For example, the benefits of communities of practice are described by Wenger et al. (2002, p. 18) in the following way:

> The ability to combine the needs of organizations and community members is crucial in the knowledge economy, where companies succeed by fully engaging the creativity of their employees. The multiple and complex ways in which communities of practice deliver value to both members and organizations is the reason they are fast becoming a central part of the management agenda.

In (some) communities of practice texts, workplace learners are re-presented as active and emotionally engaged knowledge-producers in the contemporary workplace and work is re-presented as the mechanism through which a creative and passionate self can be produced. For example, Mitchell (2003, p. 5), a change management consultant contracted by the Australian government at the time to advise on the successful implementation of change across the PSE sector, described communities of practice as: 'groups of people bound together by common interests and a passion for a cause, and who continually interact'. According to Mitchell, the 'new' worker was one who placed an emphasis on relationships, for example, PSE practitioners needed to be 'more client-focused by establishing improved relationships with both enterprise clients and individual students' (p. 8). Workers were to become knowledge producers where: 'The development of practice involves a balance between exploring ideas together and producing documents and tools' (p. 6). The members of the community of practice, as described by Mitchell, 'communicate regularly and continuously in an atmosphere of trust, enabling collective enquiry about issues of importance to the members' (p. 6).

The communities in this change management text had great appeal (at least to those concerned with managing employee conduct) and these were the texts that the professional developers drew on to guide their everyday practices. And perhaps the most appealing aspect of this document was that the communities of practice described were all aligned (seemingly unproblematically) with broader organisational goals.

The project proposal

The initial uptake of the government funded programme by both the academics and the professional developers involved the construction of allied interests and the development of a shared language for talking about work and learning (Miller & Rose, 1993). One way this was established was through the development of a shared problem space in the text of the project proposal. The proposed project outcomes were identified as:

- Improved recognition of the learning to be found in the organisation, to the benefit of both the organisation and individual employees.
- Improved understanding by key personnel in the organisations of the ways in which organisational culture and procedures encourage or inhibit learning, and the issues which need to be resolved in developing the learning organisation.
- Improved learning systems and learning strategies in the organisation that will more effectively facilitate learning embedded in practice.

The research proposal text can be examined for the ways learning was spoken about in this document, the meaning of learning embedded in this text and the subjects this version of learning worked to produce as seemingly natural. The reference to 'the learning to be found in the organisation', where learning is used as a noun, works to reinforce the view that learning is a thing that exists, and has a fixed and accepted meaning. Also, the notion that learning can be 'encourage(d)' or 'inhibit(ed)' again implies that learning has a fixed and unified meaning as does the promise that 'systems' and 'strategies' will be developed to enhance (this particular understanding of) learning. Moreover, the reference to 'the learning organisation', already re-writes the workplace as a seemingly natural site of learning.

The representation of learning in the anticipated project outcomes as benefiting both individuals and the organisation at one and the same time works to reinforce a view of workplaces as sites where the goals of individual employees are necessarily aligned with organisational goals and objectives. This is referred to in the industrial relations literature as a 'unitarist' assumption of employee relations (see Fox, 1974). In other words, learning was re-presented as a solution to the longstanding managerial problem of worker alignment and commitment. Furthermore, there was not just the assumption of alignment between employees and organisations in this text, but the promise of providing instances of alignment. For example, an anticipated outcome was 'improved recognition' of learning that benefits 'both the organisation and individual employees'.

Learning was named in the proposal as 'embedded in practice', which suggests the circulation of a community of practice discourse and similarly to much of this literature, there was little space for resistance and contestation in the representation of learning provided in the proposal. The language of learning used in the proposal proved persuasive as the funding application was successful and an alliance was forged between the workplace learning academics and the professional developers at PSE. Who, after all, could possibly be 'against learning' (see Contu, Grey & Ortenblad, 2003)?

Translating learning

The academics could be understood as authorities on workplace learning and, indeed, it was because of their expertise in this knowledge domain that they were able to enter into a collaborative relationship with their industry partner in order to investigate learning in the PSE workplace. The cross-institutional alignment suited the professional

developers as it provided the project with the stamp of the academy and the power associated with more traditional forms of knowledge production.

Stage 1 interviews

While the Stage 1 project texts, which included interviews with members of the participating workgroups and analysis of the transcripts, can be understood as simply reflecting a pre-existing workplace learning reality at PSE, they can also be examined for the ways the PSE workplace was re-inscribed as a site of learning and the subject positions produced for PSE employees in these texts. For example, the interview texts had been translated by the researchers into a typology of learning where it was proposed (in a handout given to each of the workgroups) that 'we' learn at work through the following processes: 'mastering organisational processes', 'negotiating relationships' and 'dealing with atypical situations'.

The typology of learning at work proposed by the researchers encompassed a broad range of work practices. Indeed, it is difficult to think of particular work practices that fall outside this categorisation of learning. And through inscribing these generic work practices as learning, most work, and workers, were re-inscribed as workplace learners. The sense that learning at work was universal, and that being a learner was a characteristic shared by *all* workers, was emphasised by the use of unifying words in this document such as 'we'. 'We' suggested the collective and that the knowledge about workplace learning produced by the researchers applied to all workers. In these texts the researchers were attempting to persuade the workgroup members that they were, *in fact*, workplace learners.

While proposing that these categories encompass a broad range of practices, thereby reinforcing a sense of universality, it is also useful to consider what they excluded. For example, if 'mastering organisational processes' is recognised as learning, does this suggest that lack of mastery denotes a failure to learn? Moreover, who decides when mastery is achieved? Workgroup managers? Senior managers? Workgroup members? Service recipients? Can learning at work be understood in ways other than skills development and 'mastery'? Similarly, when dealing with 'typical' situations at work, rather than atypical, is there nothing to be learnt? Is learning absent from the mundane, everyday labour that forms a part of many workplace practices? And if so, who and what does this re-presentation exclude as learners and learning?

This is not to suggest, however, that the knowledges produced in the project were false, and that the truth could have been established through better research methods, but rather to direct attention to the ways categories work to produce exclusions and more specifically to examine the particular realities produced in this inscription of workplace learning.

Stage 2: workgroup meetings

The workgroup meetings conducted during Stage 2 of the project provided another site for re-inscribing the PSE workplace as a site of learning. Interestingly, Stage 2 of the project had initially been named as the 'Intervention Stage'. This name, however, was later dropped by the researchers because of its methodological implications. The academics wanted to distance themselves from an action research style of methodology whereby an intervention is introduced and the effects of the intervention are systematically examined. While the name 'intervention' went out of circulation, the Stage 2 meetings can still be understood as performing the function of an intervention as they provided an obligatory point of passage (Callon, 1986) for the research subjects,

whereby those who participated were automatically positioned as 'the workplace learner'.

Furthermore, through organising the Stage 2 workgroup meetings as sessions where workgroup members reflected on their workplace experience in order that the truth might be revealed about learning at work, it could be said that a dominant learning discourse of reflection on practice was being enacted by the researchers. This has become a powerful learning discourse, particularly within the field of professional development (Bradbury, Kilminster, Frost & Zukas, 2009; Edwards, 1998; Edwards & Nicoll, 2006). In this discourse, workplace learning is understood as a process of rational reflection on experience for the purpose of enhancing work practices.

During Stage 2 of the project the language of learning was introduced by the researchers as a theme for exploring particular practices in the workgroups. Through this process particular work events and practices that had been described by workgroup members (but not necessarily in relation to learning, nor named as learning) were selected and named by the researchers as connected with learning and thus re-configured as learning. For example, for the senior managers it was: 'learning through transition' and for the trade teachers: 'learning through the challenge of new students'.

The workgroup meetings can be understood as part of a network that contributed to re-producing 'the workplace learner' as a seemingly natural subject in the PSE workplace. Through re-inscribing work as learning, and workers as learners, the subject position of 'the workplace learner' was constructed and workers became thinkable and knowable in this way. While this is not necessarily a problem, as 'the workplace learner' subject can be constructed in multiple ways, the ways this subject is constructed in research accounts requires closer examination as it plays a part in the ongoing struggle over worker subjectivity (Weedon, 2004). The spaces made available to workplace learners, in naming learning this way were 'learning through transition' and 'learning through the challenge of new students'. And as will be discussed later, neither of these learning spaces seemed to appeal to workgroup members participating in the project.

Shaping the token

While the project provided a site for alignment, there was also struggle between the workplace learning academics and the professional developers where each attempted to shape learning in ways that suited their own purposes. Latour's concept of 'the token' (1986) is useful here for examining the ongoing renegotiation around the knowledge object 'workplace learning', and the implications in terms of the subjects particular notions of learning brought into effect.

The brochure

The academics attempted to introduce reflexive methods throughout the project, whereby the researchers considered their own learning in the cross-institutional project and differential relations of power between the academy and the PSE workplace. The push for reflexive texts can be linked with the poststructuralist leanings of the group and an interest in relations of power and the ongoing struggle over subjectivity. The academics were not interested in using learning as a technology for bringing about workplace change and sought to disrupt a programmatic approach with a focus on interventions.

However, the reflexive approach adopted by (some of) the researchers became a site of struggle and was considered, by some, not to be the point of the project. In other words, the purpose of the project was not to produce texts about us (the researchers), but

texts about them (the researched). The gaze of the researchers was to be firmly directed on *the other* employees in the workplace and this, I suggest, was connected with the desire by the professional developers to know 'the workplace learner' in order that their conduct might be governed. This was what counted as knowledge about workplace learning for the industry partners and this was the type of knowledge outcome that the professional developers (and other groups in the organisation) expected from the project.

In a final attempt to achieve an outcome that (might) contribute to enhancing workgroup and organisational performance, the professional developers requested the production of a brochure about learning in the PSE workplace. This was to be a document that could be used by multiple groups in the organisation with the aim of enhancing learning in that workplace. As such it needed to appeal to professional developers, workgroup managers and workgroup members. While the academics collaborated on the production of the brochure, the production of this text was not a seamless and cohesive recording of the seemingly transparent findings ('matters of fact') of the research project. Rather, it involved a protracted struggle between the academics and the professional developers over the way learning in the PSE workplace might be re-presented.

The production of the brochure was a drawn out exercise where the text was passed backwards and forwards between the professional developers and the academics, with each group working on it in a way that suited their own interests. For instance, the professional developers insisted on the inclusion of text that re-presented them as active players in learning in their workplace, so sections such as: 'Structured professional development plays a vital role in skilling the organisation' were included. The academics, in wanting to avoid an overly programmatic approach wrote of multiplicity and 'the different languages of learning' in this organisation.

In the final product, however, the re-presentation of everyday learning was not dissimilar to the later communities of practice literature (e.g. Wenger et al., 2002), and similarly to that literature, the brochure drew on a unitarist assumption of alignment in an effort to persuade. For example, in an attempt to persuade employees as to 'Why everyday learning matters' [for them], one of the section headings used in the brochure, the following argument was presented:

> There are several reasons why everyday learning matters for workers. For example everyday learning enables workers to master organisational processes, negotiate particular aspects of their work and deal with atypical situations (both individually and collectively).
>
> In other words, everyday learning is critical in the day-to-day jobs of workers and is significant because it helps them address local issues, do their jobs more effectively, and to respond more quickly to the problems that arise at the coalface.

Thus, what was able to count as learning in the above text was framed by a managerial account of productivity, whereby learning necessarily contributes to enhanced organisational performance. Learning was re-presented as a means of enabling workers at PSE to be more 'effective' and efficient in solving workplace problems and workplace learners were re-presented as productive and aligned employees. There was little in the brochure to disrupt a view of learning as skills development and 'mastery', and more specifically the development of skills that contribute to enhanced organisational performance. And unsurprisingly, considering the purpose of the document, there was no space for representations of resistance to managerial objectives and workers who may have alternative perspectives.

It is important to emphasise, however, that this was only one knowledge product (and one reality of workplace learning). There were other publications, with some drawing attention to differential relations of power in workplaces and the politics of learning at work. Furthermore, how effective the representation of learning provided in the brochure actually was requires further investigation. While beyond the scope of this paper, a Foucauldian analysis suggests examining how the brochure was taken up, by whom and for what purposes?

Moreover, the language of learning as skills development, which at times was shared by the academics and the professional developers, had little appeal within the workgroups in this workplace. The re-inscription of the workplace as a site of learning by the learning experts was often challenged by workgroup members and there was contestation around the positioning of the researched as 'the workplace learner' throughout the project. For example, the senior managers resisted being positioned as workplace learners, even though there was a discourse of Organisational Learning in circulation in their workgroup.[1] As the director of the senior managers work group indicated when asked about the importance of demonstrating confidence and certainty at work:

> ... The term I use quite a lot is 'maintaining the ascendance'. I use ascendance as a metaphor because we just simply cannot afford, if we get knocked off, then the institute, the whole structure, there's questions on the whole way of the organisation structure and its development. So we can't afford in a more public forum to be seen to be small 'L' players... [2]

Furthermore, the circulation of an apprenticeship discourse amongst the trade teachers also made it difficult for them to take up a learner identity. An apprenticeship discourse works to produce the subject positions of 'master' and 'apprentice' as seemingly natural, and the trade teachers tended to understand themselves as masters rather than apprentices, particularly in relation to their students. For example:

> When I've got students around me, I don't seem like I'm learning now, I'm the one doing the teaching. As far as I'm concerned I'm the one in control. I'm the one with the knowledge that's being passed over. I've got the experience...

Networks, knowledge, power and multiple reals

The alignments of the project draw attention to a web of relations between professional developers, workplace learning academics, communities of practices texts, the workplace learner, masters, apprentices, government policy on HE, research proposals, workplace documents and how they were more or less precariously held together. For example, (some of) the inscriptions of the project enabled the PSE workplace to be known as a site of seemingly natural learning, with all workers re-presented as learners, and 'the workplace learner' subject re-presented as an effective and efficient problem solver in the workplace, contributing to enhanced organisational performance. And in casting this particular grid of visibility over the workplace learner, only certain types of learning at work were able to become visible (Rose, 1999, p. 270). This assemblage contributed to the durability of 'the workplace learner' as necessarily aligned with organisational goals and objectives. Thus, rather than understanding power as residing with a particular group, for example with the State, or with management or with the Academy, the project can be understood as a site where power was distributed yet

interconnected to re-produce a taken for granted managerial notion of employees as necessarily aligned with organisational goals and objectives.

The account also problematises the notion of a singular object 'workplace learning' and directs attention to the ongoing enactment of different workplace learning reals by the professional developers and the workplace learning academics. At times there was alignment in terms of what counted as learning at work and at times contestation and difference. While the shared language of the professional developers and the academics in relation to the productiveness of learning at work enabled the development of alliances at the project's inception, as the project played out it became evident that there were different ways for thinking and talking about learning at work, and these were integrally interrelated with practice. The project was a space where the discourses of adult education, embodied and enacted in the practices of the workplace learning academics, and the discourses of human resource development, embodied and enacted in the practices of the professional developers, intersected. The account also suggests different workplace learning reals produced in and through the practices of the senior managers and the trade teachers, although space precludes a more detailed exploration in this paper.

It has been argued that the professional developers used workplace learning for programmatic purposes, where learning was understood as a thing that could be managed and controlled in the PSE workplace and where learning interventions could be designed to enhance workplace performance. The professional developers understood learning at work as skills development and, more specifically, skills development for the purpose of enhancing organisational performance. Furthermore, and similarly to the change management texts that were in circulation in their workplace, their uptake of a communities of practice discourse was for the purpose of changing practices rather than the recognition of knowledges produced in existing practices.

In contrast, the workplace learning researchers drew on a practice discourse for the purposes of recognising the learning in workplaces that takes place in existing practices. The workplace learning academics were interested in legitimating sites other than the academy as sites of knowledge production and learning. While harnessing the power of the academy, the academics also sought to subvert it through re-writing learning in terms that disrupt traditional knowledge hierarchies and the privileging of academic knowledge.

The ongoing contestations during the project in relation to who could, and who could not, be named a learner and who could, and who could not, do this naming, suggest that workplace learning is anything but a generic term. Thus, the naming of learning at work and the uncovering of its truth is perhaps more complex than many accounts provided in the workplace learning literature and importantly, more than a matter of different perspective. This raises difficult questions for workplace learning research in terms of who is able to speak about learning at work, what is able to be said, and how might workplace learning be known?

A Foucauldian reading of power as distributed, relational and productive enables an account of workplace learning that introduces resistant rather than necessarily aligned subjects in workplaces. The multiple nodes that work to hold networks in place and reproduce seemingly durable objects and subjects are also potential sites for resistance and fracture. Thus, rather than understanding power in the project as emanating from a single site, with the academics as the agents of government and only producing knowledge that suited the purposes of their industry partner, or the industry partners as necessarily subservient to the power and authority of the academy, or

workers as cultural puppets passively taking up the subject position of 'the workplace learner' during the project, another view of power is provided here. There was no ultimate authority. Instead, power was distributed across various social institutions and practices. This directs attention to the pervasiveness of power but also to its potential fragility and the multiple sites for resistance and renegotiation.

Openings for workplace learning researchers and workplace learning research

An actor network approach provides a useful analytic device for directing attention to differences in what learning *is*, both within and across workplaces, as well as across institutions. Rather than trying to bring together different versions of the real together in a single representation, it provides a methodological tool for exploring partial connections (Law, 2004). This provides a useful opening for workplace learning researchers as it enables a more reflexive approach to examining the part played by our own knowledge products in accounts of workplace learning and the objects and subjects these accounts work to produce as seemingly natural. The notion of partial connections provides a useful opening to tired debates over theory versus practice, where theory is understood as only residing in the academy and practice only residing in workplaces.

Partial connections work to hold networks together but they provide space for resistance. An actor network approach provides the analytic space to explore resistance, thereby enabling accounts of workplace learning as other than alignment. The approach opens up potentially fruitful areas for the exploration of resistance in workplaces and its connection with learning as identity work. For example, when might it be useful to name oneself as a learner at work and use a workplace learner identity to resist other positionings? The uptake by the trade teachers of a learning discourse but using it for their own purposes is suggestive in this respect. The analysis also indicates the dominance of a discourse of learning as mastery and skills development but are there other ways of being a learner at work? Following on from Boud and Solomon (2003), are there ways of disrupting this dominant discourse in workplaces in ways that do not make employees vulnerable?

The theme of translation is particularly useful for examining the ways learning is translated as it moves across different sites. It enables attention to be directed to the active part played by knowledge products in contemporary translations around work and learning. It also points to the inevitable failures when to attempting to make two worlds equivalent (Law, 2004). The focus in this paper was on the translations associated with the movement of 'learning' into workplaces and the parts played by a network of actors, including workplace learning academics, in these translations. The approach also opens space for examining translations as work moves from workplaces into HE and becomes learning.

In summary, an actor network approach, underpinned by a Foucauldian conceptualisation of power as distributed, relational and productive, provides a useful analytical tool to examine the multiple reals performed in and through various learning practices as well as the relations between these reals – the partial connections. The approach enables networks that work to produce very real, material effects to be mapped, including the part played by academics and their knowledge products in these networks. However, rather than understanding networks as fixed, it is an approach that enables the potential fragility of power to be exposed.

Endnotes

1. See Harman (2012) for a more detailed account of the contestation between the workplace learning researchers and the senior managers in the PSE workplace.
2. 'L' is a reference to 'L' plates and to being a learner driver.

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Parental self-work: governing enactments in family life

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Abstract

Discourses on lifelong and lifewide learning portray everyday life as a pedagogical space where requirements for how to preferably improve oneself through learning are highly significant. Drawing upon the notion of governmentality, it could be argued that techniques operate within a range of practices to shape, foster and stabilize the assumed adequate ways to perform. Using that particular lens, the case of parenting was investigated to accentuate selves and self-work in narrations on family life in Norway. The analysis illustrates how the techniques of activation and comparison are at work to define, fashion and develop the responsible, involved and attentive parental self, thereby signifying pedagogical claims one should aspire to. However, how this is accomplished differs slightly within the social contexts of family life. Parenting, then, may be discussed as a powerful educative practice for fabricating capable and well-behaved citizens of contemporary times.

Keywords: governing; lifelong learning; parenting; self-work

Introduction

Today family life and parenting seem informed by rationales of learning that define and explain *what happens* within such practices in terms of competence, knowledge and skills (e.g. Gillies, 2011; Suissa & Ramaekers, 2011; Aarsand & Aarsand, 2012). What parents do obviously involves pedagogy in a wide sense, yet it could be argued that the highly prescribed societal expectations and range of actors eager to assume a pedagogical role rather address the adult as the learning subject. In various sites – through support groups, counselling and education – activities are labelled, advice is given and behaviour is corrected. Parents are targeted, and are invited to and located within learning spaces where how to develop adequate conduct is the main issue depicted as significant for a well-functioning family life. Even the media assume a similar position by passing judgment on what counts as well-behaved parenting

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(Maudlin, Sandlin & Thaller, 2012; Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2013). In this format, dialogue, coaching and expertise are seen as decisive for attaining successful performances (Assarsson Aarsand, 2011; Dahlstedt & Fejes, 2013). Parental learning, then, emerges as a social norm that is established and promoted within and across settings.

Some researchers argue that this should be seen as a neo-liberal mode of governing, where subjects are shaped, fostered and fabricated by themselves and others (e.g. Rose, 1999; Popkewitz, 2003, 2008; Fejes & Nicoll, 2008). How techniques and practices are activated and operate to encourage and discipline people to assume desirable ways of thinking, speaking and behaving are accentuated. Such governing acts of subject formation have also been called attempts 'to define and develop a way of life' (Foucault, 1997a, p. 138). Taking my point of departure in an interest in how selves are created and constituted in present time, I argue that parenting is a particularly intriguing case. It represents a site of adult everyday life that is usually thought of as a personal, private sphere beyond formal education and public domains. Within the intimate dynamic site of family, how to be and become a specific person is a main aspect of social interaction, and as such it may also contribute to our understanding of lifelong and lifewide learning.

Located within discourses on lifelong and lifewide learning, adults are positioned as continuously facing requirements to be active, responsible and willing to improve themselves. The autonomous individual is a prominent figure, and this is combined with the assumption that everyone has the capacity to become more competent (e.g. Usher & Edwards, 2007; Fejes & Nicoll, 2008; Edwards, 2010). Framed in that manner, there is reason to attach importance to the participants' perspective and in the present article I turn to the adults themselves and their activities in parenting to investigate *how* they are positioned and position themselves, and, also, to ascertain *what* practices are activated to shape and foster them to become particular parental subjects.

Governing techniques, power and the self

The notion of *governmentality* provides useful tools for analysing educative processes and self-work, and as Foucault (1993, p. 203) carefully, yet convincingly, explains 'the contact point, where the individuals are driven by others is tied to the way they conduct themselves, is what we can call, I think, government'. It focuses on the ideas, ideals and preferences that regulate and establish particular modes of conduct where individuals take an active role in shaping, fostering and moderating themselves, and each other, to assume acceptable ways of behaviour. Distinctive *techniques* operate where "techniques of domination" refer to the self as distributed, integrated and evaluated according to particular structures and practices of coercion, while "techniques of the self" highlight how people create, moderate and foster themselves as selves with respect to what is held to be adequate in social settings (Foucault 1991, 1993). Assuming certain ways of life is never about forcing people to adjust to what is desired (Foucault, 1991, 1997b, 1997c). Rather, there 'is always a versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques which assure coercion and processes through which the self is constructed or modified by himself' (Foucault, 1993, p. 204).

Governmentality, then, is about how practices and activities create and maintain social order through more or less deliberate attempts to fabricate oneself and others in certain directions. Techniques and tactics used to govern the way people make sense, talk and act are discursively produced and reproduced in and through social interaction that defines, establishes and distributes what is considered to be correct, good and

proper, and what is not. By offering, encouraging, assuming, but also resisting positions, a dominant pattern of subjectivities is fabricated and re-fabricated (Foucault, 1997b). What holds for being true makes some positions available and provides repertoires of how selves may be adequately displayed, thereby demonstrating what persons, groups and even organisations are expected to strive for. This highlights how certain modes of behaviour are cultivated, and how we foster each other and ourselves with respect to what is held to be normal in practices where we participate. Self-work in terms of guidance, regulation and discipline is accentuated because such exercises on the self are assumed to sculpt, maintain and stabilise (Foucault, 1993).

Thus, since some actions modify others, *power* is always present in mobile, reversible and unstable networks that structure and constitute rather fixed patterns of behaviour. What is normal and improper is fashioned, categorised and legitimised by the creation of social order that people aspire to follow and maintain (Foucault, 1991). Certainly such activities have restricting ambitions and regulatory effects, however, they also facilitate, enable and encourage people to fashion themselves as particular selves. The focus is on the dynamic, which means that even though certain patterns of social interaction invite people to assume the required positions, there are always possibilities to defy, oppose and refuse. Power is seen as relational, productive and even necessary to ensure that everyday life practices work.

Some research notes on governing contemporary parents

From the governmentality stance, the norms and values produced and promoted are of great importance since they are assumed to have something to say for selves and self-work. In the Nordic context, where this study was conducted, there appears to be no doubt as to which parenting ideas and ideals are preferred. Policymakers strongly support the shared model where women and men who enter the position of parent should have equal possibilities to actively engage in transitions to parenthood (e.g. Bergnéhr, 2008). Research shows how the norms of equality operate, particularly in middle-class families, where both parents are expected to and get involved in housework, homework and leisure activities (Bekkengen, 2002; Gottzén, 2009; Vuori, 2009; Klinth & Johansson, 2010).

Some researchers argue that what has been considered a hegemonic structure of masculinity appears to loosen up to include requirements for men to be child oriented and adjust to the ideal of gender equality (e.g. Johansson & Kuosmanen, 2003). Thus, again, other studies show how gendered patterns of parenting are maintained, albeit in a slightly different way than before. In private spaces, for example at home, women still seem to be the primary caregivers while in public spaces, such as sports, men seem to dominate (Shows & Gerstel, 2009; Gottzén, 2012). Furthermore, it has been claimed that social class is made relevant (e.g. Gillies, 2008) by producing and reproducing a distinction where the targets for professional intervention are ‘working-class and minority families’ rather than ‘white-middle class, heterosexual families’. While the former parents may be subjected to service and intervention positioning them as ’clients’, the latter are seen as able to govern themselves through discourses that make them appear as ’consumers’ (Edwards & Gillies, 2012, p. 67). While the former parents may be subjected to service and intervention positioning them as clients, the latter are seen as able to govern themselves through discourses that make them appear as consumers.

Along the line of governmentality, several studies on parenting have been conducted that illustrate how contemporary adults are subjected to particular requirements, for instance, being responsible, autonomous, collaborative (Rose, 1999; Popkewitz, 2003, 2008), reflective, communicative (Moqvist, 2003), responsible, informed (Millei & Lee 2007; Baez & Talburt, 2008), flexible (McGowan, 2005) and involved (Dahlstedt, 2009; Gottzén 2009). The relationships between home and education are often in focus, implying that parents should provide children with appropriate activities to reinforce and rationalise school. Adults are also disciplined to be active and responsible community members who thus support important governmental objectives. Stereotypically stated, then, at the intersection of parenting, gender and social class, the involved, informed, caring and equal subjectivity is promoted as the ideal to strive for, and is presented as a legitimate position that is both institutionally and culturally supported.

The outlined expectations placed on adults are here to be seen as pedagogical claims signifying self-work, which is the focus in the present paper. Whether parents adjust to or oppose these expectations, they are at any rate exposed to particular requirements they have to deal with in some way. I use qualitative interviews to situate parenting within people's everyday lives and highlight learning in terms of how to define, fashion and develop selves.

Interviewing parents

Research that aims at investigating identity and selves, or how people create themselves and are created, often takes its point of departure in the narrative (e.g. Bamberg, 2004, 2011; Riessman, 2008; Spector-Mersel, 2010). When people tell, create and revise stories by legitimising their choices, and discuss and explain their own and others' actions, they also perform subjectivities. Dialogues on the on-going living life are considered to have a defining character, where people plot themselves into time and space in particular ways similar to, or different from, other actors. For my purposes here, with the aim of providing rather detailed empirical accounts of what will be analysed in terms of parental selves and self-work, narration is first and foremost defined as activity (Bamberg, 2011; Evans, 2013).

In addition, the situated, dynamic and relational character of talk is accentuated, where it could be claimed that narratives are always co-constructed in interactive practices rather than "told" in a clear-cut way (e.g. Goffman, 1981). Taking a discursive stance, to explore the shaping of particular subjectivities according to how people make certain positions, activities and practices relevant is an important concern. The local, situated language use is also emphasised by highlighting how the participants articulate, perform and display themselves when narrating parenting experiences in spoken interaction (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Accordingly, I extensively use the participants' own words and verbalisations to illustrate the mechanisms of adopting, modifying and negotiating the subject positions available in dominating discourses, or what also has been called master narratives (Davies & Harré, 1990; Bamberg, 2004).

Bearing the above-mentioned research in mind, to better understand governing enactments in family life and, more specifically, how self-work is really carried out, there seems to be reason to focus on middle-class parents. To find parents to interview I used my personal contacts, and asked friends as well as colleagues to spread information about and invitations to participate in the research project in their own networks. I was delighted by the response from many, to me, unfamiliar adults willing

to share their stories on family life. Twelve adults were chosen, all university graduates and mostly full-time employees, and by taking their professional positions into account they might in broad terms be labelled middle-class. It could be claimed that the self-selecting strategy of the interviewees most likely has something to say for the research findings. In particular, it could be assumed that they position themselves as acceptable, and perhaps even contribute to what may be considered one-sided "fairy tales". Although this might be the case, I argue that it would be naïve to confuse this with the absence of a struggle for validation. Seen through the lens of governmentality, the interviews also reveal doubt, failure, defeat, conflict, worry and insufficiency (see Aarsand, 2014). Thus, for the purposes here, the analytical focus is on the emerging patterns of selves, and how self-work is carried out by making certain positions, activities and practices available.

Several open themes on family life and parenting were discussed in the interviews, and each interview lasted from approximately one and a half to two hours. They were recorded, reviewed repeatedly and transcribed verbatim. In the analysis, I returned to particular sections in the interviews to transcribe the dialogue in detail. Looking at the material from the governmentality perspective, the subject is considered reflexive, and, furthermore, it has a relation to itself that is like a self that can be worked on, modified and improved (Foucault 1991, 1993). With this in mind, I focused on what were considered to be truths, norms and "evidence" of normal (and pathologised) parenting, including what positions, actions and practices were enabled (and ignored, disallowed) and what was emphasised (and omitted). A dominant pattern that emerged in the complete material was the narrative of the responsible, involved and attentive parent. However, it turned out that this was accomplished in a slightly different way. First, the interviewees displayed themselves in reference to what appears to be main or shared parenting, respectively. Second, the interviewees defined significant parenting practices differently in private and/or public arenas (children's schoolwork, playing, organised leisure time, household work and so on). Third, the interviewees made distinct resources relevant for working on themselves, where striving to be like role models, or, on the contrary, avoiding counter positions reoccurred.

In the present article two participants that represent a jigsaw puzzle of the above-described pattern were selected to portray parenting. The master narrative (e.g. Bamberg, 2004) of how to become responsible, involved and attentive is discursively produced by drawing upon the different resources previously described: according to main versus shared parenting, in private versus public arenas, and, according to role models versus counter positions. In addition, bearing in mind that the interviewees probably consider themselves as belonging to an acceptable group of parents, perhaps sometimes even sense themselves as exceeding what holds for being "average", rather elaborate, distinct and reflected narratives were constructed. In the interactional event of the interview they also willingly shared their family life with me without explicitly considering anything as exceptional, provocative or deviant. In that sense they have fashioned themselves as "ordinary" or at least as part of practices that "we" seemingly shared. However, there seems to have been enough differences at work to make visible and explore values, norms and routines rather than take things for granted.

The act of portraying situates parenting within the local, particular and social contexts of two persons' lives and makes it possible to point at similarities as well as differences, thus still staying close to the interviewees' – or narrator's – own voices and words (Riessman & Speedy, 2007). In the analysis, individualities are highlighted, but also transcended to illustrate the pattern of subjectivities and practices appearing in the complete material. One may of course call into question that Jonathan and Julian are

middle-class, white, heterosexual men of a similar age living in Norway. However, I would argue that although this is the case, *how* such social categories are made relevant or intersect with parenting within the social contexts of personal lives is certainly a question for empirical exploration. Due to research ethics, some personal data have been changed, and, moreover, the quotations in the following text have been translated into English.

Portraying parental selves: practices, activities and positions

In the following section we will delve into the interview material and first meet Jonathan, and then turn to Julian, two parents displaying similarities as well as differences. By portraying parental selves, thus highlighting the practices, activities and positions made relevant, the existing norms and values will be exposed. Furthermore, some key techniques initiated both by themselves and others that seem significant for accomplishing self-work in governing enactments will be depicted. However, located in distinct family lives this is discursively styled, negotiated and accomplished in a slightly different way.

Jonathan

Sharing the parental responsibilities

Jonathan is 35 years old and works fulltime as a project manager. He has been living with Hannah for ten years and is now a father of four, from a new-born baby to a child nine years old. Jonathan positions himself as an adult who shares his parenting in the sense that he and Hannah take similar responsibility. This is depicted as conditioned by the fact that they both consider work to be a main part of life. At the time of the interview Hannah is on parental leave with the new-born baby. Jonathan describes the situation as 'exceptional' since it makes it easier for him to fully engage in his work. Just a year ago the situation was reversed where first and foremost he was the one responsible for the family's everyday life. Back then Hannah, who is an entrepreneur, was focused on finishing a huge project at work. Jonathan explains: 'I took the kids to preschool and school and picked them up every day, and I cooked dinner and she came home at nine o'clock every evening. It's tough but you get used to it'. The years with children, then, are characterised by shifting periods of intense focus on family and intense periods of heavy workload.

According to Jonathan, their parenting responsibilities usually follow a rather stable pattern. Yet, they are more or less interchangeable and continuously negotiated since both he and Hannah have to acknowledge the general workload and booked appointments, and, in addition, what is considered to be best for the whole family. Jonathan says 'we often decide from day to day, for instance I often get them [the children] to childcare and school, but today the youngest one slept in and we let him do that since he gets so grumpy when he's tired'. Even though Jonathan is fully committed to his job, his family comes first. However, there is no doubt that tensions accompany such a priority as he from time to time is unable to adjust to the requirements from work. Work also easily transmits to family time and leisure, 'that's what I don't like when it comes to my work, there's always something that needs to be finished that you spend your time thinking about'. Jonathan maintains that such balancing acts are

'challenging', yet common for all people who are combining family life with fulltime work.

Engaging with the children

Jonathan claims that the shared parenting probably relates to slightly different domains. He elaborates on the subject by comparing his parenting practices to Hannah's and states 'I'm more playful, at least that's how I see it', and adds 'often we all get kicked out of the house [laughs], then we tumble around on the lawn, play soccer, jump on the trampoline, just be together with the kids you know'. Jonathan thereby positions himself as the children's co-player as he emphasises their similarities when engaged in game and play. However, everyday activities like that are not just connected to leisure and entertainment. Rather, he often returns to the importance of 'experiencing things together' and portrays being focused on the children and being fully present as main aspects of parenting that he prioritises. That means, for instance, 'putting the cell phone away', as well as talking and listening to whatever interests the children.

Jonathan also makes parenting relevant in terms of 'getting the kids involved'. Such activities are distinct from playing since they concern educative aspects, as he explains it, 'not necessarily to play, but to let them learn things they care about'. Jonathan, then, points out that he systematically tries to acknowledge the children's experiences, such as 'things they notice in their everyday life, like the trees growing, stars in the sky and things that interest them'. Hence, 'to teach them different things' appears to be a main concern. Jonathan displays himself as knowledgeable who, moreover, works on maintaining the children's curiosity by 'telling stories in interesting ways'. He really enjoys being fully involved in the children's presentations of the surrounding world, 'I think that's fun'.

Struggling with leisure time obligations

Jonathan definitely struggles when the priorities for spending time with his children are challenged by the requirement to be a loyal and hard-working employee. Even though for the moment he has Hannah's acceptance for not being present all the time, he is ambivalent and depicts the situation as 'incredibly stressful'. Moreover, in a long-term perspective Jonathan is definitely doubtful about having two parallel careers in the same family. He anticipates the upcoming tension where coping with the children's commitment to leisure activities will compete with the adults' work priorities. Jonathan shakes his head and states 'in my world it's not possible', and has no idea how such things will be dealt with successfully. He elaborates on the subject by saying 'I don't get it, I mean later on when they [the children] begin to play soccer, it starts at five o'clock, which means dinner has to be at four. I mean you can't work fulltime, at least definitely both can't'. In a dramatic, determined voice he pretends that he will display zero tolerance for organised activities as he says 'there shall be no activities' [laughs].

Nevertheless, Jonathan has already resigned himself to this inevitability as 'the boys have joined a gym class and they have swimming lessons and things like that'. As she is on parental leave, the responsibility for such activities now rests on Hannah, 'she is first and foremost the one taking care of that'. Jonathan states that the situation is unfortunate since he would like to make other priorities than what appears to be possible, 'I try to join the gym class, I really enjoy it, to be present when they tumble around'. The inconvenient time makes this difficult as the children's activities start when he is still at work, something he claims is more or less impossible to change, 'I'm not sure I can be home at that time'. However, to seriously think that 'there shall be no

activities' for the children is not a realistic option. It seems to be taken for granted that good parenting is to let the kids commit to various activities. They have to adjust to that fact somehow, at least if they are to position themselves in desirable ways. It seems self-evident that family life and children's activities may affect adult's work situations, and perhaps even radically change them.

Making empathic abilities matter

Jonathan says that when it comes to parenting his father is the ideal to strive for, 'he's definitely my role model when it comes to being a father, I have to admit that'. He elaborates on this by telling us his father has been 'very decent all the time'. Although his father was a hard-working man, 'he went to work at seven thirty every morning and came home at four o'clock', he definitely spent time together with Jonathan and his siblings. While Jonathan describes his mother as 'orderly and strict' and 'the one going on about school and homework', he depicts his father as 'playful' and 'the one who took part in our leisure time'. Furthermore, his father 'knew the importance of taking us out to activities, going outdoors, doing things and teaching us things' and 'he was smart and said wise things'. In addition, Jonathan states 'my father is very patient and empathic, shows empathy, he knows, he understands people'. He displays himself as similar by saying 'I have the same ability'. Such competence makes him able to 'read the kids' behaviour, I know how they feel, I know what they want and enjoy'. Jonathan calls this a useful resource since 'you can anticipate many situations when you know they're going to start crying and you know why they're going to cry. Then you just take them away and let them know that now we do it like this'.

Jonathan depicts himself as rather knowledgeable on this matter, 'I have that ability more than her [Hannah]'. He explains that actions and behaviour have consequences for how the children discriminate between the parents. Jonathan elaborates on the subject and adds that 'maybe dad seems a bit "smarter" since he knows the reason for it [the child's reactions], at least that's how I think'. In this way he displays himself as having close, intimate relationships to the children. Moreover, this is assumed to be skilful, where Jonathan also seems aware of his resourceful childhood experience. At the same time, he is eager to not appear as superior, as he adds 'but I must not boast too much'. Positioning oneself and being positioned as empathic is surely a good thing in parenting practices. Nonetheless, having an admired role model to aspire to means that some self-work still needs to be done.

Julian

Being the main responsible parent

Julian is 39 years old and works fulltime as a physiotherapist. He has been married to Stella, who is an interpreter, for almost fifteen years and they have three teenagers. Julian positions himself as the main responsible parent, organising and coordinating the family. In the interview he points to his cell-phone and states 'the whole family is in there' referring to different commitments and activities. He keeps track of his own and his children's schedules, including extracurricular and other activities, to make sure that they are where they are supposed to be at the right time. Julian compares himself to his wife and lets us know that 'Stella has gotten used to me keeping up with everything and taking responsibility for everything, you see, I have to plan my own weeks anyway so I just take care of the kids' activities too'. While laughing, he states that parenting appears to be an all-embracing activity sneaking itself into almost everything. When, for instance, struggling with something at work, Julian can find himself thinking about what to make for dinner, something he illustrates by saying 'hmmm, no not lasagne today, not again, what about pasta, perhaps pasta, or maybe not'. He adds that it is obvious he is not the only one thinking like this as he claims the lunch conversations at work are often about various aspects of family life. Julian, then, portrays his own behaviour as ordinary and explains it to be natural since 'we're all so caught up in family stuff'.

When Julian elaborates on what is considered to be parenting practices some of them seem to be taken for granted. This refers to primary responsibilities, 'basic things', like ensuring that the children get enough sleep, eat healthy food and have clean clothes to wear. Yet, Julian portrays such things as very important as they are necessary if the children are going to gain respect and acceptance from other people. Moreover, he still claims to be an important part of the children's everyday lives even though they manage to take care of many things themselves. He is definitely 'busy talking to the kids about how they experienced their day' and tries to pay attention, talk about and listen carefully to whatever appears relevant to them. Julian says 'I really focus on things like that, I think they are valuable in a family'. Nevertheless, socialising with the teenagers can sometimes be a bit challenging, where you can find yourself having 'to listen to that very funny joke again', said ironically. In addition, Julian displays himself as also responsible for keeping tensions and trouble out of the family by, as he puts it, 'letting the kids know when it's time for bed to avoid a conflict with mum'. Expressed like that, Julian depicts his wife and children as rather equal while he clearly has another position in the family.

Getting involved in school activities

Julian argues that parenting also includes relations to public spaces in the children's everyday lives, and that mainly means school. When it comes to educational matters he describes himself as 'the more experienced' and 'successful' compared to his wife. Being the knowledgeable one makes him responsible for the children's school activities. This refers to being involved in the ordinary homework 'I'm the one taking care of those things', but also the one to be aware of and in charge of each child's weekly schedule. Julian says that he usually is 'the one remembering that one of them [the children] is going skiing, another one needs to collect candles or bottles or whatever for a competition or some other school project, and the oldest one needs to take ingredients to school since they are going to be cooking, and will also be late today as the class will be taking part in a concert'.

Furthermore, the parenting practice related to education is expansive and manifold. It also includes the children's approach to school in its widest sense and what Julian calls 'motivational stuff'. He describes some challenging experiences during one of his children's primary school years. Already after the first day, their child came home from school very disappointed and stated: 'Do you know what we were supposed to do? We just drew pictures of ourselves! And I thought that we were going to learn something important!' Julian explains that their child 'had really been looking forward to starting school'. Even though being a bit confused, Julian tried to motivate their child to adjust to the situation and despite the shattered expectations to think that school was nevertheless okay. Many times he asked himself if they as parents were the ones to blame, 'did we do anything wrong?'

Although they seemed to have managed, there is no doubt that 'it was clearly a big challenge'. Julian, then, signals that some heavy family responsibilities rest upon his shoulders. Yet, it does not seem realistic to alter the situation, and he further argues that he finds it hard to initiate a discussion with his wife on this subject. Julian asks himself 'how on earth can you really bring something like that up?' To just blatantly suggest that 'perhaps you could take care of that from now on' also seems out of the question. Actually, Julian is not convinced that he wants things to change. Rather, by stating 'that's my role', he depicts a fixed pattern where Stella and Julian have acted differently for many years and are thus expected to continue in the same way.

Enabling an active leisure time

In the context of parenting Julian emphasises that his job is 'flexible', which means he can combine it with comprehensive leisure time. Family life is intense since he and the children are committed to various organised activities in the evenings and at the weekends. Julian is the one accompanying the children to such activities, and, in addition, he is coaching a teenage sports team. Being able to give children in general something relevant outside of the family is considered to be a good thing, 'that's the nice part of being a coach'. He elaborates on the subject and says that 'what may be impossible to offer the kids at home as a parent, can actually be found at some other places. Taken together I think that society and the whole wide world is a rather great place'.

From time to time Julian finds himself defending his involvement in several activities to his wife Stella. In contrast to Julian, she prefers to stay at home 'and thinks that's very important'. He refers to their differences with a smile and says 'you can of course disagree over how many hours you have to stay at home to watch television together'. To some extent Julian agrees with Stella, and even he complains sometimes, mostly about the huge amount of time he invests in the teenage sports team. Julian says 'of course I could have spent those hours differently', at least when it is raining cats and dogs and he still has to spend long hours outdoors. Yet, he considers his involvement to be part of a bigger whole, like taking collective responsibility for young people in society. In Julian's own words, it is 'because of other people I push myself to do it'.

Making communicative abilities matter

Julian grew up in a family that he portrays as common for his generation. His mother was a housewife and his father 'worked and travelled a lot, and when he came home there were many things that needed to be repaired'. Julian emphasises that 'childhood was good', yet neither of his parents were easy to talk to, at least not from the children's point of view. He elaborates on the subject and says 'you couldn't just talk to them

about things that were on your mind, you were not expected to talk about such things'. Julian is keenly aware of this background and emphasises that he systematically strives for the opposite, 'I have really worked on that'. The stance taken is the opposite of what he calls 'the Homer Simpson method', the well-known cartoon character who, according to Julian, tells his daughter Lisa that to deal with problems and feelings she should 'just push them down your throat into your stomach, you'll always find some more space'.

Hence, Julian needs to pay attention to his own behaviour 'if they [the children] ask me if I'm okay and I'm not, it's better to say "no" and be honest', or perhaps explain to them that 'well something at work is bothering me, but I'm okay'. Acting like a role model in front of the children by practising communicative skills is important, but not enough. Julian rather transforms this into an explicit ideal where no one seems left behind, as he puts it, 'I want to teach my kids to do that'. Continuing to work on himself and, in addition, positioning himself as knowledgeable and able to ensure that the children avoid such a non-preferred position seem to be main concerns in his parenting practices.

Governing the adult in and through parenting

The portraits of parenting reveal a particular pattern that signifies what is determined to be an adequate self, and, accordingly, what is supposed to be learnt when becoming and being a parent. The positions where one is responsible, involved and attentive reoccur, and are thus created and maintained across practices. A similar ideal is fabricated and re-fabricated, cultivating a standard, seemingly taken for granted, that easily marginalises other kinds of selves. Although tensions do appear, they do not really destabilise what holds for being the preferred subjectivity, a fact that legitimises how to accomplish a socially acceptable position while being exposed to everyone and no one (Foucault, 1997b, 1997c). The parental subjectivity and self-work displayed, then, may be depicted as a regime of knowledge and truth where a uniform, hegemonic ideal is being produced and reproduced over and over again.

However, a closer look at the portraits illustrates some notable nuances. First, the claim of being *responsible* is a key issue that emerges in multiple practices and activities. It is made relevant in reference to the main parental position where displaying oneself as in charge of almost any activity where the child is involved is significant. Being able to perform as the main responsible parent requires an available representation of a less responsible position. Thus, to fashion oneself as responsible is also prevalent in the shared parental position. If the former positioning highlights some quantitative differences, the latter one rather attends to qualitative differences of engaging oneself in varied activities and practices, yet, to the same extent. As such, it could be argued that the main and shared parenting in fact reveal the similar responsible self, a positioning that rather starts to make sense if contrasted to the opposite – the irresponsible parent. By presenting oneself as taking a major part in the family's everyday life there is a connection to dominant discourses, for instance on gender equality (e.g. Bergnéhr, 2008). Both private and public spaces are made relevant when positioning oneself as responsible, involved and attentive in and through household work, child rearing, school and leisure time. It could then be argued that parenting is undergoing changes (e.g. Klinth & Johansson, 2010), where the dominant ideal of what is considered good for the child, but also the parent and society, remains unquestioned (Foucault, 1991, 1993, 1997a).

Second, the requirements for *involvement* operate throughout distinct activities and practices where, in particular, education and organised leisure time appear to be important. There is no doubt that the norms for being involved are identified and legitimised, which is evidenced by ambitions to adjust to what holds for being adequate (Foucault, 1993). In spite of compulsory or optional participation, it could be noted how displays of the present sometimes even indispensable self are made relevant, which in some arenas may be seen as gendered patterns of being playful and sporty (e.g. Gottzén, 2012). Moreover, organising one's own working life in a way that enables extensive involvement accentuates the parent as a professional subjectivity, which probably also explains the constant struggle to get everyday life to work. Even though one apparently does not always succeed, the ideal to strive for still seems self-evident. Apparently, the public arenas where children participate do not only shape and foster them in particular ways, but also their parents.

Third, the claim of being *attentive*, by making empathy and communicative abilities matter, is displayed somewhat differently. It rather manifests itself as a conscious, deliberate commitment to improve oneself and systematically work on becoming more skilful. It could thus be noted how such self-work is accomplished in various ways; one may use role models to achieve particular performances or, on the contrary, one may identify counter positions to avoid. This strategy notwithstanding, the knowledgeable and capable subject is accentuated, excluding itself from public sites of intervention by demonstrating that what holds for being adequate parenting is already recognised in the private sphere (Gillies, 2008; Edwards & Gillies, 2012).

The present study illustrates how multiple spaces are defined as parenting practices, even though this may not be self-evident (Doucet, 2009). Available in social contexts, the adults equip themselves to engage in parental self-work and to display acceptable performances, even to improve the same. Bearing this in mind, it could be argued that *activation* emerges as a technique of the self (Foucault, 1991, 1993; Fejes & Nicoll, 2011). By inviting oneself and making oneself responsible, in manifold practices and at all times, governing enactments of shaping and fostering are continuously at work. In fact, the blurred scenario of activities and practices referred to as parenting is useful since the activation in itself is the most interesting point. Almost any aspect of what is considered to be the opposite of responsible, involved and attentive is denoted as improper and deviant. What really matters, then, is to engage in parenting, which also works as an important identity marker.

Furthermore, *comparing* oneself, thereby making visible and evaluating parenting practices, for instance with respect to spouses, own parents or any identified role model also appears as a key technique in self-work (Foucault, 1991, 1993). Such acts highlight sameness and difference to others in the similar subject position, and are prominent in considering oneself as capable of modifying and improving. In fact, the comparative activity makes it possible to position oneself as skilful and competent, for instance, by displaying oneself as similar or even superior to others with regard to the taken-for-granted standard. Particular fabrications and re-fabrications of parenting are conditioned and enabled, by themselves and others, according to what appears to be adequate and normal (Foucault, 1991, 1997a). Within that realm, the identified techniques work as valuable resources for how to sculpt and regulate desirable selves. Taken together, by embracing the idea of parental learning as governing enactments in and through family life, diverse interest in and discursive resources for cultivating responsible, involved and attentive selves seem to interconnect, which dissolves a clear-cut distribution of private versus public, coercion versus choice and change versus stabilisation.

Finally, moving beyond the case of parenting, how to shape and maintain particular contemporary selves may be connected to wider discourses, which reveal certain relations, nodes and networks of power (Foucault, 1991). The workings of power condition and enable what are found to be adequate ways to perform, and accentuate the present regimes of knowledge and truth. Bearing this in mind, there is reason to once again point out that tactics and techniques for activating subjects to be capable of taking responsibility, making choices and improving also exist elsewhere, in a range of other practices. We appear to be witness to dynamic power relations through which by consolidating particular domains adults are governed to attain what is held to be preferred ways of living (Foucault, 1997a, 1997b). Distributed and mobilised through several channels, they all announce that there is always some aspect of ourselves that probably needs to be improved, preferably by learning, at least if we are to achieve an even better and more well-functioning life. Indeed, when different spheres and interests intersect, turning preferences into truths, the techniques and power relations that operate need to be exposed. Such critical approaches may also interrupt the dominating discourses of the present time, which hopefully opens for a wider diversity in how to cultivate meaningful ways of life.

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Adult education and publishing Canadian fiction in a global context: a Foucauldian analysis

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Abstract

This paper draws upon findings from a research study on the relationship between fiction, citizenship, and lifelong learning. It includes interviews with authors from several genres, publishing houses, and arts councils. This paper explores many of the ambivalent outcomes of the shifting power elements in publishing that can simultaneously benefit and disadvantage the publication of a national body of fiction. Although focused on the Canadian context, fiction writers and publishers around the globe face similar challenges. Using a Foucauldian analysis, it considers the importance of fiction and adult learning in shaping discourses of citizenship and critical social learning.

Keywords: lifelong learning; Foucault; power; citizenship; publishing; fiction

Introduction

The publishing industry for fiction writing in Canada has undergone tremendous changes in the last four decades, and the fallout from these dramatic shifts is not yet fully understood. This paper uses a Foucauldian analysis to trace some of the dynamics and developments in Canadian publishing to illustrate the mechanisms of power at play and to explore the implications of this for adult education and citizenship. While this paper focuses on a Canadian example, in many countries fiction writers' works provide important resources for the broader population to engage in critical social learning. Through fiction, citizens can explore different stories of nationhood, be exposed to alternative cultural and political viewpoints, develop the imaginative capacity to envision historical events, and be introduced to various locales. Fictional stories may give voice to minority perspectives and challenge taken-for-granted assumptions and social mores. Fiction writers may be seen as knowledge builders, although the kinds of

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knowledge they create may not always reconcile with the government's or industry's desired educational trajectories.

The book publishing industry is important because it directly affects who gets to say what to whom, which Michel Foucault indicates is always a key question in identifying power relations. Writers' livelihoods are largely dependent on the publication and distribution of their work, and they are grappling with how the publishing culture is changing with new technologies, shrinking government funding, and the pressures of globalization. These shifts in the publishing industry will affect what role writers will play in creating fundamental aspects of national culture and what kinds of access educators and learners may have to Canadian fiction in the future. Fiction may provide many opportunities for lifelong learning, which we define as learning that occurs at all stages across the lifespan, but particularly with a focus on learning in adulthood. In order to be useful in fostering debates pertaining to citizenship, however, there needs to be a substantive body of Canadian fiction that can serve as a resource for learning, whether this learning occurs in a formal classroom setting, a non-formal site such as a library book club, or through an informal exchange of novels between friends.

Drawing upon findings from a research study on fiction, citizenship, and lifelong learning, this paper begins with a brief overview of debates around adult learning and citizenship informed by the work of Michel Foucault. It then discusses some key Foucauldian concepts that inform our analysis for this paper. A summary of some specific policies and factors that have historically shaped the publication of Canadian fiction is given, and then an overview of the research study, which includes interviews with authors from several genres, publishing houses and arts councils, is provided. Findings and analysis are presented under three headings: Publishing Matters; Governmentality, Self-Regulation and Circulation, and Critical Social Learning and Fiction. The paper concludes with a consideration of the implications of these findings and analysis for adult educators.

Adult education, citizenship & Foucault

A number of critical educators have used Foucault's work to explore debates pertaining to adult learning and citizenship (Fejes & Nicoll, 2008; Petersson, Olsson, & Popkewitz, 2007), as Foucault's work provides important insights into how power shapes different learning contexts. Foucault posits that power is exercised rather than held. Power is a 'set of mechanisms and procedures that have the role or function and theme, even when they are unsuccessful, of securing power' (Foucault, 2004, p. 2). Foucault (1977a, 1977b) argues that power is located in the everyday normalizing discourses of individuals—how they speak, what they speak about, what remains in silence, or how body language is used. Furthermore, Foucault suggests that power is found in the *relations* between entities rather than in individuals or institutions themselves (Foucault, 1980). Thus, no individual, nor any discourse, is ever outside of power. Power flows throughout society like a network in which nodal points produce power that may fluctuate and shift at any given time. 'Power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization' (Foucault, 1978/1990, p. 92).

There is ambiguity in how power fluctuates, sometimes in the hands of one group, sometimes in the hands of another, but never with the guarantee that it will stay put or that anyone can hold on to it. One of the main determinants of power involves who gets to say what to whom? Foucault (1978/1990) frames the discourse around power to ask

this sort of question in an effort to account for the fact that it [for our purposes, with reference to publishing] is spoken about, to discover who does the speaking, the positions and viewpoints from which they speak, the institutions which prompt people to speak about it and which store and distribute the things that are said.

For Foucault (1980), a 'regime of truth' is established through the dominant discourses that circulate in a society, which constitutes hegemonic practices. Within a neoliberal context, educational discourses frequently reflect the hegemonic framework of the marketplace whereby learning becomes interpreted narrowly as a set of carefully pre-determined outcomes that are deemed to be beneficial to society. Simons and Masschelein (2010) draw upon Foucault's concept of governmentality to consider how education has become a 'learning apparatus' and point out the problems with viewing learning as individualized capital that has to be managed, and that is tied in to a discourse of educational competencies.

Within a policy framework that consistently tries to focus learning on the attainment of 'essential skills, (i.e., Gibb, 2008; Metcalfe & Fenwick, 2009)—that is, skills that are important to employers—the 'regime of truth' that emerges suggests that learning must always be connected to economic prosperity. Learning that may enhance the critical capacity of citizens is unlikely to be encouraged. Yet Nicoll, Fejes, Olson, Dahlestedt, and Biesta (2013) use a Foucauldian analysis to argue that 'embracing alternative forms of democratic citizenry to those narrowly prescribed through a generalized curriculum is necessary if a more open democracy is to be possible' (p. 835). If citizens have access to reading and writing fiction that takes up stories integral to their society and how it fits within a globalized context, opportunities may arise to challenge hegemonic assumptions that otherwise limit critical social learning. This may be an essential component of fostering a thoughtful, active, and engaged citizenry.

In his lectures about bio-power, Foucault (2004) identifies circulation at the crux of any political-economical system. While his examples are located in his historical analysis of sixteenth to eighteenth century France, many of Foucault's points illuminate his critique of how power functions whereby 'mechanisms of power are an intrinsic part of all these relations and, in a circular way, are both their effect and cause' (Foucault, 2004, p. 2). Foucault pinpoints the ideas of circulation and materiality as the most important conditions for understanding how power functions. In the context of Canadian publishing, having the opportunity to create the material reality of a published book (whether electronic or paper) and to circulate books (thus provide opportunities for access, distribution and potential learning) are all situated within complicated networks of power relationships.

Elsewhere Foucault discusses how power can be examined through the role of authors and books within any given society. In an essay entitled *What is an author?* Foucault (1984) provocatively suggests that the author disappears, and he echoes playwright Samuel Beckett's question, 'What does it matter who is speaking?' (p. 101). Challenging the notion of authors as self-contained entities somehow separated from the rest of society through their writing he writes:

> This usage of the notion of writing runs the risk of maintaining the author's privileges under the protection of writing's *a priori* status: it keeps alive, in the gray light of neutralization, the interplay of those representations that formed a particular image of the author. (Foucault, 1984, p. 105)

This 'neutralization' is problematic because it ignores that both the author and the writing are produced and received in the context of larger social conditions. What Foucault (1984) then terms as the 'author function' refers to the author as signifying

part of a set of relations 'characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society' (p. 108). By using the term 'author function' instead of just 'author', Foucault foregrounds the notion of the speaking subject being constituted through discourse. The 'author function' draws attention to the role writers play not just as individual artists or creators of stories, but as citizens situated within particular social, political, and historical contexts, who may have a role to play in expanding social learning discourses.

In terms of power, Foucault (1984) asks strategic questions about 'the subject's points of insertion, modes of functioning, and systems of dependence' (p. 118). The author is an 'ideological product' because the notion that the author is the inventor and originator of a constant flow of ideas is ironically the opposite: 'he [sic] is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition' (p. 119) of fiction. Foucault perceives the focus on the author as a 'constraint', although he acknowledges it would be unrealistic to assume writing could ever stand 'in an absolutely free state' (p. 119).

Fiction writers do not craft their books or publish their work in a neutral zone. Decisions around what stories will be told, which books will be published, and which authors will be promoted, are shaped by power constraints and supports. Unless there are supports for Canadian publishers, most Canadian writers would have to publish in the United States or the United Kingdom. Most publishers are interested in publishing books that they anticipate will generate profitable sales in a globalized context. It is unlikely, therefore, that Canadian writers would have as many opportunities to write fiction that take up unique aspects of Canadian culture and identity that pertain to citizenship issues.

Foucault's analysis (1969/2011) also points out that what constitutes a 'book' cannot be neatly demarcated, since it is more than a material item—it is a component of a larger discourse.

> Beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network. (pp. 25–26)

Therefore the books that comprise a nation's literary canon may reinforce or interrogate cultural assumptions regarding citizenship. Any one book does not exist as an isolated entity—it is part of a larger social discourse.

Foucault gives examples of books that carry different kinds of cultural, historical or religious impact, arguing 'is not the material unity of the volume a weak, accessory unity in relation to the discursive unity of which it is the support?' (Foucault, 1969/2011, p. 25). Canadian fiction, therefore, is part of the broader conversation pertaining to citizenship; novels are often interconnected at different levels with cultural and national debates regarding identity.

Canadian publishing

A Foucauldian analysis reveals how neoliberal influences, characterized by the power of the unfettered marketplace, have been in some instances challenged by government policies and funding supports that create a counter-resistance to the impact of the global marketplace in shaping Canadian publishing. Olssen (2006) uses Foucault to consider a 'detotalising' model of community whereby a certain amount of government regulation

may counter the detrimental effects of neoliberalism on education in which 'the logic of globalization dictates a greater role for markets uninterrupted by government regulatory controls' (p. 232). Similarly, if historically there had not been a determined effort by the Canadian government, speared on by active lobbying on the part of authors and publishers to create a network of supports for writers to publish fiction within Canada, it is doubtful that a significant body of Canadian literature would have been or would continue to be published.

Like many critical adult educators (Fejes, 2010; Welton, 2005) we recognize current discourses around citizenship and learning are connected to historical factors linked to particular social, political, and cultural events and contexts. Opportunities for learning about citizenship in connection to fiction writing have been shaped by policies that have impacted upon the development of the Canadian publishing sector. Politics have long played a role in shaping the literary scene in Canada. Roberts (2008) comments *The Massey Commission's 1951 report*, which 'proposed a deliberate and coordinated strategy for state-sponsored Canadian cultural development . . . led to the establishment of the Canada Council for the Arts' (p. 148).

Today the Canada Council still plays a central role in providing funding to Canadian publishers and to individual artists, including fiction writers. These programs are linked to a mandate to foster a sense of national cultural identity integral to supporting learning in connection to citizenship.

Back in the 1960s and 70s, Clark and Knights (2011) note that branch plants (foreign owned companies) established a stronghold on textbooks, the most profitable area of publishing, which affected the viability of small Canadian presses to produce less profitable fiction books. Canadian-owned companies, without the 'economies of scale' or capital supplied to branch plants by their large parent companies, thus failed to compete in their own domestic market. Branch plants got around regulations regarding Canadian content by adapting American or British texts to meet those requirements.

According to Clark and Knights (2011), the creation of the Independent Publishers Association (IPA) in 1971 (which became the Association of Canadian Publishers [ACP] in 1976), posed a serious rival to the Canadian Book Publisher's Council, which had been the only trade organization of book publishers in Canada. Notably, most of its members represented the interests of branch plants. The IPA/ACP took the Canadian Book Publisher's Council off-guard with their strong lobbying and nationalistic focus. They brought the mandate of the publishing industry into the political arena, arguing that Canadian ownership of publishing houses was necessary to ensure the publication of Canadian texts and to address large structural equities, which in turn would shore up an important element of Canadian culture.

Over the decades, an awareness of the need to broaden the mandate of publishers to acknowledge the increasing diversity of the Canadian population arose. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988) was the first of its kind in the world to 'recognize the importance of preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canadians' (p. 1). First promoted by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau in the 1970s, the idea became a political reality in the 1980s.

Critical adult educators (Guo, 2013; Mojab, 2005) point out the limitations of a liberal approach to multiculturalism, in which as Guo (2013) states 'cultural differences are often trivialized, exoticized, and essentialized' (p. 27). What is needed is a critical approach to multiculturalism that 'makes explicit hidden or masked structures, discourses, and relations of inequity that discriminate against one group and enhance the privileges of others' (Guo, 2013, p. 27). Nevertheless, the ideological and material impact of this federal policy continues to influence policy developments and the

allocations of resources. Young (2001) convincingly argues that despite tensions and challenges to be negotiated around complex issues such as race and ethnicity, the supports given by the arts councils and government programs have helped change the face of Canadian literature to become more representative of the country's increasingly diverse population.

As our study shows, today Canadian writers and publishers face many new challenges from globalization. The publishing industry acts as a gatekeeper to determine which authors will get published and reach a broader audience, and which ones will not, although with emerging technologies and big chain store buyers, the gatekeepers are changing. Foucault's work provides a useful framework for analyzing ways in which these changes may impact on adult learning and citizenship in relation to fiction writing.

The research study

This research study explores connections between citizenship, fiction writing, and lifelong learning. Thus far we have conducted forty-one interviews with traditionally published fiction writers. The majority are Canadian, although we included interviews with five American authors and three writers from the United Kingdom to gain insights into cross-cultural experiences. All of the authors are English-speaking and come from the areas of CanLit (Canadian literary fiction), Children's/Young Adult (YA) fiction, and mystery/crime fiction writing. Whilst categorization is not easy as many authors write in several genres including drama or poetry, these categories were chosen to a) include an area of popular genre fiction that reaches a broad audience of readers, as well as b) authors who write for younger readers—thus considering the importance of learning from fiction across the lifespan. Several of these authors have also written books designed for low-level literacy adult learners. Some participants are emerging authors, others are highly recognized, and we used a purposive sampling approach (Collins, 2010) to ensure representation from diverse backgrounds and geographical regions in Canada.

Additionally, we interviewed twenty-two 'key informants'—individuals in the publishing, policy and educational sectors, including arts councils, publishing houses, and creative writing programs. Their viewpoints help to paint a bigger picture of what is at stake with publishing fiction in Canada today.

Like many adult educators, we were interested in considering various biographical as well as social and cultural factors that shape learning across the lifespan (Olkinuora, Rinne, Mäkinen, Järvinen, & Jauhiainen, 2008). To explore this, we used a life history approach for the interviews with the authors. As MacIntyre (2012, p. 190) argues, a life histories approach ensures 'that the learners' experiences of learning' remain the focal point of a study, while at the same time these experiences are understood 'in the contexts of their biographies'. The life history interviews averaged between an hour and a half to two hours in duration.

Scheibelhofer (2008) discusses the idea of the problem-centred interview that combines the 'narrative interview [which] is often used to study biographical processes' (p. 406) with more specific questions brought in by the interviewer in the latter part of the interview to focus in on the information most pertinent to the study. In these interviews we tried to balance giving participants space to share their own stories whilst keeping a focus on the learning experiences connected with becoming a published writer. For key informants, the interviews were shorter and more targeted, focused on obtaining a better understanding of their organization's role in supporting fiction writing

in Canada. Participants could review and edit their transcripts. The authors in this study consented to have their identities revealed, but had the option to select quotations to be used but not directly attributed to them. Key informants had the same options, although they could also opt for complete confidentiality.

In this paper we decided a Foucauldian analysis would work best when focusing upon the complex, fluid, and rapidly changing nature of the publishing industry. We combined this with a grounded theory (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001) approach to analyze the data, recognizing 'the need for systematic interactions between data and ideas as well as the emergent properties of research design and data analysis, which are in constant dialogue' (Atkinson & Delamont, 2005, p. 833). Some of the questions pertained to whether authors or publishers had received government funding, connections between Canadian fiction and Canadian citizenship, and the impact of technologies on publishing. With a particular focus on the impact of publishing, we distilled three major themes to explore in this paper: a) Publishing Matters, b) Governmentality, Self-Regulation and Circulation, and c) Critical Social Learning and Fiction.

Publishing matters

Just as Foucault often plays with multiple meanings of a single word, we also use a pun to consider how publishing 'matters' to Canadian authors, the government, the industry, and the broader public. Milana (2012) argues that increasingly policies pertaining to adult education are not seen as either 'a global concern or a national affair', but rather in terms of 'global-local interconnectedness' (p. 783). Historically, the development of government supports for the arts in Canada, such as the Canada Council, have been linked with the belief that it is important to sustain and foster the development of a national body of literature. This is a 'matter' of national concern that relates to lifelong learning and citizenship, in that through fiction Canadian writers have the opportunity to create their own stories that can be shared through informal, non-formal, and formal educational contexts (Gouthro & Holloway, 2013). At the same time, however, globalization is changing the nature of the publishing industry.

As Harvey (2006) notes, neoliberal influences push toward open markets, free trade, and lessening government supports for anything that is not deemed to be profitable. Emma Donoghue, an Irish writer who emigrated to Canada many years ago notes that most of her income comes from being published in the United States. She wryly observes 'you can be an utterly beloved Canadian writer, but if you're only published in Canada it's hard to make a living because it's not a big enough market.' A neoliberal model for publishing is a death knell for the majority of Canadian writers if they wish to make enough money to be able to dedicate their work life to writing.

The arts councils provide financial support to assist small presses to publish works that are deemed to be valuable representations of Canadian culture. They also have competitions where writers may be awarded money to cover their subsistence costs while they dedicate time to a writing project and provide travel grants so that authors can promote their work and attend literary festivals. However, literary writer and professor, Roy Miki, argues that globalization entered into cultural production, the shift occurred around the mid-nineties. Up until that time, Canada Council saw itself as a cultural creation institution, and that the money was stimulating creativity. When economic globalization came in, culture was economized and we began to think of culture mainly in economic terms. In recent years there have been cutbacks to funding

councils which impacts upon the ability of Canadian fiction writers to publish their work and earn enough money to sustain a full-time career as an author.

Nino Ricci, who has twice won the Canadian Governor General's Award for his literary novels says, 'what is interesting and a bit disturbing to me, is that for twenty years I was able to make a living as a writer, and now that seems no longer possible…apart from a small handful of writers'. A key informant notes that:

> McClelland and Stewart [a well-established Canadian Publishing firm] was just finally, officially purchased by Bertelsmann. That means all those Canadian titles are now owned by a German conglomerate, which I find troubling. They say they'll keep their commitment to publishing Canadian works and keeping Canadian works in print, but . . . . I don't know that the multinationals have any sense of obligation to publishing Canadian literature.

Foucault acknowledges there are tangible constrictions that shape processes, procedures, and circulation. Borrowing on Foucault's (2004) analysis of circulation, no matter how brilliant a book is, its impact upon society will be non-existent or minimal if it never gets published or circulated to the reading public. Distribution issues are also complicated by changes in the global marketplace. For example, Canadian mystery writer, Elizabeth Duncan, said:

> [Canadian] H. B. Fenn has just closed and that was a major distributor. My book is published by an American publishing house that relied on H.B. Fenn to distribute them in this country, so maybe my own books won't even be available here.

Getting published becomes somewhat of a moot point if the author cannot then circulate the book. Publishing 'matters' as well in the material sense—the many stages of production of a book are based in physical reality. We cannot separate out the final product—the book of fiction—from the process of becoming a book. Foucault (2004) in his critique of materiality would argue this process is a large part of where the relations of power are exercised, which involve the author, editors, peer reviewers, government granting agencies, publishers, distributers, advertisers, book sellers, and consumers. At every stage, material realities shape what is possible in the imagined realm of how to publish a book of fiction. These include the costs of paper, cover design, and typesetting as well as the costs of shipping, positioning the book in high profile locations, and the costs of returns.

Foucault (1969/2011) qualifies that matter is 'datum', that is, the facts used for calculation. Any imperative discourse (such as claims circulated in the publishing industry about how publishing should happen) must necessarily work within 'a field of forces that cannot be created by the words of a speaking subject alone, because it is a field of forces that cannot be controlled or asserted within this kind of imperative discourse' (p. 3). This 'material reality' of the changing nature of publishing in a neoliberal, global context creates multiple challenges for Canadian writers and publishers. One key informant discussed 'the evaporating retail market' for hard copy books, noting 'Indigo, which is our big chain . . . recently decided to reduce their inventory to less than 50 percent books now . . . so there's no place to get books out there in front of people's eyes'. E-technologies are also greatly changing the world of publishing and altering the material reality of what constitutes a book.

One key informant who works in publishing notes 'we do have eBooks for all of our new titles and most of our backlist . . . the eBook sales are bigger every month, so it is definitely growing'. In the selling of e-books, Blankfield and Stevenson (2012) argue that publishers are still figuring out how to best protect their electronic legal rights as

illegal sites are multiplying exponentially and all too often 'by the time they [rightsholders] have discovered file sharing, many thousands of copies could be circulating the Web' (p. 86). This raises concerns over whether authors will have a protected income if publishers cannot control the sales of their books.

Furthermore, as Roncevic (2013) states, 'not all e-books may be read on all devices . . . . While the number of dedicated e-readers continues to grow, so does the frustration surrounding the limitations imposed on users who own only one reading device or a library able to afford only one type of e-book platform' (p. 11). These devices have been developed along traditional business model lines of competition and exclusion, which leave readers with fewer options to access books or even be aware of their existence. There is also no commitment from companies that develop reading devices to promote fiction according to the authors' nationality. Mystery writer Vicki Delany notes:

> I have a Kobo, and if you go on the website, all you see on the front page are best sellers. You can select by category, and if you select Mystery and Suspense, up comes Dan Brown, James Patterson, and those kinds of people; there's no place to look for Canadians. You can search but that means you have to have a name and a title.

Arguably, a huge advantage of e-books is that they can surmount the physical limitations of paper usage and the distribution systems for printed books. At the same time, this has led to a surge in growth in 'indie-writers' who forego the traditional publishing process. As author Susanna Kearsley says:

> It's going to change for a lot of writers, especially the writer coming up. You're probably going to get a lot more of them finding ways to publish their own work; you can do that now through Amazon.

While some people believe this offers new potential for authors who have been excluded from traditional publishing to get their work into the public domain, others are concerned about the detrimental impact this might have on the quality of fiction that is available and financial repercussions for established writers (since indie-authors often offer their books for a fraction of the price of traditional books). Overall, there is a great unease as no one can predict the future of book publishing. It is difficult to predict whether there will be adequate supports to sustain the development of a substantive body of Canadian literature, which may have implications for opportunities regarding lifelong learning related to citizenship.

Governmentality, self-regulation and circulation

In developing a critical analysis of lifelong learning within a neoliberal context, Foucault's concepts of governmentality and self-regulation provide useful insights. Tuschling and Engemann (2006) argue that 'governmentality theory focuses on the techniques that allow the alignment of governmental interventions with self-regulative capacities of individuals, simultaneously spawning and utilizing them' (p. 451). The coercive effects of power can be seen when neoliberal values such as individual responsibility, competition, and the overarching need to appease the marketplace are not challenged within lifelong learning policies or wider discourses of learning. As learners embrace this ideology, they may 'self-regulate' by adhering to a notion that learning only has merit if it can be measured, accounted for, and attributed economic value.

Art is an important tool to denaturalize power relations we have become accustomed to, and has often been used by feminists, for example, to challenge learners to think about alternative perspectives and frameworks (Clover, 2010). Jarvis (2012) explores 'the potential that fiction may have for promoting social critique and action' (pp. 743–744), considering how learning in connection to fiction may spark empathy. We also see that fiction provides valuable opportunities to critically reflect upon issues connected to citizenship by challenging taken-for-granted assumptions, exploring complicated issues, and providing insights into alternative perspectives. Foucault's notion of circulation sees power connected to learning moving in multiple ways—not only from the imposition of neoliberal policies and the hegemonic acceptance of dominant belief systems, but also in the forms of resistance that arise to challenge these discourses.

Foucault (1978/1990) argues that the structural divisions of power that characterize circulation is of less importance than being able to identify the underlying desires that imbue change. This desire to change may entail 'effects that may be those of refusal, blockage, and invalidation, but also incitement and intensification: in short, the 'polymorphous techniques of power'' (p. 11). For example, the arts councils can use funds to exert power on the publication and circulation of books by influencing the traditional literary canon, which is a well-established body of literature that has historically lacked diversity. This intervention of the arts councils is important in determining the material reality of what books will be published and given opportunities for wider distribution. One of the key characteristics of the arts councils in Canada is that they have been established to be at arms-length from the government, so that they can be autonomous in selecting what projects they will fund, according to a peer adjudication process. Literary writer and professor Nicole Markotić cautions that:

> . . . the government has cut back on the Canada Council, but then it's given more support to what it calls 'cultural activity', which is folk dances, piano lessons . . . things that commodify culture in a particular way. So, in a way, that's the government deciding what art is, and that's dangerous with any government . . . you're going to get artists who turn away from that, and do what they're doing, then no one hears about it for a few decades. Or, they grab onto that, and they're just feeding into an idea of art established by someone else. So that's never good for a country, for a nation.

Implicit in Markotić's comment is that writers may make ethical decisions as they learn their way into publishing as to whether or not they might compromise their art—or 'self-regulate'—in order to conform to what they think are the criteria for publications or grants. Markotić further contextualizes what seem to be 'individual' choices of authors, observing that how the writing community is shaped through the federal government-at-large funding and policies will have implications for which stories and how stories are told. In addition, she points to the danger of what Guo (2013) defines as a conservative or liberal approach to multiculturalism—in which case deeper levels of critical engagement with important social issues are discouraged while more superficial aspects of cultural diversity are endorsed.

The importance of delving into issues such as diversity is an integral aspect of considering citizenship in an increasingly multicultural society, such as Canada. Literary writer Suzette Mayr comments on how she consciously plays with the complexities of diversity, for example, thinking through first versus second or third generation immigration experiences, or the biases of readers:

> It really bothers me that the default position in novels if you don't specify a character's race or ethnicity is that they're white, and probably of Scottish, Irish, or English descent. I

> don't want readers in my books to take that for granted even if a character has a certain name, and I don't specify who they are.

Mayr's approach points to how writers can provoke the sort of critical questioning that adult educators can draw upon to examine important social issues pertaining to citizenship by using fiction.

Foucault might ask, 'why now?' Why is it now when neoliberalism seems to have piqued at its height of power since its inception over 60 years ago (see Olssen, Codd, & O'Neill, 2004 for a history of neoliberalism) that Canadian fiction is now embracing diversity more so than it has ever done in the past despite shrinking publishing markets? Neoliberalism places no value on ethnic and linguistic diversity beyond how these 'features' can be incorporated to make businesses run better.

The publishing houses, arts councils, and writers consistently commented that the financial support and a conscious focus on diversity by the arts institutions in Canada have contributed to the higher number of writers of diverse backgrounds being published, particularly in the realm of literary fiction. Hegemony cannot completely ignore the discursive power and claim of the 'author function' in society for better representation of this diversity. So it is not just that fiction writers are choosing to write about diversity more than in the past, but that the Canadian publishing industry, which depends largely on supports from arts councils, is encouraging and allowing these voices to be heard, although not in completely unproblematic ways.

For example, Roberts (2008) points out there were a flurry of newspaper articles from British papers disparaging whether renowned Canadian writers such as Michael Ondaatje or Rohinton Mistry, who are of Sri Lankan and East Indian descent respectively, and whose books are often set outside of Canada, could be named as Canadian authors. Nevertheless, despite such scrimmages in the press, an undoubtedly new characteristic of Canadian fiction is the breadth of diversity that explores a wide range of societal issues. Hegemony feels the pushback of the masses, the population, asking for better representation of their backgrounds and experiences. People then believe they are being heard and seen in the portraits in fiction—that their story has merit, and they draw new images in their minds of what it means to be a citizen who 'owns' the language of fiction used to describe their experiences. Fiction provides a conduit for the circulation of ideas about citizenship—about identity, social issues, power struggles, and shifting discursive practices. Nicoll et al. (2013), say citizenship:

> . . . can be analysed in terms of the field discourse as that delineating possible action, the effects of the power relations produced and maintained and as resources that help make specific actions possible. This shifts the focus from the institution of citizenship and the citizen as agent *to* discourses and acts of citizenship and the power relations that these imply and maintain. (pp. 838–839)

This approach to defining how citizenship functions fits very well with Foucault's theories of power. Analogously, it provides a new dimension for thinking about fiction, critical social learning, the 'author function,' and citizenship. Citizenship education is problematic if it tries to inculcate certain values such as defining a normative definition of 'a collective moral character' (Nicoll et al., 2013, p. 835). Fiction and the 'author function,' may work as an example for how to examine what Nicoll et al. (2013) propose are already 'existing discourses and practices' (p. 834) about citizenship that have not received official attention, yet nevertheless shape how citizenship is enacted and engaged with daily.

Critical social learning and fiction

Critical social learning entails having learners engage in dialogue and reflection to explore alternative perspectives and consider difficult issues such as culture, identity, citizenship, and participation in governance. Vandenabeele and Wildemeersch (2012) note 'learning related to public issues is a multilevel activity' in their study of how farmers engage in learning related to sustainability through everyday practices (p. 70). For the farmers this involved negotiations with other citizens, environmental groups, and governing councils, as well as personal reflection informed by the media and various biographical experiences. Ultimately, Vandenabeele and Wildemeersch (2012) argue that 'it is impossible to learn with one unifying truth in mind' (p. 69)—at least with an issue as complex as reconciling sustainability and modern agricultural processes. A Foucauldian analysis reveals that this is also the case for many issues debated around learning, fiction writing, and citizenship.

Fiction can be a key tool for critical social learning because it provides carefully, artistically wrought portrayals of communities and society that can influence individual and collective views about citizenship. Simons and Masschelein (2010) argue it is important 'to emphasize a critical attitude towards the present' (p. 393), which may mean raising contentious issues that need to be debated within localized, national, and international communities. As literary writer Rosemary Nixon states:

> Stories have conflict and complications and they deal with things we don't want to look at . . . . Look at Mariam Toews' *A Complicated Kindness.* The Mennonites were so upset over that. Look at Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*. The Bengali community was outraged that she . . . because nobody wants their dirty laundry hung, nobody . . . and it isn't dirty laundry, it's being human in the world. So I think it teaches us so much about the way to live and the way not to live; any powerful book does.

The 'author function' helps to complicate the discursive terrain of citizenship in the larger cultural context. For example, the Giller and Booker literary Prize nights are highly televised, the Canadian Broadcasting show *Canada Reads* is very popular, and quips on Canada's diverse population with shows such as *Little Mosque on the Prairies* (alluding to the famous American novel series called *Little House on the Prairies*) suggest that fiction writing is undeniably situated in popular discourse. Here, we want to draw attention to how fiction writers and their works, now inserted into broader popular culture, means that the circulation of the ideas in their writing (if not always the books themselves) circulate ever wider, giving greater power to the concepts they offer. This is a form of critical social learning. If we connect this circulation of fiction writers' ideas back to the notion of 'citizenship *from* discursive practices' (Nicoll et al., 2013, p. 834), we see that the discourse of Canadian fiction writing has the power to influence how people think of their relations to society, to government, and their roles as citizens.

Some critical educators would argue that hegemony allows for these forms of resistance in the belief that they will not result in any significant overthrow of the current power regimes that be—that it is simply an example of 'repressive tolerance' (Brookfield, 2005). We would like to think otherwise. Readers/audiences who have now experienced such a broad range of fiction will not willingly go back to narrow forms of prose; they will continue to desire fiction that represents their experiences. As the publishing sector has broadened its parameters to include more writers of diverse backgrounds, a precedent has been set that may shape the evolution of Canadian fiction. Therefore, the possibility of fiction's power to shape realities including how citizenship

is defined and practiced, and fields of power in the larger society, still poses a real threat to hegemony.

Foucault (1980) consistently advocates for the potential of resistance, arguing, 'there are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations are exercised' (p. 142). The 'author function' positions writers as important to citizenship, culture, and industry. Writers' relations to publishers, arts councils, writers' unions, and creative writing programs shape the 'author function' and sometimes form sites of resistance to dominant discourses, thus providing opportunities for critical social learning.

Through fiction, educators in formal and non-formal contexts may introduce learners to complicated social issues that relate to citizenship through stories that take up difficult aspects of a nation's history—such as the exploitation of immigrant labourers or Aboriginal peoples. Current political debates, such as francophone and LBGTQ (Lesbian/bisexual/gay/transgendered/queer) rights and perspectives may be explored. Through informal contexts, individual readers or members of the public who follow programs such as *Canada Reads,* citizens may be exposed to stories of fictional characters who live in different geographical regions—so a person in downtown Toronto may learn about life in rural Cape Breton by reading an Alistair MacLeod novel. Fiction provides opportunities for developing critical literacy skills; a capacity to not only read about different perspectives, but to appreciate what it means to be a Canadian in a complex global world.

In their examination of the *Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning—European Framework,* Pirrie and Thoutenhoofd (2013) argue that current discourses in lifelong learning have been strongly influenced by human capital theory, which focuses on individuals' learning skills that can enable them to contribute to the economy. This is a very different approach from lifelong learning as 'a much broader conception of human flourishing' (p. 614). They raise critical questions about the orientation of policies around lifelong learning that claim to include considerations of citizenship and wellbeing, but lack theoretical grounding, are imbued with the technical language of competencies, and focus primarily on cognitive learning related to economic objectives. Policies such as these rarely take into account how other policies in the arts sectors, such as in the realm of publishing, impact on opportunities for learning around citizenship. There needs to be a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of how learning around citizenship is integrally connected to a nation's social and cultural repertoire of knowledge, which is often not explicitly linked to learning and the labour market.

Petersson et al. (2007) contend that governments construct citizens through 'cultural theses about 'how to think'' (p. 52) formed through the relations of 'an amalgamation of institutions, authority relations, stories' (p. 52). Fiction can contribute to the multitude of stories that shape learning around discourses of citizenship, but art is not necessarily created (like a policy document) to propel a particular vision of citizenship forward. Fiction writers have the acumen to comment through their fictionalized worlds on a myriad of societal issues, often including voices of marginalized groups, which would otherwise not be heard. This is not to say that all writers are interested in political critiques through their writing. Writers can both affirm or challenge dominant discourses through their fiction. They represent a plethora of views that can allow for multiple ways of problematizing what is citizenship in the Canadian globalized context.

Conclusion

Canadian writers are part of and constituted in and through relations to the larger societal discourse. Thus, an examination of the publishing industry, and a consideration of how fiction can promote critical social learning, also gives insight into larger societal power relations. 'The author function is therefore characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses with a society' (Foucault, 1984, p. 108). Foucault (1978/1990) posits that power cannot be analyzed in larger, generalized ways; instead, one has to focus in on specific practices within a particular domain to understand the technologies and effects of power. The Canadian publishing industry's complexities, and the importance of fiction in relation to the culture, serve to illustrate how authors are positioned in the 'author function'—in relations with larger institutional organizations that foster or impede their writing.

In a very pragmatic, yet also philosophical sense, Canadian citizens must choose to what extent it is important to support Canadian fiction through tax dollars and government policies, as well as through their choices as readers and educators in using Canadian fiction as a resource for lifelong learning. In Foucauldian terms, this 'desire' becomes a form of power to support the work of fiction writers in developing work that can be used for critical social learning. As Biesta (2012) notes in his discussion of Foucault, 'power and knowledge *never* occur separately, but always come together' (p. 13). The reading public and educators might take for granted that writers will continue to write and that their work will be circulated, but the institutions that authors must by necessity rely upon to achieve publication may no longer fall under the auspice of future governments, who rationalize away the abstract and intangible benefits of what fiction contributes to knowledge building. A neoliberal framework that emphasizes the values of the marketplace over critical cultural interests may permanently alter opportunities for learning in connection to citizenship if a nation's fiction is eradicated or diminished in scope.

Although our paper focuses on the Canadian context, we believe that not only writers and publishers, but the broader citizenry in most countries have a vested interest in the production and circulation of fiction. The stories that belong to a nation also belong to its people. We are left uncertain whether future writers in Canada or elsewhere will be able to have access and support to tell their stories as the world of publishing unfolds in ways that mostly mirror a neoliberal mindset. Lobbyists perhaps have less sway now than 40 years ago because governments have less power in the globalized world of multinational companies. In this paper, we want to draw attention to the importance of fiction as a resource for critical social learning related to citizenship. Not only writers and publishers, but educators, as well as members of the reading public including parents of school children, new immigrants, women's groups—just to name a few, may create resistance to hegemonic belief systems by putting pressure on the gatekeepers of the publishing world to ensure they have access to stories that represent different kinds of experiences and concerns. As power is exercised and circulated through the relations between all parties involved in publishing, we hope that the desire to hear multiple voices in fiction will continue to enhance the diversity of Canadian fiction that is published—in whatever form that may take in the future.

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Interactional power: observing and identifying power in interaction analyses of adult education situations depending on power notions and data types[1]

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Abstract

Since the 1970s, various aspects of power have been at the focus of theoretical and empirical adult education research. Despite the actual interest in political and discursive aspects of power, this article emphasizes the importance of interactional studies when observing and identifying power based on various types of data. As for German interaction studies, three phases can be distinguished, characterized by a) observations of failed participation based on records of classroom behaviour, b) the identification of mutual power negotiation in classroom and counselling situations based on transcriptions, and c) the identification of the power of physical settings in adult education classrooms and in counselling sessions based on visual data. It is presumed that observing/identifying power in adult education classrooms and counselling sessions generally depends not only on the notions of power underlying the studies but also on the data types produced and the methods applied for their interpretation. In addition, the question is raised whether the identification of power can be considered a power practice used by adult education researchers.

Keywords: power; empirical research; interaction; classroom; counselling

Introduction

From its very beginnings, adult education has been legitimized to a large extent by pointing out that large parts of the adult population were deprived of power: the power to participate in politics and society, the power of self-determination, and the power of intellectual autonomy. According to Elias and Merriam (1980), the diverse philosophies that influenced the theory and practice of power struggles in adult education can been identified as liberal, progressive, humanistic, and radical. One of the main functions of adult education, therefore, seemed to be to compensate for social, educational, and individual disadvantages (Pöggeler, 1975; Olbrich, 2001[2]). Even today, the existence of disadvantaged groups is used to justify adult education and lifelong learning – although not necessarily in opposition to other justifications, such as enabling individuals to adapt to societal, technological, and economic changes (cf. Kraus, 2001).

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The traditional focus on the empowerment function of adult education was shaken by the suspicion that adult education itself might be an instrument of power. The idea is not entirely new. In Germany it can be traced back to 1872, when Wilhelm Liebknecht delivered his famous speech, 'Knowledge is power – power is knowledge', in which he pointed out that non-political bourgeois education reinforces the political and social conditions oppressing the workers, who used to be the main target group of adult education in the nineteenth century. So it is possible to draw a line from early Marxist theory to the idea that the adult education classroom 'is a duplication of the existing societal relations of power replete with hierarchies and privileges conferred along lines of gender, race, class, sexual orientation and other status markers' (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1997, p. 243), on the one hand, and current ideas of governmentality as influenced by the works of Michel Foucault (cf. Fejes & Nicoll, 2008) on the other.

The critical focus on social injustice and inequity, as well as the modern concept of governmentality, has had a remarkable influence on empirical adult education research. This affects research on participation in adult education, including questions of access and inclusion (see e.g. Sargant, Field, Francis, Schuller & Tuckett, 1997; Jackson, 2011), and critical analyses of official documents on adult education and lifelong learning (see e.g. Edwards & Nicoll, 2001; Brine, 2006) following the Foucauldian approach to lifelong learning as intrinsic to contemporary technologies and strategies of power.

In view of the remarkable change that policy discourse has undergone in recent years (cf. Wildemeersch & Olesen, 2012), adult education research turns out to be more interested in the political and discursive aspects of power, and less in the interactional ones. Interactional perspectives that emphasize symbolic interactionism, constructivism, and performance theory, and focus on micro-level phenomena like the negotiation of status and power, collaborative meaning making, and bodily practice.

While research on teaching and learning in adult education based on observation and tape-recording of classroom sessions seems to have lost its significance in recent years, interest in interactional research has been rekindled by new forms of (technology-based) teaching, the increasing importance of counselling and guidance in adult education, and new ways of recording (visual) data. This change of data is accompanied by a shift of focus to different forms and manifestations of power, which will be discussed in detail below. The present article, therefore, aims to demonstrate the (ongoing) importance of research into interactive power in adult education situations, both in the classroom and in counselling sessions, and to draw attention to the influence exerted not only by theories of power but also by various types of data used in empirical research. To this end, I will present an outline of the history of empirical research on interaction in adult education classrooms and, to a minor extent, in adult education counselling sessions since the 1970s, with special emphasis on the type of data collected and interpreted.

Observing and identifying power in studies of adult education interactions

In view of the fact that empirical research data are always rooted in national contexts and influenced by local infrastructures, it seems reasonable to concentrate on studies conducted to a particular cultural and historical practice. That is why I will focus almost exclusively on (West) German[3] studies of adult education interactions (for an overview see Nolda, 2010) when reviewing the various aspects of power observed or identified[4].

Observing failed participation based on records of classroom behaviour

The early 1970s saw a series of studies devoted to opening the 'black box' of the adult education classroom as a result of growing political interest in adult and continuing education as a fourth sector of the public education system, various political documents and laws fostering adult education in the German states, and the establishment of departments of adult education at the universities[5]. Research in this field was largely based on tape recording and methods examining the verbal interaction between participants[6].

One of the first studies on adult education classroom interactions in German-speaking countries (Schalk, 1975) explored the impact of language barriers on discussions between lower-class and middle-class participants in Austrian community adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen*). Transcripts of the discussions were analysed according to the categories of elaborated and restricted language code use (e.g. the use of hypotactic or paratactic sentence structures) developed by Bernstein (1971), who asserted a direct relationship between social class and language. Schalk reported that middle-class adults, when engaging in discussions with lower-class adults, were able to switch from their own elaborated code to the restricted code of the lower-class participants (at least when speaking about concrete topics), whereas members of the lower class were not capable of making such an adaptation. The study showed how speakers using only the restricted code were excluded from discussions about more abstract topics, which could be seen as an argument for using and teaching the elaborated code in adult education classes.

A study conducted by Siebert and Gerl (1975) aimed to develop a didactic-methodological theory of adult education based on precise knowledge of actual teaching events in adult education to check the implementation of adult education strategies and postulates, and to develop tools for analysing and planning adult education. The study design was based on the conviction that adult education could promote the 'democratization of all social sections' if it were possible to enhance the ability of students to actively take part in courses. This referred, on the one hand, to the selection of suitable learning subjects and, on the other hand, to the establishment of forms of interaction enabling learners to articulate their learning interests and influence their learning processes (Ibid., p. 24). Interactions in adult education classes in German community adult education centres were observed by classifying the contributions of learners and teachers according to their didactic function, distinguishing between content orientation and process orientation. The authors of the study found that the majority of classes observed were content- and teacher-orientated, that most teachers presented themselves as experts, that students preferred to ask teachers (and not other students), and that students showed more interest in the acquisition of knowledge, whereas teachers were more interested in the problematization of knowledge (cf. Siebert, 1975). The design of this study was influenced by the interaction analysis technique developed by Ned Flanders (1970), consisting of an 'objective' and systematic observation of classroom events, especially along the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of teachers' (mostly dominant) verbal behaviour in the classroom.

Another study from that time by Weymann (1977) combined educational and sociological issues. For example, it analysed whether those who failed in other educational systems really got a second chance in adult education, what might be the reason if they didn't, and what sort of pedagogical conclusions should be drawn to improve the situation. Referring to Bernstein's code theory and the theory of metacommunication, Weymann applied categories such as intentionality, reciprocity,

digitality, analogy, and dominance. He measured how much and how often participants spoke, and how teachers dealt with students' contributions. As a matter of fact, it was found that personal and evaluative statements by lower-class students were only reluctantly accepted by teachers belonging to the middle classes. Students, on the other hand, were mostly reluctant to meet the teachers' demands for providing critical summaries of the groups' learning processes (Ibid.).

Thus the relevant finding of this study was that it identified the dominant (verbal) behaviour of teachers and the inefficacy of their efforts to encourage socially and educationally deprived students to verbalize critical attitudes. The same is true of a study focusing on paid educational leave (*Bildungsurlaube*) organized by trade unions (Kejcz, Monshausen, Nuissl, Paatsch & Schenk, 1979-1980). Observation protocols and tape recordings of classroom interaction were analysed to check whether the principle of learner or participant orientation (*Teilnehmerorientierung*[7]) was realized. Researchers wanted to know in detail whether teachers responded to students' experiences, how competencies were distributed among participants, whether classroom participants agreed about contents, and how participants' interpretative patterns (*Deutungsmuster*[8]) were discussed. Researchers found evidence that participants were often talking at cross-purposes and that misunderstandings were mostly ignored. Observation protocols and tape recordings suggested that social injustice was, in a way, duplicated in adult education: the mechanisms that were found to prevent participation in adult education were similar to those that prevented participation in society[9].

Studies of this period are characterized by an approach that attributed power to a group (members of the middle classes/teachers) and then scrutinized adult education classrooms for evidence of whether or not members of the superior group (the middle classes/teachers) enabled the participation of members of the subordinate group (members of the lower classes, students). Power, or lack of power, was conceptualized as being basically stable. By measuring the quantity and distribution of certain items of verbal behaviour, the exertion of power through individual speakers or a group of students was made 'visible'. This was achieved on the basis of observation protocols and orthographic transcriptions of spoken language, which were however not always included, or only partially included, in the study reports.

Identifying mutual power negotiation in classroom and counselling situations based on transcriptions

The critical impulse of dedicated adult educators committed to fighting social injustice in the 1970s and 1980s was attenuated by the establishment of academic adult education and the necessity to adopt the impartial norms of science. As a consequence, methodological accuracy and quality came in focus, and researchers did not necessarily feel obliged to directly advance the quality of adult education practice or combat exclusion.

In the 1990s, the rise of the qualitative paradigm and symbolic interactionism led to studies that replaced the attributive notion of power by a relational one. Their work was based on the assumption that power relations between students and teachers were produced interactively. Power was not seen as being equally distributed between partners but as being essentially dependent on the existence of partners (cf. Luhmann, 2003) and above all as being inherent to any interaction. And most importantly, social differences and hierarchies were not understood as given but as mutually produced and even changed by interaction. That is why written reports included meticulous, full-length transcripts—a methodological constraint taken from conversation analysis,

enabling readers to examine and review the researchers' interpretations (cf. Psathas, 1995).

The idea that hierarchies were not given beforehand but had to be claimed and negotiated even applied to interactions in which adult students were examined by teachers. A study of foreign language examinations demonstrated the ways in which examiners as well as examinees try to impose their will on one another and reach an agreement about this. The only (or preferable) way to trace these interactions is via meticulous transcripts marking silences, slips of the tongue, overlapping speech, and intonation curves (Nolda, 1990). The data were interpreted following, on the one hand, the principles of conversation analysis, strictly considering the sequential order of interactions and even minute details. On the other hand, the interpretation was following the principles of 'objective hermeneutics'[10], aiming at the utterance meaning as distinct from the speaker's meaning. This was accomplished especially by discussing different or even controversial readings of certain passages.

The same method was applied in a study concerning classroom behaviour in liberal adult education (Nolda, 1996). Based upon line-by-line analyses of classroom sessions, categories were generated that referred to aspects of power such as reacting to the institutional lack of power, indirectly exerting power by organizing lessons, or self-presenting and establishing group identity. Claims for power could be identified both on the part of teachers and on the part of students. Teachers, for instance, preferred to present themselves as experts who often tried to ignore opinions other than their own, whereas students sometimes used lessons as a stage to present their knowledge and themselves as morally superior persons.

That some findings of earlier studies were confirmed and others questioned was above all the result of a more scrupulous and methodologically controlled analysis. But it was also in part due to the fact that adult education itself had changed. We should keep in mind that empirical research of this kind does not automatically produce final descriptions of adult education irrespective of the time and place where the data were gathered. To a certain extent, interaction analyses can therefore be used as an instrument for recognizing and defining characteristics of a certain period, a certain field, or a certain type of adult education institution.

The way teachers deal with adult learners' interpretative patterns was studied by Schüssler (2000), who carried out a detailed analysis of two adult education classroom lessons: one in which these patterns were made explicit by the teacher and another in which the teacher avoided confrontation with them. The teacher's intervention (in a vocational training setting), which may be seen as an act of power – though meant as an offer to improve students' self-awareness and autonomy – often caused resistance. So power became evident both when maintaining these patterns and when questioning them. The concept of interpretative patterns and the andragogical claim to intervene or take them into account, discussed widely in contemporary German literature (cf. Arnold, 1985), led to analyses of the way in which patterns of interpretation influence interaction in adult education classrooms. Dealing with interpretative patterns was shown to be a special form of power negotiation in the adult education classroom.

Another facet of interactional resistance was described by Gieseke and Robak (2000), who provided a detailed interpretation of a videotaped seminar for persons working in adult learning. Seminar participants resisted the deductive models presented by the teacher; the teacher resisted the wish of the participants to discuss their daily work. Both did so in a rather indirect manner. So the interaction was characterized by an alternating dominance of participants talking and the teacher explaining theoretical models.

In the 1990s, guidance and counselling[11], as a generally learning-oriented process, became an important part of adult education practice and a widely discussed topic in the literature on adult education (Projekt SOPEK, 1991; Eckert, Schiersmann &Tippelt, 1997). Disse (2005) reconstructed a consultation session that was part of a compulsory training programme for unemployed persons financed by the Federal Employment Office; Müller (2005) examined counselling sessions for people seeking advice about adult education offers; Maier-Gutheil (2009) analysed consultation services for people planning to launch a new firm.

Like learning situations, counselling situations are characterized by genuinely asymmetrical relationships between (seemingly) superior teachers/counsellors and (seemingly) subordinate students/clients. Interaction studies therefore served to produce a microanalysis of the subtle dynamics of power going on in semi-public adult education classrooms and non-public counselling sessions.

Based on their meticulous analysis of accurate, full-length transcripts, Disse (2005) and Maier-Gutheil (2009) found that, faced with the danger of becoming objects of administrative measures, clients are definitely able to resist – in an interactive manner – counsellors' power claims, and that counsellors in turn interactively deal with the resistance of clients. Müller's study underlines the differences between three types of counselling – information-oriented, situation-oriented, and biography-oriented counselling – showing that it depends on the specific type of counselling whether criteria such as length of utterances have to be considered as signs of power (claims).

In the above mentioned studies, the use of meticulous transcripts made it possible to reconstruct, on a micro level, subtle interactional practices of claiming, maintaining, and resisting power and to enhance adult educators' knowledge about the interactional dynamics of classroom sessions and counselling situations.

Identifying the power of physical settings in adult education classrooms and in counselling sessions based on visual data

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the social and pedagogical relevance of the dimensions 'space/environment' and 'body' was increasingly acknowledged by theorists and researchers in education and the social sciences (cf. Ecarius & Löw, 1997; Langer, 2008), accompanied by a growing interest in visual data (cf. Pilarczyk & Mietzner, 2005; Dinkelaker & Herrle, 2009).

Visual data like photographs and videos made aspects of power visible that had hitherto been neglected, especially the impact of the classroom as a physical setting and the non-verbal behaviour of teachers and students. Special attention was paid to the teaching and learning materials and to the persons being present: their looks, posture, facial expressions, and gaze movements.

This tendency was strengthened by renewed interest in the ethnographic approach (cf. Hünersdorf, Mader & Müller 2008), which tried to capture the complexity of classroom life (cf. Watson Gegeo, 1997), including spatial relationships: 'We learn about power in adult education by studying the micro-dynamics of particular learning groups in particular classrooms (the gestures, body postures, seating arrangements, facial tics and phrases that learners and teachers commonly utter)' (Brookfield, 2005, p. 126).

Although rooms used for adult education lessons are not always specifically prepared for this special use, and the time teachers and learners spend in these rooms is much shorter than in school or university, they do show underlying concepts of teaching and learning and of the power relations inherent in them. This refers not only to settings suitable for lecture-style teaching but also to settings suitable for group discussions,

such as chair circles which place each participant in a state of constant visibility. In accordance with ideas proposed by Foucault and the theory of governmentality, an arrangement like this can be seen as an instrument that makes students 'prisoners of a power situation fostered by themselves' (Klingovsky, 2009, pp. 161-126.).

Perhaps unlike school classrooms, rooms used for adult education lessons are not only signs of a 'pathic power' (cf. Schultheis, 2007) to which teachers and students have to surrender. They also suggest certain appropriations – suggestions teachers and students are to a certain degree free to act on. Identifying the ways in which teachers and students deal with the spatial structure of classrooms may give interesting insights. Based on videos and room sketches, strategies of adaptation, change, or avoidance (e.g. by rearranging the furniture, crossing borders, taking a seat near to or far from others) could be traced (cf. Nolda, 2006).

Videos can show in detail how teachers and students deal with artefacts like blackboards, computers, or computer-based presentations. The ubiquitous PowerPoint in particular has been the object of video-based interaction research (cf. Schnettler & Knoblauch, 2007). The question of power first of all involves asking which persons exclusively or primarily use media such as black and white boards, flip charts, and projectors. Of nearly equal importance is the way in which these persons use them: writing on a board, for instance, may indirectly support and enforce the opinion held by the person having access to the board (cf. Kade, 2014).

Analysing non-verbal phenomena in interaction analyses—strongly recommended by Goffmann (2005)—presents specific challenges. For example, it is almost impossible to identify a superior physical habitus[12] based on videos showing adult learners in classrooms during lessons in which only little freedom of bodily action is allowed, or during lessons especially designed to train bodily actions, which therefore cannot be counted among the 'natural' qualities of a person. Instead, it makes sense to identify exactly how teachers create distance and proximity to students, how students react, form axes of interaction together, or exclude others (cf. Kendon, 1973), and how those who are excluded react to being excluded and how power can be established by the visible unwillingness to communicate (cf. Herrle & Nolda, 2010).

Gestures like raising a finger, whether isolated or accompanying speech, are not automatically signs of exerting power, but have to be looked at in their contexts and in connection with other behaviour occurring simultaneously. That is why the methodologically controlled analysis of photographs and stills/frames, in which – in line with Panofsky's (2006) model – researchers distinguish between the pre-iconographic and the iconographic level, trying to define a person's 'habitus' (cf. Bohnsack, 2008), is a way to gain insights that go far beyond the possibilities offered by participant observations or transcriptions of recorded speech. On the other hand, the movements of persons and their speech are often indispensable for understanding the situation in which a gesture is embedded (cf. Streeck & Knapp, 1992).

Video analyses of adult education classrooms comprising liberal adult education, foreign language lessons, vocational trainings, physical education, and the like (see e.g. Herrle, 2007; Simon, 2008; Kade, Dinkelaker & Herrle, 2009; Karisch, 2010; Schindler, 2009; Kade, Nolda, Dinkelaker & Herrle, 2014) demonstrate the 'power' of the visual approach in detecting non-verbal ways of exerting and fighting interactional power. One of the main aspects explored in these analyses is eye movement. The relevance of eye movement, emphasized early on by some representatives of conversation analysis (cf. Goodwin, 1979; Heath, 1997), does not only relate to the behaviour of teachers seeking to get or intensify students' attention but to all persons present in the classroom. Power dynamics can be detected by tracking deviations from the expected direction of vision

(mutual and synchronous looking at interactions partners). Avoiding eye contact, for instance, might be meant and understood as a subtle form of denying recognition (cf. Schaffer, 2008) or as a gesture of submission (cf. Dinkelaker & Herrle, 2009).
Unlike language-based data types, which are derived from participant observation or recordings, videos as original data can be watched as long and as often as possible so that even minute details like short and unspectacular movements, gestures or gaze movements can be captured in a way that would have been impossible in the real situation. In addition, exchange of glances and gestures between students, which are normally out of teachers' sight, can be used for the interpretation of comments on power claims.

Another way of identifying interactional power relations with the help of visual data is by analysing official photographs showing learning or counselling situations. At first glance, they represent – unlike tape and video recordings by researchers – the way institutions want themselves or their work to be seen by the public or by their clients. With the help of scrupulous analyses it is nevertheless possible to detect 'hidden' or even officially denied aspects of power.

Wilke (2011), in a study using the documentary method for analysing visual data developed by Bohnsack (2008), showed how the idea of lifelong learning is visualized in documents placed on the website of the European Commission. As a matter of fact, one of the photographs he analysed showed rather elitist (academic) learning settings, where older people are presented in a way that marks them as belonging to the middle classes but not really belonging to the academic setting. So the idea of (social and generational) inclusion championed in EU documents seems to be in part contradicted by the photograph, which reveals a paternalistic attitude officially denied. Furthermore, the idea of lifelong learning is visualized as the passive reception of information, seemingly without the possibility of actively participating or interacting.

Even in studies based on tape recordings, additional visual data can offer valuable insights. In a study on interaction in adult education counselling (Stanik, forthcoming), photographs of counselling situations used by institutions in their online self-presentations were analysed in order to confront visual self-presentations with the findings of the empirical research based on audiotapes. One of the photographs of a counsellor and an advisee shows that it is only the counsellor who has access to a computer and various information materials neatly positioned behind her back. The counsellor thus appears as a representative of an institution that seems to provide well-structured information but is not directly involved in discussing problems that might occur with the client. It is the spatial power of access to information that is visualized indicating the dimension of knowledge power. Both photographs can be seen as unwitting demonstrations of (subtle) institutional power that is denied in official statements by the institutions in question.

Conclusions

As shown above, identifying power by means of interaction research depends not only on different notions of power but also on the data that are used or produced and analysed. Referring to attributional notions of power, analysts of written reports on classroom behaviour found out that the verbal strategies of middle-class teachers prevent learners from participating. Referring to relational notions of power, analysts of spoken language revealed interactive self-presentations and power dynamics by dealing with learners' interpretation patterns. Based on pictures and stills, rooms and artefacts

can be understood attributionally as means of exerting power; based on videos, they can be interpreted as challenges that can be met in various ways. The careful analysis of photographs and stills offers insights into the subtleties of non-verbal power, questioning the idea that interaction and interactional power is predominantly a verbal, rationally controlled phenomenon[13]. With the help of audio-visual media, the way power is claimed and/or questioned through gazes can be tracked in (almost) every detail.

It is no question that research on various aspects of power in adult education has been strongly influenced by diverse theories of power. The example of the development of interaction research in adult education shows that the impact of the type of data used, and of the method of interpretation applied, is equally important. So the observation and detection of power also depends on technical progress and the development of new methods.

To say that certain individuals or groups exert or question power is, in a way, itself a practice of power, because it demonstrates the ability to look behind the surface of behaviours and actions that usually go unnoticed. The question whether theorists of power and adult education researchers contribute to the detection of hidden or subtle power mechanisms in adult education situations or in education generally (cf. Bilstein, Keiner, Ecarius & Wimmer, 2007) is therefore also a question of the hidden power of theorists of power and adult education researchers themselves. That comprises not only moral objections to the exertion of power by practitioners. The question that arises is: to what extent is the identification of power in educational situations by theorists and researchers more or less strongly influenced by their suspicion or assumption of its existence – that is to say, to what extent are researchers simply searching for affirmations of what think they already knew?

Theories and studies demonstrating that power is exerted by someone or something hitherto or usually considered beyond suspicion attract attention – a temptation which is possibly hard to resist. In order to clarify these doubts, it would be useful if researchers generally disclosed not only the notion of power they adhere to but also their reasons for choosing a certain method and a certain data type, outlining the implications of these choices. This means that a clear distinction has to be made between general notions of power and empirical evidence of power relations based on specific data types.

So in addition to the finding that adult education is a site of power, it can be assumed that adult education research involves power practices, too. This assumption is in accordance with Foucault's notion of the all-pervasive nature of power (cf. Foucault 1991) and is informed by Luhmann's (2003) insight into the productive power of observations of the second order.

Notes

[1] Modified, extended, and updated version of Nolda (2010).

[2] For an overview of critical approaches to education in general adult education from an international perspective see Westwood, 1996.

[3] For an overview of German adult education, its historical development, legal basis, institutions, and so on, see Nuissl and Pehl, 2004.

[4] The article might therefore also serve to support the dissemination of research and scholarly writing across language barriers (cf. Fejes & Nicoll, 2013).

[5] The relevance of the establishment of professors in adult education for research in this area is underlined by Fejes & Nicoll, 2013.

[6] Early studies in adult classroom interaction were based entirely on notes written during lessons (cf. Seitter, 2010).
[7] For a detailed analysis of the principle of *Teilnehmerorientierung* and its current meanings in German adult education, see Holm, 2012.
[8] The term *Deutungsmuster*, referring to schemes of perceptions and meanings that prefigure the understanding of the world, was introduced to German empirical social science by Ulrich Oevermann (1973/2001) and goes back to the lifeworld philosophy of Alfred Schütz.
[9] The same model was applied to the observation of interactional power in adult education classrooms resulting from gender differences (see Hoverstadt, 1997).
[10] For an overview of the concept of Ulrich Oevermann's 'objective hermeneutics', see Reichertz, 2004.
[11] Because the major concern of guidance is with the decision as a product, and because counselling is more concerned with the process of decision-making (cf. Potter, 1996), both counselling and (modern) teaching mainly aim at enabling and facilitating.
[12] A person's physical habitus or – as Foucault puts it, the hexis – shows his/her systematic relation to and his/her position in the social world (Bohn, 1991)
[13] An illuminating example is provided by Pielarczyk and Mietzner (2000), who analyzed an official photograph from the late 1980s showing a school class in the German Democratic Republic, in which a political ritual was performed in a way that contradicted the enthusiasm officially required and formulated in the caption.

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The transition from initial vocational training to the world of work: the case of art school students

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Abstract

This contribution is based on a recently finished study. It gives an important place to the empirical dimension and proposes the analysis of two life-paths in the artistic field set against a broader analysis of the whole of the corpus produced as part of this research. The methods of analysis are situated at the intersection of the narrative and the sociological fields. This contribution examines the passage from initial training to the world of work. It reconstructs the ordeal represented by this passage and shows the way this ordeal fissures identity and human agency. It conceptualises in particular the possible links between identity and agency and the social environment. It then proposes an analysis of the process of bifurcation. The failure of intended artistic projects gives way to a bifurcation. The analysis locates this process at the intersection of self-improvement and the search for social roots. Bifurcation gives way to the emergence of a new polarisation of action and to the reconstruction of a new system of networking with the environment. This contribution looks back at the whole of the analysis through the spectrum of low human agency.

Keywords: ordeal; bifurcation; identity; agency; low human agency

Introduction

Modernity contributed to making identity a self-determined project, democratising the figure of vocation and spreading a shared ideal of worldly self-accomplishment. (Schlanger, 1997; Taylor, 1998).

The individualisation which took place within organised modernity is linked to the possibility of planning the itinerary of one's own life. A process of institutionalisation and standardisation underpins this possibility. The self-accomplishment project as a temporal project is inseparable from a reliable succession of temporal sequences, with predictable content, depending on the period of the individual's life. It is a question of finding and choosing a place in a world where projecting and planning out your life is easy and guaranteed by the institutionalisation of life-paths, especially professional ones. In this context, the stabilisation of identity occurs "a posterior". Organised

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modernity has given way to a threefold separation of paths: preparation, activity, rest (Alheit, 2010).

Our contemporary societies are wrought by different processes, which contribute to the weakening of the founding principles inherited from the societies of organised modernity. Instability and uncertainty pervade advanced modernity (Rosa, 2005/2010). They contribute to the de-standardisation of life paths. Today, it is a question of accomplishing oneself in a context of uncertainty. (Menger, 2010). The "a posteriori" stability that characterised organised modernity is jeopardised. Bifurcations (Bessin, Bidart & Grosseti, 2010) and conversions (Soulet, 2010) have been multiplied and training is no longer limited to the period of youth.

Fitting in

There is a tension at work between uncertainty and the aspiration towards self-accomplishment in the process of the integration of youth into society and work. Integrating the world of work has tended to become a 'non absorbing' state (Lefresne, 2007). Alongside this process, different research findings point to a transformation of young people's relation to work. These studies show the shift from an ethos of duty to an ethos of self-accomplishment. Within the latter, work is organised and a great deal of energy invested in it with a view to its accomplishment (Roulleau-Berger, 2003). In contemporary late modernity, integration is a process structured by a tensions between the increasing precariousness of the workplace, which weakens a certain understanding of the integration process 'forged in the economies where the vast majority of economically active adults managed to stabilise their situation' (Lefresne, 2007, p. 46) and a desire to accomplish oneself through work.

In such a context, the passage from initial training to the world of work can represent a crisis, which can unsettle 'one's self image, the definition that one gave of oneself' (Dubar, 2007, p. 167). This passage can be 'the end of something' and 'the start of nothing' (Mazade, 2011). It can end up in a constraint to bifurcate and change.

A study

Anchoring

The study (Pita, 2012) on which this contribution is based is itself situated within current trends of biographical approaches in adult education and training (Baudouin, 2010; Dominicé, 1990; Pineau, 1983). This approach addresses the theme of training in an original way. It incites us to step out of educative insularity (Baudouin, 2010), to reinsert training in a temporal perspective and take into account a more subjective point of view. In this approach, the 'person and the agent whom the action depends on have a story, are their own story' (Ricoeur, 1990, p. 137). The analysis of training is located within the biography. The biography is noteworthy in that it integrates 'in a global process of accumulation of real experience fields of experience which are separated and specialised by institutional and social division' (Alheit, 2010, p. 2).

One figure, three questions

This approach considers life narratives as the main access route to training. Life histories permit a restitution of the diachronic profundity of the narrating subject. They give 'free rein to a reflection based on experiences sufficiently significant to be stamped on the memory of the person speaking or writing' (Dominicé, 1990, p. 127). They share

the moments that left their mark in a narrative form of temporality (Baudouin, 2010). Questions of time and memory are decisive in the production of life histories (Menna Barreto Abrahão, 2012) and, in a broader sense, of personal identity (Ricoeur, 2000).

This approach contributed to narrowing the divide between training and the issue of identity (Lainé, 2007). The narrative of a life is an answer to the question "who am I?" (Ricoeur, 1990). It redeploys an identity, which affirms itself by being put into words. It confronts dialectically "idem"-identity and "ipse"-identity[1]. It recuperates the successive "ipseities" that contributed to forming people's identities.

This research considers the figure of the young artist as prototypical of the contemporary tension between aspirations of self-accomplishment and uncertainty. Artistic professions offer the possibility of self-accomplishment. The category artist is particularly blurred (Schlanger, 1997) and artistic professions have yet to be defined (Sapiro, 2007). The field of art is nevertheless a laboratory of hyper-flexibility (Menger, 2010) and hyper-competition. It is a laboratory for transformations in the world of work. The chances of success of an artistic project are uncertain. The artistic project is not guaranteed by the standardisation of professional trajectories. It cannot benefit from the "a posterior" stability of organised modernity. Our research consisted in answering three questions:

- What ordeals structure the life paths of art school graduates?
- What identity configurations emerge for each biographic period?
- What stability and what changes characterise the identity of art school graduates?

Autobiographically oriented narratives

Twelve art school graduates were interviewed during 2008 and 2009. Six of them had obtained a fine arts degree and six had a degree in fashion design. The art school is located in the French-speaking part of Switzerland.

The narratives were produced orally during interviews. The interviews took place between two and five years after the end of the initial training, and varied from an hour and half to four hours in length. The purpose of these interviews was to put into words the life-paths of these art graduates.

The instructions given to interviewees invited them to favour the narration of events they felt were important to them (subjective point of view) and to follow as closely as possible a chronological order in the narrative. Our interventions during interviews were limited to asking questions of comprehension and clarification during the narration. The subjects were given a month to prepare and organise the narrative as they saw fit. We then re-transcribed the oral narrative, which was then reread, validated and sometimes completed by the subjects.

The interviews employ the autobiographical genre. This genre supposes a diachronic rather than synchronic perspective, solicits narration rather than argumentation. Its structure is drawn from the individual's life, the story of its development (Lejeune, 1996). The interviews locate this story in the artistic field. They thus enable to apprehend the vocational training and formation of an artist within a long time-scale, with the 'trait of subjectivity' (Baudouin, 2010) characteristic of autobiography, in which a relation of identity links the author (the one invited to narrate himself) and the main protagonists (the different former subjects configured and proposed by the narrative.)

Autobiography as study framework

Periods

From a narratological point of view, autobiographical activity requires an effort of periodization (Lejeune, 1996). The auto-biographers must divide their life path into temporal spans of several years, which constitute the various successive periods. These give the partial limits, which enable the narrative to deploy itself. Through periods, an identity stabilises itself. These periodical identities are linked together by continuities and ruptures. The identity of the narrator is the synthesis of these periodical identities. Links can be made here with interactionist perspectives. These perspectives consider the person as a synthesis of different successive temporalized 'selves' (Menger, 2010).

The narratives have been divided into three successive periods: the artist's vocation, the artist's vocational training and the integration of the art school graduate into the world of work. This choice is at the intersection between a categorisation of narratives (induction) and a theoretical categorisation (deduction). It recalls the ternary division proposed by Dubar (2010) in the construction of social and professional identities.

For each period, typical identities and structuring ordeals have been reconstructed. A comparative perspective (Demazière & Dubar, 2007) has been used. It enabled to spot similarities and differences using a form of analysis that respects the individualising slope of the narrative. These reconstructions took shape following an effort of aggregation, categorisation and nomination. This contribution favours the period integration and does not address the question of the typical reconstructed identities.

Ordeal

The concept of ordeal or trial ("épreuve") is central to our work. It enables us to link narrative characteristics of our corpus to an analysis of social experience. It articulates the narrative and the sociological dimensions.

Periodization does not define the elementary structure of the narrative, which owes its form to the successive ordeals. Inside each period, the narrative develops one or several significant episodes from the point of view of the narrator. The autobiographical narrative emphasises the turning points of existence. Change is 'a quality of the narrative before being a quality of lived experience' (Baudouin, 2010, p. 162). The narrative proposes a poetic of rupture. The periods are wrought by imbalance. Life narratives are particularly pertinent for analysing the moments of identity changes (Field, Merill & West, 2012).

Baudouin's work (2010) shows how change initiated through 'asperities' of experience traverses the narrative via the semiotic category of ordeal (Greimas, 1966). Ordeal is the basic unit of narrative economy. Relating one's life means managing and organising a given number of ordeals in the different periods the narrative discerns in the biographic flux.

The notion of ordeal is relevant today in sociology. Its use by authors such as Martucceli (2006), who supposes 'individuals take hold of social processes in the form of intrigues' (Martucceli, 2010, p. 100). This use is inseparable from hermeneutics of contemporary experience, which considers people's point of view. 'In contemporary society [ordeals] are part of the ordinary conception individuals have of their own life' (Martucceli, 2006, p. 22). From a sociological perspective, ordeals are socially produced challenges. According to the available 'social shock-absorbers', oscillations and energy dispersion can be contained. The ordeal can be more or less intense. These 'shock-

absorbers' are notably supports and resources situated in the environment. An analysis of this environment reveals a certain number of inequalities.

People construct themselves through a series of commonplace ordeals, which succeed each other through the course of a life. They engage people's identities. It is a question today of 'building, on the basis of one's biographic path and relational ordeals, a "personal identity", which must be connected to the biographical narrative and recognisable by one's partners' (Dubar, 2006, p. 197). This modality of identity construction is an 'alternative to the transmission of normative identities, related to constituted roles' (ibid.) Nonetheless, these ordeals cannot be understood without the analysis of the subject's environment. At this level, our contribution proposes a shift away from analyses solely centred on psychological dimensions or on the "habitus" (Field et al., 2012)

Modalities of analysis

From the narrative point of view, the ordeal supposes a diachronic perspective (Baudouin, 2013). It entails a dialectical relationship between passion (enduring) and action (reacting). The canonical narrative reveals a double transition in which the main protagonist is moved to a distal zone and then returns to a renewed identity/proximal zone.

Table 1

Spaces	Topical	Exotopical	Topical
Actions	Deficiency	Ordeal	Reintegration
Zones	Identity/Proximal	Distal	Identity/Proximal

Source: Baudouin, 2010, p. 7

The table above reads from left to right. Reintegration in the identity/proximal zone defines the final phase of the ordeal.

Narrative grammar (Greimas, 1970) enables us to analyse the action demanded by the ordeal in the narrative and thus to apprehend the evolutions and transformations of the main protagonist throughout the deployment of the story. In summary: a subject is in search of a valued object, a protagonist mandates this search, others come to his help or hinder him, and it ends with a new form of qualification.

The ordeal allows us to analyse identity processes and products[2]. It favours the reassessment of identity transactions on a biographic axis and a relational plane giving shape to biographic (continuity vs. rupture) and relational (recognition vs non

recognition) regimes (Dubar, 2010). In the narrative, ordeals lead to 'befores' and 'afters' in value-creation and to a series of successive forms of qualifications.

The ordeal takes place in an exotopic space. In comparison to the subject's usual bearings, this space constitutes a breach. It may concern the symbolic, relational or material plane. Analysing what constitutes the breach allows us to apprehend the amount of passion, which characterises the ordeal, and in a comparative perspective, the 'shock-absorbers' which are present.

Any ordeal is the object of a meticulous narrative treatment. Based on Gennette's works in narratology (1983), we can put forward a connection between modalities of treating narrative and the speed of the narrative. Narratives do not have a constant, steady speed. A long stretch of time can be summed up in a few words (summary) while an episode considered as important can be developed extensively (scene). The slower the speed of the narrative, the more it develops ordeals which marked the author's life path according to his/her own perception. This attention to the speed of the narrative is characteristic of a certain number of works in the field of biographical approaches (Baudouin, 2010; Horsdal, 2011).

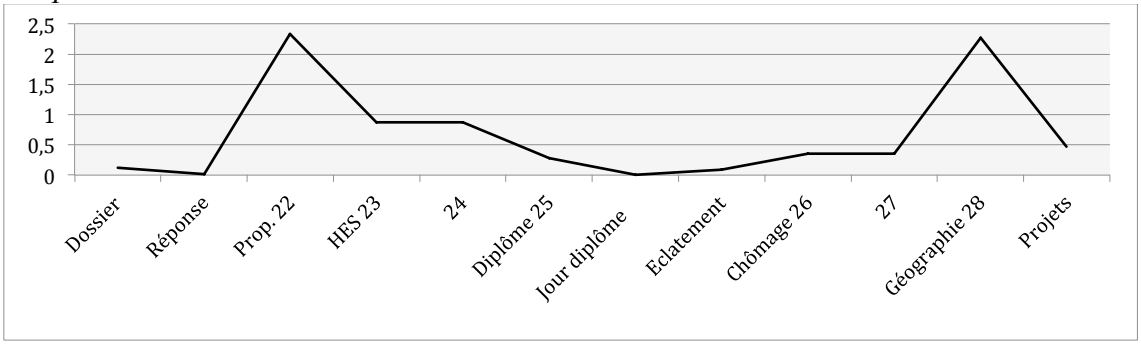
Speed is defined as the ratio between a temporal measure (the narrated time) and a spatial ratio (the number of signs). Objectification of these kinetic variations does not pose any technical problems. Word processors make it easy to count the number of signs dedicated to each sequence. These can be put in relation to the total number of signs in the interview and then replaced in chronological order. These kinetic changes can be objectified in the form of graphs. The episodes, which are subjected to meticulous narrative treatment, can thus be easily identified. Objectifying speed has the virtue of bringing the researcher closer to the 'plot development' ["mise en intrigue"] (Ricoeur, 1983) of each autobiographic narrative and thus closer to the subjective point of view of the person narrating him/herself.

The way in which the passage from initial vocational training to the world of work takes place is decisive when it comes to the possibility of continuing an artistic activity and subjectively continuing one's own identity as an artist. This passage is a standard and decisive ordeal in our societies (Martucelli, 2002). Based on two contrasted interviews with young fashion design graduates, we propose to illustrate the ordeal we reconstructed through our research.

Dereliction and failure

Iléana's narrative describes this passage as the 'bursting' of a 'bubble'. Her narrative recalls an experience of fall even dereliction.

Graph 1



Source: Authors' own design

This graph represents the kinetic variations in her interview. The closer the line gets to the ordinate scale, the slower the speed of the narrative, which corresponds to a significant ordeal. These variations allow us to locate the successive ordeals that Iléana considers to have marked her path in the artistic field.

This graph brings out two consecutive sequences. The first sequence is that of the 'Graduation Day'. The narrative speed is approximately one page for one day. The second one is that of the moment of rupture or 'bursting'. A month is narrated on one page. These two sequences are contrasted. The first describes Iléana's consecration, the second her fall.

The 'Graduation Day' sequence recounts Iléana's graduation jury, as well as the showcasing of the students' projects. It condenses the whole of the processes that marked her training. All ends well here.

Fragment 1

I gave all I had for this project. It means I do things with my heart, with my whole body. As a matter of fact, I love matter too! I didn't want to do something that wasn't, that isn't, I mean that didn't have anything to do with fashion design and clothing [...] My project was about creating matter, to do with funerary rites. I set up installations, sculptures and also took photos. And the jury is made up of fashion professionals... Will they understand? [...] And then I'm not sure I want to make art to put it in my cellar, it's not very meaningful! I got a good mark even though I'd taken risks... There was even one person from the jury who reckoned my work was so powerful the photos would have been enough! They understood it, those guys! (Iléana).

This sequence is a key moment of recognition of Iléana's identity as a stylist. Her identity stabilises itself and a subjective appeasement takes place. It is a dream come true: becoming a stylist when her background always went against her choice and her former path did not predestine her to an artistic vocation. 'There, we're completely elsewhere, we're not on earth any more'. She is living a dream. The school is described as a 'bubble' where Iléana moves about like a 'fish in water'. This sequence announces however Iléana's imminent fall.

Fragment 2

All of a sudden: 'Boum!' I found myself all alone, with nothing left, no friends after a while, on the dole... Yeah, all of a sudden you take notice of reality.[...] The funny thing is, in the bubble, in this small creative world, in this small world of friends, well, as an artist, it's a bit like being at the top... You're on a pedestal! And when you're unemployed, in the active world, being an artist, you're just a loser! […] Instead of

> considering myself in relation to all those years of studying, and how I saw myself at the time, as a stylist, well all of a sudden, I found myself on the dole as a salesperson.[...] All of a sudden I was forced to go in a direction I'd always tried not to follow! It was to escape from that that I'd done my baccalaureate and studied fashion design! I'd fought for that! And there, everything was broken! (Iléana).

For Iléana, losing her job was a real 'destruction'. The passage from initial training to the reality of the world of work burst her 'bubble'. It was a return to 'reality'. Iléana comes from a modest background. 'Skint', she's forced to sign on the dole. This forces her to look for a job as a salesperson. It must be said here that Iléana's first vocational training was as a salesperson[3]. In her case, this means not recognising her identity as a stylist, but her path is also marked by a logic of emancipation. Honneth's studies (2000) show how important the phenomenon of non-recognition is in the practical relation to oneself. Iléana's self-esteem has been attacked.

> Fragment 3
>
> Your friends see you in a totally different way... But they also see you differently because I was also different... I saw myself differently... People who ask you what you did, I wasn't going to say: I'm a stylist. I told them I was on the dole. (Iléana).

Iléana is affected by several losses. Her identity as a stylist falls to pieces with the loss of recognition she found during her time at art school. Unemployment contradicts this recognition, but also that of the 'small world of creativity'. Iléana goes from being 'at the top' (the small world of artists) to being a 'loser' (the big world of work). Unlike the art school, the artist is a 'big loser' in 'active life' Iléana then loses her creative 'energy', the will to create. This 'motivation' was fuelled 'by friends'.

In Iléana's narrative, the periods before and after 'school' are set in contradictory tension. The opposition is radical.

> Fragment 4
>
> [At school] You're surrounded by lots of people... Because you go see x, you go and see y, to ask questions and for this and that... I was seething with excitement... There! There are loads of people, loads of things to do... We're like totally buzzing. We're full of ideas... Yeah! We're totally on a collective trip. (Iléana).

Iléana was thrown out of this collective 'trip'. She witnesses the dissipation of her creative energy. She attempts to continue with certain creations, certain small projects, setting her own rules. She nonetheless abandons, grudgingly and at a high psychological cost. She doesn't have any 'motivation' left. She also becomes aware of her need for money, which is entirely coherent with the 'reverse economy' that is characteristic of the world of art (Bourdieu, 1992), in which one needs to earn one's living 'to' create rather than earning one's living 'by' creating. The art school offered an infrastructure and she realises how important this has been for her. 'After leaving the school, the first thing you need is money!'

Iléana 'feels like [she's] stopped living', 'fizzled out'. The 'emptiness' where she seems to find herself after this passage, the 'anxiety' and the paralysis that have submerged her are striking in her narrative. These losses result in her experiencing feelings of deprivation, solitude and failure.

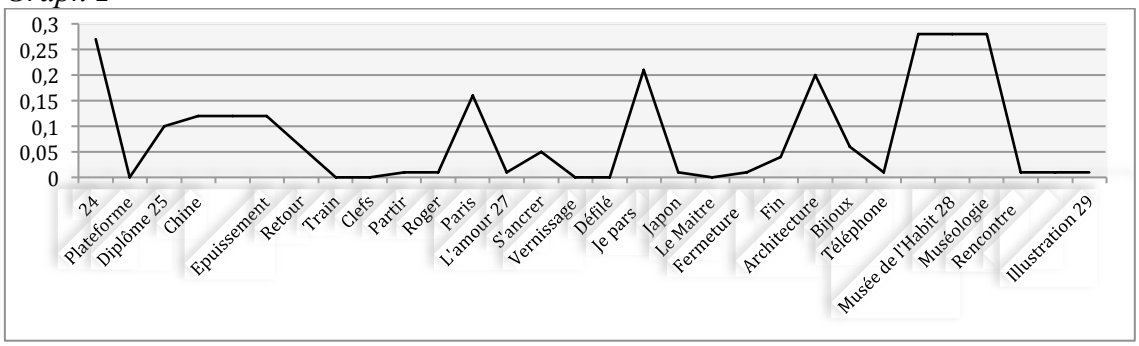
Iléana's narrative establishes a contrast between a fragile set of self-imposed rules (her attempts to continue creating on her own) and very strong excitement (when she was part of the art school). She is forced to search within herself the resources necessary

for the realisation of her artistic activities, but fails to do so. Similarly, she fails to maintain her identity as a stylist outside the art school.

Frenzy

Camille's narrative contrasts with Iléana's. Camille enjoys a certain consistency of identity (the consequence of a harmonious relation between an identity for self and an identity for others) and quickly develops creative activities after her initial training. Both the consistency and the activity can be partly explained by a privileged background.

Graph 2



Source: Authors' own design

The graph above represents the speed of Camille's integration narrative. The 'China' sequence is interesting. Camille narrates six months in fewer than four pages. This sequence starts on her graduation day. It concerns the passage from initial training to the world of work. It must be set in relation to the "Plateforme" sequence, where the narrative slows down considerably. One day is narrated in two pages. Her narrative suggests a scene:

> Fragment 5
>
> We're strolling through the stalls at Plateforme, and I come across the most beautiful pair of shoes that I've ever seen! My mum sees the pair. The shoe is called Moebius. She tells me, in front of the guy: 'Hey, look Camille, it's your cat's name!' So I get to know the man. I tell him it's the most beautiful pair of shoes that I've ever seen. He tells me he's the one who made them. He tells me he loves my dress, that it's incredible. I tell him I made it […] It's a shoe made from a single band. And I tell him it's incredible, my dress is made the same way![...] He contacts me for several weeks. I don't know why, but it just doesn't happen. Then a year later, I receive an email in English. He's going to open a design studio in China and asks me if I want to go and live there with him, to set up a clothes department. (Camille).

Camille is in her second year. This chance meeting is crucial. It opens the doors to the industrial and commercial network of fashion design. On her graduation day, she takes the plane to China. She goes from art school to the industrial and commercial network of fashion design without any transition. The environment in which she finds herself allows her to continue her fashion design activities and gives her the opportunity to develop her skills as a stylist.

Fragment 6

> I left for China the day I got my degree! I received my degree and left for the airport so as not to miss the plane! I didn't celebrate with anybody.[...] I was a student, I didn't earn anything, and from one day to the next, I become an international stylist. Two thousand dollars in China! I was a multimillionaire! (Camille).

Camille goes on to create shoes, sets up a fashion department, travels from fashion week to fashion week, represents the company in Japan. Her narrative tells of a good deal of personal energy and creative symbiosis with her boss and the work team.

Fragment 7

> For the first three months, I lived at work...I lived there with my boss. Your work is your life, and your life is your work. No more private life barriers. And then there was this really strong relationship with my boss of whom I can say he is my (artistic) twin. I remember drawings, where I was drawing and his pen tip would push mine out of the way to continue the drawing. It really is a type of professional symbiosis! (Camille).

The differences with Iléana are striking. The passage from initial training to the world of work, far from proceeding via successive losses, gives way to a series of advantages, which contribute to the development of Camille's artistic activities and identity. Her hyperactivity will sometimes take quite extreme forms.

Fragment 8

> I was travelling so much. I had on-going business on different continents! […] It became totally crazy, I broke up with my friend. I was totally disconnected from reality! Well, when you live in China and you arrive in London or Europe... You feel really close to Nyon! You get plane tickets every week, with eighteen-hour flights. I had a stack of tickets as big as that, flights I was going to take in the coming weeks. (Camille).

An ordeal

A strong contrast is evident when we analyse the two life-paths. Agency and identity appear linked to family background: continuing one's activity and continuing oneself in one's identity require a supportive environment. Camille's hyperactivity as well as Ileana's paralysis mixed with anxiety and nostalgia can be partly explained by the nature of their respective backgrounds.

This observation points to a relationship of dependency between identity and agency on the one hand and family environment, background on the other. Iléana suffers from a series of losses, which will provoke her breakdown and her fall. Camille enjoys a series of gains, which will help her to develop her activity and realise her identity. However both received the same recognition from the institution in which they were trained.

This passage can represent a rupture in people's paths. The ordeal of passing from initial training to the world of work, such as we have reconstructed from the analysis of our entire corpus, is made up of two dimensions. The first of these is the notion of losses. These are accompanied by the realisation of what the art school graduate had formerly enjoyed. Their environment is affected at three levels: material, relational and symbolic. On a material level, the infrastructure (tools, workplaces, projects...) disappears. It used to structure and support artistic activity. On a relational level, a

collective organised around art disappears. It was made up of peers, professors and visiting lecturers. It favoured motivation and exchange. The aspiring artist found his/her energy there. Without this collective, this motivation evaporates. On a symbolic level, the aspiring artist witnesses the disappearance of a world organised around common values and categories. Identity is threatened here. It belonged to this world and was recognised by it.

When there is rupture on these three levels, the aspiring artist must 'rebuild him/herself' (the expression is recurrent). Losses are always expressed in passive form. The graduates are not subjects, they are subjected to. This reconstruction demands action. One must react. The tension between these losses, which happen to people (passive form) and a desire to maintain the autonomy and the authenticity that marked the artistic project (active form), forms the heart of this ordeal.

"Shock-Absorbers"

Iléana cannot find the resources in herself to continue her activity and she cannot call herself stylist because she lacks anchorage in a common world. A self-accomplishment process is stopped in full flight. Iléana will never be a stylist. Unlike Camille, she does not have the relevant 'shock-absorbers'.

Camille enjoys support and resources. By support, one must understand the whole of supports to oneself [soutiens à soi] (Martucceli, 2002). They make up our own peculiar world, a 'meshing around oneself' (Martucceli, 2002, p. 400). Supports designate a series of 'links with others', with 'ourselves' and with 'objects' (Martucceli, 2002, p. 400). This meshing allows the person to 'keep hold' because it maintains her. It allows us to retain the illusion of holding out 'from the inside' and of accomplishing ourselves.

These supports have a shoring role. To help her through this passage, Camille can count on a particularly legitimate support: an immaterial job, thanks to the encounter during the 'Plateforme' sequence. Camille is saturated by an environment, which favours her expressiveness.

On the other hand, Iléana faces one of the 'most banal and most difficult ordeals to which individuals are confronted' (Martucceli, 2002, p. 65) in our societies. It is typical of the modern condition, where it is question of 'managing to keep up in a world […] which no longer provides any holding'(Martucceli, 2002, p. 44) and which even expels. Iléana is well and truly expelled from what used to be her world.

The notion of resources must be introduced in relation to the question of agency. On the contrary to supports, they can be drawn on by individuals. Supports designate an existentially oriented meshing. Their efficacy depend on a certain level of unconsciousness. This is indicated by the realisation which follows the losses sustained during the passage. People are however conscious of their resources. They can draw on them. Resources however only exist in relation to a context and when drawn upon. Camille gives us an example in the 'keys' sequence identified by the kinetic analysis.

Fragment 9

I was looking for my keys. You come home and you ask yourself where you left your keys from before you know. I looked for them compulsively in my luggage, saying to myself: 'Fuck, I forgot them!'. And in fact, I realised I didn't have any keys! But it was terrible! No keys, that means nobody trusts you, nobody wants to give you a job or an office or anything. It means you don't have a house. It means you have no means of transport, no bike, no car. It means you have no pass-times, no locker at the swimming-pool or I don't know where else. You don't have any flat keys. You have no keys! And in

> that second, I swear the ground opened up under me! I told myself: 'You're going to have to start all over again!' (Camille).

At that moment, the Chinese experience is over. Camille loses the support to her activity and to her identity. She suddenly realises it. Just as Iléana, she experiences of dereliction. However, her experience in China has helped her build a network. This is a resource she will draw on.

> Fragment 10
>
> And there, as is often the case with me, escape, I leave for Paris to see all my friends from Paris I'd made on the job. (Camille).

She cannot stand the realisation. The ground opens up under her. But on the contrary to Iléana, she will be able to overcome this ordeal. She has resources. She solicits her network, leaves for Paris and finds a new job in that field. The meshing rebuilds itself.

Bifurcation

The second dimension of the ordeal can be summed up in one expression: 'rebuilding oneself'. It follows the losses, which come with the passage from the initial training to the world of work. The analysis of the integration process reveals an effort of redefining aspirations. It is present in integration paths from the moment the person is expelled from what used to be his or her world. The artist project ruined, our narratives recount the progressive emergence of new projects. This entails working on the intersection between social and autobiographical.

Once the artist project has become impossible, a moratorium on commitments takes hold, a suspension in a sort of virtuality and a series of abortions before the subject can get together again and find the resources in its environment for a professional reconstruction.

Analysing Iléana's path brings out a rupture in her identity. Iléana is forced, to start with in an extrinsic way, to review her aspirations. She must 'rebuild' herself. She wants to give new meaning to her life.

> Fragment 11
>
> [On the subject of fashion design] There are personal reasons, as well as professional reasons, because it's really hard... You know you'll always be, financially speaking, really... Yeah! Always in a difficult situation...Yeah! Having to count your pennies all the time, something I didn't really want to do...It's also questioning things... Asking myself what my use is on life! A very strong hesitation developed, and then you have to choose. (Iléana).

Forced because she's on the dole, Iléana finds a small job as a salesperson. She comes back to the path she wanted to leave. She 'hates' this job. She does not want to get caught by the 'destiny' she had tried to elude once before. She stays on the job for five years. For two years, she tries to find herself while working part-time. This is what the 'rebuilding myself' sequence recounts. Two years during which Iléana feels like she was 'slowly fading away'. She feels like 'a teenager'.

Fragment 12

> How do you know you like chocolate? I mean, I don't know, since I was a kid, I love nature, I love animals, I want to help nature and animals, and so there you are, I just felt like, I told myself: "There! I've already followed a path I liked in my life, why not try another which could bring me more work and try and sort myself out financially. (Iléana).

A new horizon emerges: geography. Iléana mentions however a concomitant desire 'not to betray', and 'lose' herself.

Fragment 13

> My intention was to be able to work half-time in the field of ecology and sustainable development, and then have another 50% where I'd still have a small studio and create a few things. Or I don't know, work for the WWF, do creations... Sometimes you tell yourself you might as well give up cos' there's no future... And the some days, I'd wake up and go 'Shit! It's a part of me!' I didn't want to stop... I need that! (Iléana).

The fear of losing part of yourself. But all the same wanting to set up a feasible horizon on the long run. Iléana seeks to establish a biographical regime of continuity and a relational regime of recognition.

Iléana will nevertheless abandon geography at University, after studying for one year. She feels like she's gradually losing herself.

Fragment 14

> And it all went rather badly... I realised that I loved nature and animals, but working in that field got on my nerves. (Iléana).

She then tries studying in the field of education for two years, subjecting herself to 'pragmatic' (a stable life plan) self-control. This makes her suffer, become unhappy, and she feels as though she is losing herself again. But she refuses to go through the same emotional turmoil that she experienced with fashion design.

Following a revelation, art therapy becomes an obvious possibility, thanks to a friend who talks about it during a discussion. Art therapy forms a satisfying 'identity offer' (Dubar, 2010) for Iléana. It brings the 'heart' and the 'brain' together. It offers her a viable outcome. This offer links her artistic training with her studies in education and lets her anticipate a form of professional stability: 'I can see myself there!'

It will have taken five years filled with doubt, questioning, loss of motivation, unfinished issues for Iléana to be 'energised' at last by a project which offers her a viable horizon, putting her on the path towards a new-found unity and continuity in her identity. Iléana can thus leave the moratorium and turn her studies into resources towards the reconstruction of her identity and her re-socialisation. In our corpus, the training apparatus appear as an important resource in identity reconstruction and bifurcation.

Low human agency

Iléana's path recounts an experience of expulsion. After aspiring and being recognised as an artist by her Art school, she bifurcates towards art therapy. It will have taken her a period of five years.

By bifurcation, one must understand the act of leaving a used and socially defined trajectory, so as to rejoin another, also socially structured. Bifurcation differs from the concept of transition. Transition designates a predictable stage in a trajectory.
Bifurcation demands work on oneself. It must lead to a narrative reconstruction, which apprehends its story as 'the story of a progression towards a more authentic life or an emancipation from constraint and error' (Rosa, 2005/2010, p. 281).

Bifurcation is favoured by a state of weightlessness, due to the slackening of the social environment. The expulsion that follows the passage from initial training to the world of work makes the process of bifurcation easier.

Iléana's path is characterised by a period of solitude and emptiness. Unlike Camille, she describes an environment using a semantic field of absence, loss and comedown. The short temporality of the expulsion is followed by a long temporality of reconstruction. A biographical crossroad opens up in front of her (Soulet, 2010). This reconstruction is at the intersection between the biographical and the social.

Iléana underwent a rupture in the ordinary conditions of her agency. She was 'driven to the limits of her agency', in a 'structural situation of vulnerability' (Soulet, 2010, p. 277) The concept of low human agency describes this kind of situation. It entails a double refusal. First of all that of the heroising of the subject. The present analysis did not look for 'the factor determining action in the innermost being', in 'exceptional resources' or in 'an essential interior quality possessed by the person who got through it' (Soulet, 2010, p. 278). If the agency is said to be of 'low level', this low level is explained by certain elements from the environment. If the agency is said to be 'strong/of high level', this can be explained by the same environment. The heart of the reasoning reside in this shift.

The concept of low level agency also goes against analyses which favour explaining bifurcation and identity reconstruction based on their result. In an A-B-C sequence, it is a question of giving less weight to C. An analytical insufficiency characterises these analyses: the finalisation of the process and overseeing an open process whose outcome is still undetermined. A crossroad is the meeting of several paths. It proposes several directions. Low level agency focuses mainly on what happens during B. A latency can thus be observed, with its length, its additivity, its sedimentations and its losses. After the temporality of the crisis, it takes the long temporality of a self-transformation on an uncertain horizon and in a sort of weightlessness seriously.

This analysis has established 'a weakening of the ordinary and stable action structures' (Soulet, 2010, p. 281). The integration process is indeed characterised, from the point where the ordeal cannot be absorbed, by a 'breaking of routines' and 'an impossibility to project oneself' (Soulet, 2010, p. 280). Agency is summoned, but in a situation which breaks its regular resources apart. Low level agency refers to this.

This agency, weakened in its resources, is not oriented by ends or norms which control its development any more. This is when it becomes 'creator of possibilities'; poietic. It is characterised by a process of subjectivation. Affected by diverse losses, Iléan must give new meaning to her action (and in a larger picture to her life). In this poietic agency, meaning is 'given by the individual itself', while being the 'object' itself. (Soulet, 2010, p. 284). It entails self-work and self-transformation. Its finalisation will happen as part of an ongoing action. It is only once the action is finalised following an effort of reconceptualisation of its experience, at the meeting point of the social and biographical element, that Iléana can call upon certain resources (in this case her training). 'Before that the resources, whatever they are, are dormant, unusable' (Soulet, 2010, p. 284).

Conclusion

Analysing the biographical paths of young art school graduates has enabled us to highlight the principal elements comprising the ordeal undergone by young artists during the transition from initial vocational training to the world of work. We have pointed to the way identity bearings are destabilised by this ordeal. It leads to the realisation that something has ended, but nothing satisfying appears on the horizon. We have also highlighted the breakdown that agency can suffer. The person cannot deploy his artistic activity using only his inner resources.

The analysis of the ordeal has led us to take into account the situations in which people are evolving. It is the loss of certain elements in the environment, which leads to the realisation that identity and agency are related. This perspective helps not to limit the analysis to psychological dimensions and prevents all form of "heroising". It is not a question of denying the existence of inner 'bearings' and 'resources', but of proposing a complementary approach, in coherence with what narratives with a dominant autobiographical content can help understand.

We have underlined how bifurcation is inseparable from a form of slackening or loosening of the grip. In our corpus it is consecutive to the first dimension of the ordeal of transition from initial training to the world of work. This 'slackening' is one of the conditions that make bifurcation possible, one of the conditions that make it possible for the subject to follow a new trajectory. It weakens the strength of inertia of the former trajectory and opens up a biographical crossroad. It breaks with the habitual, the usual, obliging the subject to work on the intersection between the social and biographical levels in order to find new ends or goals, a new coherent form and unity of identity and thus join a shared world.

Notes

[1] Ricoeur's work (1990) underlines the fact that the identity of a person is the result of a series of successive innovations and sedimentations. "Idem"-identity designates elements, which help re-identify a person as the same through time. "Ipse"-identity designates the dynamic and changing pole of the identity. It is linked to action.

[2] Our approach of identity construction considers a doubly transactional process of socialisation (mediated by language) situated on a biographic axis (interpretation of one's story and self-predicative identity) and a relational plane (interaction and identity attributed by others).

[3] Sales staff train as apprentices, whereas fashion designers study in higher education establishments.

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Book review: Popular education, power and democracy—Swedish experiences and contributions

By Ann-Marie Laginder, Henrik Nordvall and Jim Crowther (Eds.). (Leicester, UK: NIACE, 2013). 288 pp., ISBN 978-1-86201-579-1

Popular education—a common enough term but often misunderstood or misapplied—takes a variety of forms and is a familiar strand in many countries' approaches to non-formal adult education. With its roots lying variously in the social movements of Nineteenth Century British and Nordic countries and, more latterly, in Latin American and several Third World countries, it generally refers to the educational tradition based upon and arising from ordinary peoples' aspirations and struggles for greater democracy and freedom from exploitation and oppression. As such it is avowedly political, seeking transformation rather than acceptance of or accommodation to, the status quo. Although manifesting differently in different parts of the world, its process tends to follow several general characteristics:

- Its curriculum comes out of the concrete experience and material interests of people in communities of resistance and struggle.
- Its pedagogy is collective, focused primarily on group as distinct from individual learning and development.
- It attempts, wherever possible, to forge a direct link between education and social action. (Crowther, Martin & Shaw, 1999)

Yet, despite the general familiarity with popular education approaches, both in concept and in practice, what's less well known or understood is their derivation—in particular the tradition developed in Scandinavia and especially that arising from Sweden. Indeed, what's most notable about what we might regard as a Swedish approach is the way it has developed into a significant part of that country's mainstream and publicly-funded provision of adult education that includes, but is not restricted to, folk high-schools, study associations and study circles. In fact, Swedish popular education is uniquely characterized by its comparatively extensive nature, its dependence upon public institutions, its relatively stable state funding and its broad popular support—from both the general public, and political parties of various ideological stripes.

This book attempts to redress that imbalance by providing an accurate and empirically grounded picture of modern Swedish popular education and various international perspectives on and comparisons with it. It consists of four parts with two, three or four chapters in each. In Part 1, "Setting the Scene", the editors provide an overall introduction to the historical background and current issues and perspectives of popular education in Sweden. Then Kjell Rubenson examines the Swedish tradition in the broader context of the European Union's discourses of adult education and lifelong learning for all. Part 2 goes into greater depth in exploring the historical perspectives of this tradition: Bernt Gustavsson first examines the transformation of the German concept of *"Bildung";* then Kerstin Rydbeck explores why popular education's organisational structure has often ignored women's organisations in the past and, even

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now, still tends to ignore or neglect a gender perspective; finally, Staffan Larsson illuminates the history of folk high-schools by relating it to more general social and educational developments in Swedish society.

Part 3 examines the relationships between Swedish popular education and various manifestations of power. First, Eva Andersson and Ann-Marie Laginder discuss how the educational practices of study circles and the motivation, interests and experiences of those who participate in them can be understood in relation to issues of power. Then, adopting a neo-Gramscian theoretical framework, Henrik Nordvall presents an in-depth study of the interactions between activists in the global justice movement and the Swedish popular education sector. Next, applying post-colonial and anti-racist theories, Ali Osman explores how Swedish popular education conceptualizes its role in facilitating the social inclusion of immigrants. Finally, Berit Larsson reflects on her role and experience as a teacher in Sweden's only folk high-school exclusively for women and the transgendered. Resisting a narrowly defined and overtly feminist approach, she argues for a more "agonistic dialogue" that draws upon a variety of theoretical insights and can be reconciled with an overtly radical concept of popular education in order to better challenge oppressive social structures.

Part 4 turns away from the Swedish focus to examine more international contexts. Sylvia Bagley and Val Rust investigate how the Scandinavian model of folk high-schools spread to and developed in the USA. In describing the origins and current missions of the existing few that remain, they situate folk high-schools in the broader spectrum of US adult education provision and argue that the Swedish popular education tradition still represents an under-utilised inspiration for American adult education. The next two chapters explore parallel developments in two other countries. First, Alan Rogers discusses the history and modern developments of folk development colleges in Tanzania—which were explicitly based on Swedish approaches. Then Yukiko Sawano reviews research on Swedish popular education in Japan and discusses how the concept has influenced the local practice of non-formal education. In the concluding chapter, Jim Crowther addresses the relationships between popular education and the state, specifically relating Swedish experiences to current developments in the UK. He argues that the state is both an important instrument for providing the resources, rights and opportunities, which individuals and communities need but that it also reproduces social relationships of dominance and control, which need to be identified and challenged. Popular educators therefore, regardless of where they are based, 'need to help communities of struggle and endurance to make connections and act globally as well as nationally and locally' (p. 12).

In sum, this book provides a wonderful introduction to the historical development and some of the current aspects and examples of Swedish popular education, both in Sweden and beyond. Its various chapters show the continued relevance of popular education approaches to addressing major educational and social issues and their diversity and rich theoretical grounding provide enough stimuli to engage educators and practitioners alike. It would be unfair to single out individual chapters for special mention; each provides a fascinating window on a specific aspect of popular education and they all inform and are informed by the others. Taken together, they show the continued vitality and significance of popular education and how social concerns, social movements, and community developments have provided and still provide rich and sustained environments for adult learning, knowledge production, and educational engagement.

Regarding education as a way to build peoples' capacities to create democratic social change lies at the very heart of popular education. This book amply demonstrates

how Swedish approaches to popular education are fundamentally based on the struggles for a more just and egalitarian social order. Such an approach is also informed by an equally clear political purpose that has nothing to do with helping the disadvantaged or the management or negotiation of poverty and domination but everything to do with deliberate analyses of, and resistance to, the nature of inequality, exploitation and oppression. Overwhelmingly, this book provides a compelling series of examples that show that no matter how bad things might get, people can always intervene, usually collectively, to better understand and improve their situation. Throughout history, the key lesson of popular education has remained the same: the best education comes through action…and the best action lies in the struggles for social justice. Ultimately, this book can serve as a key resource in the worldwide struggles for social justice by demonstrating how education can be both (a) a tool for social change as well as for personal transformation and (b) how insights gained from others' actions and struggles can be used by people the world over. *La lutta continua*.

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Book review: The Confessing Society—Foucault, confession and practices of lifelong learning

By Andreas Fejes and Magnus Dahlstedt (London and New York, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2013) 122 pp., ISBN 978-0-415-58166-0

In *The Confessing Society: Foucault, confession and practices of lifelong learning,* Andreas Fejes and Magnus Dahlstedt convincingly argue that Foucault's work on confession is exceptionally useful when undertaking critical analyses of contemporary times. The authors open the book by referring to the statement that 'Western man has become a confessing animal' (1998, p. 59). Drawing on Foucault's later writings on governmentality, they claim confession to be a widely dispersed activity embedded within multiple everyday sites where we continuously seem to find ourselves invited into verbalisation in a confessional manner: to talk about ourselves, to reveal what we aspire for and to uncover our deficits, failures or shortcomings. Located in and driven by what is depicted as a wider ethos of therapy, a preoccupation of the self, sensations and emotions may be noticed. Private intimate relationships are put under the magnifying glass, seemingly prepared for careful examination, and are also often publicly displayed. It seems necessary to turn the gaze inwards, to confess and disclose in order to improve oneself, thereby achieving a happier and more well-functioning life. Confession, then, is claimed to be a powerful technology for creating, shaping and fostering good citizens.

However, the book does not just aim to describe the Foucauldian notions. Rather it closely investigates the emergence of a confessional mode in lifelong learning practices. In particular, it highlights acts of discrimination—what is considered good or bad, adequate or inadequate, normal or deviant—and what kind of subjectivities emerge in such enactments. This idea is further developed in the first chapter, *Introducing the confessing society,* where the authors present their main arguments by drawing on close readings of governmentality—how subjects are governed and govern themselves while at the same time governing others. Within that realm, confession stands out as a highly valued technology of the self, and therefore is important to our understanding of the workings of power. The all-embracing notion of lifelong learning is considered crucial to contemporary subject formation processes, thus, it is deemed to be critically important to highlight *how* confession is put into play, takes shape and operates within such varied framings.

The second chapter, *Reflection and reflective practices,* discusses this theme in terms of signifying a prevalent ideal assumed to accomplish successful learning. It reoccurs across spaces, in education as well as working life, and is taken for granted as being desirable. Drawing upon interviews from planned learning activities at a workplace, learning conversations and logbooks aimed at developing reflecting abilities are rather seen as confessional technologies at work to improve practices and performances. Chapter three highlights how elements of confession are at play by addressing *Deliberation and therapeutic intervention* in educational programmes. Drawing upon interviews and manuals, therapeutic-like models are analyzed in terms of educating for what is held to be an ideal democratic citizenship. Such initiatives seem to

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direct their focus towards individuals' inner lives to make them capable of external changes and dialogue mobilised as a key technique for moulding active, responsible and flexible subjects. Accordingly, the willingness to engage in dialogue appears both as a prerequisite and an effect of participation.

In the fourth chapter, *Lifelong guidance* is the subject, depicted as prevalent, and promoted within educational as well as vocational practices with the aim of incorporating life as a whole. Drawing upon policies on adult education and guidance, the activation of individuals to take responsibility for aspirations, choices and changes is illustrated. Life is seen as something that becomes what you yourself make of it, where success and failure are to be seen as individual matters. Guidance transforms into a mode of speaking, insinuating itself into any relationship, and the need for counsellors may even be brought into question since the desire to speak the truth about oneself is the key to fulfilling goals and dreams. The fifth chapter, *Medialised parenting,* highlights ambitions to cultivate what is found to be desirable parents. Drawing upon media productions in makeover reality formats, the interventions made in families by experts to correct behaviour and support change are examined. In assessing, evaluating and exposing enactments, confessional verbalisations are vital, as they manifest the active, responsible and empowered parent. Dialogue about oneself is the tool portrayed as necessary for successful performances in family life and, also, as an accessible learning opportunity with a wide reference.

The final chapter, *Revisiting the confessing society,* summarises the idea that confession has become a crucial technology in contemporary governing strategies and, furthermore, that lifelong learning is a regime of practice where power is distributed to shape and foster desirable subjectivities. In this concluding section, the authors also critically review the benefits of and constraints on the way of dealing with confession throughout the book. Nevertheless, one of the main ideas in using such an approach is to comment on contemporary times by making visible the self-evident and the taken-for-granted as good, adequate or normal, and perhaps even opening for some alternatives. Drawing upon three examples—'Pierre Rivière', 'the Books of life', and, 'humour, satire and laughter'—they discuss how the mobilising of marginalised discourses makes the implicit explicit and may allow for other forms of power and subjectivities than the dominating ones. Thus, as pointed out, moving beyond, traversing and refusing should not be confused with getting away from power relations: they will still be at work and so need to be.

I really enjoyed the book. It is definitely a timely contribution to the field of adult learning and education. First, the analysis of various lifelong learning practices through the lens of confession is compelling. Second, the use of different empirical material promoting multiple rather than uniform readings is inspiring. Third, the emerging picture of how learning has become a vital part of the various examined sites is valuable. Fourth, the finding of how several practices, spread from formal to informal, in fact seem to consolidate what appears to be a hegemonic, unquestionable truth is important. Although similar points have been made elsewhere, the design of walking on the same path through various contexts is elucidating. Indeed, the critical ambition is also addressed and hopefully encourages educators, counsellors and other professional groups to pursue further discussions on how to stage lifelong learning.

Finally, to take a critical stance, as similar arguments reoccur throughout the book, there is always the risk of being repetitive rather than deepening the conceptual understanding. This might be the case at times, yet, since confession is anchored and manifested in distinct practices, my impression is that a good balance is maintained. It should also be noted that the empirical material provided is mainly taken from Swedish

contexts, but I presume that the exhaustive analysis makes them useful across cultures. My main, slightly ambivalent reservation would rather be that the solid, creative and elaborate style seems to falter a bit at the end. When the taken-for-granted-ness is rendered, the ambition appears to be to take the critical analysis a step further. More specifically, it is about moving beyond what may be considered 'a confessional trap' to anticipate, or rather point out, some alternative modes of life by illustrating how things may be otherwise dealt with. The cases drawn upon for analysis are interesting in all their oddity as they provide slices of the unfamiliar and marginalised, clearly aimed at destabilising and deconstructing the 'truth' of the present**.** However, when located among the up-to-date practices of the media, education and working life outlined as the primary landscape within which to orient oneself, at least some of the examples unfortunately appear somewhat far-fetched. Even though the approach in itself is enticing and often required in this kind of book, the attempts to let some possible alternatives emerge become less convincing, which disturbs the appealing account to bring what is held to be self-evident and normal into question. Still, I have to emphasise that such criticism should not in any way detract from what the book has to offer. I recommend it—not just for readers concerned with lifelong learning, but also anyone interested in critical analysis of adult everyday practices.

Presumably, one might feel that the confessional theme is more than saturated after reading this book. On the contrary, I still find myself pondering with this importunate idea in mind. Also, I have to admit, I am tempted by the authors' invitation to further develop and (re)consider how confession and similar technologies operate in everyday interactions—inside and outside of education—where we continuously learn how to think, talk and act like particular kinds of subjects.

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Book review: Learning with adults: A critical pedagogical introduction

By Leona M. English and Peter Mayo. (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers., 2012) 269 pp., ISBN 9789460917684 (electronic bk.)

Written at a time when, for many, the neoliberal policies and globalization lead to an increasing confusion between education and training, as well as to the reification of the "theories of human capital", this book addresses the critical pedagogy in the context of adult education in several fields.

English and Mayo remind us what education and educators should strive for. In a way, they propose a manifesto for education, leading us to question the ways in which the world is and to imagine how it could and should be. In fact, the whole book is crossed by an emancipatory vision and the need for a citizen's commitment with education towards the collective building of a "better world".

Actually, we are in the presence of a quite interesting book, written by two well-known authors, who have been publishing together in recent years, while carrying on their professional activities in different continents. Either individually, or in partnership, both have written several books and journal articles in the broad area of the critical education of adults. Leona English is professor of adult education at St. Francis Xavier University, in Nova Scotia. Her recent research interests are related with spirituality in adult education, gender and learning, as well as critical theory. Over the last few years, English developed her interests through a program of qualitative research informed by critical social science theories of postmodern/structuralism, namely in the fields of religion and education. In 2012, she published the book *Adult education and health* (University of Toronto Press). The co-author, Peter Mayo is professor at the Department of Education Studies (he was its Head for the period 2008-2012), Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Malta. He is also a member of the Collegio Docenti for the doctoral research program in Educational Sciences and Continuing Education at the Università degli Studi di Verona. Mayo teaches in the areas of sociology of education and adult continuing education, as well as in comparative and international education. Among his major contribution is a comparative analysis of Paulo Freire's and Antonio Gramsci's educational thinking.

Written by critical theory defensors, the entire book is crossed by many references to the Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire, one of the most remarkable thinkers in the history of pedagogy and one of the most acclaimed critical educators.

Prefaced by Professor Carlos Alberto Torres, Director of the Paulo Freire Institute, University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), this book calls for reflecting on an important and complex field of educational intervention (learning with adults), along 18 chapters organized into four sections: 1) Contextualising Adult Education; 2) Contemporary Theoretical Perspectives on Adult Education; 3) Contexts of Practice in Adult Education; and 4) Concerns in the Practice of Adult Education.

The first section begins with a discussion around learning and lifelong education. Here the authors present critical questions about the purpose of adult education in the

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contemporary era. Specifically, the discussion extends on the neoliberal assumptions about learning throughout life, the notion of state, its role and assumptions, its practices and effects in this field. Arguing that notwithstanding the context of an intensified globalization, the nation state still exists (e.g., the states of the European Union), the authors examine in Chapter 3 the meaning of being a citizen and how the adults' education can contribute to the enhancement of citizenship, even though it is understood as a contested terrain.

The second section is devoted to a discussion of the contemporary theoretical perspectives on adult education. Without attempting to exhaust the possible approaches, the authors address particular aspects of theories of feminism, the human capital theory and the critical systems theory. Three chapters constitute this theoretical section. The first chapter focuses on the Marxist theory, reflecting on how this affects the theories and practices of adult education in different parts of the world (mainly Europe and Latin America). The second chapter – focused on the postmodernist theories – and the third chapter – on adult education and post-colonialism – discuss the direct implications of these perspectives in approaching the structures, identities, the race, and lifelong education.

The third section, *Contexts of Practice,* discusses the various contexts where a lot of teaching and learning is done with adults, whether formally, informally or non-formally. Six chapters discuss topics such as the relations between work and adult education, including the generative forces of employability and the notions of competence and education for work, resulting from a set of radical attempts and reforms created by the neoliberal regimes aiming at maximizing profits and reducing people to mere resources. These chapters also cover other issues related to the role of museums as critical sites of learning in the community, education and social movements (which, according to the authors, are the places where the most critical change is occurring), community development and university continuing education (UCE).

The last section, entitled *Concerns in Practice of Adult Education*, discusses key themes in critical adult education across its six chapters. It addresses women and adult education, using feminist perspectives, critical pedagogy and adult development theory. The remaining chapters question both the purpose and intention in the context of adult education, such as racism, spirituality, environment, adult health education and older adults.

If the 18 chapters of the book (many of them resulting from revised texts, previously published by the authors) reveal to be important for understanding the objectives of the book, the *conclusion* is quite essential to the reader. Here, a holistic vision of the work is presented. In many ways, it is a return to the beginning of the book. It explores the notion of critique and how it has suffered the demise in the field. More than a "traditional conclusion", this text, subtitled *The Critical Turn in the Adult Education* is a bibliographic essay of sources that highlight the work of many of the proponents of the critical adult education framework and those whose broader work had implications for the field and, furthermore, definitely inspired the authors in the texts presented.

By the end, adult education is presented, according to the authors, as an amorphous field, comprising different traditions and distinctive understandings of who is involved and what their purposes are. All these aspects are somehow covered in the book. Summing up, Leona English and Peter Mayo present a critical perspective on the different political challenges, dilemmas, theories and practices in the field of learning and education of adults, namely those which were intensified by the dynamics of capitalism and neoliberal globalization.

Insofar as brought in by scholars, this work presents a writing style that is most accessible to a wide range of readers, thus contributing, in some way, to restore the hope in "a better world" as a result of the transformative capacity of adult education. Undoubtedly, it is a fundamental book on the analytical, critical and emancipatory perspectives over the adult education. This is a book to read, to reflect and, perhaps, to inspire us to act.

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Aims & Scope

The European journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults (RELA) is a refereed academic journal creating a forum for the publication of critical research on adult education and learning. It has a particular focus on issues at stake for adult education and learning in Europe, as these emerge in connection with wider international and transnational dynamics and trends. Such a forum is important at a time when local and regional explorations of issues are often difficult to foreground across language barriers. As academic and policy debate is increasingly carried out in the English language, this masks the richness of research knowledge, responses and trends from diverse traditions and foci. The journal thus attempts to be linguistically 'open access'. Whilst creating a forum for international and transnational debate, contributions are particularly welcome from authors in Europe and other locations where English is not the first language.

RELA invites original, scholarly articles that discuss the education and learning of adults from different academic disciplines, perspectives and traditions. It encourages diversity in theoretical and methodological approach and submissions from non-English speakers. All published contributions in RELA are subjected to a rigorous peer review process based on two moments of selection: an initial editorial screening and a double-blind review by at least two anonymous referees. Clarity and conciseness of thought are crucial requirements for publication.

RELA is published on behalf of the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA).

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