DISCOURSE, DOGMA, AND DOMINATION: KNOWLEDGE WORK AS ART AND POLITICS

By

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Technology, Sydney

August 2008

CERTIFICATE

I certify that this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being submitted as part of candidature for any other degree.

I also certify that this thesis has been written by me and that any help I have received in preparing this thesis, and the sources used, have been acknowledged in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

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ABSTRACT

The thesis critically analyses the gaps among management literatures as discourses of ambition and evaluates them against the realities that constitute praxis. The work provides a different insight into organisational and management theory that encourages critical thinking about the normalising effects of discourse, and points to the possibilities that can emerge from engaging with alternative perspectives, such as those emanating from practitioners. The analytic framework that is used to identify and explicate this hiatus is drawn from Foucault's genealogy, which is used as a method for conceptualising and explaining relationships between and among discourses. Genealogy is also used to show that there is not merely one way of perceiving an object of discourse and thus creating meaning, but many.

The topic of the thesis is knowledge work. The assumption that there is a clear and abiding descriptor of knowledge work supports an erroneous perception that there is consensus in interpretation and that its meanings are fixed and uncontested. Rather, the concept of knowledge work is ambiguous and highly contested. It is inconsistently conceptualised in the literature and scholars frequently omit any definition or clarification of what knowledge work is, perhaps assuming that their readers will have an inherent and automatic understanding of it. The thesis navigates the many discourses of knowledge work. It shows that in practical terms, inferences of neutrality and normality are instead prescriptions, through which different interpretations pit those who prescribe against those who do.

Knowledge work has emerged as a significant domain of practice and discourse that resonates within the fields of organisational and management theory, and within the circuits of business, consulting, education, and policy formation. Knowledge has become the business of business, such that the discourse of knowledge work has become significant within the discursive knowledge fields of organisation studies, management studies, economics, technology, intellectual property, globalisation, and finance.

The importance of knowledge work is such, that in contemporary discourses it is seen as facilitating a new golden age of a knowledge society. The dissertation tackles this

hypothesis through two historical illustrations. The first shows that the modern concept of knowledge work emerged as a response to particular historical conditions to refract social, economic and political circumstances. The second illuminates an antecedent of the contemporary 'knowledge society' to show that it is neither new nor unique.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

In the chapter, the aims, research questions, context and purpose of the thesis are introduced to the reader. An explanation of what knowledge work is and why it is a suitable object for study is provided, as is the method of analysis used throughout the thesis. Additionally, each chapter is outlined to assist the reader in grasping the content and the structure of the work.

1.1 PREAMBLE

> See, in my line of work you got to keep repeating things over and over and over again for the truth to sink in, to kind of catapult the propaganda. – George W. Bush, discussing social service policy at a town meeting in Greece, N.Y. and reported in the *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*, May 25, 2005 (Froomkin, 2005)

The thesis is a story about legitimacy: about how an 'official' perspective achieves its officialness and whether there is an 'actual' story that differs from the official one. The thesis critically analyses and evaluates the gap among management literatures as discourses of ambition against the realities that constitute praxis. It seeks to understand how 'a line of work', as suggested in the opening quote by U.S. President George W. Bush, catapults propaganda to become a discourse of truth merely through its repetition. What is meant here by a 'discourse of truth' is described by Foucault (1972) as a discourse that achieves dominance because it is perceived as a legitimate and authoritative representation, is widely disseminated, and its meaning options are broadly accepted as being true and accurate.

In the quotation above, George Bush suggests that the particular discursive construction that he calls propaganda becomes truth as it 'sinks in' through repetition. The irony is that Bush made this statement in all seriousness and without irony intended. Regardless, there is authenticity in his suggestion that what is referred to as 'the truth' is constructed in discourse to reflect a particular

'line of work'. An analysis of discourse can explain how legitimacy is attained and how discursive representations of a thing that reflect the interests or line of work of particular authorities attempt to shut out other ways of understanding that thing; thereby attaining truth through discursive closure.

One goal of the thesis is to investigate how legitimacy is achieved through discourse and how particular discursive representations gain dominance over other conceptions. A second goal is to understand the relationship between a constructed discourse of truth about a line of work and those who perform that work. Use of the term construction in relation to discourse is purposive since the thesis argues that describing a thing does not necessarily entail describing all there is about that thing; rather, details are selected and deselected to present what is important to those who construct a discourse.

The main contribution of the thesis is to illustrate to management theorists and practitioners, and perhaps more generally, that there is an uneasy relationship between descriptions of the line of knowledge work by academics and its praxis as experienced by those who do the work. The study suggests that uncritical adoption of academic discourses of knowledge work by management as the way knowledge work should be performed needs to be reconsidered in a more nuanced way to reflect concerns articulated by knowledge workers in relation to their praxis. The thesis argues that disciplinary regimes of power underpin the realms of legitimacy and authority pertaining to knowledge work, as they do with other discourses. Management's idealisation of what should be needs to be filtered through discursive processes of what can be, rather than enforced through rhetoric of wishful thinking tricked out in the guise of truth.

1.2 DEFINING KNOWLEDGE WORK

Peter Drucker (1959) first devised the term 'knowledge work' when he wrote specifically about the 'work of knowledge' as the application of knowledge rather than knowledge in and of itself. Drucker described knowledge work specifically

in economic terms as associated with organisations. He identified knowledge work as an organisational activity, whereby knowledge workers are organised functionally to produce knowledge, either as an end product or as a contribution to a product.

Knowledge work as a descriptor is problematic. Individuals who perform knowledge work generally do not make reference to themselves as knowledge workers; rather, this is an organising category imposed on them by others. Whether knowledge work is an outcome (such as an advertisement) or a process (such as developing a media campaign) is debatable. It may be both. Or it may see-saw between working with knowledge as a process for a product of knowledge that is then reapplied as a process for something else (for example, a market research questionnaire used as the basis of a market research report that is then developed into a marketing strategy).

In addition, knowledge work does not represent a discrete occupation or role and tends to be amorphous (Scarbrough, 1999). For example, while an individual who performs knowledge work is a knowledge worker, at the same time she may be an architect, a medical practitioner, a supervisor in a manufacturing line or an advertising account manager, since each works with knowledge.

Moreover, while most academics conceive of knowledge work as located within organisations, even if the ontologies may differ, its association with organisations is also contested. An individual can work with knowledge without it being categorised as economic work, such as the work of an artist, or a missionary, or a philosopher (Machlup, 1980 [1962]).

Setting the above discrepancies to one side, there are consistencies in the understanding of knowledge work. The categories of knowledge work and knowledge worker tend to be used almost exclusively by academics and those involved in information technology, rather than by the universe of those who reasonably could be expected to identify with the category. It is not an ordinary numbers' categorisation device. It may well be that the newness of knowledge work as an organising category and the discursive 'capital' associated with it is

not yet established and remains unclear. We don't know yet what it means to be a knowledge worker; the identity is not established fully and the broadness of the category, which interconnects with many other more tightly-defined organising categories, makes it somewhat ambiguous.

Despite the problems associated with pinning down a definition of knowledge work, or perhaps because it facilitates ambiguity, knowledge work is influential in developing discourses concerned with first world social and economic development, often referred to as the 'knowledge economy' (Adler, 2001; Mokyr, 2002; Jaffe and Trajtenberg, 2002), 'knowledge society' (Drucker, 1993; Miles *et al*, 1997; Hargreaves, 2003), 'information economy' (Boisot, 1998; Brown and Duguid, 1998; Frenkel *et al*, 1999; Wolff, 2005), and other similar terms. The terms knowledge economy and knowledge society catapult the discourse of knowledge work into a discourse that contributes to what many commentators see as the global basis of world order. Its significance and influence are such that it is a worthy topic for research.

1.3   RESEARCH AIMS & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The chapter presents the aims, purpose and contextual background of the research as well as a discussion of the methodological framework used throughout the dissertation. The content and structure of the thesis are outlined here chapter by chapter to assist the reader in interpreting the key literatures and arguments used.

The principal research questions addressed in the thesis are, first, how do knowledge practitioners who are constituted by the discourse describe how they enact the discourse through praxis; and second, haven't individuals always worked with knowledge?

In order to address the research questions, the thesis has three main aims:

- The first is to conduct a rich empirical analysis of how knowledge workers/practitioners relate to the various discourses of knowledge work. In exploring the discourses, an understanding is sought as to how practitioners discuss their actual practice of knowledge work as it relates to the official and dominant discourses, and whether alternative or, indeed, sub-discourses inhabit knowledge practices and the way practitioners talk about them and perform them. The empirical analysis seeks to present interpretations of the praxis of knowledge work rather than to represent any idealised official version of the dominant discourse.

The thesis argues that knowledge work is both constitutive of a set of practices and the way these practices are spoken about, and of those who perform these practices, people who are known as knowledge workers or practitioners. Accordingly, a field of research was sought wherein knowledge practitioners could perform and discuss their performance of knowledge work that was neither task-oriented nor sponsored by a single organisational setting. The quest was to not only conduct a piece of research that would bring to light the clarification of knowledge work discourse in discussions, in the reality of institutions and in practices (to paraphrase Foucault, 1988: 111) but do so in an environment unconstrained by hierarchical organisational relationships.

A subsidiary aim of the empirical analysis is an exploration of the tensions between the official and unofficial versions of knowledge work practices; how they are articulated by practitioners, and how these tensions are resolved, if at all. Given the transient nature of discourse itself, a well-constructed empirical study into how those who are constituted by a discourse (in this case, knowledge workers) actually use the discourses (purveyed by academics and taken up by management) will make an important contribution to knowledge.

- A second research aim is to investigate how particular conceptions of knowledge work have come to dominate other meaning options. Using Foucault's (1972) theories of discourse as a basis for how discourse emerges and develops, as well as his work on power and knowledge (Foucault, 1976; 1979; 1980; 1982; 1984a; 1984b; 1988), and critiques of these by other scholars (Goldstein, 1994;

Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982; Davidson, 1986; Hoy, 1986; Donnelly, 1986; Eribon, 1991; Clegg, 1997; 1998; Kendall and Wickham, 1999; Wickham and Kendall, 2007; Dean 1994; Fox, 2000; Fendler, 2004; Hook; 2005), the thesis critically analyses how particular conceptions and meanings of knowledge work have emerged, developed, transformed, and gained dominance or sunk into oblivion, possibly to be revived at a later stage.

The dominant knowledge work discourse is teased apart in Chapter 2. The complexities of the discourse are unravelled, and its internal workings laid out to show that it is not homogenous, consensual or fixed. In so doing, the thesis elaborates on how a knowledge work discourse emerged, under what material conditions and in what contexts; how it is legitimised through rules, laws and traditions of institutional knowledge that make statements about it; how the discourse is defined and refined within specific boundaries of interpretation as it is challenged by other meaning options; and how it changes nonetheless as it is re-presented within other contexts and aligned with other discourses. The study analyses how knowledge work as an object of discourse is disseminated as it is taken up by other fields of knowledge that make statements about it, thereby making it relevant to these other fields of knowledge, and which, at the same time, transform and transmute it. The thesis also examines other possible conceptions of knowledge work, which have developed as discourses in their own right. The dissertation contributes to scholarly literature by showing how the discourses of knowledge work are subject to the interests of those who purvey particular meaning options, and how these meaning options can be illuminated and explained by careful use of genealogy as a method of analysis.

▪ A third aim of the study is to explore the underpinnings of what contemporary discourses in the fields of management and organisation studies identify as a knowledge society. The notion of a knowledge society is so important that it has come to represent a particular world view within a significant globalised understanding about business, institutions and the field of work in general. Emergence of a knowledge society as a new golden age and a new 'post' society is inextricably bound up with knowledge work and those who perform it (Bell, 1973). As Chapter 4 illustrates, a knowledge society was conceived as a

'post' World War II society which created a new social model (Drucker, 1959; 1969; 1993) based on the value and creation of knowledge within an organisational sphere by highly-educated and qualified individuals who worked with intangibles rather than tangibles as 'symbolic analysts' (Reich, 1991).

Chapter 5 extends and challenges the view of 'post' society as a knowledge society by revisiting an earlier epochal shift in knowledge relations through the lens of contemporary concepts. The period chosen as a contrast to throw this important contemporary movement into relief is the Renaissance, which is also a period in which knowledge erupted as a focus for societal milieu. Principles of a knowledge society are explored through the development of printing and publishing in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries, as well as examining the conflicts that arose through the dissemination and containment of both new and old knowledge that was made available via the processes of printing and publishing. Through the window of the Renaissance, it is argued that a conception of a contemporary knowledge society as unique is, instead, a process of discursive construction and development that sets aside the novelty of 'post' society as a knowledge society.

Throughout, the thesis uses Foucauldian discourse analysis or genealogy as the framework of analysis. By conducting a genealogical analysis of the dominant discourse of knowledge work, the thesis seeks other possible meanings and interpretations that may have arisen, and acknowledges there are other possible conceptions of truth. Thus, the thesis explores the tension between and among discursive truth claims, each of which aims to achieve legitimacy by carving out a niche of truth. This is done in three ways. One is a historical review of the material conditions under which the discourse of knowledge work was conceptualised and developed (Chapter 4). Another is an analysis of literatures showing the various discursive networks, to which knowledge work as an object of discourse is attached, aligned with, transforms and is transformed by (Chapter 2). A third is the empirical research that studies concretely an example in which knowledge workers as a non-specific category of work or *genus*, as it were, clarify the knowledge work discourse as it pertains to them (Chapter 7).

1.4 KNOWLEDGE WORK AS AN OBJECT FOR STUDY

If knowledge work is important as an object for study, it would seem obvious that it should be significant as a contemporary discourse that would tend to dominate other discourses. But this is not the case. Although its reach is extensive and has permeated through most management and organisational discourses and literatures, it is unobtrusive as a particular object of discourse. Knowledge work as an object of specific discourse has largely been absorbed into other discourses, where it has become a dominant theme of these discourses.

Economics (Drucker, 1959; 1969) and technology (Bell, 1973; 1976) are the discourses wielding the greatest early influence on knowledge work, with discourses of management of knowledge occurring somewhat later (Drucker, 1993; 1994; Clegg and Palmer, 1996; Scarbrough, 1999; Fuller, 2002). Embedded within the discourses of knowledge work are those that relate to organisation as a process (Blackler, 1995; Empson, 2001) and organisations as the entities in which processes of knowledge creation occur (Drucker, 1993; Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Interrelationship effects are multiple and complex. The frequency and multiplicity of interconnections among the discourses have given rise to the new discourse of knowledge management and impart its particular trajectory (Davenport *et al*, 1998; Davies and Mabin, 2001; Lang, 2001; McKinlay, 2002; Goodall and Roberts, 2003).

Knowledge work and knowledge management discourses intersect at nodes of control and expression of knowledge. They intersect at the point of acceptance or rejection by management of both the processes and the outcomes of the work of knowledge by those who perform it, that is, the acceptability by organisations of certain types and forms of knowledge. Nodes of control and expression of knowledge are bounded by other objects within the technology and economic discourses that regard knowledge as something that can and should be managed by others (Drucker, 1969; Fuller, 2002). These objects relate to demands for productivity of knowledge workers to sustain knowledge as a renewable resource (Drucker, 1993; 1999; Newell *et al*, 2002). At the same time, knowledge management discourses capture knowledge

work and its processes of production to become organisational resources (see, Bell, 1973; Davenport *et al*, 1998; Garrick and Clegg, 2000; Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Gray, 2001), which are articulated as organisational learning (Argyris and Schön, 1978; Levitt and March, 1988; Huber, 1991; Bohm, 1998; Yanow, 2000) and reticulated in specific ways to create a learning organisation (Nonaka, 1994; Small and Dickie, 2000; Gourlay, 2004). Additionally, management of knowledge as an organisational asset ensures it has market value (Orr, 1991; Wadel, 1979), which can be measured (Kaplan and Norton, 1996; 1998 [1993]; 2007), and needs to be protected in law (Teece, 1998; Boisot, 1998). These processes and their interrelationships are explicated in Chapter 2.

Once control of the processes of knowledge creation and the way in which it is expressed in economic terms has been established, knowledge work as an object of discourse has been transformed into organisational knowledge and is now presented in terms of ownership of outcomes (Teece, 1998; Boisot, 1998; Constant *et al*, 1994; Morris, 2001; Scarbrough, 1999). The difference is the refocusing of knowledge as something to be owned rather than something to work with; subtly transforming it from an activity of work to legitimacy of ownership by organisations.

Significance of knowledge work in discourses of organisational knowledge is such that a new discourse of intellectual capital has emerged (see, Constant *et al*, 1994; Morris, 2001; Boisot, 1998), which itself is aligned to other discourses, such as knowledge management (Bell, 1976; Nonaka, 1994; Barley and Orr, 1997; Reed, 1996; Reich, 1991; Smith, 2001), communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Brown and Duguid, 1991; Wenger, 1998) and knowledge intensive firms (Starbuck, 1992; Alvesson, 1995; 2001). Moreover, knowledge work has become bound up with discourses associated with the globalisation of knowledge-based economies and firms (Davenport *et al*, 1998; Foray and Hargreaves, 2002; Foray and Lundvall, 1996).

The absorption of knowledge work by other discourses attests to the significance of its themes, in that it now dominates conceptions of knowledge in these discourses. Yet, for some scholars writing about knowledge work, the very

paucity of clear definition is considered its problem rather than its strength (Blackler, 1995; Collins, 1997; Scarbrough, 1999; Fuller, 2002; Robertson and Swan, 2003). They consider it to be a slippery concept rather than ephemeral and pervasive. Even though at present, knowledge work as a discourse may not be distinguishable from other discourses, this was not always the case. Knowledge work emerged as an important discourse and its influence was, and still is, extensive. Moreover, its significance is undeniable since the contemporary themes of a knowledge society as a new world order are based on knowledge and the work of knowledge, be it political, economic or social.

Despite the wealth of literatures surrounding the concepts of knowledge work and its associated and aligned discourses, a critical analysis of knowledge work has been lacking in the bodies of scholarly work pertaining to organisation and management studies. Much has been assumed about it; even the way in which it has been defined in the literatures is slippery and changeable. Much less has been researched about its emergence and development as the object of discourse; an omission that calls out for rectification in view of its weighty impact on other discourses and the development of global policies relating to the so-called 'knowledge society'. The importance of the knowledge society as a new golden age is grounded in knowledge work as an object of discourse and the statements that are made about it. Thus, knowledge work presents an under researched but important topic for study in a PhD thesis. It has significant implications for management, for theorists in management and organisational studies, and for knowledge practitioners themselves.

1.5   GENEALOGY AS A METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Since genealogy is used as the framework and method of analysis throughout the thesis, it is important to position it as a significant means of understanding the research topic. Although Chapter 3 is dedicated to examining genealogy and its critiques in great depth, the present section explains the value of genealogy for use in the thesis by way of a visual metaphor that epitomises the suitability and

application of genealogy to the dissertation and perhaps more broadly to management and organisational studies.

Foucault (1988: 112) argues that western society frequently aims to produce and circulate discourse that has as its teleological origin and goal the attainment of truth. The notion of discursive production, reproduction and transformation may be illustrated through use of M.C. Escher's 1953 lithograph *Relativity*, which is itself a metaphor for relationships among different perspectives (Escher, 1992). The Escher lithograph (see Figure 1.1 on the following page) shows people ascending and descending staircases on three visual planes. As the viewer's eye follows each figure, it meets figures moving naturally in other planes on the same staircase. Two figures on the same staircase face in the same direction but one is ascending and the other is descending. Turning the picture around merely illuminates other planes in which figures go up and down the stairs. Moreover, each aspect of the staircase provides both the boundary and support for the others.
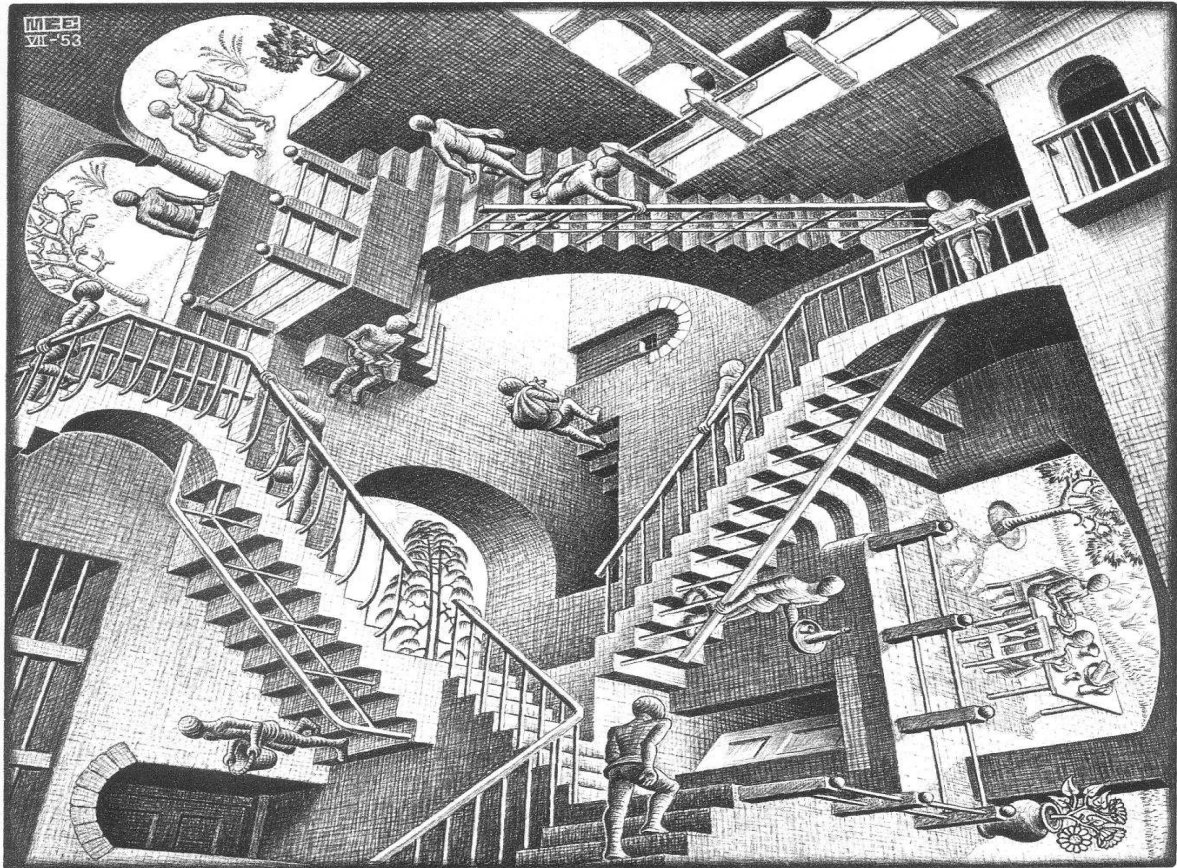
67.
Relativiteit
Relativity

Figure 1.1
(Escher, 1992: 67)

As Escher explains his work,

> Here we have three forces of gravity working perpendicularly to one
> another. Three earth planes cut across each other at right angles, and
> human beings are living on each of them.

> It is impossible for the inhabitants of different worlds to walk or sit or
> stand on the same floor, because they have differing conceptions of
> what is horizontal and what is vertical. Yet they may well share the use

of the same staircase. On the top staircase illustrated here, two people are moving side by side and in the same direction, and yet one of them is going downstairs and the other upstairs. Contact between them is out of the question because they live in different worlds and therefore can have no knowledge of each other's existence (Escher, 1992: 14)

The Escher lithograph provides us with a metaphor for visualising several possibilities of how knowledge work practitioners may employ discourses. Here, we have a notion of parallel conceptual discourses of knowledge work coming from various perspectives. Indeed, it is through deployment of genealogy that we can see these different perspectives. The standpoints may be viewed from that of organisational and managerial authorities, representing the current dominant representation, as well as a somewhat different knowledge work universe seen from the practitioner perspective, which is both alternative and parallel to the dominant discourse. At times, it is hard to distinguish the different trajectories as they merge and intersect. Moreover, the relationships among these different positions provide discretionary boundaries that change according to the standpoint of the viewer.

Of course, for the audience looking at Escher's *Relativity*, there is another plane and that is the one taken by the viewer, who can see all three worlds simultaneously, has knowledge about each of the worlds, but whose conceptions about the realities of these different worlds is challenged anew each time the graphic is viewed. It is the observer who can see the relativity of the gravitational planes; yet, each notion of 'up' or 'down' as the truth is confused and distorted by one or both of the other planes. Each time the viewer focuses on one of the planes, brings it to front of mind, the others recede; in much the same way as the act of elevating a particular perspective as the truth tends to reduce other possibilities as truth revelations. In this context, it is hoped that the thesis can bring clarity to the viewers' (readers') understanding of knowledge work in all its guises, and explores and explains the different perspectives.

Escher's graphical metaphor of truth as relativity is equally applicable to the discourse of knowledge work as it pertains to the gravitational plane of organisational management with which knowledge work has been discursively

linked. It is the relativities of Foucault's genealogy that enables us to view knowledge work and its relationships with academics, organisational management and the knowledge practitioners themselves. An organisational management conception focuses on knowledge work as subordinate to and in a supporting role for the organisation, such that without the organisation, there is no rationale for knowledge work *per se* (Drucker, 1969). Such a discourse conceives of knowledge work objects in terms of benefit to the organisation, such as markets, competition, organisational products and services, technology as a knowledge repository, and knowledge as an organisational asset.

Discourses aligned with the organisational management perspective elevate ownership of knowledge work outcomes as the significant discursive objects, such that it becomes intellectual property protected by laws, requiring measurement of knowledge production and productivity, and discretionary sharing of knowledge to enable organisational learning. On a different gravitational plane, the interests of knowledge work practitioners are centred on the human side of knowledge work practices and concern notions of trust, identity, integrity, autonomy, accountability, responsibility, and freedom.

As the Escher metaphor continually reminds the viewer, a problem remains with the relativity of parallel and competing universes of understanding and the ways in which portals may be developed across different gravitational planes that represent a multiplicity of discursive conceptions of knowledge work. The challenge for organisations and management is to be able to observe and understand the extent to which knowledge practitioners inhabit different realities, so that viable and flexible arrangements may be established to begin to meet the diverse interests.

Before an exploration of the planes and universes inhabited by knowledge work practitioners can be conducted, I need to set out the fields of knowledge that are designated as the official, legitimised and dominant conception of knowledge work, and the networks of authorities whose arbitrary interests are served by such discourse. I then explore alternative conceptions and how they are supported by other networks of authorities. Contestation among the various groups of

authorities continues to vitalise the discourse while destabilising it, as new objects are incorporated in the discourses only to spin off into entirely new discourses or subvert the old ones.

Discursive dominance is attained by a confluence of views and statements about an object, expounded by 'authorities of delimitation' from diverse institutional bodies of knowledge and practice. Through communication and usage, particular conceptions about an object emerge as dominant and legitimised discourses (Foucault, 1972: 46). While the statements form a discursive unity, the discourse is loose and tenuous and subject to challenge from alternative views. In recognising the fragility of the discourse and the ease with which it can be transformed and 'manipulated', authorities seek to restrict possibilities for transformation by limiting other ways of conceptualising the discursive object. They do this by linking together various arguments that specify the nature of the discourse, categorising and ordering the statements about it, and classifying them into 'grids of specification' (Foucault, 1972: 46-49).

In this way, authorities of delimitation attempt to establish the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of the discourse and attempt to fix a particular discursive conception. Legitimisation of particular conceptions about the discourse is sustained within local contexts through invocation of these legitimised statements with their meanings revealed through context and usage (Foucault, 1972: 109). Variegated histories of knowledge work, both post-World War II and during the Renaissance, each chosen as a point of rupture in the emergence of new conceptions of knowledge's possibilities and practices, in addition to empirical fieldwork investigating a contemporary community of knowledge practitioners, provide a contested territory in which knowledge work is situated.

The next section lays out in a more two-dimensional way, the structure of the thesis through formation of its chapters.

1.6   STRUCTURE OF THESIS AND INTERRELATIONSHIP OF CHAPTERS

The structure of the thesis is unorthodox. While it adheres to conventions of a beginning and an end, the middle sections are positioned around the central theme of discourse as a legitimising process (Chapter 3). The thesis pivots around Chapter 3 rather than flowing in a linear and traditionally sequential mode. Different orderings of the material that constitute 'the middle' of the thesis are possible; indeed, at certain stages in the development of the present text they were entertained, especially as the author struggled to impose linearity on a thesis that, resolutely, escaped such a narrative genre. Juxtapositions, as much as expositions were central to the argument; hence in its final form the thesis is arranged according to:

- The topic of the thesis (Chapter 2 – knowledge work)
- An exposition of genealogy as the chosen method of analysis in Chapter 3
- An historical context in which the discourse on knowledge work emerged and was named (Chapter 4)
- A second historical context that examines whether knowledge work can be regarded as unique to a particular time and place (Chapter 5)
- How knowledge work is regarded in a contemporary context by knowledge practitioners whose subjectivity is formed by the discourse (Chapter 7).

Thus, the thesis has been consciously designed as a non-linear work. It posits three historical contexts with which to analyse discursively the themes and argues that they provide the reader with a rich and thorough examination of the discourses of knowledge work. The contexts are located at particular points in time in Western development and shift both back and forward as well as laterally to provide the reader with a multi-faceted map that may be understood in various ways. This means that the flow of the thesis is not sequenced according to the periods of enquiry but rather, chapters are placed to emphasise preceding or subsequent research streams and themes of analysis that build towards the overarching goal of the research as theory development. As Richard Daft (1985: 194) suggests, "data collection and analyses are important, but data are intended to

illuminate a path of insight into organizational behaviour and processes. Theory gives meaning to data." At the same time, data also give meaning to theory, so that theory development in the thesis is a recursive process.

The following diagram provides the reader with a road map of the thesis to assist in its navigation. It shows a visual arrangement of how the thesis design has been structured so that the various streams of research that comprise the overall work interrelate with each other and contribute to theory development.

Figure 1.2
Interrelationship of chapters & structure of thesis

Chapter 1
Introduction

Chapter 2
Knowledge work discourse:
Dominant patterns & networks

Chapter 6
Looking back on
looking forward:
Research
design &
methods

Chapter 4
An object of
knowledge work
is constituted

Chapter 3
Discourse as a legitimising
process

Chapter 7
Knowledge
work
in practice

Chapter 5
Emergence of
'post' society

Chapter 8
Coalescence, contributions & conclusion:
Implications of the research

1.6 .1 Outline of the chapters

The flow of the thesis is structured by the relationship of chapters as one might peel away layers of an artichoke. However, each of the chapters is anchored in the 'choke' of the thesis, which maintains a consistency throughout. The choke (if the artichoke metaphor is continued) consists of the two research questions: how do knowledge practitioners who are constituted by discourse speak about how they enact the discourse through praxis? And second, haven't individuals always worked with knowledge? Throughout the thesis, these questions are the core and guide all facets of the research.

Chapter 2 presents a detailed analysis of statements about and definitions of knowledge work as an object of discourse; how they have attained significance, and the power effects that their influence exerts. Management and individuals in authority express specific representations of knowledge work from different positions of interest in particular aspects and forms of its practices. The chapter examines the concepts associated with the dominant discourse of knowledge work (which have already been explained above in section 1.4) and the discourses that prevent closure of the dominant discourse. Alternative discourses challenge assumptions about knowledge work relating to organisational ownership of knowledge and begin to re-inscribe knowledge in terms of discourses of power (Deetz 1994b; Clegg and Palmer, 1996; Garrick and Clegg, 2000), knowledge worker identity (Deetz, 1994a; Carr, 1998; Alvesson, 2000; 2001), processes of creativity (Blackler, 1995), in terms of sensitivities to the relationships between power and tacit knowledge (Garrick and Clegg, 2000; Marshall and Brady, 2001), in the specifics of knowledge-intensive forms of organisation (Alvesson, 1993) and a conception of the individual as controller of his or her own knowledge (Fuller, 2002; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2001).

Chapter 3 explains genealogy as the chosen method of analysis that is best suited to understanding knowledge work as discourse. The chapter explains how certain meaning options are able to achieve dominance and legitimacy over other possible interpretations and how, in other circumstances, different readings may become

dominant. Meanings generally ascribed to discourses, such as knowledge work, do not necessarily inscribe all of their nuances at all times and in all contexts, and meanings held to be common are merely those that are fixed temporarily.

Kendall and Wickham (1999) describe genealogy and its forerunner archaeology in the following way:

> Where archaeology provides us with a snapshot, a slice through a discursive nexus, genealogy pays attention to the processual aspects of the web of discourse – its ongoing character (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 31)

Archaeology describes certain characteristics of discourse that may be considered to be rules of formation (Foucault, 1972). In archaeology, Foucault lays out artefacts and cultural objects that become visible as a result of a particular discourse being interrogated. Since archaeology is essentially descriptive, it describes the processes of discursive formation and development. The rules of formation describe the 'surfaces of emergence' or historical contexts; the 'authorities of delimitation' or those individuals or groups who have the *imprimatur* of authority from their field of knowledge to define what is included and excluded from the discourse; and the 'grids of specification' which explain how a discourse is disseminated into other fields of knowledge.

Genealogy, which developed late in Foucault's writings (1980; 1981; 1988), built on the descriptive nature of archaeology, the metaphor he had previously chosen for his earlier methods. Genealogy examines processes of how certain statements come to be made about objects and not others, how objects of discourse gain particular meanings but not others, and how and why discourses transform – not only that they do transform, which is part of the descriptive mode of archaeology – but also whose interests are served by intact reproduction of discourses or their transformations. These are power effects and, here, genealogy is used to examine such power relationships.

Both genealogy and archaeology are critiqued with each concern argued and explored thoroughly. Ultimately, genealogy is found to be a worthwhile method through which discourse may be analysed and is most suitable for the thesis.

<u>Chapter 4</u> is an historical account of the emergence of a knowledge work discourse. The chapter explores the coupling of concepts of knowledge and work in contemporary discourse. It delineates the social, economic and political circumstances that provide historical conditions for knowledge work to emerge as a discursive object. The chapter posits one beginning of knowledge work as occurring between the two World Wars; and specifically, after World War II, its contours become clearer as it is conceived as a response to political and economic circumstances, a 'pay-off' in terms of the social-promissory benefit of educational access. The context is located at a particular point in time in contemporary Western development and shifts both back and forward as well as laterally to provide the reader with a multi-faceted map that may be understood in various ways. It may be read as a historical explanation, as points of interest and focus, and as an interweaving of a series of events, some connected and other disparate.

The chapter makes specific reference to occupational changes and workforce participation, a shift from rural to urban employment, from unskilled and semi-skilled labour to the creation of an educated workforce. These changes are annexed to economic discourses of national significance (Drucker, 1959; 1969; 1993; Bell, 1973; Constant *et al*, 1994; Teece, 1998; Boisot, 1998; Morris, 2001).

Discourses that shaped social conditions after World War II were embedded in political discourses of economic nationalism to support large corporations and to address industrial issues of overcapacity and overproduction (Drucker, 1949; 1959; 1963; Fuchs, 1968; Bell, 1973; Reich, 1991). In turn, they linked to discourses of citizenship and participation in American society through mass consumption. At a broader national level, these discourses articulated an alignment between the well being of the American economy, corporate America, and the creation of a distinctly American lifestyle (Reich, 1991), premised on improved spending power of the population. For this to occur, people needed higher-paying employment, which, in turn was supported by increased skills and employability via extending tertiary education to those who had previously been denied access.

<u>Chapter 5</u> explains that the network of objects considered to be significant within a discourse of knowledge work also feature in pre-industrial and industrial societies, illustrating that the origin of knowledge work discourse does not lie exclusively post-World War II. In focusing on new technologies for printing and publishing during the period known as the Renaissance, the chapter argues that pre-industrial and industrial societies were also knowledge societies. The discursive objects include organisational ownership of knowledge, theoretical knowledge, productive work, information technology, problem delineation, and problem solving, all of which are significant in the contemporary understandings of knowledge work. However, by rethinking knowledge work discourse in relation to Renaissance themes, an answer begins to emerge to the second question that the thesis asks, 'haven't individuals always worked with knowledge?'

The chapter identifies a number of problems associated with the categorisation of any society in terms of a cohesive unit of time and human endeavour, such as the Knowledge Society and the Renaissance. A comparative examination of characteristics of knowledge work is conducted between these two golden ages. As an example of the fierceness with which authorities of delimitation attempted to protect the official Renaissance discourse against alternative views, the chapter offers a micro-history of one individual who challenged the legitimate discourse and his untimely end as the authorities of delimitation took action against his perceived heresy. This scenario is compared to the ferocity with which corporations, global institutions and governments protect contemporary official discourses of knowledge against the expression of other views. Finally, the concept of a knowledge society is reconstituted to include both contemporary and more ancient perspectives, thus arguing that the concept of knowledge work within a knowledge society is neither new nor unique to a contemporary period.

<u>Chapter 6</u> explains the research design and method used to select the contemporary empirical research site and is written as a work-in-process alongside the data analysis chapter that follows it. As Miller and Glassner (1997) suggest, empirical research and analysis are interrelated, so the inductive processes involved in writing both chapters concurrently enabled me to look back at the design issues while looking forward to the sense-making processes of the analysis itself.

With the objective of the thesis being to understand how knowledge workers use discourse to describe knowledge praxis, the goal of the chapter is to establish an empirical research design framework for the thesis. Using Denzin and Lincoln's (1994; 2000; 2005) work on methods and research design, the chapter identifies their five key research design principles and applies them to the thesis, justifying and supporting the various design decisions. The chapter then explains how the research site and participants have been selected, the methodological limitations, and how the empirical data is analysed.

In selecting the data site, the challenge was to avoid an analysis of how specific knowledge work tasks are performed, such as designing a building, developing a piece of software, creating a business strategy, making a decision about marketing a product; but rather research empirically the praxis of knowledge work as discourse. Therefore, selection of a specific empirical site comprising individuals who constitute and are constituted by knowledge work discourse entailed a thorough search of a range of possible operational examples. Since the empirical research is an examination of the processes by which knowledge work is clarified by practitioners, a process of elimination of unsuitable sites is detailed and thorough.

I decided that the Internet would enable me to address the first research question of how knowledge workers describe how they enact the discourse through praxis. The Internet would allow me to examine how knowledge practitioners articulate their experiences of praxis in an environment outside of an organisational hierarchy, thereby providing a situation that does not focus on specific organisational tasks or is subject to relationships of power due to organisational power structures. Indeed, as Benson (1996) suggests, Internet public texts are expressed directly by those engaged in online discussions of various types and are not mediated by third parties, including the researcher, thus providing 'discursive democracy' through the use of 'naturally-occuring data' (Silverman, 2007). Therefore, authors of Internet texts are not inhibited by identification within particular environments, such as national or organisational contexts.

Other research design and methods issues that the chapter addresses, include use of a known forum of professional practitioners rather than a public chatroom; accessibility by the researcher including ethical issues; availability of archived material; and use of genealogy as the method of discourse analysis for the data.

Chapter 7 begins with a discussion of the types of discourse analysis that can be used to facilitate analysis of the specific data of knowledge work in practice. Again, it is found that genealogy provides the most appropriate way of teasing out and understanding the experiences of knowledge practitioners as they discuss their praxis. When the archived text is analysed (it is provided in its entirety in the Appendix), it reveals an understanding of how practitioners use existing knowledge work discourses – dominant and alternative – as a common language of communication within their professional community of practitioners.

As well, analysis of the data reveals that practitioners express praxis in terms that are generally not found in the academic knowledge work discourses and that represent understandings of power inherent in these discourses. Practitioners use both the current dominant managerial and alternative conceptions about knowledge work in their discussions of organisational practices. They do so within the notions of globalisation and a world order, which they interconnect with more humanistic discursive objects such as trust, authenticity, personal relationships and openness.

The chapter shows that while the wider discourses that link knowledge work to disciplines such as economics and technology are invoked by practitioners, legitimacy of these discourses is intersected by more human-centric discourses of trust, personal relationships, intuition and the like, which tend to diminish the dominance of prescriptive managerial discursive objects, such as measurability, standardisation and systemisation. Practitioners also bring alternative discourses into play to explore notions of identity and power relations. Alternative discourses are evident in practitioner discussions of trust, honesty, accountability, reciprocity, personal relationships and the human side of knowledge work and its management. Use of alternative discourses is an attempt to wrest control of knowledge away from organisations, management and technology and back into

the hands of the knowledge creators. Both are relevant, since practitioners reframe the dominant discursive objects within new contextual perspectives of familiarity and practice.

As the concluding section, <u>Chapter 8</u> provides coalescence of each of the streams of research, along with contributions to theory and method. It begins by articulating the overarching narrative of the thesis as a story about legitimacy. In so doing, it summarises the thesis' response to the first research question concerning how knowledge practitioners describe how they enact the discourse of knowledge work through praxis.

The chapter recontextualises knowledge work discourses with contemporary and historical circumstances. It specifically answers the second research question that yes, individuals have always worked with knowledge, even though it may be conceived differently. The chapter revisits the significance of genealogy as a mode of discourse analysis to provide a deep and thorough analysis of the data streams used in the thesis. In developing localised histories in line with a genealogical method, the dissertation elucidates the contemporary development of discourses of knowledge work; it provides a detailed examination of the conditions of emergence of the discourses in response to particular historical conditions of the Twentieth Century; and then juxtaposes the features of knowledge work, as necessary to the construct of a knowledge society, to a period five hundred years earlier to show that the Renaissance was also a knowledge society.

Finally, the chapter develops the practical implications from the research for organisations and management and makes some recommendations for how management can create a more beneficial environment for knowledge workers, and in so doing create a more successful organisation. It suggests a more consultative approach to the relationship between knowledge practitioners and the knowledge they create that may yield knowledge that is more insightful, deeper and of greater organisational benefit.

One further task remains; to explain the title of the thesis.

1.7   NAMING THE THESIS

The thesis title *Discourse, dogma, and domination: Knowledge work as art and politics* begs an explanation. The main thrust of the dissertation comes before the colon in the title, with the topic and its modifying factors coming after. Essentially, the thesis concerns the construction of discourses of knowledge work as dogma for the purposes of domination. In the case of the current work, it is a particular type of discourse analysis, that of genealogy, which provides a way to study the language and texts of knowledge work in order to understand its reality (Foucault, 1972; Clegg, 1975; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Genealogy is a view that gives priority to the study of how language constructs and informs its own reality and is conceptualised and understood in its relation to other texts and contexts, rather than being validated against some external truth (Foucault, 1972). Discourse is not just a relationship between reality and language (linguistics or semiotics), it performs a different task: discourse reveals practices (Foucault, 1972: 54). In the thesis, analysis of the discourses of knowledge work reveals practices by management as it attempts to control knowledge workers and knowledge work, while also revealing how practitioners respond to such imposition through articulating their discourses of praxis.

Key to the title is the discovery and recovery of discourses that are used by management to dominate conceptions of knowledge work, to the exclusion of other possible meaning options. Management discourse is presented as dogmatic truth, so much so, that in analysing the perceptions of those who perform knowledge work, it is found that through such management prescriptions, there is a misalignment of the discourses between management and knowledge workers. Thus, in order to play in the field designated by management, knowledge practitioners need to be both artful and political. In this case, art has duality of meaning, in that it is a creative process and product while also being artifice, that is, a ploy to gain or maintain control over knowledge. Politics is used in the thesis in the sense of political games people play. Here, politics are not necessarily

about the *polity* in the Greek sense of citizenry and government but social relations involving authority (suggested by Lukes, 1974, 1975; Clegg, 1989; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000 and many others) about one-upmanship, manipulation, self-serving rhetoric, in other words, how power relationships are created discursively.

Although, there might be a question about whether knowledge practitioners should actually play in a field exclusively designated by management, rather than seeking other options and going elsewhere, this, too, is addressed in the thesis through the art and politics of both management and knowledge workers.

1.8   CONCLUSION

The chapter has explained the research aims and purpose of the thesis, justifying the importance of knowledge work as an object for study. The structure of the thesis and interrelationship of chapters was explained before each chapter was briefly outlined. The focus of the thesis is expressed as understanding how those who are constituted by a specific discourse, as knowledge workers, relate the discourse to praxis. The chapter clearly articulated the gap between what is expressed by academics and reflected in management disciplinary practices as what should be happening, and what actually occurs in praxis according to those who perform it. The dislocation between what is constructed as discourse and what is experienced as reality is clarified.

Central to the thesis is a deep analysis of the literatures that explicate the discourses of knowledge work as natural and normal, rather than as constructions that reflect interests and historical contexts as power effects. Genealogy is discussed as the method of discourse analysis that best illuminates the histories and developments of knowledge work discourses as they transform and align with other important discourses, such as economics, law and technology as well as identity, power relations and processes of creativity.

Pivotal to success and the sustainability of many contemporary organisations are the performance of knowledge work and the abilities of organisations to capture and use such knowledge. Developments and transformations of discourses of knowledge work to admit new statements relating to more socially-oriented practices illustrate that traditional command and control relationships between management and knowledge workers are not working as hoped for or expected. They show that management needs to implement different strategies that are more conducive to how knowledge practitioners understand praxis.

CHAPTER 2

KNOWLEDGE WORK DISCOURSE: DOMINANT PATTERNS & NETWORKS

The present chapter explicates various conceptions about what knowledge work has come to mean in a contemporary context, its significance for management and organisation studies from both organisational/management and practitioner perspectives, and its uniqueness or otherwise as a topic for research.

The concept of knowledge work is ambiguous (Knights *et al*, 1993; Scarbrough, 1999; Robertson and Swan, 2003) and highly contested (Blacker, 1995). It is inconsistently conceptualised in the literature and scholars frequently omit any definition or clarification of what knowledge work is, perhaps assuming that their readers will have an inherent and automatic understanding of it (Blackler, 1995; Collins, 1997). However, the assumption that there is a clear and abiding descriptor of knowledge work supports an erroneous perception that there is consensus in interpretation and that its meanings are fixed and uncontested.

In order to clarify assumptions and explain misconceptions, the chapter presents a detailed analysis of statements about and definitions of knowledge work as an object of discourse; how they have attained significance, and the power effects that their influence exerts. Management and individuals in authority express specific representations of knowledge work from different positions of interest in particular aspects and forms of its practices.

As a precursor to how legitimacy and authority are constituted (elaborated in Chapter 3), the present chapter investigates dominant patterns that have enabled knowledge work to become so significant. I shall do this by explicating the ways in which discourses of knowledge work have helped to shape not only itself but also other significant fields of knowledge. In turn, knowledge work has also been shaped by other important discourses as an osmotic effect between and among

discourses relating to management and organisational studies. In effect, the chapter will examine networks of discourses that emerge from, interconnect with, influence, and are influenced by, or subsume knowledge work discourses.

The framework of analysis used in this and subsequent chapters is a Foucauldian genealogy, which provides a means with which to elucidate how discourses emerge, develop, become embedded and institutionalised, and illuminates the power relationships implicit in these processes. Selection of genealogy as the methodology is significant and Chapter 3 is devoted to a detailed analysis and critique of genealogy, in combination with its antecedent archaeology, as an appropriate methodology for use in the thesis. In his work on archaeology and subsequently genealogy, Foucault sets out guidelines through which we can analyse how a discourse such as knowledge work may be understood.

Foucault posited that what influences discourse and its representations are the relationships between and among discursive practices (what is said) and what he describes as non-discursive practices (what is done) (Lotringer, 1989). Moreover, as non-discursive practices vary within local contexts and across contexts, so, too, do the types of discourses that emerge and develop. Over time, discourses will be transformed as they are influenced by, and in turn, influence non-discursive conditions (Cohen and Saller, 1994). If these statements are opened up, their social arrangements can be discerned (Kendall and Wickam, 1999: 25).

A Foucauldian genealogy presents a way of understanding how a discourse, such as knowledge work, emerged and developed at a particular historical juncture, how particular interpretations have been supported and by whom, how certain meanings have gained dominance over other meanings, and how these understandings have been disseminated. By using genealogy as a framework of analysis *a priori* to its explanation and critique in the next chapter, I hope to familiarise my reader with its workings by peeling away the layers of meaning associated with the discourses of knowledge work. I wish to make visible for my reader the many twists and turns that a discourse of knowledge work can take as it is presented and re-presented as normal and natural, when it is nothing of the sort.

2.1   OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

The dominance of certain perceptions about knowledge work has been so
pervasive that its meanings are taken for granted and have been effective in
closing off other possible interpretations. Dominant managerial discourses speak
of unproblematic knowledge sharing by individuals (see, Drucker, 1993; Nonaka,
1994; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Davenport *et al*, 1998; Wiig, 1999a; Smith,
2001; Swart and Kinnie, 2003), such that knowledge sharing is seen as natural and
normal. At the same time, there are opposing views that suggest knowledge
sharing is contested and conflicted and traversed by discourses of power (Deetz
1994b; Clegg and Palmer, 1996; Garrick and Clegg, 2000). Therefore, the first
objective of the chapter is to review the knowledge work literature to tease out
various interpretations and to understand how certain of these interpretations have
attained dominance, while others have receded in significance.

A second objective of the chapter is to explore the influence of knowledge work
on other discourses and how a knowledge work discourse has been disseminated
across a broad spectrum of organisation and management literatures. In turn,
these other discourses have been significant for the way in which a discourse of
knowledge work is presented and re-presented. For example, discourses that have
taken up the concept of knowledge work and made statements about it include
economic conceptions of knowledge as an organisation asset (Constant *et al*,
1994; Teece, 1998; Boisot, 1998; Morris, 2001) associated with the globalisation
of knowledge-based economies and firms (Davenport *et al*, 1998; Foray and
Hargreaves, 2002; Foray and Lundvall, 1996). Alternative views see the influence
of economic discourses as a power effect that separates knowledge from the
knower (Deetz, 1994b; Clegg and Palmer, 1996; Scarbrough, 1999; Garrick and
Clegg, 2000) and mark the identity of knowledge workers (Deetz, 1994a; Carr,
1998; Alvesson, 2000; 2001). In analysing networks of interconnecting
discourses, the chapter explores how other discourses have transmuted meanings
about knowledge work and, in turn, have also been influenced by them.

A third objective of the chapter is to investigate how new discourses have
emerged from knowledge work through its alignment with other discourses. For

example, discourses of organisational learning evolved as a response to facilitating knowledge transfer unproblematically from an individual to an organisation (Argyris and Schön, 1978; Levitt and March, 1988; Huber, 1991; Bohm, 1998; Yanow, 2000). Alternative interpretations deal with problems of 'unsticking' tacit knowledge from individuals (Szulanski, 1996) through extraction processes involving disciplinary routines of knowledge management (Scarbrough, 1999; Wilson, 2002; Fuller, 2002; Boje, 2006).

The following section begins to investigate contemporary meanings of knowledge work with the purpose being to unravel and explicate the multiple perspectives that knowledge work presents and re-presents as it influences and is influenced by other significant discourses.

2.2 CONTEMPORARY MEANINGS OF KNOWLEDGE WORK

In this section, I set out statements about knowledge work as an object of discourse that are widely accepted in the literature and have become dominant. As these definitional statements are laid out, it is easy to see how seductive and persuasive they are in their ordinary form, and are accepted as normal and natural.

The first part of the section describes various statements that have come to dominate discourses of knowledge work. It is followed by a critical analysis of themes that emerge from the dominant discourses and begins the task of exploring the web of other discourses that influence current conceptions of knowledge work. Then, the literature on alternative conceptions is examined and, by articulating the themes arising through these discourses, the determination of dominance and alternative positioning of discursive statements begin to emerge.

2.2.1 The dominant discourse

When economist and management scholar Peter Drucker coined the specific expression 'knowledge work' in 1959, he wrote specifically about the 'work of

knowledge' as the application of knowledge rather than knowledge in and of itself. By aiming at effective application, that is, by making knowledge productive, knowledge work uncovers a need for new knowledge (Drucker 1959: 25).

Drucker observed that "we are developing rigorous method for creative perception" (Drucker 1959: 29) rather than relying on the "'Eureka' of sudden insight by the genius" (Drucker 1959: 31). In other words, he suggested that we develop and standardise ways of creating knowledge that is productive; ways that do not 'waste time' exploring knowledge that may not be useful. The conception of developing rigorous methodologies for enquiry would enable "systematic organization of our ignorance" (Drucker 1959: 31) and would assist us in identifying in a systematic mode what it is that we don't know about a particular topic, that is, to recognise and accommodate the gaps in knowledge. Drucker proposed that organised knowledge would occur as a systematic and rigorous application of the formal learning of theory and analysis (Drucker 1959: 142; 1969: 268).

Drucker (1959) coined the basic concepts of contemporary knowledge work that have remained largely intact for almost fifty years. The broad, rather than narrow, categorisation has enabled reproduction of a knowledge work discourse to be channelled effectively and to remain relatively unchanged. Tenets of a knowledge work discourse are inclusive rather than exclusive and enable more finely-grained definitions to emerge. Peter Drucker's legitimacy as an authority on knowledge work is not only affirmed but has also helped to establish a discourse around knowledge work that has become a field of knowledge for authorities in various institutional fields, such as academia, business, economics and management.

Drucker (1959: 75) discussed three important concepts that delimited the discourse and formed discursive boundaries for knowledge work, which remain central to contemporary dominant discourse. The first of Drucker's concepts concerns defining knowledge work as a productive application, that is, the work of knowledge, rather than gaining wisdom for esoteric purposes. The concept involves work by specialists who apply their knowledge as professionals and take responsibility for their own performance and contribution (Drucker 1959: 75).

The second of Drucker's concepts identifies knowledge work as an organisational activity, whereby knowledge workers are organised functionally to produce knowledge, either as an end product or as a contribution to a product. Drucker addresses the point of functional organising by stating that, although a professional specialist or knowledge worker works in a field of knowledge that sets its goals in its own terms, a specialist needs a professional manager in an organisational context to weld professional specialists from different fields of knowledge into an effectively-performing unit (Drucker 1959: 76). According to Drucker, in a group, professional specialists and their work outcomes need to be managed and controlled to meet organisational objectives, whereas on her own, a professional is quite capable of adhering to requirements of an institutional field, clients (who may be organisations) and managing herself.

Drucker's third knowledge work concept defines knowledge acquisition as a capital investment through formalised educational programs rather than the traditional and more time consuming on-the-job observation and apprenticeship training. Drucker, and his successors, such as Reich (1991) and Despres and Hiltrop (1995), conceptualise that expanded educational opportunities would create a large pool of formally-educated and knowledgeable individuals to become a new class of worker – a knowledge worker. Drucker (1959) identifies specific programs of learning through designated educational institutions, particularly universities, as key sources of knowledge acquisition and accreditation. He hypothesised that without a formal degree certifying acquisition of approved knowledge that could be useful to organisations there would be limited access to middle-class income (Drucker 1993: 42). He argued that such knowledge could only be obtained systematically and through accredited facilities.

Notions of a capital investment involved in acquiring knowledge imply that a return on investment is necessary. Knowledge workers need to apply their knowledge and put it to work. Thus, Drucker establishes a discursive boundary, one implying that knowledge gained must be able to be applied productively in a broader economic sense to achieve a return (Drucker 1959: 119-120), rather than be used for merely esoteric gain.

With this powerful foundation, a knowledge work discourse is established which engages with organisational and managerial concerns for valuing, capturing and measuring knowledge work processes and outcomes in favour of an organisation. Contemporary management focuses much attention on how knowledge is deployed in a workplace, particularly by those who "acquire, process and apply such knowledge" (Scarbrough, 1999: 5).

Other scholars of management and organisation studies have built on Drucker's foundational discourse and variously define knowledge work as a "knowledge producing occupation … a movement of manual to mental, and from less to more highly trained labor" (Wolff, 2005: 37, citing Machlup, 1980 [1962]). Such work involves processes of knowledge creation and dissemination (Nonaka, 1994) within an organisational context (Mintzberg, 1983; Prusak, 1997; Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Carter and Scarbrough, 2001; Donaldson, 2001; Patriotta, 2003). It is work associated with problem identification, solving and brokering of business solutions, also known as 'symbolic analysis', since it manipulates intangible ideas, symbols and images (Reich, 1991: 49). Despres and Hiltrop (1995) build on Reich's view but raise an issue important to the discourse, that is, despite poor organisational identity and skills obsolescence, organisations need knowledge workers,

> "Knowledge workers manipulate and orchestrate symbols and concepts, identify more strongly with their peers and professions than their organizations, have more rapid skill obsolescence and are more critical to the long-term success of the organization" (Despres and Hiltrop, 1995: 13).

An interdependent relationship exists between knowledge workers and an organisation such that knowledge workers not only manipulate and orchestrate symbols and concepts but they also create new knowledge. As well, knowledge workers recombine existing knowledge in different ways.

The cognitive skills by which these activities can be done are tacit. When Polanyi (1962a) said "we can know things we cannot tell", he is describing knowledge as intangible and its tacitness as 'hidden' in the heads of knowledge workers, "hidden even from the consciousness of the knower" (Wilson, 2002). Much of the

knowledge work literature concentrates on strategies to make tacit knowledge explicit, to make it available as a shared resource and to make it useful to others. In order for knowledge to be useful, it must be articulated. But the dominant discourse of knowledge work goes further than that; knowledge also needs to be recorded and stored so that others, who may not be present at the time of articulation, can also access it (see, Bell, 1973; Davenport *et al*, 1998; Garrick and Clegg, 2000; Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Gray, 2001).

The literature suggests there are various ways that knowledge can be articulated, recorded and stored: through participation in organisational teams established by management to resolve specific problems of organisation (Nonaka, 1994; Brooks, 1994; Cohen *et al*, 1999; Zeller, 2002; Tam *et al*, 2002); intra- or inter-institutional communities of practice which support 'situated learning' experiences through peer group interactions (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Brown and Duguid, 1991; Davenport and Hall, 2002); and documenting, codifying, and capturing knowledge in computerised databases and knowledge management systems so that it can be stored, manipulated and made available to others (Nonaka, 1994; Davenport *et al*, 1998; Bhatt, 2001; Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Robertson and Swan, 2003). As Drucker might have said, they are processes that enable systematic organisation of ignorance as well as knowledge.

Management encourages knowledge sharing and legitimises these activities by providing environments where such social-organisation interactions can occur. They can be seen in many modern organisations that design the work environment as a 'natural' setting for socialised human interaction (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Horibe, 1999; Smith, 2001). These range from communities of practice (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Davenport and Hall, 2002) to worker-centred environments, whose purpose is to encourage the open sharing and use of many forms of knowledge (Davenport *et al*, 1998; Smith, 2001).

Knowledge work is portrayed as politically, economically and socially desirable; doing it is a status to which individuals aspire (Drucker, 1959; 1969; Reich, 1991). To perform knowledge work, individuals need higher levels of education than traditional industrial workers (Drucker, 1969; Bell, 1973; Small and Dickie, 2000;

Sveiby and Simons, 2002). Knowledge work represents a new form of class structure – a business class – that is based on education but is centred on the economic value of knowledge (Reich, 1991). Reich observed that the income of knowledge workers tends to be higher than for other worker groups, so that they can participate in all consumption benefits that may accrue from it. Many management scholars support an optimistic view of knowledge workers, suggesting that those who undertake formal education in order to acquire and subsequently apply theoretical and analytical knowledge should be treated with greater respect, given greater opportunities and be more highly valued by society (Drucker, 1994: 65; Brint, 1984). Pursuit of higher education and working with knowledge are seen as ways to create social harmony and individual dignity for workers, as Drucker proposed (1949: 164; see also, Brooks, 1994; Mohrman *et al*, 1995).

Not only is the work produced by knowledge workers considered to be a valuable resource organisationally; it is also portable, such that knowledge workers no longer need be tied to a single organisation. Their careers become 'boundaryless' (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996) and embody a 'total career' concept for which the individual herself is responsible (Schein, 1978; Hall, 1996). As the antithesis of a traditional career of professional advancement within a small number of firms, a boundaryless career is "a sequence of job opportunities that go beyond the boundaries of a single employment setting" (Defillippi and Arthur, 2001: 116). Organisations pay extraordinary amounts of money and benefits to lure and keep the best knowledge workers.

In order to achieve a boundaryless career, it is vital that a knowledge worker maintains her professional and personal skills at the highest levels (Defillippi and Arthur, 2001). Thus, a knowledge worker embarks on 'continuous learning' so that skills and experiences can be developed and applied in new ways (Drucker, 1993; Tannenbaum, 1997; London and Smither, 1999). Knowledge workers gain the freedom to manage their own individual careers, to develop them through programs of continuous learning and, thereby, can achieve high salaries and benefits to be 'sold' to the highest bidder.

These dominant representations of knowledge work are disseminated broadly as natural and normal, and contribute to enlightenment notions of rationality and progress. Such representations are portrayed as the genesis of a new golden age, a 'knowledge society' (Drucker, 1959; 1969; 1993; 1999; Bell, 1973; 1976; 1999; Despres and Hiltrop, 1995; Rowley, 1999; Miles *et al*, 1997; Hargreaves, 2003), which emerges from its gloomier and less-progressive antecedents of 'industrial society' and the even earlier hard and unpredictable 'agrarian society' (Bell, 1973; 1999). It is a discourse that emphasises only positive statements about social advancement of knowledge workers, such as, their higher education, salary differentials, individual respect and dignity creating social harmony in a community-like workplace.

Knowledge work itself is described as valuable and economically beneficial for organisations, particularly on a world stage (Dunning, 2000; Carnoy and Castells, 2001), as well as encouraging use of the latest technologies so that others can gain access to this new resource. As an organisational resource, knowledge work is highly valued as a means of competitive advantage and as such, is considered to be an organisational asset (Penrose, 1959; Nelson and Winter, 1982; Teece, 1981; 1998; Boisot, 1998: Neef *et al*, 1998) and thus, protected in law. Who would not want to participate in such an enriching environment? Who would not want to garner respect and high remuneration for creative work? Who would not want to own their career?

To this point, care has been taken to present the dominant discourse of knowledge work uncritically, since that tends to be the way it is viewed by management. Knowledge work is an object of discourse bound up with many other important discourses that speak to the very structure of western capitalist societies. Foundations of most societies have evolved very powerful and protective discourses that are intertwined with human rights, notions of civilisation and self-evident truths. Control of knowledge discourses in both form and expression are institutionalised within governmental and organisational discourses, such that they are generally unquestioned and accepted, and are seen as natural and normal.

An example is the use of confidentiality agreements is a means of restricting dissemination of knowledge beyond organisationally-approved recipients. While such agreements may be legally contested in some parts of the world, their purpose is to inhibit freedom of association between and among individuals because of a concern about knowledge being shared with organisationally non-approved others. While the rationale supporting such prohibition is meaningful in a market competition sense, such action also serves to protect the intact presentation of knowledge discourses. Institutional control of expression and presentation of knowledge are discussed in the present chapter and are also examined in Chapter 5 as being institutional control of knowledge by the Church through its heresy laws.

In the following section, we begin to unpack the dominant discourse to reveal how the specificities of its meanings are constructed thematically and to uncover networks of other discourses that are closely aligned with and influential in carving out particular meaning options.

2.2.1.1 Themes emerging from the dominant discourse

There are many significant themes represented in the dominant discourse, and, as we begin to analyse them critically, we see they reflect interests and power effects. In many cases, such interests and power effects are hidden by the positive rhetoric of the dominant discourse, so that without careful consideration of whose interests are being served, these power effects may well remain undisclosed.

Reflecting on the previous section, we note certain discursive themes become evident in the dominant knowledge work discourse. Each of these themes arises through alignment of knowledge work with other discourses, which influence and are in turn influenced by the discourse. There are major thematic threads running through the discourse, such as economics (its measurement and value, ownership), technology (its management and accessibility), law (its protection through disciplinary statutes), and societal (its social status and environment). Within these thematic threads are sub-themes, some of which have developed into

discourses in their own right. Each of the major thematic discourses and their sub-discourses are critically analysed, in turn.

There are many cross-overs between and among these discourses, for example, economic discourses provide a network of statements relating to extrinsic and instrumental value of knowledge work. Knowledge work itself is described as valuable and economically beneficial for organisations, particularly in a global environment, and encourages use of the latest technologies so that others can gain access to this new resource. As an organisational resource, knowledge work is so highly valued that it can provide a competitive advantage and as such, is considered to be an organisational asset.

The management of knowledge work is seen as an obvious adjunct to the work of knowledge. Management of knowledge work is broadly discussed, theorised about and understood as crucial to organisational competitiveness (Teece, 1981; 1998; Hedlund, 1994; Davenport *et al*, 1998; Nonaka *et al*, 2000). In order to be managed, knowledge work needs to be made consistent and standardised so it can be compared and 'benchmarked' (measured) using techniques such as the 'balanced scorecard' (Kaplan and Norton, 1996; 1998 [1993]; 2007).

In the 'balanced scorecard' approach to the measurement of an organisation's strategic objectives, internal and external measures are balanced to "reveal(s) the trade-offs that managers have already made among performance measures and encourages them to achieve their goals in the future without making trade-offs among key success factors" (Norton and Kaplan, 1998 [1993]: 316). The balance serves to 'integrate' knowledge work into organisational objectives by means of computerised knowledge management systems. How such integration can occur is a big unknown factor but it is addressed in somewhat subtle ways through associated discourses on organisational learning and the learning organisation.

Technology is another aspect to the control of knowledge work by management. To offset any challenge to discursive dominance of particular conceptions about knowledge work, knowledge is viewed as merely a small part of the total organisational machinery. Rhetoric relegates the role of knowledge workers to

forming only a part of the full organisational objective. For example, analysts from authoritative technology market analysis firm Gartner Group describe knowledge workers as merely a part of a total organisational knowledge management system as "a conventional network simply moves data among the end-point application systems and people" (Gartner Group, 2003a: 1).

Management of knowledge entails organisational capability and capacity to assess the economic value of knowledge, to be able to place an economic value on knowledge in monetary terms, and to be able to compare its economic value with other things of instrumental value. A methodology to supply an extrinsic value to knowledge is required, one which can also be applied to other things of economic value in order to make comparisons. Standardisation is a crucial part of this methodology and entails creating a base line or benchmark through which incremental change may be recorded.

In this respect, a knowledge work discourse also embodies discourses of productivity, since knowledge management is seen as the solution to a perceived management and organisational problem of how to make existing knowledge productive (Drucker, 1993; 1999; Newell *et al*, 2002). Of course, the question of productivity benchmarking is difficult to assess, as is the differential between making knowledge productive and making it 'more' productive. At the same time, knowledge work becomes more valuable, not only by developing techniques for measuring the productivity of knowledge workers and their knowledge 'outputs' but by applying technological means to extract, organise, contain and control access to the knowledge (Neef *et al*, 1998; Davenport *et al*, 1998; Teece, 1998; Small and Dickie, 2000).

Part of the management of knowledge is the development of a system whereby knowledge can be made useful in an organisational context. It generally requires documenting and storing knowledge, creating a capability to disseminate it to approved others, and developing techniques so that knowledge can be used more broadly within an organisational context. Thus, knowledge work discourse is not only aligned with economics but is influenced by managerial and organisational values, as well as by technology used to record, store and disseminate it.

Since there are important economic and competitive discourses aligned with knowledge work in an organisational context, management must ensure that use of something as valuable as knowledge work is restricted to the organisation and does not become freely available to others. In this sense, knowledge work discourse becomes aligned with discourses of ownership; proprietorial discourses that favour organisations. As knowledge becomes a thing to be owned, the owners of knowledge –organisations – must be protected against its theft and misuse, especially as careers become 'boundaryless' (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). It is done by restricting access to what is now considered to be organisational knowledge, such as deploying technology to secure levels of access by individuals, using contracts restricting use of knowledge by those who create it and those who purchase it as clients, and physical security such as guards, locks, and so on. And if these fail, knowledge is protected by law, with legislation denoting it as intellectual property and industrial property. Those who can be classified as deviant in their access to it may be prosecuted, even including those who have created knowledge in the first place – the knowledge workers. To ensure that deviant access is restricted globally, there are institutions that control dissemination of such knowledge by protecting intellectual property world wide, such as the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) with 184 member states[1].

One might argue that use of knowledge in an organisational context is normal and natural, so its management, economic value and protection are an obvious part of a process that redefines a continuum of statements about knowledge work. A critical analyst would respond by saying that patterns of discursive dominance are such that particular meaning options are included in the discourse while others are purposefully excluded, as the boundaries of discourse are tightened through such redefinition.

Before a deeper and more fine-grained analysis of knowledge work and other discourses associated with it are conducted, it is important to review what statements have been excluded from the dominant discourse. The objective is to

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[1] http://www.wipo.int/members/en/

provide a more balanced analysis of the discourse by showing other possible meanings that may be attributed to knowledge work but which remain at the margins. This is explored in the next section.

2.2.2   Alternative discourses

Foucault (1972) suggests a way of understanding the dynamics of power relationships inherent within a dominant discourse – which can be fruitfully employed in our analysis of discourses of knowledge work – is to conduct a deep examination of empirical data and how the relations between theory and practice are implicated. Understanding such a relationship is fundamental to understanding how knowledge work is practiced. It may be applied in the context of the thesis by acknowledging that a relationship between an individual and the broader social milieu (and even a corporation or governmental institution) is primary to that understanding and should not be considered to be alternative in any way. Indeed, discourses concerned with the dynamics of power relationships, as well as knowledge and identity pertaining to an individual, are fundamental to any form of social organisation and are discussed in detail in the following chapter. However, for the purposes of examining discourses of knowledge work in the thesis, it may be argued that a management and organisational view dominates and thus, discourses that do not fit within these bounds may be considered to be alternative.

Alternative discourses speak of knowledge work differently from those that dominate managerial and organisational views and see knowledge work from the perspective of the knowledge workers, rather than corporations or their management. These other discourses challenge assumptions about knowledge work relating to organisational ownership of knowledge and begin to re-inscribe knowledge in terms of discourses of power (Deetz 1994b; Clegg and Palmer, 1996; Garrick and Clegg, 2000), knowledge worker identity (Deetz, 1994a; Carr, 1998; Alvesson, 2000; 2001), processes of creativity (Blackler, 1995), in terms of sensitivities to the relationships between power and tacit knowledge (Garrick and Clegg, 2000; Marshall and Brady, 2001), in the specifics of knowledge-intensive

forms of organisation (Alvesson, 1993), and a conception of the individual as controller of his or her own knowledge (Fuller, 2002; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2001). Such discourses provide alternative views of knowledge work; views that are considerably less popular within organisation management than the dominant ones, for obvious reasons.

Many of the authorities challenging the dominant discourse also come from management and organisational studies, often filtered through postmodernist and post-structuralist ontologies and epistemologies. They may emphasise knowledge work as an activity that may or may not have economic value. Indeed, rather than the concept of work being "our most general word for doing something, and for something done" (Williams, 1976: 281), economists provide the most commonly-used definition of work as an activity with a market exchange value (Orr, 1991; Wadel, 1979). Such a definition has allowed management to define the content of work as an activity necessary for production, thereby effectively excluding other activities that may be necessary adjuncts (Orr, 1991: 12). Here, the definition of work is an element of the relationship of individual employment that is controlled by only one of the parties – management (Orr, 1991: 12). However, like other discourses, work is socially constructed and subject to contingencies of context and time (Orr, 1998: 439).

Alternative knowledge work discourses also highlight asymmetrical organisational power relations, such as those represented by organisational learning, through which employees must continually revise and renew their knowledge or else face redundancy (Garrick and Clegg, 2000: 279). For example, some scholars focus on management aspects of knowledge work and decry knowledge management as management of work practices in line with Taylor's (1919 [1911]) 'scientific management' principles (Littler, 1985; Wilson, 2002) or merely as another management fad (Ponzi and Koenig, 2002), or argue that knowledge and management are contradictory concepts since tacit knowledge cannot be managed (Scarbrough, 1999; Schultze and Stabell, 2004; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2001; Fuller, 2002).

Some alternative perspectives relate to how knowledge is enacted in organisations. One such sub-discourse questions whether the fixing of knowledge is an asset or a process (Blackler, 1995; Empson, 2001). Scholars, who view knowledge as an asset, argue that knowledge is commoditised and functions through internal markets (Szulanski, 1996; Teece, 1998). In such cases, knowledge as an asset is owned by the organisation that sponsors it rather than by the individual who creates it. As an organisational asset, it may be used as management sees fit, shared by other organisational members to produce new or differentiated knowledge, ultimately for the commercial benefit of the organisation. Hence, the discourses of knowledge-intensive forms of organisation (Mintzberg, 1983; Alvesson; 1993; Collins, 1997; Garrick and Clegg, 2000; Morris, 2001; Robertson and Swan, 2003) suggest that "knowledge intensity" is the main product. See section 2.4.3.1 for a more detailed analysis on the processes of commoditising knowledge as an organisational product. Alternatively, if it is a process, knowledge is interpreted as a communicative process that is constructed and maintained through social interactions (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Latour, 1987; Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Tsoukas, 1996). For example, Brown and Duguid (1991, 1998) discuss the means of instilling communicative processes within organisational contexts through communities of practice, with organisational control (Hildreth and Kimble, 2004) of the "situated learning" space (Lave and Wenger, 1991). (See section 2.7 for an indepth discussion of communities of practice).

As well, Tsoukas (1996) explores an aspect of the social processes of knowledge, control of which creates tensions between an organisation's management and its individual members. Tsoukas argues that knowledge is "inherently indeterminate and continually emerging" and thus, is not contained by any single entity (Tsoukas, 1996: 11). He nominates three types of individual knowledge, only one of which can be controlled by an organisation, that of role-related knowledge. The other two types: an individual's own experiences and her historical contextual knowledge typically cannot be controlled by an organisation.

Extending the theme of processes of knowledge creation and production, a further sub-discourse focuses on explication of knowledge into systems and routines that manage it, which appears to contradict the concept of the fluidity of knowledge

(Alvesson and Kärreman, 2001; Fuller, 2002; Schultze and Stabell, 2004) or aspects of its unmanageability (Tsoukas, 1996). Moreover, defining processes for systematising knowledge as knowledge management is also contested, a concern recognised by Tsoukas and Vladimirou (2001). It is suggested that knowledge management not only dehumanises knowledge but it may be seen as merely a management fad (Alvesson *et al*, 2002; Wilson, 2002; Ponzi and Koenig, 2002). And Fuller (2002) suggests that knowledge management is more about management and control than knowledge and concerns the disciplinary use of technology and the principles of routinising data and information.

Although such contentions of alternative discourses challenge closure of a dominant discourse of knowledge work and knowledge management, they are sub-discourses nibbling at the edges. Few offer an alternative that could become dominant because all engage with the organisational and economic meaning of knowledge work, which is at the heart of knowledge management. At the same time, they defend the personhood of knowledge workers – acknowledging their identities, creative processes, power relationships and control of their knowledge – from being subsumed within managerial and organisational mechanisms as mere cogs of market economies. However, without any apparent and viable alternative discourse to the dominant contemporary meanings afforded to knowledge work, legitimating authorities have effectively maintained control of its discursive boundaries.

When considered broadly, the knowledge work discourse is fluid and its meanings are also fluid, such that conceptions of a single, fixed, all-encompassing definition need to be jettisoned in favour of a deep analysis of statements describing knowledge work as an object of discourse. What follows is an investigation of the statements about knowledge work and aligned discourses from which these statements have emerged.

2.3   ECONOMIC DISCOURSES

Economic discourses relate to many different statements about knowledge work. Typically, they describe disciplinary measures related to how knowledge work is managed and organised, how it is valued, its modes and techniques of production, and how it is measured. Through association with economic discourses, knowledge work is also linked to organisational themes of globalisation and competition, and the rise of new types of organisations – knowledge-intensive firms (Deetz, 1994a; Alvesson, 1995; 2000; Morris, 2001; Robertson and Swan, 2003; Kärreman and Alvesson, 2004). With economics as the most significant feature of a contemporary discourse of knowledge work, the following section investigates economic discourses that form networks of association with and statements about knowledge work.

2.3.1   Globalisation and constituting 'world order'

Knowledge work crosses international boundaries and is embedded in discourses of globalisation as the basis of knowledge-based economies (Davenport *et al*, 1998; Foray and Hargreaves, 2002; Foray and Lundvall, 1996). The significance of the discourse can be seen in the ways in which knowledge work and knowledge management have entered economic development debates. In first-world developed countries, knowledge management is articulated as an important factor in accelerating the rate of economic change.

Both knowledge work and knowledge management are used to differentiate post-industrial economies from those characterised by traditional manufactured goods or agrarian economies (Bell, 1973; Neef, 1996; 1998; The World Economy Survey, 1996). Further, they are cited as influential in developing discourses concerned with first world social and economic development, often referred to as a 'knowledge economy' (Adler, 2001; Mokyr, 2002; Jaffe and Trajtenberg, 2002), 'knowledge society' (Drucker, 1993; Miles *et al*, 1997; Hargreaves, 2003), 'information economy' (Boisot, 1998; Brown and Duguid, 1998; Frenkel *et* al, 1999; Wolff, 2005)

and other similar terms. The discourse of knowledge work thus enters into a discourse that works to constitute world order.

Once upon a time, as we shall explore further in Chapter 5, in terms of the world defined as Europe, prior to the Reformation, there was a clear sense of world order whose fulcrum was the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Subsequently, other empires have risen and fallen on less 'spiritual' ground (although there is a great deal of materiality to the Church). Today, the world order has as its fulcrum a series of economic institutions, rather than a singular religious authority. Thus, the world order to which knowledge work is an object of significance is an economic one, with knowledge positioned discursively as a key economic resource. Corporate, national and international strategies are established and continually strengthened to control and protect knowledge work, its organisational owners and their competitive advantage (Bell, 1976; Teece, 1981; 1998; Hargadon, 1998). As Prusak (2001) opines, organisations may ask themselves, "What do we know, who knows it, what do we not know that we should know?" but they are also likely to ask, "Who knows what we know, how do they know it, and what effect will their knowing have on us?" Although globalisation of knowledge access facilitates internationalisation of markets and economies, it also brings with it some very specific problems for organisations.

In order to sustain international competitiveness for organisations, a global hegemon of knowledge and its protection on an international scale is supported by such institutions as the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), National Bureau of Asian Research, the World Trade Organization (WTO), European Commission, the World Bank, the Asia Foundation, and UNCTAD (Maskus, 2000). Stiglitz (2002: 5) argues that globalisation is associated with American capitalism and international institutions are led by "international bureaucrats – the faceless symbols of world economic order", who lack transparency and accountability for their actions (Stiglitz, 2002: 3, 225).

Stiglitz argues that leadership of these organisations always comes from first-world developed nations; the executive management of these institutions has limited direct experience with developing nations, and is not representative of the nations the institutions are supposed to serve (2002: 17). Moreover, the executive management

tends to have close links with the finance industry, with movement of executives between and among the global institutions and large international financial instutions occurring frequently (Stiglitz, 2002). As Mills might have argued, the executive management of these global institutions form a power elite; they are powerful because of their positions in such institutions (Mills, 1999: 9).

Stiglitz (2002: 225) also suggests that global institutions, most specifically the International Monetary Fund (IMF), WTO and the World Bank, support corporate interests rather than assisting third-world developing nations prepare for and enter into a globalised economic environment. Stiglitz (2002) harshly criticises these global institutions and their executive administrators for such activities as their insistence on liberalisation of trade and capital markets, and the focus on privatisation of government assets in developing nations, which serves the interests of corporate America and Europe, or in the developing nations almost exclusively the power elite (Stiglitz, 2002: 58, 71).

International institutions, major corporations and first-world governments partner in an unequal power relationship with a nation's citizenry. A discourse of globalisation associated with intellectual property rights assists in tightening the connection between and among knowledge work, globalisation and organisations. It is multi-layered in its disciplinary effects. For example, a knowledge worker may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement upon joining an organisation that is dependent on knowledge production, such as an accounting firm or management consultancy. Although it is arguable whether such agreements can be successfully upheld in law, their purpose is to restrict freedom of expression of knowledge to unapproved others for competitive or other reasons. Thus, knowledge that is known by the knowledge worker may be restricted in its transmission to others.

Such knowledge is restricted by corporations and firms and is upheld by a nation's laws. The knowledge is deemed to be owned by such corporations and firms, rather than those who created or produced it, and is protected in law from non-approved others as intellectual property. Ownership of the knowledge is deemed to have passed to an organisation and be separated from those who know it – the knowledge workers. (This is further discussed in section 2.4.) Nations make laws to protect

what is now considered to be an organisation's intellectual property, even from those who created it, so that any breaches in approved dissemination of knowledge – now intellectual property – may be subjected to prosecution under the law. Through the concept of globalisation, a discursive shift is apparent in the status of knowledge worker/citizen described in terms of approbation by Drucker, Bell, Reich and others, to becoming a potential revealer of corporate secrets/law breaker and deviant. The decisions concerning such breaches of intellectual property laws are made by a power elite who, in Mills (1999) view have the authority to control and manage such decisions, based on the positions they hold in such powerful institutions as corporations, judicial systems, and government.

If we apply Stiglitz's (2002) arguments, that global institutions are run for the benefit of corporations, these global institutions have been instrumental in shaping an institutional world view about the discourses of knowledge, economics and law that have shifted the prescription of knowledge use up a level. The globalisation discourse has helped frame a community of governmental and top management practitioners for whom it is a given that strategies be initiated to develop and maintain power status of organisations through control of knowledge as an economic asset in an international sense (Penrose, 1959; Nelson and Winter, 1982; Teece, 1981; 1998; Boisot, 1998; Neef *et al,* 1998). Power relations are both implicit and explicit in the knowledge work discourse – in its formation, how it has entered the public arena, how the discourse presently stands and is communicated, and discursive practices embedded in organisations. With notions of economics attaching to knowledge, it is no longer free, no longer something that routinely circulates as Machlup (1980 [1962]) suggested. Its general value has been converted into economic value and is subject to the rationalising, disciplinary and performative regimes that things deemed to be of economic value are subject to in international market societies.

Power relations mediate the economic, political, social and cultural discourses concerning knowledge work. Power also influences the discursive formation of knowledge work by way of the historical context from which the concept of knowledge work first emerged as discourse, examined in depth in Chapter 4. Suffice to say here, conditions for the emergence of a knowledge work discourse were in part created by post-World War II government policies and strategies, particularly in the

United States, in terms of promoting an ideology that supported mass production and mass consumption.

One aspect of globalisation is creation of the knowledge worker as a purposive design element to support that ideology, since the new economy required both technically and administratively-skilled workers and sophisticated consumers. A power effect of these changes was the polarisation of society into one group of individuals who could effectively participate in a new knowledge employment arena and hence have a role in the new economy, and another group who was not equipped to do so. Social bifurcation continues to play out in the contemporary context. In some respects, it is a new form of class structure, partly based on education and centred on the economic value of knowledge (Reich, 1991).

Subsequent widening of the income gap between a new business class and the traditional working class is directly related to levels of education and type of work performed. Work associated with problem identification, solving and brokering of business solutions is knowledge work. Reich calls it symbolic analysis, since it manipulates intangible ideas, symbols and images (Reich, 1991: 49). Discursive statements about knowledge work portray it as politically, economically and socially desirable. Traditional blue-collar union-oriented workers are required to either aspire to attain new levels of education, employment, income differentiation and eligibility to participate in a consumer society or be left behind in an increasingly impoverished, disengaged and disenfranchised space. By creating a new business class and providing the educational means to attain it, an unarticulated barrier is created between highly-desirable and less-desirable aspects of citizenry. In this way, formation of a discourse of knowledge work is politicised through its nexus with social, cultural and economic processes.

A second aspect of globalisation is its market orientation. Organisations dehumanise knowledge work and package it as a series of measurable benchmarks, driving worker productivity and engaging in competitive marketing (Drucker, 1993; Teece, 1998; Hargadon, 1998; Davenport *et al*, 1998). Since the 1990s, management of knowledge work and those who perform it have emerged as important control issues for organisations, particularly in a global market context (Neef, 1998). As a result,

knowledge management has become an important consideration in controlling actual creation, production, and access to knowledge within organisations and for organisational customers (Nonaka, 1994; Teece, 1998; Szulanski, 1996). Stated simply – if not simplistically – "knowledge is seen as the engine of the economy" (International Data Corporation, 1999: 6) and "the knowledge society and the knowledge economy have arrived" (Rowley, 1999: 416). These are views that affix discourses of knowledge work and knowledge management to economic discourses.

As stated earlier, productivity is an important object within the discourse of knowledge work and requires new methods of measurement for consideration. This is especially significant for embedding knowledge work within a globalised context. Authorities of legitimation have developed a range of knowledge management implementation models that centralise productivity within the discourse in both the academic world (see, Nonaka, 1994; Raelin, 1997; Bhatt, 1992; Davenport *et al*, 1998) and the world of business and management consultancy[2] (see, International Data Corporation, 1999; Wiig, 1999a, 1999b; Gartner Group, 2003a; Meta Group, 2004). Both academic and business groups present discourses that establish organisational guidelines for measuring, capturing and reporting on knowledge work outcomes. While models may vary, all engage with knowledge discourses on measurement, productivity and management.

Capacity to quantify knowledge outcomes is an important criterion within globalised knowledge, thereby justifying its economic value. Quantification enables productivity of knowledge producers to be measured. Nation-states can be 'benchmarked' and compared, so that corporate strategies can be devised and implemented to improve productivity for competitive edge and corporate profitability that crosse national borders (Davenport *et al*, 1998). Measurement and management of knowledge work within a global context is used to evaluate, standardise and predict desired levels of human productivity, thereby establishing the use of power and control in relationships between individuals and their knowledge in an organisational globalised context.

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[2] The firms mentioned here are among the most influential consultancy firms world wide, each of which counts many thousands of organisations as its clients. They have a significant influence on the business strategies of major national and international organisations.

Standardisation and its resultant benchmarking differentiate organisationally-acceptable productivity levels from those that are unacceptable, establishing boundaries of expectation. Boundaries may be contested and are liable to change, depending on variations in market performance of organisations as well as the way in which boundaries of expectation are controlled by management.

One only needs to look at the chatter occurring in cyberspace to observe individuals' responses to such control. For example, many Internet chatrooms rage against 'outsourcing', including 'offshoring' to rapidly developing third-world centres, and proposals to establish 'ship-to-shore' and 'floating software labs' outside national territorial waters (Schaffhauser, 2005; Arran, 2005) that are made possible under the existing U.S. Cruise-to-Nowhere Act of 1999[3]. In each of these cases, first-world labour laws are not applicable, so that organisational market performance can be enhanced by easily reducing labour costs through market-based payments to employees or contractors caught up in them. While some workers could opt out of such a system; when unemployment is high and economies are less buoyant, this is not necessarily an option. While ship-to-shore and floating labs outside of national territories may be extreme, they reveal the potency of managerial and organisation power relations even for work as desirable as knowledge work.

Through standardisation and benchmarking, knowledge work is subject to the disciplinary regimes of performativity and measurement, control, normalisation and regulation that are part and parcel of regimes of control in contemporary organisations. The next section begins to examine the normalising process of such regimes of control through management of knowledge.

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[3] The Cruises-to-Nowhere Act of 1999 was introduced by U.S. Congress Representative Frank Wolf on January 6, 1999. Under existing U.S. Federal law, offshore gaming on a vessel in international waters is legal unless a state passed a law specifically prohibiting the activity. Following the Casino Ventures case, Wolf introduced H.R. 316 Cruises-to-Nowhere Act. H.R. 316 amends section 5 of the Johnson Act (15 U.S.C. 1175) to delete the requirement that a state "enact" a statute to prohibit cruises-to-nowhere, and to ensure that the Johnson Act does not preempt state law. http://www.house.gov/transportation/cgmt/hearing/07-28-99/07-28-99memo.html, (accessed July 6, 2006).

2.3.2   Management of knowledge

Management of knowledge is one of the most obvious contemporary areas of interest in knowledge work (Drucker, 1959; 1969; 1993; 1994; Clegg and Palmer, 1996; Scarbrough, 1999; Rajan *et al*, 1999; Garrick and Clegg, 2000; Fuller, 2002; Newell *et al*, 2002; Argote *et al*, 2003), so it is here that a deeper analysis of knowledge work discourse begins. It is not the only place where such a beginning could be made, since it is just one node in a discursive network pertaining to knowledge; but it is significant since management of knowledge has become a critical requirement for its organising.

More important for our purposes is that management of knowledge expresses particular and multi-stranded ways of organising knowledge. It includes statements linking to other discourses, such economics, technology, society, law and more. It is not the only discourse emanating from the work of knowledge, nor is it necessarily the most significant in its reach, since other discourses about globalisation and formulations of society are far more pervasive. Nonetheless, focusing on management of knowledge (or knowledge management) enables one to further disentangle the knowledge work discourse. As the section explains, knowledge management maintains relative stability as a discourse in its own right, because statements about it never venture far from the discursive space of economics, technology and organisations.

Stability of the knowledge management discourse is an effect of power in delimiting the boundaries of discourse, while at the same time enabling the dispersal of its core through other discourses. In discourses of managing knowledge, knowledge work concentrates more on the disciplinary effects of knowledge management technologies to routinise, capture and control knowledge, than it does on managing organisational knowledge. Indeed, as Small and Dickie (2000) note, knowledge management is a way in which an institution (organisation or even a country) "obtains, registers, records and retrieves data and information to aid decision-making or responds to those who have a 'need to know'" (Small and Dickie, 2000: 121). Through legitimising its interest in knowledge, management's motives and agendas have

tightened the discursive boundaries defining knowledge work, while concurrently adding new objects from adjacent managerial discourses.

The section continues to unpack the knowledge work discourse with a particular focus on how it has been absorbed into a knowledge management discourse. It looks at the ways in which certain managerial conceptions of knowledge discourses have become fixed so as to dominate alternative conceptions through rhetoric and power negotiations. Also examined is how new discursive objects have been admitted from other organisational and managerial discourses to the knowledge work discourse. Finally, an exploration of the ambiguities of the knowledge work discourse is conducted in order to describe how knowledge work as discourse has collapsed into or been excluded from the emergent knowledge management discourse.

2.3.2.1   Legitimising management interests in knowledge

Dissemination of particular representations of knowledge work discourse flows between academia and the business world in a two-way street (Browning, 2000). Typically, the business world creates the rhetoric and jargon, while academia then researches it and substantiates it as legitimate discourse, or not, which then flows back into the business world with the academic *imprimatur* of legitimacy. As well, it is not unusual to find academics straddling the bounds between academia and business, which gives even stronger credence to their authoritative legitimacy and the organisations they represent.

Legitimation of discourse through organisational and academic discursive transference represent generalising theories or grand narratives of Lyotardian proportions that impose "a general, supervening pattern of meaning, explanation and direction upon the variety of ways men and women think and act" (Browning, 2000: 31). In his discussion of Lyotard (1984), Browning (2000: 2) suggests that postmodernity needs to challenge the role of grand narratives, which use heterogeneity and language games to compose social bonds and legitimate knowledge. It is not the narratives that concern Browning but the grandness of them, seeking to privilege one discourse over another, thereby subsuming other

narratives, events and views into its own orbit to establish a dominant discourse (Browning, 2000: 3). I gladly take up that challenge in the context of knowledge work.

As an example of how a discourse attains legitimacy, the well-known and oft-cited academics Thomas Davenport and David DeLong are also associated with commercial consulting group Accenture Institute for Strategic Change. These consultant-academics and other Accenture consultant-academics (Ives *et al*, 1997) have found space in peer-reviewed academic and business journals[4] to promote particular managerial perspectives that serve their interests. Their views flow back and forth between business and academia, subsuming other narratives within their particular managerial discursive orbit.

Within five years since the publication of their article *Successful knowledge management projects* (Davenport *et al*, 1998), it had been cited in academic works more than 700 times (see, for example (Rowley, 1999; Valli, 2001; Wei *et al*, 2002; Petrides, 2002; Koch *et al*, 2003). The fields of knowledge that have taken up aspects of the article's content represent such spheres as computerised knowledge management systems, the Internet, marketing, libraries, communities of practice, and organisational learning. The extent of dissemination of just this single work, which can be multiplied by thousands of other authoritative works concerning management of knowledge, indicates the power effects of a single discourse emanating from legitimating authorities, in this case consultant-academics, to influence how others conceptualise knowledge management.

When critical analysis of this article is conducted, there are significant limitations to knowledge management projects that could be considered to be 'successful' in the terms of the authors. Such analysis reveals that in arriving at their eight key factors that can help a company create, share and use knowledge effectively via computer-based knowledge management systems, the authors explain that they

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[4] *Sloan Management Review*, (Winter 1998) published December 1997; *Journal of Knowledge Management*, June 1998. Both are peer-review journals with *Sloan Management Review* claiming 70% of its readership is business executives (at February, 2006), while *Journal of Knowledge Management* suggests value for executive readers at the level of CEO, CIO, and so on, as well as business professionals.

primarily focus on explicit forms of knowledge documentation for relatively low level knowledge management projects.

Methods by which such knowledge could be made explicit are dealt with only in a cursory way. Further, the 'successful' projects do not deal with the complexity of creating knowledge for innovation but mainly deal with processes and procedures that are task oriented, such as answering reseller questions, improving in-the-field access to a central database, avoiding repetition of mistakes, capturing expertise, improving processes and learning, and standardising office procedures. If these are the successful knowledge management projects, then perhaps the unsuccessful ones are far more complex?

Of course, it may be unfair to criticise the authors for not addressing unsuccessful knowledge management projects, since they did not purport to cover all the issues, and indeed, other authors have often addressed such shortcomings (Blumentritt and Johnston, 1999; Jansen *et al*, 2000; Wilson, 2002). Such problems include the dilemma of sharing and competing within processes of knowledge production; limits to the amount of detail about processes; that fundamental behavioural shifts may be necessary in organisations, resulting in changes to the power structure; huge complexities of human factors; measuring the quality and quantity of knowledge, and withholding of knowledge for power reasons. It is also interesting to note that research conducted by Davenport *et al* for this article comprised just 31 projects within 24 organisations (Davenport *et al*, 1998), of which 18 were considered to be successful (p.10) and 15 of the organisations were directly involved with technology through manufacture, sales or consulting (p.56).

Within the same time period, other Accenture consultants were consolidating legitimacy of knowledge management within an historical context. Such legitimacy cites historical foundations for the current conception of knowledge management as the management of knowledge purported to stem from libraries of antiquity some 4,000 years ago (Ives *et al*, 1998: 269-274). In this article, the authors state that,

> … [A]ttempts to organize the records of civilization, government and commerce (were made), so that the high value information contained

therein could be used to guide new transactions and to prevent the loss
of knowledge from generation to generation (Ives *et al*, 1998: 269).

In so doing, the authors embed the contemporary notion of knowledge
management within a rich historical tradition of libraries and lofty notions of
recording civilisation, and passing of knowledge down to future generations.
They then embrace technological and economic discourses in their statements that
"driven by the need to make knowledge capture, storage and distribution more
effective and efficient, new technologies were developed" (Ives *et al*, 1998: 269).

The authors then proceed to ask questions that present dilemmas of fear,
uncertainty and doubt in the minds of their readers which, by no coincidence,
directly tap into particular consultancy service offerings provided by Accenture to
resolve these questions and dilemmas. They use business rhetoric to discuss such
technologies that develop and sustain "global electronic networks" (Ives *et al*,
1998: 270), to understand "cognitive and business impacts" (Ives *et al*, 1998:
271), and the need for technology bandwidths in order to access global knowledge
(Ives *et al*, 1998: 272). I do not want to suggest that the development of libraries
in antiquity, and subsequently, were free of power relations, coercion and fear. In
a situation of limited literacy and technologies of reprography, this was clearly not
the case. I want only to suggest that techniques of power are also used in aligning
contemporary discourses of knowledge management in an historic context to serve
Accenture's consulting interests.

The Accenture authors then refine knowledge management so that it legitimises
limiting access to approved individuals within an organisation, for the purposes of
productivity and performance,

> Knowledge Management, in its most current sense, may generally be
> thought of as the effort to make the knowledge of an organization
> available to those within the organization who need it, where they need
> it, when they need it, and in the form in which they need it in order to
> increase human and organizational performance (Ives *et al*, 1998: 272).

They then add,

> There is little difference in the purpose of modern Knowledge
> Management from that of those racks of clay tablets buried in the ruins
> of ancient Mesopotamian cities. It is not the basic requirements that

> have changed, but the enormous volumes of information, the speed of content changes and the transformation of the workplace (Ives *et al*, 1998: 272).

With this statement, the Accenture consultants seek to transform discourses of management of knowledge from notions of historical collections of artefacts available through libraries of knowledge in both public and private domains into a new discourse of organisational knowledge management. Discursive transformation shifts the use of knowledge from broadly-disseminated scholarly access of libraries (Eisenstein, 1983: 48) into the domain of exclusive organisational use. Knowledge under management becomes available through disseminating technologies, only to those who have been selected by organisational management to receive it, and for the specific purposes of increasing their individual productivity to the benefit of organisational performance and competitiveness. The discursive transformation is purveyed as normal and natural yet it clearly reveals how the knowledge discourse has been politicised in a bid for ownership and power.

The discourse on managing knowledge has been transformed into a new discourse of knowledge management that aligns with discourses of economics/ownership/ productivity/organisational performance, as well as technology/access/speed. Moreover, the Accenture author-consultants attempt to give historical authenticity and a genealogy to their knowledge management discourse by linking it to tradition, to give it the patina and authority of legitimation through a discourse of historicity. Finally, the Accenture consultants make the pitch to sell their services through the statement that,

> Anyone who consults in Knowledge Management needs to be: flexible, sensitive to different points of view, and must look at Knowledge Management as an exploratory journey rather than as a set destination. (Ives *et al*, 1998: 273)

The underlying message here is that Accenture consultants are flexible and sensitive. It is possible that the sales pitch embedded in this peer-reviewed academic journal may be seen as insignificant, although the article had been cited 26 times (at May, 2007). It is through practices such as these that the dominant managerial and organisational discourse is sustained and disseminated. The

following section continues to investigate how discourse is legitimated and serves commercial business interests.

2.3.2.2 Servicing commercial economic interests

Roles played by consultants in developing, legitimising and disseminating the dominant knowledge work discourse relate more to their commercial practices and acceptance by their client base than, as Foucault may suggest, any unity of views from within institutional bodies of knowledge and practice accepted by public opinion, the law and government (Foucault, 1972: 46). Consultant interests intersect with those of their clients; and the interests of both are commercial. The specific focus and *raison d'être* by Accenture and others within industry is commercial success for their organisational clients, so that their statements about discursive objects favour business rhetoric and are aligned with the inclusion-exclusion practices of the dominant organisational and managerial discourses.

Consultants may not necessarily adopt the dominant discourse uncritically but their rhetoric often seems to be aimed at reducing or eliminating any uncertainty or ambiguity in the discourse, thereby attempting to close it off from alternative interpretations. Unlike many in academia who acknowledge the existence of alternative discourses, even while attempting to marginalise these other discourses (Collins, 1997; Cook and Brown, 1999; Bhatt, 2001; Donaldson, 2001; Davenport *et al*, 2002), those who have more commercial interests rarely admit to the possibility that any alternatives could exist. Instead, they further refine the discourses to tighten the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, and their discourses reflect the singularity of their perspective. For example, a principal of a consulting firm redefined 'knowledge' as "information put to productive use", but stated that the real issue was not how to define it but how to "create and leverage new knowledge" (Botkin, 2000: 34). Here, there is no doubt about how knowledge *should* be defined and there is no ambiguity, uncertainty or even question about knowledge having value other than to be linked to organisational usage and productivity. Indeed, it seems that it is unquestionably *the* definition of knowledge rather than merely *a* definition.

Consultants who advocate the dominant knowledge work discourse also embrace other discourses within their conceptions of knowledge work, including economics, through productivity and competitiveness (Accenture, May 2001; Gartner Group, 2003a; 2003b; Meta Group, 2002: file 1195; 2003: file 490; 2004: file 2726). As an example, technology analysis firm Gartner Group (2003a) suggests that not only is it difficult for organisations and management to collect knowledge from organisational members, despite implementation of communities of practice for knowledge sharing and technological systems to capture and make knowledge available to others, but it is necessary to use such knowledge on a broader economic basis in order to gain a return on this investment. To whit, unless firms commercialise the knowledge acquired within a market environment rather than merely to improve internal processes such as helpdesk facilities, the costs associated with developing such systems may not be offset. Thus, the consulting advice provided for clients offers multiple messages, not only to capture and utilise knowledge for internal benefit but to work to commercialise it as well. In this way, interconnecting discourses are jointly or severally given play within the knowledge work discourses.

Ownership of 'intellectual capital' as an economic and an accountable capital resource that is accountable in terms of the organisations in which it is employed is discursively delimited as normal and natural. For example, intellectual capital may be seen as two distinct forms of knowledge: one form is philosophical while the other is practical (Wiig, 1999b). Any questions about the morality of ownership of intellect as organisational capital are seen to be swept away through a process of separating the morally-valued philosophical and the economically-valued practical. While management and organisations focus on the practical, for knowledge workers, there is increasing insight into the role that understanding or meaning-connected knowledge and abstract mental models play in intellectual work, as the next section explains.

2.3.3 Discursive strategies for co-opting knowledge

It is one thing for discourse to establish the economic status of knowledge and the role of organisations in managing it but it is quite another to tap into and incorporate the most elusive aspect of organisational knowledge, that which resides in the heads of knowledge workers. Without this access, discourses that elevate knowledge to the status of major social movements and world order, as in 'the knowledge age' or 'knowledge society' (Drucker, 1969; Bell, 1973; Despres and Hiltrop, 1995) or 'knowledge economy' (Drucker, 1969; Neef, 1998; Dosi, 1998) are somewhat hollow (Collins, 1997). In this section I shall explore how managerial and organisational discourses mandate transition of knowledge from the heads of knowledge workers and facilitate its sharing within an organisation.

Despite the obvious importance of intellectual capacity for how knowledge workers perform knowledge work, if they are unwilling or unable to share their knowing, management has a problem in acquiring such knowledge as an organisational asset. Thus, there is renewed focus on using other disciplines as means to ensure that knowledge is captured. Nothing is left to chance, that is, uncertainty and ambiguity are forsworn. For example, Wiig (1999b: 16) suggests that other disciplines should be co-opted into management of knowledge and 'extraction of intellectual capital' (IC) from knowledge workers, such as

- Business Theory & Economics to create strategies, determine priorities, and evaluate progress
- Cognitive Sciences to understand how best to support knowledge workers' mental functioning required by their work settings
- "Cybrary" Sciences to bring knowledge-related services to everyone
- Ergonomics to create effective and acceptable work environments
- Information Sciences to build supporting infrastructure and special knowledge-related capabilities
- Knowledge Engineering to elicit and codify knowledge
- AI (Artificial Intelligence systems) to automate routine and assist knowledge-intensive work with reasoning and other high-level functions
- Management Sciences to optimise operations and integrate KM efforts with other enterprise efforts
- Social Sciences to provide KM-related motivations, people processes, and cultural environments (Wiig, 1999b: 16).

These are potent secular and practical systems, and although they may make use of human aspects of knowledge through physical (environmental), cognitive (mental) and cultural (social) systems, they have already been separated from any ethically-laden spirit and philosophy of knowledge.

For those in the management business, it is considerably easier to assume the rationality of technology, that is, knowledge management systems, than it is to assume or manage the (ir)rationalities of people. A subtle shift in knowledge discourses has begun to devolve the valued intellectual capacities of an individual to the margins of the discourse, while, at the same time, making technology a more central and important discursive object. The implication of the shift in emphasis from people to technology in knowledge discourse is twofold. First, that the knowledge residing within business enterprises has been 'hard earned'; management recognises that knowledge is not willingly shared by those individuals who create it. Second, that technology provides a means whereby elusive knowledge can be captured and retained by an organisation. However, in order to facilitate the flow of knowledge from the people who know to the technology that captures it as organisational knowledge, management must devise discursive strategies for co-opting knowledge from an individual to an organisation. One way of co-opting knowledge is to downplay the importance of an individual's contribution to organisational knowledge and promote other means as having higher priority.

In the example below, influential technology analysis firm Gartner Group expresses the shift in rhetoric of knowledge discourses from people to technology. We see that knowledge workers as significant to knowledge discourses have begun to spiral outwards to the edges of discourse. They are spoken about as merely one part of an IS (information systems) network; the part that is not intelligent. Instead, application systems, those that manage knowledge are drawn into a position of centrality within the discourse.

> In traditional IS architecture, all intelligence (i.e., all data and logic) is held within the application systems. Applications are smart, but the network isn't. A conventional network simply moves data among the end-point application systems and people (Gartner Group, 2003a: 1).

> There is much to be done: [technology] vendors must implement their next-generation products to incorporate the things they have learned, and user enterprises must apply their hard-earned knowledge on a broader basis (Gartner Group, 2003a: 2).

Technology analysis firms such as Gartner Group and International Data Corporation (IDC) have significant influence on the business strategies of major national and international organisations. When such firms emphasise the importance of technology and knowledge management systems and de-emphasise the role of people as significant within knowledge management discourses, they are listened to by organisational management and their advice is acted upon within organisations. In the above case, analysts from Gartner Group suggest that for an organisation implementing knowledge management, the role of people is significantly less important than technology, to the extent that one should assess success of knowledge management by 'intelligence' of the technology systems deployed rather than the people who use it.

IDC analysts posit that although technological systems to manage knowledge are very important for organisations, the needs of knowledge workers cannot be ignored, since it is the capacity for knowledge workers to manipulate knowledge that is crucial for organisational competitiveness and sustainability.

> Currently, what organizations know determines the degree of their sustainable success. In fact, knowledge has turned out to be a company's greatest competitive advantage, transforming KM into a trend in corporate life. Knowledge and people go hand in hand. In the knowledge age, the key asset of an organization resides in the minds of employees. Therefore, to succeed, a company's culture must encourage and reward knowledge sharing, as well as manage it. Knowledge, however, is not an asset that can be controlled like any other company asset (IDC, 1999: 2)

In the above quote, IDC suggests that internal efficiency is the primary aim of organisations and needs to be sustained by organisational efficiency, knowledge worker productivity, and operational cost savings as beneficial goals of knowledge management programs (IDC, 1999: 5). In giving primacy to technology through its ability to capture, create and organise "intellectual capital in inventive ways for the purpose of business planning and reorganisation, as well

as other high-level, strategic decision-making issues" (IDC, 1999: 9), IDC recommends to its clients that acceptance of the importance of technology within knowledge discourse is valid, normal and actual.

Centralising technology in the knowledge discourse in order to co-opt knowledge has a very particular purpose. The strategy is to attach knowledge firmly to an organisation so that its substance becomes an object that is owned by the organisation as an organisational asset. In effect, knowledge is being transformed from an object of creation by a human being that is inextricably linked to humanity, to becoming a product to be owned by another, thus transmuting it into organisational knowledge.

2.4 ORGANISATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

In this section we shall look at some connecting discourses about how knowledge work has become owned by organisations rather than knowledge workers, a situation often referred to as 'organisational knowledge'. Discourses concerning organisational knowledge contain statements that describe how it is only knowledge that is made explicit that becomes knowledge of value. Although processes of making knowledge explicit, and therefore valuable, are instrumental, the rhetoric of its explication is presented as sharing knowledge for the common good (the common weal). In this case, the weal or wealth is for an organisation and its shareholders.

Management assigns a type of moral virtuousness to notions of sharing knowledge, valorising the processes whereby ownership of knowledge is uncontested by individuals and passes smoothly to the organisation. And as knowledge becomes an organisation asset, management re-presents the acquired asset as an organisational commodity, to do with it as management deems best. To effect the transition, the discourse of knowledge work must limit any possible contestation of ownership by creators of knowledge 'assets' – the knowledge workers.

Organisational authorities attempt to fix particular meanings within a broader knowledge discourse and establish boundaries for inclusion and exclusion. Through tools of rhetoric such as organisational culture and defining socially-acceptable behaviours, organisational authorities create social exclusion for knowledge workers who withhold knowledge from an organisation, or exercise their mobility option before divulging 'organisation knowledge'. At the same time, authorities recognise and acknowledge 'legitimate' behaviours by according a visible process of status – rewards and awards – as well as social inclusiveness and acceptance. A carrot-and-stick process of incentives as well as disciplinary actions is an attempt to create willingness by organisational members to participate in approved, appropriate and legitimated behaviours. Through management, organisation authorities are instrumental and effective in developing varieties of rewards and disciplinary actions, as the next section explains.

2.4.1   Management's role in organisational knowledge

Drucker espoused a view that 'ignorance' needs to be organised systematically for methodical enquiry. He also suggested that those who work in specific fields of knowledge be organised so their combined performances provide a unified and anticipated outcome (Drucker, 1959: 31) – a view that takes us towards a contemporary notion of the knowledge organisation. With a professional manager to organise, the professional specialists (knowledge workers) no longer set goals on their own terms. Knowledge workers must consent to goals and terms established by their managers, since organisational outcomes are established by managers (Drucker, 1959: 76). Potentially, this is an area of contestation, since knowledge workers must march to the drum beat of an organising professional manager, whose role it is to provide direction and ensure adherence to a benchmarked process and outcome.

Through aligned statements about tacit and explicit knowledge (Machlup, 1980 [1962]; Bell, 1973; Brown and Duguid, 1991; Nonaka, 1994; Noneka and Takeuchi, 1995), an organisational knowledge discourse has developed that says knowledge needs to be managed by (and for the benefit of) an organisation. Organisational knowledge discourse masks the power effects of its proprietorship by use of 'neutral'

business language. Such language involves recording, storing and managing through 'benign' use of computerised knowledge management technologies (Dixon, 2000; Small and Dickie, 2000; Alavi and Leidner, 2001) and is supported by 'disciplinary' regimes of organisational learning (Huber, 1991). Such neutrality attempts to filter alternative conceptions about knowledge in its humanist terms.

Through use of rhetoric that seeks to separate knowledge from its human creators, such discourse exhibits knowledge as an object that is managed and, through management, becomes more useful – with 'more' rather than 'less' being the precursor to measurement and setting of standards for productivity. In this broad movement, knowledge gleaned from an individual is processed and converted into organisational knowledge. As Nonanka (1994) observes,

> At a fundamental level, knowledge is created by individuals. An organization cannot create knowledge without individuals. The organization supports creative individuals or provides a context for such individuals to create knowledge. Organizational knowledge creation, therefore, should be understood in terms of a process that "organizationally" amplifies the knowledge created by individuals, and crystallizes it as part of the knowledge network of an organization. (Nonaka, 1994: 17)

Nonaka acknowledges individuals as creators of knowledge but through the 'supporting' environment, including management, technology and imposition of a culture of sharing, such individual knowledge becomes organisational knowledge. It is a power effect that knowledge is only and always owned by an organisation rather than by those individuals who create it.

There is a further step that is necessary before individual knowledge can become useful as organisational knowledge in the terms that Nonaka describes. Although knowledge management is seen as a means of structuring 'unstructured' knowledge in people's heads (tacit knowledge) as well as organising and storing it (Davenport *et al,* 1998), there is an important interim step, that of separating knowledge from the knower. Before the ordering and structuring of knowledge management can be performed, tacit or hidden knowledge needs to be made explicit. The following section explores these processes.

2.4.2 Tacit and explicit knowledge

Statements defining successful knowledge management projects – compared to unsuccessful ones – support an argument about the necessity of knowledge sharing in order for a knowledge project to be successful (Davenport *et al*, 1998). Further, using the adjective 'success' to describe knowledge management projects shows that sharing of knowledge is not a natural process that occurs merely by identifying a need for coaching human subjects, that is, to coax them into sharing. A dilemma of 'sharing' of knowledge connects knowledge work with other discourses and discursive objects in organisational studies, embodying themes of communities of practice, professional learning, and progress, which link to other discourses of organisational financial objectives, intellectual capital as industrial property and ownership; in other words, organisational power effects.

Knowledge management discourse emerges from discussions of routinising and standardising organisational operating procedures, so that the product of these processes can be stored and retrieved (Nelson and Winter, 1982). Yet a discourse of knowledge management in its relationship to knowledge work also creates significant power effects concerning the relationship between an individual and her knowledge. Knowledge management's emerging discourse sustained Bell's (1973) early conception concerning technology's crucial role in the knowledge work discourse. Bell suggests that such an exchange would occur within a non-conflicting environment, in which technology would become a strategic resource and a lever for social change (Bell, 1999: xviii) by eradicating the industrial scarcity of resources. Bell envisaged that all parties would recognise the utilitarian benefit for all. He did not forecast the possibility that unwilling knowledge workers might contest such a process, which may be regarded as disciplinary and controlling by management.

Bell (1999) perceived the transfer of knowledge from an individual to an organisation as being normal and natural. He saw that a management-knowledge-technology nexus would increasingly rationalise knowledge (in a Weberian sense) as exclusively an organisational activity in which knowledge is made explicit through codification. The theme of codification, framed by a management-knowledge-technology discourse, would enable expressed (explicit) knowledge to be captured and made

available in a form that can be inscribed in and described by organisational technology systems, to be stored and made accessible to appropriate others. Bell did not acknowledge the power effects implicit in such a management-knowledge-technology nexus.

Power effects implicit in the arrangement of management of knowledge through technology is that individuals who are deemed inappropriate – at least by organisational management – to be recipients of the acquired base of what has become 'organisational knowledge' are denied access. In fact, it is possible that the exclusion may include the originators or codifiers of the knowledge. Moreover, the process of capturing and codifying knowledge requires selection of what knowledge should be included or excluded – a process performed by management adhering to criteria that is either arbitrary or contingent, or possibly both. These are power effects and deny any claims of neutrality for a management-knowledge-technology discourse in either format or accessibility.

The connection is strong. Indeed, I argue that the knowledge work discourse is now subsumed by a management-knowledge-technology discourse that is knowledge management. The connection aims to reveal neutrality and naturalness in folding in the knowledge work discourse to knowledge management, since it is seen as a means of structuring the 'unstructured' knowledge in people's heads (tacit knowledge), organising and storing it (Davenport *et al*, 1998). For example,

> To transfer tacit knowledge from individuals into a repository, organizations use some sort of community-based electronic discussion. In HP's corporate education division, for example a knowledge project was capturing tips, tricks, insights, and experiences into a Lotus Notes database and making them available to some 2,000 trainers and educators scattered throughout the corporation's many sites (Davenport *et al*, 1998).

If we accept Polanyi's[5] argument concerning tacit knowledge that "we can know things we cannot tell" but are unable to articulate this knowing, we can more easily

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[5] Polanyi (1962a: 601-2) described tacit knowledge as knowing something but being unable to express the particulars that constitute it. He argued that we cannot adequately explain tacit knowledge even though we can perform it, because it is a jumble of chaotic fragments in our heads and hidden from cognitive processes. For example, we can perform activities such as swimming or bicycle riding, including ensuring our buoyancy and balance needed to perform these activities. We can even describe particular elements that comprise such activities, such as arm and leg

accept there is need to make it ordered and, therefore, explicable (Ray and Clegg, 2007).

Statements about order link with a discourse of knowledge projects, exercises in making order out of fragments and chaos, and unexplicable knowledge. Thus, the exercise in transference of tacit knowledge from people's heads into an organisational repository to become explicit is a specific 'knowledge project' and one that requires acceptance of such transfer as normal, rather than a power effect. It removes the 'stickiness' (Szulanski, 1996) of knowledge among human beings, to facilitate a smooth non-conflictual transition from individuals to technology and back again. Here, technology is used as a filtration system to ensure knowledge that sticks to other organisational members is rationalised in such a way as to be of organisational value. In this way, the knowledge management discourse reflects the Eighteenth Century Enlightenment project of making scientific order and rational progress out of a chaotic world.

Scarbrough suggests that "the theories underpinning knowledge management tend to neglect any discussion of the specific organizational and managerial mechanisms through which knowledge is appropriated for economic ends" (Scarbrough, 1999: 5). Power effects of a knowledge management discourse subsumed in rhetoric reify knowledge and abstract it from the knowledge worker (Scarbrough, 1999:5). Technological capture and storage aspects of knowledge are only a part of organisational knowledge discourses. An issue for management becomes how to manage organisational knowledge. Since knowledge workers have become so mobile, and more importantly, have begun to recognise their own value to organisations, it is crucial that organisations can capture and then capitalise on the elusive knowledge of knowledge workers, that which is called tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1962a; Mintzberg, 1975). As a result, new discursive strategies have emerged, whereby sharing one's knowledge is considered virtuous.

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movements, but we have difficulty explaining the interrelationship between the individual elements and the holistic activity that is performed.

2.4.3   Knowledge sharing for the common weal

Knowledge work can only become organisational knowledge if those who create it can be induced to share it. One of the more effective ways of creating such an inducement is to normalise sharing of knowledge through social and cultural considerations, which embody notions of community and the common good (common weal) (Adelstein, 2007). To this end, knowledge work discourses reflect and critique purposive designing and building of particular corporate cultures (Smircich, 1983; Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Denison and Mishra, 1995; Kunda, 1992; 1995; Kärreman and Alvesson, 2004) as a management device to 'unproblematically encourage' human beings who create knowledge to share and consolidate their knowledge (Anand *et al*, 1998).

Cultural reorientation through discursive conceptions of social identity (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Deetz, 1994a; Alvesson, 1994, 2000, 2001; duGay, 1997; Brocklehurst, 2001; Brown, 2001) is aligned with discourses of cultural approbation of teamwork (Brooks, 1994; Mohrman *et al*, 1995; Cramton, 2001; Dameron, 2002; Zeller, 2002; Doorewaard and Brouns, 2003; Akgün *et al*, 2006) and organisational learning (Cangelosi and Dill, 1965; Argyris and Schön, 1978; Brown and Duguid, 1991; Huber, 1991; Easterby-Smith, 1997; Easterby-Smith *et al*, 2000; Blackler and McDonald, 2000; Falconer, 2006) to provide interconnecting discursive nodes to knowledge work (Drucker, 1993; Blackler, 1995; Teece, 1998; Cohen *et al*, 1999; Garrick and Clegg, 2000; Robertson and Swan, 2003; Adelstein, 2007). Through these discourses, explication of knowledge work is attended to in very specific ways that not only expedite the process of sharing but go a long way to formularising and standardising both quality and quantity of knowledge. However, managerial authorities of legitimation invoke such discourses as a means of ensuring that tacit knowledge can be made explicit in the most organisationally-appropriate way – both quantitatively and qualitatively. At the same time, discourses of social and cultural inclusion and exclusion normalise the artificiality of organisational culture to reduce possible contestation and conflict.

Imbuing a particular organisational culture among organisational members is a necessity for a successful organisation. Since there is no objective measure of success (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Lang, 2001), the ambiguity of what is meant by it, what its criteria might be and for whom, is arbitrary and contingent. Statements concerning sociological and cultural objects are linked with organisational and management discourses to predict the future for an organisation that successfully implements knowledge management, and by implication makes tacit knowledge explicit. For example,

> Successful KM [knowledge management] requires a change in culture – in an appropriate organizational culture, employees are freed up to be more creative, show greater responsibility and contribute to the intellectual capital of the company. (IDC, 1999: 10)

Note the forceful rhetoric used by this technology market research and consulting firm as it unambiguously states that success, in terms of freedom, creativity, responsibility, contribution, and intellectual capital, is dependent on a change in culture. The only uncertainty in this statement is the judgment about appropriateness of organisational culture – to whom is it appropriate, who determines it, who benefits, and how is it measured?

Studies that show failure (non-success) to be an important inclusion-exclusion boundary to the discourse of successful knowledge management have as their purpose the acquisition of knowledge to be used by an organisation (Davenport *et al*, 1998). Using success as a discursive boundary lends validity to the importance of organisational knowledge capture and reuse. Here, discursive normativity is elicited through management and control of knowledge workers and their knowledge. Control is normalised by acculturation and by gaining support of employees in understanding how they can contribute to the organisation more effectively.

> KM projects in Europe seek to find, select and organize the knowledge of an organization and then present it in a way that helps employees comprehend, utilize and contribute to innovation. In addition, the aim is not only to manage the information which flows in the organization, but also to invent new approaches for managing employees in order to keep their knowledge captured in a structured way. Moreover, the adoption of KM programs has created links with the area of human resources, as the tight labor market has affected every business and industry sector. IDC has noticed that organizations with high employee

retention have enhanced adoption of KM programs. Thus, fear of ending up without competitive advantage has led organizations to prioritize on capturing and reusing knowledge (IDC, 1999: 3).

The scenario of 'successful KM' reflects a highly cooperative and positive organisational social environment. At the same time, rhetoric of innovation and contribution to an organisation is clearly articulated in the tightening of control of knowledge to overcome labour market limitations. The IDC author stresses the importance to business of prioritising capture and re-use of knowledge, which, in effect, commoditises it. Such prioritising enhances the value of knowledge work by attempting to make knowledge into a quasi-renewable resource; while also reducing knowledge to a commoditised object.

2.4.3.1 Commoditising knowledge

As an article of trade or commerce (*The Macquarie Encyclopedia*, 1990: 186), knowledge work as a commodity becomes even more useful to business. Commoditising knowledge work necessitates careful management. Huber (1991) points to the use of computer-based 'expert' systems, not only as a means of storing and retrieving 'soft' information, but also to make it useful in developing "computer-based organizational memory" (Huber, 1991: 106). Mintzberg (1975) refers to tacit knowledge as 'soft'– which aligns neatly with use of the term 'software' to describe invisible instructions to a computer that makes it perform certain routines. Such systems can access captured knowledge within databases. Other knowledge workers using computerised 'expert systems' can drill down into knowledge databases in order to mine knowledge and reshape it to be used in different ways and for various purposes. In effect, knowledge databases and the expert systems that access them commoditise knowledge to make it commercially useful and turn it into a resource that can be redeployed in a multiplicity of ways.

The problematic loop of knowledge ownership retention by organisations is rapidly closing, as discourses about computerisation of knowledge distance it from knowledge workers. A centrifugal shift of knowledge work and knowledge workers to the perimeter of the knowledge discourse is occurring through a discursive sweep

that minimises humans in favour of technological elements. This is organisationally beneficial, since unique humans are less amenable to control and cannot be marketed as effectively as replicable technology.

Power effects implicit in knowledge management and organisational knowledge discourses include ways of acquiring knowledge that is considered 'useful', including interpersonal and social exchanges, distributing it to approved others, interpreting it according to prescribed meanings, and storing knowledge for use by and the benefit of an organisation (Huber, 1991: 89-90). In fact, it is 'management' of both knowledge and knowledge worker that feeds into discourses of knowledge management and organisational learning. Centripetal forces of a knowledge discourse draw the conceptions of managing knowledge and organisational knowledge into its centre as a reaction to centrifugal forces pushing knowledge work/worker to the boundaries (Adelstein, 2007).

Rhetoric of managing knowledge is a bit unsavoury in its suggestion that knowledge left unmanaged is somewhat wild: it is either wasted, unused (Fuller, 2000: 3) or possibly even 'misused', according to legitimating authorities. Many vested interests are bound up in management discourses, which work a subtle rhetoric to close off ownership of and responsibility for knowledge from the knowledge workers and hand it to organisational management. A power effect is demonstrated in that discourses of organisational knowledge and knowledge management regulate and channel discourse on knowledge work in specific directions, while closing off alternative conceptions.

An example of how the economics and technology objects are now tightly integrated within a knowledge management discourse can be seen in the following extract from a conference paper delivered by an analyst from technology consulting firm Gartner Group. Here we can see the expression 'business intelligence' reflects the commoditisation of knowledge work.

> In the last year, we have surveyed and talked to several organizations and vendors and discovered some important findings. First, most organizations have an ideal use of business intelligence (BI) to leverage existing enterprise IT investments (such as customer relationship management [CRM], enterprise

resource planning [ERP] and human resources) to make better decisions and improve profitability, operational efficiency and organizational transparency. Second, market hype is at an all-time high as vendors seek to further establish themselves as technology leaders and to leverage the technology to give them an advantage. Finally, and perhaps most important, is the reality that we have found in most organizations that are deploying BI (business intelligence systems) today. Most such deployments are departmental and tactical in nature.

They are not well-sponsored or -budgeted, and few have the skills to leverage or use the tools further than basic reporting and analysis. (Liu, 2003)

While much is to be gained by deconstructing this discourse, key points to observe are that there is no acknowledgement of human creators of this 'business intelligence' other than as an appendage to "existing enterprise IT investments". In the last paragraph, it is human beings in the departments that lack skills to leverage or use tools productively. From the perspective of Gartner Group, whose thousands of organisational clients attend conferences where such influential and highly-regarded papers are delivered to management, human beings are still the problem. The incentive to commoditise organisational knowledge through computerised systems not only marginalises its human creators but reduces their importance to the process as well.

A small window of opportunity in which knowledge workers could have mastery over their own organisational destiny, suggested by Drucker (1959), Bell (1973), Reich (1991) and others has been shut tight. The knowledge management discourse is dominated by meanings that elevate the importance of technology to meet organisational requirements for what is now termed 'business intelligence', which one might suppose is the antithesis of 'business stupidity'. At the same time, these meaning options deny, elide and suppress the importance of human creators of knowledge so that one may now term them 'business problems'.

Authorities of delimitation that protect and police the boundaries of a knowledge management discourse have vested interests in maintaining control. Their activities initiate significant power effects in the way knowledge management and knowledge work objects are presented and re-presented. Yet, the discourse does not engage directly with notions of power despite an obvious relationship. Rather, knowledge management embraces the notion of knowledge as a commodity to be deployed like

other organisational commodities, rather than as a valuable resource whose creative source, the knowledge worker, should be also valued. Moreover, a commodity, such as organisational knowledge that can be manipulated and re-used for competitive advantage in global markets, needs to be protected. We now shift focus to examine how organisational knowledge is protected, as knowledge work interlinks with new discourses that effect such protection.

2.4.4 Knowledge work aligns with legal discourses

There is still ambiguity about how organisational management can ensure that a 'knowledge product' created by knowledge workers can be fully recognised as being owned by an organisation, rather than by the individuals who created it. Therefore, it is necessary to protect knowledge as an organisational asset by inscribing its ownership in law. A legal discourse has developed within which laws have been enacted and are continually strengthened to protect the knowledge 'assets' of organisations through intellectual property laws (Teece, 1998; Boisot, 1998). Legal discourses have contributed to emerging knowledge work discourses through inclusion of such discursive objects as are implied by organisational ownership of knowledge. In this way, statements about property rights become aligned to discourses of knowledge work.

Objects embedded in practices of protection directly influence the way in which knowledge is codified by and distributed within an organisation to create an intellectual property asset. Knowledge as an asset needs to be effectively protected from those who management deems to be likely to infringe the organisation's ownership rights. In turn, this has influenced legal discourses, which try to regulate sharing behaviours and argue that knowledge, even tacit knowledge, is an organisational resource to be protected (Constant *et al*, 1994; Morris, 2001; Boisot, 1998). This has led to the establishment of specialised insitutions, such as WIPO, that monitor and control the authorised and unauthorised uses of organisational knowledge.

For discursive objects, such as software piracy and service level agreements, the legal discourses on copyright and patent to protect goods are extended to include protection of methodologies and services, as well as the processes of producing and distributing the work of knowledge (Constant *et al*, 1994; Jarvenpaa and Staples, 2001; McSherry, 2001). For example, McSherry (2001) explores the effects of intellectual property rights on academia and how issues of ownership of academic knowledge could impinge on the intellectual foundations of universities and academic freedom. She alleges that purported legitimacy of ownership of knowledge work by organisations is far from settled. She cites that in a university context, ownership of academic knowledge contradicts the theory of legitimacy of academic freedom to both conduct research and continue to make that research freely available in the public domain.

In effect, a discourse of property rights revitalises the interconnection of legal and knowledge work discourses and spirals back on property, knowledge work and legitimacy objects that speak to legal and organisational discourses. Discourses of property rights have a further impact in the knowledge fields of organisational and management studies, economics, sociology and the like, to reveal the hidden discursive objects of power, legitimacy and ownership of knowledge.

Protection of intangibilities such as knowledge, particularly where the extent of knowledge may be unknown as in tacit knowledge, directs us to the concerns of how to make hidden knowledge visible. It brings us to a discussion about the significance of capturing, storing and making knowledge available on a restricted basis and the ways in which this can be effected.

2.5 TECHNOLOGICAL DISCOURSES

Management of knowledge is management of the resource of knowledge, not only of those who create it, but also of the object that is created. This section on technology discourses that are associated with knowledge work deal specifically with its capture, codification, storage, manipulation, and accessibility. They are

all terms to describe a process that makes knowledge 'visible' and connects the knowledge work discourse with that of technology (see, Bell, 1973; foreword to 1976 and 1999; Nonaka, 1994; Barley and Orr, 1997; Reed, 1996; Reich, 1991; Smith, 2001).

Arguments about distinctions among knowledge, information and data, although important, do not concern us here. What is of concern is the way in which discourses of knowledge work and its management are purposively and exclusively aligned with technology.

2.5.1   Knowledge management

Knowledge management is portrayed as the key issue facing organisations in the Twenty-First Century (Castells, 1996). The discussion emerged in the early 1990s as organisations and management began to consider problems emerging from the effects of depletion of expertise as organisations 'downsized' (see, Drucker, 1993; Dougherty and Bowman, 1996; Mishra and Spreitzer, 1998; Baily *et al*, 1996). Downsizing was an economic response to technology impacts on the labour market that enabled organisations to reduce their reliance on the expertise and knowledge of people in favour of new information technology.

Downsizing shifted the emphasis of managing knowledge away from those who created it but were difficult to manage, towards a more stable and non-resistant technological solution. It had begun in the 1970s with accessibility of computing power to non-data processing personnel through personal computers, accelerating from the mid 1980s as personal computers became networked and more powerful, and allowed data and information to flow through these networks almost uncontrolled. Management perceived that this free-flowing information could be shared among many others, some of whom might use it to the detriment of the organisation, which was problematic.

Even earlier, the manufacturing sector had used technological systems, such as 'just-in-time' (JIT) processes, to reduce manufacturing costs through reducing associated

labour costs. Uncontrolled warehousing costs and bottlenecks were seen as being directly responsible for production inefficiencies and non-maximised productivity. Success of JIT and other technologically-based systems were perceived to be a potential template for other labour initiatives using technology to perform the tasks of people, in post-Fordist and post-industrial workplaces (Bell, 1973).

Discourse began to reflect two critical inhibitory aspects, both of which related to human beings and technology. The first was to restrict information dissemination only to those others who are approved. The second was to reduce labour costs by eliminating some workers while adding new tasks for others, thereby improving efficiency and productivity of those who remained.

By the mid 1980s, increasing organisational profitability and efficiency became a euphemism for reducing the numbers of an organisations' most expensive item – its people – and had reached a critical stage. Organisations were losing their well-educated, most qualified employees who found handsome redundancy payouts, hefty 'sign on' bonuses to competitors, and increased employment mobility matched the lack of employee loyalty exhibited by management in downsizing organisations. At the same time, organisational management found that technology did not hold all the answers and knowledge management projects had only limited success (Davenport *et al*, 1998; Davies and Mabin, 2001; Lang, 2001; McKinlay, 2002; Goodall and Roberts, 2003). Yet conceptions of knowledge management could prove to be more effective at managing information and the discourses began to reflect this adjustment.

2.5.1.1 Knowledge 'inputs' and 'outputs'

Theoretically, the application of measurement to resolve the question about how much knowledge is transferred to knowledge management systems, that is technology, links discursive objects of 'knowledge work' with 'knowledge assets' and hence 'financial assets'. It provides a seamless and natural way for management and organisations to maximise capital investment returns in both people and material assets (Kaplan and Norton, 1996: 61). In this movement, knowledge and assets are inextricably-linked objects within a knowledge management discourse, further

strengthening the relationship between knowledge-technology discourses and those of economics. Capacity to measure something as intangible as knowledge, enables discursive statements concerning knowledge work to function more easily at a quantitative, 'more scientific' and 'objective' level, rather than adopting a more difficult-to-assess qualitative and interpretative approach. As well, the human creators of knowledge are expected to submit to power relations constituted through knowledge management practices and discourses of utility and organisational objectives.

Such a notion is exemplified in Davenport *et al* (1998: 44), who contend that 'successful' knowledge management projects accomplish organisational objectives of "doing something useful with knowledge" by structuring people, technology and knowledge content, a view that echoed Drucker (1959). The implication is that some knowledge may not be useful and unless it can be applied in a practical sense within an organisational context, it is not valued. Further, useful knowledge needs to be mediated by technology (captured, stored, disseminated) and human beings alone cannot justify their position as useful knowledge makers unless they are supported by technology. Such a power effect does not give primacy to people as knowledge creators over technology as the means of codification and storage of the knowledge, but unifies the two within a knowledge-technology dimension to cooperatively generate knowledge content. Davenport *et al* (1988) observed in their study that,

> BP Exploration (BPX)…successfully completed a pilot of a more internal and infrastructural approach to achieving knowledge access and transfer in its 'Virtual Teamwork' project. BPX managers initially felt that much of the important knowledge in its organization was unstructured knowledge in people's heads. Rather than extract it for a repository, managers aimed to facilitate the exchange of this tacit knowledge. They equipped each BPX site with at least one desktop videoconferencing system, document scanning and sharing tools, and the requisite telecommunications networks. They also provided substantial education and coaching on how people could use the system to solve real BPX problems (Davenport *et al*, 1998: 46).

Here, too, it can be seen that people form a less important and more troublesome part of the knowledge-technology aspect of a knowledge management discourse. Power effects determine, first, it is the organisation's knowledge that is important rather than that of the individuals, which lies unstructured in people's heads; second, it needs to be extracted and separated from its human creators; third, it needs to be filtered and

structured by technology to make it useful to accomplish organisational objectives; and fourth, in order to make knowledge useful, management alone would determine how 'knowledge access and transfer' would be done. Indeed, in identifying objectives of 'successful' knowledge management projects, Davenport *et al* (1998) go beyond assessing the degree of agreement by individuals to part with their knowledge. The authors express success in the neutralised and more benign terms of 'sharing', rather than the more overtly painful 'extraction'. They determine that knowledge sharing can only be done through substantial education and coaching, that is, disciplinary techniques to separate knowledge from the knower.

The next section explores discourses that make statements about knowledge sharing, with particular emphasis on the desirability of organisational learning to create knowledge transfer from an individual knowledge worker to an organisation. The assumption that ownership of knowledge may be contested has been excluded from discourses of organisational learning and the learning organisation.

2.5.2 Organisation-learning-organisation: Who's learning now?

The path from knowledge work to knowledge management is not direct but traverses and interconnects with discourses of organisational knowledge and organisational learning (Argyris and Schön, 1978; Levitt and March, 1988; Huber, 1991; Bohm, 1998; Yanow, 2000), as well as the learning organisation (Nonaka, 1994; Small and Dickie, 2000; Gourlay, 2004). The subtlety of power effects of knowledge ownership serves to link knowledge management with discourses of organisational learning and the learning organisation as part of managing organisational intellectual assets.

Although alignment of a knowledge management discourse with knowledge work may be considered to be loose, in fact, knowledge management does stem conceptually from knowledge work, since knowledge management conceptualises how knowledge can be made useful in organisations. Knowledge management is closely and directly connected to discourses of technology as management control (Zuboff, 1988; Alavi and Leidner, 1999; 2001) and the learning organisation (Senge, 1990; Pedler *et al*, 1989), since both are concerned with acquiring, capturing and

using knowledge for the benefit of an organisation (Huber, 1991). Discourses concerning management of knowledge not only positions it within an organisation but develops a prescriptive discourse to ensure that the organisation controls it.

The learning organisation (LO) focuses on maximising learning in organisations. It does this through idealising typography of learning that uses information and communications technologies (IT/ICT) to capture, transfer and store routines of learning and knowledge outcomes (Easterby-Smith, 1997: 1086; Gourlay, 2004: 96). The discourses develop and present sets of tools through knowledge management systems (KMS) and learning models that can be applied to organisational members. Intersection of these discourses of practice and application powerfully close off any alternative conceptions about how knowledge may be acquired, shared, interpreted and applied. It should be noted here that discourses of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) as a means of situated learning, also developed as a way of structuring and controlling dynamic social but work-related interchanges among organisational members (Hildreth and Kimble, 2004). The concept of communities of practice as a discourse of knowledge sharing is discussed in section 2.7 of the chapter.

Discourses of a learning organisation (LO) prescribe specific practices in order for an organisation to maximise its 'learning' and are disciplinary regimes that organisation members are required to follow. How did such a disciplinary shift come about from learning as a culturally-collective activity to one that is measurable through notions of maximising and minimising? Discourses of LO and KMS connect with earlier discourses of organisational learning (Argyris and Schön, 1978; Andreu and Ciborra, 1996; Alavi and Leidner, 2001), which examine learning processes in organisation settings as social processes, but do not necessarily try to change them (Easterby-Smith, 1997: 1086; Yanow, 2000: 256; Gourlay, 2004: 96). Specifically, application and implementation of organisational learning is referred to as the 'learning organisation' (Easterby-Smith, 1997: 1103).

Differences between the tradition of organisational learning (OL) and the subsequent discourse of the learning organisation (LO) is the development of normative models, which provide boundaries to learning in organisations and close off other avenues of

enquiry (Calhoun and Starbuck, 2005). The literatures of OL and LO are quite distinct, with OL being analytical and concentrating on understanding (rather than changing) learning processes within organisation settings, whereas, LO is action oriented towards an ideal type that maximises learning within an organisation (Easterby-Smith, 1997: 1086; Thomas and Allen, 2006). Indeed, Thomas and Allen (2006: 123) argue that central to the concept of a learning organisation is both OL – continuously transforming the organisation through learning processes (Dixon, 1999; 2000) – and the concept of knowledge (Argyris and Schön, 1978; Senge, 1990).

Within the discipline of management science, the learning organisation is "committed to achievement of a desirable end state" (Easterby-Smith, 1997: 1103-4), emerging from the normative model of Huber (1991) of knowledge acquisition, sharing and its use. Garvin (1993) expands on this with his TQM (total quality management) model that suggests a 'three Ms' framework of meaning, management and measurement. He articulates a model for systematic problem solving, transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently, and measuring change (Garvin, 1993: 78). Fundamental to implementing the learning organisation model is its systematising through KMS, such that an idealised model of an organisation that learns from the experiences of its members does so through fabricating – making up – a disciplinary regime of extraction, capturing and controlling knowledge. At the same time, use of technology for LO facilitates organisational downsizing and begins to reflect historic conditions of global economic fragility of the 1980s, as has been discussed.

Easterby-Smith (1997: 1090) observes that scholars from the disciplines of management science and organisational development were primarily instrumental in refocusing discourse away from the processes of OL to the prescriptions of the LO. The shift helped to resolve several behavioural problems (Huber, 1991) associated with learning content not being transferred to other organisational members; defensiveness by individuals and groups to share knowledge, and poor communications among organisational members as to the purpose and strategies for transferring learning (Easterby-Smith, 1997: 1090).

A systems perspective identifying how 'feedback loops' effected transfer of learning to an organisation was added to provide a holistic view (Senge, 1990), using

information technology to 'informat' or systematise the process of transfering learning (Zuboff, 1988). Based on the work of Argyris and Schön (1978), informatting control systems could be established to structure learning transfer, including detecting and correcting errors (Easterby-Smith, 1997: 1092). Such errors were attributed to human beings, who would try to disassociate themselves from providing learning content to any project that might be considered failed, thereby risking sanctions (Argyris and Schön, 1978).

Further problems in implementing OL, identified by Huber (1991), included 'politics' and 'non-rational' behaviours, relating to legitimacy of decision making based on knowledge transferred via OL. If information was incomplete, distorted or incorrect due to political machinations within an organisation, such as sanctions against individuals, then poor decision making may occur – risking further sanctions (Easterby-Smith (1997: 1092).

Easterby-Smith (1997: 1094) argues that the possibilities of free and open information exchange are naive (also see Coopey, 1995) and argues that management cannot understand or synthesise, much less satisfy, the different aspirations of the holistic organisation, groups within it and individuals (Giddens, 1979).

> This results in continuous political activity in which individuals and groups mobilize structural and informational power to serve their own ends. In the case of the learning organization, where rules are likely to be reduced and turbulence increased, this political activity is likely to rise rather than fall, as has been observed by Kanter (1989) (Easterby-Smith: 1094).

Knowledge transfer from individuals to groups, within groups, and from individuals and groups to an organisation are acknowledged as fraught with problems of a human nature that cannot be overcome by managerial will alone. Yet, processes of OL are crucial to knowledge transference in that they establish patterns and processes of communication between and among knowledge workers (Alavi and Leidner, 2001: 120). They need to become normalised as modes of organising and embedded in organisational culture or organisational climate (Slater and Narver, 1995; Clegg and Garrick, 2000; Bijlsma-Frankema *et al*, 2006; Dymock and McCarthy, 2006). Further, as Balthazard *et al* (2006) suggest, normalisation within organisations as constructed culture has positive influences on efficiency and effectiveness compared

to, what they call, dysfunction and defensiveness. Thus, an organisational objective suggested by Drucker (1959) of efficiency and effectiveness can be acquired by prescribing ideal models through organisational culture shifts to maximise organisational learning. A discursive shift from observational qualities of organisational learning to prescriptions of a learning organisation through new modes of organisational enculturation is almost complete.

Potential knowledge can be made available and delivered by knowledge workers through LO, so that others may use it and learn from it. Management can position ongoing learning as a central feature of sustainability for both knowledge worker and organisation. Learning, as a combination of continuing professional education and inhouse training becomes a measurable object and subject to the same rationalising processes as knowledge work (Garrick and Clegg, 2000).

Learning emerges as a new discourse of intellectual capital and connects with both knowledge work and knowledge management (Roos and von Krogh, 1996; Scarbrough and Swan, 2001). It is accompanied by a shift in emphasis from discourses of a learning organisation to that of knowledge management, mirrored by a decrease in "people management and development themes" and a corresponding increase in information systems, information technology and intellectual capital (Scarbrough and Swan, 2001: 7). Concurrently, discourses of knowledge management (KM) are

> [B]eing reconstructed by the HR (human resources) community as the creation of intellectual capital through the development of employees and the management of organizational culture (Lank, 1998; Mayo, 1998). The fact that KM is a popular term provides a convenient trigger with which to resurface and revitalize change processes associated with earlier LO initiatives (Scarbrough and Swan, 2001: 10).

Discourses of knowledge become a part of discourses of economics and intellectual capital and are seen as having a distinct market value to contribute significantly to organisational financial objectives (Roos and von Krogh, 1996: 333). Discourses of intellectual capital objectify and separate knowledge and intellect from their rightful owners, since

> [I]ntellectual capital is conceptualized from numerous disciplines making the field a mosaic of perspectives. Accountants are interested

in how to measure it on the balance sheet, information technologists
want to codify it on systems, sociologists want to balance power
with it, psychologists want to develop minds because of it, human
resource managers want to calculate an ROI on it, and training and
development officers want to make sure that they can build it
(Bontis, 1999: 433).

Further, as Garrick and Clegg (2000: 280) point out, "Within this discourse, the
'intellectual' capital of employees is constructed in a very specific way whereby their
intellectual and human capacities are integrated with financial objectives".

The next section continues to unpack discourses that separate knowledge workers
from their intellectual endeavours. It shows how effective is the 'carrot approach' to
facilitating disengagement of knowledge from the knowledge worker, by shooting
straight for the desirability of social status and achievement – the bull's eyes for
knowledge workers, suggested by Drucker (1959), Reich (1991) and Despres and
Hiltrop (1995).

2.6 SOCIAL DISCOURSES OF STATUS & ENVIRONMENT

Knowledge work is portrayed as politically, economically and socially desirable;
elevating it to a status to which individuals aspire. In order to perform such work,
knowledge workers need higher levels of education than traditional industrial
workers (Drucker, 1969; Bell, 1973; Small and Dickie, 2000; Sveiby and Simons,
2002). As well, knowledge work ushers in a new form of class structure – a
business class – that, while it is based on education, is centred on the economic
rather than intellectual value of knowledge (Reich, 1991). Many management
scholars support such an optimistic view of knowledge workers, suggesting that
those who undertake formal education in order to acquire and subsequently apply
theoretical and analytical knowledge should be treated with greater respect, given
greater opportunities and be more highly valued by society (Bell, 1973; Drucker
1994: 65; Brint, 1984; Reich, 1991).

Rhetoric suggests that since knowledge work assumes such a high value for organisations, contributions by knowledge workers would be recognised by the organisation (von Krogh and Roos, 1996). Such a valuable contribution purportedly gives knowledge workers stronger bargaining power and status in an organisation (Morris, 2001). However, status comes with a *proviso* that attaches to the value aspect of the discourse: that is knowledge workers conform to organisational objectives. Establishment and pursuit of organisational objectives demand productivity according to management-approved benchmarking that adheres to the concept of a learning organisation (Garvin, 1993; Slater and Narver, 1995).

At one level, an important linkage between knowledge work and its management appears to balance the interests of management and knowledge workers as an equitable exchange of knowledge for status. Such exchange resides exclusively within an organisational context: knowledge produced by knowledge workers must meet organisational objectives, and if it does, organisational status is accorded to the knowledge worker.

Organisational culture and socially-acceptable behaviours are clearly defined by management through prescriptions of what is considered to be legitimate and organisationally-appropriate behaviours. Organisational authorities characterise as social deviance any attempts by knowledge workers to withhold knowledge from an organisation, or to exit the organisation without having divulged what is deemed to be 'organisation knowledge'. Concurrently, behaviours that are recognised as legitimate are acknowledged publicly to other organisational members via visible processes of rewards and awards, as well as social inclusiveness and acceptance. Processes of providing both incentives and disciplinary actions become embedded within organisational culture to create willingness by organisational members to participate in approved and legitimated behaviours (Szulanski, 1996; Cramton, 2001; Tam *et al,* 2002; Sveiby and Simons, 2002). Knowledge workers must march to the drum beat of an organising professional manager, whose role it is to provide direction and ensure adherence to benchmarked processes and outcomes (Drucker, 1959: 76). Thus, social discourses of status and culture become intertwined within the discourses of knowledge work and organisations.

In the next section, the knowledge work discourse is analysed in respect of its connections to social discourses that speak to humanistic and societal concerns of status and acceptance.

2.6.1 The changing status of knowledge workers

As discussed earlier, a dominant theme in organisational knowledge discourses says that knowledge needs to be managed by (and for the benefit of) organisations (Machlup, 1980 [1962]; Bell, 1973; Brown and Duguid, 1991; Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Power effects of its proprietorship are masked by the use of 'neutral' business language. Such language involves recording, storing and managing knowledge through 'benign' use of computerised knowledge management technologies (Dixon, 2000; Small and Dickie, 2000; Alavi and Leidner, 2001) supported by 'disciplinary' regimes of organisational learning (Huber, 1991). Rhetorical 'neutrality' attempts to filter out alternative conceptions about knowledge in its humanist terms.

Through use of rhetoric that seeks to separate knowledge from its human creators, the dominant discourse exhibits knowledge as an object that is managed and, through management, becomes more useful – with 'more' rather than 'less' being the precursor to measurement and setting of standards for productivity. In this broad movement, knowledge gleaned from an individual is processed and converted into organisational knowledge. As Nonaka observes,

> At a fundamental level, knowledge is created by individuals. An organization cannot create knowledge without individuals. The organization supports creative individuals or provides a context for such individuals to create knowledge. Organizational knowledge creation, therefore, should be understood in terms of a process that "organizationally" amplifies the knowledge created by individuals, and crystallizes it as part of the knowledge network of an organization. (Nonaka, 1994: 17)

Nonaka acknowledges individuals as creators of knowledge but only insofar as they remain creative individuals within an organisational 'supporting' environment. There is no question about whose knowledge it is. Moreover, there is an implication that

individuals must maintain their creative juices in order to remain in the protective cocoon of an organisation.

Additionally, Nonaka remarks that an important component of the knowledge creation process is its amplification and crystallisation within an organisational environment to make it louder and clearer for other organisational members within the knowledge network to use. Nonaka points out that, while an organisation cannot create knowledge without individuals, it is the organisation rather than those individuals that adds the value necessary to make it useful and useable by other organisational members. In other words, 'raw' knowledge created by individuals must be pummelled and shaped by an organisation to attain value. The argument is no longer just about who owns the knowledge but rather who makes it valuable, with the organisation now regarded as fulfilling both roles; owning knowledge and making it valuable.

The encumbent high status that Reich, Bell and others associated with knowledge work begins to shift from the highly-valued role of creator of organisational knowledge, to whom a debt of acknowledgement must be made for its value, to a less important status of being a producer of raw material, such as a miner or a farmer. The new value – the value add – is provided by an organisation. In combination with the rhetoric concerning knowledge workers needing to adopt organisational culture and socially-acceptable behaviours, organisational authorities further create exclusion of those knowledge workers who withhold knowledge from an organisation. Moreover, the process of extraction of and adding value to an individual's raw knowledge downplays any negative impacts should individuals exercise their mobility option before divulging 'organisational knowledge'.

Recognition and acknowledgement of 'legitimate' behaviours through visible processes of status – rewards and awards – as well as social inclusiveness and acceptance are complemented by a new disciplinary strategy. A new tool has been created for use in the carrot-and-stick process to create willingness by organisational members to participate in approved and legitimated behaviours (Szulanski, 1996; Cramton, 2001; Tam *et al,* 2002; Sveiby and Simons, 2002). The new tool – a definite stick – portrays the contribution by knowledge workers to organisational

knowledge as less important than the value-adding processes that an organisation must perform to integrate the knowledge network of an organisation. The new status of knowledge workers is that not only must they march to the drum beat of an organising professional manager, whose role it is to provide direction and ensure adherence to a benchmarked process and outcome (Drucker, 1959: 76) but that they need an organisation to give meaning to the knowledge each creates: she cannot do it alone.

In contemporary conceptions of a knowledge work discourse, we have seen how organisations and management have laid the conceptual groundwork and deployed the toolsets necessary to capture, store and retrieve knowledge; they have determined who should have access and how they can access; and how knowledge can be manipulated to add value. All of these are embedded within knowledge management systems. As has been discussed, organisations and management recognise that deep and valuable knowledge also resides in the heads of knowledge workers; knowledge that is tacit is hidden (Polanyi, 1962a). Once it is made explicit, it can be captured by technological systems and massaged in various ways to be made valuable and useful to the organisation.

Although the status of the knowledge worker may have diminished along with the ultimate value of her raw knowledge, her contribution cannot be excised completely. There is another problem that inhibits full maturation of the knowledge management discourse and restrains its closure. Again, it points to problems of disclosure by knowledge workers. The problem is that the actual ways of discovering what sort of knowledge is tacit – knowledge that may be of value to the organisation even in its raw state – and how much there is that could be made available is still uncertain (Garrick and Clegg, 2000: 279). There is no technological way for organisation management to ascertain just what resides in the heads of knowledge workers and to what degree they are actually sharing this knowledge.

2.6.1.1   Enveloping the social in the organisational

Clearly, there is a suspicion that at least some individuals may be unwilling to share their knowledge freely in officially-sanctioned ways, although they may be willing, or appear to be willing (Goffman, 1961), to disclose their ideas with co-workers in a more socially-oriented environment (Scarbrough, 1999). It is by interconnecting with a broader social milieu that an organisational knowledge discourse gains further validation and dominance, while at the same time, it can mask technologically-oriented rhetoric under a more desirable cloak of social interaction. How this comes about reveals discursive nuances that see a shift from a conception of individuals as unstructured repositories for disorganised knowledge (Polanyi, 1962b; Warglien and Masuch, 1996) into the softer humanising language of knowing as a process of lived experience (Scarbrough, 1999) and willingness to share (Brown and Duguid, 1998; Davenport *et al*, 1998). Important questions remain about how to know unknown knowledge as well as how to elicit a sharing attitude from individuals who do not wish to share their knowledge.

The first question is: how can organisations ensure that the cognitive machinations of its knowledge workers have the capacity to produce the sort of knowledge that will be of value to the organisation and that they will do it expeditiously? There are links with a second crucial question that asks: how can organisations ensure that knowledge workers will share that information, making it available to organisational management and 'appropriate' others?

To negotiate status within organisations, knowledge workers must engage fully with a managerial discourse of use-value (Grant, 1996; Teece, 1998; Garrick and Clegg, 2000). Knowledge worker status is commensurate with the organisational asset status of his/her knowledge contribution and accumulation of such assets by organisations. Indeed, the status of knowledge work has to be affirmed by measurement of such assets as part of an organisation's strategic objectives, in ways extending beyond traditional short-term financial indicators, which link organisational goals with organisational processes.

At the same time, organisations balance external measures, such as operating income, with internal measures, such as new product development (Kaplan and Norton, 1992; 1998 [1993]; 2007). Through its nexus with knowledge management, knowledge work is slotted within the boundaries of other discourses, such as management and organisational theory, knowledge production, and accounting, all of which participate in controlling and legitimising conceptions of knowledge work. Such disciplinary discourses effectively change the status of knowledge workers: if they comply with organisational objectives, there are rewards, otherwise …

We begin to see that managerial discourses de-align knowledge work from those who create and work with it. Organisational objectives require that knowledge be explicated and articulated, captured and stored, valued and measured. Far from remaining pivotal to knowledge discourses, knowledge workers have become decentred in the discourses, indeed marginalised and disconnected.

2.6.1.2 Mind/body disconnect

As has already been discussed, a problem for management is that the most valuable knowledge for an organisation, knowledge that is implicit in problem solving and creative growth, resides in the heads of its knowledge workers. This knowledge is elusive: quality and quantity are generally unknown and gaining access to the knowledge can only be done if the knowledge workers agree to it. If agreement is not readily forthcoming, it becomes necessary to look at ways to change behaviours (imprinting organisational culture, organisational learning and the learning organisation, establishing organisational communities of practice) and to improve the barter position of an individual knowledge worker in her trade-off with the organisation (Empson, 2001).

Discourses of organisational cooperation (see, Mumby and Stohl, 1991; Cramton, 2001; Dameron, 2002), teamwork (see, Cangelosi and Dill, 1965; Brooks, 1994; Mohrman *et al*, 1995; Cohen *et al*, 1999; Gomez *et al*, 2000; Newell *et al*, 2002) and communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Brown and Duguid, 1991; 1998; Horibe, 1999; Davenport and Hall, 2002; Swan *et al*, 2002) are invoked within

knowledge work discourses to encourage knowledge sharing (see, Schein, 1978; Davenport *et al*, 1998; Swart and Kinnie, 2003). Continuing education and professional development (Davenport *et al*, 1998; Davenport and Prusack, 1997; Garrick and Clegg, 2000; Schultze, 1999; Alvesson, 2004) become a treadmill for knowledge workers in their quest to achieve status (Blackler, 1995; Davenport and Prusak, 1997; Alvesson, 2001), which, in turn, helps to create cultures of organisational learning (Argyris and Schön, 1978; Levitt and March, 1988; Huber, 1991; Bohm, 1998; Yanow, 2000).

In effect, attainment of status through continuing processes of 'upskilling' creates an environment for effective transfer of knowledge from an individual to the organisation (Szulanski, 1996; Inkpen and Dinur, 1998; Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Morris, 2001; Empson, 2001; Argote *et al*, 2003). With these new discursive objects of articulated (organisational learning) and reticulated (learning organisation) learning influencing interpretations of the knowledge work discourse, an emergent knowledge management discourse absorbs these new objects as part of its discursive formation. Knowledge management as a managerial discourse assumes cultures of organisational learning and the learning organisation as embedded discursive objects.

As a managerial discourse, knowledge management locates the people who create and develop knowledge specifically within an organisational context describing them as 'repositories' of unstructured (raw) organisational knowledge which needs to be 'extracted' and structured (Nonaka, 1994; Collins, 1997). Unstructured knowledge must be 'extracted' from human creators, structured through databases, and disseminated to those deemed 'suitable' recipients of these bases of knowledge.

While it is clear that technology provides an alternative, and, from the point of view of management, a preferable repository for knowledge, the question remains: has everything of value been delivered by the human creators? How can the quantity of knowledge 'deliverables' be measured? These are no small questions and link the discourses of knowledge work and knowledge management with that of accounting in order to quantify these outcomes, embedding them in financial discourses with objects of return on investment and improved asset utilisation (Kaplan and Norton, 1996).

At the same time, discourses that serve to ameliorate knowledge extraction processes from an individual also serve to disconnect the mind of the knowledge worker from her physical being. It is not quite the same as saying, "Look, you sit in front of a computer all day; you don't need your legs any more", but it denies a holistic approach to humanity. A subtle shift in the knowledge discourse has begun to devolve intellectual capacities of an individual to the margins of discourse. Significance of the knowledge worker as pivotal to a knowledge discourse has begun to shift to the edges of discourse, as technology, in the form of knowledge management systems, is drawn into a position of centrality.

2.6.2   Knowledge work as discursive praxis

Under a broader knowledge work discourse, there are emerging sub-discourses that exploit alternative epistemologies of possession and practice (Marshall and Brady, 2001). Authorities who position the discourse as one of practice maintain that knowledge work is a process, an inherent fluidity bound up in dynamic processes of creating, experiencing and knowing (Scarbrough, 1999; Blackler, 1995; Cooper, 1990; Chia, 2000). Within this discourse is situated a notion of control of the process by knowledge work practitioners.

There is an alternative sub-discourse that conceives of knowledge work as an 'object' for possession and engages with its fixedness, through its capture, storage and accessibility within a value hierarchy of data, information, knowledge, wisdom (Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995; Teece, 1998; Davenport *et al*, 1998). It is a discourse that is concerned with organisational possession and ownership of outcomes of a process as a 'knowledge product' and requires that knowledge workers share their knowledge.

A third group of management theorists propose a sub-discourse arguing that it is a combination of both process and possession, which is iterative and/or interactive, and integrates aspects of both social and technological activity in the construction of knowledge (Wood, 2002; Cook and Brown, 1999), offering a middle ground

wherein both practitioner and organisation control different parts of knowledge work, with both apparently benefiting. The debates emerge from earlier knowledge work arguments of tacit versus explicit knowledge (Inkpen and Dinur, 1998; Cooper and Fox, 1990; Donaldson, 2001; Garrick and Clegg, 2000). It could be argued that the arguments support negotiated power relations between practitioners and an organisation, since knowledge management, as a means of systematising and routinising knowledge outcomes, has been shown to be fallible and needs to be propped up.

The discourses are also concerned with power: implicit within knowledge work, sub-discourses of possession and practice are discourses of dispossession and prescription. Yet the significance of power relationships between and among knowledge work practitioners and organisations in which knowledge production takes place is denied and ignored in the dominant discourse. There are several aspects to the discursive tensions between knowledge workers and organisations, which have already been discussed in the chapter. However, there is another tension that needs to be explored, that of sharing knowledge by individual knowledge workers. The following section examines various modes of knowledge sharing and how they are conceptualised as specific discourses of knowledge work.

2.7 DISCOURSES OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING: COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE & PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

The differences and similarities between professional associations and communities of practice (CoPs) are important for the thesis in that the empirical research (analysed in Chapter 7) is located across these discourses, taking on certain aspects from each. Essentially, both discourses – professional associations and CoPs – centralise a concept of knowledge sharing and are pivotal to the changing status of knowledge workers. There is a vast body of literature associated with professions and CoPs that can be examined within the bounds of the knowledge work discourse.

Discourses of CoPs are well established; however, their formalisation within organisations was first expressed through 'situated learning' practices as an apprenticeship model for on-the-job training (Lave and Wenger, 1991) highlighting the extent to which learning occurs through organisation work practices (Swan *et al*, 2002: 477). CoPs are critical to sharing knowledge within organisations (Brown and Duguid, 1991). From a management perspective, innovation through knowledge sharing is crucial, so much so, that workplace environments are constructed to encourage such sharing by emulating social interactions that reflect communal and social aspects in a work environment (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Brown, 2001; Dameron, 2002).

CoPs are said to emerge spontaneously via networks of individuals with similar work-related interests (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). However, participation in a CoP is voluntary, since communities have no specific deliverables, cannot be created by fiat, tend to be independent of organisations, and are responsible only to their own sense of their constituency of interests (Horibe, 1999: 156). Informal chats between or among colleagues are recognised as potentially viable/productive organisational activities that may offer peer exposure to problems and solutions in an informal, social, although *ad hoc*, way (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Horibe, 1999). Frequently, the 'water cooler' metaphor is used to describe such informal, *ad hoc*, agendaless, spontaneous and voluntary discussions among organisation members (Millen *et al*, 2002; McDermott, 1999; Saint-Onge and Wallace, 2002; Liebowitz, 2003) as if it were the holy grail of CoPs from which knowledge trickles forth.

Such metaphoric imagery is taken seriously in many organisations, where management seeks to legitimise these activities and provide normalised environments where such social-organisational interactions can occur (Brown and Duguid, 1991). They can be seen in many 'modern' organisations that design the work environment as a 'natural' setting for socialised human interaction by constructing and supporting CoPs (Swan *et al*, 2002) or 'structuring spontaneity' (Brown and Duguid, 2001).

Brown and Duguid (1991) also see developments of community and socially-oriented organisational activities as interlinking knowledge work as an organisational theme with broader society and, more specifically, local communities. Such developments

appear to portray a more humanistic aspect to the knowledge work discourse; since, aligned to discourses of knowledge is a discourse that appears to privilege social interactions among those individuals who share their knowledge through CoPs (Brown and Duguid, 1991).

Concurrently, a CoP connects with knowledge work and knowledge management through management efforts to legitimise CoP activity. It is a consequence of implementing managerial goals of turning tacit knowledge into explicit and organisational knowledge to support organisational objectives (see, for example, Frenkel *et al*, 1999; Drucker, 1969; 1993; 1999; Nonaka, 1994; Brown and Duguid, 1998; Hargadon, 1998). However, Brown and Duguid (1991) observe that within organisations, a gap exists between the ways management understands how work is performed and how learning occurs, which is abstracted from actual practices. Therefore, Brown and Duguid enhance the basic apprenticeship training model to include a more professional level for innovative practices through CoPs. In this way, discourses of CoPs become aligned to those of organisations and learning since learning practices are "the bridge between working and innovating" (Brown and Duguid, 1991: 41).

2.7.1 Blending CoPs with KMS for organisation consumption

Management enlists conceptions of organisational order and ownership, discourses that bind the social interactivity of CoPs to those of knowledge management systems (KMS), since KMS technological tools may be required to reframe CoP activities for organisational consumption. Activities of capturing and mapping a range of problem-solving activities that may occur in a CoP are reflected in knowledge management's organisational 'community-based' electronic 'discussion' methodologies for extraction, codification, storage, and dissemination to others within the organisational social framework (Davenport *et al*, 1998). Social interaction becomes merely an adjunct to knowledge management, since it directly connects to discourses on knowledge sharing and CoPs.

Although CoPs are associated with organisation learning, Lave and Wenger (1991) also offer a more broad-brushed definition that is pertinent to the thesis. Accordingly, a community of practice is defined as

> [A]n activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their community. Thus, they are united in both action and in the meaning that that action has, both for themselves, and for the larger collective (Lave and Wenger, 1991: 98).

Lave and Wenger's definition does not prescribe the notion of community as being location-specific or as shaped by management but allows for the situating of a CoP wherever participants decide it should be. After all, it is their community and their social lives. For management to determine the social context in which CoP activities can take place is to negate ownership by participants of their social sphere. Installation of water coolers at ten paces is not without an agenda, as some scholars suggest, any more than is community-oriented software that appears on organisational intranets. Through their environmental design, these tools are part of a managerial drive to connect CoPs with organisational learning and organisational knowledge. It is a "build it and they will come"[6] strategy but if they don't come …

Taken further, facilitation of CoPs by organisational management may be viewed as an attempt to predict and control outcomes, thereby enhancing organisational benefit (Wenger and Snyder, 2000; Fox, 2000; Contu and Willmott, 2000; Swan *et al*, 2002). Indeed, as Swan *et al* observe, management exploits the concept of "'communities of practice' as a rhetorical device in the pursuit of organizational objectives and the legitimization of new practices" (2002: 479).

Rhetoric widely used by management, suggests that knowledge work, as an object produced and reproduced by the CoP discourses, is seen as natural and normal; flows of knowledge are "inextricably linked to social relations developed through shared practice" (Swan *et al*, 2002: 479). CoPs purport to emulate human interactions of the broader society, those engaging with traditional cultural practices of localised

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[6] 'Build it and they will come' is an expression that has become part of every-day use and was originally a central line of dialogue in the 1989 American film *Field of Dreams*, starring Kevin Costner.

communities worldwide. In such a natural social environment, knowledge workers
are thought to be more agreeable to share their knowledge,

> While knowledge is often thought to be the property of individuals, a
> great deal of knowledge is both produced and held collectively. Such
> knowledge is readily generated when people work together in the
> tightly knit groups known as 'communities of practice' (Brown and
> Duguid, 1998: 91).

Despite the purported reciprocity of knowledge sharing within CoPs, Brown and
Duguid (1998) recognise that such social activity is not frictionless. People rely on
organisations to gain advantages and reduce problems they may incur as individuals,
such as protecting their rights, which an organisation can and will do in the spirit of
competition and asset protection (Drucker, 1969; 1993; Brown and Duguid, 1998:
93). In some respects, potential for friction is due to what Macdonald (1984; 1985;
1995) describes as a 'professional project', whereby

> The possessors of specialist knowledge set about building up a
> monopoly of their knowledge and, on this basis, establish a monopoly
> of the services that derive from it. This draws on a mainly Weberian
> tradition, especially the concepts of 'exclusion' and 'social closure' as
> mechanisms whereby the social standing of a group is achieved and
> maintained (Macdonald, 1995: xii).

Macdonald discusses Weber's concept of social closure to explain how "members of
a social stratum establish and maintain their status to achieve collective social
mobility" (1985: 541). Here, Drucker's (1959) high social status, Reich's (1991)
aspirational business class and Arthur and Rousseau's (1996) boundaryless career of
knowledge workers are echoed in Macdonald's (1985; 1995) notions of social
standing via self-regulating professional occupations and their associated norms,
practices, rights and privileges (Macdonald, 1985: 541; also Freidson, 1984).

Macdonald's (1984; 1985) work focuses on accountants; however, building a case for
the professionalisation of knowledge workers is less clear cut. The very vagueness of
what a knowledge worker is, as well as the fact that many individuals do not identify
themselves as such (Scarbrough, 1999), works to good effect in limiting possibilities
for a professional association of knowledge workers. Indeed, it may be in the
interests of organisations to inhibit cohesion of knowledge work into a professional
association, since professionalisation may play a significant role in legitimating

change including "radical changes in structures and managerial arrangements" (Greenwood *et al*, 2002: 58). As these authors theorise, such change is most likely to occur in mature or highly-structurated professional settings, since they provide clear and legitimised boundaries in which occupational communities can enact change (Greenwood *et al*, 2002: 61). Therefore, any moves to form knowledge workers into a coherent professional group that may challenge organisational structures and managerial arrangements need to be strongly resisted.

Despite this, there is a sense of 'professional project' in terms of possessors of specialised knowledge and associated social standing (Macdonald, 1984; 1995; Freidson, 1986) in the notion of a professional community of knowledge practitioners. Alignment of the concept of a community of practice to discourses of knowledge work foreshadows evolution of professionalism among knowledge worker practitioners, at least in terms of a privileged social position (Drucker, 1959; 1969; Reich, 1991; Despres and Hiltrop, 1995) and the ethics of professionalism (Macdonald, 1995; Freidson, 1984).

2.7.2 CoPs & professionalism embody societal values

Conceptions of CoPs and professionalism refine Machlup's (1980 [1962]) notion of 'knowledge occupations' beyond a mere arbitrary and ethically-neutral (Macdonald, 1995) categorisation of the labour force – whose usefulness is predisposed to defining workforce statistics for census data – towards development of an association of professionals, in line with Macdonald's (1985; 1995) notion of professions being seen as ethically positive and central to notions of social values. Social values of specific interest to the thesis include social stratification (including Weberian notions of credentialism to support social mobility) also suggested by Drucker (1959; 1969) and social division of labour argued by Reich (1991) and Despres and Hiltrop (1995), discussed earlier in the chapter.

Clearly, within a context of organisational knowledge, processes of exclusion and monopoly of services by knowledge practitioners that might occur if they were to be organised in a professional association are not likely to be encouraged by

management, since the carrot-and-stick approach to organisational status would lose impetus. Nor could professionalisation of knowledge work occur without cooperation of – including neglect by – organisations (Drucker, 1959; 1969), or in the case of specific professions (medicine, law, accountancy) by the state (Macdonald, 1985; 1995). Since status through professional association is not in play within a generalised view of knowledge work, social standing of knowledge workers as professionals *per se* can only be permitted within organisationally-approved parameters.

Finally, CoPs can be used as an organisation tool for social control of knowledge workers. As has been shown, the concept of a CoP has emerged as an effective device for organisations to manage knowledge workers and encourage them to share their knowledge. Sharing knowledge is a function of attaining the elevated status of knowledge worker and, since knowledge has a high economic value (Drucker, 1959; 1969; Reich, 1991), those who perform such work should be treated with greater respect, given greater opportunities and be more highly valued by society (Drucker 1994: 65; Brint, 1984). Further, since social control by organisations is well established and predates emergence of many professional associations that assume this control through self governance and membership of a regulatory environment (Freidson, 1984: 2), management support of CoPs is merely regaining lost organisational ground.

2.8 SUMMARY OF CURRENT MASTER DISCOURSE

Knowledge is now the central and vital component of not only the economy but also society, changing the position, meaning and structure of knowledge (Drucker, 1969: 349). In essence, knowledge has become the business of business and contemporary discourses have developed to reflect this. In discourses of business and economics, the capability to create, store, disseminate, manage and control access to knowledge has become crucial to business performance (Davenport *et al*, 1998; Brown and Duguid, 1998; Foray and Hargreaves, 2002; Mokyr, 2002) with technology providing the means to do so. In this way, the intangibility of knowledge has significantly

influenced economics discourses and become a constitutive part of the discourse of globalisation: the global economy is a knowledge economy.

Knowledge, as an object of discourse, has been transformed through aligned discourses that give primacy to current economic conceptions about knowledge (Neef, 1998; Empson, 2001; Nelson and Winter, 1982; Penrose, 1959; Teece, 1981; 1988). Other conceptions of knowledge, such as knowledge as morally and ethically compelling, as freely given, as humanistic, as art, as the root of wisdom, as culture and tradition, and as an end in itself (Machlup, 1980 [1962]) are de-emphasised and in some cases displaced or even dispelled by such a movement.

Knowledge is increasingly considered to be the pivot for the economic development and the economic status of organisations and nations, and has come to be characterised as contingent on the degree to which knowledge is effectively manipulated and made to work economically and performatively (Drucker, 1959; 1969; 1993; 1999; Alvesson, 1995; Brown and Duguid, 1998; Hargadon, 1998). The centrality of this discourse has had spill-over and adjacent effects.

As we have seen, a discourse of knowledge management has developed from technology that is used to capture and manage knowledge for organisational memory (Huber, 1991), and now emerges as a means of turning knowledge into a product (Marsick and Watkins, 1999; Garrick and Clegg, 2000). Knowledge management systems have moved beyond ways and means of categorising knowledge and systematically storing, manipulating and managing knowledge, and have solidified as tangible multi-layered computer-based products. This movement effectively removes the mystique and intangibility from knowledge as a human endeavour by confining and binding it to definable and marketable products. Such products are enthusiastically sold and supported by computer suppliers and others.

Commercialisation of computerised systems for capturing and manipulating knowledge has enabled discourses of knowledge management to extend their alignment with discourses of technology and economics in new ways, influencing these discourses while being influenced by them. Commodification of knowledge work through packaging knowledge as a product, ownership of knowledge products,

and economic and market discourses concerning revenue generation, financial assets, capital invested, and so on, now become associated with discourses of knowledge work and knowledge management. The interrelationship between knowledge work and knowledge management is very tight, bound together through economics and technology. But this is not all! Commercialisation of knowledge products encourages authorities to legitimise discourses concerning ownership of knowledge products and how they might be protected. Through legitimating authorities, such as technology analysts, academics and business managers, boundaries of knowledge management discourse are policed through strategies of inclusion (technology, productivity, value) and exclusion (human beings).

The current master discourse of knowledge work establishes a triumvirate of common statements linking knowledge with economics and technology. There are many sub-discourses that support this triumvirate of statements in different ways. For example, sub-discourses coming from organisational fields of knowledge clearly support economic conceptions of knowledge, since organisations are key beneficiaries of the outcome of controlling knowledge. Management of knowledge, both through human and technological gate-keeping, controls psychological and physical access. So, too, laws support the economic nature of knowledge since philosophically they protect knowledge for organisations while discriminating punitively against its unauthorised use.

Depending on the knowledge discipline and its associated interests, some bodies of knowledge offer a more subtle texture to knowledge work discourses. For example: *technology*, inherent in the processes of knowledge production, is also used to develop theoretical models for quality control and productivity measurement, as well as codifying and storing knowledge (Drucker, 1969; Bell, 1993); the *law*, in which ownership of exchange value derived from discourses of intellectual property and organisational assets is bound up with issues of ownership and access to knowledge (Teece, 1998; Morris, 2001); *government* regulations act to protect national and corporate knowledge interests in a global environment, including the establishment of specialised global institutions to monitor and act against those who breach these laws (Reich, 1991; Hargreaves, 2000; Maskus, 2000); *education* offers programmed learning and structured

theory development within bodies of knowledge, institutions and organisations (Drucker, 1993; Garrick and Clegg, 2000); *management* devises measures for productivity of knowledge workers and assesses the value of knowledge produced for organisational owners (Drucker, 1999; Davis and Naumann, 1999); knowledge work has *economic* value that is exchanged within competitive markets (Boisot, 1998; Davenport *et al*, 1998), which has an effect on *organisations* and institutions, since they are beneficiaries of such economic valuation (Teece, 1998).

Implicit within these particular conceptions of knowledge work practices are power relations with definite interests vested in them (Foucault, 1977; 1980; Deetz, 1994b; Clegg and Palmer, 1996). These interests determine content and value of new knowledge. Interests so vested also enable laws to be made regarding ownership and access to new knowledge and devise means of surveillance and measurement of aspects of both knowledge production and knowledge producers.

Various strategies are developed and applied in order to mine the resource that is knowledge for benefit of organisational entities. A transformation has occurred in discourses of knowledge acquisition from an apprenticeship-based form of on-the-job learning to one of organisationally mapping knowledge sharing activities that occur within a CoP of knowledge workers. The transformation facilitates prescription of how knowledge work should be performed. It shows how new objects are admitted into discourse. Direct discursive connections between CoPs and knowledge work, organisational learning, organisational knowledge, knowledge management, knowledge creation, and innovation, are clearly visible.

More dispersed networks that reflect CoPs as a discursive object include intellectual property, knowledge intensive firms and globalisation. Embeddedness of CoPs within managerial and organisational discourses emerges through a need to capture and own the intangibility of knowledge work practices. There is further dispersion of objects relating to knowledge work into distal discourses that are influence by conceptions of knowledge work and in turn, are influenced by them. The following

section examines how more remote connections with knowledge work serve to disperse dominant managerial conceptions more broadly.

2.8.1 Distal discourses influencing knowledge work

Interconnections and interrelationships among discrete discourses also facilitate emergence of other discourses that combine elements of these multiple discrete discourses. Not only do economic conceptions of value and ownership embedded in a knowledge work discourse give rise to discourses of knowledge management and learning, but conceptions about knowledge work have become integrated with and influence economic discourses. Here, too, when invoked, themes and statements of knowledge work provide touchstones for economic discourses, whereby multiple discourses interconnect at various times and bring forth new objects and new discourses.

For example, continuing demand by organisations for knowledge ownership is also supported by discourses about 'professionalisation' of knowledge, giving rise to new types of organisations that are reliant on a market for knowledge as a product/service. While these organisations have existed for hundreds of years in the form of accounting firms, legal practices, insurance companies, financial advisory firms, now they enter the knowledge arena as 'knowledge intensive firms' (Starbuck, 1992). Discursive objects of the 'knowledge-intensive firm' or KIF (Starbuck, 1992; Alvesson, 1995; 2001) and 'productive knowledge' (Drucker, 1993) have emerged from knowledge work discourses but are also representative objects in economic discourses in their own right.

In KIF discourses, knowledge is a competitive offering to the marketplace; is part of a service and product suite offered by organisations (Tsoukas, 1996), or it has become a sub-categorisation, such as Hargadon's (1998) 'knowledge broker', which defines KIFs as firms that combine existing knowledge in new ways. These interlinking discourses retextualise the meanings of the knowledge work discourse to refocus it more clearly within organisational and management discourses, as well as those of a

management- knowledge-technology discourse and an extended social milieu of human interaction.

Another discursive variant is that of 'knowledge creation' (Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995) that is no longer a fuzzy and inspirational *ad hoc* process but is redefined as a set of routines and processes in which tacit knowledge is made explicit. Discourses of knowledge creation intersect with discourses of knowledge management, communities of practice and KIFs, as well as with discourses of organisational and management control (Kaplan and Norton, 1996; 2007; Hargadon, 1998; Foss and Pederson, 2002). Indeed, knowledge creation discourses have much in common with knowledge work discourses in that they incorporate objects of tacit knowledge and problem solving and recognise the humanness that is knowledge. These discourses influence and are in turn influenced by knowledge management discourses, particularly where the latter involves technological systems for management of knowledge.

Further discursive development continues to occur, as organisational authorities attempt more tightly to bind knowledge work discourses within legitimising frameworks that reflect their interests. By holding up the tenets of knowledge work discourses as aligned to larger discourses of globalisation and international markets, authorities aim to curb and limit other perspectives about knowledge work. However, activities that delimit the boundaries of discourse through specifying, categorising, regrouping, classifying and interrelating are frequently contested, with alternative and competing conceptions forming, as well as sub-discourses emerging as variations of the master discourse.

As other discourses interrelate with the knowledge work discourse, they leave an imprint on the way knowledge work is perceived. In exchange, they adopt those concepts of knowledge work that serve their particular interests. For example, discourses of economics have structured the way knowledge work is perceived as a marketable product or service that has economic value for organisations (Garrick and Clegg, 2000).

In turn, knowledge work has been adopted by economic discourses and has elevated the importance of firms, and indeed countries, that have a predominance of creative problem solving. Knowledge products are marketable and become valued economic differentiators from other firms and countries (Alvesson, 1995). And of course, in both political and social *ouevres*, the new difference between developed and developing countries is no longer the degree of industrialisation but rather, the quantity and quality of knowledge they can generate (Hargreaves, 2000). Hence, knowledge work is highly valued as an economic, social and political differentiator inextricably linked to professional status and progress of knowledge workers, one which attempts to close off alternative or conflicting conceptions of a knowledge discourse.

Current knowledge discourses dominate any possible questioning of ownership of knowledge produced in favour of an organisation. Knowledge workers are 'encouraged' not to contest transition of knowledge ownership to the organisation. By relinquishing ownership of the knowledge they produce in favour of the organisation, the trade-off for knowledge workers is high organisational status, although, such status seems to be under threat. In this way, knowledge work becomes interlinked with discourses of intellectual capital and organisational assets.

Productivity of knowledge workers and assessment of quantity of knowledge produced then links knowledge work with principles of rationality and utility through codification, measurement and assessment in accounting and financial discourses. Knowledge work discourses become reconnected with technology, further consolidating a management-knowledge-technology nexus. These discourses come with an additional object, in the guise of socially-accepted behaviours, as a cooperative means of creating value for an organisation through knowledge work projects. With cooperative practices, we can now see reconnection with discourses of communities of practices that link with broader discourses of organisational teamwork as sanctioned and legitimate social interactions. Sharing of knowledge, ostensibly to make tacit knowledge explicit, is expressed in rhetorical terms of naturalness and neutrality and positive managerial attitudes to social interactions that

occur within designed work environments and replicate more personalised social environments.

Interconnecting nodal points between a discourse of knowledge work and other adjacent discourses have been explored, as have the power effects that serve to energise them. Other discourses have served to further tighten conceptual boundaries around knowledge work. They do this by attempting to limit contribution of knowledge to that of economic value only, via an intersection of managing knowledge through technological means. Economic value is gained by both an organisation and individual knowledge worker. At the same time, knowledge work now appears as a key object in economics discourse.

Organisational status of knowledge workers is reflected in discourses of knowledge work, knowledge communities of practice and knowledge management. These knowledge discourses are indirectly influenced by discourses of individual rewards but also, they are outcomes of power effects as trade-offs in equity between knowledge sharing and organisational status.

2.9   KNOWLEDGE WORK AS AN ORGANISING CATEGORY: COHERENCE & CONTRADICTION

As discussed earlier, the term knowledge work is problematic in that it does not represent a discrete occupation or role and tends to be amorphous (Scarbrough, 1999). An individual who performs knowledge work may be at the same time an architect, a medical practitioner, a supervisor in a manufacturing line or an advertising account manager, since each works with knowledge. However, an individual can work with knowledge without it being categorised as economic work, such as the work of an artist, or a missionary, or a philosopher (Machlup, 1980 [1962]). Individuals who perform knowledge work generally do not make reference to themselves as knowledge workers; rather, this is an organising category imposed on them by others. And the problems of knowledge work as an organising category do not stop there. It is debatable whether knowledge work is

an outcome (such as an advertisement) or a process (such as developing a media campaign). It may be both. Or it may see-saw between working with knowledge as a process to create a knowledge product that is then reapplied as a process for something else (such as a market research questionnaire that is used as the basis of a market research report that is then used to develop a marketing strategy).

Some clarification is achieved through Reich's (1991: 177-180) definition of a symbolic analyst that directly associates with aspects of knowledge work, such as problem identification, solving and brokering of solutions. Since symbolic analysis manipulates intangible ideas, symbols and images, it can be aligned with solutions of a business nature which can be traded worldwide (Reich, 1991: 177). Reich suggests that symbolic analysts tend to command great responsibilities and corresponding wealth (Reich, 1991: 178). Individuals could expect to gain strong identity from membership of such an important category. Yet, this is not necessarily the case and highlights a second problem associated with knowledge work as an organising category.

The categories of knowledge work and knowledge worker – attributed to individuals who perform knowledge work – tend to be used almost exclusively by academics and those involved in information technology, and not by the universe of those who reasonably could be expected to identify with the category. It is not an ordinary numbers' categorisation device. It may well be that the newness of knowledge work as an organising category and the discursive 'capital' associated with it is not yet established and remains unclear. We don't know yet what it means to be a knowledge worker – the identity is not established fully and the broadness of the category, which interconnects with many other more tightly-defined organising categories, makes it somewhat ambiguous.

As an organising category, knowledge work differs from other traditional professions or fields of expertise in that its practitioners work *with* knowledge *per se*, whereas professions *draw from* a body of knowledge (Scarbrough, 1999: 7). Institutionalisation of knowledge work into a *corpus* of knowledge, and knowledge practitioners into professional CoPs (Brown and Duguid, 1991) do not occur as easily or in the same way as for other professional occupations and roles,

since knowledge work engages with many diverse types of knowledge. It disallows traditional notions of defining organising categories, such that knowledge practitioners are designated and normalised within traditional occupational categories as architect, business analyst, marketing consultant, and so on.

Further, representations of organising categories for the variety of knowledge practices change over time as alternative conceptions are disseminated and gain credence. Representations depend on context and the interests of those participating in discourse; those whose identities are bound up in particular representations and what interests and relations might best be served by their intact reproduction (Foucault, 1977; Clegg, 1989). Each discursive conception about knowledge work stems from a particular field of knowledge with which legitimating authorities are aligned, and whose normalised view about knowledge work represents its particular interests. Moreover, like other fields of knowledge, interconnections with and relationships to other discourses further serve to identify those who are included and excluded from the organising category of knowledge work.

It is not only authorities from different fields of knowledge who direct how particular conceptions about a discursive object come to be seen. Objects discursively constructed within aligned discourses also influence conceptions about knowledge work, whose discursive objects are, in turn, reflected in these other fields of knowledge with which the knowledge work discourse intersects and interacts. However, the iterative processes of influencing and being influenced by other discourses do not necessarily produce cohesion and consensus within discourse. Instead, admission of new objects to a discourse generates tension and and may create internal contradiction.

Contradictions between and among objects in intersecting discourses of discursive networks need not be dissipated, overcome, or radicalised into cause and effect, but may be described in themselves as objects of interest (Foucault, 1972: 169). Contradictions may give rise to incoherence and irregularities within a discourse, in which incompatible propositions or sets of meanings fragment the discourse

and its internal cohesion (Foucault, 1972: 166). Yet, as Foucault points out, contradiction is not subordinate to the logical coherence of a discourse, rather it is through contradiction that discourse is revitalised, challenged, changed, and transformed (Foucault, 1972: 168). He says,

> Discourse is the path from one contradiction to another: if it gives rise to those that can be seen, it is because it obeys that which it hides. To analyse discourse is to hide and reveal contradictions; it is to show the play that they set up within it; it is to manifest how it can express them, embody them, or give them a temporary appearance (Foucault, 1972: 168-169).

There are other implications, and indeed, power effects arising through contradictions, ambiguity and uncertainty surrounding different conceptions of knowledge work. Specifically, implications relate to how knowledge work practitioners, who are implicated in and constituted by discourse, come to terms with the complexity of discursive themes about it. Do they see evolutionary and revolutionary processes of discursive development as antithetical to their practical experiences of knowledge work? Are discursive contradictions such that they hold little resonance for practitioners so that they independently develop their own discourses, which may challenge the dominance of the 'legitimate' versions? Further, do knowledge work practitioners question the veracity of a legitimised discourse of knowledge work as it relates to their immersion in practice, or do they use official discourses as resources within their explanatory cultural stories, while reproducing and transforming them into a more resonant reality? These are important questions which are investigated and addressed subsequently in the thesis, specifically Chapter 7.

Finessing of exploratory discourses into prescriptive ones from the late 1990s reflects the emergence of conditions for globalisation of businesses and its resulting competition. Through historical conditions that enable a discourse to form, discourses of a learning organisation and knowledge management interconnect with discourses of globalisation, measurement and control, and in turn, influence the trajectories of OL, LO and knowledge management discourses. Contradiction is evident in determination by management authorities who try to delimit boundaries of the dominant discourse to control production and reproduction of discourse to organisational processes and rational systems. At the

same time, they work an exclusion effect on the idiosyncratic and organisationally-imperfect human beings who are the creators of knowledge.

Recent knowledge discourses show a pattern of developing prescriptive formulations that were based on earlier observations of processes of knowledge creation and dissemination. One key observation is that the objects of knowledge work and the knowledge worker are now virtually missing from these discourses. A pivotal feature of the work of knowledge becomes extracted from these later discourses, as legitimising authorities in organisations and academia delimit boundaries of the discourse and continue the shift of knowledge work and knowledge worker to the perimeter. Indeed, the boundaries of knowledge work discourse have succeeded, at least temporarily, in separating the work from the knowledge, knowledge from the knower and excluded both from the discourse.

As has been shown, the upper topographical level of the contemporary knowledge work landscape shows only glimpses of its connections with knowledge workers. Indeed, the importance of 'knowledge workers' has largely been extracted from these discourses; it requires careful consideration actually to recognise there is a human contribution at all. Huber (1991: 95, Table 1) suggests that human beings are inhibitors of organisational learning by restricting information distribution (sharing) of 'soft' (tacit) knowledge, which problematises transfer and management of their knowledge. More recently, the problems of knowledge transfer and 'stickiness' of 'best practices' identified by Szulanski (1996) have come in for prescriptive modelling as Szulanski and Cappetta (2003) develop their typology for ensuring stickiness or knowledge transfer occurs.

2.10   CONCLUSION

The chapter has carefully reviewed knowledge work and associated literatures to explain the various interpretations, describing both dominant and alternative discourses of knowledge work. Throughout the chapter, these dominant and

alternative discourses have been employed to build a deep and critical analysis of the knowledge work discourse.

The chapter then showed how statements about knowledge work have been transformed as they are taken up by other interconnecting discourses, which may be transmuted and transformed further. It explained how other knowledge discourses have arisen from the discourses of knowledge work through attachment to other objects in organisational and managerial discourses. Such discourses as knowledge management, knowledge creation, organisational knowledge, organisational learning, and intellectual property, define and refine the boundaries of knowledge work discourses. Control of discursive boundaries is achieved by the ways in which statements about knowledge work are filtered through other institutional fields of knowledge, such as economics, technology, law, and society. It has been shown that discursive statements are cloaked in a positive rhetoric that speaks of the acceptability, neutrality and normality of certain social behaviours, and by excluding those human qualities that seek to maintain control over human knowledge.

In deconstructing the various statements embedded in the discourses of knowledge work, networks of related and even distant discourses have been teased out. Interconnecting discourses exert potent influences on the way knowledge work discourse has been formed, is communicated and is practiced. Knowledge work discourse, like other discourses, is mutable and transient through changeable representations that are influenced by statements and objects from other discourses in other fields of knowledge. In turn, statements about knowledge work are taken up by other discourses and further disseminated, thus anchoring discursive conceptions, even if only for a short time.

The chapter also showed that power permeates all aspects of knowledge work discourse and cannot be erased by normalised and utilitarian views that purport to be natural and neutral or even true. Power relationships define the meanings ascribed to knowledge work through strategies of inclusion and exclusion. Such strategies can be found, for example, in economics through initiatives to control commercial resources, global competitiveness, and through encouragement and enabling of consumption behaviours; within law through its legal frameworks that

defines knowledge work as owned by corporations rather than individuals and protects such ownership with punitive intellectual property laws; within organisations that seek to capture, control and exploit knowledge assets and intellectual capital for competitive advantage; within management in its endeavours to control, measure and predict appropriate productivity levels for those who create and produce knowledge; and within discourses of professionalisation that seek to affirm career advancement through acculturation and 'citizen-like' behaviours in organisational contexts.

The chapter has shown that such discursive strategies serve the interests of a power elite and challenge a taken-for-granted notion that knowledge work is subject to rational progress, or that the dominant discourse is natural and normal. Legitimation of particular discursive conceptions of knowledge work exerts inclusion-exclusion practices by attempting to affix the boundaries of discourse. Through political processes and by means of rhetorical artifice, they have attained legitimacy and become the dominant discourses. Managerial interests are shown to name, frame and apply normative controls to knowledge production and knowledge products. Through a discursive power regime of legitimation – and delegitimation – management wrests control of knowledge from knowledge workers who know it and create it, and place it firmly in the hands of the organisation which sponsors it. Analysis of these legitimising processes has revealed how a discourse of knowledge management has emerged to assume control over aspects of the ambiguous and tenuous knowledge work discourse, through measurement and routinising knowledge creation and production.

Questions remain about the degree of closure sustained by knowledge work discourse. There are further questions about the legitimacy of the dominant knowledge work discourse that need to be resolved, insofar that they can, through empirical research. Chapter 7 continues the story of legitimacy about knowledge work from the current chapter – as the official story – to investigate what is the actual story according to those who are constituted by the discourse and, indeed, practice it – the knowledge workers.

The next chapter examines and critiques the methodology that is used to analyse and understand how knowledge practitioners give meaning to knowledge praxis. The methodological chapter is followed by two historical contextualising chapters, the first of which explores how and why a knowledge work discourse emerged in a particular form at the time that it did. The second responds to the second research question that asks, haven't we always worked with knowledge by repositioning the discourse of knowledge work within an earlier period and shows that, even without the organising category we know as knowledge work, yes, we have indeed worked with knowledge; we have just conceptualised it differently. At the same time, this chapter rebuts the contemporary world view of a knowledge society being radically different from its antecedents.

CHAPTER 3

DISCOURSE AS A LEGITIMISING PROCESS: GENEALOGY AS METHODOLOGY

> 'Reality' is what we take to be true. What we take to be true is what we believe. What we believe is based upon our perceptions. What we perceive depends on what we look for. What we look for depends upon what we think. What we think depends upon what we perceive. What we perceive determines what we believe. What we believe determines what we take to be true. What we take to be true determines our reality. (Zukav, 1979: 328)

> A discourse not only produces knowledge of a certain object, it produces and reproduces the object itself, and, above all, it produces and spreads (perhaps forces upon us) a certain conception of the object. (Daudi, 1986: 242)

Meanings generally ascribed to discourses, such as knowledge work, do not necessarily inscribe all of their nuances at all times and in all contexts, and meanings held to be common are merely those that are fixed temporarily. How such meanings are attributed and interpreted are the subject of the chapter. The aim of the chapter is twofold: first, to explain how genealogy, as the preferred method of analysis, explores processes through which knowledge work is legitimised as discourse, and, second, to contribute to broader themes of discourse analysis within management and organisation theory.

The chapter lays out the tools that will be used to analyse knowledge work discourse as a historically-constituting process in the thesis. In the first instance, archaeology as a possible methodological framework is described and critiqued. Genealogy is then introduced as a critique of archaeology, before these two methods are assembled as a single mode of analysis, which is then extended and justified as the methodology appropriate for the research project. As genealogy, the combined method is again held up for scrutiny.

I argue that Foucault offers us a suitable research toolkit in his analytical methodologies of archaeology and genealogy, which can be used to examine how discursive practices are historically constituted, gain legitimacy, are reproduced,

disseminated and transformed. The study of language and texts as integral to an understanding of reality is a fundamental concept behind archaeological and genealogical perspectives for discourse analysis (Foucault, 1972; Clegg, 1975; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). Language constructs and informs its own reality and should be conceptualised and understood in its relation to other texts and contexts, rather than being validated against some external truth. Foucault says that discourse is not just a relationship between reality and language (linguistics or semiotics), it performs a different task: discourse reveals practices (Foucault, 1972: 54).

Kendall and Wickham (1999) describe archaeology and genealogy in the following way:

> Where archaeology provides us with a snapshot, a slice through a discursive nexus, genealogy pays attention to the processual aspects of the web of discourse – its ongoing character (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 31)

For our purposes, both are important and since archaeology comes first in the sequence of Foucault's writings, its nature is explained in the first instance.

The analogy of archaeology is apt in that the method describes certain characteristics of discourse that may be considered to be rules of formation (Foucault, 1972). In archaeology, Foucault lays out artefacts and cultural objects that become visible when a particular discourse is interrogated. Since archaeology is essentially descriptive, it describes the processes of discursive formation and development. Archaeology spreads before us the objects of a particular discourse, statements about those objects, who has made statements and with what authority, and how statements and objects of discourse permeate other discourses, thereby influencing these other discourses and, in turn, being influenced by them. Discursive nexus is how Foucault describes the linkages between and among discourses at a particular point in time (Foucault, 1972).

Genealogy comes later in Foucault's writings (1980; 1981; 1988) and builds on the descriptive nature of archaeology. It examines processes of how certain statements came to be made about some objects and not others, how objects of

discourse gained particular meanings but not others, and how and why discourses transform – not only that they do transform, which is part of the descriptive mode of archaeology – but also whose interests are served by intact reproduction of discourses or their transformations. These are power effects and, here, genealogy is used to examine such power relationships.

In the chapter, I argue that a synthesis of archaeology and genealogy addresses both 'big picture' questions explored in an archaeological method as a 'snapshot' in time, while also addressing detailed processes through a localised genealogical analysis of power relations. The methodological toolkit used here facilitates exploration of how concepts, ideas and texts are inextricably linked and become constituted as a discourse: a way of speaking things into being that is not only recognisable as doing so but that also succeeds in its project (Foucault, 1972; Clegg, 1998).

The opportunity for scope and depth in using both archaeology and genealogy as a combined method of analysis, facilitates a thorough investigation of how power and its negotiations are implicated in the constitution of a contemporary knowledge work discourse, so that modern practices can be appropriately embedded in historical antecedents (Foucault, 1982; 1980). While these antecedents engage with a history of contemporary knowledge work praxis, they are also constrained and legitimised effects of power. Other histories may give rise to other meanings, as this chapter will expound. Archaeology/genealogy has provided a framework of analysis for the previous chapter, as it will for subsequent chapters, to explore the influence that historically-constituted practices have on contemporary practices and how they legitimise or constrain such contemporary practices. For the purposes of the thesis, praxis is defined as action or practices in opposition to speculation of a philosophical or theoretical nature (Abercrombie *et al*, 1994: 331, citing Lefebvre, 1968; The Macquarie Encyclopaedic Dictionary, 1990: 742).

Although historical analysis is typical of many research projects, its purpose here is not to play a straightforward and undifferentiated role, merely establishing a background from which to launch my particular research project. Typically,

historical information is used mostly to describe the setting of and explanation for thematic considerations to be studied (Mills, 2003), so that consideration of the past becomes only a reflection of current circumstances. If that were an objective of the thesis, the past would be seen as it unfolds to a future already occupied; a teleological trajectory that attempts to establish an idea of progressive rationalism that has been around since concerns of 'Enlightenment' scholars first became apparent. However, Foucault does not ascribe to teleology in either archaeology or genealogy, as the chapter argues.

Rather than unreflexively adopting Sir Isaac Newton's purported advice that one should 'stand on the shoulders of giants', we will pick through footprints left by the feet of historic thinkers better to understand circumstances through which their modes of thinking emerged and developed, and how their networks of thought evolved. Since the contexts and circumstances that influenced earlier thinking also legitimised and constrained our predecessors' conceptions of knowledge work, I will argue that historical constitution and reconstitution of these discourses are imbued with hidden power effects that directly and indirectly flavour contemporary conceptions. As Chapters 4 and 5 will show, these constituted histories provide a rich data source to enhance our understanding of contemporary practices.

In order to show how a modern discourse of knowledge work has been guided through particular representations and sustained by specific discursive practices, the present chapter explores methodological concepts and arguments proposed for the thesis. The methodological framework for analysing legitimising processes of knowledge work through the formation and development of the discourse will be established. Foucault's archaeological and genealogical perspectives will be differentiated before they are assembled to provide a comprehensive analytic method. Under the *imprimatur* of genealogy, the method will provide a means with which to elucidate how discourses emerge, develop, become embedded and institutionalised, and illuminates the power relationships implicit in these processes.

3.1   ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS & ARGUMENTS

Foucault (1969, in Lotringer, 1989) explains archaeology by setting out four large questions that define an archaeological investigation,

> What are the different particular types of discursive practice that one can find in a given period? What are the relationships that one can establish between these different practices? What relationships do they have with non-discursive practices, such as political, social, or economic practices? What are the transformations of which these practices are susceptible? (Cohen and Saller, 1994: 57, citing a 1969 interview in Lotringer, 1989: 59)

These are significant questions in the context of the thesis. I will argue that it is an understanding of discursive practices and the relationships between and among these practices, and what Foucault describes as non-discursive practices or contexts, which influence discourse and its representations. Moreover, as non-discursive practices vary within local contexts and across contexts, so, too, do the types of discourses that emerge and develop. Over time, discourses are transformed as they are influenced by, and in turn influence, non-discursive conditions.

Foucault's archaeology is a strategy of analysis whereby he defines and names a system of rules that produce, organise and distribute a series of statements to become a discourse (Foucault, 1972). Kendall and Wickam (1999) observe that

> Archaeology helps us to explore the networks of what is said, and what can be seen in a set of social arrangements: in the conduct of an archaeology, one finds out something about the visible in "opening up" statements and something about the statement in "opening up visibilities" (Kendall and Wickam, 1999: 25)

Foucault (1972) explains that an archaeological analysis is concerned with an archival and historical basis for understanding discourse through its patterns and regularities, as well as its transformations. Archaeological analysis does not offer explanations about historical facts or interpretations; rather, it describes conditions under which discourses can arise, develop and transform (Foucault, 1972). Under different circumstances, a discourse may never have been conceptualised or may have developed quite differently, as the text from Zukav (1979) that introduces the chapter describes.

Archaeological method enables us to investigate a topic of interest or a problem rather than a particularised subject. It decentres concerns about the 'truth' of accounts about the subject in question and places them within the historical conditions of their emergence and development, demonstrating that these are, at best, local, partial and parochial (Donnelly, 1986; Foucault, 1980; Hunnicutt, 2006). Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982: 96) argue that since there is no deep meaning or concealed origin in history or outside it, for an archaeologist the search for hermeneutic foundations is unachievable. In using archaeology, one cannot make truth claims, and so, an archaeologist's discourse is ahistorical (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 96). Foucault explains,

> … [M]y main concern has been with changes. In fact, two things in particular struck me: the suddenness and thoroughness with which certain sciences were sometimes reorganized; and the fact that at the same time similar changes occurred in apparently very different disciplines. (Foucault, 1970: xii)

Archaeology as a methodology explores how change occurs in bodies of knowledge and forms of knowledge, that is, how a new concept or a new theory appears (Foucault, 1970). Foucault proposed archaeology as a system of analysis that explores how change occurs but, at the same time, avoids imposing cultural totalities, world views, consensus, and homogeneity (Foucault 1972: 17).

Instead, Foucault provides us with a rigorous method through which to analyse conflict and opposition between present knowledge structures and their historical development. A Foucauldian archaeological methodology provides an analytical framework to investigate how a discourse – a group of statements – attaches to and interrelates with other discourses. It reveals how events, contexts and discourses that occur outside of the specific discourse/discursive practices/social practices being studied may strongly influence the formation and development of the discourse in question and reveal how certain meaning options are inscribed within the discourse while others are closed off.

The method also reveals how the aforementioned giants become authorities of delimitation and how a discourse is disseminated across other fields of knowledge to be taken up by other authorities. Through this process, some meanings gain

dominance while others are delegated as subordinate or alternative. Further, authorities from various institutional fields of knowledge use specific conceptions in relation to a discourse, strengthening and multiplying those conceptions through presenting and representing them in similar ways, while further closing off other ways of perceiving.

Most importantly, archaeological analysis provides a richer understanding of the discourse studied through its relationships with other discourses and discursive practices within its historical context. As the archaeological metaphor implies, an object of a discourse emerges from beneath the surface of meanings via an intricate network of historical relationships that are simultaneously and sequentially cultural, social, political and economic. The following section explains Foucault's rules of formation of a discourse.

3.1.1   Rules of Formation of a Discourse

> In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality. (Foucault, 1981: 52)

Foucault (1972) argues that formation of a discourse is subject to certain rules. When Foucault discusses the elements of archaeology, he describes surfaces of emergence (historical contexts), authorities of delimitation (those who are legitimised as authorities by their specific fields of knowledge) and grids of specification (modes of distributing objects and statements of a discourse through other fields of knowledge).

Discursive objects are specified in particular ways by 'authorities' who are legitimated by institutional fields of knowledge to decide what should be included or excluded from a discourse. Inherent within discursive objects are particularities and specificities of the historical context within which they are formed and that constitute conditions of possibility for their construction and emergence as a discourse.

Foucault (1972) explains that discourse is simply a group of practices – praxis – that is named and described in particular ways. Discourse presents a kind of 'unity' in terms of its "reconstruction after the event, based on particular works, successive theories, notions and themes some of which had been abandoned, others maintained by tradition, and again others fated to fall into oblivion only to be revived at a later date" (Foucault, 1972: 51).

Foucault explores the question of how an object becomes located in particular fields of knowledge (Foucault, 1972: 53). He says that discourse is not characterised by privileged objects (statements) but by the broad dispersion of similar statements across many fields of knowledge. Formation of discursive statements or objects is made possible through simultaneous or sequential intersections of historical events and authoritative discussants who establish discursive boundaries and who use similar systems of categorisation (Foucault, 1972: 49). Even so, relationships among discursive statements are at best tenuous and may emerge from different fields of knowledge with different authors and as a result of different kinds of events (Foucault, 1972: 31-32).

Foucault argues that the effectiveness of discourse directly relates to its dispersion, allowing it to dominate competing discourses (Foucault, 1972: 41). Domination of a discourse occurs when a system of statements about an object is dispersed across different fields of knowledge, when there is a diversity and quantity of experts and authorities who participate in a discourse, and when there are many strong connections among fields outside of the practices prescribed by a specific object (Foucault, 1972: 41). When multiple statements that have thematic coherence are developed and constructed independent of each other in different fields of knowledge and are taken up by 'experts' to form a 'unit' of ideas, which are then re-dispersed into other fields of knowledge, this process of connecting, relating and dispersing thematic statements is the basis of discursive formation and development of a theory concerning a particular object (Foucault, 1972).

Foucault (1972) proposes that discourse formation is accomplished through adjacency to and invocation of other extant discourses and the institutional

support and legitimacy that they have secured. He argues that an emerging discourse needs to produce similar thematic ideas, concepts and statements to those already located and accepted in different fields of knowledge. These series of statements coalesce into a unity that is at the same time anchored intertextually to elements in other discourses with which they resonate.

Discursive statements are bound together by sets of conditions and rules that interact with each other, are interrelated, and allow construction and development of a discourse. However, rules are suffused with power, since they are codes and procedures for inclusion and exclusion (Daudi, 1986). A discourse seeks to totalise its discursive object and in so doing, it tries to close off other refractory and fragmentary discourses that may serve to shift discursive boundaries (Foucault, 1972). Thresholds of a discourse need to be examined, since what is outside the boundaries defines what is contained within (Foucault 1972; Daudi, 1986: 232-123). Thus, we need to establish the diversity and disparity of discourses that give rise to rules governing formation of a particular discursive object (Delaporte, 1994: 139), which, for our purposes will be knowledge work.

Foucault also suggests that discourses and their elements are defeasible: they remain tenuous, mutable and potentially unstable – subject to power effects that work to sustain them in the context of a contested space. They remain subject to discontinuity, interruption, merger, transformation, de-formation and reformation. Discourses and their elements can also be displaced, overturned, invaded, corrupted, polluted and are subject to death and decay. Although discourses may be inherently unstable and temporary, and lack consensus, they achieve a coherence, however temporary, which enables them to lay claim to knowledge statements and to exhibit power effects within the particular domains they describe and inscribe – they form a distinct body of knowledge (Foucault, 1972).

At the level of formation of objects of a discourse, Foucault identifies conditions of possibility in rules of formation, which he designates as: surfaces of emergence; authorities of delimitation; and grids of specification (Foucault, 1972: 44-47). These conditions of formation are explained in the following three sub-sections.

3.1.1.1 Surfaces of emergence

Ways in which discursive objects are specified are influenced by variability of historical context during which they are formed. These contexts, which Foucault (1972) calls surfaces of emergence, are historical conditions enabling a discourse to form. They include political, economic, social and cultural arenas/conditions. They also work to delineate a discourse and define the boundaries that mark what is included and excluded (Foucault, 1972: 45; Daudi, 1986: 152). Such surfaces pre-exist emergence of a new discourse, but may become differently organised as the discourse emerges and may form into fresh relationships with new surfaces of emergence. In archeological terms, the tectonic plates of discursive formation shift and resettle.

Specificity and particularity of historical conditions are unique, so that conditions of formation of a discourse are also unique. And since historical conditions change, so, too, boundaries of a discourse are osmotic and may include new objects while excluding others. Further, although there may be similarities with other historical conditions, each is serendipitous in coming together and organising differently.

In Chapter 4, as conditions of formation of a knowledge work discourse are specifically explored; surfaces of emergence that enabled knowledge work discourse to emerge in the way that it did and at that particular time will be analysed. Historical conditions of a political, economic and social nature were organised in a particular way at that time rather than another, to provide pre-discursive conditions for emergence of the discourse. Under other conditions, knowledge work discourse may have been constituted differently, as Chapter 5 shows.

3.1.1.2   Authorities of delimitation

Validité! Normativité! Réalité! (Foucault, 1972: 68) describe the methods used by authorities of delimitation of a discourse to work acceptance and adoption of objects and statements of a discourse. Drawing on Foucault's formation of concepts and the requisite rules that characterised 'General Grammar' of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, discourse also defines its own domains of validity, normativity and actuality (Foucault, 1972: 68).

Discursive statements about something – 'objects' in Foucault's argot – are made by those whose legitimacy, authority and expertise are accredited by institutional fields of knowledge, which act as what he calls authorities of delimitation. Authorities of delimitation control discursive formation by determining what is included and what is excluded. Authorities are responsible for defining and policing the boundaries of a discourse and include those individuals and groups who assume the status of authority through their legitimated knowledge of the object/subject that a discourse lays claim to. For example, business discourse constructs the subject position of manager – and provides an authority and location to talk in a certain way about objects in a business discourse.

Establishment of who may be considered to be an authority is also a recursive process and discursive effect wherein discourse constructs subject positions (Foucault, 1980; Clegg, 1998; Howarth, 2002). These are variable with respect to their location in a discourse and their legitimacy in talking about its objects (Foucault, 1972). Authority is legitimated through subject positions within a discourse, which will often have institutional association or accreditation attached to it, and in turn, is often legitimated by designated institutional status and pedagogical systems designed to maintain the elite structure of the privileged (Daudi, 1986: 233-234).

At the same time, a discourse constitutes institutions in a field of knowledge, which then reflexively and hermetically supports the discourse. For example, a discourse about knowledge management includes texts that specify those people

and those institutions that are seen as legitimate and credible to talk about knowledge management, such as universities and academics, and corporations, management and IT professionals (Fuller, 2002). Other institutions and persons are excluded through the same movement, for example, people in the arts, and service and manual workers. It is the authorities of legitimation that constitute and are constituted by a broader institutional field which supports both legitimate discourse and discursive authorities – those responsible for delineating contours of a discourse and policing its boundaries. In effect, authorities control truth claims concerning a particular field of knowledge, as well as integrity of a discourse (Daudi, 1986: 233-234).

Foucault explains a domain of validity as establishing criteria for discussing truth or falsehood, and inclusion or exclusion of particular concepts and statements within a discourse. A domain of normativity gives order, rules and standards of correctness to statements within a discourse; so that some may be excluded as irrelevant, while others are marginalised or derided as unimportant or unscientific. Finally, a domain of actuality provides boundaries to reality, so that problems relating to the present are defined, articulated and separated from those of the past (which are presumed to be no longer relevant), as well as solutions used to address real problems (Foucault, 1972: 68).

Foucault (1972) states that the legitimacy of authority to make statements concerning an object of discourse is bound up in roles of validation by institutional fields, and constituted and reflexively sustained by discourse. Legitimated authorities establish rules and norms, and judge individuals and groups with respect to their adherence to such rules and norms. They also make decisions about how deviance and deviants will be dealt with, so that once discourse achieves praxis (or reflects praxis), functional roles for policing boundaries of a discourse have been articulated (Daudi, 1986: 151). The process is neither natural nor neutral, rather it is political and arbitrary, since establishment of boundaries of a discourse, to what ends, and their policing is clearly a power effect.

While authorities of delimitation come from established fields of knowledge, in situations where such fields are not established or are in the process of being established, rules of acceptance and adoption of discursive objects are particularly important to those who are implicated within and by an emerging discourse as practitioners, rather than theory-builders. Rules are tools used to establish *prima facie* evidence of authority by practitioners in emerging knowledge fields such as knowledge work. Moreover, it is important for practitioners to employ the official discourse since to challenge it openly would also challenge their legitimacy and acceptability to participate as practitioners. Chapter 7 analyses this further in relation to empirical research in the thesis.

3.1.1.3   Grids of specification

In exploring how an object becomes located in particular fields of knowledge, Foucault says that discourse is not characterised by privileged objects (statements) that nominate a single truth claim about a discourse, but by the broad dispersion of similar statements and themes across many fields of knowledge (Foucault, 1972: 53). Foucault calls these systems of dispersion 'grids of specification'.
As Foucault explains, formation of discursive statements or objects is made possible and legitimated through their resonance with and invocation of similar objects in adjacent or even distal discourses. They might also depend upon simultaneous or sequential intersections of particular contextual arrangements and states, such as historical events, that help to constitute a discursive object within a particular space at a particular time. Furthermore, authorities of delimitation from adjacent discourses may support an emerging discursive object, and/or may use similar systems of categorisation within an adjacent discourse (Foucault, 1972: 49). Concurrently, there is tenuousness about discursive statements and their relationships, since they emerge from different fields with different authors and as a result of different kinds of events (Foucault, 1972: 31-32).

The more dispersed a system of statements about an object across different fields of knowledge, the diversity and quantity of experts and authorities who participate in a discourse, and the plurality and strength of connections and relationships to

and among fields outside practices proscribed by a specific object, the more effective a discourse will be (Foucault, 1972: 41). Such dispersion further adds legitimacy and anchorage to an emergent discourse and facilitates its dominance relative to any competing discourses about an object.

Foucault says it is important that networks of connection are supportive of and not in competition with an emerging discourse, since appearances of unity and consensus concerning a discourse rather than fragmentation and contested meanings are crucial to achieving dominance. The process of connecting, relating and dispersing thematic statements is the basis of discursive formation and development of theory concerning a particular object (Foucault, 1972). At some point, there will be a centripetal movement as these dispersed elements coalesce into a distinctive discourse with their own specificities. Supported by authorities of legitimation from different fields of knowledge who are similarly influenced by historical events or surfaces of emergence, a discourse emerges, develops, influences other discourses and authorities of legitimation, which in turn influence it, support it or assist it to transmute.

As a description of how a discourse is formed and develops, perhaps gaining dominance, Foucault's archaeology provides a set of rules by which a researcher can analyse empirical data. However, description alone provides limited contribution to organisation and management studies and may elicit a 'so what?' response from the reader. The next section critiques archaeology as a method of analysis and paves the way for its integration with Foucault's genealogy.

3.2 CRITIQUES OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The following sections analyse some of the more significant critiques in relation to archaeology that are useful to consider in the context of discourses of management and organisational theory. At this stage, critiques are limited to archaeology. However, once a synthesis of archaeology and genealogy is proposed and argued, further critiques will be made addressing the

appropriateness of combining both methods for the analytical project undertaken in the thesis.

Critiques have been lively, even vibrant. Critiques of archaeology specifically concern questions about conceptualising relations of agency and power; types of power; from whence power is derived, and how it is used. Foucault's views about power and how it is sustained and negotiated within human relationships have polarised scholars for decades and continue to do so (see Lukes, 2005 for a recent debate).

Other critiques apply to genealogy as well as archaeology, such as history and its problematisation, concerns about truth and origins of discourse, and views that Foucault is unmethodological. These will be dealt with as critiques of genealogy. A further criticism of Foucault is that despite his stated objective not to offer a moral critique, he does so, which relates to criticality in terms of the modern critical tradition expressed by the Frankfurt School. For example, Habermas critiques Foucault's genealogical project in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Fendler, 2004, citing Habermas, 1987). For a detailed analysis of the Foucault/Habermas debate about what counts as 'critical' history, see, Fendler (2004), Bernstein (1994), Connolly (1985), Dean (1994) and Owen (1995). Although important, it is peripheral to the research and analysis project undertaken here and will not be reviewed as a general analysis. However, a specific analysis of criticality of genealogy as discourse analysis will be undertaken in section 3.4 as a response to Wickham's and Kendall's altered position in relation to use of genealogy. My analysis will be limited to Wickham and Kendall (2007) because, up to this point, they had been staunch supporters of genealogy as a method of analysis and I consider a response is necessary in order to justify my use of genealogy in the thesis.

The following sections analyse and respond to the major scholarly criticisms of archaeology and include genealogy as one of these critiques.

3.2.1 Agency & power

A significant line of criticism leveled at Foucault's archaeology is the limited role of agency and power (Taylor, 1984; Castel, 1991; Mills, 2003). Castel (1991) argues that Foucault's conception of power relations as something residing in all cultural phenomena is formulaic, simplistic and reductionist, against which Castel argues that power is always repressive, violent, arbitrary, and concerns confinement, control, segregation and exclusion (Castel, 1991: 12); an argument also posited by Giddens (1984) and Moss (1998). Their views accord with a conventional agency model of power that holds to a notion of hierarchical or sovereign power favouring ownership and appropriation of power, rather than Foucault's 1977 view of power as a facilitative non-zero-sum conception of power, discussed by Clegg (1989a: 8, 15).

Taylor (1984) enters the agency and power debate suggesting that Foucault (1976: 123-124) sets aside the 'old mode' of an individual or group exercising sovereign power over others because they are constitutive of them and come with built-in forms of domination (Taylor, 1984: 166). The example Foucault uses is the doctor/patient relationship where the doctor has both knowledge and power. Clearly, this is not power as domination that Castel and others opine, but neither is it necessarily a negotiated power relationship that Fendler (2004) suggests. Taylor adds that such domination is contextual rather than pervasive (Taylor, 1984: 167), which may be explained in the context of noting that if the patient is a plumber and the doctor seeks his professional assistance for a blocked sewer, their power roles would be reversed. This exemplifies Foucault's facilitative conception of power relations described by Clegg (1989a).

Foucault argued extensively, both implicitly and explicitly, against a repressive hypothesis, as expressed by Castel (1991). He says,

> 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; it also traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network that runs through the whole social body … (Foucault, 1980: 119).

Thus, when he argues that power is a productive – rather than repressive – mechanism that circulates in discourse, Foucault undermines modernist legislation that says that power belongs to certain people or groups of people (Fendler, 2004: 449). Indeed, it has been argued that Foucault's treatment of power is iconoclastic; amounting to a politically incorrect view, given that critical history has now been colonised by Marxian, Freudian, and the Frankfurt School notions of power (Fendler, 2004: 449; Bernstein, 1994: 222). Clegg (1989a) also rejects views proffered by scholars such as Castel, arguing that Foucault offers a critique of conventional perspectives of power and that the core of such a critique is that a conception of power needs to be emancipated from its 'sovereign' notions of prohibition to refocus on disciplinary aspects (Clegg, 1989a: 16). Thus, it becomes both facilitative and productive.

Laclau and Mouffe (1985) also engage with agency and Foucault's disciplinary conceptions of power in their ideas of hegemony and ideology as praxis through discursive legitimation of power. They suggest that within a notion of 'radical democracy' are independent struggles determined by discursive opposition to relations of subordination (Weber, 2006). Although outside the scope of the thesis, for more detailed and wide ranging discussions on the debates of sovereign and disciplinary power, see Weber (1946/1958; 1978), Clegg (1975; 1979; 1989a; 1998), Clegg *et al* (2006), Laclau and Mouffe (1985), Giddens (1984), Deetz (1992b), Haugaard (1997), and Lukes (1974; 2005) among others.

Foucault argues that the notions of power and agency encompass a broad field of power relations. He considers all relations between people to be power relations, since power is negotiated in each interaction (Foucault, 1980) and need not be repressive, violent, arbitrary, confining, controlling, segregating or excluding, as Castel (1991) suggests. Foucault's conception of power focuses on the possibilities of resistance located within power, rather than its oppression, that is, the productive possibilities of power (Foucault, 1977; 1980; 1982; 1988; Clegg, 1979; 1989a; 1989b; 1994; 1997; 1998; Deetz, 1992b; Fendler, 2004; Mills, 2003). In describing his view of power, Foucault says,

> … [I]ts effects of domination are attributed not to 'appropriation', but to
> dispositions, manoeuvers, tactics, techniques, functionings; that one should

decipher in it a network of relations constantly in tension, in activity…that one should take as its model a perpetual battle rather than a contract regulating a transaction or the conquest of a territory (Foucault 1979: 26).

Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) argue that Foucault's intention is to show that human subjects are produced historically from their social world rather than through permanent structures that may constitute or condition reality; that is, their subjectivities are mediated through power relations. Kearins and Hooper (2002: 736) consider Foucault's approach to theorising power offers an alternative to pervasively functionalist/behaviourist and more critical structuralist explanations (such as Marxism). They argue that Foucault's work straddles the "radical humanist/radical structuralist divide" and integration of both agency and structuralist perspectives provides a basis for new theorisation insights (Kearins and Hooper, 2002: 736).

Haugaard (2002) also argues against a view that power resides in permanent structures. He suggests that an archaeological account of power does not assume that power is conceptualised as pre-given and beyond time and history; it does not exist in isolation, to be appropriated by the strong against the weak but occurs relationally through difference (Haugaard, 2002: 183). Power does not pre-exist the system that observes it but is constituted by it (Foucault, 1970; Pottage, 1998). Instead, "power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of non-egalitarian and mobile relations" (Jose, 1998: 29; Foucault 1976/1984: 94). Foucault shifts the focus of analysis away from a conception of power as a possession to one of changing relations, such as manager and employee, or organisational colleagues, or members of a team (discussed in depth in the works of Clegg, 1989a; Jose, 1998; Smart, 1983; Haugaard, 2002, and many others).

Interplay and changing relationships are also addressed by Pottage (1998) in his recursive view of power, which is in some ways argued along lines similar to those espoused by Clegg (1989a) in his 'circuits of power'. Pottage (1998) argues that Foucault's model of power consists of "actions upon actions" (Pottage, 1998: 2) in which institutions or agents participating in a social order cannot claim a position of neutral observation outside of that social order. Rather, they perform actions upon actions, involving a recursive process, whereby emerging processes

and theories produce themselves out of their own contingency, distinguishing themselves from their environment, and being forced to maintain such distinction in light of a changing environment (Pottage, 1998: 4). These arguments tend to reinforce a view that Foucault engages with an 'agency' approach but in unexpected ways – that is, ways unexpected by those critical theorists of power that may require resolution and emissary-like progress in a teleological manner (Taylor, 1984).

Another critique of Foucault's agency/power perspective relates to his lack of explanation about how localised power relationships can translate into more globalised domination effects. Taylor (1984) complains that Foucault does not explain macro-contexts of power concerning groups (classes, governments, corporations) in dominant or non-dominant positions nor the relationship between micro- and macro-contexts (Taylor, 1984: 167). Here, too, Clegg (1989a) provides a sound rebuttal to this line of criticism with his 'circuits of power'.

Clegg (1989a) explains how episodic power relations at the level of agents develop into rules of practice at the level of social integration, which then become domination at the level of system integration. Obligatory passage points facilitate the movement of power within and through these circuits, which also take into account exogenous environmental contingencies, that is, external factors. Typically, these relations are unequal because in localised episodic power relations, the balance of power – that is, the losses and gains – changes during the interaction to form a circuit of power (Clegg, 1989a). In this way, power is not necessarily a negative force limiting agency through exclusion, repression, censoring, abstracting, masking and concealing; rather it produces reality, domains of objects, and rituals of truth (Foucault, 1977: 194). (For a more detailed explanation of Clegg's power circuits, see Clegg, 1989a.)

Ultimately, the implications of Foucault's notion of power are that no one is outside the operations of power; that the nature of power is relational, and all dimensions of social space include relations of power (Jose, 1998: 30) because they are the very basis of the social domain (Smart, 1983: 103). Agency of individuals is always enacted within broader cultural contexts, that influence both

directly and indirectly how individuals operate within a relationship. Foucault argues that we cannot easily observe the working of multiple power relations, but we can investigate what is hidden in relations of power by tracing them through the networks of relationships to understand how they work (Foucault, 1988). Indeed, micro-techniques of power inscribe and normalise, not only individuals but collectives and organised groups (Clegg, 1989b: 100).

Foucault shifts emphasis away from a simple analysis of institutions reified as agents and as having all the apparatus of power in their own right; instead the analysis concentrates strategic power in the hands of individuals and ways they impose and oversee institutional systems (Mills, 2003). Foucault wants to avoid a totalising account of institutions as the sole source of power relations but argues that a field of actual power relations is much broader and encompasses negotiated relationships between individuals of equal as well as unequal power status, such as friends, or parent and child, or manager and staff (Thornborrow, 2002).

Foucault acknowledges that an investigation of power requires an enquiry into what might be "most hidden in power relations; anchor them in their economic infrastructures; trace them not only in their governmental forms but also in their infra-governmental or para-governmental ones; and recuperate them in their material play" (Cohen and Saller, 1994: 57; Lotringer, 1989). In his interviews with Lotringer (1989), Foucault describes his reorientation to the analysis of power as emerging from his experiences of the 1968 Paris riots of students and workers against French President de Gaulle. He saw first-hand how exercises of localised power against a group of students at the Sorbonne had unexpected and contingent flow-on effects among a broader group of students and Parisian workers.[7]

Foucault viewed the "ascending analysis of power relations and processes" (Kearins and Hooper, 2002: 734) as a rebuttal to "the regulated and legitimate forms of power in their central locations" (Foucault, 1980: 96). Specifically,

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[7] For further information on events in Paris, described as the '1968 Paris riots' see,
http://www.metropoleparis.com/1998/318/chron318.html
http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/may/13/newsid_2512000/2512413.stm

power plays out materially in localised forms from the bottom up and not just from a top down hierarchical approach. Power relations are anchored in their material conditions of existence in this approach and their analysis is centred on micro-practices of power, that is, practices implicated in local, individual transactions rather than a macro-analysis of how policy from official sources is derived and enacted (Foucault, 1980: 85; Kearins and Hooper, 2002: 734; Hunnicutt, 2006: 440). Kearins and Hooper (2002: 734) argue that, although a genealogy may lack the impact of a macro-analysis of power relations, local knowledges do contribute to "specialised areas of erudition" and to "hostile encounters" that "have been confined to the margins of knowledge" (Foucault, 1980: 83).

Apart from the criticisms of Foucault's work relating to concerns such as agency and power, which have been addressed in this section, there are several other avenues of criticism that may be invoked. For example, Foucault's facilitative notion of power may be seen as reductionist or worse, or that his conceptions of localised power do not account for global domination, or that power can only ever be violent. Each of these criticisms is dealt with in section 3.4 of the chapter. However, Foucault also critiqued archaeology in the form of genealogy, as the following section explains.

3.2.2 Genealogy as critique

Foucault recast his archaeological analysis into genealogy in order to deal specifically with the "workings of power and with describing the 'history of the present'" (Mills, 2003: 25; Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 29; Kearins and Hooper, 2002). Genealogy, as an analysis of processes and power, may also be considered as a critique of archaeology by Foucault himself from as early as 1975 in *Discipline and Punish* (Cohen and Saller, 1994: 57).

Although he does not lay claim to a formalised schema for his theorising and methodological framework for analysis, Foucault (1982: 208) theorises three distinct ontological approaches evident in his work (Kearins and Hooper, 2002:

754). First, in *The Order of Things* (1970), Foucault attempts a description of the present through an analysis of discourse and discursive practices. Second, in *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault theorises a concept of power relations, and finally, in *The History of Sexuality* (1976; 1984c; 1984d), Foucault begins to relate ways in which individuals have been constituted as ethical subjects (Kearins and Hooper, 2002: 754).

Genealogy does more than address the power issue in archaeology; it implicitly deals with a method of theorising and analysis that goes beyond a set of rules for formation of discourse. Hook (2005: 4) argues that in genealogy, Foucault (1984b) does not offer a 'concrete' structure but rather a 'mode of critique' through,

> [A] set of profound philosophical and methodological suspicions towards the objects of knowledge that we confront, a set of suspicions that stretch to our relationships to such objects, and to the uses to which such related knowledges are put. (Hook, 2005: 4)

In Hook's view, Foucault's genealogy is a method that urges us to reflect on our assumptions of both the objects of knowledge and the statements about the objects, as well as the way in which such knowledge is produced. Despite criticisms of a lack of coherent methodology, according to Hook (2005), genealogy has the potential to "produce a variety of autonomous critiques whose validity remained independent of the approval of 'established regimes of thought'" (Hook, 2005: 5, citing Foucault, 1980: 81). A genealogical critique grounded in specific and localised microcontexts can avoid supra-theorisations and "generate a sort of noncentralized theoretical production" (Hook, 2005: 5). Such a method of theorising enables "the insurrection of subjugated knowledges" (Foucault, 1980: 82) to recast historical events through ontologies that have been excluded from legitimised discourse.

A genealogical critique can serve to 'desubjugate' knowledge that has been dismissed as inferior or somehow lacking in acceptability according to established systems of knowledge. For example, they might exclude knowledge generated through practices within particularised contexts that may not necessarily be accepted within a dominant discourse. Possibilities of decentralising and

informalising knowledge production as an institutional power effect can lead to acknowledgement of localised contexts as a site of discursive struggle (Hook, 2005: 6). Such localisation of power struggles could desubjugate knowledge and make its production more accessible to participants in their (re)creation of subject positions. In this way subjects can redefine the relationship of their positions, rather than having to accept (or struggle against) predefined subject positions based on their relationship to a hierarchy of authority.

By increasing opportunities for discursive knowledge production into localised contexts, genealogical researchers can reveal and explore discontinuities of microcontexts, with a possibility of subverting and reconstituting a power/knowledge relationship (Foucault, 1980). Of course, localised knowledge production may also be co-opted by and assimilated into other knowledge producing systems (Foucault, 1980: 85; Hook, 2005: 6). However, Foucault does not give primacy to localised knowledge *per se* but rather, how it is used strategically to challenge complacency towards rightness or wrongness in forms of knowledge production (Smart, 1983) so that self-evidency may be questioned.

Hook (2005: 19) argues that genealogy takes on a "political role as its analysis proceeds, not along the lines of establishing 'the anticipatory power of meaning', but rather so as to unearth 'various systems of subjection … the hazardous play of dominations'" (Foucault, 1984b: 148). Here, genealogy shakes up the foundations of knowledge and understanding to "produce an awareness of the complexity, contingency, and, fragility of historical forms" (Smart, 1983: 76). It demounts traditional pillars of knowledge, the aforementioned shoulders of giants, to roll around in the mud at their feet in order to observe things differently. "The procedures of genealogy hope to produce counter-intuitive ways of seeing, to enforce an awareness that things have not always been as they are" (Hook, 2005: 7). Indeed, Foucault suggests that genealogies are "precisely anti-sciences" because they draw attention to "local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges" that rebut claims of authority of a unitary body of theory to distill, filter, and position them in a hierarchy of knowledge and science (Foucault, 1980: 85). It is no wonder that it is claimed that genealogy satirises the Enlightenment's

"prospectuses of progress" (Gordon, 1994: 186) or that his method in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is considered to be a spoof (Megill, 1985).

Foucault's methodology sets up the circumstances through which our perceptions may be challenged. In *Discipline and Punish* (1977), he explores Bentham's 1843 panoptic conception of incarceration as constant visibility and behaviour modification merely through the possibility of and opportunities for surveillance by non-specified others. While Foucault makes no judgment as to the contemporary and accepted use of surveillance as a disciplinary regime in most western societies he sets up a broader context to enlarge our perceptions of how surveillance may be used specifically under circumstances of non-incarceration. See also, O'Neill (1987), der Derian (1990), Sewell and Wilkinson (1992), Lyon (1991; 1994), Bennett (1994), and Adelstein (2000) among others, for studies on how surveillance is deployed in non-incarceration environments.

Foucault challenges the naturalness and normalness of our perceptions about how we see and understand things, demonstrating that, under other circumstances, our perceptions may have been quite different. In so doing, he challenges the status of 'truth' and 'tradition' as a fixed way of understanding, and encourages us to think critically about accepting the *status quo*; since it only stands in relation to arbitrary circumstances and its acceptance becomes a tacit act of arbitrary submission to contingency. Genealogy is a response to those critics who claim that Foucault does not provide a general theory of epistemic change, because his aim is to explore contingencies and conditions of possibility, rather than to provide any universal theories based on certainty (Mills, 2003).

Although genealogy may be posited as a critique of archaeology, it also presents a continuum of theorising and analytical development. Genealogy does not overturn the 'structures' of archaeology but rather complements them by taking archaeology in the direction of implementing a method. If one were to apply archaeology as a method in and of itself, applying it to practical purposes of discursive analysis and having identified archaeological rules of formation of a discourse, one might well ask, so what? What do my data actually mean? Archaeology alone cannot answer this important question and Foucault did not

apply archaeology to empirical research (Foucault, 1972: 199; Howarth, 2002: 128). However, he 'bracketed' archaeology and genealogy, synthesising the methods to form what he calls 'problematisation of practices' so that a more meaningful analysis can be made. Further discussion of the concept of problematisation is made in section 3.4.1 on discontinuous histories.

3.3   A SYNTHESIS OF GENEALOGY & ARCHAEOLOGY

Having dealt with the problems specifically associated with archaeology, including positing genealogy as critique, what is now proposed is a synthesis and complementarity of genealogy and archaeology. While it is hardly a new approach (see, Davidson, 1986; Dean, 1994; Toews, 1994; Goldstein, 1994; Kendall and Wickham, 1999; Kearins and Hooper, 2002; Howarth, 2002), it has particular relevance for the thesis in analysing discourse as a legitimising process.

Goldstein (1994: 14) particularises genealogy as a form of layering of successive cultural forms, each of which is both self-contained and radically different from one another. She argues that genealogy accentuates the 'horizontal' dimension of events, which are non-teleological, occurring contingently and in local contexts (Goldstein, 1994: 14). While the "archaeologist studies discourses synchronically as autonomous rule-governed practices, the genealogist produces 'a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects' that necessarily involves the complex interaction of linguistic and non-linguistic practices" (Howarth, 2002: 128; Foucault, 1980: 117).

To explain further, genealogy breaks down notions of power as centrally held into small-scale local episodes, and thus is "explicitly concerned with the centrality of power and domination in the constitution of discourses, identities and institutions" (Howarth, 2000: 71-73; Donnelly, 1986: 23). Episodic power occurs at an agency level and may erupt as a response to some small-scale localised causes, which subsequently may develop into 'rules of practice' and ultimately domination (Clegg, 1989a). By eschewing large-scale causal theories (Mills, 2003) and a

notion of centrality of power (Donnelly, 1986), a genealogical method enables us to explore the range of contexts and contingent processes that enable a discourse to emerge, develop and gain dominance.

A synthesised archaeological/genealogical perspective facilitates exploration of trajectories of discourses of knowledge work from their emergence as discourse to their contemporary context, as histories of the present. Genealogy as method aims to avoid judgments and easy assumptions, as Foucault exhorts us to do (Foucault, 1988: 326) and critically to consider and question the ways in which we perceive objects as givens, that is, how we normalise discourse. He means that we must critically assess ourselves and the automatic cultural constructs and identities we unthinkingly impose (Foucault, 1988).

The thesis addresses both the dimension of 'vertical' questions of archaeology and the detailed 'horizontal' processes and narratives of genealogy suggested by Kendall and Wickham (1999: 30-31). In collapsing distinctions between archaeology and genealogy, the analysis can focus on how we, as individuals, exist under certain conditions and what enables us to do so, and what accommodations of knowing and knowledge make such an existence possible (Foucault, 1988). Moreover, conditions of existence are inextricably entwined with technologies of power embodied in social practices (Smart, 1985: 48) as the empirical Chapter 7 illustrates.

If archaeology provides slices of discourse for examination and genealogy attends to the processual aspects of the web of discourse in terms of its ongoing character, it would be fruitful to combine the archaeological and genealogical approaches (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 30-31). Using this tandem approach, referred to generically as genealogical method, 'historical slices' as well as 'historical processes' can be examined. In the thesis, genealogy opens up possibilities for thinking in different ways in relation to organisation and management theory. However, genealogy also faces criticisms, which are addressed below.

3.4   CRITIQUES OF GENEALOGY

Several key criticisms have been identified and need to be resolved so that genealogy can be considered to be viable as a methodology for discourse analysis. They include the relationship between small-scale local episodes and centralised power; problematisation of practices and Foucault's ahistoric writing of history; his non-traditional use of historical evidence; his rejection of teleology and totalising history in favour of contingent histories of the present; his rejection of Truth in origins; his use of breaks and irruptions rather than epistemic evolutions and progressions; his integration of discourse with social practices and disciplinary techniques of power; and his unintentional use of critical resolution.

The following sections begin an examination of the critiques of genealogy, beginning with the various issues associated with Foucault's mode of writing history, also known as problematising of historical production (Howarth, 2002: 128; Kearins and Hooper, 2002: 735).

3.4.1   Discontinuous histories

A synthesis of archaeology and genealogy challenges traditional writing of history and historiography and, instead, Foucault offers a plurality of histories of the present that incorporate discontinuities and abrupt changes rather than linear teleology (Donnelly, 1986; Kendall and Wickham, 1999; Howarth, 2002; Mills, 2003; Hook, 2005). Foucault's histories provide a way of thinking about past and present without the need for teleological progression, or indeed a critical view of linear human development. Foucault's historical practices are ahistoric (seen as a criticism); his use of 'official' historic dossiers is selective; his use of dates and facts unorthodox– most notably in *Discipline and Punish*, *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self* – and his refutation of truth claims in history as speculation, have all brought him and his writings under a microscope of scholarly criticism (Donnelly, 1986; Castel, 1994; Mills, 2003).

Foucault turned to Nietzsche's genealogy (Foucault, 1980: 64, 83–85, 196–197; Foucault, 1984c: 11–13) to address weaknesses in his historical contextualisation

of the social or the 'problematisation of practices', implicit in his earlier work on archaeology. Foucault did not dismiss archaeology; rather he integrated it within genealogy to deal with problematisation in terms of historical production (Howarth, 2002: 128; Kearins and Hooper, 2002: 735). Foucault used problematisation as an account of history, weaving it closely to social systems and modes of thought relevant to the historical contexts about which he wrote. Davidson (1986) also argues in favour of Foucault's method of problematisation of history. He said that Foucault's work was in tension with traditional history based on facts and dates, the task of which was to define relations of causality, antagonism or expression between and among facts and dates (Davidson, 1986: 222). Instead, Foucault's work deals directly with historical ways of thinking as contingent with historical contexts, rather than in isolation to or separate from these events or irruptions, as he calls them.

The extent to which Foucault deals with problematisation through contextualisation has led to criticism by some historians for his lack of specificity of historical events and his somewhat 'cavalier' use of historical records, documentation and references (Mills, 2003: 23; Greenblatt, 1989; Gane, 1986; Anderson, 1983; Donnelly, 1986). However, Foucault rejects what he calls the teleological and totalising effects of traditional historicising practices purely as a framework for interpreting past events, saying they protect constitutive boundaries and isolate historical events from broader contemporary cultural contexts (Toews, 1994: 117; Mills, 2003).

Kendall and Wickham (1999) argue that archaeology as method is both non-interpretive and non-anthropological. As non-interpretive, it tries to avoid making judgments, causal connections and deeper meanings but seeks to describe regularities, differences and transformations; as non-anthropological, it seeks a break from a human-centric approach to history (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 26-28).

Foucault uses "historical methods to analyse the development of academic disciplines themselves (such as psychoanalysis and medicine) and to show the triumphalism of their accounts of their own history" (Mills, 2003: 23). Foucault

took to task conventional historiography and historicising practices that failed to account for the richness of historical contexts through which many diverse discourses could emerge and develop (Toews, 1994: 117).

3.4.1.1 Challenging traditional historiography

Scholarly focus on periodisation as a linear historical tradition tends to be widely used as a substantiating device to negotiate legitimacy of a particular position as a reflection of the present. Instead, Foucault adopts a thematic problem-based, rather than period-based, approach to history (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 23). He challenges traditional historicising approaches of grounding, centring and stabilising certain events, while making peripheral the broader cultural contexts from which they emerged, in order to impose these events as a universal perception and to delimit other ways of seeing (Toews, 1994: 121).   Succumbing to the notion that there is a single definitive linear account of events may well be dangerous, since it enables the past to be seen only through dominance of the present (Donnelly, 1986: 17).

Rabinow (1984) argues that Foucault clearly articulates that his general aim is to discover how practices become "coherent reflective techniques with definite goals", with such goals being to seek some truth – which he calls speculation – "subject only to the demands of reason" (Rabinow, 1984: 7, citing Foucault and Blasius, 1993). Thus, it is the twin projects of coherence and reason that try to dictate those reflective techniques, that is, a singular 'true' history rather than pluralised histories.   Foucault emphasises a shift away from systematic "reconstruction of such 'vertical' (that is linear teleological) contextual determinants of the construction of experience to the horizontal processes, the narratives of contingent events, in which these determining contextual fields were produced" (Toews, 1994: 127).

Philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre suggests other problems are inherent in Foucault's method since Foucault does not inform us how historical conditions influence thinking, how each thought is constructed, or how "mankind passes from one

thought to another" (Mills, 2003: 123). To do so, Foucault would have to bring in praxis, and therefore history (that is, official or totalising history), which is precisely what he refuses to do (Mills, 2003; Eribon, 1991: 163). Eribon argues that Sartre's ontology of 'History' presents history as an official repository of 'Truth'; he does not appear to give any space to alternative views of how history may be written, and, indeed, seems to support the 'meta-narrative' and totalising approach to which Lyotard (1984) so vehemently objects. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) also refute Sartre's notion of truth claims by historical authorities, suggesting that Foucault has shown

> '[O]fficial' biographies and current received opinions of top intellectuals do not carry any transparent truth. Beyond the dossiers and the refined self-consciousness of any age are the organized historical practices which make possible, give meaning to, and situate in a political field these monuments of official discourse (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: xvii)

As Foucault argues in *The Order of Things* (1970), the way we devise categories and lists of discursive objects relates to the meanings of human experiences. Meanings are contingent on and accommodate ways of thinking relevant to particular epochs, that is, organised historical practices that create and are created by dossiers and *connaissance* of human understanding. Thus, the 'officialness' of authorities from institutional fields of knowledge is constituted through discursive processes of legitimisation, supported by dossiers of practices. In this way, the complex interaction of linguistic and non-linguistic practices, suggested earlier by Howarth (2002: 128), reveals how certain meanings are attributed to domains of objects, and statements about them to constitute knowledges.

Davidson (1986) suggests that Foucault's histories are in tension with the way traditional historiography is written, which is based on causality between facts and dates (Davidson, 1986: 222). Genealogical method, as a means of focusing on a network of influences and systems of thought, rejects the primacy of facts and dates as the only way of reading, writing and understanding histories (Davidson, 1986). Foucault argued that systems of thought would better characterise what traditional historians call periodisation, since it is more important to differentiate epochs according to discourses that make sense locally (Haugaard, 2002: 184). Foucault characterises European history into three distinct modes of thought: The

Renaissance (arguably between 1450 and 1650), the Classical Period (also known as The Enlightenment, arguably 1650 to 1800), and The Modern Period (arguably from 1800 to the present) (Haugaard, 2002: 184). As Chapter 5 discusses, these timeframes are much debated by historians and scholars from other disciplines, according to what they consider to be significant events and the defining break between one epoch and another.

3.4.1.2 Periodisation

Foucault's periodisation and his use of history is marked by a series of abrupt changes – his characteristic hallmarks – which are antithetical to Enlightenment notions of rational progress (Rabinow, 1984; Mills, 2003) and liberation through truth (Taylor, 1984: 153). For positivist organisational researchers, the possibility that we are not progressing, at least to somewhere, is disconcerting, since the point of building up organisational theories in a traditional managerial sense, is to improve and progress. From Foucault's perspective, civilisations do not necessarily progress, or indeed, regress. They do not have inevitable outcomes of enlightenment (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 4; Mills, 2003: 78-79).

More recently, Wickham and Kendall (2007) argue that Foucault, in his approach to governmentality, relies on teleology. They describe teleology, conceived as "the ultimate purpose of human endeavour is the quest for ever-growing human reason, a reason that is the universal basis of moral judgments, especially moral judgments about political and legal actions", which they argue leads to critique rather than description and explanation. Wickham and Kendall suggest that teleology is evident in Foucault's work, from analysis of discourse or knowledge forms (Foucault, 1970; 1972) to an analysis of the workings of power (Foucault, 1971; 1973; 1976; 1977a), which then shifts focus to a genealogical approach to governmentality (1984c; 1984d).

Wickham and Kendall (2007) argue that Foucault was locked into a Nietzchean world view of power as omnipresent, swinging between poles of knowledge but decoupled from human actors. They substantiate their argument using many

examples specifically of mechanisms of such omnipresent power, such as church and state, rule of law, levels of civility, legality and so on; in other words, governmentality. Indeed, Foucault's references to the three main periods of thought of Renaissance, Enlightenment and Modernity directly refer to aspects of governmentality or even attempts at 'group think', since these bodies of practices pre-existed before they were identified as discourses. However, there were many localised resistances showing that smooth transitions between one historical period and the next did not occur. These are examined in Chapter 5 and they also form the main empirical research of the thesis in Chapter 7.

Although Foucault used such general and epochal terms for convenience to refer to the objects of his analysis, he emphasised discontinuities and differences rather than the traditional use of these terms to denote cultural unity or totality, consensus, or homogeneity (Toews, 1994: 126). Foucault writes that,

> … I shall not place myself inside these dubious unities in order to study their internal configuration or their secret contradictions. I shall make use of them just long enough to ask myself what unities they form; by what right they can claim a field that specifies them in space and a continuity that individualizes them in time; according to what laws they are formed; against the background of which discursive events they stand out (Foucault, 1972: 29).

Foucault refutes the notion that there is a smooth transition from one *épistèmé*, or world view, to another, with giants standing on each other's shoulders, building progressively on their antecedent's work; rather there are breaks and discontinuities (Mills, 2003: 64).

As Rabinow (1984) explains, it is the discursive practices that are discontinuous rather than the longer threads of continuity in non-discursive practices (*la longue durée* as suggested by the Annales School of historical thought) that provide Foucault with "a powerful and flexible grid of interpretation with which to approach relations of knowledge and power" (Rabinow, 1984: 9). Moreover, it is not Foucault's intention to isolate discourse from its social practices but rather to provide an analytical framework with which to understand how discourse functions in relation to techniques of power (Rabinow, 1984: 10). In this light, genealogy becomes an appropriate framework to understand how power operates

within discourse, including surrounding social practices, and to examine "how and around what concepts they formed, how they were used, where they developed" (Rabinow, 1984: 12).

It is argued that genealogy enables a researcher to transgress historiographically-imposed cultural limitations and is well suited to analysis of discourses of knowledge work, since we can explore the broader cultural contexts through which the discourses are constituted and develop.

3.4.2   A problem of T/truth & origins

> There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth (Foucault, 1980: 39).

Foucault was influenced by Nietzsche's genealogical method (Nietzsche, 1968) in which he challenges ontological basis of 'Truth' (with a capital 'T', to emphasise its primary and dominant status as a discursive totality) to show through genealogy how an elite group can legitimise and consolidate their power and do so in a piecemeal and arbitrary fashion (Rabinow, 1984). Indeed, Foucault determines that 'truths' are produced by regimes of power through technologies of control (Taylor, 1984: 160).

Foucault (1972) applies ingredients of Nietzsche's work in developing his theory of discourse of a history of ideas. Foucault studies a concept of power in discourse and how discourses cohere into a body of knowledge, even though they are unstable, arbitrary and contested. Discursive coherence is formed through a plurality of similar ideas, concepts and statements located in different fields of knowledge. Yet, these series of statements are also discontinuous, interrupted, merged, transformed, de-formed and reformed.

Foucault points out that Truth does not reside fully-formed as a discursive totality in the 'origins' of a discourse; it has no meaning outside a given order of power (Taylor,

1984: 160). Truth is projected in descending and ordered formation, becoming more fixed and less able to be refuted; since discursive formation is a discontinuous historical process that is socially constructed and arbitrarily conceived by those with the power to do so (Foucault, 1972: 7-11). "There is no truth that can be espoused, defended, or rescued against systems of power. On the contrary, each such system defines its own variant of truth" (Taylor, 1984: 152-153), that is, truth is variable according to the systems of power that create it.

The objective of Truth as a discursive totality is to dominate other discourses by canonising a particular discourse and its objects; to provide it with a long and linear genealogy creating teleological equivalence, that is a 'march of progress' undisturbed by discontinuities, fragmentation, and alternative views (Foucault, 1972: 7-11). Discourses work their practice in masking the 'will to power' by effacing the rhetorical devices that sustain them and hide discontinuities, fragmentation and arbitrariness – they construct an apparently seamless, coherent and authoritative account, not only of their objects but of their own genesis and development (Foucault, 1972; Taylor, 1984; Hook, 2005).

Influenced by Nietzschean thought, Foucault proposed that the search for origins be replaced by a search for beginnings, since origins tend to be imbued with founding myths and traditional history as purposive events rather than emerging from arbitrary and discontinuous circumstances (Delaporte, 1994: 140). Genealogy, Foucault points out, is not a simple task; it requires "relentless erudition", "knowledge of details and … a vast accumulation of source materials" (Foucault, 1984b: 140; Hook, 2005: 14[8]).

Hook suggests that Foucault seeks density of history that juxtaposes a variety of views of knowledge, and the contexts and circumstances on which such knowledge is based. Further, genealogy seeks to separate and identify the various layers of "historical sedimentation ... to demonstrate how origins may be continually reinscribed or overwritten" (Hook, 2005: 14), thereby disassembling the mythical

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[8] Hook argues that "Foucault's comments in this respect imply a series of pragmatic considerations regarding data collection in genealogy. The suggestion is that a vast amount of documentary historical data needs be collected. Furthermore, this body of data should be heterogeneous rather than homogenous in form; we need assemble a variety of different data, a 'polymorphism of sources' which might be built towards a point of 'incomplete saturation'" (Hook, 2005: 29).

qualities traditionally associated with singular or determinant origins. "What is found at the historical beginnings of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things ... disparity" (Foucault, 1984b: 142). Here, Foucault argues that, as with the emergence of discourse, origins are neither singular nor unarguable.

Foucault's rejection of a singularity of origin stems from a concern that what comes before the instant of origin is somehow predetermined and implies a teleological notion of 'henceforthness' and fatalism, emerging from the hands of a creator (Foucault, 1984b: 143; Hook, 2005: 14). A search for origin seeks recovery of the Truth of a thing, from which point it came into being as part of a grand design or grand narrative – a meta-narrative which brooks no disagreement (Lyotard, 1984). In other words, the search for origins is a power effect – a search for an overarching Truth, a theory of everything.

Foucault (1984b) refuted the feasibility of an enquiry into origins. Instead, he looked for 'ignoble beginnings' through examining unpredictable occurrences that constitute entities and by focusing on a 'play of dominations' at critical historical irruptions. Howarth (2002: 128) suggests

> [G]enealogy is committed to a thoroughgoing perspectivalism in which events are perceived from the particular point of view of a 'situated' researcher. Foucault's 'effective history' thus entails a radical historicisation of processes, institutions and practices, such that '[n]othing in man – not even his body – is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men' (Foucault, 1984b: 87–88, cited in Howarth, 2002: 128).

Foucault clearly answers his critics regarding the problem of origins. He argues that everything about humans changes – our way of thinking, giving meaning and even our bodies – so that a stable, consistent and unchanging understanding of society and the world around us is impossible. Thus, there is no point in searching for the Truth in the origin of a thing, because neither exists.

3.4.3 Foucault digs the dirt on methodological grand theories

A further criticism of Foucault's approach is that he doesn't actually have a method (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: vii; Megill, 1985). Although Foucault provides methodological 'tone', he does not provide a coherent statement of his methodology; he offers a 'spirit' of a method rather than the substance (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: viii). At the same time, he was a careful investigator and his work "is not the product of idle speculation or groundless grand theorising, but emerged from a huge amount of careful research" (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: viii). Yet, his work does not fit comfortably within any particular research paradigm – he disputes being pigeon-holed as a postmodernist or post-structuralist (Gane, 1986: 3; Raulet, 1983; Harari, 1979), a Freudian or Marxist (Gane, 1986: 3; Raulet, 1983), or a techno-functionalist (Gane, 1986: 4; Anderson, 1983).

Historian Robert Castel (1994: 237) argues that one of Foucault's significant methodological contributions was to use history to account for the present, to problematise a current question. Foucault's method describes the rules of formation and production of statements, rather than providing a general theory of epistemic change (Davidson, 1986: 223). It is an interpretation that fits comfortably with Foucault's ontologies of social relativity.

Foucault's 'historical *a priori*', described in *The Order of Things* (1970), enrich our interpretations of human experience prior to the 'conditions of possibility' of a given epoch – that shaped perceptions of that era – rather than *a priori* to all experiences (Haugaard, 2002: 185). Historical systems of thought – that make sense of human experience in an earlier period but may no longer be meaningful in a contemporary period – become the basis for Foucault's problematising methodology, which he uses instead of traditional linear historiography (Davidson, 1986). Using this method in Chapter 5, the conception of knowledge work as it relates to human experience in the period known as The Renaissance is problematised.

In a vein similar to Kendall and Wickham (1999: 139), Smart (1983: 103), Jose (1998: 30) and others, I propose to conduct an examination of social practices that occur at the particular sites of my discursive investigation, and to do so without reducing the complexity of historical context to a simple set of causes and effects, or to use history as background wallpaper. A genealogical approach will fruitfully reveal how "cultural objects as ragbags of knowledge, practices and programs (are) gradually put together, with new practices being invented and old practices revitalised and pressed into service for new tasks" (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 139). I propose to do this by:

- Examining how knowledge work is constituted as an object historically within the context of a particular time and space, to explore the legitimising processes through which knowledge work as a discursive object emerges and develops (Chapter 4).

- Relocating the knowledge discourse to an earlier historical period and within a particular place, to engage with aspects of the "experience of human existence" (Toews, 1994: 117) and to examine the legitimising processes of an earlier knowledge discourse (Chapter 5).

- Investigating how certain conceptions about knowledge work are legitimised, sustained and become dominant in contemporary knowledge work practices through their reproduction and re-presentation as coherent, natural and true by authorities whose expertise and objectivity are accepted as legitimate (Chapter 7).

Further, by using genealogical analysis of discrete time slices, it will be shown how notions about 'naturalness' and 'normalcy' are inserted into the logic of institutional authorities as a power effect, instead of being the result of a "specific historical conjuncture" (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 140). Through analysis of such insertions, I provide a different insight into organisational and management theory that encourages critical thinking about the normalising effects of discourse, and point to the possibilities that can emerge from thoughtful consideration of alternative perspectives.

The implications for organisation theory suggest a way of understanding how a knowledge structure can develop that favours a particular discourse and enables it

to gain primacy, not through its truth claims but through power effects arising from contingent and arbitrary conditions. Through analysis of discursive formation and development of a knowledge structure, a range of other possibilities and other meaning options can be made visible. Such an understanding can pave the way for productive challenges to organising traditions about knowledge, innovation, learning and managing.

Thus, I argue that genealogy as a method is best suited to the thesis to explain how discourse normalises power relations; it makes visible the artifice and politics that conceptualise and constitute knowledge work as discourse. I challenge the cohesiveness of a discourse of knowledge work that, through longevity, consistency of statements, and claims of tradition and history, speaks authoritatively to contemporary praxis and prescribes conditions under which practitioners may practice.

3.4.4 Criticality of genealogy as discourse analysis

Recently, Wickham and Kendall (2007) have resiled somewhat from their earlier position as champions of genealogy as a method of discourse analysis. Although I stated earlier that I would not examine the Habermasian critique of Foucault here, citing it as peripheral to the thesis, Wickham's and Kendall's change of position in regard to criticality needs to be discussed, because of the strong and continuing influence of their earlier work for any researcher conducting a genealogical project.

In their 2007 paper, the authors link genealogy to Foucault's critique of mechanisms of the state and the law, that is, governmentality through teleology. Here, Wickham and Kendall continually remind us that it is Foucault's work on governmentality that is under their microscope of scholarly argument, but not the use of genealogy for other forms of discourse analysis. The differentiating terms used here are critique and teleology. Since teleology has already been dealt with earlier in the chapter, the problem of critique perceived by Wickham and Kendall will be addressed here.

The authors say that by 'critique', they mean Critical Theory as the "tradition of intense criticism against those mechanisms of the state and the law" and with particular reference to govermentality (Wickham and Kendall, 2007). Such critique is a key tenet of the Frankfurt School, although as Wickham and Kendall point out in several genealogical beginnings, critique comes from the much earlier traditions of Plato and Aristotle, in Medieval Europe with Augustus and Thomas Aquinas and also in Early Modern Europe during the Thirty Years War.

The purpose of critique is what Taylor (1984) calls the "rescue of freedom and truth" from excesses of power in all its forms. Critique also speaks to the omnipresent violence of power that Castel (1991) also remarks on in his criticism of Foucault's historiography. However, the 'realities' of excessive power and domination in a physical sense during war or in institutions of power and control (hospitals, army barracks, schools, factories) is differentiated in the constitution of discourse (Foucault, 1972; Taylor, 1984) and self-disciplinary actions/re-actions (Foucault, 1976; 1984c; 1984d; 1988; 1993). As discussed in the earlier section on agency and power, this ignores the argument that power can be facilitative and productive (Clegg, 1989a).

Taylor (1984) suggests that individuals and groups can be trained to objectify and dominate through acceptance of discipline relating to organisation – of movement, space and time – to create new social orders. At the same time, physical environments, such as army barracks, hospitals, schools and factories are disciplinary and, in Goffman's (1961) terms, total institutional modes of organisation that, by their nature, lend themselves to the control of some individuals and groups by others. Taylor argues that "what is welded through the modern technologies of control is something quite different, in that … it is not concerned with law but with normalization" (Taylor, 1984: 158).

> In these contexts, the inculcation of habits of self-discipline is often the imposition of discipline by some on others. These are the loci where forms of domination become entrenched through being interiorized (Taylor, 1984: 159).

Taylor argues that here Foucault offers the Frankfurt School and critical theorists "an account of the inner connection between the domination of nature and the domination of man that is rather more detailed and more convincing than what they came up with themselves" (Taylor, 1984: 160). Taylor comments that it is a measure of the great richness of Foucault's work that this gift is not at all part of his intentions, since Foucault argues vehemently against offering a critical or emissary view of the oppression of nature and our 'liberation' from it (Taylor, 1984: 160).

Foucault argues that he was unaware of the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School

> [I]f I had been aware of it at the time … I would have avoided many of the detours which I made while trying to pursue my own humble path – when, meanwhile, avenues had been opened up by the Frankfurt School. It's a strange case of non-penetration between two very similar types of thinking (Foucault, interview with Raulet, 1983: 200).

However, rather than approaching the question of rationality from a bifurcated view of Critical Theory in that "either you accept rationality (offered by critical theorists) or you fall prey to the irrational" (Foucault, in Raulet, 1983: 201), Foucault argued, not for one bifurcation of reason (as did critical theorists) but for "an endless, multiple bifurcation". In other words, modern conceptions of rationality gained dominance in the same way as do other discourses but it should be stressed that there are other ways of seeing rationality (Foucault, in Raulet, 1983: 203).

Wickham and Kendall (2007) argue that Foucault preached a version of critical theory through teleology. However, it may be that Wickham and Kendall are attempting to throw the baby out with the bathwater; since in their view, because Foucault did not practice what he preached, his genealogy should be disregarded as a methodological framework. I argue against their view for the following reasons.

Genealogy is still viable for discourse analysis that does not purport to be a critical discourse analysis, where the researcher does not need to, and indeed, should not

make moral judgments. Second, genealogy is well suited to analysis of localised discourses, where histories and contexts play a more important role in understanding how a discourse emerges, forms and gains meaning. Localised discourses reflect personalised subjectivities of participants, so moral judgment by a researcher in this situation tends towards hubris. The broad intentions of the thesis are to understand the practices of those who are constituted by the discourse – the knowledge workers – rather than to pass a moral judgment on them or on management. Indeed, Chapter 5 goes to the nub of the problem of such a critique against the mechanisms of the state and the law based on traditional views, that is, the Catholic Church position on heresy.

The second issue that Wickham and Kendall (2007) raise is the danger of teleology. Foucault, himself, rails against teleology (specifically in *Nietzsche, genealogy, history*, 1984b) to ascertain the origins of Truth. While Foucault's arguments concerning teleology and truth have been discussed in depth in this chapter and elsewhere in the thesis, the connection Wickham and Kendall (2007) make here, rightly, is that where an investigation and declamation of Truth based on origins is made, it is, indeed a moral judgment. Since Wickham's and Kendall's definition of critique is directly linked to governmentality – socially, legally and/or morally – the link between teleology, Truth and moral judgment is indeed made. Moreover, Foucault's views must be linked to his time and place in the world, his personal historical context as Wickham and Kendall (2007) clearly explain and has been articulated above; therefore, Foucault's thinking on genealogy as a means of analysing discourse, particularly for localised knowledges should not be discounted.

Like the work of other theorists, Foucault's analyses may be seen as flawed. However, contradictions may be seen also as 'theoretical stepping stones' to be used as guides for developing new forms of analysis that are suited to contemporary conditions (Mills, 2003: 125). Foucault provides a methodological richness that can be drawn on to amplify and render contemporary research problems. By focusing on the conditions of existence that enable particular knowledges to form, Foucault challenges the so-called self-evidentiary and received nature of knowledge. It is this assault on the 'traditional' as a singular

truth, rather than as a response to arbitrary circumstances, which enables us to explore knowledge work discourse in all its textual richness and ambiguity. Further, an understanding of how those who are constituted by the discourse of knowledge work – the knowledge workers – understand and perform knowledge work, through variegated histories is the objective of the thesis, rather than a critical assessment of why knowledge workers perform knowledge work in the way that they do.

3.5   GENEALOGY AS METHOD

In the sections above, key criticisms of Foucault's genealogy have been identified and resolved sufficiently to enable genealogy to be considered to be viable as a methodology for discourse analysis. They include the relationship between small-scale local episodes and centralised power; problematisation of practices and Foucault's ahistoric writing of history; his non-traditional use of historical evidence; his rejection of teleology and totalising history in favour of contingent histories of the present; his broad use of historical periodisation; his dismissal of Truth in origins in favour of beginnings; his use of breaks and irruptions rather than epistemic evolutions and progressions; his integration of discourse with social practices and disciplinary techniques of power; and his unintentional use of critical resolution.

Foucault's method of analysis seeks to offset the purported 'neutrality' and 'naturalness' of particular discursive interpretations to recover and reveal the historical, discursive and institutional contexts that constitute conditions for emergence of a discourse. A significant aspect of such contexts is to provide legitimacy to an emerging discourse; to offer a tradition of praxis. However, Foucault's analysis reveals such legitimising processes to be arbitrary and a power effect, since there is nothing inherent in a discourse itself that allows it to be powerful and achieve a degree of dominance.

As has been discussed above, discourses and the elements and statements of which they are constituted are mutable, unstable, arbitrary and contested. Discourses are a claim to speak authoritatively with respect to some domain of concern and to make knowledge and truth claims in relation to that domain. Rather than pronouncing the truth or otherwise of discourse, Foucault suggests that we see "historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false" (Foucault, 1980: 118). Rather than providing his readers with proscribed judgments, Foucault encourages us to see that discourses are, in fact, an assemblage of meaning options inscribed out of a system of differences and infinitely proliferating possibilities.

To achieve discursive dominance, certain possibilities are closed off and excluded from discourse so that a singular or more contained set of meaning options can be presented; contested and alternative meaning potentials are elided, denied, repressed and ruled out. At the same time, inherent mutability, instability, arbitrariness and power effects that work discursive closure and practices of inclusion and exclusion are masked and effaced through rhetorical devices that present discourse as natural, neutral, and authoritative. The apparent coherence, unity and veracity of discourse is a further power effect.

Earlier, I argued that archaeology and genealogy may be combined as a method for examining historical slices and processes. Now, I push this notion further by integrating genealogical forms of analysis with archaeological research so that power relations is emphasised within the overall analytical method.

3.5.1 Developing the framework for analysis

Kendall and Wickham (1999: 26-28) set out a framework they describe as 'archaeology in action' that aims to achieve seven things:

1. Chart the relationship between what is said (discourse) and what is visible (environment). There is a dynamic and mutually-conditioning relationship between words (the sayable) and things (the visible). Kendall and Wickham exhort us to focus on the appearances of statements rather than attempting to

implicate some deeper human meaning or rationalisation. They suggest that discourse analysis should be used to describe, rather than to critique the rationality of certain positions or make moral judgments based on teleology (Wickham and Kendall, 2007). Kendall and Wickham (2007) also warn that the genealogical researcher should not position him/herself as judge of the rationality of discursive participants' views, since the researcher is likewise influenced by his/her own experiences and interests.

2. Analyse the relationship order between and among statements, whereby an investigation focuses on how a system of statements works and how statement elements are given a particular ordering. For example, the statements 'organisational knowledge' and 'knowledge organisation' rely on an ordering of 'organisation' and 'knowledge' to derive specific and different meanings. One statement relates to ownership of knowledge, its protection and rights of access; whereas the other concerns a mode of workplace organising based on knowledge as a marketable product. Differences between these meanings rely on a relationship order of statements.

3. Establish a set of rules for selection and use of some statements and their repeatability, compared to others that may be equally feasible. Rules investigate how authorities from some fields of knowledge take up certain discursive statements at particular points in time and recycle them through new ontological lenses, while ignoring others that do not suit particular purposes.

4. Analyse relationship positions between subjects in respect of discursive statements and ways in which statements produce subject positions, for example management and worker, superior and subordinate, employed and contracted, and unemployed, fully employed and under-employed.

5. Describe historical and environmental contexts, that is 'surfaces of emergence', for example, the environment in which the conception of knowledge work emerged was post-World War II, where certain events made emergence of discourses concerning knowledge and work possible.

6. Describe 'institutions' that acquire authority and create the boundaries of discourse within which discursive objects act or exist. In this situation, Kendall and Wickham (1999: 27-28) describe the physical and visible features of an institution such as a school. Physicality of an institution does not serve the purposes of the thesis but the institutional space of an Internet community of

knowledge practitioners – the field of research – does (described in Chapter 6 and analysed in Chapter 7). Here, a particular forum of discussion – that of 'trust in knowledge management' – within a community of knowledge practitioners forms boundaries of the text that is the empirical data used in the thesis. Additionally, the domain in which both management and knowledge work are subjects is organisation studies, so that particular discursive objects act and have particular meaning within this environment.

7. Describe 'forms of specification', which provides naming (language) and framing (contextual) tools to make phenomena accessible. As is argued in Chapter 5, responses to the questions: Why knowledge work? Why now? show that uniqueness of historical circumstances facilitate conceptualisation of particular discourses and how they may be specified to make them accessible. Further, by reanalysing forms of specification, we can see how phenomena can be understood differently.

Since I plan to incorporate genealogy, which emphasises relations of power as a process for strategic development of archaeology (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 33-34), within my genealogical framework of analysis, two further strategies should be included. The rationale and the suggested additional strategies are now discussed.

3.5.2 Lifting the mask on tradition

In differentiating archaeology and genealogy, Foucault (1980: 85) suggests that genealogy reveals the tactics that enable subjected knowledges to be brought into play, that is, to uncover histories of the present through their assumptions of truth. Foucault also describes subjected knowledges as judgments, a type of blame game in which we try to attribute origins of responsibility (Foucault, 1988: 326). Further, we must conduct "a critical ontology of ourselves" (Foucault, in Rabinow, 1984: 47) by asking: why do I think that, why do I assume it to be? And then we should persist in peeling back the layers of our assumptions by continuing to ask these questions, thus making "facile gestures difficult" (Foucault, 1988: 155).

Wickham and Kendall (2007) suggest that genealogy may be best used by a researcher to describe a discursive environment and techniques used to sustain it, rather than to critique the rationality of positions taken by participants of a discourse. They argue that descriptions of discourse and participant interests should be revealed through careful analysis. I would argue that such careful analysis as Kendall and Wickham prescribe should include a thorough examination of how interests are conveyed as truth claims through developing a worthy lineage of tradition.

At the same time, they warn that a genealogical researcher should not position him/herself as judge of the rationality of discursive participants' views, since a researcher is likewise influenced by his/her own experiences and interests. Although I may apply a critical ontology of self by asking questions of myself concerning my own assumptions, it becomes problematic when applying a critical ontology of self to discourses developed by others, since I cannot ask them to do likewise. And, of course, I cannot assume to know what is in the minds of others by using my assumptions. All that I can do is reveal and describe such assumptions of truth and examine them within the historical contexts in which they evolved.

Thus, I contend that we need to extend Kendall's and Wickam's genealogy in action by adding two further steps, which are to:

8. Uncover and describe the tactics that are used to cloak discursive beginnings in assumptions of truth, that is, what is commonly and uncritically perceived as received intellectual dogma, and therefore sacred. Wickham and Kendall (2007) advise the researcher to avoid attempting rationales of causality based on teleology, since it "forces description in a pre-ordained direction" (Wickham and Kendall, 2007), which I would agree is sound advice; hence the goal of this step is to uncover and describe tactics, rather than fit them into a teleology.

9. Investigate ongoing processes of discursive normalisation that sustain assumptions of truth and their uncritical acceptance as histories of the present. In Chapter 4, I investigate the emergence of knowledge work as a discourse and how its constitution and development were influenced by existing historical conditions, authorities of delimitation and its dispersal into discourses from

other institutional fields of knowledge. The chapter also traverses a metaphorical landscape of transformative processes of knowledge work, as it is presently conceptualised and contextualised and complements the preceding chapter.

Figure 3.1 below shows the extended genealogy in action framework.

Figure 3.1

Genealogy in action methodological framework
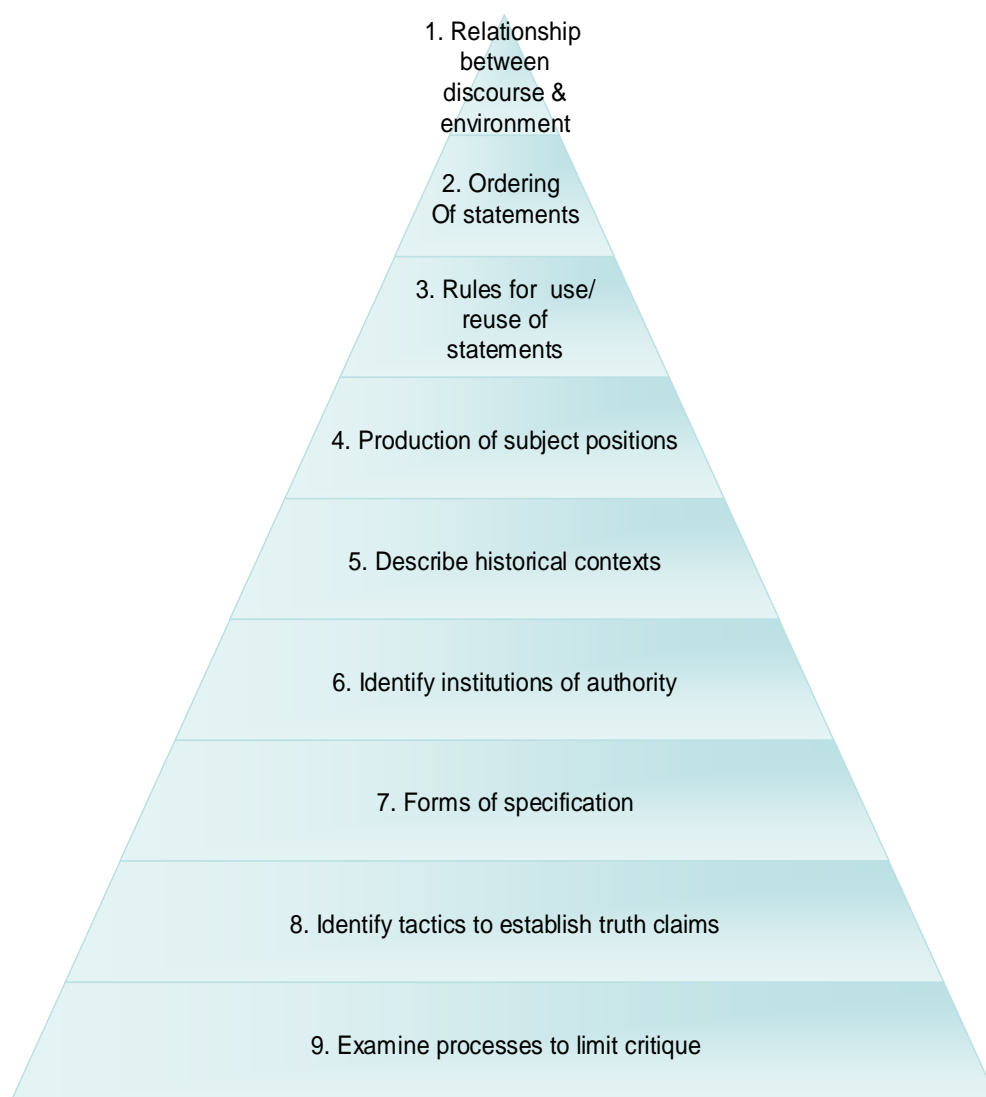
1. Relationship between discourse & environment

2. Ordering Of statements

3. Rules for use/ reuse of statements

4. Production of subject positions

5. Describe historical contexts

6. Identify institutions of authority

7. Forms of specification

8. Identify tactics to establish truth claims

9. Examine processes to limit critique

Steps 1-7 represent Kendall's & Wickham's (1999) 'archaeology in action'.
Steps 8 & 9 are new developments to represent 'genealogy in action'.
Both are based on Foucault's archaeological & genealogical framework
for discourse analysis

Now, the toolkit combining the methods of both archaeology and genealogy is laid out. It incorporates Foucault's (1972) archaeological 'rules of formation' of a discourse in conjunction with a modified 'archaeology in action' (Kendall and Wickham, 1999) to include analysis of power relations and effects. I can now take my reader on a journey to explore discourses of knowledge work from conditions of its emergence as an object of organisational interest, its development within particular spheres of knowledge, and its dissemination and validation across other institutional fields of knowledge.

In the next chapter, we move beyond the descriptive practices of archaeology and apply the genealogical tactics to investigating how the object of knowledge work is constituted and how power relations support certain interpretations and enable them to dominate. Here, we begin to investigate how power relations not only sustain dominance of particular discursive conceptions but also constitute and are constituted by legitimising processes and practices.

3.6   CONTRIBUTIONS & CONCLUSION

The chapter has explained how genealogy offers an effective and viable framework of analysis through which to explore processes of legitimising knowledge work as discourse. It argues for the integration of archaeology with genealogy and contributes a new dimension to it by building on Kendall's and Wickham's (1999) 'archaeology in action'. The method includes a framework for a deeper analysis of power relations and effects and can be used in the fields of organisational and management studies:

- As an analytical framework that offers a more structured methodology than Foucault offered in his various works, thereby satisfying criticisms that Foucault was relatively methodologically disinterested
- To provide a way of explaining and interpreting discursive themes without reliance on mountebank perceptions of Truth and origins
- As a rebuttal of organisational and institutional rhetoric, jargon, slogans and 'spin' as serving particular interests

- As a method for conceptualising and explaining relationships between and among significant organisational discourses, for example, economics, technology, law and society
- To show that there is not merely one way of perceiving an object of discourse and creating meaning but in fact many
- To provide a way of understanding how a knowledge structure can develop that favours a particular discourse and enables it to gain primacy, not through its truth claims but through power effects arising from contingent and arbitrary conditions
- To offer a different insight into organisational and management theory that encourages critical thinking about the normalising effects of discourse, and points to the possibilities that can emerge from alternative perspectives
- To show that discourses are not only tenuous and can transform but also to investigate how they transform.

Genealogy as method shows that discourse does not emerge fixed and defined from a scholarly 'Eureka!' moment, nor does it represent the Truth but merely a truth, according to who perceives it and how it reflects their particular interests. Genealogy provides a proficient analytical framework for analysis, since it enables discourses of knowledge work as the theme of interest in the thesis to be studied within its contexts of emergence and development.

It has been explained that genealogy enables us to argue that use of historical contexts goes well beyond the role of background to enjoin contemporary research questions. Its use in analysis suggests that development of any discourse emerges from a process of Weickian (1995) 'sense making' of historical contexts that are conditions of formation, and involve inclusion and exclusion of many diverse meaning options. Such sense making is arbitrary, since different contexts could give rise to other meanings. Further, it has been shown that genealogy allows us to explore the 'who' of sense making, that is, by what authority a particular discursive conception gains legitimacy and dominance. It develops a framework in which we may investigate how authorities who demark and delimit meaning options of a discourse are legitimated by institutional fields of knowledge. Genealogy also enables us to understand how certain meaning options gain wider

currency through their adoption and use by other authorities who are also given a voice of legitimacy within their knowledge spheres.

The chapter has shown how, authorities of delimitation embrace certain discursive meanings options and delegitimise others. Ways that meaning options are presented and represented may transform over time; sometimes with radical breaks from past conceptions, while at other times, their meanings are subtly renegotiated as they interrelate and connect with similar discourses from other fields of knowledge. The fragility and tenuousness of discursive conceptions, and the abruptness or fluidity of discursive transformations are reflected in and constituted by historical conditions of emergence and development of a discourse.

The chapter has argued that history cannot be divorced from discourse, since historical contexts as 'surfaces of emergence' both constitute and are constituted through emergence of particular discourses at particular times, and are influential in how discourses transmute. Fixedness of discursive meaning is only temporary. That discourse can be made stable, for how ever long it is, is a power effect and the role of power in anchoring discursive stability of knowledge work as a discourse is the subject of the next chapter.

Foucault has been the subject of many critiques relating to both archaeology and genealogy. The chapter has addressed the main criticisms relating to Foucault's use of history, how he handles truth and origins, his methodological style, issues of power and agency, teleology, criticality and others. Each concern has been argued and explored thoroughly. Ultimately, genealogy has been found to be a worthwhile method through which discourse may be analysed and is most suitable for the thesis.

CHAPTER 4

AN OBJECT OF KNOWLEDGE WORK IS CONSTITUTED

In the current chapter, I explain one 'possible' beginning of knowledge work conceived as a response to circumstances of a political and economic nature that seeks a 'pay-off' in terms of the social benefit of educational access. Within a broader thesis about understanding conceptions of knowledge work, the chapter examines how a discourse of knowledge that is coupled to a discourse of work could arise at a specific time and be influenced by circumstances unique to the period. The chapter may be read as an historical account of the emergence of a knowledge work discourse. It explores historical context or, in Foucauldian terms, surfaces of emergence from which a discourse of knowledge work could materialise and develop and to show that under different circumstances the discourse may have been different or indeed, never have arisen at all.

Rather than searching for mythological and teleological origins of the discourse, I seek its 'ignoble beginnings' by examining unpredictable occurrences that constituted the entity of knowledge work and by focusing on a 'play of dominations' at critical historical irruptions (Foucault, 1984b). Using genealogy as a methodology of analysis discussed in the preceding chapter, I seek to separate and identify the various layers of "historical sedimentation ... to demonstrate how origins may be continually reinscribed or overwritten" (Hook, 2005: 14), thereby disassembling the mythical qualities traditionally associated with singular or determinant origins. The present chapter complements Chapter 2 but provides a different point from which to examine a discourse of knowledge work.

Chapter 2 laid out contemporary discourses of knowledge work showing transformations of the discourse, as well as its exclusions and inclusions. Having established a view of knowledge work as a dominant managerial discourse and its alternatives through processes of constitution and reconstitution of meaning, Chapter 3 then explained genealogy as an appropriate methodology to use to

analyse the discourse and reveal its power effects. Also using genealogy as the methodology, the present chapter explores the coupling of concepts of knowledge and work as conceived in contemporary discourse. Explication of the discourse of knowledge work as much older than the context of the present chapter is the task of Chapter 5. The effects of these two historical contexts will then be examined at an individual level in a contemporary environment, as the objective of the empirical research in Chapter 7.

The two historical contexts are located at particular points in time in contemporary Western development and shift both back and forward as well as laterally to provide the reader with a multi-facet map that may be understood in various ways. They may be read as historical explanations, as points of interest and focus, and as an interweaving of a series of events, some connected and other disparate.

The first studies a particular genealogy of knowledge work as a beginning to the discourse; this is a purpose of the present chapter. It is not the only beginning as Chapter 5 will show; but it is a beginning that may be understood as an antecedent to Chapter 2 and a precursor to Chapter 7 – the empirical data. It may be considered to be an antecedent because it explains prior conditions under which a concept of knowledge work could arise and coalesce into a discourse. It is a precursor to Chapter 7 in that it helps to clarify the frailty of the human condition that reflects and responds to historical circumstances.

The second historical context, which is examined in Chapter 5, repositions the conceptions of knowledge work within the period of the Renaissance, to show that although the discourse of knowledge work was not conceived of in terms of what was said, the praxis of knowledge work was certainly present.

4.1 A SITE & TIME TO COMMENCE EXCAVATION

A key site to begin to explore formation of the discursive objects of knowledge and work as part of a single discourse is the United States. Although similar circumstances were present elsewhere, such as the United Kingdom and Australia, the U.S. was a prime location in the search for how knowledge work was to be conceived of and developed as an important discourse. The excavations focus on the nature of work as a significant object of discourse, with reference to occupational changes and workforce participation, a shift from rural to urban employment, and from unskilled and semi-skilled labour to the creation of an educated workforce. These changes are annexed to economic discourses of national significance (Drucker, 1959; 1969; 1993; Bell, 1976; Constant *et al*, 1994; Teece, 1998; Boisot, 1998; Morris, 2001).

The impetus for many of these changes were two World Wars and, subsequently, different political and economic handling of post-war society. Discourses that shaped social conditions after World War II were embedded in political discourses of economic nationalism to support large corporations and in addressing industrial issues of overcapacity and overproduction (Drucker, 1949; 1959; 1963; Fuchs, 1968; Bell, 1973; Reich, 1991). In turn, they were linked to discourses of citizenship and participation in American society through mass consumption. At a broader national level, these discourses articulated an alignment of the well-being of the American economy with corporate America and the creation of an American lifestyle (Reich, 1991).

At a local and regional level, consolidation of the numbers of organisations, organisational growth and competition, and an ability to develop internal markets to absorb production capacity, relied on an unprecedented scale of consumer-driven economics (Bell, 1973; Reich, 1991). Economic stability required social stability, so that many more aspects of the lives of the American people were channelled and controlled in socially, politically and economically-desired directions after World War II (Reich, 1991).

As Reich (1991) and other scholars observed, American society focused on acquisition of material wealth as socially desirable by contributing to the economy through a balance of increasing production and booming consumption. New class divisions were promoted; new productive and acquisitive business classes were deemed to be highly acceptable, compared to less productive and poorer working classes. Acceleration of research and development, particularly in new product and process innovations, was good for business, good for the economy and supported 'American values' of consumption. This required an overall 'upskilling' of the American workforce from a predominance of unskilled and semi-skilled workers early in the Twentieth Century to a workforce with higher levels of education and technical skills by the 1950s. The only way the American workforce could represent these American values was to apply their learning to building the economy, while concurrently earning at a higher wages level in order to spend rather than save (Drucker, 1949; 1959; 1963; 1969; Fuchs, 1968; Bell, 1973; Reich, 1991).

On a personal level, attainment of desirable economic and social stability and status could best be achieved through higher wages gained as a result of higher educational levels. The wage gap was a strong incentive for individuals to not only learn new technical, management and other business techniques but to be formally accredited by an educational institution as having done so. With this knowledge cachet, individuals could become effective members of a new business class (Drucker, 1959; Bell, 1973; Reich, 1991). They could apply their knowledge and learning to a work environment, gain higher wages as a result, and be better able to acquire trappings of success through consumption for themselves and their families.

4.2   CONDITIONS OF EXISTENCE FOR EMERGENCE OF A KNOWLEDGE WORK DISCOURSE

Having set the background for a new discourse of work practices to be constituted, this section begins a process of excavating and exploring the conditions for which the emergence of a discourse on knowledge work occured. Specifically, I will examine social, economic and political circumstances that facilitated emergence of knowledge

work as a discursive object. Although the discourse emerged in the United States, it was influenced, embraced, and rejected by diverse political, social and economic interests both within the U.S. and elsewhere. Since discourses of knowledge work centre on 'work' – types of work, what people do and contexts for work – it makes some sense to begin an explanation in this domain.

Conditions of emergence for a discourse of knowledge work involved changes in workforce participation, composition of occupations, the rise of political and social movements that were anathema to traditional American values, and feelings of disengagement and disenfranchisement from those values experienced by returning war veterans. These conditions coalesced into a series of rhetorical statements, embedding an agenda of attaining higher educational levels within citizens' increased and intensified participation in a buoyant consumer economy. Such participation would provide enabling conditions for people to engage with better paid, better quality, higher valued work – that being knowledge work. A buoyant economy would be facilitated by and accelerated through people's participation in this high value work.

From the outset, knowledge work was embedded in discourses about general economic development but also in discourses about the changing nature of work, general improvement in educational levels, and of new and invigorated consumer markets and trends. These are weighty discourses, discourses of great moment and social and political weight. It is not surprising that an object of discourse attaching to and/or invoking such important discourses is given credence and has a place of reception. The sections following explore specific aspects of the historical context to illustrate analytical trajectories of the discourse and encompassing economic, political, social, and employment conditions. It is important to provide such contexts as it is only through understanding 'the why' and 'the how' of a knowledge work discourse that 'the what' becomes truly meaningful. The next section explains the economic and political conditions for formation of a knowledge work discourse; while section 4.2.2 examines social and employment conditions, and 4.2.3 addresses concerns about new social movements, since they appeared to undermine American values. A new discourse of knowledge work was just one of the measures used to counter such subversiveness.

4.2.1 Economic & political conditions of formation

Historical economic and political conditions in the U.S. created an environment in which particular statements and objects of a future discourse on knowledge work could emerge. Implicated among the factors was the mix of available jobs and the skill sets required to perform them (Drucker, 1959; Bell, 1973). Shifts in the nature of jobs, the job pool and the skills and competency requirements created a space in which a new discourse about work and jobs could arise. Transformations in the terrain of work and worker emerged through changes in the form and nature of the economy and needs of businesses, as well as in the political forum.

As technological improvements to the way work was performed gathered pace in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century, industrialised nations developed capabilities for mass production that resulted in problems of overproduction (Hounshell, 1984; Sabel and Zeitlin, 1985). Corporations in Britain, Europe and America looked to new markets as well as existing ones, aiming to spread their spheres of influence while deploying high tariffs at home. The American economic sphere of influence in world industrial production expanded with territorial expansion, influence and economic growth and was seen as synonymous with national power; all of which was embodied in the concept of the corporation (Reich, 1991; Perrow, 1990).

Discourses marking the well-being of American citizenry were tied to those of a national economy, which in turn depended on the success of its huge corporations (Reich, 1991; National Bureau of Economic Research, 1960). These discourses, linking economics, business and politics, also influenced American political leaders. For example, Mark Hanna, a Nineteenth Century American political philosopher, greatly influenced Twentieth Century American politics (Drucker, 1994). Hanna emphasised the dominant role of economic interests as the integrating influence for all other concerns. Hanna's theories influenced Roosevelt during the period of the New Deal, such that economic interests served political processes and so that politics became a 'dynamic disequilibrium' between major economic interests of agriculture, business and labour (Drucker 1994: 78), with the interests of business being foremost.

As well, political philosopher and journalist Herbert Croly argued that large American corporations should be "converted into economic agents … unequivocally for the national economic interest" (Reich, 1991: 39[9]), an idea embraced by Theodore Roosevelt in his New Nationalism and put into effect during World War I.

The American government had already begun to develop new discourses of economic nationalism by tying well-being of citizens to success of the national economy, which depended on success of giant corporations (Reich, 1991: 35; National Bureau of Economic Research, 1960). Three elements were embodied in this move to deal with continuing problems of overproduction: high tariffs on imported goods; exclusive trade agreements for poorer regions of the world; and minimising competition among manufacturers in home markets by encouraging business cartels, so that profits could increase and price cutting could be reduced (Reich, 1991: 34; Hounshell, 1984; Sabel and Zeitlin, 1985).

In order to make a shift from competition to national consolidation, mergers of businesses into giant corporations were deemed to be more acceptable to the American people than were price-fixing cartels or monopolies (Reich, 1991: 36). It was easier for large corporations with centralised management to control distribution markets and gain economies-of-scale efficiencies in production and sources of materials supply (Reich, 1991: 37). The concept of controlling large corporations through antitrust laws[10] enabling them to serve the national economic interest was scrapped. Instead, 'national industrial cooperation' was supported by various government defence boards that let contracts for heavy industry, banking, airlines, military contracts, telecommunications and aerospace (Reich, 1991: 40). For example, some surplus production was absorbed by the new defence contracts for the U.S. military-industrial complex in the early 1950s as America prepared for a new war, this time against communism in Korea (Koistinen, 1980). This was not the case earlier in the Twentieth Century.

During World War I, American economic growth was impeded as overproduction continued but international markets were disrupted and shrank. Recession and

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[9] Citing Herbert Croly (1909), **The Promise of American Life**, New York, World, pp. 362, 379
[10] The Sherman Antitrust Act was passed by Congress in 1890

depression followed shortly thereafter. It was not until after World War II that creation of strong internal markets was seen as the most effective way to minimise economic sensitivity to international fluctuations and absorb overproduction. In order to switch the American population away from their frugal war-time ways and to participate fully in a consumption-oriented economy, changes in the nature and status of work were needed (Drucker, 1949; Reich, 1991; Hounshell, 1984; Sabel and Zeitlin, 1985).

A new discourse of consumerism was enunciated and took hold, capturing the imaginations and resolving America problems of overproduction simultaneously (see Boorstin, 1962; Ewen, 1976; Reich, 1991; Cohen, 2003). Polarisation of American society into a new class system, based on notions of mass production and mass consumption with high and low consumers, was aligned with discourses of nationalism and patriotism (Bell, 1973; Reich, 1991). At the same time, people needed to be able to access new types of higher-paid employment to be able to consume and preserve large-scale production. It fitted with objectives of national corporate planning embodied in New Nationalism, which saw various government-backed schemes supporting corporations, in turn supporting national economic goals.

Discourses of consumerism arose from an impetus to accelerate new production development and new technology created by World War II, supported by new techniques of advertising (Ewen, 1976) and instruments of credit (Hunter, 1996). However, the spectre of overproduction loomed, as it had after World War I. Other difficulties to participation in a consumer-driven economy were handicapped by large numbers of returning veterans who lacked the skills to use new industrial technologies created during war time, subsequently converted to peace-time use. The size of the trained workforce became a limiting factor in post-war economic prosperity. The American war production program had suffered major bottlenecks due to a shortage of middle management, technicians and supervisors, rather than shortages of materials, labour or transportation, and this situation continued post war (Drucker 1949: 164).

There was a clear dislocation between political notions of creating an economic boom through take up of domestic overproduction and the capacity of the population to

fulfil logistics of consumption. Without more money in the pockets of workers, their purchasing power was limited. And without skills and capabilities to earn more money, take up of the new goods produced could not happen. Political will without political means could not bridge the gap (Drucker, 1949; 1959; 1963; Fuchs, 1968; Bell, 1973; Reich, 1991).

These were not the only problems facing post-war politicians and industrialists; there were concerns about social and employment conditions for returning veterans. The next section explores and explains the significance of these conditions.

4.2.2 Social & employment conditions

Shortages in skills required for participation in more technologically-oriented industry had been a continuing problem for decades. The number of available jobs in the agricultural sector had been steadily declining from 1900 (Bell, 1973: 134). Use of new agricultural technologies reduced the need for unskilled farm labour and the development of huge farming corporations reduced viability of many small farms.

While the largest proportion of jobs had been in agriculture in 1900 (37.5 per cent of the total workforce), by 1940, the number of agricultural jobs had been reduced by more than half to become the smallest occupational sector. More than ever, cities provided significant employment possibilities for semi-skilled and unskilled job seekers (Bell, 1973: 130-134). Even before World War I, there had been a significant and continuing drift away from agricultural work in the U.S., with many farm workers moving to the cities to find work in booming industry (Fuchs, 1968; Bell, 1973). In the first two decades of the Twentieth Century, workforce participation in America had grown by 43.5 per cent (from 29 million to 41.6 million) (Bell, 1973: 130).

Urban population growth was supported by two elements: inward migration of displaced peoples from the old societies of Europe, the majority of whom also headed for American cities, and internal migration of black sharecroppers from the post-slavery economy of the South, heading northwards together with other rural workers.

A 1908 government study found that around 60 per cent of industrial workers in 21 key American industries was foreign born (Reich, 1991: 32[11]). Blue-collar employment absorbed an additional 6.3 million by 1920 to reach the level of 16.7 million jobs (adapted from Bell, 1973: 130, 134). An influx of new workers provided labour for more production and, coupled with new manufacturing technologies, increased production rapidly became overproduction. The American share of world industrial production 'ballooned'[12] and overcapacity became a major problem that plagued the U.S. despite tariffs and subsidies (Crouzet, 1982).

During World War I, in the United States and elsewhere, there was a significant influx of largely single women into the workplace and away from traditional female employment in domestic work. Post war these women were reluctant to relinquish such highly-paid work in order to re-accommodate returning male veterans (Sealander, 1986; Bourke, 1994). Immediately after World War I, there were insufficient jobs for the surplus of unskilled labour, on farms, in factories or in services[13] (Bell, 1973: 129). Further, the U.S. Federal Government had only provided training benefits to disabled World War I veterans, leaving a large proportion of unskilled but able-bodied veterans with limited employment options and feelings of abandonment. As a result, a post-World War I recession saw millions of veterans unemployed and homeless (West's Encyclopedia of American Law, 1998).

The immediate post-World War I depression eased after 1920, when employment became available in new auxiliary services to existing industries, such as maintenance and construction of transportation systems and new utilities, such as telegraph, electricity, water and sewerage services, and manual work loading and unloading goods for distribution (Bell, 1973: 129; Fuchs, 1968: 22). American cities continued to swell with an influx of rural people, particularly farm workers, some of whom were absorbed into domestic service situations, although in-service situations frequently challenged the values and standards of those raised on farms or in the country, who were unused to being treated as servants.

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[11] Citing, Jenks, C.W. and Lavek, C.E. (1926), **The Immigration Problem**, Funk and Wagnalls, New York, p.148

[12] In the years from 1870 to 1913, American share of world industrial production expanded from 23.3 per cent to 35.8 per cent (Crouzet, 1982).

[13] Services were defined as domestic and auxiliary services in transport, utilities, distribution many of which were unskilled or semi-skilled (Bell 1973: 129).

While an economic boom returned in the early 1920s in new industries, such as motor vehicles and utilities, a general dissatisfaction with the capitalist system *status quo* among segments of the American population at grass roots level were fuelled by and, in turn fuelled, political and social movements. While overall annual immigration levels increased, a more dramatic picture can be seen in where immigrants settled. As the table below shows, not only did the numbers of immigrants increase but the proportion of them settling in urban areas compared to rural areas also increased.

Table 4.1
United States Immigration Statistics[14]

Year	Urban Settlement	Rural Settlement	Total Immigration	Ratio Urban to Rural
1890	5,679,135	3,570,412	**9,249,547**	61%
1900	6,859,078	3,482,198	**10,341,276**	66%
1920	10,500,942	3,419,750	**13,920,692**	75%
1930	11,250,815	2,953,334	**14,204,149**	79%
1940	9,276,707	2,318,189	**11,594,896**	80%

Over a 40-year period, from 1890 to 1930, immigration to the U.S. rose from 9.2 million to 14.2 million per year with new urban dwellers increasing from 61 per cent of the immigration intake in 1890 up to almost 80 per cent by 1930. New immigrants spurred feelings of American nationalism and many citizens' attitudes, which held that jobs were being taken by immigrants, soon developed into hostile attitudes towards the newcomers (Reich, 1991).

Aggression arose on many sides. New émigrés from Europe (comprising more than 85 per cent of all immigration in 1920[15]) were subject to hostility from American

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[14] Calculated from Gibson, C.J. and Lennon, E. (1999): Tech paper 29: Table 18, http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab18.html

urban workers, and unemployed labourers from rural America fared no better. Intellectuals, politicians and industrialists presented different agendas and government planning at the upper echelons was not being implemented at grass roots level. Rhetoric was not translating into effective action and alternative lifelines were being thrown to the discontented populace; lifelines that were popular with neither government nor corporations (Tomlins, 1985).

4.2.3   Concern about new social movements

One of the alternatives offered to workers came via the trade union movement – with unions available for both skilled and unskilled workers – which the power elites considered to be ideologically linked to socialism and communism (Tomlins, 1985). There were union strikes and marches for human, women's and workers' rights. There was social, political, economic and ideological upheaval. Imported political movements of communism and fascism from Europe were countered with polemic ideologies in the U.S. in the 1920s and 1930s. Intellectuals, such as influential Soviet émigré Ayn Rand, publicly opposed any domestic engagement with communist ideologies. Other political commentators observed that the welfare state of Germany emerged from the Depression of the 1930s much sooner than occurred in the U.S. (Drucker, 1949). Early optimism by the U.S. Government in support of the promise of totalitarian and nationalist states was countered by American leftist intellectuals who joined others in Europe in speaking out against totalitarian governments in Germany and Spain, such as, Nathaniel West, Gertrude Stein, Lillian Hellman, Ernest Hemingway and many others (Hollander, 1992).

Another voice in the debate, one that straddled elements of both right and left arguments, was Peter Drucker, who became so influential in subsequent discourses of knowledge work. Drucker had experienced the rise of fascism in Austria during the 1920s and 1930s. Later, from comparative safety in the U.S., he wrote about freedom from the tyranny of totalitarianism of class and state (Drucker, 1949: 11). He also observed that the concept of a modern welfare state was synonymous with a free industrial society and autonomous corporations, not because government gave

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[15] *Op cit.*: Table 4, http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab04.html

handouts to its citizens, but through a notion of reciprocity between citizens and the state, each contributing to the welfare of the other (Drucker 1949: 337-8). A conduit for reciprocity between citizens and state was the corporation, so that Drucker's views embraced earlier discourses of national corporate planning, which had so influenced American politicians of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. Drucker's view resonated with Elton Mayo's human relations and welfare corporatism (Clancy, 1998) and echoed Durkheim's views concerning social cohesion (Durkheim, 1957; 1984; Lukes, 1985).

Despite intentions, government and business rhetoric did little to stem problems at the level of individual worker, many of whom were unemployed, uneducated, unskilled, homeless, or separated from family (Singer, 2002). The disenfranchised were amenable to ideologies put forth by alternative social movements. Although both socialism and communism were seen within the U.S. as potentially totalitarian and enslaving, it was capitalism that was challenged by unionism in the 1920s, and socially, politically and economically by the Depression of the 1930s. The union movement continued to gain strength with increasing conflicts between unions and management, and frequent strikes generated further uncertainty and disillusionment among the working classes, both employed and unemployed. The Depression of the 1930s exacerbated employment problems for unskilled workers and what little employment growth there was focused on the services sector and sales. Many unskilled workers took up door-to-door selling or street hawking. Others, particularly women, did piecework from their homes, frequently exploiting the labour of their young children in their efforts to earn income. This occurred despite child labour protection laws (Reich, 1991).

Images of lines of unemployed are familiar depictions of American life during the 1930s Depression, but there were still opportunities for educated white-collar workers and skilled blue-collar artisans, even during the depths of the Depression (Reich, 1991). Although opportunities for farm-based employment declined, much of the slack was taken up by white-collar occupations; jobs for blue-collar 'operatives' showed a gradual incline with a jump in number of occupations occurring between

1930 and 1940[16] (Bell, 1973: 130, 134). For the uneducated and unskilled, work opportunities continued to be limited as they had been after World War I. Their lives are well-documented (see, Agee and Evans, 2000; Fortune Magazine; The New Republic; writings of journalist and satirist H.L. Mencken; the photographs of Walker Evans) particularly as social settings in popular culture representations in books, plays, cinema and theatre (von Sternberg's *The Docks of New York*, 1928; Steinbeck's *Of Mice & Men*, 1939; Chaplin's *Modern Times*, 1936; and many films of Laurel & Hardy and Harold Lloyd[17]).

Unemployment, underemployment and a buffeted and disillusioned working class was amenable to radical change, yet changes in their well-being did not come quickly. They were a long way from participating in Drucker's proposed reciprocal welfare economy. Capitalistic work practices of the first part of the Twentieth Century would never enable the working poor to participate in a free industrial society as envisaged by American political leaders and philosophers. Autonomy of industrial enterprises was still paramount, yet the majority of workers, particularly those who were unskilled and semi-skilled was being replaced and displaced by newer more productive technologies. Production overcapacity was a problem that lingered and a solution was yet to be found.

There was still a dislocation between skill levels of the populace and their ability to earn more and, therefore, consume more. The connection between levels of education and capacity to consume still needed to be made. The next section takes up

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[16] Statistics within the period of the 1930s at the height of the depression are lacking, as the onerous task of census-taking occurred only every ten years, so that the 1930 census is the only basis for projections and analysis of the impact of the Depression. The government's redefinition of labour force categories and availability of the new methodologies for researching also supported discursive formation of knowledge work, as they did for many other discourses, by bringing into focus that which had not previously be visible or accessible. Daniel Bell observed that there was no real measure of the unemployment during the 1930s due to lack of clarity concerning definitions of the labour force and deficiency in research techniques to make quick counts (Bell 1973: fn23-4). Further, there was no full view of the economy since the GNP and national-income accounts were not part of public policy until 1945. Bell (1974: fn23-4) cites the unpublished dissertation by J. de Neufville (MIT) on using social indicators to illustrate unemployment statistics. The study has subsequently been published as Innes de Neufville, J. (1975), **Social Indicators and Public Policy Interactive Processes of Design and Application,** Amsterdam, NY, Elsevier Scientific Pub. Co.
[17] Relevant films were sourced from Manville, R., and Jacobs, L., (1972), **The International Encyclopedia of Film**, London, Rainbird Reference Books.

the story and focuses specifically on education as a condition of formation for a knowledge work discourse.

4.2.4 Education conditions

To establish a relationship between discourses of economic growth, consumption and education that provides conditions of emergence of a knowledge work discourse, a link still needs to be made with levels of education. While American politicians and economic philosophers espoused rhetoric of mass production and economic growth, a set of circumstances that would inhibit implementation of the vision was beginning to be recognised. In order to fully participate in a consumption society, consumers needed to have sufficient income to spend on desirable goods rather than mere basics, or at least be able to acquire them on credit (Hunter, 1996). And, for people to earn the requisite level of income, they required regular and reasonably well-paid jobs for which they needed skills and education beyond the most basic schooling.

Although elementary schooling became compulsory to Grade 8 (age 14) in the 1920s with broadened educational opportunities, many children still did not attend school to this minimum level (Snyder, 1993). College and beyond were accessible only to an elite and privileged few. Even by 1940, the required eight years of schooling was achieved by less than half of the American population (Snyder, 1993), leaving more than 50 per cent of the populace with the most basic levels of literacy and numeracy.

The situation was even worse in the American armed forces. Prior to World War II, the U.S. had only a small standing army of about 175,000 (Snyder, 1993), yet when America entered the war, its newly-swollen ranks of recruits were disproportionately represented by less-educated echelons of society. The U.S. Defence Department assessed its capacity for war and realised that of enlisted men aged 18 to 24 years, almost three-quarters (74 per cent) had not completed the obligatory eight years of elementary schooling, that is, beyond the age of 14 years (Gibson, 1976: Table 8). Moreover, from the ranks of potential leaders of males above the age of 25 years, 78 per cent had no formal education beyond Grade 8, (Gibson, 1976: Table 8). The

majority troops were barely literate or numerate, had difficulty reading maps, using technology, or reading and comprehending written instructions (Snyder, 1993).

The fact that the defence forces were also under-trained, under-equipped, and the war machinery they did have was very old, did not augur well for successful participation in World War II[18]. However, new production methods for the war effort rapidly changed equipment capabilities, as has already been described. As well, new methods of group learning, which were structured to assist rapid learning techniques were implemented to develop skills for a defence industry workforce and continued on after the war. This was also the case for administrative training programs (Snyder, 1993). But a lack of even basic education in areas of literacy and numeracy among many recruits meant that their ability to learn to use new equipment was hampered and could not be rectified quickly.

4.2.5   Learning lessons from history

The urgency surrounding the circumstances of U.S. participation in World War II precluded any immediate resolution to impoverished education among defence recruits. Within months of America entering the war, plans were being developed to address potential post-war manpower requirements. These were aimed at boosting veteran benefits, including education, in order for veterans to make the transition to becoming participating members of society easier than had occurred post-World War I. Although providing benefits for veterans dated back to the Rehabilitation Act of 1919, which recognised that military service prevented young people from receiving training for employment or a vocation, it was exclusively for disabled veterans rather than those who were still able bodied (Schugurensky, 2002).

Memories of the effects of post-World War I unemployment, homelessness and recession, and the role of disenfranchised veterans in the rise of social movements that were problematical for the American government were still fresh, so that a healthy post-war economy would depend on veterans being able to support

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[18] **Colour of War: America at War**, *Part 3: Triumph and Despair* (2002), television documentary, TWI/Carlton for PBS in association with Channel 4 (producer), (U.K.), screened TCN Channel 9 Australia, January 5, 2003

themselves (West's Encyclopedia of American Law, 1998). Double the number of
veterans was expected to return after World War II compared with World War I. It
was recognised that benefits under the existing 1919 Act were inadequate; they had
even been insufficient to offset negative economic and social experiences in the post-
World War I period, as has been shown. Dire economic predictions for society post-
World War II from business and government leaders envisaged greater
unemployment and widespread economic depression than had occured post-World
War I (Schugurensky, 2002). The American government was pressured to pass
offsetting legislation. By mid-1943, White House agency The National Resources
Planning Board recommended a series of programs for education and training to
address post-war manpower needs (Schugurensky, 2002).

Education was also a key tenet of the U.S. Government's *Servicemen's Readjustment
Act of 1944* (the G.I. Bill), which was proposed as a means of easing returning World
War II veterans' transition to civilian life. It included not only hospitalisation,
housing and business establishment, but also education access and the building of
appropriate facilities (Library of Congress, 1946[19]). The G.I. Bill offered subsidised
tuition, fees, books and living expenses while veterans attended college, university or
other approved institutions; they could attend the educational institution of their
choice; and the institution had to admit them if the veterans met their admissions
requirements (Schugurensky, 2002).

While the G.I. Bill had its ardent supporters (newspaper owner William Randolph
Hearst for one), there were many who argued vehemently against it (West's
Encyclopedia of American Law, 1998). Some university presidents argued that
educational standards would be diminished, while others asserted that universities
were accessible only to the elite of America and needed to be democratised (Kiester,
1994). There were objections that the cost would be prohibitive, that some
institutions would reduce standards to gain government subsidies (DiLorenzo, 1997),
that education would not necessarily provide access to jobs, that some trade and
vocational training would be of an unacceptable standard[20], there would be

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[19] **Library of Congress Catalog** (1946), LC Control No. 46026742.
[20] **Joint Report of the Administrator of Veterans Affairs and Director of the Bureau of the
Budget**, in House Document 466, 81st Congress, 2nd session.

overcrowding (West's Encyclopedia of American Law, 1998), and that education would provide a shelter for slackers who did not want to work (Kiester, 1994).

While some of these arguments against educating returning veterans were realised, around 7.8 million World War II veterans took advantage of the G.I. Bill, including 2.2 million who attended higher education (tertiary) institutions (West's Encyclopedia of American Law, 1998). According to Snyder (1993: Table 28), in 1929/30 the number of higher education degrees conferred on U.S. citizens was 139,752 (representing 0.11 per cent of the total population), in a ratio of 60:40 men:women. By 1939/40, the number of attained degrees was 216,521 a growth of 65 per cent (and 0.17 per cent of the population), in a similar male-to-female ratio.

After the G.I. Bill was enacted and by 1949/50, the number of attained degrees reached 496,661, a growth of 229 per cent (at 0.33 of the population) with a male-to-female ratio of 76:24 (Gibson, 1976: Table 174). Not only had the number of degrees attained doubled during the decade between 1939/40 and 1949/50, but enrolments in higher educational institutions had also doubled. Highest take-up peak of the G.I. Bill benefits occurred in 1949, at which time almost 2.5 million people in the 18 to 24 age range enrolled in universities or colleges, with 70 per cent being men (Snyder, 1993: 65). Moreover, the annual current-fund revenue available for education more than trebled from US$714 million in 1939/40 to US$2,374 million in 1949/50 (Snyder, 1993: Table 34).

4.2.5.1 Two-fold benefits of the G.I. Bill

Success of the G.I. Bill in terms of social and political benefit through education alone was huge, yet its economic benefit was not yet ascertained. Educating and upskilling returning veterans served to put on hold a potential glut of low-skilled workers, while new peace-time consumer manufacturing industries were established or converted from war-time footing. At least veterans were given educational opportunities they were denied previously, and it was hoped that they would be dissuaded from seeking out alternative socio-political movements, especially communism, as had occurred post-World War I (Reich, 1991).

Returned veterans took advantage of new opportunities to gain education and new technical and administrative skills. As well, they were effectively paid to spend between two and four years out of the workforce (depending on the educational institution), thereby avoiding a repeat of the post-World War I recession due to simultaneous events of a large influx of people coupled with a lack of employment. Such an education policy also facilitated a slower transition out of the industrial workforce of the many "Rosie the Riveters"[21], the women who had stepped in to fill employment positions when the men went to war, and who were reluctantly ousted from their work in defence and other industries and back into the home[22] (Singer, 2002).

Holding strategies and a slower diffusion of the population into the workforce gave the government time while it pondered two important economic questions. What to do with the newly educated in terms of available work? How could the government gain an effective return on its investment in this education? Renewed consideration of the discourses of economic prosperity through a skilled and educated workforce embodied in the National Corporate Planning gathered strength.

At this point, the murkiness of the beginnings of a discourse of knowledge work is starting to clear. It can be seen that a connection between education and work is emerging; that in order for a successful consumer economy to become a reality, a stable political framework – an American democratic order – must be attained. Alternative and undesirable social movements must be squashed and conditions for their emergence must be radically altered.

Circumstances for materialisation of a discourse of knowledge work are beginning to be clarified but they are still a long way from explaining how other objects became embedded in a discourse of knowledge work. As has been discussed in Chapter 2, knowledge work as a discourse is aligned not only to economics and education but

[21] "Rosie the Riveter", the subject of a U.S. Government propaganda campaign to encourage women into industry was a fictional character.
[22] According to a poll by Newsday, September 11, 1944, 85 per cent of women said they wanted to continue to work in the factories; 86 per cent of Nassau women in an August 1945 N.Y.S. Department of Labor survey said they expected to continue working after the war (Division of Industrial Relations, Women in Industry and Minimum Wage), in Singer (2002).

also to technology. The following section explores another history of knowledge work in terms of its connection to technology.

4.3   TECHNOLOGY AS A NEW DISCURSIVE OBJECT

Although Drucker (1959) observed that new technologies are agents for economic development, particularly communications technologies, he did not assert that technology is integral to the work of knowledge as did Daniel Bell (1973); rather he said it is an outcome of knowledge applied in scientific and technological discoveries, a very different tack from a more contemporary understanding of the significance of an object of technology to a discourse of knowledge work.

Drucker (1969: Part 1) examines knowledge technologies in relation to their economic use to create new industries and businesses. His discourse on the work of knowledge does not rely on technology as a centrifugal force; rather it enables technologies in the broadest sense to develop. Drucker discusses a broad application of many technologies in new fields of medicine, marine, agriculture, industry, pharmaceuticals, metallurgy, as well as electronics. By connecting a discourse of knowledge work with other discourses, in effect, they become opportunities for discursive dispersion into and interconnection with new fields of knowledge. As legitimated authorities from these new fields take up the object of knowledge work and make statements about it pertaining to these disciplines, industries also associated with these fields of knowledge begin to demand 'knowledge workers' rather than manual workers. The discourse of knowledge work began to emerge in developed countries, those with sound industrial and educational foundations (Drucker, 1969: 12).

In Drucker's discussion of new industries, he describes the 'information industry' as having significant impact on the economy and society, equating its impact with that of the electric generator (Drucker, 1969: 26). Drucker is describing extant tendencies, crystallising them, and in so doing, constituting them as discursive devices whose subsequent agency demonstrates the acuity of his analysis. He

argues that although "an information industry can function without a computer …
we would not have understood that information, like electricity, is a form of
energy" (Drucker, 1969: 26-27). He proposed that information is "energy for
mind work" and a computer is a tool enabling people to do the "mind work they
want to do and are unable to do today for want of cheap, reliable, and fast
information" (Drucker, 1969: 27). Drucker's emphasis was on the economics of a
new information industry through use of information systems (Drucker, 1969: 25)
to assist in accessing information, but it was up to Daniel Bell and others to
finesse the concept, tighten connections and transform a discourse of knowledge
work to admit an object of information technology.

4.3.1 Forms of society connect to knowledge work

Daniel Bell's (1973) post-industrial and information society thesis resonates with
themes of new social movements based on boosting education in similar vein to Peter
Drucker's (1969; 1993) post-capitalist and knowledge society. Bell adds an
additional twist to underscore and reflect technology usage as an associated, and
indeed, central object within a discourse of knowledge work. Bell's (1973)
sociological thesis examines dependence of Twentieth Century industrial society on
technology and science and observes that it is very different from a manufacturing
society of two centuries earlier (Bell, 1973: x). He projects future intersections of the
axes of industrial society with science and technology into the Twenty First Century
and develops his theory of a post-industrial society incorporating scientific and
technical applications through electronic technologies.

Bell (1973, and new forewords to the 1976 and 1999 editions) incorporates within the
discourse a notion of technology as a complementary and necessary tool of
knowledge work, rather than as outcomes of research and development or even as a
repository for knowledge, as did Drucker. Indeed, for Bell, knowledge work could
not exist without technology, so that technology became another object, along with
economic value and accredited programmed education, inherent to a discourse of
knowledge work.

Bell (1973) developed the concept of a 'knowledge society' in which he explored a transition from an industrial society to a 'post-industrial society' (Bell, 1959[23]; Riesman, 1958). Like Drucker and his conception of knowledge as an economic resource, for Bell, technology is the central theme and he examines ways in which it has become a strategic and pivotal resource and an impetus for social change (Bell, [1973] Foreword to 1999: xviii). Computers and their impacts on society is a particular focus for Bell reaching into spheres of economics, politics, education and the workplace.

Bell (1973; and Forewords to 1976; 1999) generates new discursive relationships between knowledge work and technologies for information processing and storage integral to a production of knowledge, beyond Drucker's (1969) conception of computers providing reliable and fast information cheaply. In a contemporary context, these discursive statements have further transformed knowledge work as an object that is economically and organisationally captive, to incorporate knowledge management, organisational knowledge, knowledge as an organisational asset, intellectual capital, a learning organisation, and so on (as discussed in Chapter 2). Concurrently and subsequently, a discourse of knowledge work has found a legitimate place in other, dispersed discourses, and knowledge work discourse is itself strengthened and supported by these associations.

4.3.2   Technologies of learning cross social boundaries

In addition to post-war education and training initiatives, new methods for learning, coupled with new technologies of production, provided a sound basis for developing a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. For America to support its participation in World War II with adequate defence equipment, it not only needed to tap into a new workforce but also develop their skills very quickly (Drucker, 1969; Singer, 2002). In the main, women and farm workers comprised a new industrial workforce

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[23] Although Daniel Bell suggested that he had coined the expression "post-industrial" in notes he presented to Salzburg Seminar participants in 1959, he subsequently discovered that David Riesman had also used the term to describe a leisure society in opposition to industrial society, and later still discovered the phrase in a 1917 book by A.J. Penty titled, **Old Worlds for New: A Study of the Post-Industrial State** (Bell 1973: 37), who had used it also in opposition to the notion of a Leisure State.

supporting the war effort yet few came with the requisite skills or knowledge. And traditional methods of learning, mostly via apprenticeship and on-the-job skills acquisition, were considered to be too slow to bring them up to a speed of manufacturing suitable for war time (Singer, 2002).

On the basis of needing to rapidly develop a skilled workforce, learning techniques that had been used effectively by more elite social groups were implemented in defence industries. These learning methods had been initiated successfully in the early Nineteenth Century at West Point and continued to be used at elite educational institutions of colleges and universities (Hoskin and Macve, 1998). The methods emulated European models, where modes of learning based on practices of regular assessments, evaluation and examination proved to be very effective (Hoskin and Macve, 1998). Indeed, the American Defence Force also used systems of programmed learning for clerical, supervisory and medical occupations. These learning initiatives were implemented by both the Defence Force and in industries supporting the war effort.

New methods comprised structured and programmed learning, providing better standards for skills development and defence industry output than could traditional experiential training of many blue collar apprenticeships. Activities, such as metal work in welding and riveting for shipbuilding, engineering work and construction, could be reduced from several years to a matter of weeks by using a system of programmed learning (Drucker, 1969: 268). Even the most unskilled, such as itinerant farm workers and women, could move into employment in defence industries and produce quality product very rapidly (Singer, 2002).

Large numbers of these new industrial workers, people who had no experience in manufacturing environments, could take on work in defence factories and elsewhere, having undertaken systematic and intensive programs of learning offsite; an achievement that was extensively written about in newspapers during the war (Singer, 2002). American newspapers in 1942 and 1943 cited the success of specialised training courses and programs for women recruited to fill positions in industry vacated by men who went to war (Mathis, 1994).

Intense learning activity coupled with formalised and structured programs speeded up the rate of learning, enabling workers to become productive faster than if they had learned via traditional on-the-job means. For example, standardised four-week technical training programs were completed by women in two-and-a-half weeks (Singer, 2002). Success of the programs not only challenged perceptions about the abilities of women but was an observable outcome that would significantly alter views about an entrenched class system of educational access in the future. If technical knowledge could be imparted to the uneducated, the unskilled and to women, to give them knowledge and skills to become very productive members during war time, how much more productive could men be during peace time?

In addition, the new industrial workers of war-time America also made suggestions and contributions for improving production and showed a willingness to work longer hours, up to 58 hours a week (Singer, 2002). Their innovations included new technical products, such as a new wire identification tape dispenser at Republic Aviation developed by Kathryn Brazzell, who won a war bond for her invention (Singer, 2002[24]). As well, the new workers showed that knowledge they had gained to perform a particular job in defence factories could be applied in new and different ways. They showed a capacity to apply the standardised theoretical learning they had gained to perform one set of activities to new activities; they were creating new knowledge – they were 'knowledge workers' although they were not categorised as such, at least not until Drucker named them in 1959 in describing these practices.

A link between work and knowledge had been made, not just for the elite, but for ordinary people. We do not know what became of Kathryn Brazzell's invention for Republic Aviation, but we do know that it was consider of sufficient merit to enable Kathryn to achieve public acclamation. We also know that such creative applications of knowledge to work were publicly recognised as accomplishments of economic as well as social and political worth. What became apparent is that, not only did formal structured programs of learning prove to be more expeditious in developing specific skills for employment, but workers trained in this way were able to apply their learning to creating and innovating products and production methods.

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[24] Citing, **The Farmingdale Post**, October 8, 1942; **Republic Aviation**, July 10, 1942; **Hempstead Sentinel**; **Republic Aviation**, November, 1942.

While innovation in both products and manufacturing methods was highly regarded during war time, it presented a new set of problems in peace time. Coupled with new technologies that had been developed during the war, new products, new methods of production, and a need for a skilled and creative workforce, industry in a post-war environment was not only looking at overproduction of a limited number of products but also at a significantly broader range of more complex products (Reich, 1991). These were integral components to America's successful transition to a booming post-war economy. Another piece of the puzzle was still to be put into place, which would take several years to be implemented. This was to create both the pull and the push for a sustained economic boom, creating impetus for individuals to strive to attain well-remunerated and, therefore, high-status employment.

4.4   CREATING CONDITIONS FOR A SUSTAINED POST-WAR ECONOMIC BOOM

American Government and business envisaged that creation of a post-World War II economic boom could occur in much the same way as the post-war boom after World War I: through reinvigorating peace-time industries by channelling new technological applications to agriculture, construction, manufacturing, transportation and so on (Reich, 1991; Singer, 2002). Once again, speed to redevelop both agrarian and industrial economies was needed to provide new housing and new employment opportunities for returned soldiers and the influx of refugees after both wars. However, this had proved to be unsustainable and insufficient to offset a subsequent economic depression during the 1930s.

Little had been done for the majority of World War I veterans who had not been disabled during the war or for those whose education had been disrupted. It was these veterans who were unable to re-engage with either the economy or American society and a considerable number followed paths that were considered to be undesirable by many in society and government. It was thought that similar conditions were likely to follow World War II unless economic prosperity not only

followed the war but could also be sustained and become inclusive of all of society. It was feared that if such a possibility was not addressed early enough, it could lead to even worse economic conditions after the second war than had occurred after the first (Reich, 1991).

During the war, the American Government supported American corporations, and industry was able to accomplish extraordinary feats of production. Post-war, this industrial capacity needed to be absorbed by international and American markets. While immediate post-war functioning of international markets was beyond the control of an American government, developing internal markets was not (Reich, 1991). There were two aspects to this – a pull through of production into society, as well as pushing out certain participants of the workforce in order to make way for others.

4.4.1 Economic pull through

A pull through of economic benefit was important to ensure there was no crippling overproduction in manufacturing and to create a desire for new products by American people. A first step in establishing a base line for an economic boom was to create stable conditions for veterans, who returned to set up families and buy homes with government-subsidised loans (Reich, 1991). They would need to fill their homes with appliances, many of which utilised new technologies developed in defence factories and converted to domestic use.

Creating a desire for such products became an important factor in providing economic pull through of manufacturing production capacity. The film and advertising industries were encouraged to develop subtle and not-so-subtle strategies to create a desire for mass consumption and immediate gratification of that desire. The film industry had been widely used for propaganda films, such as Frank Capra's 1942 film series called *Why We Fight*. Even as early as 1942 and alongside these cinematic images, film producers and directors were also used to promote images of beautiful women, weddings, families, and domestic bliss. The message was, enlist, fight for your country, win the war, and when it was over … all this would be yours!

Between 1939 and 1947, for example, MGM Studios made a series of comedic films starring Ann Sothern, about Maisie a strong-minded American showgirl who went to work in an aircraft factory to support the war effort, worked hard, obeyed all the rules and 'got her man'. One of the scenes shows Maisie starring in a musical review for soldiers with a chorus line of beauties in bridal gowns, singing 'cookin' with gas', so that soldiers could be conditioned during the early stages of the war that desirable domesticity came with a new gas cooker. Cinematic product placement had begun. So, too, advertising agencies added urgency to acquisition of goods post-war for returning veterans and their booming families (Rothenberg, 1995: 312).

Although initiated by economic and political circumstances, a discourse of mass consumption was strongly linked to new post-war images about America and its people. For many veterans, returning to their pre-war lives would prohibit them from participating fully in a booming economy. Many had come from poor rural backgrounds, where unskilled labouring jobs were now being done by new agricultural machines and methods (Reich, 1991; Singer, 2002). Others had worked at menial jobs in urban areas or were part of the great transient populations that tramped from town to town and city to city, captured in cinematic images of Charlie Chaplin's *Little Tramp* and many Laurel and Hardie films, as well as *The Grapes of Wrath* by Steinbeck and in Woody Guthrie's *Dust Bowl Ballads*.

Newly-created desire for stability precluded such unstable lives and other options for employment needed to become available. Hand-outs for itinerants became less generous than after World War I, not because people could ill afford them but because they were unwilling to support vagrancy when other options were available (Singer, 2002). Drucker's (1949) view of a welfare state was one of reciprocity, not hand outs.

Coupled with new skills and training and capabilities to earn higher incomes, the spectre of overproduction was ameliorated by a new-found ability of American citizenry that could afford and be willing to purchase new products. The joys of a consumption economy were well within their grasp. There only needed to be a transfer of actual jobs from those who performed them during the war effort to those

who were now formally educated and newly skilled – an exchange of one set of workers, in the form of women and unskilled workers and labourers, for another, the technical and administrative knowledge workers and managers.

4.4.2 Policies of exclusion

The pact between government and industrial corporations never included over-staffing. In order to create a sustained economic boom, employment needed to be found for returning veterans and it was unlikely that men would work under the guidance of women (Woloch, 1994). In addition, many men needed to gain skills to use industrial technologies. The manufacturing of a vast array of new consumer products required people not only to produce the goods but also to manage the producers. The war-time effort had revealed paucity of education for many recruits that had to be remedied quickly and those whose training and education had been cut short also required an opportunity to complete their secondary and tertiary education.

There was a push to 'persuade' many women to return to domesticity and work at home (Singer, 2002). They needed incentives to take off their overalls and headscarves and don the fashions of 'feminine' women such as iconic actresses June Allyson and Donna Reed, who greeted their husbands at the door with a dry martini, and served plentiful and wholesome food from kitchens full of labour-saving appliances[25]. While these images formed a new discourse perpetuating the American Dream (Rosenberg, 1982; Boorstin, 1962) of mass consumption, aligned with those of beauty and happiness, at the same time factories were forcing women out of the workforce by removing many war-time benefits, such as crèches for their children. Like it or not, women were being edged out of many parts of the employment sector in order to provide work for veterans. It was a delicate balance, often handled quite indelicately.

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[25] "The introduction of ready-to-wear fashion by elite designers was also connected with the emergence in the 1950s and 1960s of an Italian clothing production sector oriented to the United States' market … The simultaneous organisational and geographical restructuring of elite fashion into a mass production industry reflected the changing geo-politics of Europe's post-War reconstruction, American involvement in Italy under the Marshall Plan, and refinements to the technologies of mass production … Dior is credited with transforming post-War dress practices through his revolutionary 'New Look'. However, the 'New Look' has also been attributed to Balmain … The costumes in the movies *Three Coins in Fountain* (1954) and *Roman Holiday* (1953) typify this look" (Weller, 2004).

The second factor created a push to maintain control over developing internal markets and sustaining an economic boom, which had failed to materialise after the previous war. During World War II, women were encouraged to find employment in defence industries and employers were likewise encouraged to accept female labour in areas that had previously been closed to women (Woloch, 1994). Compared to the majority of traditional employment that women and other unskilled people had been able to do, such as paid domestic labour in laundries and restaurants, as shop assistants, farm and building labourers, employment in defence work paid considerably better. Not only were these new workers, both men and women, paid better but they were well trained, productive and creative in how they performed their jobs. Moreover, as war-time industries made the transition to peace-time activities, cumulative spending power of better-paid workers could be put towards consumption of new goods.

These were the sorts of workers that America needed post-war but in much larger numbers and they had to include veterans, not just those who had been disabled or whose education had been disrupted, but as many as possible. The success of war experience in new rapid and standardised training methods – grouped in a classroom rather than individually on a factory floor – and the resultant additional earnings that these skills provided for trained workers could provide a panacea for industrial overcapacity. The greater the skills of workers, the more they could earn, and the more they could spend.

4.4.3   Critical timing

There was another perceived benefit underlying the rationale for separating post-war education from its application within a workplace, apart from speed and assurances of standardised training. A proposition of separating formal learning by attending college or university from actual work in factories and offices could be used effectively to pay veterans to stay out of the workforce while they learned. This meant several things to initiating conditions for a sustained economic boom, especially in gaining time.

One aspect assisting the economic strength was that newly-developed products, particularly household products, could take advantage of mass production techniques and new technologies as war-time industrialisation for peace-time uses was transformed. Another benefit to an economy in transition was that not only could many male veterans delay their immediate return to the workforce but women could be moved out of desirable employment areas without disrupting the fragile peace-time economy. Between 1940 and 1945, the female workforce had grown by more than 50 per cent, with the proportion increasing from 27.6 per cent of the workforce to 36.1 per cent in 1945[26] (Hartmann, 1982). Many women had left poorly paid jobs in domestic service and trade for better jobs in offices (Woloch, 1994).

When men left to go to war from 1941, American citizens had already lived through a decade of economic crisis. At the depths of economic depression in 1933, more than 30 per cent or 12 million men and women could not find employment. Even by 1940, after major federal funding programs of the New Deal, eight million Americans were still unemployed (Hartmann, 1982). Would things be any better after the war? How would they be able to buy into economic prosperity with the limited earning potential they had based on the level of skills they had?

These hard questions were fuelled by overt and subliminal messages equating success with consumption; happiness equals consumption; domestic bliss with consumption (Ewen, 1976; Cohen, 2003). The government made it relatively easy for returned veterans to go to college or university with generous funding of up to US$500 a year for tuition and other costs, plus an allowance based on the number of months served (West's Encyclopedia of American Law, 1998). As a result, around 10 million male veterans took up education offerings in the G.I. Bill, although only two million actually were expected to do so (West's Encyclopedia of American Law, 1998).

Not only were the G.I.s able to do the work but they were also able to gain formal credentials that documented this achievement, with universities, specific training colleges and vocational schools being established to administer new learning programs (Singer, 2002). Gaining appropriate accreditation appears to be pivotal to

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[26] It should be noted that statistics used rely on availability of U.S. Census data, which, as noted, earlier was conducted at 10-year intervals.

education in relation to emergence of a knowledge work discourse (Bell, 1973; Drucker, 1959; 1993). Numbers of graduates tripled from 129,000 degrees conferred on males in 1939/40 to 376,000 in 1949/50 (Snyder, 1993: Table 8), with enrolments in higher education by males aged between 18 and 24 years doubling during the same decade from 893,000 to 1,722,000 (Snyder, 1993: Table 24).

These factors created both push and pull for a more highly-educated and speedily-trained workforce, with higher earning potential, and who had acquired accreditation through formalised and standardised learning, application of which could be of benefit to a work environment (Bell, 1973: 134). While a discourse of knowledge work had not yet been articulated, elements framing discursive conditions for its subsequent formation and emergence were developing.

4.5   ROI − APPLICATION OF LEARNING TO WORK

The post-war economic challenges for the American government and businesses were full employment and the creation of new jobs. With a two-year college degree or a four-year university degree behind them, war veterans wanted types of employment that could utilise their new training and skills. A proportion of these newly-educated workers were taken up in companies that relied on defence contracts with the U.S. military-industrial complex in its fight against the spread of communism from the late 1940s, the Korean War and the subsequent "cold war" (Koistinen, 1980). Growth in the numbers of new defence contracting companies and related employment assisted with an emerging and more affluent American middle class, in line with the aspirations of The American Dream (Rosenberg, 1982; Boorstin, 1962). For example, the growth in consumption of televisions grew from 17,000 in 1946 to 250,000 by 1949. By 1953, two-thirds of American homes had at least one television (Schultz and Tishler, 1999).

During the 1950s and 1960s, the issue became one of quality of jobs not just quantity (Reich, 1991). Quality jobs meant higher pay yet the difference in earnings potential related to levels of education attained and types of work that people could do with

their education (Reich, 1991: 205-207). As Reich observes, an individual's competitive position in the market is related to the function he can perform and it is knowledge workers, or 'symbolic analysts' who can solve, identify and broker new problems, who are the most successful (Reich, 1991: 208).

Recognition of new problems represents a change in discursive perceptions about order, in which innovation and change supersede inevitability of progress (Drucker, 1957: 17). Such change means looking at the world differently. For example, expenditure on technology research for American industry for non-military purposes rose from less than US$100 million (at 0.1 per cent of national income) in 1928 to more than US$7 billion (at 2 per cent of national income) 30 years later (Drucker, 1957: 19). Research was used to develop new technologies, processes and products, spreading from highly technological industries such as electrical engineering and chemicals to a huge range of business industries.

In these innovative industries, the newly educated found employment. They became part of organisation teams developing science, processes and products, finding new uses and new markets. They were able to participate in and contribute to a booming economy by helping to develop new products and processes for mass consumption; and through their higher earning potential, they were able to acquire new products and use new services to become part of a mass consumer economy. They became a newly-educated business class delivering a desirable stratum of American citizenry (Reich, 1991).

Education had its return on investment through its application to business and the economy in research and development of new processes and products. An American nationalist discourse articulated a distinction between highly-desirable and less-desirable American citizenry, through supporting an American way of life. That meant participation in the economy, which in turn meant mass consumption, and that could only occur through higher wages.

In this way, the conditions of existence for emergence of a knowledge work discourse were politicised and aligned to social, cultural and economic processes. Yet a discourse, in which a conception of knowledge work was the object, had not yet been

articulated; it required discursive authorities in particular fields of knowledge to describe knowledge work, develop a specific discourse for which it would become an object, and define boundaries of a knowledge work discourse.

4.6 EARLY AUTHORITIES OF DELIMITATION

To this point in the chapter, a detailed examination has been conducted of the historical context or surfaces of emergence which enabled a discourse of knowledge work to emerge and develop in the way that it did. We have examined how theoretical learning gained by workers to perform one set of activities was applied to other activities to create new knowledge – thus spawning a notion of praxis from which a concept of knowledge work emerges. More than that, we have seen how knowledge work was infused with the political to create a particular society; how it provided an artificial stimulation for consumption of goods and what that meant for corporations and government post war. Consumption's insidious effects on the female war-time workforce have been explored, whereby the grittiness of overalls was replaced with the prettiness of dresses with flounces and petticoats and all that the femininity of these implied. Discourses of technology and learning connected so closely with economic discourses of knowledge work, that other meaning options were closed down and excluded from the discourses.

The section now begins to explore the early authorities of the knowledge work discourse and how they delimited the boundaries of the discourse. Knowledge work began to assume a particular discursive form primarily through the works of academics in America, many of whom had fled from totalitarian regimes in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. Peter Drucker, who coined the term knowledge worker (1959), is one such *émigré*. He saw knowledge workers as an emerging group of formally-educated workers who would succeed industrial workers as the dominant group in the workforce (Drucker 1994: 63). How did such a description emerge and what were the circumstances that inhabited Drucker's thinking?

Drucker escaped Nazi Germany for London and then the U.S. in the 1930s, having directly experienced the emergence of totalitarianism[27]. In his early books, Drucker explores the rise of corporations as an important social, economic and political response to what he called 'sick governments' (Drucker, 1969). He particularly criticised an idealised version of free market economics, which did not recognise what he considered to be the twin requirements for an individual; for status and justice in his/her relationship with an enterprise, and for the need of an individual to function in an enterprise and a society that functionally reflect each other (Drucker, 1942; 1949: 151-154). According to Drucker, denial of status in a society leads to denial of justice and facilitates the rise of totalitarianism and police terror, whereas denial of social function leads to insanity and creation of magic rituals. Denial of both leads to breakdown in social cohesion (Drucker, 1949: 154).

Drucker updated and disseminated his views concerning the primacy of economics and organisations as a means to national power, developing influential policies of National Corporate Planning within a broader discourse of politics and economics[28]. By further enunciating a dominant role for economic interests as an integrating influence for all other concerns through his books and articles, Drucker – as an authority of legitimation in economics – began a process of alignment of discourses that enabled discursive statements concerning knowledge work and economics subsequently to emerge. He delimited this new discourse of knowledge and work within the knowledge field of economics.

Another émigré from Austria to the U.S. was Professor Fritz Machlup, who held numerous positions at prestigious American universities (Arnold, 2003). Machlup had also begun to explore knowledge as an economic activity in the early 1930s with emphasis on theoretical and empirical research as essential aspects within R&D (Machlup, 1980 [1962]). Machlup perceived that quality R&D was closely linked with quality education and that computer technologies supported national production and dissemination of knowledge. He also supported economic views of categorisation, measurement and management, that is, if it can be measured, it can be managed! (Arnold, 2003).

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[27] http://www.druckerarchives.net/data/html/drucker/1930s.htm
[28] http://www.druckerarchives.net/data/html/drucker/timelineh.htm

Machlup's 'chain of ideas' (Machlup, 1980 [1962]: xvii) resulted in a proposed six-volume work on all forms of knowledge of which three only were completed. The first was published in 1962 and reviewed in academic, business journals and popular media in the U.S. and internationally across disciplines such as economics, politics, and sociology. His theories were taken up in academic lectures and doctoral theses, and generated discussions on student campuses in both positive and negative ways (Machlup, 1980 [1962]: xxi-xxviii). He strongly influenced others in their thinking about knowledge creation, production, dissemination, and he created new knowledge objects for the discourse.

Another key influence in the emerging knowledge work discourse was Daniel Bell. Throughout his Foreword 1999 to his 1973 book *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society*, Bell refers to citations of his own work and the significance of his position in the discourse, setting himself up as an authority in the delimitation of a knowledge work discourse. Although his self-identification as an authority may not have been necessary, since citations of his work and international recognition by governments, other academics and scholars, and business people has been ongoing, his self-promotion may have served to generate his reputation as a legitimating authority.

In his discourse of knowledge work, Bell insisted that technology was a pivotal object, with his particular focus on information technologies as a unique component that places knowledge work within an information society thesis. Emergence of the requisite information technologies occurred during World War II as a result of intensive research and development. Military technologies of mass production and innovation were modified to enable an American dream of high consumption to occur (Rosenberg, 1982; Cohen, 2003). Moreover, a new class of knowledge workers were better remunerated than industrial workers, and subsequently better able to participate in an emerging consumer society setting new western standards of capitalism.

Both Drucker and Bell assert that knowledge work has a uniqueness that positions it exclusively within post-World War II organisational discourses. For Drucker, knowledge work is economic in that it necessitates putting formalised theoretical

knowledge to work productively. Government sponsorship of veterans after World War II through the G.I. Bill demanded an economic return in order to justify use of American taxes, thus knowledge gained through higher education should be put to work profitably and productively.

Formality of appropriate accreditation appears to be the crux of an education debate, since the two to four years that veterans were out of the workforce while gaining further education had to be justified to society. A discourse of education required positive reinforcement of delivering to society a new class of workers – knowledge workers – whose new skills could be used by businesses in developing new products and markets. Drucker's discourse on knowledge work was configured around its economic benefit for corporations and, ultimately, the state.

Drucker as an authority of delimitation is supported by an institutional field of economics, in which knowledge is conceived as a resource. However, not all authorities are accorded equal status, and just as discourses are subject to reinterpretation and 'clarification' through legitimating processes, so too, are authorities of delimitation. Drucker's theories were not wholeheartedly accepted by his contemporaries. For example, his theories are contested by Machlup, (1980 [1962]: Ch.13) in his work on uses, values and benefits of knowledge, which relate to availability of funding based on immediacy of 'practical results' (Machlup, 1980 [1962]: 206).

Machlup argues that an economic exchange value of knowledge, like everything else, is based on relative scarcity (Machlup, 1980 [1962]: 207), and more education does not necessarily equate to higher earnings (Machlup, 1980 [1962]: 212; also Bell, 1973: 411). Machlup also questions the use of statistical 'proxies' to disentangle factors and effects to measure length of education in relation to earning capacity (Machlup, 1980 [1962]: 212; Bell, 1973: fn325) an issue that is emerging as key in contemporary debates about outsourcing and 'offshoring'.

Links between an emerging discourse of knowledge work and economic discourses of employment, production, consumption, and markets are now evident, yet boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of a knowledge work discourse

were defined early in the life of the discourse and, as we have seen in Chapter 2, the boundaries are still fiercely defended and contested by contemporary authorities of legitimation.

4.7 CONCLUSION

The chapter has shown that knowledge work like other discursive formations is an historical process that is socially constructed and arbitrarily conceived by those with the power to do so. In the chapter, I have shown that Truth does not reside in the origins of a discourse, subsequently to be produced and reproduced in a fixed and non-refutable manner. Discourse is not *The* Truth but *a* truth. Although an objective of such discursive totalities is to dominate by canonising a discourse and providing it with a long and linear genealogy, I have shown that this cannot be borne out by historical rereadings.

In the chapter, I have shown that formation of a knowledge work discourse is subjected to processes of legitimation, emerging from the conditions of its existence. Social and economic conditions after two world wars and different political responses to resolve them created historical fragments that attached themselves to a new discourse of knowledge work. In having to deal with movements of significant populations of poorly-educated people and an influx of new migrants, needing to create sustained economic conditions post war, ensuring war-time industrial capacity did not result in overproduction that could not be absorbed by internal and external markets, and generating the means whereby a society of limitations and restrictions could become one of consumption and affordability, the U.S. government in hand with industrialists and academics created the wherewithal for an economic and social shift.

Government-sponsored education to boost levels of technical and managerial skill required a return on the taxable community's investment, a factor that has been shown to clearly differentiate this historical context from previous conditions. It enabled formation and development of a knowledge work discourse as an application

of theoretical learning in the workplace. The chapter has also shown that retraining, reskilling and generally educating the workforce to use new technologies or manage those who did, emphasised acquiring, using and re-using learning in new contexts, thereby creating knowledge. A focus on working with knowledge was shown to be fundamental to participating in a booming post-war economy. Greater numbers of individuals gained specialist technical skills in new industries and applied them to research, development, manufacture, administration and management.

Work practices were categorised and organised in new ways by individuals with status and designated authority from institutional fields of knowledge and designated as knowledge work. These authorities determined boundaries of the discourse, thereby legitimising certain conceptions while deligitimising others. Members of governments, academia and executive business management were very powerful authorities of delimitation within the knowledge work discourse; facilitating its establishment and enabling one form to dominate all others.

The chapter has detailed how Drucker, Bell, Machlup and other intellectuals observed first-hand the material and ideal interests that had governed people's conduct in the early Twentieth Century. It showed that one of the reasons for thrusting organisation and order into the limelight could be found in the pursuit of specific political agendas, including a need to develop a post-war, non-totalitarian welfare state. For Drucker and others, this view was grounded in personal experiences of the rise of fascism in Austria in the 1920s and 1930s, as has been explained.

Also explored in the chapter was the Druckian notion that freedom from totalitarian tyranny could only be achieved through reciprocity encompassed in the concept of a 'welfare state' that relied on individuals' efforts to increase productivity and efficiency. It has been shown that government support for access to higher educational opportunities was a key to economic reciprocity by the broader community and achievement of a new form of welfare state was its goal. In return, those who were educated were duty-bound to submit to interests of productivity and efficiency – interests of economics and organisation.

The chapter also explained that expanded educational opportunities created a larger pool of formally-educated and knowledgeable individuals – knowledge workers – whose economic reciprocation could be far higher than that of industrialised workers. It upped the ante regarding expansion of learning techniques and knowledge among the citizenry, and also set new expectations regarding types of occupation that only the more highly-educated people could attain.

Without a formal degree certifying acquisition of approved knowledge, there would be limited access to middle-class income. At the same time, it has been shown that credentialism is disciplinary in that it demands formalised education programs, deemed to be appropriately standardised and routinised to satisfy the push and pull of consumption. Moreover, overall elevation in the class of worker was possible only through the intervention of professionally-trained management, and that, too, required certified acquisition of approved knowledge.

Now, I will set the scene for the following chapter. If we return to Foucault's (1972) 'linear schema' of totalising history, we can see that by creating order from the uncertainty and ambiguity of Twentieth Century politics, society and economics. A new Golden Age can be discursively created – a Knowledge Society, as Drucker describes it. This enables a knowledge work discourse as the imperative to a Knowledge Society to 'transparently' dominate other discourses by canonising its linear genealogy, ensuring that is undisturbed by discontinuities, fragmentation, and alternative views. It also ensures that institutional dominance of a discourse of approved knowledge and its certification, can maintain boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of a discourse of knowledge work.

A so-called Knowledge Society supports a utilitarian approach to knowledge, stemming from Enlightenment tenets of rational progress. We might also take a broader Aristotelian view of knowledge that includes wisdom as well as economic value. A point of differentiation between wisdom and knowledge centres on instrumental purposes – which, increasingly are defined in purely material and monetary purposes. However, that was not always the case, as the next chapter explains.

CHAPTER 5

EMERGENCE OF 'POST' SOCIETY

> … it is supposed that history itself may be articulated into great units – stages or phases – which contain within themselves their own principle of cohesion … A total description draws all phenomena around a single centre – a principle, a meaning, a spirit, a world-view, an overall shape (Foucault, 1972: 10-11).

The objective of this chapter on 'post' society is to continue to deconstruct discourses of knowledge work to reveal that they have more ignoble beginnings. Their conditions of emergence have existed previously. The chapter begins by identifying a number of problems associated with categorisation of any society that is referenced as a cohesive unit of time and human endeavour, such as the Knowledge Society and the Renaissance. Then, a comparative examination is conducted between these two golden ages with a genealogy of the Renaissance to illustrate the point. This genealogy examines key features of the Renaissance, its emergence as discourse and the accompanying processes of legitimation and delegitimation. Further, the chapter posits a micro-history of an individual and his relationship with society as a genealogy of knowledge work removed from its contemporary trappings. Finally, the concept of a knowledge society is reconstituted to include both contemporary and more ancient perspectives.

Knowledge work is privileged by contemporary managerial discourse as a principal tenet of the present epoch. Thus, we know our times as those of a 'knowledge society' (Drucker, 1957; 1969; 1993; 1999; Bell, 1973; 1976; 1999; Despres and Hiltrop, 1995; Rowley, 1999; Miles *et al*, 1997; Hargreaves, 2003), 'information society' (Bell, 1973), 'knowledge economy' (Adler, 2001; Mokyr, 2002; Jaffe and Trajtenberg, 2002), 'information economy' (Boisot, 1998; Brown and Duguid, 1998; Wolff, 2005), and other similar terms. The label affixes particular understandings about knowledge and work to current temporal and spatial circumstances. However, as the present chapter will show, a network of

objects considered to be significant within a contemporary discourse of knowledge work also featured in pre-industrial and industrial societies, including organisational ownership of knowledge, theoretical knowledge, productive work, information technology, problem delineation, and problem solving. Were pre-industrial and industrial societies not also knowledge societies drawing "phenomena around a single centre" as Foucault's quote above suggests? And, if so, how are knowledge activities reflective of these societies any less significant than those of a contemporary context?

In the chapter, uniqueness of knowledge work to our contemporary period is questioned and it is subsequently argued that we have always worked with knowledge. Moreover, it is posited that people always work and have worked with knowledge, using the same rules of formation of a discourse and seeking domination over other knowledge discourses as an effect of power. In continuing a genealogical analysis of knowledge work, I will argue that a totalising view of knowledge work as reflective of a unit, stage or phase in a progressive society is nothing more than a search for mythological and teleological origins of discourse. Instead, I will continue to search for 'ignoble beginnings' of a discourse of knowledge work.

The preceding chapter set the scene for the present one. In Chapter 4, I showed that creation of order and organisation out of the real uncertainty and ambiguity of Twentieth Century politics, society and economics facilitated emergence of a new type of worker, one who could apply theoretical knowledge to work practices – a knowledge worker. Moreover, as Chapter 4 and Chapter 2 discuss, this new worker was purported to be indicative of emergence of a new society, a new Golden Age – a Knowledge Society. Such a world view enabled a discourse of knowledge work to become imperative to a Knowledge Society; to 'transparently' dominate other discourses by canonising its linear genealogy, ensuring that it is undisturbed by discontinuities, fragmentation or alternative views. This world view also ensured that institutional dominance of a discourse of approved knowledge and its certification could maintain boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of a discourse of knowledge work.

Among other things, the present chapter explores a notion of and problems inherent in classification of periods of time as 'great units' of history. Breathless promoters in the consultancy profession often characterise the present as 'The Knowledge Age', 'The Knowledge Society', or 'The Information Society'. Such appellations present a cohesive and totalising world view pivoting around the particular phenomena of knowledge and work.

We have already seen how contingencies that presaged a Knowledge Society were substantially a product of the post-World War II period, as discursive networks that constituted objects emerging under an *imprimatur* of rational and desirable social progress. These objects reflected a radical break from the bleak immediate wartime past and presented conceptions of accelerated consumerism and capitalism, education and employment as new goals for Western populations. Through networks of discourse that spoke of a new liberal order, knowledge work became an object central to the dominant discourse of the next golden age.

It cannot be accepted uncritically that there was a historical break between pre-knowledge societies – in Bell's *oeuvre* post-industrial society (1973) or Drucker's post-capitalist society (1969) – and a new golden age of the knowledge society. Answers must be found to such questions as: did conditions of formation for a knowledge work discourse exist before Drucker proposed the post-World War II label of 'knowledge work'? Or was knowledge work recognised only after he had categorised and proscribed it as such? In other words, what is new about knowledge work; haven't we always worked with knowledge? This is the second research question, one that the present chapter aims to resolve.

As an illustration of this conundrum of recognising a thing prior to its categorisation, Oscar Wilde wrote in *The Decay of Lying* that life imitated art, since we recognise aspects of life through the naming, framing and categorising constructions we draw on from literature, poetry, painting, sculpture and other fine arts. Wilde asks,

> For what is Nature? Nature is no great mother who has borne us. She
> is our creation …Things are because we see them, and what we see,
> and how we see it, depends on the Arts that have influenced us. To
> look at a thing is very different from seeing a thing. One does not see

anything until one sees its beauty. Then, and then only, does it come
into existence (Oscar Wilde [1889] 1948: 986).

The literature that locates knowledge work discourses as exclusively post-war is
problematic since, much as Wilde's conception of the way we perceive Nature, it
is cognitively and socially constructed, such that, "to look at a thing is very
different from seeing a thing". Thus, a genealogical search requires digging deep
to see if conceptions about a phenomenon, such as knowledge work, existed
before they were categorised as such.

5.1   A PROBLEM OF 'POST' SOCIETY

It would be very comforting to think that Western society has made a huge leap to
a new knowledge society, one that supersedes exploitation, excesses and moral
corruption of an industrial world and its political and ideological manifestations.
However, there are several problems with denoting a period of time as a 'post'
society in that it discursively attempts to group elements of facts and dated events
and to make them relevant by placing them in relation to one another, to form
totalities (Foucault, 1972: 8).

A discourse that speaks to the coincidental but contingent timing of facts and
events represents a process of ordering and sense making; however, selection of
certain events and visible facts that exemplify coincidences also deselects others
that do not fit within the schema. Foucault (1972: 8) argues that all schemata are
discursive constructions; their elements define and order 'series' creating a
homology of linked events taken to be distinct from any previous pattern. They
are not constitutive of "great ages of the world, or to the periodisation dictated by
the rise and fall of civilisations; it is the effect of the methodologically concerted
development of series" (Foucault, 1972: 8-9). Through particular discursive
practices, interpretation of such series attempts to make order out of disorder and
continuity out of discontinuity, to create domains of knowledge and reason out of
chaos.

A need to create clearly segmented and stable time frames out of disorder embraces an Enlightenment view of rational progress towards a utopian conception of a better society. It is based on event-occurrences that have a momentous effect on society as a whole but it also conflicts with a notion of equilibrium and linear progression towards some achievable horizon. Rational progress is problematic in that it attempts to create a "continuous chronology of reason", one which is often traced back to some inaccessible and myth-laden origin displaying linear teleological development towards some unattainable utopian end (Foucault, 1972: 9-10). A 'post' societal model attempts to make truth claims about linear progress and describes a transition from a previous cultural construct to a new age. 'Post' society is often conceptualised in a consensual and homogenous way; one in which boundaries between one society and its predecessor are clear cut.

By its nature, a golden age imposes an abstract unity on a series of events that have a completeness that separates past and future, requiring both a beginning and an end. Events constituting emergence of a knowledge society may have some clarity in terms of dating its irruption but its boundaries of 'closure' are less clear. According to many scholars, politicians, business people and others, we presently live in such a knowledge society. Thus, any map of the present age is incomplete, providing an open loop through which other linked events or relevant elements may possibly be inserted into the series. Such new elements could potentially change the way we view conceptions of a 'post' society, perhaps relegating it to a role of minor hiccough in a so-called 'march of progress'.

There are several problems that are proposed for investigation in the chapter in relation to emergence of a 'post' society. The first is the notion of a break from the past and whether it is gradual and evolutionary or whether it is like a sharp blow that is sudden and complete. A second problem is the totalising effect of a 'post' society; are its effects universal or is it experienced only by some segments of society? A third problem is the origin of a catalyst for change; is a 'post' society a direct effect of a single happenstance, or a convenient convergence of a number of contingent timings and events?

5.1.1 … At the third stroke!

In investigating what constitutes a break from the past, there is a problem with fixing discursively-constructed boundaries at a time within a given geography. An understanding of what marks those boundaries is required as well as determining how much should be included or excluded from the time period. Further, how does one determine an insight that tends to point to a single catalyst? While there might be a case to argue for some specific moment marking the beginning of a contemporary knowledge society; any such moment will be one of a number of potential moments of a beginning but none of which can unambiguously represent *the* origin of a knowledge society. In addition, we cannot finalise boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, since we are in the midst of what is discursively constituted as a Knowledge Society.

Typically, boundaries give rise to geographic and cultural slices, such as 'Western', 'European', as well as to temporal contexts, such as 'Modernity', 'Renaissance' and 'Knowledge Age'. Although Foucault used such general and epochal terms for convenience to refer to objects of his analysis, he emphasised discontinuities and differences rather than traditional use of these terms to denote cultural unity or totality, consensus, or homogeneity (Toews, 1994: 126). Foucault wrote that,

> … I shall not place myself inside these dubious unities in order to study their internal configuration or their secret contradictions. I shall make use of them just long enough to ask myself what unities they form; by what right they can claim a field that specifies them in space and a continuity that individualizes them in time; according to what laws they are formed; against the background of which discursive events they stand out (Foucault, 1972: 29)

Foucault exhorts us to analyse event-statements that bring forth discourses of temporal and spatial unity, which erase the singularity and uniqueness of these events and hides their 'secret contradictions'. Rather than look for continuities towards some teleological end point, we should, and indeed will, examine internal configurations of these epochs and contingent events that form such historical eruptions that we call 'post' societies.

5.1.2 Discursive practices of periodisation

'Post' models of society purport to represent a holistic experience in relation to some phenomena or events, organising them around a central theme. Commonality of perspectives facilitates openness towards discursive construction of a world view at a particular time and within a specific context. Such views represent a break from the past, a change of direction for a particular social group that is in a privileged position to take advantage of the event or to discursively construct meanings about it.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Foucault (1972) explains that discourse is simply a group of practices – praxis – presented as a kind of 'unity' in terms of its "reconstruction after the event, based on particular works, successive theories, notions and themes, some of which had been abandoned, others maintained by tradition, and again others fated to fall into oblivion only to be revived at a later date" (Foucault, 1972: 51).

Discursive fixing of a set of cultural experiences within spatial and temporal boundaries is problematic for Foucault, since such boundaries propose homogenous and consensual truth claims (Toews, 1994: 126). Truth claims embedded in a world view are visible in a contemporary context where knowledge work is represented in terms of the Knowledge Society thesis (Drucker, 1957; 1969; 1993; 1999; Bell, 1973; 1976; 1999; Despres and Hiltrop, 1995; Rowley, 1999; Miles *et al*, 1997; Hargreaves, 2003). However, such a view is relevant only for those societies, or parts thereof, that have access to the phenomena of computing and communications technologies, since it is these technologies that are pivotal to the spread of information for such societies.

For the majority of impoverished third-world populations, a Knowledge Society neither describes their world view nor captures their unprivileged position in a global society which largely denies them access. Such world views are embedded in Western economic perceptions of globalisation and market forces and are sustained through power effects that seek achievement of discursive domination. For the privileged who embrace the discourse and have access to its benefits, such 'great units of history' could well represent a new order, since the phenomena that are central to their way of life provide them with a means for a discontinuous self-positioning.

Collectively, notions of a 'post' society are conceived as a stage in the great march of progress, civilisation and enlightenment towards some teleological and utopian end. These notions are discursively constructed by the privileged to exemplify a new order that they experience. They are power effects in that such notions propose and impose a 'post' society as the new norm. Making and marking a new order through historical periodisation is important to understanding how discourses are conceptualised and developed. Emergence of a new order means that rules governing the old order may change or that new rules may yet be conceived and implemented, providing a space and time in which rules are in a state of flux and subject to radical transformations. At the same time, discourses are forming and developing and speak normatively to the new order. And those who can dominate discursive representations of the new order through their positions in institutional fields of knowledge tend to come together to form the power elite and enjoy the privilege of constructing and implementing the governing rules (Mills: 1999: 9).

Rules of discursive formation and development are brought to bear in conceptualising representations of a new order by authorities of legitimation with truth claims from institutional fields of knowledge. Implementation of new rules means authorities establish new boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, and those with alternative views are seen as subversive or even heretical. A 'post' society turns its back on its predecessor; breaking away from continuation of old ways while enthusiastically embracing the newness of a new order.

5.1.3 Catalytic breaks

Discursive unities that redefine a particular period rely on some contingent event as a catalyst for formation and emergence of a discourse representing discontinuity from the past. As the new discourse garners strength through building its networks of interlinking objects and new authorities of delimitation, institutional authorities representing the old dominant view will often perceive this as a challenge to their authority and attempt to sustain the traditional dominant discourse by delimiting the boundaries of orthodoxy with increasing vigour. The

shape and form of the dominant discourse will change, link by link, as it absorbs elements from new discourses and undergoes transformation and re-presentation in new ways. It does so in order for the authorities of delimitation to try and maintain relevance and to sustain positions of power in determining discursive representations.

In the next section of the chapter, a dominant orthodox discourse that was challenged successfully by emerging alternative discourses transforming and succeeding it will be examined. I have deliberately decided to look in detail at how power/knowledge dynamics shape change under conditions of autocratic knowledge regimes, in order to provide a contrast with how these dynamics are shaped in more democratic regimes. While power may be easier to find at work in the former, thrown into sharp relief by claims of autocracy *vis-à-vis* knowledge, it is no less present in the latter, even if contours are blurred by the softening remit of a more democratic knowledge polis.

Being in the midst of a so-called contemporary Knowledge Society, it may be more appropriate to move some distance in time from the awkward constraints of the current 'post' society. I shall do so by focusing on what I will argue may be considered to be an earlier knowledge society, the historical periodisation known as 'The Renaissance', where claims of religious dogma to frame limits of knowledge were challenged, questioned, and ultimately overthrown. It was a period that was also constitutive of a knowledge society; one that wrought huge social change and contained all the elements cited as fundamental to a contemporary Knowledge Society.

The next section explores discursive conceptions of the Renaissance as a knowledge society, investigating its beginnings, its emergence as a discourse, and how discursive statements changed to admit new objects. I then focus on emergence and dissemination of knowledges during the Renaissance by examining the development of printing and publishing and its impact on language, culture, individual identity, the nature of work, as well as emergence of new reading publics. I argue that the evolution of printing was as revolutionary in its impacts on European society 500

years ago as computer technology has been for the present period, a point also argued by McLuhan (1962).

The broader cultural context of Europe at that time is also examined in order to investigate continuing underlying mentalities as well as breaks in traditional life patterns of the populace in response to availability of new knowledge. The dominant discourse and significance of institutional fields of knowledge, such as the Roman Catholic Church, and the role of its authorities to legitimise or delegitimise alternative knowledge views will be explored. I will show how institutional authorities of the dominant discourse used the printing press in a disciplinary way through standardising texts and attempting to limit arbitrary interpretations. Then, I examine through a specific historical example how institutional authorities of delimitation could deal with alternative conceptions in their efforts to delimit boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of the knowledge discourse.

5.2   COMPARING KNOWLEDGE SOCIETIES

According to Francis Bacon, writing in the Sixteenth Century, the three great inventions of the period were the mariners' compass, the printing press and gunpowder (Dickens, 1974: 103). These three inventions had different but potentially collaborative purposes: the first was to contribute to knowledge and dissemination of a dominant culture; the second was to make a variety of knowledges accessible to more people but also to standardise and delimit how knowledge was presented, and the third was to enforce a dominant culture and its traditional values.

The printing press and the impacts of book publishing in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries are our present interest, so I will set aside rich analyses of gunpowder and the compass to concentrate on the knowledge society aspects of the Renaissance. In many ways, celebration of knowledge as an end in itself makes this an ideal counterpoint to the excessive currency of contemporary concerns with a knowledge society. There was a knowledge revolution (or

perhaps, evolution) and emergence of a knowledge society before *the* Knowledge Society.

The elements of radical change, such as new technologies, employment categories, historical conditions, that were described by Bell, Drucker and others as distinguishing features of knowledge work in the current discourses on post-industrial, post-capitalist, information and knowledge societies, also had significant impacts on the social organisation of knowledge in agrarian and industrial societies as well. Knowledge work concerns not only development of knowledge but also entails disciplinary aspects of it, such as the way it is selected, codified, applied and disseminated. The printing revolution or evolution (depending on the historical approach) was one of the factors supporting the rise of three major movements of the early modern period: the Renaissance (arts), the Reformation (religion) and the Age of Enlightenment (science and discovery) (Ong, 1958; Nauert, 1973; Eisenstein, 1979). Together, these presaged an earlier knowledge society that also resonates with contemporary conceptions.

5.2.1 Discursive resemblances

Definitions put forward by Bell and Drucker and institutionalised by others do not satisfy the uniqueness of contemporary knowledge work as facilitating a break from an industrial to an information society. All the elements enshrined in contemporary knowledge work rhetoric were also to be found in the Renaissance in the context of book publishing. The Renaissance was a society of autonomous publishing organisations with specialised roles and skilled workers who organised their individual work as an integrated whole, a notion that is also applicable to the current conception of knowledge intensive firms (Alvesson, 1995).

Skilled employees applied their technical knowledge innovatively for specific publishing solutions and extensively used technology to standardise not only the form of the book but also the arrangement of text within it, much as knowledge workers or symbolic analysts are represented in a contemporary context by Drucker, (1949; 1969; 1993; 1994), Bell (1973), Reich (1991) and others. Publishing made available

new knowledge as well as broadened access to existing knowledge, helping to identify new problems as well as solving them, in a similar way to theories of dynamic organisational knowledge creation described by Nonaka (1994) and others. In the Renaissance, publishing houses were organised and managed as commercial autonomous enterprises that were entrepreneurial and innovative and, despite continuing restrictions by the Church on what they could publish, widely disseminated books and the knowledge they contained.

Further similarities between these two periods are to be found in the conditions of their emergence after major wars – the 100 Years War in the early modern period prior to the Renaissance and the two world wars prior to the Knowledge Society. There had been large population shifts away from rural areas to urban living in both cases with development of large cities and towns and their appeal to impoverished peasants (pre-Renaissance) and rural workers (pre-Knowledge Society). There were significant advances in technologies and communications that created a strong impact on each society: integration of mass printing technologies in new ways which superseded elite hand-written script, and use of information technologies and computing which now dominates print.

In the Renaissance, new commercial fields of book publishing and book selling helped to disseminate knowledge contained in printed books, making it more accessible, while in the Knowledge Society electronic communications and associated computing, software and service providers using the Internet have extended available knowledge, also making it more accessible. In each case, the work of knowledge is viewed as both a social and economic resource; and in each case new bodies of knowledge developed along with application of theoretical knowledge for practical purposes.

Each 'society' heralded significant change in the political arena; in the case of the Renaissance it enabled translations in vernacular languages to occur, which supported development of nation states and subsequently nationalism; while a Knowledge Society embraces autonomous organisations and supports the development of globalisation. Cultural shifts are significant in both cases: in the Renaissance, traditional oral society developed into a literate society; while a Knowledge Society

sees increasing numbers of individuals gaining access to and attaining higher education levels than ever before. Each society gave rise to specific preservation of knowledge: in the Renaissance through printed books and in a Knowledge Society through electronic databases.

Similarities between the two 'golden' ages are also apparent in the disciplinary regimes for the control of knowledge and how it should be expressed, which is reflected in the institutional fields of knowledge, institutional control and authorities of delimitation. In the Renaissance, such activities of control and expression of knowledge were fulfilled primarily by the Church and supported by the state; whereas in a contemporary Knowledge Society, institutional control that delimits a global hegemon of knowledge is fulfilled primarily by corporations, global institutions and governments. In the Renaissance, individuals or groups who were accused of expressing knowledge that was not officially sanctioned were deemed to be heretics and suffered disciplinary sanctions that may have included death. In a contemporary Knowledge Society, individuals or groups who express what is considered to be 'unacceptable' knowledge by the state may be accused of being terrorists and imprisoned without trial[29]. In the case of corporations, employees bound by confidentiality agreements, who are accused of sharing organisational knowledge with management-determined 'unapproved' others, may be fired from the organisation, pursued in the courts and possibly imprisoned. On a larger scale in the present global economic environment, there are global institutions that have been specifically established to protect what is regarded as 'intellectual property', such as the World Intellectual Property Organization, National Bureau of Asian Research, the World Trade Organization, European Commission, the World Bank, the Asia Foundation, and UNCTAD (Maskus, 2000).

Although these many instances do not cover all the similarities or differences between the two golden ages, as one would expect with the passage of five hundred years, there are sufficient examples to at least raise questions about the uniqueness of a Knowledge Society and why it should be discussed now but not then. Similarities in the objects of knowledge work discourses of a contemporary Knowledge Society and

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[29] A more recent example of action against individuals for what the U.S. Government deems to be terrorism can be seen in the U.S. military activities in Guantanamo Bay.

the Renaissance are shown in the following table. Many but not all of these incidents and contexts are explored in the thesis. Nonetheless, as we can see from the table following, discursive objects in the central column provide adjuncts and thematic links between these two golden ages.

TABLE 5.1
Comparison of Knowledge Societies

"Knowledge Society"	Discursive Objects	"Renaissance"
Information technologies	Communications shift	Script to print
Computers	Technology	Printing press, ink, paper
Electronic telecommunications	Dissemination	Book publishers and book sellers
Knowledge work as social and economic resource	Resources	Publishing as social and political resource
Greater access to information and knowledge	Access	Greater access to knowledge and wisdom
Application of theoretical knowledge to work practices	Praxis	Enables disparate theories to form a body of knowledge
Agent of change – new forms of organisation; 'boundaryless careers'[30]	Progress	Agent of change – translations in vernacular; typography; spelling; grammar and syntax
Supports development of globalisation	Political	Supported development of nation states, nationalism
Government, academia, business	Institutional fields of knowledge	Guilds, publishers, universities, the Church
Capitalist/industrial society to post-capitalist/post-industrial/information society	Discursive totality/periodisation	Medieval to Early Modern
Elementary education to higher education;	Cultural shifts	Oral to literate society
Corporations, global institutions & governments	Institutional control	Church & the state
Electronic databases	Preservative power	Printed books
Education	Agent of change	Printing
Academics, governments, business, management consultants	Authorities of delimitation	Catholic and Protestant churches
Two World Wars, revolutions and new social movements	Historical conditions	Hundred Years War, religious upheaval (Great Schism and other religious reforming movements); interest in Humanism
Authority goes with status	Social boundaries	Authority went with status

[30] Arthur, M. B. and Rousseau, D. M. (1996), **The Boundaryless Career: A New Employment Principle For A New Organisational Era**, New York, Oxford University Press

5.3   FROM RINASCITA TO RENAISSANCE

Use of the term Renaissance is not without its own discursive development and challenges. Jules Michelet in his *Histoire de France* (1857) first coined the term Renaissance from Vasari's Sixteenth Century term *rinascita* meaning moment of rebirth in relation to art and sculpture (Kablitz, 2001). Kablitz argues that in writing about their epoch, authors of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries used the term *rinascita*, which was different in essence from the word Renaissance that was adopted by Nineteenth Century writers. He says,

> The theoretical framework of this concept is constituted by a debate
> that had been going on throughout the Middle Ages, the debate on the
> relation between art and creation. It was a specifically Christian
> discussion that, in a certain way, completed and replaced the ancient
> classical debate on the relation between art and nature (Kablitz, 2001).

Medieval scholar Gordon Leff concurs and argues that from as early as the Eleventh Century, there was "mounting intellectual ferment" and that the greatest problem for Christian thinkers was the discrepancy between their own doctrines and those of classical philosophies drawn from Plato, Aristotle, Proclus and others (Leff, 1958: 17).

More than three centuries later, scholar Jacob Burckhardt in his *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1990 [1878]) incorporated a far broader conception of knowledge than art and sculpture alone and gave the term worldwide currency. In Michelet's and Burckhardt's view, the catalyst for change in a world view was due to bringing together technologies of printing that distinguished the Renaissance from preceding *renascences*. Also important is the time in which they wrote – the mid-Nineteenth Century, which, in light of our present 'post' society discussion, was the late Enlightenment period, when discourses of new learning through science and discovery were 'bringing enlightenment' to lands dominated by European thinking. There was seriousness and purpose to these newly-minted Renaissance men, a shift away from being merely dabblers in the arts and sciences, such as to attain a level of heroic diligence. Burckhardt wrote,

> The fifteenth century is, above all, that of the many-sided men. There
> is no biography which does not, besides the chief work of its hero,
> speak of other pursuits all passing beyond the limits of dilettantism.

> The Florentine merchant and statesman was often learned in both the classical languages; the most famous humanists read the Ethics and Politics of Aristotle to him and his sons; even the daughters of the house were highly educated. It is in these circles that private education was first treated seriously (Burckhardt, 1990 [1878]: 102).

Burckhardt's reconstitution of the *rinascita* as The Renaissance was the beginning of a discourse constituted in terms of a civilising process carried on by an enlightened society. The discourse reflected on an earlier 'post' society through the historical lens of the Nineteenth Century. The view of the Renaissance as pitting creation discourses of art and divinity against each other was transformed by Burckhardt into an overall discourse of civilising processes, one that continues to be replicated in our contemporary conceptions about the Renaissance period. Historian Elizabeth Eisenstein (1983) argues that Burckhardt heralded many developments associated with the Italian Renaissance as pointers towards modern, more civilised times.[31]

Apart from the teleological nature of Burckhardt's civilising process, it is too limiting to suggest that the Renaissance was an abrupt break from the Medieval world; that it was a 'post' society. Indeed, even the development of the Gutenburg printing press about 1450, which is heralded as the most convincing argument for revolutionising – rather than evolutionising – the European way of life during the Renaissance, is strongly debated (Rabb, 1971; Eisenstein, 1983; Febvre and Martin, 1979; Steinberg, 1961). Development of libraries and collections of manuscripts, the spread of an intellectual movement throughout Italian court circles, rejection of scholasticism, a focus on antiquity, interest in philology, and interest in non-Christian cultures were all evident prior to invention of the printing press (Rabb, 1971: 137).

5.3.1 Print as a catalyst for transition

Eiseinstein (1983) suggests that the idea of the emergence of individual consciousness as an effect of the advent of printing is feasible (see also, Chartier,

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[31] The view that the development of the individual occurred through the political circumstances of Italy is far-fetched she believes; the advent of printing held greater responsibility for the emergence of individual consciousness (Eisenstein, 1983: 129).

1989; Johns, 1998), while McLuhan argued that "forms of experience and mental outlook" altered, since pre- and post-print represented two different forms of society or as he calls it "an interplay of contrasting cultures" (McLuhan, 1962: 1). While of interest and importance, these points will not be debated here. Our interest is in more-readily available and diverse information that became available through print production, which supported development of an enquiring, curious and more knowledgeable society. As the next section argues, printing was a key element in developing this knowledge society yet discourses about printing as the catalyst for post-Medieval society of the Renaissance have sidelined other discourses about this earlier knowledge society.

While we must acknowledge the tremendous impacts of the printing press, for our purposes it is the discourses of dominance and opposition concerning knowledge and knowledge work that engage our interests. In particular, we will investigate legitimising processes that accompanied the emergence of new knowledge and how power relations normalised knowledge discourse within the Renaissance 'post' society. In the chapter, I again ask the question "haven't we always worked with knowledge?" but this time I ask it in relation to the Renaissance as a knowledge society. The section aims to show that discourses of knowledge were not unique to the Renaissance period, just as they are not unique to a contemporary Knowledge Society.

While there are several knowledge discourses that I could investigate during the period of the Renaissance, I will explore two that are critical for a thesis on discourse, knowledge and power. The first is a technical knowledge discourse that bears resemblance to Bell's (1973) thesis on post-industrial society and the profound impact of technology in developing a contemporary knowledge society; development of printing technologies concurrent with establishment of new types of employment and knowledge work. The second is the social impact of knowledge, reflected in Drucker's (1969) writings on 'the age of discontinuity' and transitions from traditional society; this explores dissemination of knowledge and how new knowledge discourses are constituted as individuals from all spheres of European society interpret new information and consolidate it within traditional discourses.

As the next section begins to explore, power is engaged with, as effects of new and old knowledge were held up for comparison, not only by Renaissance scholars but also by ordinary people. Their power emerged through their active participation in development of new discourses concerning traditional themes of belief and world views. At the same time, power as a repressive and disciplinary activity was exerted as the existing holders of orthodox knowledge attended to the constraining and restraining of the spread of alternative knowledges.

5.4   DISCOURSES OF A 'POST' SOCIETY: PRINTING & KNOWLEDGE

Scholars tend to concur that development of the printing press was instrumental to the emergence of the Renaissance period (Febvre and Martin, 1979; Steinberg, 1961; Eisenstein, 1983). Let us begin investigation of printing as an important factor in the Renaissance knowledge society by laying out its physical technical developments and identifying new technical skills that resulted in new forms of employment, since this is how an exploration of the discourse of knowledge work has been conducted previously in the thesis (see Chapter 2).

Commercial book publishing was a result of evolutionary processes bringing together many skills, crafts and technologies (Eisenstein, 1983). It could only occur after printing technologies had reached a particular stage of development: from early paper made from rags; to inks which adhered better to paper; to metalworking skills to make type moulds; to the printing press itself with its beginnings in the wine press, but adapted to printing by Johann Gutenberg about 1450 (Eisenstein, 1983). Printing presses originally speeded up the process of copying, using similar formats and producing books with which the reading public were familiar. During the *incunabula* period (prior to 1500), mass printing did not initially explore the capabilities of print technology, and in fact, printed books were hardly distinguishable from manuscripts (Steinberg, 1961).

Prior to the Gutenberg press, books were printed using wood-blocks, engraved metal plates, drawings on stone and other media, technologies which continued to undergo greater refinement (Steinberg, 1961). Many benefits not necessarily envisioned by early printing entrepreneurs resulted from overcoming specific problems of standardisation, such as pagination, indices, title pages, tables of contents, consistency of type styles and spelling, leading to development of dictionaries and thesauri in local vernacular (Eisenstein, 1983). In assembling the present text, I wonder just how far we have progressed in facilitating such problems of standardisation, even with the latest computing technologies.

Training in these new skills led to the establishment of new occupational groups responsible for the output of printed editions, and interchanges of knowledge occurred among specialists who were "typefounders, correctors, translators, copy editors, illustrators or print dealers, indexers and others" (Eisenstein, 1983: 45). Similarities between developments of book production and knowledge work are very strong, including the use of new technologies that captured and stored knowledge, emergence of new occupational groups, and formalisation of learning and development of new skills.

Invention of the printing press reflected an ability of the technology and entrepreneurs of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries to meet demands for new information and knowledge, demands for 'traditional' clerical 'old' knowledge and information, as well as revitalisation and reinterpretation of 'classical' knowledge from ancient Greek and Roman historians, philosophers and artists (Febvre and Martin, 1979). These demands had their roots firmly entrenched in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, in the growth of the bourgeoisie, urbanisation by merchants and professionals, and emergence of secular education. As well, in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries with establishment and development of new universities, new theories of learning came via a spread of ancient learning after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the flight of scholars to Western Europe clutching ancient Greek and Hebrew texts to their breasts (Febvre and Martin, 1979; Steinberg, 1961). There was also the spread of Arabic science and learning – although there were also purges by the Catholic Church in the mid-Fifteenth Century, including mass burning of scholarly texts, and

scientific and geographic discoveries, many of which predated development of the printing press (Febvre and Martin, 1979; Eisenstein, 1983). The Church was concerned that widespread dissemination of such texts and the knowledge they contained might subvert its teachings and dogma. In other words, the Church vigorously maintained the boundaries of contemporary 'official' knowledge.

Demand for new and 'old' knowledge was fuelled by a new lay reading public including lawyers, court officials, merchants and other members of a new bourgeoisie, all of whom required reference books for their professional lives, as well as literary and other recreational books, and, of course, religious texts for their spirituality (Koenigsberger, 1987). As Koenigsberger commented, "the spread of education and literacy to large sections of the especially urban lay public of Europe provided the market for the enormously increasing output of the printing presses" (Koenigsberger, 1987: 155).

The number of books and other documents produced within the first 50 years of using the new forms of printing press are debated as being between eight million and 24 million (Lienhard, 1998). Eisenstein (1983: 13) suggests that by the turn of the century, around eight million books had been printed on "moveable metal type, oil-based ink, wooden handpress" that represented Gutenburg innovations. They were produced in new printers' workshops that had sprung up in "every important municipal centre by 1500 … (and) added a new element to urban culture in hundreds of towns" (Eisenstein, 1983: 12).

Development of commercialised printing created a demand for new technical skills and knowledge directly associated with printing (Eisenstein, 1983; Febvre and Martin, 1979). These included building of printing presses; creating and applying new print technologies of paper, ink, and binding processes, metalworking and typography. Other skills and knowledge were required in the form of formatting, editing and proofing the written word as well as checking accuracy of maps, technical drawings and other documentation. Opportunities arose to disseminate publications, such as travelling book distributors, book sellers, public libraries and book clubs with participation by reading individuals who were knowledgeable about the contents of the publications. Other forms of

knowledge work developed to standardise and protect knowledge, such as court officials, administrators, lawyers, and the clergy. All of them may be considered to be Renaissance knowledge workers, since they created and worked with knowledge.

5.4.1 False & unauthorised knowledge: Problems of printing

Outpouring of huge quantities of texts from printing presses was not always welcomed. Apart from the Church, not every author wanted his or her works in print since plagiarism was rife and unscrupulous publishers pirated works published by others, or did not wait until the appropriate period for exclusive publishing rights had elapsed (Febvre and Martin, 1979). Problems of copyright and authorship arose since a book could be purchased in one country and reprinted in another. Playwrights were not inclined to publish their plays since they could lose out financially both from lack of copyright laws and because publication was perceived to diminish the size of audiences wanting to see plays produced (Febvre and Martin, 1979). We can see here echoes of ownership of organisational knowledge and intellectual property so evident in a contemporary knowledge society. For example, in the introduction to his edition of the *Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, Peter Alexander wrote,

> Shakespeare did not print his plays when he produced them
> because the actors did not favour such a procedure. They feared
> that publication might affect adversely their takings at the theatre,
> and the financial return … was insufficient to overcome this fear
> … There was nothing in the nature of modern copyright to protect
> the author's interest (Alexander, 1961: xxiii).

Alexander also commented on the unscrupulous nature of some printers who "were ready to issue even imperfect versions of the plays, whether put together by needy actors who had parts in them, or vamped up by someone who had carried away from performances the drift of the plot" (Alexander, 1961: xxiii). In response to these 'bad quartos', Shakespeare, Sir Thomas More and other playwrights of the time oversaw correct published versions of their plays (Alexander, 1961: 1351). As a result and with continuing developments in

printing, a spate of new specialist employment opportunities arose for editors, proofreaders and others in the printing profession.

5.4.2 Printing legitimate & illegitimate knowledges

Problems of controlling orthodox discourses also arose as more books were written, copied and increasingly widely disseminated. As discussed earlier, those who can dominate discursive representations of a new world order through their institutional fields of knowledge are privileged to construct governing rules and to implement them. In this case, only certain representations of a new order were acceptable to institutional authorities, such as the Catholic Church.

Many alternative ideas produced in books were seen as subversive and heretical, spreading beyond the control of legitimating authorities; consequently, censorship became more rigid and punishment more severe (Beacon for Freedom of Expression[32]). Printing assisted Protestant reformers (such as Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and others) as well as the Catholic Church in contesting claims about knowledge and truth. Thus, the printed book became an arena for religious battle.

Censorship of texts was extended by the Catholic Church as the dominant religion with the introduction in the Sixteenth Century of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. The Index comprised lists of books "banned for their heretical or ideologically dangerous content, issued by the Roman Catholic Church, and with the Sacred Inquisition as the zealous guardians, banning and burning books and sometimes also the authors" (Beacon for Freedom of Expression).

There were also Expurgatory Catalogues produced by the Church containing lists of literary works not entirely forbidden, but where sentences or parts were censored, thus effectively delimiting boundaries of knowledge discourses. The purpose of both Index and Catalogues "was to prevent the contamination of the

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[32] **Beacon for Freedom of Expression** has been produced by the Norwegian Forum for Freedom of Expression (1995-2001), with the Norwegian National Library as professional advisor. The project is managed by the Norwegian Steering Committee hosted by the Norwegian Library Association. The database was produced in collaboration with tutors and students at the Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Science at the Oslo University College

faith or the corruption of morals of Roman Catholics according to canon law, through the reading of theologically erroneous or immoral books" (Beacon for Freedom of Expression). As one would expect, these were not entirely successful in restricting dissemination of alternative discourses of truth and knowledge, and such heretical discourses that arose were dealt with by the Church in other ways. The following section examines the disciplinary role of knowledge.

5.4.3   Knowledge as discipline & control

Printers and publishers were not only independent autonomous entrepreneurs such as Aldus Manutius, the Catholic Church and various secular rulers also established their own print shops. While, editorial decisions made by early printers regarding reorganising of texts and reference books to rationalise, codify and catalogue data, as well as improving layout and overall presentation, they also helped to reorganise the thinking of readers (Eisenstein, 1983) if not radicalise it (McLuhan, 1962).

Eisenstein (1983) writes that the Church carefully selected what knowledge could be disseminated by its own print shops as well as by independent publishing entrepreneurs. Its publications included standardising and providing specific versions of prayer books for both public congregational and private reflective prayer; providing books of pulpit sermons for the clergy; lists of acceptable topics for debate among congregations; lists identifying sins, penances and penalties; and generally designing the norms of orthodoxy for clergy and their congregants.

Secular rulers, too, took enthusiastically to printing, producing their own administrative lists and laws for normative behaviours. Clerks, administrators, and jurists were all provided with books on control and discipline of the population and, like the clergy, were expected to adhere to the written rules. There became little room for debate, disagreement or interpretation, since these were the laws of the institutional fields of knowledge, the sovereign and the Church, and were documented as such.

Minions of the state and the Church enacted the rules as practitioners of disciplinary knowledge. While we can imagine that some of these knowledge practitioners interpreted institutional rules according to their own interests – as indeed they do in a contemporary context – others would have subscribed to the dominant discourse with the mandated authority that legitimised them as members of an institutional hierarchy. Thus, we find that along with opening up of new knowledge sources through the advent of printing came a tightening of disciplinary knowledge and control over the population. Of course, people had other ways of accessing knowledge about their communities and the wider world apart from books and those who administered the regulatory environment through books; so the next section examines how knowledge was disseminated in early modern times.

5.4.4 Dissemination of knowledge

While it is clear that printing and publishing had a profound effect on European thought, knowledge was disseminated in traditional ways as well. In this light, we need to examine social context of information exchange and how ideas and knowledge were spread in medieval times and continued to be disseminated during the Renaissance.

Much written culture was influenced by oral culture, which in turn was reinvigorated by elements of print culture flowing back, shaping ways of thinking, not uniformly and homogenously, as proponents of a 'post' society would have us think, but in a fragmented and uneven manner. Elements of popular oral and performative cultures in local situations that reflected political circumstances of the time (Burke, 1978; Ginzburg, 1980; Kinser, 1986), such as carnival and *charivari*, contributed as much to development of individual consciousness *vis-à-vis* group consciousness as Burkhardt (1990 [1878]) argued, as did the advent of printing argued by Eisenstein (1979; 1983).

Establishment of libraries with collections of manuscripts as well as the spread of an intellectual movement throughout Italian court circles and interest in philology

and non-Christian cultures, all encouraged dissemination and communication of theoretical, classical Greek, Hebrew and Byzantine knowledge, as well as new knowledge. Dissemination of these knowledges was accelerated by new printing technologies, exemplified perhaps in a wonderful confluence of Christian, Islamic and Jewish thinking and culture that fruitfully co-existed on the Iberian peninsula for a short time, particularly under the enlightened leadership of Charles V (Rabb, 1971).

Concurrently, establishment of new universities created a new reading public: professors needed texts, reference books and commentaries. Additionally, demand by a new secular reading public, including lawyers, court officials, merchants and others of the new bourgeoisie, required reference books for their professional lives as well as literary, recreational and religious texts. By the Sixteenth Century, spread of education and literacy to large sections of the urban populace led to publishing in vernacular as well as the scholarly languages of Latin and Greek. It laid the groundwork for extensive use of the printed word to disseminate argument and counter-argument of Luther's Reformation and the Catholic Church's Counter-Reformation (Koenigsberger, 1987; Eisenstein, 1979).

Publishers, editors and printers using new printing technologies could rapidly disseminate and cross-fertilise these concepts in sufficient quantity and in a consistent format to satisfy a growing thirst for information and new ideas, including reproduction of the visual arts, such as maps and technical diagrams, as well as the written word. Of particular interest in a relationship between and among publishers, readers and text is that broad dissemination of both new and old texts enabled comparisons to be made, resulting in contradictions and weakening of confidence in old theories, as well as encouraging new intellectual combinations and permutations (Eisenstein, 1983). We will discuss a particular instance when we examine the curious case of Menocchio in section 5.6.1.

When scholars and the new reading public were able to examine multiple texts together, diverse systems of ideas were generated in combinatory intellectual activity (Koestler, 1959). Here, too, links between contemporary knowledge work and publishing of knowledge 500 years ago are strong. We see the economic

importance of publishing both in developments of new markets across Europe and for information leading to radical changes in society. The next section explores how knowledge discourses of the Renaissance were constituted and developed. Using genealogy as method, the section examines Renaissance knowledge discourses within historical contexts of society, politics and religion.

5.5 CONSTITUTION OF RENAISSANCE KNOWLEDGE DISCOURSES

As discussed, the *rinascita* was a period of renewed interest in art and sculpture from which emerged vibrant debates concerning creation and creativity as divinely or humanly inspired (Kablitz, 2001; Leff, 1958). Commentators writing during this early modern period suggested that God inspired even the discovery of printing "to disseminate the truth in our century", as François Lambert wrote in 1526 (Eisenstein, 2002, Gilmont, 1999). Of course, we should not discount that prudent men – and they were men – might have had a good sense of the political cover that an appropriate reference to the Almighty might provide them against the major temporal power of the Church. Thus, we can see notions of truth claims in knowledge disseminated through publishing, claims that were supported in part by the Catholic Church. Consequently, all these newly-available texts informed people whose cultural lives were already rich with traditions, many of which predated Christianity. Thus, many diverse and conflicting knowledge discourses arose during the period of the Renaissance.

Availability of printed materials on a mass scale, did not automatically sweep away existing forms of communication and cultural exchange, since the majority of the populace during this period could not read but were read to (Eisenstein, 1983). With availability of mass produced books, maps, pamphlets and so on from printers' workshops, we should be talking of an expanded hearing public rather than a reading public, since illiteracy persisted in rural areas until the Nineteenth Century (Eisenstein, 1983: 12, 93). Eisenstein states there was a "disjunction between the new mode of production (of books) and older modes of

consumption (oral culture)" (1983: 93-94). Not only did the contents of books but also painting, sculpture, plays, storytelling and cultural practices of creators, performers and audiences shaped 'ways of thinking' (Darnton, 1985: 6), since for the majority of Europe's people, "popular culture was their only culture" (Burke, 1978: 214).

For peasants in early modern Europe, folk tales provide us with an entry point to cultural texts about their lives. Darnton (1985) observes that popular culture, including folk takes and other oral culture such as songs and pageants "show not merely what people thought but how they thought – how they construed the world, invested it with meaning, and infused it with emotion" (Darnton, 1985: 3). However, since folk tales are oral culture, our understanding of them relies on them being written down, and their interpretations by writers also reflect values and interpretations of the *literati* rather than the peasants.[33]

Diversity of oral culture is such that in order to study a particular period, we must examine the cultures of the elites *and* the plebeians (popular culture) to view problems they faced and how each stratum of society addressed problems relating to their period (Darnton, 1985: 7). Although I do not plan to analyse cultural spheres of the early modern period in depth, a view of the complexity of knowledge discourses that emerged during the Renaissance will be provided.

Knowledge discourses were outcomes of intellectual engagement at all levels of society with traditions – in which people were already immersed and familiar – and knowledge, through availability of texts published in their vernacular – much of which was new to them or conflicted with their existing knowledge. The reading and hearing public was almost as varied in its capacities to integrate and sort out these diverse knowledges as was the printed material itself. And a key element in the making of knowledge discourses from books was trust (Johns, 1998; Eisenstein, 2002), since trust in knowledge was as important during the Renaissance knowledge

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[33] For example Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm collected and published a compendium of German folk tales in the early Nineteenth Century, editing them to make them more 'politically correct' and less violent for young readers of the period (Darnton, 1985).

society as it is in the contemporary knowledge society (discussed in detail in Chapter 7).

Also needed to be taken into account is autonomy of individual audience members who interpreted oral culture according to their different social levels for their own ends, reflected in the time and place of the telling (Darnton, 1985; Febvre and Martin, 1979). Key to discourses of popular literature and culture was a distinction between what was imposed on the popular classes and what they produced (Ginzburg, 1980: xv).

Personalisation of local stories and legends to specific individuals who were disliked often had serious consequences for the person targeted. For example, during the witch hunts of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, accusations of witchcraft were generally at a local village level, where the accused was often known to the accuser, perhaps a neighbour or relative. Frequently, the accuser drew on popular tales of the period or region and many of these stories were 'corroborated' by 'witnesses', such as those who may have seen a witch fly up the chimney or a young girl transmogrified into an animal (Devlin, 1987: 201-202). And since the Catholic Church established inquisitions to deal with such aberrances and heresies, in terms of their own discursive truth claims, the accused could easily be disposed of by the legitimate authority of the Church. A specific occurrence is explored in section 5.3.1 concerning the curious case of Menocchio the miller.

However, not all disagreements about legitimate knowledge between the populace and the state or Church ended in tears or bloodshed, since there were opportunities for public expression by communities, which were not only tolerated by authorities but they participated in as well, as the next section explains.

5.5.1 Expression of socio-political tensions

Neither written nor oral culture were seen as devices for revolution, although their interpretations embodied inherent themes of abuse by authority (Darnton, 1985;

Devlin, 1987; Ginzburg, 1980). A peasant would no more think of overthrowing the natural and established order of the world, than fly, but used such devices as storytelling, carnival and *charivari* as safety valves to avoid popular dissension and to reinforce the natural order, that is, social, religious and political hierarchy (Darnton, 1985; Devlin, 1987; Davis, 1987).

Devlin (1987) argues that the main theme of carnival, apart from the religious one, was acknowledgement of an established hierarchy by recognising its reversal through the Feast of Fools, where a fool was crowned king; when women ruled their husbands; women dressed as men, or men dressed as women; children chided their parents; and the grotesque, gluttonous and bawdy were publicly celebrated. This reversal was not intended to portray revolutionary ideals nor peasant aspirations, especially as participants in these activities from time to time included sovereigns, aristocrats and the clergy, as well as peasants (Devlin, 1987: 194). Yet these annual 'safety valves' could not always be controlled and occasionally ended in violence and bloodshed (LeRoy Ladurie, 1979a; Kinser, 1986). Authorities tried to restrict activities of carnival where they considered their control over the populace may be threatened. Such action did not necessarily mean that the popularity of these events was reduced but they became more secular and political, as participants used carnival activities to reflect social tensions of particular communities (Kinser, 1986).

In this way, pre-Christian discourses about socio-political conditions and community tensions continued to be expressed and enacted for a wide audience wrapped up in Christian religious pre-Lenten Feast of Fools rituals, as they had for hundreds of years. Insights into the daily lives of the common people are revealed through carnival and "the world turned upside down" (Burke, 1978: 189), that is, a reversal of traditional society.

Participants acknowledged that these views were not the norm and not intended to offend or confuse the audience, as their epilogues attested (Kinser, 1986), yet those in position of authority either from within the community or outside it were often lambasted so vigorously that participants could be charged with anti-authoritarian or anticlerical intentions (Ingram, 1984). There was a fine but

changeable line between what authority accepted and what it did not, and retribution by authorities to any perceived challenge to their control could be swift and severe.

In the section below, the historical context of the dominant belief system as a knowledge discourse is explored, taking note of how its disciplinary regimes were imposed on the local populations, not only during the Renaissance but from the conception of the Catholic Church.

5.5.2 Discourses of domination

> The transfer of the techniques of perfection – undoubtedly indispensable to all art – to the idea of creation conceived as a model of improvement also bears important consequences with regard to the status of nature. Nature can no longer be the definite result of creation. Nature even loses its traditional role and importance. It is no longer a mirror of God, but a document of its own fascinating production. As a consequence, the heritage of creation now passes to art. (Kablitz, 2001)

In the section, we take as our example for investigation the Roman Catholic Church as the dominant institutional field of knowledge of belief systems and the role of its authorities to legitimise or delegitimise alternative knowledge views. Freedom to think, write and express one's views is a relatively recent historic development (Ginzburg, 1980; Mattingley, 1963). The ostensible function of the Catholic Church and its clergy was to get souls into heaven, so that freedom of thought and expression was unthinkable and dangerous, since it may influence others and lead them into iniquity (Van Helden, 1995).

The dominant cosmological discourse in Europe, from the Twelfth Century onwards, melded the scientific with the religious, and was expounded by the Catholic Church as 'truth in faith' doctrine. It was based on Aristotle's cosmology of a central Earth surrounded by concentric spherical shells carrying the planets and fixed stars, with division between the heavens and the earthly region, between perfection and corruption (Van Helden, 1995). The earth was centre of the universe and all planets and stars encircled it. Celestial bodies moved to their natural places around the earth, and stones fell not because of

gravity (since it was not yet conceived of) but because the natural place of heavy bodies was at the centre of the universe, and that was the Earth (Van Helden, 1995).

The Aristotelian model proposed that fundamental constituents of all matter were earth, fire, air, water and the ether, also known as quintessence (Silk and Ferreira, 2005). Cosmology of the universe comprised a central sphere of the Earth and outer spheres supporting the planets and stars. Earth, which consisted of the four elements, was at the centre, the planets and stars were located on 56 supporting spheres made of quintessence (Silk and Ferreira, 2005). The Catholic Church supported this Aristotelian geocentric model since it offered reconciliation with a biblical passage in Joshua [10:13-14], which states that God caused the Sun to stand still (Van Helden, 1995).

Catholic Church orthodoxy of the cosmos conceived the universe as finite, closed, and a hierarchically-ordered whole, in the same way as did society. It claimed as truth the 'great chain of being', a value hierarchy of being and structure from imperfection and putrefaction of the earth to the perfection and divinity of heavenly crystal spheres, which correlated to a hierarchy of animals, humans and divinity – animals, peasants, knights, king, papacy, angels and god (Koyre, 1957). Such a representation was the generally accepted order of the universe, in which each being understood his or her place in it. However, alternative knowledge discourses about the cosmos challenging the truth in faith doctrine, and which the Catholic Church denoted as heretical and therefore repressible, had begun to emerge virtually from the beginnings of Christianity.

Indeed, since the Fourth Century Common Era (C.E.), when Emperor Constantine I made Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire, there were challenges to the dominant discourses of the Roman Catholic Church (Van Helden, 1995). With its mandated authority as the institutional field of knowledge concerning the official and legitimate belief system hierarchy, the Church was charged with responsibility by the State to ensure its truth in faith discourse maintained both religious and secular order. The Catholic Church established a single hierarchical administration, centred in Rome, to develop its discourses, legitimise them

through Church councils, disseminate them, and protect the order they imposed. In effect, domination of a cosmological discourse by the Church held sway in Europe until scientific secular discourses of the Seventeenth Century adopted what was previously considered to be heretical alternative positions. Such scientific and secular discourses limited the power of the Catholic Church to control all discourses concerning cosmology and repudiated its truth claims, at least notionally and temporarily.

Through its role of developing and maintaining a discourse of truth in faith, the Catholic Church linked normativity of a secular hierarchical order with religious doctrines and certain elements of traditional peasant and popular culture (Kinser, 1986; Burke, 1978; Kamen, 1984; Ribiero, 1986). These discourses interpenetrated one another, but they were neither homogenous nor consensual for the European populations during the Renaissance; since, as with other discourses, they were subject to legitimising processes by mandated authorities of legitimation, in this case, the Catholic Church. The next section examines how the Catholic Church worked to close off its truth in faith discourse to present a totalising and unified world view.

5.5.3 The legitimising process of cosmological orthodoxy

Even prior to linking of Church and state, Church Councils established consensus of discourse by settling doctrinal arguments at Councils held in Rome, beginning with the Council of Nicea in 325. These Church Councils held debates that refined boundaries of religious orthodoxy. But the extent of power of the Catholic Church went further than religious discourse; it held strong institutional power in the face of weak and fragmented state power. Indeed, the political structure was a "crazy quilt of overlapping jurisdictions, feudal, ecclesiastical, dynastic, corporate" (Mattingley, 1963).

> The order of secular rulers, the nobles, the second estate, rose from simple gentlemen through knights and barons and dukes and kings to the shadowy figure of the emperor. The order of spiritual leaders reared beside them a similar pyramid through priest and monk, bishop and abbot to the refulgent figure of the pope. (Mattingley, 1963: 22)

There was a strong relationship between secular and religious powers in an indivisible society, yet it was not an easy relationship between temporal sovereigns of Europe and its spiritual rulers, and even more fragmented among various fiefdoms or city states that fought against each other as well as the Church (Mattingley, 1963). Mattingly argues that a mythical teleological view of a *Republica Christiana* or Christendom existed, as a "unitary, hierarchically ordered society in which every individual, every corporation, every people had its appointed place, and which everyone from emperor and pope to villain and serf was meant to guard and serve" (Mattingley, 1963: 24).

Above all was supremacy of God, so that every individual should serve and be subject to doctrines of Christian orthodoxy. The Catholic Church had the mandate to interpret what that orthodoxy should be and the moral authority to weed out all heretics who challenged its doctrines. It also had the legal authority to enforce observance, practices and codes through its various Inquisitional bodies (Ginzburg, 1980). As we shall see, through its many Inquisitions established across Europe, the Church developed a sophisticated model to control discourses of knowledge in its attempts to maintain legitimacy of its discursive truth in faith doctrine.

5.5.4 A model to maintain the dominant discourse

In the previous chapter, we saw how historical contingencies enabled a knowledge work discourse to emerge and develop in the modern period. Authorities of delimitation attempted to close boundaries of the discourse by using a 'carrot' of opportunity and a disciplinary 'stick' to encourage participation in the legitimate and official model of the knowledge work discourse. At the same time, individuals and organisations that participated in presenting and representing a legitimate discourse of knowledge work also came to be constituted within processes of legitimation. Thus, a knowledge work discourse constituted knowledge workers who could participate in benefits ascribed to the discourse.

The model used by the Catholic Church to delimit boundaries of its discourse about cosmological knowledge and belief systems worked in a similar way. It used a two-pronged approach, one that was considerably effective, at least superficially, for about 1,500 years. Rather than initiating a 'carrot' approach, the Church used a stick to police boundaries of the discourse, shown in the many cases against what it perceived to be heretics documented in the Inquisitional Records (Ginzburg, 1980). At the same time, the Church tried to control from within any changed representations of cosmological knowledge and belief discourses through its various Councils, at which numerous methods were devised to manage and limit discursive transformation.

Although the Church pursued heretics from the Fourth Century onwards, Pope Paul III only established a permanent Congregation of Cardinals and other Church officials in 1542. Congregation of the Holy Office became the supervisory body of local Inquisitions and its task was to maintain and defend integrity of Church doctrines against alternative false doctrines (Van Helden, 1995). As we can see, the Church was constituted through the belief systems it preserved and if these doctrines were not defended, there would be no need for the institutional hierarchy of the Church itself.

Usually, to perform the function of the Congregation there were ten cardinals, a prelate and two assistants all chosen from the Dominican order. There was also a group of experienced scholars of theology and canon law to advise it on specific questions (Van Helden, 1995). Inquisitors, whose role was to deal directly with the population, examine any erroneous doctrines and try heretics, tended to be from the Dominican or Franciscan orders but few had any legal training, either secular or ecclesiastical. Local bishops undertook many inquisitions at local ecclesiastical courts at which the accused had to present his or her case (Hample, 2001: 137; Ginzburg, 1980: 3).

Unlike the judicial system of today, inquisitions were not concerned with the innocence or guilt of a heretic – guilt was assumed – but whether the soul could be saved (Hample, 2001: 139). Evidence, including denunciations, might accumulate for many years before an accused was required to answer. Professions of

innocence or challenges to an inquisition's procedures or authority were not permitted, since these constituted heresies in themselves by defying the will of the Church (Hample, 2001: 139). So, the issue was whether a heretic was contrite and willing to undergo penance, such as banishment or imprisonment, restriction on travel, and wearing a white garment with a yellow heretic's cross as a visible sign to others (Ginzburg, 1980; Hample, 2001). Only relapsed or unrepentant heretics, those who did not accept or appear to accept the Church doctrines, were burnt at the stake (Ginzburg, 1980; Hample, 2001).

By the Sixteenth Century, the Church model of maintaining the dominant discourse had reached a high level of sophistication. Inquisitors sent out by Rome, or indeed from elsewhere (France, Spain), could rely on manuals of inquisitorial procedures to determine whether answers given by presumed heretics at their trials could be traced back to scripture, papal bulls or other Church decrees (Hample, 2001: 137) – a form of organisational knowledge. However, interests of the Inquisitors lay with truth – or at least what was determined by the dominant discourse of the Catholic Church to be truth – rather than justice (Hample, 2001: 137).

The work of the Inquisitors as authorities of delimitation was to police discursive boundaries by denoting any alternative knowledge views as heresy and taking action when breaches occurred. In a contemporary Knowledge Society, corporate management and others who form part of the power elite, such as intellectual property lawyers, executive administrators of international intellectual property organisations (WIPO) and so on, perform similar work as the Church Inquisitors, protecting corporations and other institutions against perceived breaches of intellectual property laws. Control of the expression of knowledge in terms of what was said and to whom was the function of the Church Inquisitors in the Renaissance period, as it is by management and institutional administrators in the contemporary Knowledge Society. While the disciplinary methods and outcomes may be different for the perpetrators who resist such control, the objectives of those who held and hold institutional control is the same – to restrict the expression of knowledge.

The Church even tried to control meditative forms of mental prayer by issuing uniform books of rules (Eisenstein, 1983: 156) as a form of thought control, in much the same way as CoPs in the Knowledge Society use peer pressure to exert cooperation from organisational members. It was another form of knowledge work, one that was vigorously pursued by inquisitorial authorities of delimitation from an institutional field of knowledge that was the Catholic Church.

Discrimination and isolation occurred by withholding names of witnesses from the accused, to avoid the possibility of intimidation of witnesses by the accused, and anyone could give evidence against an accused, including criminals, children and other accused persons, although no witnesses could be called on to speak for the accused (Hample, 2001: 140).

Hample argues that these tactics gave the Inquisitions control over what could be placed in evidence and that the trial was on the Church's terms rather than any modern judicial processes of fairness (Hample: 2001: 140). According to Hample, documentary evidence in favour of the accused was unavailable to the accused and generally unavailable to historians subsequently. Material from one trial could be used for others; even minor points could generate new investigations, while witness statements could be and were used to intimidate an accused with the aim of obtaining a confession (Hample, 2001: 141). Controlling the discourse was the key objective of the Catholic Church, a fine art used to legitimise orthodox knowledge and delegitimise alternative views.

There was more work to do, however. Excising pernicious influences arising from reading books of new or old knowledge were part of a legitimising process addressed by the Catholic Church. Through the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the Church established a permanent institution to deal with this heresy. In 1559, Pope Paul IV first published a list of forbidden books, called the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, compiled by the Sacred Congregation of the Roman Inquisition (with the last index published in 1948) (Van Helden, 1995; Beacon for Freedom of Expression). The first Index was immediately subject to revision by a papal commission, which published its result as the Tridentine Index in 1564. It seems that qualifying statements made about the objects of inquisitional discourses

needed to be re-presented differently. The Index also provided rules for censorship (Van Helden, 1995). Inadvertently, it also provided free publicity for those books and authors on the prohibited list, such as Machiavelli, who could be advertised as forbidden fruit (Eisenstein, 1983: 176).

The Sacred Inquisition acted as zealous guardians of the Faith and executed their office with severity (Beacon for Freedom of Expression). Intellectuals and others were pursued vigorously for their acceptance of Protestant doctrines or for heretical ideas, such as Martin Luther. However, the purpose of the Index was to protect the orthodoxy and ward off significant challenges to the teachings of the canonical texts, since the problem of maintaining control had increased with the invention of the printing press. As more books were written, copied and increasingly widely disseminated, subversive and heretical ideas were spread beyond control of the Church (Beacon for Freedom of Expression).

The Church also used development of the printing press to its own advantage. Having seen how Martin Luther and other anti-papist groups had used pamphlets and printed texts to disseminate their heterodoxies, the Church was able to introduce uniformity in interpretation of its beliefs and performance of its rituals of worship, including pulpit oratory, through printing and distributing standardised texts across Western Christendom (Eisenstein, 1983: 155). It was not only the clergy who had access to printed materials, lives of saints and other devotional materials. The populace were encouraged also to read inspirational religious literature produced in uniform texts authorised and legitimised by the Church.

The model for managing the discursive boundaries of truth and knowledge of the Catholic Church was sophisticated and action oriented. Maintaining integrity of Church discourses became another form of knowledge work; not only to discursively deride and exclude alternative conceptions but it was also complemented with life-or-death non-discursive actions. The Catholic Church had a mandate of legitimacy from the state and maintained this mandate through disciplinary action. Yet, closure of the boundaries of discourse could not be completed; alternative conceptions about truth and knowledge continued to nibble

at the edges, challenging its dominance with other knowledges, belief systems, and empiricism cloaked as science. In the next section, we explore alternative knowledge discourses against which the Catholic Church as legitimated authority of delimitation imposed its disciplinary regime.

5.6   CONSTITUTING ALTERNATIVE KNOWLEDGE DISCOURSES

We have explored how the Catholic Church attempted to control presentation of dominant knowledge and belief discourses by establishing rules of representation, authorities of delimitation, and a means of policing boundaries of the discourse. Having attained a mandate of legitimacy of this knowledge discourse from the Roman Emperor in the Fourth Century, alternative conceptions about truth in faith were always a problem for the Catholic Church. From earliest times, there was resistance to domination of a single unified discourse as truth: there were the Arians and Manicheans in the Fourth Century, whose existence predated Christianity; in the Middle Ages there were the Cathari and Waldenses, and in the Renaissance there were Hussites, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Rosicrucians (Van Helden, 1995).

In the Renaissance period, contingent circumstances arising from printing and disseminating books, particularly in local vernacular, encouraged more people to learn to read and to read for themselves, which exacerbated these challenges. Kristeller (1974: 17) notes that many of the classics were "transcribed into both Latin and vernacular languages to appeal to various strata of the humanist reading public" particularly non-scholarly lay public who did not necessarily read or understand the official languages of Latin and Greek. This helped to open up new horizons of thought to individuals, especially those who could attend schools to learn to read (Ginzburg, 1980) and to whom the enormous extension of knowledge from classical Greek and Roman history became available. It posed a problem in a relationship between classical and Christian values (Gilmore, 1963: 73). A further problem of divisions occurred, particularly in more remote

communities, between those who could and those who could not read, since people who were excited by new ideas were keen to discuss them with others.

In continuing to explore the dominant truth in faith discourse of the Catholic Church and alternative discourses, we could describe the work of Copernicus, Galileo and other scholars of geocentricity, who challenged the Catholic Church discourse that the Earth was the centre of the cosmos. Their scientific views and methods are well documented; and so I purposely choose to investigate the case of an unimportant Italian peasant from a remote village. The case illustrates how widespread were the challenges to orthodoxy and the level of determination by authorities to delimit alternative views. It is also curious to investigate how alternative opinions by a single unimportant and unscholarly individual could be seen as a challenge to the dominant discourse of the Church.

5.6.1   The curious case of Menocchio

In the section I investigate, through a specific example, how alternative conceptions can provide irruptions and contingencies that encourage emergence of a 'post' society, and how a dominant discourse actively discourages such change. In effect, this restraining activity inhibits an opportunity for emergence of a new 'golden age' by maintaining and sustaining presentation of orthodoxy. However, the example shows that legitimation through institutional fields of knowledge is not fixed but is transitory, since an assertion of truth claims is arbitrary and reflects potential fallibility of institutional authorities to assert such discursive claims.

The example also shows that even personal opinions of a single unimportant peasant could engineer a radical response by institutional authorities of delimitation in their efforts to delimit boundaries of inclusion and exclusion of the dominant knowledge discourse. Further, through this example, distinctions between legitimised knowledge and truth claims can be illuminated, since it is argued that legitimised knowledge is an effect of power rather than necessarily being true or accurate or real. As Chapter 7 shows, the gap between the discourses of ambition and the realities of praxis are still as far apart in contemporary times as they were 500 years ago.

Our particular Renaissance example concerns a literate, inquisitive and outspoken miller named Domenico Scandella, also known as Menocchio, whose case comes to our attention through the efforts of historian Carlo Ginzburg in his book with the appealing title *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (1980). Menocchio lived between the times of Copernicus and Galileo. He was from the north-eastern Italian village of Montereale in the region of Friuli, some 200 kilometres from Venice. He came to the attention of the Sixteenth Century Roman Inquisition for his unorthodox views of religion and the cosmos, about which he talked freely and vigorously to anyone who would listen. He was questioned, sent to trial, and imprisoned for his heretical views in 1584. Initially, he recanted his particular cosmological beliefs and was released after three years. He was forced to wear a white tunic with a yellow cross denoting him as a former heretic at all times, until, 16 years later, he was again tried for re-asserting his earlier views, found guilty of heresy and burnt at the stake in 1599 (Ginzburg, 1980).

Menocchio's heretical views were that he believed the universe was formed out of chaos, comprising earth, air, water and fire that were "mixed together; and out of the bulk a mass formed – just as cheese is made out of milk – and worms appeared in it, and these were the angels" (Ginzburg, 1980: 5-6). Ginzburg's book gives us a small-scale humanistic, individualised interpretation that contextualises larger-scale underlying mentalities of Renaissance and pre-Renaissance Italy, much as Foucault's histories do.

Menocchio's story comes to us via the records of the Roman Inquisition itself. In the 1970s, Ginzburg's investigative efforts were not whole-heartedly supported by the Catholic Church, which refused to allow researchers free access into the *Sancta Sanctorum* of the *Palazzo del San'Uffizio*, where the Inquisitional Records are kept (Schutte, 1999). According to Schutte, the reason for the Vatican's reluctance to make Inquisition documents available is due to an estrangement between the papacy and the secular sphere, dating back to the Renaissance period and the Counter-Reformation – also known as the Catholic Reformation, depending on one's views – and the separation between clerics and the laity (Schutte, 1999). Even now, from Ginzburg's account we see that the institutional field of knowledge maintained by the

Catholic Church from five centuries ago remains a protected discourse, with access to it still restricted and maintained by the Church.

Nonetheless, Ginzburg was able to access sufficient documents about Menocchio's trials and explore them in relation to wider historical contexts to provide us with his genealogical exploration and interpretation. Ginzburg's interpretation focuses specifically on the sources of ideas for Menocchio's views, and in particular, what books he had access to, those he read, and how he read and interpreted his books. Tilly (1990: 698) argues that Ginzburg uses the centrality of Inquisitional trial records as a prism through which to explore broader historical context. Ginzburg examines major defining events of Europe – such as the Reformation and Counter-Reformation – that provide a background to why things happened in the way that they did and were reflected through the localised episodes in Menocchio's life.

Ginzburg tracks emergence of Menocchio's alternative conceptions about the cosmos from peasant oral culture. He explores contexts of oral culture and the cultural divisions between 'high' or elite culture (that of the nobility and bourgeoisie) and the 'low' culture of the peasants, urban tradespeople and artisans, and how ideas permeated across high and low cultures at that time (Redfield, 1956; Tilly, 1964; 1990; Anderson, 1971; Davis, 1987; Burke, 1992). As already discussed, much of this oral culture predates discourses of the Roman Catholic Church and speaks of other understandings about the nature of deity and humanity and "the persistence of a peasant religion intolerant of dogma and ritual, tied to the cycles of nature, and fundamentally pre-Christian" (Ginzburg, 1980: 112).

We can glean from Tilly (1990: 698) that Ginzburg's general argument is that alternative discourses about the cosmos arose from a web of interconnecting discourses, from the Reformation, printing and publishing, as well as oral culture from remote rural areas and the interpenetration of oral and elite cultures. Tilly argues that Ginzburg

> [R]aises doubts that the rural heresies radiated downward from elite
> thinkers, such as Martin Luther, and tenders, ever so delicately, the

> counterhypothesis that both peasant heresies and literary
> heterodoxies drew on a widely circulated, constantly evolving,
> popular oral tradition (Tilly, 1990: 699).

Tilly (1990: 697) describes Ginzburg's interpretation of Menocchio's circumstances as small-scale and humanistic, one that seeks to interpret an individual's experience. He writes that,

> From the trial records, a few other local sources, and an enormous
> knowledge of 16th-Century Italian popular culture, Ginzburg
> constructs a credible account of both an extraordinary person and
> of the cultural world in which he lived (Tilly, 1990: 698).

Menocchio's story is of interest for several reasons. The first is how Menocchio came to hold alternative views about discourses of religion and the cosmos to those of the dominant institutional fields of knowledge, the Catholic Church and its authorities of delimitation, the clergy. Second, it is curious that a peasant from a remote area of Italy and whose sphere of influence to disseminate his alternative views was extremely limited, should elicit such a strong 'policing' response from authorities of the dominant discourse. Third, Church truth claims about the cosmos have shown subsequently to be just as erroneous as the assertions by Menocchio yet its mandated role as authority to deal with opposing views went unchallenged. Fourth, legitimising processes of the Church Councils were so institutionalised and regulated through Church hierarchy and its protocols that even if there was some doubt in the minds of Church authorities, they could not challenge these truth claims for fear of being ostracised and denounced as heretics themselves, exemplified by Savonarola and Luther.

Again, genealogy is the analytical framework, since it probes historical conditions as a suite of power initiatives and responses to complex relations of changing conditions of existence (Foucault, 1972: 49). It makes visible power relations that are negotiated through such conditions of existence and change. Through genealogy we can investigate: the authorities of delimitation and their associated fields of institutional knowledge who legitimated, established and policed discursive boundaries of inclusion and exclusion; surfaces of emergence in which this alternative conception about cosmological and religious knowledge could arise; grids of specification through which the dominant discourse, and indeed an alternative discourse such as

Menocchio's could be disseminated; and power effects that established and conserved specific interests.

Although Menocchio was accused of being a Lutheran, Ginzburg observed that it was unlikely that the miller had come under Protestant influence. Rather his views were uniquely his own, derived from many rather than a single source. One of Menocchio's problems was his willingness and enthusiasm to discuss his ideas with others and his somewhat assertive and opinionated mode of communication. The Church considered Menocchio was proselytising and was "preaching and dogmatising shamelessly", a fact that seriously aggravated his situation (Ginzburg, 1980: 2, quoting from his research of the Inquisitional records).

The parish priest with whom he had had prior conflict denounced Menocchio to the Vicar General and thence to the Roman Inquisition. For the parish priest, whose job it was to save souls, it was not difficult to denounce a man with whom he did not get along and who also "uttered 'heretical and most impious words' about Christ" (Ginzburg, 1980: 2). Indeed, it was the parish priest, an underling in the Church hierarchy, who sought to square a personal relationship with Menocchio by reporting his activities to Church authorities, which caused Menocchio to be marginalised. As Mills (1999) might have argued, it was the mandate of authority gained through membership of the clerical power elite that enabled the parish priest to exploit his power to serve his own opportunistic interests.

Ginzburg asserts that a further problem was that Menocchio had scant regard for Church authorities. He regarded the clergy as parasites, who kept knowledge to themselves and saw the Church as an exploiter of the poor, a theme common to other heresies. Thus, it was not too difficult to gain testimony from the villagers of Montreale with whom Menocchio had had such heretical conversations to confirm such heresy, whether accidentally or purposefully. As the villagers knew, once an individual was charged with heresy, they, too, could be implicated by association or also be charged with heresy based on something they uttered at Menocchio's trial (Ginzburg, 1980). Thus, it would have been easier to feign ignorance or disinterest or actively discourage airing of Menocchio's view so that they would not be caught up in the ordnances of heresy that the Church imposed.

Ginzburg's research shows that some of the villagers, who could read and had access to a range of books, tried to convince Menocchio not to speak to others about things he had learned, being well aware of their heretical nature. Many others who could not read for themselves or did not have access to books were said to find Menocchio's ideas outrageous and against the prevailing order (Ginzburg, 1980). According to Ginzburg, Menocchio did not just occasionally blaspheme but "blasphemed beyond measure" (1980: 4).

An example of pursuing opportunistic interests, as in the case of the village priest, or protecting one's interests, as the case of the villagers, shows how localised power relations, no matter how small, can have significant power effects. Legitimacy of the prevailing order and status of orthodoxy of the dominant discourse were used to pursue personal interests opportunistically. Activity of the village priest in elevating Menocchio's heterodoxy to the attention of authorities of the Church had far-reaching implications for the villagers of Montereale and other villages close by. It served to establish the importance of even a minor individual in policing boundaries of the dominant knowledge discourse, since it was knowledge of the cosmos that was in question here. As well, villagers who participated in Menocchio's trial performed a similar role of protecting the dominant discourse through their language (rhetoric) and behaviours (practices). Thus, they also worked to effect closure of the orthodox discourse of the Church by protecting and, in serving their own opportunistic interests, became practitioners of the dominant knowledge discourse. In effect, they, too, were knowledge workers.

In positioning the concept of knowledge work in the period of the Renaissance and in the circumstances of Menocchio versus Church dogma – and it is not the only time and situation in which it could be done – we can readily see that the contemporary view of knowledge work and knowledge workers expressed by Drucker, Bell, Despres and Hiltrop, Rowley and others recycles a concept that is much older. Just as in the contemporary period, a discourse of heresy (non-legitimised knowledge) was conceived and developed using the same rules of discursive formation and seeking domination over other knowledge discourses as an effect of power. In the Fifteenth Century, authorities of delimitation of the 'truth in faith' discourse were represented

by the Church and state. Dissemination into other spheres of life through presenting and representing the discourse was performed by those who adhered to the discourse of heresy as a disciplinary regime, such as local priests, local administrators and even villagers. While the tenets of the Roman Church were documented, it was up to parish priests (not all of whom could read) and local administrators to interpret the discourses and apply it to their local situations. It was these individuals who supported or refuted accusations as to what constituted heresy and how it should be dealt with, either at a local level or through the involvement of the Church in Rome. As earlier stated, once the Church was officially involved, there was no question about the guilt or innocence of the accused, only whether he or she would recant, thereby saving his or her soul.

In determining whether presentation and re-presentation of Church dogma by individuals was constituted as acceptable or not, parish priests and others acted as gatekeepers to legitimised knowledge, policing the boundaries of Church dogma as well as controlling discursive statements contained within. Surely, the work that these individuals performed under the auspices of the Church, ensuring that legitimated knowledge was disseminated, controlling the boundaries of discursive inclusion and exclusion, and applying disciplinary action as required by the Church organisation, should be considered to be knowledge work. Admittedly, it was a different kind of knowledge work than is considered within a contemporary context but knowledge work, nonetheless.

Looking at the example of the Church shows us the way in which authorities try to police and enforce boundaries of discourse. In Renaissance Europe, the Church maintained the boundaries of religious belief and tried to bend secular knowledge to its doctrinal discourses; however; in the contemporary period, it is not religious knowledge but knowledge work in a commercial and business sense that is the most prized category of knowing. If we want to see how knowledge societies are consititued, we can get our bearings by looking at a simpler and more elemental structure of society that is dominated by a religious institution. It enables us to address similar sorts of mechanisms that control discourse in a contemporary society.

We have now reached a point where the concept of a 'knowledge society' or 'knowledge age' needs to be reconstituted within a new understanding of knowledge work that it is not unique to one period but has been recycled. Knowledge representing a new golden age expressed by Drucker, Bell, Reich and others needs to be reconsidered.

5.7   RECONSTITUTING A KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

> In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled,
> selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of
> procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain
> mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable
> materiality (Foucault, 1981: 52).

As shown in Chapter 2, contemporary discourses of knowledge work variously define it as acquisition, processing and application of knowledge (Scarbrough, 1999: 5), a "knowledge producing occupation … a movement of manual to mental, and from less to more highly trained labor" (Wolff, 2005: 37, citing Machlup, 1980 [1962]). It involves processes of knowledge creation and dissemination (Nonaka, 1994) within an organisational context (Mintzberg, 1983; Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Carter and Scarbrough, 2001; Donaldson, 2001; Patriotta, 2003). It is work that is associated with problem identification, solving and brokering of solutions, also known as 'symbolic analysis', since it manipulates intangible ideas, symbols and images (Reich, 1991: 49). Drucker (1959: 75-6) identifies knowledge work as a productive application, that is, the work of knowledge, rather than gaining wisdom for esoteric purposes. It is an organisational activity, whereby knowledge workers are organised functionally to produce knowledge, either as an end product or as a contribution to a product.

Just as printing and publishing in the Renaissance reflect constituencies of a contemporary knowledge society, it is not too much of a stretch to apply these same definitions to knowledge work of the Catholic Church hierarchy and its minions of some 500 years ago. Such definitions of knowledge work can be related to Church theories of cosmology, its organisational status, and the functional organisation of

monastic orders to do the bidding of the Inquisitions as well as its manipulation of intangible ideas, symbols and images. The work of the Inquisitions was productive in that it theorised concepts of heresy and produced heretics that conformed to such theories, in much the same way as governments theorise concepts of terrorism and produce terrorists to conform to the theories. Members of the Church hierarchy acquired, processed and applied specific knowledge through Councils, Indices and lists of standardised, acceptable knowledge, which the lower echelons of the clergy were expected to apply to circumstances of everyday life. These same Councils were established as knowledge-producing occupations embodying debates, rhetoric and judgment concerning the value of the knowledge produced. Comparisons with the contemporary Knowledge Society are reflected in the work of WIPO and other global and national institutions that create and administer legal frameworks that list, standardise and judge knowledge as intellectual property owned by corporations, rather than to be freely circulated (Machlup, 1980 [1962]).

Then as now, institutional authorities composed of the power elite attempted to control the flow and spread of knowledge. During the Renaissance, the power elite comprised the Church and state, which largely controlled the military, whereas, the contemporary power elite (at least in the U.S.) comprises the triumvirate of the military, corporate and political elite (Mills, 1999). Mills argues that in the modern period, members of the directorate in these powerful domains were "men of education and administrative experience" (1999: 289), who tended to come together to form the power elite but only because of their positions of power within these significant institutions (Mills: 1999: 9). Extending Mills' argument further, the canonical authority of the Renaissance Church resided in its ability to realise its will and was derived through its base of power, wealth and prestige, and was similarly led by men who were well educated and had strong administrative experience.

Knowledge creation was documented and disseminated through the Church organisation and even members of its lowest hierarchical levels – the parish priests – were expected to identify heresy among their parishioners, solve and broker solutions either locally or by bringing in members of the Inquisitions. Here, too, the Church did not pursue knowledge about heresies and heretics for wisdom but rather as a basis for disciplinary action and control. The Church controlled the discourses of truth in

faith, belief, cosmology, as well as determining what was true (that is acceptable) knowledge printed in the new books.

As authorities of delimitation of a discourse of knowledge work mandated by the state, the Church established not only pursuit of knowledge work by its members but also the form and type of knowledge that was acceptable for engagement by the broader community. Its control of the boundaries of knowledge discourse was such that other discourses challenging its statements were not benignly and dismissively referred to as 'alternative' but were seen as evil threats against the *status quo*, regarded as heresy and aggressively dealt with.

Technology played an important part as well. Technologies of torture were specifically associated with Inquisitions, although they were not new. Book publishing was seen as a particular problem for the Church, since new technologies associated with printing, publishing and distribution opened up avenues for new readers who could access both new and old knowledge in local vernacular at a cheaper cost. Renaissance book clubs flourished, where new and old publications were not only read but discussed and argued in relation to everyday life experiences; in much the same way that contemporary communities of practice do. In most aspects, the discourses of knowledge work in contemporary and Renaissance times are reflective of each other.

If we revisit the table of section 5.2.1, which is repeated on the next page, we can clearly see there are enough similarities in the objects of the knowledge work discourse to provide comparable parallels between the Renaissance and the Information Society.

TABLE 5.1
Comparison of Knowledge Societies

"Knowledge Society"	Discursive Objects	"Renaissance"
Information technologies	Communications shift	Script to print
Computers	Technology	Printing press, ink, paper
Electronic telecommunications	Dissemination	Book publishers and book sellers
Knowledge work as social and economic resource	Resources	Publishing as social and political resource
Greater access to information and knowledge	Access	Greater access to knowledge and wisdom
Application of theoretical knowledge to work practices	Praxis	Enables disparate theories to form a body of knowledge
Agent of change – new forms of organisation; 'boundaryless careers'[34]	Progress	Agent of change – translations in vernacular; typography; spelling; grammar and syntax
Supports development of globalisation	Political	Supported development of nation states, nationalism
Government, academia, business	Institutional fields of knowledge	Guilds, publishers, universities, the Church
Capitalist/industrial society to post-capitalist/post-industrial/information society	Discursive totality/periodisation	Medieval to Early Modern
Elementary education to higher education;	Cultural shifts	Oral to literate society
Corporations, global institutions & governments	Institutional control	Church & the state
Electronic databases	Preservative power	Printed books
Education	Agent of change	Printing
Academics, governments, business, management consultants	Authorities of delimitation	Catholic and Protestant churches
Two World Wars, revolutions and new social movements	Historical conditions	Hundred Years War, religious upheaval (Great Schism and other religious reforming movements); interest in Humanism
Authority goes with status	Social boundaries	Authority went with status

[34] Arthur and Rousseau, 1996

In conducting a genealogy of knowledge work but locating it in the Renaissance, a strong argument has been made to show that a knowledge work discourse that is considered to be a contemporary phenomenon is part of a more extensive ancestral knowledge discourse. In the chapter, we have seen how Foucault's 'historical *a priori*', described in *The Order of Things* (1970), can enrich our interpretations of human experience prior to 'conditions of possibility' of a given epoch – which shape perceptions of that era – rather than being *a priori* to all experiences (Haugaard, 2002: 185).

The chapter has also shown how historical systems of thought – that made sense of human experience in an earlier period of the Renaissance but is no longer meaningful in a contemporary context of knowledge work – have been used as a problematising methodology – a genealogy of knowledge work – instead of traditional linear historiography (Davidson, 1986). Using this method in the chapter, a conception of knowledge work as it relates to human experience in the period known as the Renaissance is problematised.

To refer back to a quote from Foucault with which we began this section of the chapter, we have seen that "production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality" (Foucault, 1981: 52). Like contemporary conceptions of knowledge work, the Renaissance view was both technical and social. Five hundred years ago, the technical conception related to new employment opportunities, development of new skills, applying learning to solving problems, all of which emerged through availability of mass printing technologies. In addition, there were employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in publishing and distribution. And there were new reading publics whose imaginations were fuelled with more information from many sources than ever before. Clearly, this was a knowledge society.

Then as now, the institutional authorities made claims of truth and falsity about knowledge, locating these claims within an institutional structure of authority and legitimacy. Through particular discursive practices, they attempted to make order out

of disorder, and continuity out of discontinuity, to create domains of knowledge and reason out of chaos. As with all discourse, the structure is flexible and transformable depending on contingent circumstances of the time; but control of discursive representations is always the goal.

During the Renaissance, alternative conceptions were deemed heretical and the views and those who held them were vigorously prosecuted. Institutional authorities imposed boundaries on acceptable knowledge and clergy who actively policed the boundaries were also knowledge workers. They were not merely functionaries of an inflexible system of rules and laws permitted only to carry out a limited and specified range of tasks; rather, they actively participated in debates with accused heretics to try and convince them of the errors in their alternative views, that is, to save their souls.

Seen another way, it can be argued that unities representing a knowledge society of the Renaissance are as dubious as those claimed for a contemporary Knowledge Society. Features of a Renaissance knowledge society are individualised within a specific time and space that speaks to these unities and attempts to ignore disunities and fragmentations that underlie the historical context. I have made use of these internal configurations and secret contradictions to understand how they were formed and investigate the background of events from which they form a high relief. To restate Foucault,

> … I shall not place myself inside these dubious unities in order to
> study their internal configuration or their secret contradictions. I
> shall make use of them just long enough to ask myself what unities
> they form; by what right they can claim a field that specifies them in
> space and a continuity that individualizes them in time; according to
> what laws they are formed; against the background of which
> discursive events they stand out. (Foucault, 1972: 29)

A discourse of the Renaissance as a knowledge society is a way of making order out of a contemporary discourse of knowledge work. It reconstitutes theories of contemporary discourse and shows that they reflect contemporary concerns of enlightenment and rational progress rather than upholding any discursive truth claims. Of course, that the Renaissance was selected as a period to study in a comparative context was arbitrary, so that any one or many other so-called golden ages could have been selected. Indeed, there are so many that overlap and form networks of discourse

that speak to some new world order, that these totalities are both continuous and irruptive, being discursive tools to be employed in a process of ordering and sense making around a central theme.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter has been to show how knowledge, as the shaping mechanism of contemporary society, is little different in its mechanisms from the ways in which knowledge has shaped past societies. What creates distinctions are the ways we particularise determining features that shape our awareness and attitudes according to a broader social context and circumstances in which we find ourselves. Similarities between a contemporary Knowledge Society and development of publishing during the period known as the Renaissance are very powerful and illustrate the fact that we have always worked with knowledge. Of course, the Renaissance is not the only periodisation that could have been used as a comparative context for knowledge work, there are many others, including the Golden Age of Greece, the Scientific Revolution, the Age of Discovery and so on. Discourses emerge that engage with technical and social aspects of availability of knowledge in new ways and provide new knowledge work opportunities. More than that, most of the elements that are supposed to define a knowledge work discourse as unique in a contemporary context are also present in other periods.

The chapter has shown how authorities of delimitation from institutional fields of knowledge attempted to shape the discourse in particular ways by closing off discursive boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. In the context of the Renaissance, these institutional authorities were primarily the Catholic Church, mandated by the state, which developed a sophisticated model for managing the discourse. Church Councils established the rules of discursive presentation and representation of the dominant discourse of truth in faith; Dominican clergy were designated the institutional 'policemen' as Inquisitors; and manuals of inquisitorial procedures were provided to the Inquisitors to help them determine whether answers given by presumed heretics at their trials fitted with Church decrees. Although the methods

used to protect the discourse 500 years ago seem radical now, they may be regarded as a rearguard action to protect Church control over discussions of truth in faith. We have seen also that regardless of the status of an individual holding an alternative view, the Church felt compelled to protect both its dogmatic boundaries and the institution itself.

The chapter has shown that a battle for control of hearts and minds was emerging as a ground for conflict among secular rulers, the Church, intellectuals and even common people, like Menocchio. All of them used technological tools of the printing presses administratively and to inform the public and thereby sway their opinions. Even Menocchio tried to influence public opinions, using a combination of texts he had read mixed with traditional oral culture. And new techniques of book production and distribution of printed materials were able to influence public opinion sufficiently to preserve the lives of some with opposing views, such as Luther, Copernicus, and Galileo. At the same time, the Church used new technologies to assist in standardising and promoting its own views, such as classifying categories of sins and listing penalties.

The chapter has shown that technologies of printing became a means of exerting disciplinary power through standardising texts, much as computing technologies and databases do in a contemporary context. A battle of wills emerged between institutions of Church and state, as sovereigns were just as enthusiastic as popes to use advantages of printing and keep churchmen in line. Secular rulers established administrative and juridical uniformity in their realms and began to restrict some activities of the Church in secular spheres. Their minions were front-line knowledge workers who administered the rules and adjusted them to the particular circumstances.

At the same time, publishing made available new knowledge as well as broadened access to existing knowledge, helping to identify new problems as well as solving them. Publishing houses were organised and managed as commercial autonomous enterprises that were entrepreneurial and innovative and, despite continuing restrictions by the Church on what they could publish, publishers widely disseminated books and the knowledge they contained.

In the Renaissance period, we found a variety of knowledge workers who were equal in knowledge, skill and proficiency to those of a contemporary Knowledge Society. There were technical workers whose adaptive skills enabled them to mass produce books; editors, copyists, translators, proof readers who dealt with content of books; distributors, publishing entrepreneurs and book sellers; and teachers, administrators, clergy and jurists whose responsibility was to manage how knowledge made available in books could be used in a wider sphere, that is to apply knowledge.

We have also seen in the specific instance of Menocchio that Church discourses were supported by institutional authorities of both Church and state, which worked in concert as well as in conflict, to maintain order in society. Control of knowledge discourses became a business of the Church, using strategies of knowledge creation and capture, learning and management, not only within an organisational context but broader society as well. As this chapter has shown, the administrative capacity and capabilities of the Church were not only effective in recording and administering disciplinary actions against heretics but also provides contemporary historians, such as Ginzburg, with a wealth of detailed historical information.

Through relocating a contemporary discourse and periodisation of a knowledge society to a different historical context, in this case the Renaissance, the chapter challenges underlying discourses concerning contemporaneousness of a knowledge society. Resistance and challenge to assumptions of established discourse, which purports to be neutral and natural but in fact attempts to dominate other discourses by laying out business imperatives, are urged. Statements that the current conception of knowledge work should be heralded as unique to a Knowledge Society are clearly rebutted. Perhaps a Knowledge Society is less about conceptions of work and more about desired transformations of society.

5.8.1 'Post' societies unveiled

Transition to a golden age may be conceived as a transformation away from the darkness of war, exploitation, hopelessness and helplessness that emerged from

rationalising processes of enlightenment and social progress. Perhaps, we should focus attention on particular organising characteristics of historical periodisations such as the Renaissance and Information Society. Such 'post' societies particularise periods of epochal change, in which something of 'crucial importance' and 'immeasurably different' happens. As we have seen, Burkhardt's thesis on the civilising processes of the Renaissance postulates a radical break from the past and a cultural transformation, in a vein similar to Bell's thesis of an Information Society and Drucker's Knowledge Society emerging from a dark age of totalitarianism.

The chapter has shown that, in speaking of a new world order, networks of discourse use knowledge work as an object central to discourses of a golden age. As already noted, there are several problems with denoting a period as a 'post' society. In Foucault's terms, it creates teleology by discursively attempting to group elements of facts and dated events and to make them relevant by placing them in relation to one another to form totalities. Discourses that speak to the coincidental but contingent timing of these facts and events represent a process of ordering and sense making; but selection of certain events and visible facts to exemplify the coincidences also deselects others that do not fit within this schematic. Through particular discursive practices, these series attempt to make order out of disorder, continuity out of discontinuity, to create domains of knowledge and reason out of chaos. 'Post' societies purport to represent shared views of population segments about cohesion of phenomena or events around a central theme.

It is not my purpose to pass judgment on those who promote development of a Knowledge Society as a unique historical period, a 'post' society; rather it is to discover how such a discourse can arise and whether its tenets address particular political considerations that are an aside to the discourse itself. We have seen that the neutrality and naturalness of a Knowledge Society as a normal progression from one social transition to the next is artificially constructed, loaded with political considerations, and located within an historical context. Indeed, social, political and economic upheavals can provide a background for radical change in established frameworks, such as in the period of the Renaissance. Perhaps the contingent circumstances that arose may be considered to be unique even though

the rules framing development of an emerging discourse, delineation of authorities of delimitation, and modes of dispersion of a new discourse are not.

There is further puzzlement that may be posed in relation to the chapter. If we are in a Knowledge Society that is post-industrial and post-agrarian, what is its pay off? Because citizens of first world countries who can participate in the new golden age are more knowledgeable workers and are able to consume more, it does not necessarily make them more content. Nor does it make those who are excluded from its goldenness more dissatisfied with their lot. The economic treadmill of acquisition of money, goods and services is in high gear, as many studies have shown. Concurrently, first world people are often fatter, unhappier, desocialised, disenfranchised and isolated than ever before. If a Knowledge Society is presented as a contemporary utopia, what comes next, a wisdom society?

CHAPTER 6

LOOKING BACK ON LOOKING FORWARD: RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODS

The chapter delineates the research design and methods used to answer my main research question: how do those who are constituted by the knowledge work discourses –knowledge workers – use these discourses to describe their social processes, experiences and performance of knowledge work? The question is important because contemporary discourses of knowledge work construct and impose particular realities on those who are constituted by the discourses (Garfinkel, 1967, Miller and Glassner, 1997). Since, the research question seeks to understand how knowledge workers use discourse to describe the everyday issues of their knowledge practices (Miller and Glassner, 1997), the research explores knowledge praxis. Specifically, it concerns how an aspect of social life – working life – is constituted through the relationship between language and knowledge (Miller and Glassner, 1997). Throughout, design decisions are guided by the research question.

The title of the chapter *Looking back on looking forward*, signifies that it is written as a work in progress alongside the data analysis chapter that follows it. The inductive processes involved in writing both chapters concurrently enabled me to look back at the design issues while looking forward at the sense-making processes of the analysis itself. Additionally, looking back, when writing about the 'knowledge work' of the Renaissance era, the case of Menocchio served as an exemplar of questioning situated within and related to the dominant knowledge discourse of the Renaissance. Looking forward, I shall seek to uncover a similarly naturally occurring questioning of the limits and framing of contemporary knowledge work.

As Miller and Glassner (1997) suggest, empirical research and analysis are interrelated, since Foucauldian discourse studies take a 'top down' approach and move from standardised discourses to the reality-constructing activities of

everyday life. The interrelationship between the methods chapter and the data chapter enables me to look back on looking forward. The first step in designing the empirical research framework is to expound how knowledge work discourse is presented and represented in a contemporary context. This has been done in Chapter 2 using Foucauldian discourse analysis or genealogy. Genealogy has also been used to analyse the empirical data in the following chapter, as it has for the two previous historical chapters. A genealogical perspective explores how language and rhetoric reflexively construct social realities, such that these representations simultaneously describe and constitute those realities (Garfinkel, 1967; Miller and Glassner, 1997). Genealogy regards social realities as embedded in generalised discourses, which are used by participants or speakers discursively to construct and describe their practices, thus talking them, if not into being, at least into shape and identity.

As we have seen, there are many knowledge work discourses, each of which makes statements about knowledge work in different ways. For example, organisation and management theory discourse describes knowledge work in terms of an unproblematic transfer of knowledge from knowledge workers to the organisation (Nonaka, 1995; Wiig, 1999b; Davenport *et al*, 1998), whereas an alternative way of looking at the discourse might describe knowledge work in terms of power relations (Deetz 1994b; Clegg and Palmer, 1996; Garrick and Clegg, 2000). Knowledge workers, who both constitute and are constituted by discourses of knowledge work, enter into these discourses, shifting from one to another as it suits their interests to do so.

With the objective of the thesis being to understand how knowledge workers use discourse to describe knowledge praxis, the objective of the present chapter is to establish an empirical research design framework for the thesis. Using Denzin and Lincoln's (1994; 2000; 2005) work on methods and research design, the chapter identifies their five key research design principles and applies them to the thesis, justifying and supporting the various design decisions. The chapter then explains how the research site and participants have been selected, the methodological limitations, and how the empirical data is analysed.

6.1 DESIGN DECISIONS

As a guide for designing the empirical research, my question favours 'observation' of knowledge workers describing knowledge work praxis rather than direct questioning. The form of observation demands a qualitative approach, since the objective is to investigate relationships not quantification. Further, the form of observation is how knowledge workers describe their experiences of creating and manipulating knowledge and how their practices are influenced by their relationships with other knowledge workers and an organisation (as an employee, contractor or consultant), rather than the doing of knowledge work *per se*. Moreover, since the empirical research concerns knowledge praxis of a generalised nature rather than specific knowledge projects, purposive selection of participants across rather than within organisations is a key element.

If I asked a knowledge practitioner to describe the practices of knowledge work, she is likely to respond by describing a particular project she is working on at the time, or how her team work together to produce a specific outcome, or create a database of FAQs (frequently asked questions), or develop an innovative idea for generating profit. In other words, there would be a narrow focus on outcomes, production, achievements and processes. However, this would not describe her knowledge practices nor could it provide a more generalised view of knowledge praxis.

As Foucault (1970: xv) suggests "the historical analysis of scientific discourse should … be subject, not to a theory of the knowing subject, but rather to a theory of discursive practice", by which he means that a knowledge practitioner can only indirectly articulate her social reality of knowledge praxis as experiences based on mutual social relationships (Prior, 1997). The implication is that instead of directly asking a knowledge practitioner to explain how she performs knowledge work, I need to use a subtle approach to researching how knowledge workers experience knowledge praxis, by uncovering the rules of discourse in knowledge

work and how they enable knowledge work discourse to be produced and reproduced.

I cannot assume that as researcher I will gain particular insights to knowledge practitioners' worlds merely by asking the 'right' questions to elicit an 'appropriate' reconceptualisation of their experiences (Garfinkel, 1967); or that I am in a privileged position to better understand their reality by pre-ordaining the right categories for coding (Silverman, 2004); or by establishing a special research setting to study how they behave (Silverman, 2007). Rather, by discursively analysing their conversations about work experiences, including their stories and rhetoric, and indeed, the very topics they raise as issues for concern and discussion, I can explain how knowledge practitioners participate in and reference official (dominant) and unofficial (alternative) knowledge work discourses. By reflecting on their discursive practices rather than relying on them as knowing subjects, I can reveal how mutual social relationships are experienced by knowledge workers in knowledge praxis. In this way, I can claim, as an author "legitimacy to speak, write and authoritatively pronounce" (Prior, 1997: 65) on the topic of knowledge work.

The design challenge here is to find a context in which a free and open discussion of knowledge praxis can occur; one that is as power neutral and 'naturally occuring' (Silverman, 2007) as possible. While power relations that develop among participants during their discussions is a normal part of interaction (Foucault, 1977; 1980; Clegg, 1989; Deetz, 1994b; Mumby and Stohl, 1991), other power influences such as organisational hierarchy (relating to superior-inferior subject positions) and even researcher intervention (through question directives) is undesirable. Therefore, for such a discussion to occur in a relatively power neutral environment, it needs to emerge through participant interests (rather than being researcher designated) and to address knowledge praxis through practitioners' ontologies and epistemologies (rather than those of the researcher). Although the researcher's ontology and epistemology obviously would influence the way in which inductive processes are conducted and the narrative written, a rigorous and holistic interpretation can be done using Foucauldian genealogy as the mode of analysis. This is discussed in section 6.2.1.

A design decision was made to collect empirical materials via a professional Internet community of knowledge practitioners using an archived text as the field for analysis. How the decision was made, the site located and the particular text for analysis selected is explained in strategies of enquiry in section 6.3.3 of the chapter.

6.2   RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

An interpretative research project needs to maintain flexibility in research design, particularly *a priori* design commitments, since this may limit the scope of discovery in thinking about and interpreting the data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 368). Even so, Denzin and Lincoln suggest some research design principles to encompass five key design questions. These include,

a)   How will the design connect to the perspective being used; that is, how will empirical materials be informed by and interact with the paradigm in question?

b)   How will these materials allow the researcher to speak to the problems of praxis and change?

c)   Who or what will be studied?

d)   What strategies of enquiry will be used?

e)   What methods or research tools will be used for collecting and analysing empirical materials? (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 368).

These issues are addressed in the sections following.

6.2.1 Genealogy & discourse analysis

Much of what takes place in management and organisation is based on discourse (Oswick *et al*, 2000; Chia, 2000). Individuals use discourse to present and represent practices that occur in and around modes of organisation, as well as other identity-producing activities (Deetz, 1994a; Clegg, 1998; Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Alvesson, 2000; 2001; Robertson and Swan, 2003).

In responding to the first design principle of connecting research design to the perspective used, the thesis uses genealogy to explore what it means to be a knowledge worker and how knowledge practices are explicated within the context of their communication. As Chapter 2 shows, genealogy teases out the various meanings of contemporary knowledge work discourse and explains how the concept of knowledge worker, as an object of discourse, is constructed through language and texts and is understood in relation to broader contexts or organisations, economics, and the like.

The study of language and texts as an understanding of reality is a fundamental concept behind a genealogical perspective for discourse analysis (Foucault, 1972; Clegg, 1975; Laclau and Mouffe, 1985). It is a view that gives priority to the study of how language constructs and informs its own reality and is conceptualised and understood in its relation to other texts and contexts, rather than being validated against some external truth. Indeed, as Down (1994: 8) puts succinctly, discourse refers to the ability to create reality by naming it and giving it meaning.

Comprehension of discourse needs to go beyond merely linguistic meanings in order to make what is being said in what is said (Foucault, 1972: 30) understandable to my readers. To do so, I seek out historical contexts from which discursive events might emerge, the influences of time and circumstances on conceptions of knowledge work. This is done in three ways. First, in Chapter 4, the thesis explored the historical context from which contemporary knowledge work discourses could emerge and develop, in particular, circumstances post-World War II. Then Chapter 5 recontextualised knowledge work within the period known as the Renaissance to

illustrate that knowledge work *per se* is not a new phenomenon but is merely refashioned through discourse to reflect contemporary concerns. Finally, the following empirical chapter again recontextualises knowledge work discourse within the sphere of contemporary praxis as directly experienced by those who constitute and are constituted by the discourses – the knowledge practitioners.

Discourse is not only a relationship between reality and language, it also reveals practices, and in particular, a corpus of practices that admits and blends into the discursive melting pot the disruptions, impermanence, incompatibilities and irregularities present within thematic coherence (Foucault 1972: 30-31). In this way, I take up Foucault's micro-historical challenge to scrutinise the particular manifestation of knowledge work discourse to see how it has been conceived, to understand its structure, its coherence, and how it has emerged as a system of knowledge to understand "what was being said in what was said" (Foucault 1972: 30).

6.2.1.1 Normalising power effects

Since genealogy probes historical conditions as a suite of power initiatives and responses to complex relations of changing conditions of existence (Foucault, 1972: 49), it makes visible power relations that are negotiated through such conditions of existence and change. Thus, analysis of empirical data is not only contextualised within its contemporary historical circumstances of September 2003, but it also shows how knowledge practitioners negotiate power relations through their discussions of knowledge praxis.

In such power negotiations, there are particular processes of legitimation and normalisation that are implicit in discursive conceptions and conditions of existence, explicated by knowledge practitioners as they speak to each other of the realities of knowledge praxis. Such processes are politicised within a discourse of knowledge work. Moreover, as part of my understanding the politicising process of discourse, I seek out the limits of what is included and excluded in knowledge work discourse used by practitioners, and how networks of relationships are

established with other discourses that may influence it in some way. Through an exposé of the discourse of discourse, I can brush away the layers to uncover an understanding of how power mediates a discourse such as knowledge work.

As an examination of how power relations normalise discourses of knowledge work, the research design for the thesis takes into account the power effects that emerge through practitioner explanations of knowledge praxis as they negotiate understanding and share experiences. Since "the (Internet) network provides virtually total freedom of speech" (Benson, 1996: 363) for the participants, or in Silverman's (2007) view 'naturally-occuring data', a researcher can analyse the texts so produced to reveal practitioner negotiations as they normalise power relationships to achieve understanding. Texts produced in a public space, such as an Internet CoP, are unstructured (by the researcher) and environmentally unconstrained (by organisation hierarchy). Thus, the Internet offers a high degree of freedom for participants to communicate conceptions about knowledge work in practice. It permits a free-flowing discussion among practitioners constructing knowledge praxis in their own terms and through their own perspectives. Using the Internet allows the researcher to observe interaction among knowledge practitioners as they construct and reconstruct the realities of knowledge praxis. Here, I can be one among many flies on the wall.

The Internet enables an examination of power relations through participant evocations, which are both natural and normal. Internet public texts are expressed directly by those engaged in online discussions of various types and are not mediated by third parties, including the researcher, thus providing 'discursive democracy' (Benson, 1996: 361) that is not 'manufactured' data (Silverman, 2007: 39). Therefore, authors of Internet texts are not inhibited by identification within particular environments, such as national or organisational contexts, nor do they need to express their views in ways which fit the questions that are asked by a researcher that invites a "retrospective 'rewriting of history'" (Silverman, 2007: 39; Garfinkel, 1967).

As well, discursive interaction in an Internet forum is less inhibited by power hierarchies that would influence discourse occurring within typical organisational

contexts. In order to limit power effects that a dominant managerial discourse might have on knowledge practitioners' expression of their praxis, due to organisation hierarchical influence, it is important that interaction within an Internet forum occurs at a peer level. In this way, relative democracy of such a public forum can diminish hierarchical relationship positions between and among participants (Habermas, 1989; Calhoun, 1992a; 1992b). Power relations among participants can be normalised through the patterns of their discussions rather than through hierarchical subjectivities, that is how practitioners see their subject positions within an organisational hierarchy such as superior or subordinate to other participants.

6.3   DESIGNING ONLINE RESEARCH

The Internet as a source of empirical data requires research design protocols that can channel the vast array of available online data into a viable research resource. Since the public nature of the Internet as a research domain may bring into question its veracity, in terms of verification of actual participants, size of participant groups, the temporal nature of the groups, the lack of structure and control or, indeed, covert control over content, and so on, there are additional problems that need to be carefully addressed in the research design. These design questions include how to approach the Internet as a field of research, including, who are the knowledge work practitioners, what types of knowledge work practitioner communities are available, how do I find them, which ones would be most appropriate for my research and why.

A researcher's use of Internet texts requires a high degree of caution, since research of a public space such as the Internet carries unique problems. Thus, the ethical considerations in reproducing their online texts for interpretation need to be considered. Since the Internet is public domain, potentially accessible to all people with the technology, do I need to seek permission to reproduce their texts and use their 'names'?

In trying to frame a response to these many concerns, I found that to pre-conceptualise the research would predetermine it in some way. *A priori* design may close off opportunities to explore the richness of the data and gain some deeper meaning to the types of discussion and varieties of discussants. At the same time, I needed to deliver some structure to the conversational modes I might discover. A broad framework led back to my original research question of how do knowledge practitioners enact the discourse of knowledge work through praxis. The first research design issue specific to the Internet was to determine who was talking about knowledge work and also the contexts of their discussions. The following section takes the first steps towards delineating the Internet as a field of research for exploration of online communities of knowledge work practitioners. I then look at the discussants and their particular frames of reference within the field of Internet research.

A second design issue, which is not just specific to the Internet but should be considered in a more general way, is the mode of analysis in which to explore the content and contexts of participant discussions. Lindlof and Taylor (2002: 216) suggest that any kind of analysis requires reducing the data through sorting, categorising and prioritising. In qualitative analysis of texts, this reduction allows for interrelationships of the data according to emerging schemes of interpretation. Rather than imposing an external system on the data, as occurs with quantitative data analysis, the concepts for a grounded form of qualitative analysis arise through an exploration and understanding of emerging themes that frequent the field texts and the theoretical ideas that form the basis of research interests (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002: 217). "It is a process of creativity (not just verification) in which the analyst is 'running things up provisionally, taking a look at them in the light of standards deriving from experience and knowledge, and modifying, reflecting or accepting parts of the whole before moving on the develop other ideas'" (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002: 217).

Further, since qualitative research is based on interpretative assumptions about culture, perceptions and forms of action (Lindloff and Taylor, 2002: 238), it is constantly changing. More so, since multiple constructed realities do not permit a single truth or any single representation to achieve more than tentative dominance

(Foucault, 1972). Moreover, concerns about measurement, stability and validity are problematic (Lindloff and Taylor, 2002; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Qualitative researchers do require credible and dependable data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), so that interpretations arrived at are accurate and plausible. The next section examines the Internet as a source of credible and dependable data.

6.3.1   Internet as a data source to investigate praxis & change

In response to the second basic design question posed by Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 368) of how the materials allow a researcher to speak to problems of praxis and change, Internet texts continuously emerge as a response to a variety of contextual, that is historical stimuli, as text authors explore opportunities for discussion, confirming and disconfirming theories according to their experiences. All of these texts are potential sources of research data as they emerge, are taken up by others, merge with other themes, evolve into other texts, or are discarded, in much the same way as Foucault (1972) describes a genealogical discourse analysis. Each reflects praxis and change. They can be read as individual texts, pertaining to theories generated by text authors in a variety of ways.

The notion of using the Internet as a field of research is not new (Benson, 1996; Schmitz *et al*, 1995; Jones, 1995; Kozinets, 2002), although it has been used most frequently for survey research (see, Kelly-Milburn and Milburn, 1995; Landis *et al*, 1995, McGlade *et al*, 1996; Kuhnert and McCauley, 1996; Stanton, 1998; Schaefer and Dillman, 1998; Silverman, 2007). For example, Kozinets (2002) found that using the Internet to tap into a topic that engages people who are self-referential as coffee drinkers with various levels of enthusiasm and interest in the themes that surround coffee, provided him with an excellent research source for naturally-occurring communities. In the thesis, such natural communities provide an excellent resource for exploring how knowledge practitioners describe knowledge praxis, with similar levels of engagement and enthusiasm that are voluntary rather than coerced (by management) or requested (by the researcher).

Benson (1995) found that the Internet revitalised political debate and provided a rare but robust forum for free speech. Schmitz *et al* (1995: 41-42) found that the Internet created "shared discourse among people who would not normally interact", in their case, homeless people in Santa Monica, California. While Atkinson and Coffey (1997: 45) observe that "many organizations and settings have ways of representing themselves collectively to themselves and to others. It is, therefore, imperative that our understanding of contemporary society … incorporate those processes and products of self-description", that is, texts that are produced and consumed on a voluntary and collective basis. Thus, Atkinson and Coffey suggest that if we wish to understand how organisation – in its broadest terms – operates we must understand how members describe themselves and how they constitute their reality (1997: 46-47).

Discursive conceptions about knowledge work, or indeed any other topic of interest to online communities, may shift. Adhesion among group membership and survival of the groups themselves are also precarious. Gergen and Gergen (2000) take this notion of precariousness further in their discussion of lack of fixity of both topic and research participants in their notion of the 'vanishing subject matter' (Gergen and Gergen, 2000: 1039). They contend that processes of meaning-making are accelerated and that research subject matter is unstable and may lose temporal relevance (Gergen and Gergen, 2000: 1040). They question appropriateness of applying traditional methods of research and representation to contemporary conditions, and speak to the heart of transitory formations in justifying study of various cultures or subcultures. They suggest that we explore a field of relationships rather than independent individuals by establishing communities of dialogue, with the subject matter of social research being continuous motion (Gergen and Gergen, 2000: 1040). Internet communities of practitioners are particularly well suited in this respect, since their presence and absence represent the ebb and flow of continuous motion of relationship establishing and relinquishing through free choice.

Although the mobility of online group participants and, indeed, the precarious existence of actual groups challenges temporality, one way of gauging group adhesion and relevance is through longevity of online communities in maintaining

member participation, through sustaining their interest in different topics. Long-term topic interest also assists in differentiating types of Internet communities, separating chatroom communities – that are loose associations of disparate individuals drawn together to discuss a specific issue at a particular time (Benson, 1996) – from practitioner communities who are drawn together by the continuing relevance of discussion topics. Such practitioner communities come together 'virtually' and voluntarily as a loose community with a shared interest in knowledge work practices.

The Internet enables a researcher to tap into a range of texts, either continuously until they peter out, or as snapshots within specific periods of interest. When analysed for emerging themes and patterns, they provide a more complete perspective of the problems of praxis and change. Moreover, later texts can be analysed similarly to build up a discourse that shows networks of discursive statements and linkages with other discourses. When such texts are compared with knowledge work discourses emerging from academia and management studies (Chapter 2), they show how text authors who are practitioners engage with knowledge work discourse.

With the Internet providing a more 'natural' environment, knowledge work practitioners can enter (and exit) at will, converse with each other as peers and explore aspects of knowledge work of importance to them. Such patterns differ substantially from organisation onsite ethnographic research that must contextualise hierarchical power relations in order to understand how knowledge projects occur (see Clegg and Courpasson, 2004, for a reading of how organisational knowledge projects are subjected to organisational hierarchical power relations in a highly sustained way). Since knowledge practitioners may also be project managers from time to time, research of them within business organisation contexts may be influenced by the particular projects on which they are working at the time and their role within those projects. To rephrase Clegg and Courpasson (2004: 540), use of a business organisation as the site of research may well bind participants to the vulnerabilities of a particular knowledge project and their specific role within it.

In using the Internet as a data source to investigate praxis and change, there are two important design challenges. The first is to select an Internet research site in which knowledge practitioners are not bound by the contingencies of a specific knowledge project and can discuss knowledge praxis, a concern addressed in the section below (6.3.1.1). Additional important design aspects include, assessing the legitimacy of a site in which knowledge practitioners interact versus using a chatroom in which anyone can participate, how to access such knowledge practitioner forums, and selecting a particular practitioner forum to research. They are addressed in section 6.3.3 strategies of enquiry.

The second design challenge is to select a research site that minimises difficulties associated with unequal power relations in a typical organisational hierarchy, such as superior and subordinate, or manager and worker. Its importance is to ensure that credibility and integrity of the selected discussion text is not biased by organisation hierarchical power relations. Thus, a preferred site would be one that is external to any specific organisation but relates to organisational activities in a more general sense. The issue is addressed in section 6.3.1.2.

6.3.1.1   Knowledge praxis, not knowledge projects

A contemporary researcher would be likely to go online as a first port of call to determine if there was some form of grouping that might be suitable for research, since it is widely accepted that the Internet provides an immense resource for data and information. It also offers a venue in which different types of discussion occur and might provide a rich research source into how knowledge workers use discourse to describe knowledge praxis. In exploring the possibility of using the Internet as the field for my research, I recognise that it could provide a resource that can be both integral to, yet individuated from, organisations and so address one of the research design challenges described above. This is vital, as my research is about how practitioners use discourse to describe knowledge praxis in a broader context rather than a narrow exploration of the specifics of knowledge work projects within organisations.

To address the problem of using the Internet as a research site for discussion texts on knowledge praxis, one might immediately suggest a formalised community of practice (CoP). However, there are caveats to this suggestion. If the CoP is organisationally sponsored, it is generally project-oriented and may present hierarchical power relations to participants. Alternatively, a truly public sphere (such as described by Calhoun, 1992a, from Habermas), such as on the Internet, has additional problems of identification from a knowledge practitioner perspective, ethical use, and whether the discussion texts are in response to an immediate set of circumstances or relate to a set of practices.

The Internet can offer a suitable field for research to explore a range of discussions and breadth of discussant types who use it to connect with like-minded others (Benson, 1996; Schmitz *et al*, 1995; Jones, 1995). Such like-mindedness enables naturally-forming groups of discussants to occur at particular times, not only as a response to specific events and historical contexts but also as a field in which generalised professional practices can be acknowledged, discussed and dissected.

One problem is to find naturally-forming communities of practice for research into knowledge praxis. In part, the problem stems from difficulties in categorising knowledge work (Scarbrough, 1999) in that knowledge work does not represent a discrete occupation or role, in much the same way as Kozinets' (2002) coffee drinkers or Schmitz *et al*'s (1995) Californian homeless people. An additional categorisation problem is that, unlike coffee drinkers and the homeless, many individuals who may be slotted into the knowledge worker category, do not recognise themselves as such and may define themselves by their specific role, such as health workers, educators, lawyers, architects, and so on; thus, in selecting communities of knowledge work practitioners through which knowledge praxis may be studied, individuals and groups who are self-referential as knowledge workers must be found. This is discussed in depth in section 6.3.2.

Atkinson and Coffey (1997) give some direction when they note that texts – and in our case, texts that are produced as processes of social engagement via the Internet – are

> '[S]ocial facts' in that they are produced, shared and used in socially organized ways. They are not, however, transparent representations of organizational routines, decision-making processes or professional diagnoses. They construct particular kinds of representations with their own conventions. (Atkinson and Coffey, 1997: 47)

Here we reach the nub of examining praxis through representations of social discourses that occur within specialised professional forums among knowledge work practitioners. Particular uses of language, *genres* or, as Foucault (1972) describes, *langage* or kinds of language, have distinctive styles and conventions that are associated with some specific domain of life, occupation or identity (Atkinson and Coffey, 1997: 49; Foucault, 1972: fn26). In other words, use of a common language becomes referential to legitimising individuals as knowledge practitioners.

Atkinson and Coffey (1997: 47) also suggest that we should examine such texts within an organisation setting and reveal cultural values and contexts that are attached to them. Just as cultural values and contexts can change the way praxis is experienced, so too, an organisation setting is not a fixed entity and may be viewed as a process of organising that is, of change (Cooper and Fox, 1990; Chia, 1996; Oswick *et al*, 2000; Brocklehurst, 2001; Clegg *et al*, 2006). Further, by examining how practitioners talk about knowledge work and engage with their realities and activities, I can better understand how their conceptions about it can shift, that is how praxis changes. Conceptual shifts illuminate the precariousness and ambivalence of fixed notions of discursive dominance about knowledge work *vis a vis* other conceptions (Ahrens, 1997).

The Internet can provide a data source in which knowledge praxis and change can be investigated, thereby satisfying the first design challenge. The second design challenge of using the Internet for research is to minimise unequal power relations due to an organisation hierarchical environment and is addressed in the next section.

6.3.1.2   Minimise organisation hierarchical power relations

Research into how knowledge practitioners describe knowledge praxis will always acknowledge power relations, even among peer participants. Such relationships negotiate power to adopt a particular subject position or to convince others of the worthiness of such a position (Clegg, 1989), rather than organisational power constituted as legitimated authority (Daudi, 1986). Since organisation power relations may inhibit discussion, due to the positions of participants within an organisation hierarchy, the research site needs to accommodate the former (negotiated power) while minimising the latter (hierarchical power). Thus, for research integrity to occur, I need to minimise possible barriers to a deep and broad discussion about knowledge praxis that may be present if the research site occurred within a specific organisation.

The significance of organisation power relations within institutions cannot be underestimated but will not be attended to in the thesis. There are many other studies of power in organisations that provide a rich conceptual ground on which a more detailed analysis can be mounted (see, for example, Lukes, 1974; 2005; Haugaard, 1997; 2000; 2002; 2003; Clegg, 1975; 1989a; 1989b; 1997; 1998; Daudi, 1986; Deetz, 1992b; Jermier *et al*, 1994; Hardy and Clegg, 1996; Clegg *et al*, 1996; Knights and Willmott, 1999; Reed, 1999; Phillips, 2003; Clegg *et al*, 2006).

The form of power relations that are of interest in my research are those that occur in a non-hierarchical setting in which participants carve out their legitimacy and subject positions as they set about normalising power relations through discourse (Foucault, 1972; Haugaard, 1997; 2003). The research site needs to facilitate participants in presenting evidence brimming with rhetoric concerning history and experiences to convince others of their knowledge and the truth in their position. At the same time, individuals should be free of organisational restraints to refute alternative views substantiated by other discourses, deride alternative views, observe and articulate weakness of evidence, lack of disclosure, and uncertainty of position, since these are the form of power relations that are relevant to the thesis. In order to achieve the research objective of understanding how knowledge

practitioners use discourse, organisational social order needs to be viewed through discursive shifts, opening up and closing down of discursive boundaries, inclusion and exclusion of discursive objects, and alignment with other discourses of influence.

Could power relations occur freely in an organisational situation? Probably not! It requires a relative equilibrium of power relationships among individuals. Therefore, I argue that freedom from organisational power effects can only occur when individuals participating in a debate/discussion/meeting are on a peer level status and can establish – at least temporarily – a position of authority in that situation. The movement of establishing, or attempting to establish, their position of authority during an episode reveals a shift in power relations from one of initial equilibrium to one of power over another or others. As Haugaard (1997: 13) remarked, power of a given actor is not necessarily general but rather the individual's sphere of power tends to relate to an area of specificity.

As a consequence of power relations in discursive presentation and representation, the Internet also fulfils the second design objective of the chapter, that of identifying a field for research where there is relative power equilibrium, at least in terms of identity construction. The Internet presents such a field of research, where participants are at a peer level and organisational hierarchy is not present.

The two research design objectives are now defined; a site in which practitioners can discuss their views on knowledge praxis rather than knowledge projects; and a site with equilibrium of power relationships among participants external to traditional organisational hierarchy. Now, the design challenge of selecting appropriate participants for the research is addressed.

6.3.2   Who or what is to be studied

To address the third basic research design principle, Denzin and Lincoln (2000: 368-9) observe that the 'who' and the 'what' of qualitative studies involve cases, instances of phenomena or social processes, in which individual cases and events

are unique but also represent more universal social processes that can be understood in other contexts. The Internet text studied in the thesis reflects a commonality of the subject matter of knowledge praxis. Once themes are extracted through analysis, they reflect a more universal understanding of knowledge work in other contexts. Emphasis on universality of social experience emerges through the social processes of defining and communicating conceptions of knowledge work, thereby constituting reality (Garfinkel, 1967). Thus, 'the who' of the research are those who may be categorised as knowledge workers, while 'the what' of research are the texts emanating from discussions among knowledge workers as they discuss knowledge practices, that is, praxis. However, 'knowledge worker' presents specific problems of categorisation in that it is ill-defined, amorphous and overlaps with more specific occupational categories (Scarborough, 1999: 6-7). At face value, this makes research into how an ill-defined group uses self-constituting discourse a difficult task, since there are few if any professional associations of knowledge workers and those who work with knowledge may not self-categorise as knowledge workers.

In order to find such an elusive group, I need to make *a priori* assumptions about knowledge workers. My assumption is that those who talk about creating and working with knowledge must, in some way, be involved in knowledge work and, therefore, may be constituted as knowledge practitioners. However, the challenge still remains: how does a researcher find a specific group to research when potential members of such a group do not categorise themselves by such nomenclature; when there is no cohesive group to target for research; and when their discussions will only obliquely reference my field of interest?

For research selection purposes, it is necessary that research participants can claim legitimacy through their use of discourse from an institutional field of knowledge to substantiate their position of authority (Foucault, 1972; Knights and Willmott, 1985; Clegg, 1998; Robertson and Swan, 2003). Additionally, they can use discourse to substantiate their positions of knowledge and as support for a particular organisation social order (Haugaard, 1997; 2003). However, a more direct way of ascertaining legitimacy to speak of knowledge work is to use a professional community of knowledge practitioners who are unconstrained by

organisational locales and specific project orientations. In this respect, the Internet as a research medium provides a unique resource of and for discussants.

Before conversations of knowledge practitioners can be engaged with fruitfully, the organising category that is knowledge work must first be explicated. It is necessary to do this, since it directly relates to how the research question may be answered and by whom.

6.3.2.1 Who is a knowledge worker?

Since I examine how knowledge work practitioners talk about knowledge praxis, it makes sense to examine those who have some consciousness about what it is to be a knowledge worker and have some identity and sense of membership of the category. In this way, I can examine those who 'self-code' their practices as knowledge work, among other things, and explore their discussions about the specifics of this organising category of knowledge work.

As discussed earlier, knowledge work as an organising category is problematic (Scarborough, 1999); thus, categorising those who perform knowledge work is likewise problematic, since such individuals may create or apply knowledge but not self-define as knowledge workers. They may manipulate images and symbols, yet not see themselves as symbolic analysts (Reich, 1991). The particular difficulties of knowledge work, as a clearly-defined category of work, impacts on the emergence of knowledge work as a profession in a traditional sense and growth of professionalism of knowledge work as a defining characteristic of an information society (Bell, 1973; Drucker, 1969; 1993).

In the thesis, the aim is not to tighten or redefine discursive boundaries of knowledge work and those who perform it to a greater or lesser extent, but rather, to examine how discourses of knowledge work are used by practitioners. My assumption is that those who use discourses of knowledge work are associated in some way with its praxis. Thus, I posit that those who deploy knowledge work discourses to communicate via a common *langage* can be considered knowledge

workers. Further, in the absence of professional associations of knowledge workers or knowledge professionals, knowledge practitioners have found a way to converse in an environment outside of organisation hierarchy. They do so by participating in a public cultural forum they are creating for themselves via the Internet (Brown and Duguid, 1991; Rheingold, 1994; Schmitz *et al*, 1995; Benson, 1996). They are the new online professional communities of knowledge work practitioners. Such online communities are emerging as communities of professional knowledge work practice, which cut across traditional organisational barriers and even national lines.

The next section develops the strategies of enquiry and explains how a particular Internet community of knowledge practitioners was selected for the research.

6.3.3   Strategies of enquiry

The fourth design principle suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) concerns strategies of enquiry, which entails an examination of various types of communities available on the Internet. Two broad categories of online Internet communities offer reciprocal arenas in which individuals can discuss issues of interest or concern. The first is a 'chatroom-style' of community that expresses immediacy of interest in a topic, with participants typically using *noms de plume*. The second embraces a more sustained discussion, generally among individuals with a more focused interest on a topic recurring among communities of practitioners. There are many of these communities functioning via the Internet, bringing those with interests in a common theme together. Such communities range from coffee lovers to health support groups.

While both of the group categories of chatrooms and specialist communities can be accessed through a search of groups on major search engines such as Google (http://groups.google.com/groups) and Yahoo (www.yahoo.com), and other groups mentioned in Internet research articles, such as www.epinions.com (Kozinets, 2002), there are important differences, as described below. As well, voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) technologies, such as Skype, now offer both

voice and visual communications to enhance engagement with Internet communities.

6.3.3.1 Chatrooms

Chatrooms offer an Internet version of 'live' communications by any interested individuals. Anyone can register, provide an email or VoIP address and participate in or 'observe' these live conversations. In online chat communities, group members frequently insert or reference a public text, typically a newspaper article, which creates a flurry of discussion for a period of days and then peters out.

Online chatrooms are similar in some ways to 'letters to the editor' sections of newspapers, whereby respondents discuss a current 'hot' issue; such discussion occurring in real or delayed time. The main difference is that, although there may be a moderator of the group to ensure basic tenets of courtesy and non-abusive opinions are met, there is no editor selecting letters based on his or her preference for 'well-balanced' representation of views or, indeed, any space limitation.

Chatrooms give a higher level of communicative freedom to participants whose opinions become available to a wider participating audience. If a theme or topic does not tap the interests of participants, threads of conversation may shift into other areas or cease altogether. It is particularly significant where objects of discourse are tenuous, as they typically are, as discourse emerges, forms, develops, transforms, and then may disappear, with such changes as a direct response to discussants interest in them (Foucault, 1972).

For a researcher, Internet chatrooms provide reality to street level conversations (Browning, 2000) without discursive limitations of mandated authorities or institutional fields of knowledge, who may channel discourse according to specific agendas and the power effects of particular conceptions of truth. These online conversations arise, are seized upon, continue, are transformed, "free(ing)

the problems that they pose" (Foucault, 1972: 28). That these historical contexts are immediate past-present does not deny their legitimacy within Foucault's (1972) rules of discourse (described in Chapter 3). However, they may not present praxis that I seek but rather superficial issues of concern or irritation that arise and subside with newspaper headlines. Moreover, since most chatrooms tend to be event driven and are not sustained, quickly emerging after an event and then disappearing within a matter of weeks, there are particular research problems.

Additionally, random access to many 'chatrooms' is also undesirable for research of a professional or academic nature. Schmitz *et al* (1995) observed that to provide "entirely open access (to Internet chatrooms) permits a level of vitriol or hazing that can drive out many participants, whereas imposition of moderated conferences can create censorship that disempowers" (Schmitz *et al*, 1995: 41-42). Thus, the possible polemics of the topic under discussion can both enhance and impede participant interaction.

A way of overcoming hazing is to broaden the boundaries of Internet research in knowledge practices from chatrooms, newsgroups or user groups, employed by Benson (1996), to include dynamic practitioner forums and communities. Although they may be moderated and therefore censored, a degree of self-censorship is anticipated among the participating group. Since practitioner forums are professional in nature, it is to be expected that participants will interact towards each other with professional respect. This brings us to an alternative sphere of online community – a professional community of practice.

6.3.3.2   Online communities of practice

An online community of practice pertaining to knowledge work and knowledge management may be a tightly-focused community of professionals who are actively seeking clarity, solutions and discussion about a topic among other professionals and colleagues. A review of the 'threads' of discussions shows participants to be 'real' people who typically include photographs, their work roles/position, as well as their names and companies. They are much less reactive

to current issues discussed in public texts and tend to become involved in a range of knowledge work community activities, such as open forums, special interest groups, themes relating to geographic zones, a resources library, interviews with academics and specialist practitioners.

There are several prominent online communities for knowledge work practitioners, including Knowledgeboard (www.knowledgeboard.com); the KM Forum Conference Centre (www.km-forum.org); and the Association of Knowledgework (www.kwok.org/), among others. These communities may have different practitioner groups participating in their various discussions; indeed, some practitioners belong to several groups concurrently.

Selection of such a community of professional practitioners overcomes several of the research constraints discussed earlier. As professionals, group members tend to be more respectful towards each other in a professional sense compared to chatrooms, and are less likely to be censored during their forums and community discussions. As well, since they are not aligned with any one organisational entity, members of a professional community are more likely to discuss praxis rather than projects. With no organisation hierarchy with which to contend, practitioners can speak more freely in a power neutral environment. Finally, Foucault's (1970: xv) concern for the 'knowing subject' is no longer an issue, since it is the practitioners who select a perspective through which a discussion on knowledge practices can occur. In the following section, the specifics of site selection and the research tools to do this are explained.

6.3.4   Research tools

The fifth design principle suggested by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) is the methods or research tools used for collecting and analysing empirical materials. Two aspects are discussed here. The first is an explanation of the researcher as instrument. The second explores the process of finding suitable online professional communities of practice, how a particular community was selected, and how a specific forum within that community became the actual research site.

6.3.4.1 Researcher as instrument

Janesick (1994: 212) suggests that "qualitative design requires the researcher to become the research instrument", that is the researcher must hone her observational skills and have the ability to observe behaviours. The sorts of observations to be made by the researcher as instrument include digging deeply for the meaning and perspectives of participants; understanding temporal relationships of structure and context; and acknowledging points of tension or conflict that Foucault would consider power relationships (Janesick, 1994: 213).

There are distinct advantages in conducting research online. With the researcher as a non-participant observer, as in this case, participants are not subjected to intervention or direction by the researcher through use of a questionnaire or survey instrument, nor do they manufacture data to fit the researcher's topic of interest (Silverman, 2007). Such a strategy is sound and maintains research integrity, since research participants are not 'guided' in their responses by an established set of research questions nor is the text used for analysis subject to researcher *a priori* assumptions.

Moreover, since subject areas and themes are determined and developed by participants, they are sustained for as long as there is interest in them. This removes artificiality of topic awareness brought about by researcher questioning. Participants are neither subject to power effects of an organisational or management hierarchy nor compelled to participate in satisfying the interests of others, including the researcher.

Additionally, by tapping into practitioners' open communications via the Internet, research into knowledge work practices attempts to place particular encounters and understandings into a more meaningful contextual or situated analysis (Tedlock, 2000). Through discursive analysis of practitioner textual 'conversations' about knowledge work and knowledge management, I can discern themes arising in the context of contemporary knowledge work practice as

practitioner actual experiences. And at a higher analytical level, I can examine the contexts through which these themes have become important to members of online discussion communities, thus developing a more traditional inductive analysis.

The first step is to find practitioner conversations, categorise them according to broad themes, and then explore topics that feed into and themes that emerge from the knowledge work discourses they employ. The following sections begin this exploration.

6.3.4.2   Research site selection

In searching for appropriate online professional communities, in the first instance, access to online community groups was gained through a list server such as http://groups.google.com/, which provided entry to the groups.

Using Kozinets (2002) and Benson (1996) as guides, a keyword search into Google Advanced Group search for the phrase 'knowledge work' was conducted. Between January 1, 1981 (as far back as I could search) and May 11, 2007 (one particular day in the search), there were more than 5,000 groups in which the keyword 'knowledge work' was found. In, 2006, there were 356 groups; 2005, there were 522 groups; 2004, there were 249 groups; in 2003, there were 290; in 2002, there were 519; and in 2001, there were 537 groups. The movement in number of groups over the years does not necessarily indicate a loss or gain of interest in the theme of knowledge work. In many cases, a perspective was posed but not taken up by others, so that the conversational thread was limited to one view. Alternatively, there was a concentration of participant practitioners in a smaller number of quality groups.

The initial search for a suitable group took place on August 26, 2004. When the groups were sorted by relevance, the first item (the one with the most frequent count of the keyword) was

Re: Productivity of **Knowledge Work**
Productivity of **knowledge work** has been decreasing < Intuitively, in spite of

all
the technology available to us now, I sense some truth in this, but don't **...**
[misc.business.facilitators](#) - 21 May 1997 by Ruete, Ned (United States Coast
Guard Research & Development Center) (eruete@rdc.uscg.mil) - View Thread
(5 articles)

When sorted by date (the most recent first):

Re: Jokes
... Postulate 2: Time is Money As every engineer knows, Power = Work / Time
Since Knowledge = Power, and Time = Money, we have Knowledge = Work /
Money Solving for ...
alt.mauritius - 9 Aug 2004 by Yusuf - View Thread (15 articles)

While both may be relevant for analysis, for our purposes, searching by counting
numbers of groups using the keyword was too haphazard to reveal potential sites
that could indicate themes for sustained discussion. More important was the need
to explore the term 'knowledge work' in context of a more extended discussion to
develop a concordance (Ryan and Bernard, 2000: 775) rather than just perform a
word count.

Continuing searches by a variety of keywords did not improve the quality of sites
until a search using the keywords 'knowledge professionals' (with 98 groups)
produced the following site located on the first page (sorted both by date and
relevance):

Second European Knowledge Management Summer School
... framework for KM[35] research. It will be supported by contributions from
prominent academics, knowledge professionals. The school is ...
fr.comp.ia - 2 Jul 2002 by Rose Dieng - View Thread (1 article)

Tracking this article led to a site which declared itself to be 'Knowledge Board:
portal for the European KM Community' http://www.knowledgeboard.com.
Clicking on this site showed that a 'KM Summer Camp' would also be held in
2004, indicating that this site had been established for several years, rather than
the typical four days or possibly four weeks of 'chatroom' interest groups. This
became a site of possible interest in terms of sustainability, and according to the
site home page, included a mix of knowledge professionals from both academia
and practice. KnowledgeBoard is described as a

KM portal funded by the European Commission under the Information
Society Technologies Programme (IST). KnowledgeBoard is a growing

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[35] KM is the accepted abbreviation used by practitioners for knowledge management

community of over 9,000 KM professionals throughout Europe and the world, managed by a consortium of partners around Europe" (KnowledgeBoard[36], accessed May 11, 2007).

At August 26, 2004, the site said it had more than 5,700 KM professionals in 100 plus countries. This made the site very significant in terms of a research resource. Since that time, presentation of the KnowledgeBoard site has changed. However, the description below pertains to August 2004.

In terms of suitability of KnowledgeBoard as the location for my research, the KM Forum Conference Centre was referred to as a site for organisations and management to register as for a physical conference, and in which discussion groups occurred within a themed online conference, including focused moderated discussions, panels, presentations covering a range of topics and issues. At least half of the membership were practitioners, with the three largest groups of members comprising 20 per cent of business consultants (internal and external), 14.5 per cent of technical professionals (both builders and users), and 10.5 per cent of people who held titles with the word 'knowledge' in it (excluding consultants). There were eight other significant categories comprising higher educators, librarians, researchers, students, business analysts, project managers, and program specialists.

Within KnowledgeBoard there were major site headings, each with sub-headings containing a wealth of information, including Zones and SIGs (Special Interest Groups), Library, Community and Resources. Members' names were listed in a directory, most with organisations, roles, countries of origin, and some with photographs. They included practitioners of various types, academics, and students. This increased its value as a site for research, since it addressed the issue of size of participant group, longevity as a group – although membership may change, and verifiability of participants.

KnowledgeBoard's Zones (geographies) and SIGs also contained Forums, which were similar in format to many of the chatrooms that began my search for online

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[36] http://www.knowledgeboard.com/members/members_in_your_country.html

discussion communities. The difference here is that participants were entering into these discourses as knowledge practitioners. The Library banner contained case studies, academic papers and interviews; and under the banner heading of Resources was a link to other knowledge practitioner networks with the following list:

- Association of Knowledgework (AOK)
- ActKM Forum
- CEST Knowledge Management Forum
- CLASSiks
- Creative Knowledge Enterprises (CKEs)
- GestiondelConocimeinto.com
- i-KM Intelligence Knowledge Management
- IABC, International Association of Business Communicators
- Institute for Knowledge Management
- Intangibles & Stakeholders Value Exchange Community
- Interdepartmental Knowledge Management Forum (Canadian Government)
- KIN (Knowledge & Innovation Network)
- KM-LEVER Leveraging Knowledge in the Software Sector
- KMForum
- KMTool
- Knowledge Cluster (Cluster del Conocimiento)
- Knowledge Management Initiative (KMI)
- Knowledge Media
- Knowledge Source@HSG
- Kubus Netværk
- NetworkingForKnowledge.com
- Plattform Wissensmanagement
- San Francisco & Silicon Valley Knowledge Management Cluster – KM Cluster
- The Coffeemachine (Alumni of City University Business School, London)
- The Conference Board European Council on Knowledge Management
- The KNOW Network
- TFPL Network

A review of these sites indicated that they have many members in common and are representative of a broad cross-section of knowledge practitioners in academic, commercial and government institutions. These sites would provide a solid network for a range of communities of knowledge professionals, from which to select a particular group in which to conduct research.

6.3.4.3 Selecting the text within the research site

Having found my research site, I decided to explore KnowledgeBoard further to select a specific text for my analysis. I started with an examination of the

KnowledgeBoard menu noted as Special Interest Groups (SIGs). The SIGs proved to be particularly fruitful in terms of exploring my research focus on understanding how knowledge practitioners use the knowledge discourse. KnowledgeBoard defined SIGs in the following way:

> Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are meant to bring together people having the same questions, problems or working topics in order to discuss, answer and solve these matters of interest through the exchange of knowledge and information.
>
> A SIG is an informal group of individuals drawn together by a common interest in a field of practice or research. It interacts on a voluntarily basis with a common passion. It gives its members the opportunity to exchange ideas, keep themselves informed, participate in current developments in their fields or jointly solve discrete problems.
>
> Each SIG organises itself around its subject with those activities that serve best its purpose - nothing is predefined. It is the common interest which defines the activities, membership, communication and structure. A SIG may be completely informal, but it may also give itself a code of practice or organisational structure. SIGs may talk in lively forums, exchange papers, run common meetings, host workshops, prepare publications, or even publish own newsletters. The life cycle is typically undefined, and can range from only some weeks to an open end. It is driven by the topic validity and the interests of the group. Meetings can take place either virtual (in the discussion forum on the KnowledgeBoard) or physical. (www.knowledgeboard.com)

The definition of SIG melds with my research design of non-participant observation in a natural and non-hierarchical setting that gives free reign to the discursive concepts of knowledge work. Online KnowledgeBoard debates are vigorous and open to any practitioners who choose to use them and/or various other knowledge practitioner interactive websites. KnowledgeBoard provides an online community of practice whose member participation is voluntary.

Topics of discussion in these SIGs are generated by members themselves in special interest groups and open forums, which are then taken up by other members if they are of interest. Participation in these discussions is open to anyone, and membership is free. Online groups provide a medium for exploring issues of concern and interest with other members of the knowledge work community anywhere in the world; an extended interval of time to allow for reflection and broad participation by interested parties; a space in which

arguments can be developed interactively; and an archival repository in which the entire documented interactions are stored.

One of the hot topics from the KnowledgeBoard archives is trust. One particularly vigorous trust thread[37] (series of online postings) began August 12, 2002 and discussion continued to December 12, 2005. Between those dates, the thread had more than 32,000 'hits' (people accessing the site) and 137 member comments added. Other discussions on trust were occurring simultaneously at other communities of knowledge practitioners around the same time.[38] An open invitation to join a specific debate on trust was inserted into the thread on September 4, 2003 and was issued by John Moore, who would be its moderator, three weeks prior to the forum occasion. The debate, which took place on September 26, 2003, became the selected site for the dissertation research. The text used for analysis is in the Appendix.

The invitation resulted from a White Paper on *The Value of Trust*[39] published by John Moore on KnowledgeBoard. The discussion thread on trust continued for more than three years. Thus, it could be argued that trust as a topic of knowledge practitioner discussion was significant, since it was sustained for a considerable time and indeed, for far longer than most other conversation threads that occur in Internet communities of practice.

John Moore, 04-Sep-03 @ 09:26AM

Join the Debate

We'll be holding a live, online debate on trust here at Knoweldgeboard (sic), with the title: **How can we move interpersonal trust to the top of the agenda for organisations?**[40]

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[37] http://www.knowledgeboard.com/item/262/2010/5/2008
[38] Other communities which hosted discussions on trust included Brint, ecademy, Association of Knowledge Workers (AOK) http://www.brint.com/wwwboard/messages/129311.html; http://www.brint.com/wwwboard/messages/129223.html; http://www.ecademy.com/node.php?id=2367&seen=1; http://www.kwork.org; http://search.atomz.com/search/?sp-q=trust&sp-a=000620dd-sp00000000
[39] http://www.knowledgeboard.com/item/262/2010/5/2008
[40] Although the title was used in the invitation to participate, it was not referred to at any other time

This will take place on Friday 26th September at 3pm (London) 4pm (Western Europe). I'll add more details here soon - but please make a note in your diaries.

The reason for selection of this particular piece of text as the research site was twofold. First, since the topic of trust was and is of particular interest to knowledge practitioners, it became relevant to explore it through discourse analysis in the thesis. Second, as discussed in Chapter 3, I am not seeking the truth concerning origins of the discourse on trust, but rather to place it within historical conditions of its emergence and development, which are, at best, local, partial and parochial (Donnelly, 1986). Thus, by obviating the need to reveal some concealed origin in its history, I concur with Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982: 96) that a researcher does not need to make truth claims or search for hermeneutic foundations of a knowledge practitioner trust discourse. The SIG forum that is the site of research for the dissertation is one point in a long history both before and after the discussion by many knowledge practitioners using the KnowledgeBoard site.[41]

What is revealed is a "history of the present" (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 29; Mills, 2003: 25) through the continuing discourse of knowledge practitioners. At the same time, I acknowledge that the forum selected as research site emerged from a situated context comprising many discussions about trust as it relates to knowledge praxis. Such discussions include chatroom postings, some of which are in response to articles written by other knowledge practitioners[42], while others have devolved from comments. Thus, in locating the field of research within the

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[41] See also: KnowledgeBoard Meta-Discipline debate for 2004: 1) what is KM? 2) what is trust? How do the 2 multiply each other? posted: January 31, 2004 (read by 1129) http://www.knowledgeboard.com/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=952 originally from OECD http://www.oecdobserver.org/news/fullstory.php/aid/1151; Authenticity by John Moore, Knowledge Board, posted November 11, 2002 (read by 4438, commented on by 27) http://www.accountingweb.co.uk/cgibin/item.cgi?id=95553&d=448&h=0&f=0&dateformat=%25o%20%25B%20%25Y; 432 articles, discussions, forums on KnowledgeBoard http://www.knowledgeboard.com/cgi-bin/search.cgi?qt=trust

[42] See, for example http://www.knowledgeboard.com/item/262, which had more than 30,000 readership hits since publication on November 1, 2002; and Miguel Cornejo's article on January 6, 2004 http://www.knowledgeboard.com/item/457 which was read more than 10,990 times and had 82 comments posted

broader frame of knowledge practitioner discourses, I argue that I am looking at a 'horizontal' dimension of events, which are non-teleological; occur contingently and in local contexts (Goldstein, 1994: 14).

Those who participated in the selected forum on trust come from a broad sphere of knowledge practitioners – academic practitioners, academic consultants, organisational practitioners and business consultants. They hail from various organisational contexts drawn from seven European countries, plus the USA. Eleven knowledge practitioners participated in the selected forum. Subsequently, the forum archive states that more than 6,854 individuals read the forum (to October, 2006) with 34 member comments continuing to February 2005.

While the SIG headings represent a culmination of discursive 'events' emerging from participant perceptions about the social and political fields of knowledge work (Wodak, 2000), they are by no means static. The SIGs retain fluidity in the continued regeneration of discursive themes beneath these headings-as-markers, while new SIG headings are created to categorise emerging discursive events, and others are archived when they are no longer active, something that was evident as I went through the process of editing and checking the thesis.

6.4 ETHICS CONSIDERATIONS

Eysenbach and Till (2001) argue that the researcher needs to determine whether the Internet postings are public or private to determine if informed consent is necessary. They suggest that researchers "may conduct research in public places or use publicly available information about individuals (such as naturalistic observations in public places and analysis of public records or archival research) without obtaining consent" (Eysenbach and Till, 2001, citing American Sociological Association[43]).

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[43] American Sociological Association. American Sociological Association Code of Ethics. www.asanet.org/members/ecoderev.html

I argue that consent of individual participants is not necessary since this Internet site is public. The following support my reasons:

1. Eysenbach and Till (2001) state that in determining whether the space is public or private, certain understandings need to be ascertained. One measure is whether a subscription or registration is required. KnowledgeBoard (KB) may be considered to be public domain, since it is accessible by anyone who has Internet access. They need not join the KB CoP in any formal sense, either by subscribing or identifying themselves as having visited the site in any way.

2. A second determinant is the number of subscribers. Although they did not specify a cut-off point, Eysenbach and Till (2001) point out that a 10-member subscriber list may be considered private whereas a 100 or 1000-subscriber list would be public. In the KB situation, the site claims more than 5,000 members, and further, that more than 5,000 visits to the site have occurred. Thus, according to this argument, the site is public.

3. Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR, 2001: 9) argue that an exception to obtaining informed consent is for observation in public spaces and that contexts such as chatrooms are always open to anyone and are considered to be public. Participants can choose to "go private" if they do not wish to participate in public areas of a chatroom and may be considered to have implicitly given consent to observation (AoIR, 2001: 9).

4. Kozinets (2002) states that informed consent is implicit in the act of posting a message to a public area (Kozinets, 2002: 65).

On this basis, the requirement for informed consent is waived by participants since they are aware that the Internet site is publicly accessible (Eysenbach and Till, 2001, citing Tri-Council Policy Statement of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2000). Moreover, since participants are not in a traditionally-vulnerable group and are aware of the public nature of their interactions both during and after the event – since generated text would be archived – they are not at risk. The arguments described above were submitted to my university's ethics committee. I provide them here because, at the time, there were no directives to account for the type of Internet research that I have

conducted. In this way, my ethics application approach provides a contribution to discourse analysis as a research method appropriate to the Internet.

6.4.1 Level of risk for participants

Although the level of risk for participants is low, according to the usual University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), Human Research Ethics Committee Criteria, at the time of submitting my research for ethical consideration, the ethical guidelines did not specifically address research into archival texts on the Internet. I lay out some possible ethical problems to the research design identified in the UTS extract of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research involving Humans (Part 1 – Principles of Ethical Conduct)* and how they have been addressed by other researchers. This provides a contribution to other researchers in addressing a similar concern using an archived Internet text for discourse analysis.

There are three criteria that I addressed in my ethics application, which are relevant for the use of Internet text. They are justification and justice, respect for persons, and beneficence. They are detailed below.

6.4.1.1 Justification & justice

As a researcher, I claim there is integrity in my approach to analyse archival text of an historic discourse that occurred within a publicly-accessible forum several years ago. I assert that according to the nature of SIGs outlined on the KnowledgeBoard site, participants in the forum established full control over accessibility to their archived texts at the onset, and continue to maintain that control after the actual workshop took place.

Although there may be a question about how the participants in the SIG intended their archived discussion to be used, my view is that their discussion was in fact text written by the participants themselves, rather than spoken and recorded by others. Pincheviski (2003: 153) argues that one of the major ways in which online interaction is controllable is the ability to diminish exposure and vulnerability.

Participants to the online forum maintain that control by continuing to allow public access to the text in its original posted form several years later.

The cognitive process of thinking, then writing, before 'posting' their comments, provides participants with control over the content of their text, so that possible criticisms of comments 'taken out of context', does not apply. Since I am using thematic analysis to explore meaning, it is not in the interests of my research to take isolated quotes or text out of context, since the context of sense making of how knowledge practitioners use the discourse is the basis of my research question.

6.4.1.2 Respect for persons

Ten of the 11 knowledge practitioners participating in the 2003 SIG workshop divulged their real names. Even if I was to de-identify participants, any quotes used from the text would make it possible for others to gain direct access to the conversation and possibly the identities of the participants through an Internet search of the quotes. Further, since many of the participants also identify themselves as members of the KnowledgeBoard CoP, including photographs, email addresses, and perhaps places of employment, it would be possible for a potential wrongdoer to track down these individuals.

That said, there are clear mitigating circumstances. First, all of the above-mentioned risks exist even without my research. I do not envisage my research would unintentionally bring harm to participants, primarily due to the research design of thematic analysis, as well as potential limitations on dissemination of the research – through the publication of the PhD thesis and subsequent academic journal articles – which are far lower than presently exists through the site itself.

Eysenbach and Till (2001) state that Internet participants know that it is a public site and that they are seeking public visibility, evidenced by the use their real-world names. Kozinets (2002: 61) also argues that "online communities are contexts in which consumers often partake in discussions whose goals include attempts to inform and influence fellow consumers about products and brands".

One use of the SIG workshop is for self-promotion by consultants and academics, where discussion turns to books written by participants or consulting projects with which they wish to be associated. Therefore, divulgence of their real-world names is a calculated move for their own benefit. The single instance where the participant used a pseudonym tends to provide a counter-example to illustrate this point.

If any problematic situations had already arisen, it would be a simple matter for members of the SIG and indeed, KnowledgeBoard, to remove their identities from the site, or indeed, remove the archived material from public view. AoIR Working Committee suggests that provision of identity in a chatroom, whether pseudonym or real-world is an indicator of a created image for public performance in this context, one in which "actors participate willingly and with the understanding that they will be seen and observed" (AoIR, 2001:10).

Another possible problem is the way I intend to use the text. It may be that I, out of the more than 5,000 who had read this workshop archive since it took place, may use the text in a way not perceived or welcomed by the participants. Here, I would argue that the research design to analyse the text as a thematic discourse treats both text and authors of the text with respect. Although I cannot guarantee some unforeseen situation may eventuate in the future with my research, I consider the risk to be extremely low, especially since the archive has been available for several years without, I suspect, any negative incidences.

6.4.1.3 Beneficence

It is possible that the research may be considered to be deceptive, since my reading of the text could be conceived as covert observation or concealment. As I have already argued, I have argued that the archive is a public text. Further, use of public Internet texts could be viewed in a similar light to other public texts, such as when a researcher conducts a literature review during any research project, that researcher is not required to contact the author or authors to gain permission to critically analyse their texts.

A further potential issue arising from the Internet as a field of research is that if the communication is expected to be ephemeral but is recorded instead, then participants' consent should be obtained (AoIR, 2001: 9). Again, this is not the case here. In the situation of KnowledgeBoard and the particular SIG discussion, participants have the option, and are made aware that they have the option, to maintain or discard the discussion text at some later stage. They are aware that this particular type of forum will be archived, based on their reading of the site. They also can see on the KnowledgeBoard site that there are references to the archive, referring to the SIG on Trust as a "hot topic" and that it has been accessed more than 5,000 times. Therefore, I argue that the expectation by participants is that this particular discussion will be maintained as an archive rather than being ephemeral.

6.4.2   Ethics approval sought & obtained

Despite the strength of the above arguments, there are conventions, particularly where the identities of participants are known, recommending that participants are accorded appropriate courtesy both in contact and use of their comments. Therefore, for the sake of these conventions I decided to go through the process of gaining participant consent.

In the first instance, I contacted the site developer and "owner" of KnowledgeBoard and gained agreement in principle to use the SIG trust workshop for academic analysis. This was followed by overtures to the site administrators. They observed that they consider the site to be public domain and should be treated with the same academic protocols as any other referenced source. I then contacted the convenor of the group to request his agreement, and when he suggested I contact all participants for their agreement, I did so. Most participants used their own names and organisational affiliations on the site and during discussions. Use of their identities was not a concern; in fact, many appreciated my contact with them as a courtesy rather than as a necessity to gain consent. All participants identified in the text have given consent to use the archived text as it

stands in its present form. One unidentified participant could not be contacted as he or she used a *nom de plume*, so has already safeguarded his or her identity.

Having addressed possible problems in selecting the site and undertaking a rigorous approach to ethics, I now turn to methodological limitations.

6.5   METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

One possible limitation to a methodology that uses online communities of practice may include the size of the online discussion community. Since the phenomena of interest are the interactions among practitioners as they describe knowledge praxis rather than a quantitative analysis, this is not a concern.

Two other limitations of research into online discussion communities are apparent. The first is that participants must be able to communicate in English (that being my own native language) and the second is that participants have access to and are able to use the Internet. The first of these limitations is less problematic than initially thought, since the majority of knowledge practitioner sites do include a variety of participants from around the world and for whom English is clearly not their primary language. However, based on the frequency and depth of interactions among these participants, even non-native English speakers are not disadvantaged in their communications with other knowledge practitioners.

The second limitation of access and usage of the Internet is also not a significant problem. Since the dominant discursive conception of knowledge work enjoinders a technological linkage between knowledge work and knowledge management, for the purposes of the research, knowledge practitioners tend to be users of computers and communications technologies.

The final issue relating to a methods chapter is selection of the mode of data analysis. This is discussed in the section below.

6.6 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In determining how data should be analysed, Silverman (1993) discusses a number of sensitivities that the researcher needs to take account of in performing analysis. One that is especially relevant to the thesis is that of 'contextual sensitivity', which he broadly defines as the recognition that social institutions may be understood differently in different contexts and that participants in that social institution create their own contexts (Silverman, 1993: 8). As has been discussed in Chapter 3, such contexts are produced discursively. Contextual sensitivity is germane to analysis of the empirical data in that it requires the researcher to investigate the contexts in which participation occurs.

Discursive analysis is the study of texts, statements and practices that take place within a context; a social situation or communication (van Dijk, 1997a). It is a way of exploring processes of organising, whereby meanings are supported or contested through production of texts (Hardy *et al*, 2000: 1232). According to Silverman (1993: 120-121), discourse analysis (DA) "describes a heterogeneous range of social science research based on the analysis of recorded talk". However, discourse analysis differs from conversation analysis (CA) in that it is concerned with a broader range of activities than conversation alone. As has been argued, discourse not only describes a reality but also may perform an action. Often the actions are covert and may relate to power relationships, such as establishing and negotiating authority and legitimacy; a point that has been addressed above.

The contexts of difference and commonality are constructed discursively by participants as they produce meaning appropriate to their social institution. In this case, the social institution is knowledge work and the meanings are constructed through particular representations and sustained by specific discursive practices. It is the process of legitimation of the knowledge work discourse that is specific research question of the thesis. As discussed in Chapter 3, a synthesis of Foucault's (1972) methods of archaeology and genealogy provide a suitable means through which to analyse how knowledge practitioners use knowledge work discourses. Such a synthesis enables the researcher to address both 'big

picture' questions explored by an archaeological method as a 'snapshot' in time, while also addressing detailed processes through a genealogical analysis. As Kendall and Wickham (1999: 30-31) observe, archaeology provides slices of discourse for examination, and genealogy attends to the processual aspects of the web of discourse in terms of its ongoing character.

By using genealogical analysis, the way in which notions about 'naturalness' and 'normalcy' are inserted into the logic of institutional authorities as a power effect become visible, instead of being the result of a "specific historical conjuncture" (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 140). Through analysis of such insertion I provide a different insight into organisational and management theory that encourages critical thinking about the normalising effects of discourse, and point to the possibilities that can emerge from alternative perspectives.

I argue that the method of analysis best suited to the thesis' empirical data is genealogical discourse analysis. Through this method, practitioner discourse can be contextualised within broader knowledge work discourses and it can be ascertained how practitioners employ the themes and patterns of a dominant discourse through their statements about knowledge praxis.

The implications for organisation theory are to provide a way of understanding how a knowledge structure can develop that favours a particular discourse and enables it to gain primacy, not through its truth claims but through power effects arising from contingent and arbitrary conditions. Through analysis of discursive formation and development of this knowledge structure, a range of other possibilities and other meaning options can be made visible. Such understanding can pave the way for productive challenges to organising traditions about knowledge, innovation, learning, and managing. Thus, I argue that genealogy as a method is best suited for the thesis on how discourse normalises power relations. Genealogical analysis helps to challenge assumptions about the cohesiveness of knowledge work discourse that, through longevity, consistency of statements, and claims of tradition and history, speaks authoritatively to contemporary praxis and proscribes conditions under which practitioners may practice.

6.7 CONCLUSION

The purpose of the methods chapter is to explain the process of designing the research, selecting the site, addressing ethics considerations, and justifying the methods used for analysis of the data. The methods speak directly to my research question, which seeks to understand how those constituted by knowledge work discourse – knowledge practitioners – use discourse in their discussions about social processes, experiences and performance of knowledge work.

My research is not traditional ethnographic research, even for qualitative work. Praxis cannot be directly observed within an organisation, since it is most likely that such interactions will concern projects rather than praxis. Moreover, organisational hierarchy comes into play, effecting the ways praxis is spoken about. And while exploration of power relations is desirable, it needs to come through the mode of analysis rather than any organisational power relativity. This is why a particular Internet community of practice has been selected and justified as the research site.

A process of normalising power effects, without eliminating them (if such a thing is ever possible) is an important aspect to the research. Thus, an Internet community of knowledge practitioners as research site assists in providing an environment that can be considered to be 'power neutral'. This does not mean that power relations among participants does not occur; rather, it means that power relations do not occur as a result of the research site selected, but instead becomes available through the process of interaction itself among research participants.

The KnowledgeBoard site selected for the research is an historic one, having taken place in 2003 and subsequently archived. The site fits well within an historic context, admittedly very recent, but within a particular set of historical events that may have changed or no longer exist. Moreover, the particular

perspective through which the text occurred was one relating to trust, an issue of particular importance at the time – and still is. Through the lens of trust and using genealogy as discourse analysis, I can explicate how knowledge praxis is understood and practiced by those who constitute and are constituted by knowledge work discourse.

Ethical issues have been explained in depth. This is because of the nature of the research using an Internet text, a situation that had not previously occurred for my university's ethics committee. I argued that the Internet is a public space containing public texts (and also private texts), and although the actual research site is a community of practice, it, too, is accessible by anyone with an Internet-connected computer. Ultimately, I decided to seek permission and, as has been described, this entailed multiple levels of permission from owner of the site, administrators of the site, leader of the discussion, and finally, participants.

The next chapter works through the process of discursively analysing the selected KnowledgeBoard forum discussion using genealogy as method.

CHAPTER 7

KNOWLEDGE WORK IN PRACTICE

Knowledge work becomes more valuable, not only by legitimising organisational ownership but by applying technological means to extract, organise, contain and control access to it (Neef *et al*, 1998; Davenport *et al*, 1998; Teece, 1998; Small and Dickie, 2000).

Knowledge and management are contradictory concepts since tacit knowledge cannot be managed (Scarbrough, 1999; Schultze and Stabell, 2004; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2001; Fuller, 2002).

John Moore: Ultimately, trust and authenticity can never truly belong to organisations, but to the people inside them …
Ton Ziljstra: Indeed, it's [at] the personal level that authenticity and trust is located – human voice …
Chris Macrae: yes extraction by an organisation is where KM goes wrong if it goes down that road *imo* [in my opinion]

Participants in online forum on Trust & Knowledge Management, KnowledgeBoard, 2003

The above three texts reflect three discourses of knowledge work. The first epitomises the dominant managerial discourse of knowledge work and the second illustrates an alternative discourse. The dominant and the alternative discourses have been discussed in depth in Chapter 2. Suffice to say that they represent diverse and sometimes opposing interests within a power relationship that pits organisational management interests against those of knowledge workers, with each of these groups of interests seeking to establish a *prima facie* case for discursive dominance and closure.

The third text comes from those who are constituted by and implicated in the knowledge work discourse. They are knowledge workers or knowledge practitioners. However, the term knowledge work is problematic in that it does not represent a discrete occupation or role and tends to be amorphous (Scarbrough, 1999). An individual who performs knowledge work manipulates symbols (Reich, 1991) and does mental rather than physical work (Drucker, 1959). Individuals who perform knowledge work generally do not refer to

themselves as knowledge workers but rather in terms of their profession, occupation or qualifications. Knowledge worker or knowledge practitioner is an organising category used by others to collect and describe them.

7.1   INTRODUCTION

The chapter examines how knowledge practitioners are engaged in knowledge work discourses, using as a research site an archived text from an online forum that took place within a knowledge practitioner Internet website, known as KnowledgeBoard. The method of selection of the particular website and the specific forum has been described in detail in the preceding chapter. The forum is not an isolated event but emerges from a network of other texts that occurred before, after and simultaneously with the selected text. These other texts will be referenced where necessary.

Reading the text that begins the chapter, we can see that there are other elements associated with knowledge praxis that appear both to be coherent with but also contradictory to dominant managerial discourses of organisational ownership, economics, technology, and intellectual property rights, as well as alternative knowledge discourses of power relations, identity and processes of creativity as has been discussed in Chapter 2. The purpose of the present chapter is to explore the contradictions and discursive gaps between the dominant managerial and the alternative discourses as experienced by knowledge practitioners in their praxis.

During the online forum episode, members of a peer community of knowledge work practitioners discussed broad issues of knowledge praxis rather than the specifics of particular projects or types of knowledge work. By discursively analysing themes associated with practices of knowledge work that are revealed in the forum, the chapter explains how practitioners apply knowledge work discourse in practice. Themes and patterns emerge through the discourses of knowledge practitioners that extend beyond specific subject tags of individual debates and topics and reveal practitioner attitudes to the praxis of knowledge work itself.

As described in Chapter 2, there is no clearly delineated knowledge work discourse. Multiple discourses make statements about knowledge work in different ways, moving across various fields of knowledge, such as economics, law, technology, learning, accounting, and so on, depending on the particular interests of those engaging with knowledge work discourse. As earlier chapters show, the knowledge work discourse is unstable and its boundaries remain open to new interpretations. Some interpretations directly conflict with others, giving rise to alternative discourses that challenge any possible notions of permanently fixing discursive meanings.

Where there is a perceived cacophony of meanings, a dominant discourse often emerges to channel the array of interpretations. Dominant discourses are not *The* Truth but *a* truth, formed within particular contexts, supported by authorities of delimitation, and disseminated through alignment with other discourses in other fields of knowledge (see, Nietzsche, 1968; Foucault, 1972; 1977; 1980; Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982; Rabinow, 1984; Kendall and Wickham, 1999, Clegg *et al*, 2004).

Using the aforementioned knowledge work discourses – both dominant and alternative – as background, the present chapter explores the nature of knowledge work through practitioners' own experiences to compare these discourses. Here, I seek to explain the following: the ways in which practitioners understand knowledge work in practice and articulate it; and whether practitioner discourses are reflective of discourses espoused by organisational management – as dominant discourses – or indeed, alternative discourses, or a combination of the two. A further objective is to reveal the extent to which practitioners are developing parallel and alternative discourses that may challenge and subvert legitimated versions. In so doing, the chapter examines how knowledge work discourse is used by practitioners to communicate with each other as a peer group, how they understand each other and how they accept or contest subject positions constructed by discourse that they conventionally use.

The chapter also examines whether knowledge practitioners, in their discursive use, accept legitimised prescriptions attributed to knowledge work practices by

management and adopt subject positions accordingly; or whether they perceive contradictions in managerial discourses based on their own experiences. In this way, the chapter examines whether there are discursive spaces between dominant meanings of knowledge work rhetoric and its praxis, that is, whether there are contradictions and discursive spaces between what is practitioner 'street level' sense-making and that which 'should' be made according to formal, large-scale managerial scripts (Browning, 2000).

7.1.1 Contributions

The chapter contributes to the literature by showing how power relations mediate the discourse on knowledge work and by challenging the taken-for-granted notion that knowledge work is subjected to rational progress rather than arbitrary interests of power elites. Further, through analysis of discursive formations of knowledge work, the chapter aims to contribute to a wider spectrum of discourse analysis across a range of disciplines and areas of practice that address knowledge work, its machinations and its effects. It aims to show how discourses arise and to show there is nothing within a discourse that necessarily gives it dominance but rather it achieves such dominance inasmuch as it is mediated by power relations.

Silverman (1997) reminds us, there is a "need to broaden our conception of qualitative research beyond issues of subjective 'meaning' and towards issues of language, representation and social organization" (Silverman, 1997: 5). Thus, three key contributions of the chapter are: first, it contributes methodologically in the way it explores how knowledge work is spoken about by practitioners in their generalised discourses about knowledge; second, it provides a way to understand how practitioners employ the objects and statements of dominant or alternative discourses and how facets of knowledge praxis are represented to other knowledge practitioners while others are passed over or ignored; and, third, it explains how social organisation in a non-hierarchical environment is established and challenged in the ways that practitioners communicate with each other and use discourse to legitimise their positions of authority. In these ways, the chapter

provides unique and rich insights into how knowledge work discourses normalise power relations.

7.1.2 Objectives

Practitioners use generalised discourses to construct everyday reality (Miller and Glassner 1997). These generalised discourses provide a common ground with which practitioners can construct their social reality, which, at the same time, also assist them to make sense of realities that other practitioners construct. The first objective is to identify generalised discourses that knowledge practitioners use in their communications with each other, so that "cultural objects as ragbags of knowledge, practices and programs" (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 139) can be uncovered. Specifically, the chapter examines how discourses of knowledge work practice stand and continue to be discussed contemporaneously from a practitioner perspective.

The second objective is to identify discursive objects of knowledge practitioner discourse and statements that describe them in relation to dominant managerial and alternative knowledge work discourses. Specifically, I examine the extent to which knowledge work practitioners reproduce dominant organisational management discourses, or whether practitioners perceive contradictions in managerial discourses and are developing parallel and alternative discourses; discourses that may challenge and subvert legitimated versions. In examining whether there are discursive spaces between symbolic meanings of knowledge work rhetoric and its praxis, the chapter seeks to understand how every-day knowledge work practices are experienced and articulated. It is done by discursively analysing text from the selected KnowledgeBoard forum and comparing it with dominant and alternative patterns and networks of discourse, discussed in Chapter 2.

The key to examining social reality constructed through discourse is to explore ways in which participants establish and contest relations of power. This is the third objective of the chapter. Such power relations entail organising statements

in particular ways that make them meaningful, so that analysing and interpreting relations of power provides an effective framework through which to explore processes of legitimising knowledge work as discourse. In practical terms, the chapter applies genealogy (detailed in Chapter 3) as a methodological framework for analysing practitioner discourse to uncover ways in which practitioners use power relations to legitimising their own discourses.

The final section of the chapter draws these elements together for discussion and conclusion about knowledge work in practice. The section does so by first establishing common ground through which knowledge practitioners communicate and participate, at least temporarily, in the processes of naming, framing, controlling and normalising discursive practises that constitute organisational and managerial power effects. Further, having revealed the patterns of managerial and institutional talk that is the dominant discourse within patterns of ordinary conversation, we can understand the meanings under construction in talk among practitioners. Finally, there is resolution – at least within a temporary fixedness that is knowledge work discourse – to the problem of determining whether there is a discrepancy between the dominant official discourse of knowledge work, as purveyed in an organisational sense, and the discursive practices of individuals who are implicated in the practices of knowledge work as delineated by the practitioners.

7.1.3   The KnowledgeBoard forum text

The Appendix provides the KnowledgeBoard forum text *toto*, so that the reader can see where sections analysed fit contextually with other parts of the text and visualise the flow of text for clarity and understanding. Seeing how text flows from one object and its associated statements to others also shows discursive switching points as networks of thought are transformed and develop through alignment with other discourses. As stated in Chapter 3, providing text in context

> … [H]elps us to explore the networks of what is said, and what can be
> seen in a set of social arrangements: in the conduct of an archaeology,
> one finds out something about the visible in "opening up" statements
> and something about the statement in "opening up visibilities"
> (Kendall and Wickam, 1999: 25)

Analysis of social arrangement of the text in the Appendix shows the reader how discursive statements open up different discursive visibilities, while, at the same time, closes down others by switching alignment of discursive objects between and among other discourses. Where text is cited or quoted in the chapter, paragraph numbering is used to enable the reader to locate the text within its broader forum context located in the Appendix.

Prefacing the text in the Appendix is a list of the KnowledgeBoard categories which provide the archived forum, details about the transcript, the participants (each of whom gave written permission to use the text, bar one who used a *nom de plume*) and the number of times the transcript was read by visitors to the KnowledgeBoard website at the time of access. As well, information concerning participants, their roles, employment, and country of origin are provided – all with the approval of participants.

An important point to note is the software used by participants of the KnowledgeBoard forum that allows them to communicate within the forum sometimes appears to be disjointed. On occasion, a participant may be typing his or her views at the same time as another, so that several participants may appear to be interrupting others but in fact, it is the individual who hits the return key of his or her computer keyboard before others who appears first in the order of text. We need to acknowledge that such disjointedness can and does have an effect on the flow of conversation, but since this is not conversation analysis but Foucauldian genealogy, it is immaterial to the way primary analysis is conducted. The section below begins analysis of the knowledge practitioner discourse by identifying the discursive objects and statements about objects within the text from the KnowledgeBoard forum.

7.1.4   Ontology of trust & connection with knowledge work

The discourses of the KnowledgeBoard forum practitioners are revealed through their 'ontology' of trust, given the broad topic of the forum on *Trust and Knowledge Management*. Even though trust is the lens through which practitioners discuss knowledge praxis, it could just as easily occur through a different sensibility, such as fear, satisfaction, loyalty or shame. That the forum concerns trust is telling in itself as analysis in the chapter reveals.

Trust does not deliver methodological causality but rather, it establishes the forum within a contingent historical context and describes conditions of emergence of discourse (Foucault, 1972; Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982; Donnelly, 1986; Kendall and Wickham, 1999). Since, the forum also engages with mistrust and distrust (Lewicki *et al*, 1998), it also tells us something about the overarching mood of the Knowledgeboard forum participants as they discuss knowledge praxis. While specific historical contexts are revealed in the text itself and through explanatory footnotes, identifying circumstances that give rise to aspects of and influences on the discussion, this section provides a more generalised context from which the KnowledgeBoard forum emerged.

The KnowledgeBoard forum did not arise in isolation but emerged from many other associated discussions, debates and texts that occurred prior to and concurrent with it. A key text that influenced the emergence of the KnowledgeBoard forum under analysis was written by the convenor John Moore a year prior to the particular forum taking place. The paper, *The Value of Trust*[44] expressed Moore's views concerning a crisis of trust that he observed being experienced in business and politics world wide. In the paper, Moore suggested that trust was central to the creative process and although business managers generally talked about trust, they generated a culture of distrust both internally and with customers. Moore's article was timely and relevant for the knowledge practitioner field. He invited readers to engage in further discussion; 137 KnowledgeBoard members did so and maintained a discussion thread for more

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[44] http://www.knowledgeboard.com/item/262/2010/5/2008

that three years. In view of the short lifespan of the majority of chatroom topics, three years of continued discussion around the topic of trust and knowledge attests to its importance for knowledge practitioners. Moore's paper was influential, having been read almost 35,000 times since its posting, and not only among KnowledgeBoard members, since the article was read by almost seven times the number of individuals than there are members of KnowledgeBoard. During the discussion thread on trust, Moore suggested that the particular online forum used here as thesis data would take place as a one-hour live debate.

While Moore's paper was influential for the particular KnowledgeBoard forum used in the thesis, it is by no means an isolated and unique document. It forms part of a trajectory of scholarly works connecting trust with knowledge work and knowledge management (see for example, Mayer *et al*, 1995; Zand, 1997; Rastogi, 2000; Adler, 2001; Child, 2001; Reed, 2001; Sveiby and Simons, 2002; Huotari and Ivonen, 2003; Abrams *et al*, 2003; Panteli and Sockalingam, 2005; Möller and Svahn; 2006; Roberts, 2006) as well as numerous practitioner websites (see for example, http://www.knowledgeboard.com/item/260; http://www.gurteen.com/gurteen/gurteen.nsf/id/trust; http://www.entovation.com/whatsnew/valuing-trust.htm; http://www.kwork.org/search.html)[45]. These documents will not be discussed here but suffice to say there is a considerable volume and scope of texts covering theories, empirical research and practitioner perspectives to accept that the connection between trust and knowledge work is well established. The general thrust of these documents is that trust is a necessary prerequisite for knowledge sharing and that without it, the many objects of organisational discourses, such as organisational knowledge, intellectual property, knowledge economy, organisational learning, learning organisation and so on, cannot occur.

[45] These websites were last accessed November 4, 2007

7.2   METHODS

Three modes of analysis are used to confirm and verify the interpretation, thereby providing methodological rigour. Together they provide several complementary means of analysing data, including: frequency count of discursive objects used in the KnowledgeBoard forum text; identification of statements that are made about objects; description of relationships between and among objects themselves and dominant and alternative knowledge discourses; delineation of how these knowledge discourses are presented and represented; and explanation of how power relationships are organised among participants in the forum. Tools to conduct analysis include Leximancer content analysis software and NVivo qualitative analysis software, used in conjunction with a manual and interpretive genealogical discourse analysis.

First, using Leximancer data mining software (V 2.2), a content analysis shows key objects in the text according to frequency of mention. The software produces a conceptual map that displays the main concepts of the text and their contextual relationships. The map identifies key objects or concepts used in KnowledgeBoard by frequency of use, their co-occurrence in the text, centrality of the concept within the text, and associated themes based on the frequency of similar contexts in the text (Smith, 2000).

Second, a basic data analysis of the KnowledgeBoard text is performed, using NVivo qualitative analysis software from QSR International. Through this analysis, key terms (discursive objects) and themes in the data are categorised into nodes. The software is then used to find associations of statements and themes that are made about discursive objects. An NVivo qualitative analysis provides a listing of individual 'free nodes' – those that do not "assume relationships with other concepts" (Bazeley and Richards, 2000: 25) – and 'tree structures' – nodes in a hierarchical system of organisation by conceptual groups and subgroups (Bazeley and Richards, 2000: 70-71). The system of categorisation, in conjunction with developing a journal of ideas and modelling these ideas, creates networks and patterns of linked concepts. In this way, a research strategy of

defining objects and identifying statements about them provides us with the framework for analysis of the KnowledgeBoard practitioner text as discourse. NVivo is used to confirm and verify objects and themes identified through Leximancer content analysis (Silverman, 1993: 59).

Using objects identified through the software operations, the next step is to apply genealogical method to analyse and interpret elements in the practitioner text to determine how they present and re-present specific discursive meanings and identify relationships of power. The method applies the new and extended 'genealogy in action' framework developed in Chapter 3, based on Kendall and Wickam's (1999) 'archaeology in action', to examine statements that describe objects situated in the selected text. The method uncovers not only conceptions about the objects but also how they are described, defined and conceptualised by statements. In so doing, a genealogical discourse analysis reveals and examines underlying structures of how those objects and statements align and interconnect with other discourses, and how statements produce subject positions, providing a rich interpretation of how knowledge praxis is articulated by knowledge practitioners.

A genealogical discourse analysis of the KnowledgeBoard forum text is compared with the dominant and alternative ontological patterns and networks of knowledge work discourses that have been laid out in Chapter 2. The method enables the practitioner discourse to be contextualised within broader knowledge work theories and discourses, so that it becomes meaningful within these conceptions. Thus, the purpose of the method is to determine gaps between knowledge praxis – through the selected text – and dominant managerial and alternative knowledge discourses. In so doing, this mode compares interpretations of the selected text with the *gestalt* that has been developed and understood from Chapter 2.

7.2.1   Identifying discursive objects

Identification of objects is the first task conducted prior to a genealogical discourse analysis. The step references objects that are spoken about by knowledge practitioners and provides "an accepted method of textual investigation" (Silverman, 1993: 59) from which more detailed discourse analysis can emerge. One way of conducting this is through a content analysis that provides both reliability and validity through "precise counts of word use" (Silverman, 1993: 59). Silverman argues that, as a quantitative method, on its own a simple word count of content analysis may lead to trite conclusions. However, for our purposes, content analysis is useful to identify key objects of discourse as a preliminary step to conducting a richer discourse analysis.

Table 7.1 shows content analysis using Leximancer software to identify key discursive objects of the KnowledgeBoard forum. Leximancer software enables a frequency count of objects in the KnowledgeBoard forum text and shows their relationship to each other through proximity of adjacent words and phrases. Although the frequency count is of value to my purposes, the relationship aspect of Leximancer is of limited use since the KnowledgeBoard forum software tends to break up the use of proximity to determine relationships. Therefore, likelihood of error is high, thus this capability of Leximancer was not used.

As well, some cleaning up of the frequency count has been done to eliminate or combine particular words. For example, Leximancer identifies the names of the speakers in its frequency count – this is not useful for our purposes. Combining words with similar meaning or etymology is useful, such as knowledge and intellect, or human and personal, or company and firm, or organisation/ organization with organi(s/z)ations and organi(s/z)ational. As well, terms that may be known also in their abbreviated form have been combined, such as knowledge management and KM. In the analysis, the nouns information/ communication connect to verbs to inform/communicate, and so have been excluded from the count of information in the phrase information management or KM. Apart from this one case, contexts of word usage are not identified at this

stage, so the word network/ing relates to both computer systems networking and the networking or interactions of people. The fact that such a detailed explanation of inclusion and exclusion in using Leximancer is necessary tends to reveal the software's shortcomings in providing context. Such shortcomings are addressed by using the tree structure and nodal capabilities of NVivo discussed in the next section.

What is notable about a content analysis of the KnowledgeBoard forum is that significant objects in the dominant discourse are used only slightly or not at all. Objects relating to humanistic concepts, such as feelings and emotions, appear more frequently than might be expected with a community of professional practitioners, many of whom do not know each other or are in different fields of knowledge. In other words, many of the participants are strangers to each other. While words (and their derivatives) such as organisation, business and company/firm appear frequently, this is to be expected in a professional community of practitioners. What would be less expected is the frequent appearance of words such as human, personal, people and feelings/emotions; terms which are more likely to appear in alternative knowledge work discourses, rather than those espoused generally by organisational management. The contexts are discussed further in the chapter.

Also intriguing to see is what objects do not appear in the KnowledgeBoard forum at all when a content analysis of objects used in dominant discourses is conducted. Terms such as measurement, management and intellectual capital appear but standardisation, benchmarking and intellectual property do not; neither do outcomes, objectives, programs, productivity, control, capabilities, routines or efficiency. Understanding contexts in which such objects are used and their relationships with each other become more important in clarifying meaning concerning how knowledge practitioners use knowledge discourses.

TABLE 7.1
**Content analysis of objects from dominant knowledge work
discourse in KnowledgeBoard forum using Leximancer**

Word	Frequency
Organi(s/z)ation/s/al	17
People	16
Business	16
Knowledge/intellect (but not KM)	11
Company/firm	8
Manage/ment	7
Value/valuable	7
Measurement	5
Intellectual capital	5
Knowledge management	4
System/isation	3
Marketing	3
Knowledge (but not knowledge management)	2
Success	2
Access	2
Transaction	2
Perform/ance	2
Economy/economic/s	1
Invest/ment	1
Process	1
Project/program	1
Authority	1
Progress	1
Product/produce	1
Global/isation	0
Standard/isation/benchmark	0
Organisation-learning-organisation	0
Knowledge work	0
Technology	0
Intellectual property	0
Application	0
Productive/productivity	0
Responsible/ity	0
Outcomes	0
Objectives	0
Client	0
Program/s	0
Secure/security	0
Control	0
Market/s	0
Legitimate/legitimacy	0
Data	0
Commerce/commercial	0
Capability/capabilities	0
Routines	0
Efficiency	0
Tacit/explicit	0

Now, a second step towards conducting a deep discourse analysis is addressed, which looks at types of statements that are made about objects and their relationships to each other.

7.2.2   Context analysis: Discursive statements

NVivo qualitative analysis software is used to identify objects as 'nodes' or categories within a 'tree' structure of interlinking statements. NVivo software shows where a node appears in the text and how it is linked to various statements through a tree structure (Table 7.2).

NVivo allows a researcher to establish nodal relationships in two ways. At one level, a researcher can perform coding of particular objects; at another level, a researcher can establish a *pro forma* node that can, depending on the context, represent an object that is unstated. As an example of the *pro forma* node, the object economy or economics is used only once, but is inferred in several different contexts. It is used directly in paragraph 87 by Ton, who says: "the Fins are also ahead in the knowledge economy in the EU", which follows a comment by Chris (paragraph 82) "in all the world there is one government I trust – Finland they trust audited themselves". Here, Chris' is acknowledging trust in a globalised context "in all the world", although globalisation as a specific discursive object is not used directly. Other contexts that relate to the object economy or economics are inferred in contexts concerning intellectual capital (six times) and social capital (13 times).

For example, Alex says (paragraph 91), "Well Skandia's intellectual capital monitor does look a bit quaint to the hard nosed. But the key question is whether they actually do anything differently as a result of it. I think they are about to start giving team bonuses to business units that perform well ..." To which Tobias responds: "But trust depends on the added value that someone has to offer, so trust and intellectual capital can be linked" (paragraph 93). Clearly, this section of text relates to economic conceptions of intellectual capital within an organisational context by discussing team performance bonuses; yet, a relationship between

intellectual capital, economics and organisation is not delineated, rather it is inferred.

TABLE 7.2

Count of key objects in KnowledgeBoard Forum using NVIVO

Word	Frequency
Trust	82
Organi(s/z)ation/s/al	17
Authentic/ity	17
People	16
Business	16
Knowledge/intellect	11
Company/firm	8
Human	7
Feeling/emotion	7
Network/ing	6
Personal	5
Reciprocity	5
Measurement	5
Intellectual capital	5
Distrust	5
Social capital	4
Knowledge management	4
Inform/ation/communicate/ion	4
Passion	2

I wish to hark back to the coding of objects in NVivo's tree structure with which to understand nodal relationships; here, objects or nodes are referenced directly in the text (Table 7.2). For example, the object authenticity is used twice by John Moore in paragraph 16, once in relation to an emerging interest by organisations in trust and authenticity, and then by individuals in relation to a type of communication. A further reference to authenticity in a different context comes from Alex (paragraph 18), who speaks of a colleague who has written a book about the concept of authenticity, relating to product brands competing against fake brands. Authenticity is spoken about by other forum participants in various ways. These ways represent different branches of an NVivo tree structure, developed by interlinking various statements about node authenticity. There are

17 references to authenticity in the text, each of which may be contextualised differently.

Explanations about how NVivo is used for analysis show how some of the shortcomings in understanding relationships evident in Leximancer (Table 7.1) can be overcome. Yet neither NVivo nor Leximancer can provide sufficient interpretation of the text alone or together to aid in understanding how knowledge practitioners use the discourse. However, they can effectively support a genealogical discourse analysis by verifying objects of discourse and relationships between statements about objects both directly and through inference.

7.2.3   Genealogical discourse analysis

With the objects of the knowledge practitioner discourse now identified, I now begin the main task of conducting a discourse analysis of the objects and statements about them. Using the newly-extended genealogy in action, developed from Kendall's and Wickham's (1999) archaeology in action, which is based on Foucault's genealogical method of analysis as described in Chapter 3, I will begin to unpack contents, contexts and contingent processes of development of knowledge work discourse using as my data the selected KnowledgeBoard forum.

As discussed in the earlier chapter, genealogical method enables a broad range of possible discursive interpretations to be revealed. Such analysis can identify and explain power effects of taken-for-granted interpretations that dominate and have achieved a status of truth (Foucault, 1972; 1980; 1988; Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982; Davidson, 1986; Kendall and Wickham, 1999; Donnelly, 1986; Goldstein, 1994; Mills, 2003). Genealogy enables us to deal specifically with how certain interpretations come to dominate discourse through the workings of power (Kendall and Wickham, 1999: 29).

As has been shown in Chapter 3, the use of genealogy as a method of analysis challenges the naturalness and normalness of our perceptions about how we see and understand things, demonstrating that, under other circumstances, our

perceptions may have been quite different (Foucault, 1972; 1980; 1988). In so doing, Foucault challenges us to contemplate the status of truth and tradition as a fixed way of understanding, to think critically about accepting the *status quo*, since it only stands in relation to arbitrary circumstances. Moreover, acceptance of this *status quo* of truthfulness becomes a tacit act of arbitrary submission to contingency (Foucault, 1972; Clegg, 1997: 484). Indeed, as Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) might have observed, like Foucault, I am interested in how certain interpretations of knowledge work have come to dominate and are sustained through networks of power relations.

Genealogy in action is used as the method of analysis to ascertain how practitioners conceptualise knowledge work in practice as objects and statements of dominant discourses, alternative discourses (see Chapter 2) or something else. For ease of reading, I re-summarise the genealogical framework of analysis developed in Chapter 3.

1. Chart the relationship between what is said (discourse) and what is visible (environment). There is a dynamic and mutually-conditioning relationship between words (the sayable) and things (the visible). Since participant interests influence the position they take, both descriptions and participant interests may be revealed through analysis. Further, Kendall and Wickham (1999) exhort us to focus on the appearances of statements rather than attempting to implicate some deeper human meaning or rationalisation. Indeed, they suggest that discourse analysis should be used to describe, rather than to critique the rationality of certain positions or make moral judgments based on teleology (Wickham and Kendall, 2007). Kendall and Wickham (2007) also warn that the genealogical researcher should not position him/herself as judge of the rationality of discursive participants' views, since the researcher is likewise influenced by his/her own experiences and interests.

2. Analyse the relationship order between and among statements, whereby a genealogical investigation focuses on how a system of statements works and how statement elements are given a particular ordering. For example, the statements 'organisational knowledge' and 'knowledge organisation' rely on ordering of 'organisation' and 'knowledge' to derive specific and different

meanings. The difference between these meanings relies on the relationship order of the statements.

3. Establish a set of rules for the use of some statements and their repeatability, compared to others that may be equally feasible. Rules investigate how authorities from some fields of knowledge take up certain discursive statements at particular points in time and recycle them through new ontological lenses, while ignoring others that do not suit particular purposes.

4. Analyse the relationship positions between subjects in respect of discursive statements and the way in which statements produce subject positions, for example management and worker.

5. Describe historical and environmental contexts – the 'surfaces of emergence'. Here, the environmental context of the KnowledgeBoard forum is a community of knowledge practitioners as well as the particular forum of discussion, that of 'trust in knowledge management'. As discussed in the preceding chapter, the forum emerged from other online discussion streams that frequently featured elements of trust or distrust in institutions and authorities. Moreover, an obvious historical context included proclamations of success in the Iraqi war counter-pointed by the subsequent and increasing numbers of people killed, injured and displaced[46].

6. Describe 'institutions' that acquire authority and create boundaries of discourse within which discursive objects act or exist. For example, for the community of knowledge practitioners participating in the KnowledgeBoard forum on trust, organisation studies is the particular domain in which both management and knowledge work are subjects. However, the boundaries of discourse of the forum are not limited to organisation studies, but range far more widely.

7. Describe 'forms of specification', which provides naming (language) and framing (contextual) tools to make the phenomena accessible.

8. Uncover and describe tactics that are used to cloak discursive beginnings in assumptions of truth, that is, what is commonly and uncritically perceived as received intellectual dogma, and therefore sacred. In a recent work,

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[46] See for example, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/ middle_east/5052138.stm, http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2003/iraq/forces/casualties/ 2004.08.html, http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2003-08-28-august-casualties_x.htm

Wickham and Kendall (2007) advise the researcher to avoid attempting rationales of causality based on teleology, since it "forces description in a pre-ordained direction" (Wickham and Kendall, 2007: 2). This is sound advice; thus the goal of this step is to uncover and describe tactics, rather than fit them into a teleology.

9. Investigate ongoing processes of discursive normalisation that sustain assumptions of truth and their uncritical acceptance as histories of the present.

Figure 7.3 again shows the illustration of genealogy in action used in Chapter 3 (as Figure 3.1) that is the methodology used for discourse analysis.

With genealogical method as a toolkit for analysis used in the chapter, the researcher and reader can consider and question ways in which we perceive objects as givens and make easy assumptions (Foucault, 1988: 326). Genealogy in action enables this researcher to interpret the KnowledgeBoard text, creating possibilities for thinking in different ways in relation to the role of knowledge work/er in organisation and management theory.

The implications for organisation theory are the provision of a way of understanding how a knowledge structure can develop that favours a particular discourse and enables it to gain primacy, not through its truth claims, but through power effects arising from contingent and arbitrary conditions. Through analysis of discursive formation and development of this knowledge structure, a range of other possibilities and other meaning options can be made visible.

Figure 7.3

Genealogy in action as methodological framework
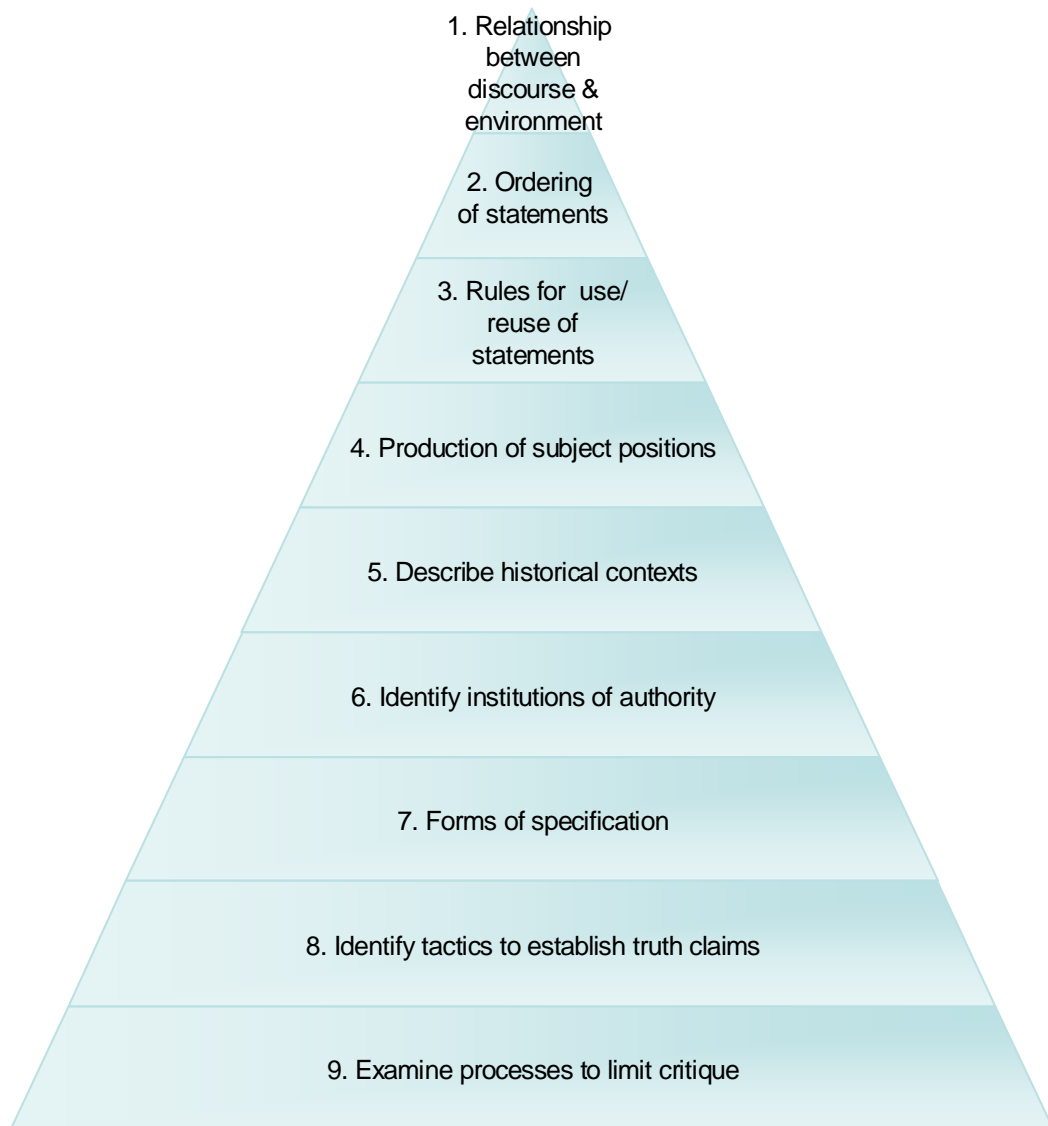
1. Relationship between discourse & environment
2. Ordering of statements
3. Rules for use/ reuse of statements
4. Production of subject positions
5. Describe historical contexts
6. Identify institutions of authority
7. Forms of specification
8. Identify tactics to establish truth claims
9. Examine processes to limit critique

Steps 1-7 represent Kendall's & Wickham's (1999) 'archaeology in action'.
Steps 8 & 9 are new developments to represent 'genealogy in action'.
Both are based on Foucault's archaeological & genealogical framework
for discourse analysis

7.3   DISCURSIVE BOUNDARIES ESTABLISHED & CHALLENGED

Meanings of discursive objects shift as practitioners attempt to affix particular statements to objects, while other practitioners may challenge particularised meanings contingent on their interests. Using genealogy in action as the method, I begin the task of analysing the KnowledgeBoard forum text. Relationships between discourse (the sayable) and the institutional environment (the visible) as well as subject positions adopted by participants are revealed. As well, I expose power relationships among participants through their tactics that channel meaning in specific ways.

As has been discussed in Chapter 3, discursive practices both support and are supported by rhetoric (Foucault, 1972). In examining how power plays are pursued and how power games are played within this specific community of practice, we can see how circuits of discursive practices and rhetoric both complement and confront each other in shifting spirals of power. The challenge is to understand the range of implications and consequences that surface during these power interactions. Such power negotiations are evident in the KnowledgeBoard debate and are examined through a power-discourse lens of Foucault, in order to understand "the strategies, the networks, the mechanisms, all those techniques by which a decision is accepted and by which that decision could not but be taken in the way that it was" (Foucault, 1988: 104).

It is evident that practitioners in the KnowledgeBoard forum debate are well aware of the dominant managerial discourse concerning practices of knowledge work, its connections to organisations, economics, law and other dominant discourses. It is also clear that while dominant discursive rhetoric is employed by practitioners as they discuss knowledge praxis, dominant discursive themes are not necessarily adopted or accepted. Representations of organising categories may change over time, depending on context and interests of those involved in discourse. Attempts to reconstitute existing representations may be resisted, particularly by those whose identity is bound up in particular representations and

whose strategic sense is that their interests are best served by their intact reproduction, thereby continuing the power (Foucault, 1977; Clegg, 1989a). Thus, meanings and representations of organising categories and their constituent membership become sites of contestation and, therefore, power over subjective and objective construction of an individual's identity (Clegg, 1989a). According to Clegg (1989a: 152), it is not just a knowledge and power relationship that is an object for analysis but also discursive representations, which transcend both individual identity and a constituted organising structure.

As I begin immersion in the KnowledgeBoard text with my reader, we can see that John assumes his identity as convenor of the debate; an identity embodied in the organising structure of the forum that traditionally entails management and control of processes of discussion. Forum convenor John Moore begins by acknowledging KnowledgeBoard members who have registered as participants to the debate and welcomes them. The act of welcoming participants establishes the forum as John's territory over which he has ultimate control. It is unnecessary to establish rules of entry and participation, since such protocols are assumed to be understood by those who are members of KnowledgeBoard. However, like guests who enter our homes, not everyone interprets protocols in the same way. We see such differences occurring from the outset of the debate, as subtle power plays among participants begin to emerge.

7.3.1 Let the power games begin

John provides an opportunity for participants to posit their arguments and initiate their power positions within the text as they begin the process of establishing discursive objects and statements that form boundaries of the forum debate. Following is a segment of text which comes at the beginning of the forum, immediately after an introduction by participants and in response to the question by convenor John Moore "So shall we begin by saying what our personal interest is in this debate?" (Appendix, paragraph 3).

In the text, we see how participants reveal only certain things about themselves. Response to John's first question is measured and wary. Participants use specific tactics in setting up this early part of the forum in order to pursue items of particular interest to them through interaction with some participants but not others, as a form of power effect.

We can see also that participants attempt to create a particular structure for the forum, contextual boundaries within which they plan to discuss their personal interests as historically contextualised. Indeed, Chris' immediate response provides an intriguing reference to events that immediately preceded the debate and clearly have influenced his response. We can also see that other participants were not influenced by these same events and so each explains their interests differently, thereby inserting other objects and statements about them into the debate.

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7. ***Chris Macrae***: unless we systemise trust in organisations my 6 year old daughter won't have a world worth growing up in[47]
8. ***John Moore:*** I've been writing about trust for a while now, I'm interested in ways of moving on from talking about it, to helping organisations make changes
9. ***Chris Macrae:*** but then I spent the weekend at www.collapsingworld.org[48]
10. ***Ton Ziljstra:*** my interest in trust: I think personal relationships are at the core of knowledge management, and trust at the heart of the success of those relations.

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[47] Here, it is important to make a distinction between a subject-position and a discursive subject position. Subject positions are those – such as father, or environmentalist – that are formed outside the specific instance of discourse under study. These subject positions, or identities, may be brought into the discourse, but the subjective position that is taken up, offered, allowed, or negotiated in the discourse is specific to the dynamics of that discourse (and perhaps its interactive history). Thus, the behaviour of Chris in his attempt to set himself up as a caring father and committed environmentalist is not questioned, so he is allowed this side of subjectivity. However, it is not taken up in the discourse and does not privilege him; other contributions are centralised into core discursive subject positions.

[48] The inaugural Collapsing World conference was held in London on September 19-21, 2003. It serves as an immediate historical context, clearly influencing Chris' ontological position concerning the connection between trust in organisations and broader society, which is creating a worthwhile world for children. The Conference is described on its website as "a global reconciliation network … established in order to foster the development of community to community processes of cultural dialogue. The network is an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural structure whose aim is to bring together people interested in reconciliation to explore ways of developing and extending face to face exchanges of a cultural, educational and intellectual nature. Outcomes of the project emerging from this meeting include dissemination of the conference proceedings, the establishment of the organisation as a loose community of groups and individuals prepared to share resources and ideas, and specific ongoing projects and plans. The latter include a follow-up meeting in India in 2004, a youth reconciliation project, an HIV/AIDS project, and projects in the United States, Bosnia the U.K., Canada, and the Middle East."
http://www.collapsingworld.org/cwc/index.html

11. *Alex MacGillivray:* I don't have any consulting projects on trust running at the moment – so no vested interests. I'd like to, but find that companies haven't really woken up to this yet.
12. *Tobias Keim:* I am interested in factors influencing trust....and ways to measure it!
13. *Ian Ryder:* I believe trust comes in varying levels – but is the root of ALL relationships which is what business, and life, depends on
14. *Stephanie Phillips:* Hi – I'm a spectator at today's session – I'll be taking over from Helen as KnowledgeBoard Editor in the next few months, and am currently editor of TrainingZONE – a community of HRD professionals. I'm interested in getting a feel for some of the issues KB members are involved in.
15. *Ton Ziljstra:* John: I do agree that we can talk a lot about trust without accomplishing anything. And after all, I would define trust as action oriented
16. *John Moore:* I am finding that organisations are starting to get interested in things like trust and authenticity; I find that most people are consumers as well as sellers, and are longing for more authentic communications.

There are several objects in the text about which statements are made. Trust is the first and most obvious object; this is a forum entitled *Trust and Knowledge Management*, and so is specifically about trust. Other objects that participants align with trust in their introductions to other members of the forum include, organisation (hierarchy, knowledge management, consulting, globalisation), control, (systemisation, forms of communication, measurement), and relationships. Although these same objects have been discussed in Chapter 2 as part of an analysis of knowledge work discourses, here they are used differently as are the statements describing them and linking them to other discursive objects.

The first statement comes from Chris who describes his personal interest in the debate as the necessity of creating a world fit for his young daughter but frames it within discursive boundaries of organisations and modes of systemisation (paragraph 7). He describes what he sees as a direct connection between creating a world that is sufficiently safe for his child to grow up in and that of developing systems of trust within organisations. Although "my 6 year old daughter won't have a world worth growing up in" is an emotional statement in itself, it serves to show other participants, and us – researcher and reader – what Chris sees as his particular ontology, that of a world of trust for little children and his humanity as a concerned and responsible parent. He suggests a solution through certainty in established and recognised systems of trust, which dispenses with the current *ad hoc* nature of developing trust. Despite the fact that the KnowledgeBoard forum is established as a discursive space for a community of professional knowledge

practitioners, Chris aligns his personal interests with those of his professional and business interests.

We also see here a man who distrusts the contingent and arbitrary ways of developing trust of the present and wants to see trust made more certain. He explains the reason why he wants such certainty is to protect future generations, embodied in the persona of his vulnerable child. It can be argued that by 'systematising' trust, *ad hoc* emotion and riskiness of individual human judgment is removed. One could also say that Chris not only distrusts traditional ways of developing trust through trial and error of human interactions but does not consider children able to develop judgment about what and who should or should not be trusted. Is this a reflection of his disillusionments or his recent experiences at the Collapsing World Conference? We do not know: we can only surmise a possible causal connection of influences from the conference as well as a broader historical context prior to early September 2003 (when the forum discussion took place). These other influences are likely to include the mounting toll from Iraq war; the second anniversary memorialising what the US refers to as '9/11' two weeks earlier; the SARS pandemic; a crisis of trust in leadership evident in public criticism of Bush and Blair concerning the lack of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons to be found in Iraq, plus scepticism about statements regarding 'the war on terror' in Iraq (see paragraphs 45, 52-56 in the Appendix) and more.

Chris' statement is significant for two reasons. First, it provides a context for his contribution to participant introductions. As an inaugural conference on global reconciliation, many of the Collapsing World conference tracks were used to identify a need for such a conference, in other words, a lack of evidential global reconciliation required such a conference to be established. Many papers presented explored inequities of native peoples within their particular geographies[49], sessions that underlined social malaise. Thus, a historical context

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[49] Keynote speakers included indigenous Australians for whom the Howard-led Australian Government refused to apologise on behalf of previous governments for the generations of Aboriginal children who were forcibly removed from their families and communities and placed with white families or government-run institutions. This was seen by some as a rebuttal to reconciliation (Bringing them home: The 'Stolen Children' report, http://agencysearch.australia.gov.au/search/search.cgi). (See also Moran, 1998; Howitt, 1998; Manne, 2001).

that Chris provides for participants (and us) focuses on a troubled and distrustful world.

Second, by making a statement about his attendance at such a conference and the personalised point about his child, Chris attempts to establish his interests as a key pathway along which the forum might develop, with his interests intertwining both the professional and personal. Such imposition may be seen as a power play by Chris to control the trust topics of the forum. The way in which he did so was to jump in to respond to the question before John Moore had an opportunity to consolidate his subject position as convenor of the group. It could be argued that Chris merely commenced proceedings in response to John's question/statement, "So shall we begin by saying what our personal interest is in this debate?" However, under normal conventions, John's use of the phrase "shall we begin" is most likely to imply that, as convenor and in order to set the tone of the discussion, the first interest introduced would be his own[50].

Indeed, it becomes clear from the text that John's intention was to do just that as he cuts across Chris's statements (disjointed software notwithstanding) to position himself as convenor of the forum and the way in which he expected other participants to respond. He appears to be a very matter-of-fact type of person, a pragmatist who clearly identifies his subject position as an organisational consultant whose interest in the topic of trust is well established, so much so, that John's interest has moved beyond talking about trust in organisational contexts to action (paragraph 8)[51]. For John, the discussion context takes place within organisations rather than through a relationship between organisations (business and government) and society. A power effect at this point is for John to exclude links between the social and institutional. Yet the context evident through John's statement is that organisations (business and government institutions) need to

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[50] The particular software used in the forum tends to chop the flow of the text, so that the analysis needs to take into account the disjointedness of the textual flow, a point that is commented on by John Moore (paragraph 50), where he says "I'm conscious that this forum software is making for somewhat disjointed conversations". Thus, the second statement that Chris makes is that he spent the weekend at the CollapsingWorld Conference (see FN4) may have been a part of his first statement but was separated from it due to the software.

[51] This may be a reference to his paper *The Value of Trust* discussed earlier (see, http://www.knowledgeboard.com/item/262/2010/5/2008)

change the ways trust is perceived, since at present, according to his knowledge, trust is something that is just talked about and needs to be 'actioned' in some way. Such a statement shows that John represents himself as being a man of action.

The significance of this introductory segment of the KnowledgeBoard forum is that participants attempt to establish their subject positions in the debate to acquire authority and create boundaries of discourse. John's opening question assumes the pre-acceptance of particular discursive objects that would exist in a forum environment – those related to professional-personal interests as knowledge practitioners operating within business organisations. For John, these are the rules of discourse – what should be included and excluded, and establishing his subject position as the authority through which discussion would flow. Notwithstanding the power effect of John as convenor of the debate, Chris chose to reframe discussion to incorporate his familial-personal interests concerning legitimating 'the world for his daughter'.

So, which cue did other participants take up: knowledge practitioner in his or her organisational role or knowledge practitioner in his or her humanist role? While John ignored introductory statements by Chris and reaffirmed his position of power as convenor through re-establishing boundaries of discussion as business-organisational, responses by five other participants kept open the boundaries of the forum. These participants did not necessarily conceive of the KnowledgeBoard forum as a separate world from business that tolerates family and little girls. For example, Ton talked of personal relationships being at the core of knowledge management, that is, an alignment of the personal with organisational management interests (paragraph 10). So, too, Ian observed that trust is the root of all relationships, of both business and life (paragraph 13); whereas, Tobias talked of factors influencing trust – which do not necessarily reflect separation of business from personal – but then noted his interest to be of an economic nature with his statement concerning measurement of trust (paragraph 12). Introductory remarks by Alex addressed his business organisational interests that concerned running consulting projects in companies without reflection of personal concerns at this point (paragraph 11). While Stephanie noted her interest in the forum as an observer, her statement concerning

her current role as editor of another KnowledgeBoard activity TrainingZone and her definition of it as "a community of HRD (human resource development) professionals" shifts discussion back into a sphere of business organisations and that the domain of KnowledgeBoard is one of a professional community of practice (paragraph 14).

To this point, genealogical discourse analysis has shown that not all knowledge practitioners participating in the KnowledgeBoard forum are willing to exclude a humanist approach of personal interaction to knowledge praxis in favour of one entirely focused on business organisation. Organisational management discourse discussed in Chapter 2 could not be considered as dominant in the KnowledgeBoard forum at this stage. Despite power strategies used by convenor John Moore, the boundaries of knowledge practitioner discourse have not achieved closure but continue to be challenged. In the following section, I examine how the boundaries of discourse begin to shift into domains of management, business and organisation in line with a dominant managerial discourse discussed in Chapter 2.

7.3.2 Porosity & instability of discursive boundaries

Ton develops a trust discourse beyond knowledge of an organisational nature to one that is closely aligned to management of knowledge, through personal relationships (paragraph 10). He says, "I think personal relationships are at the core of knowledge management, and trust at the heart of the success of those relations." Ton challenges the discursive boundaries of organisation that separate messy human things concerning relationships from those purporting to belong to the heart of rationality defining organisations. Here, he brings new objects of humanity into play, such as the personal and heart, things he considers to be inherent in discourses that align trust with knowledge management, or indeed, trust with anything. Ton is shifting discursive territory away from controlling interests of organisational management to a more fundamental issue, that of trust, or indeed, distrust being an extension of qualities of human personal relationships. He lays down a challenge to the group by attempting to switch rhetoric away from

business-centric discourses to more human-centric ones. At the same time, it is a power play to redefine boundaries of discourse through admitting new objects.

As yet, objects of personal relationships are not taken up by other participants in the forum; they ignore Ton's attempts to destabilise discursive boundaries around organisation. In effect, humanising aspects of trust are refuted, since Alex responds to John's comments about a possibility of consulting projects but adds that such opportunities are not yet viable as "companies haven't really woken up to this yet" (paragraph 11). Although Alex rejects Ton's theorising of human relationships as very significant to knowledge management; at the same time, he reifies companies with a human touch that they have not 'woken up' from their dream-filled slumbers. Also, we may consider his arguments to favour discourses concerning systematising trust and its embeddedness in knowledge management as emerging and potential, rather than actual. Here, we can see how Alex starts to insert objects of an economic and transactional nature by raising the issue of business opportunities via consulting projects.

Tobias reconnects statements of trust with organisation and systems in a clean sweep by suggesting factors for measuring trust (paragraph 12). Such connections align with Drucker's knowledge work discourses of standardising, measuring and making knowledge productive (discussed in Chapter 2). Here, we can see rhetoric similar to that which Drucker applied to knowledge now being applied to trust. In so doing, Tobias adopts a schematic of managerial discourse and excludes human relationship statements from discourse. He does so by re-establishing boundaries of trust and organisation control through depersonalising human links to trust and replacing them with accounting modes of measurement and analysis of influencing factors. As an academic concerned with IT, Tobias expresses his interests in terms of his academic discipline. Not for him are fuzzy interpretations of human relationships of trust in relation to work of knowledge, but rather ways of concretely identifying, systematising and measuring factors that influence trust; all of which fit well within a dominant management discourse.

Tobias employs discursive objects related to his field of knowledge, information technology, even when discussing matters of trust. For example, later in the text,

in examining contexts and situations where trust occurs, Tobias asks, "So trust depends also on the topology of the network[52]" (paragraph 51). Chris (a consultant and academic, who develops software that assists knowledge workers to visualise relationships[53]) replies, "Context is interesting because it means to measure trust you would need context specific measurements, something many organisations under prioritise" and "Yes trust is intimately related to the network, but I guess I'd like a map of it, maybe that's typology (sic)?"(paragraphs 53 and 54). Such an argument by Chris is consistent with his early statement about systematising trust in organisations (paragraph 7).

It may seem odd to describe trust in terms of the topology of networks, notwithstanding topology and network are tautological. Setting redundancy aside, topology and network concern relationships between linked elements, which go to the heart of a discussion of trust and its association with other discursive objects. Yet the topology of network is an object of a technology discourse; use of which helps to fix boundaries of debate within aligned discourses of organisation and technology.

We begin to see how knowledge practitioners employ objects of dominant managerial discourses of knowledge work as a way of linking trust with knowledge. While managerial knowledge discourses seek to embody work of knowledge within systematising organisational practices, knowledge practitioners peer into the entrails of these concepts to explore how such linkages might occur while taking account of human and social concerns. In the next section, we continue to unpack knowledge praxis as understood by knowledge practitioners through ontology of trust.

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[52] "The physical topology of a network refers to the configuration of cables, computers, and other peripherals. Physical topology should not be confused with logical topology which is the method used to pass information between workstations. Logical topology was discussed in the Protocol chapter." (Winkleman (2005), Ch5, http://fcit.usf.edu/network/default.htm)
"A protocol is a set of rules that governs the communications between computers on a network. These rules include guidelines that regulate the following characteristics of a network: access method, allowed physical topologies, types of cabling, and speed of data transfer." (Winkleman (2005), Ch2 http://fcit.usf.edu/network/default.htm)
[53] On his KnowledgeBoard member profile, Chris describes his work as developing "visualisation maps of connected relationship systems as action learning tools", that is in similar vein to Leximancer software that I have used in the thesis.

7.4 TRUST, MEASUREMENT & ORGANISATIONAL SYSTEMS

Despite the different fields of knowledge of the forum participants (consultants, academics and organisational practitioners), there is a common set of objects implicit in knowledge praxis that may be dispersed into other fields of knowledge. In the following section, we continue genealogical analysis by examining linkages between trust, its measurement, and how it becomes aligned with organisational systems. Statements are analysed along with their connections to other discourses. As well, subject positions produced by forum participants are examined, looking at how statements are rendered; and power relations revealed.

Normalisation of trust as an object of organisation and its alignment with economic discourses do not go unchallenged, since participants acknowledge limitations to what such transactional processes can achieve. Indeed, one view is that processes of accounting, when applied to trust, tend to systematise distrust (paragraph 58); another is that reciprocity is a poor measure of trust since con men (confidence tricksters) use it (paragraph 62); others suggest that if trust has an extrinsic value like an item on an accountant's balance sheet, perhaps it can be spent in an economic exchange (paragraphs 60 and 63). But maybe, it cannot be managed at all! Doubts like these expressed by knowledge practitioners suggest that they do not fully subscribe to dominant managerial discourses; that systematising aspects of the human condition, such as creation of knowledge or trust, is unrealistic in business organisational terms. Perhaps, it's more a case of "creating the infrastructure for people to do so" (Tobias: paragraph 64) and hoping that the right sort of trust, like knowledge, is engendered by such an environment. The text below shows the influence of dominant managerial discourse as it relates to knowledge work but at the same time, exhibits a twist illustrating how knowledge practitioners challenge boundaries of dominant discourse.

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55. *Vincent Ribiere*: I think that reciprocity plays also a big role in trust
56. *John Moore*: Alex: Good point re Iraq. Important to realise that authenticity doesn't create trust - but it does give us the information on who we do and don't trust
57. *Alex MacGillivray*: Chris, you talk about measurement; who has done the best work on measuring trust in your opinion?

58. *Chris Macrae*: reciprocity is huge; because trust is a word that builds relationships where as many performance measures are only about transactions, i.e. they systemise distrust
59. *Tobias Keim*: Yes, trust involves strength, frequency, reciprocity of successful repeated interaction
60. *Alex MacGillivray*: and then, if you can measure it, can you manage it?
61. *Chris Macrae*: Alex, anyone who isn't an accountant because they only use the operand of add (seperability, [sic] linear etc); there's lots of good stuff at www.euintangibles.net - the EU prism group; I also like your work at NEF
62. *John Moore*: I agree in principle with Tobias and Vincent about reciprocity but let's remember that some of the shrewdest conmen use the principle of reciprocity to set their victims up!
63. *Alex MacGillivray*: And then, if you can manage it, then are you allowed to spend it once in a while?
64. *Tobias Keim*: Perhaps you can't manage trust really, but create the infrastructure for the people to do so.

What is immediately obvious is that practitioners reference trust in conjunction with economic and accounting discourses. The relationship includes objects of quantitative or economic value, such as performance measures, transactions, strength of interactions, frequency and repeatability of interactions, reciprocity (in balance sheet as well as human terms) and expenditure. Here, participants engage in rhetoric that aims to normalise the language of trust within an ambit of economics and accounting, and in particular through organisational processes. For them, trust in organisations is more about motives that derive benefit for an organisation and, therefore, should be managed, and less about individuals working towards developing trustworthy relationships with others for benefit of the individuals involved. It seems that discourses of trust in organisations relate specifically to financial and transactional benefits for organisations and should be managed.

The group of practitioners challenge a balance sheet approach to trust discourse, which suggest possibilities of incoming and outgoing trust transactions as the debit and credit columns accrue. The object reciprocity[54] is not one typically used in accounting discourses; it relates specifically to human behaviours of giving and receiving of rewards. Generally, a transaction[55] is used to describe the outcome of a business negotiation and in accounting terms it refers to a ledger or other record keeping of financial incomings and outgoings. However, in essence, reciprocity

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[54] Reciprocity is a rewards-based social interaction between individuals or social actors (Abercrombie *et al*, 1994: 348)
[55]Transaction is an instance or process; carrying out a piece of business; a negotiation (*The Macquarie Encyclopedic Dictionary*, 1990: 1016)

and transaction both describe two-way interaction. The difference is that a transaction can take place at a personal level but reciprocity is always a social rather than business interaction. Although practitioners acknowledge that new organisational trust discourses embody statements about trust measurement, evidenced in the side discussion between Alex and Chris about who does the best work on measuring trust, there is no closure to this discourse. They recognise the power relations in such statements about how to de-socialise interactions of reciprocity of trust and replace them with business transaction. Such scepticism is summed up rather nicely by Alex with the comment "…if you can manage it, then are you allowed to spend it once in a while?" (paragraph 63), to which John later replies "Alex, what do you mean by spending trust or are you being ironic?" (paragraph 66).

It is possible that the irony is lost on John, since the discussion has been gradually shifting away from the personal interests, expressed by Chris at the beginning of the debate, into a more organisationally-based context. The next section examines how the practitioner discourse tries to embed the social within the organisational.

7.4.1   Reciprocity through organisational infrastructure

Tobias suggests a way of managing trust may be to create an infrastructure within organisations to not only enable individuals to reciprocate trust with each other but to also generate spill-over effects for organisations (paragraph 64). He intimates that if organisations create an infrastructure in which people can build trust networks, perhaps that is all management can do. In this, Tobias recognises that there is a conceptual gap in the relationships between and among individuals and those of an organisation. Thus, if the best (or all) that management can do is to create an infrastructure, whereby organisational members can trust each other, then if spill-over benefits from trusting relationships among members occur, organisations could be beneficiaries. The very 'iffiness' of this suggestion implies considerable uncertainty about such spill-over effects even occurring, much less being measurable or predictable. Such a view reflects what Browning (2000) argues is the gap between a dominant managerial discourse of what should be and

the reality at the 'street level' of what is. This conceptual gap between an ideal organisational world envisaged in management discourse – if we say it is so then that is the way it is! – and what is actually experienced by practitioners illustrates their acknowledgement of a gap and ways they explore how to close, or at least narrow it.

We also see in the preceding text above that trust attaches to discourses of economics and accounting, through rhetoric of performance measures within an organisational context. Here, trust interactions are appended to accounting through measurability of strength, frequency, reciprocity of repeatability and determinations of success. It is as if trust created in such ways can not only be measured but also managed by parties outside an intimate trust arrangement between social agents. Such a notion goes well beyond creating an infrastructure and hoping for some residual benefit from trust engagement by individual organisational members.

We see that trust begins to lose its conceptual foundation within personal relationships and moves into an organisational concept whereby it becomes a product of an organisational environment, rather than emerging from a series of personal exchanges. If organisational infrastructure becomes an environment where trust between organisational members can occur, it also suggests that organisational infrastructure provides a place and a time for trust events. Further, trust events that occur outside of organisational infrastructure may be viewed with suspicion, whereas trust events that occur within an organisational environment will be assessed on the basis of benefit to the organisation. As a result, other types of trust that may not benefit an organisation, or at least are judged to be neutral or non-beneficial, may be excluded. Taking this argument further, trust that occurs between people in organisations is only encouraged to thrive if it is judged (by management?) to be of positive benefit to the organisation and adheres to an arbitrary performance measure.

7.4.1.1 Processes of trust in organisations

As has been discussed in Chapter 2, an infrastructure for knowledge creation is described by dominant managerial discourses as something that goes well beyond merely creating an organisational environment in which knowledge creation, and indeed, knowledge sharing can occur. It should occur through tightly managed processes of organisational learning and a learning organisation. In the KnowledgeBoard forum, practitioners do not necessarily embrace this view, thereby preventing closure of management discourse as true and incontestable. In the exchanges (paragraphs 55-64 shown previously in the text), the practitioner discussion explores relationships between knowledge work processes and organisational processes.

Vincent links reciprocity to trust, that is, there is an expectation by those who give trust that it will be returned in kind (paragraph 55). This is followed by a question from Alex about measuring trust (paragraph 57), to which Chris replies (paragraph 61) "anyone who isn't an accountant" which indicates a distrust of accounting methods.

Reciprocity of trust is clearly a concern for knowledge practitioners, not just by individuals in a social arrangement, but also by organisational management. For example, Chris aligns reciprocity of trust among individuals with a concept of measurement of trust by organisations through associating the two in developing systems of distrust. By this, it is likely that Chris questions how trust by individuals on a reciprocal basis can be associated with measurement systems established by organisations (paragraph 58), which, by their very nature are designed to measure attainment or failure to attain a benchmark. Chris' argument is that trust and reciprocity of trust concerns building relationships, whereas measuring performance (of trust or indeed, anything else) is about one-way transactions of trust from an individual to an organisation. Vincent, Tobias and John express scepticism about trust reciprocity at a personal and organisational level. This is supported by psychological contract literature which suggests that breaches in psychological contracts occur more frequently by employers than

employees and that disappointment may lead to perceptions of betrayal by an employee (see, Schein, 1978; Wilkins and Ouchi, 1983; Robinson and Rousseau, 1994; Sparrow, 1996; Morrison and Robinson, 1997; Thomas and Anderson, 1998).

Chris' statement about measuring transactional trust – perhaps through frequency of transactions, developing benchmarks and assessing performance of success or failures against such standards – is more about systematising distrust. In other words, measuring trust performance through transactions is about failure of trust to meet an organisational system standard, which, in effect, systematises distrust.

To rephrase Lewicki *et al* (1998) in the trust and measurement literature, to systematise dis̲trust is to show confidence about a relationship partner's un̲desirable behaviour based on prior knowledge of that partner's capabilities and intentions, that is, to expect the worst. Systematising and measuring trust is unidimensional. Systems are established by organisational hierarchy to measure performance of organisational members against arbitrary trust attributes established by the organisation but which are not necessarily reciprocated. Here, we see echoes of violation of psychological contracts experienced by employees from organisational management. Lewicki *et al* (1998) suggest that shortcomings in measurement of trust arise not only because such measurement is unidimensional but also because it tends to be transactional rather than reciprocal and evolving through continuous development of interpersonal relationships. Indeed, there is a trend to operationalise trust in order to measure it (see, Mayer *et al*, 1995; Lane and Bachmann, 1998; Adler, 2001; Child, 2001; Bachmann, 2001; Huotari and Iivonen, 2003) is more likely to measure economic growth rates rather than trust. Such a view is exhibited also by knowledge practitioners in that measuring trust reflects arbitrary power interests of organisational management and, thereby, contests the dominant discourse.

We can see here that knowledge practitioners challenge the inclusion of trust as an object in discourses of organisational systems and measurement on the basis that statements about trust within these discourses fail to comply with the usual meanings inherent in trust. These are meanings such as reciprocity and

authenticity, usually embedded in personalised understandings of trust, which are challenged by practitioners when trust is invoked in an organisational context.

Alex poses a question that shifts the discussion beyond factors of measurement to one of management of trust. Clearly, this is the territory of dominant managerial discourse of measurement and management, where management of trust is more about managing risk and avoiding blame by offloading trust-sensitive issues to others. Hurley (2006) sets up a 10-point plan of practical ways of managing trust, which he suggests can "create a more dynamic and sustainable foundation for productive relationships" (Hurley, 2006: 62). Here too, we find discourses of measurement and management aligned to productivity of relationships. As discussed earlier, measurement of trust for 'productive relationships' requires trust to be predictable and comparable to a benchmark of expectations if it is to occur within an organisational context. The manageability of such a thing is its predictability of acceptable risk or blame or being able to offload 'trust-sensitive issues' to others. There is almost a sense of desperation to establish the social interaction of trust within an impersonalised organisational context. Dominant managerial discourses step over the murkiness of establishing processes for collaboration and knowledge transfer between individual knowledge workers and from individual to organisation.

Although it is generally not specifically stated in much of the management and organisational discourses of knowledge work, the necessity for trust among individuals who may have to work together but who may not trust each other or management, will inhibit knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing. Prescriptive discourses of knowledge transfer and sharing through communities of practice (Wiig, 1999a), or developing rigorous methodologies for enquiry would enable "systematic organization of our ignorance" (Drucker 1959: 31), or systematising processes of knowledge creation and dissemination (Nonaka, 1994) within an organisational context (Mintzberg, 1983; Prusak, 1997; Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Carter and Scarbrough, 2001; Donaldson, 2001; Patriotta, 2003) cannot overcome this basic problem.

The following section examines practitioners' views concerning use of prescriptive processes, such as those advocated by organisational management in dealing with such human tendencies as trust, as a precursor to knowledge sharing.

7.4.2   Accomplishing a hierarchy of trust

Themes concerning types of trust and their extrinsic values emerge in various places in the text. Statements are made concerning varying levels of trust, that is, each trust level is bound by certain attributes which must be accomplished before a higher level of trust is attained. Ian (paragraph 13) sets the scene for a discussion on a hierarchy of trust when he speaks of "trust comes in varying levels" as if trust can be neatly packaged in the modular form of a manufactured product. Rather than speak of types of circumstances in which we would trust another, such as, "I would trust XYZ in this situation but not in another", Ian uses language that refers more closely to a hierarchy rather than variable contexts. Here, too, we can see connections with discourses of accounting and control through modes of measurement that are bounded at each level in a hierarchy of trust. Implications are that some knowledge professionals are so immersed in a dominant discourse of structure in organising that they find it easier to relate to attaining set benchmarks or standards before moving on to other sets. One could question why trust matters at all if management can establish a measurable hierarchy of trust levels that follow principles of economic rationality and progress.

Ton confirms John's statements about a need to accomplish something actively through action rather than talk, with action denoted at a higher level than talk (paragraph 15). Such accomplishment strengthens alignment with discourses of progress and productivity through activity, which Ton states cannot occur through 'talk' alone. Indeed, he derides talk alone as being unable to accomplish anything. In connecting trust to an action orientation that needs to accomplish some form of progress, we can see there is a need to push action along rather than permit trusting relationships to evolve in their own individual and unique ways. Again,

Ton's statement about a need for trust actively to accomplish something links it to managerial discourses of organisational productivity and rational progress.

In the the following section of the text, participants expand on perceptions of a hierarchy of trust; indeed, discourse on trust can be subdivided into two streams with different levels – trust creation and trust maintenance.

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69.   *Chris Macrae*: Tobias, we must manage trust but this depends on detecting emerging conflicts and then resolving them; systemically almost the opposite process of transactional management

70-71. *This forms a part of a different discussion, probably due to the software.*

72.   *Tobias Keim*: Chris, okay this is to keep trusted relationships alive, but what about ways to create or establish trust

73-76. *Part of the same discussion as paragraphs 70-71.*

77. *Chris Macrae*: To create trust, start with a founding purpose that is unique, which you can uniquely deliver, which is valued by other people; trust is about how much does everyone involved communally value you?

78. *Tobias Keim*: So people need to manage themselves and create their own USPs [unique selling propositions] in order to be valued and trusted?

The text shows how participants speak of trust creation aligned with business discourses of founding purposes, delivery, value, management (in this case, self-managing), and USPs (unique selling propositions). Here, trust seems to be less about willingness of an individual to be vulnerable to actions of another as suggested by Mayer *et al* (1995: 712) and more about how the other establishes a case for trust credentials as a basis for gaining trust in return, rather like ticking a box. Remember also a comment by John Moore (paragraph 62) about con men setting up their victims. The implication bring us back to rhetoric of a dominant managerial discourse concerning economic progress that arises through systematising aspects of the human condition, be it trust or knowledge, and, as Drucker (1959) suggests, putting them to work for the benefit of organisations.

The notion of trust maintenance suggests processes of managing a hierarchy of trust, detecting potential conflicts and then intervening to resolve them. It is as if machinery of trust hums along and general maintenance of the machine reveals a possible error message on a screen indicating that a problem can be fixed before the machine breaks down, thus resulting in continual production of trust as if it

was a product of more or less reliability. Here, trust is conceived as an organisational process observable by others who can intervene and fix a trust relationship in which an observer may not be directly involved. It is very much a 'nannying' situation, whereby the individuals involved need to refer to a higher authority (external to the relationship) to fix it, or else these individuals do not recognise when trust is no longer being built but dismantled through continued exchanges. It becomes evident that trust like knowledge has become a medium of economic value and exchange. All you need to do is to sell the proposition of trustworthiness and others will believe it and communally trust you. In the words of Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, bah! and humbug!

Later in the debate, two discussants further elaborate on the notion of a hierarchy of trust and benefit to organisations but also identify caveats.

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96. *John Moore*: I think trust is what makes it easy for people to share ideas, so is bound to have an impact on an organisation's ability to create intellectual capital
97. *Refers to an earlier section of text and so has been omitted here*
98. *Alex MacGillivray*: Well this is the crucial question. In big companies, that is true. Inside 3M, say, you can afford to take a risk with an idea because you can trust management not to belittle you. Not so at Kodak.
99. *John Moore*: I generally find organisations have cultures that subtly or overtly discourage openness and make vulnerability dangerous.
100. *Alex MacGillivray*: But in little firms and micro-enterprise, I wonder whether they don't thrive in a climate of mistrust. We've been looking at enterprise in the UK inner city and they don't 'cluster' - they are adversarial.

John proposes (paragraph 96) an easy link between people (that is, organisational members) sharing ideas and creation of organisational intellectual capital. Perhaps he assumes a lack of complication in intervening steps between individuals sharing ideas and those ideas being captured, recorded, stored by technology, assessed by management as being an organisational asset, and determined as intellectual capital that is owned and protected by an organisation. If so, it appears that John is using not only rhetoric of dominant discourse but assumes that transition from knowledge and ideas in people's heads to becoming organisational intellectual capital and property is smooth and unproblematic.

Such an assumption by John reflects dominant managerial discourses of knowledge work involving processes of knowledge creation and dissemination

(Nonaka, 1994; Davenport *et al*, 1998; Bhatt, 2001; Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Robertson and Swan, 2003) within an organisational context (Mintzberg, 1983; Prusak, 1997; Alavi and Leidner, 2001; Carter and Scarbrough, 2001; Donaldson, 2001; Patriotta, 2003) and where there is none of the stickiness suggested by Szulanski (1996) that inhibits such transfer. At the same time, perhaps John is assuming that other participants in the debate have an inherent and automatic understanding of the processes (Collins, 1997); an assumption normalised by discourse but which in fact is a power effect. For John, it is establishment of trust (possibly via organisational infrastructure of some sort) that can overcome resistance by people to share their ideas.

Alex takes John's statement and turns it into a question, or possibly two (paragraph 98). He asks: Is it trust that makes it easy for people to share ideas? Does trust have an impact on an organisation's ability to create intellectual capital? He then pinpoints where trust needs to reside in order to connect notions of sharing ideas with creation of organisational intellectual capital. He suggests that at least one step necessary in the creation of organisational intellectual capital from ideas shared by individuals who trust each other is the way management responds to such ideas: how ideas are valued or derided as valueless. A hierarchy of trust explored by participants during the KnowledgeBoard debate can be seen also as a hierarchy of distrust when ideas are judged as worthy or otherwise by management. Alex suggests it is big companies that create an environment where ideas can be shared, citing 3M as an example. On reflection, he counters the statement with an example of Kodak.

If, as Alex sees it, trust is willingness of an individual to risk that management will not belittle people and their ideas, it presents a counter-example of the trust definition suggested by Mayer *et al* (1995: 712) of willingness of an individual to be vulnerable to the actions of another. If an individual cannot afford to take a risk that management will not belittle him or her, then stakes are high for the individual in terms of creating an identity of self value, suggested by Deetz (1994a), Carr (1998), Alvesson (2000; 2001), willingness to participate in organisational processes of creativity (Blackler, 1995), and understanding sensitivity to relationships between power and tacit knowledge (Garrick and

Clegg, 2000; Marshall and Brady, 2001). Here, Alex is presenting an alternative to the dominant managerial knowledge work discourse; one that engages with identity and asymmetrical organisational power relations but refutes Drucker's conception of the individual as controller of his or her own knowledge (Fuller, 2002; Alvesson and Kärreman, 2001).

Alex's polarised reference to two big companies 3M and Kodak, leaves the way open for John to connect trust with organisational culture. Thus, John (paragraph 99) speaks of trust as inherent in the nature of organisational culture, whether it encourages or discourages openness, and moreover, whether it makes vulnerability dangerous. Again, if one does not allow oneself to be vulnerable to actions of another (Mayer *et al*, 1995) because it is dangerous, then it is likely that trust does not exist here. Alex's final comment shifts the trust issue from within organisations among organisational members and management to an external view about little firms and micro-enterprises, which are so competitive that they thrive in a climate of mistrust. Whether such mistrust applies equally to the relationships within these organisations is uncertain but the implication and connection are there.

Thus far, the section has examined a hierarchy of trust or distrust based on organisation. First, there is organisation of knowledge workers, who provide the foundation for conceptions of knowledge creation and organisational intellectual property; organisational knowledge workers may be seen separately from and often in conflict with management who may also be knowledge workers; such separation within an organisational hierarchy is due to a power imbalance of management and non-management. Discourses of knowledge sharing by knowledge workers through modes of organisation and processes of creating organisational intellectual property from individuals' ideas are implicit in these notions. Hierarchy is further developed with the notion of management as a mode of organising responsible for judging and valuing knowledge created by individuals. Where management personalises such judgments and conveys its views to individuals, thereby making them feel vulnerable, at risk and belittled, trust may be damaged, since an identity of worthiness may be a casualty.

At a further level, there is a perception that an organisational culture of openness will assist to create a hierarchy of trust from an organisation to its management and from management to knowledge practitioners (Barnes, 1981; Mayer *et al*, 1995; Mishra, 1996; Reed, 2001; Bachmann, 2001). However, an argument that attempts to separate management from a reified organisation, as if they are two distinct groups, is no more sustainable than an argument prescribing a particular culture within an organisation with which all members engage. As we know from Goffman's (1961) work, there are some individuals who will abide by institutional rules and directives, some who will challenge them, while others will subvert them by appearing to obey but, in fact, not do so. Goffman (1961: 170) termed as 'primary adjustment' behaviours of individuals who engaged in prescriptions laid down by an organisation/institution. 'Secondary adjustment' participants 'worked' the system but appeared to conform outwardly, thereby subverting it. Goffman also said that organisations tended to adapt to secondary adjustments by both increasing discipline and selectively accepting practices, which was a way of regaining and maintaining control over participants (1961: 178).

Is such adaptation evident in the KnowledgeBoard debate? In the section below, four participants revisit the notion of an organisational hierarchy of trust, this time, with quite different opinions.

7.4.2.1 …or not!

While engaging in rhetoric of dominant economic discourses of limited resources, KnowledgeBoard participants also give the nod to alternative discourses of power relations and identity at a more individual level. Below, they discuss the appearances of trustworthiness that organisations present to consumers.

> 117. **Alex MacGillivray**: It may be that there is a limited amount of trust that a given group of consumers have to invest in business - so businesses have to fight for it. If that is true, then regulation is a waste of time. But surely trust has fallen absolutely across business to an all time low, too?
> 118. **John Moore**: Yes, I think the evidence that trust in institutions of all kinds has fallen, though NGOs seem to do ok in surveys
> 119. **Monica Andre**: How about the role of organizational infrastructures in building trust?

> 120. *John Moore*: I think we're seeing the demise of monolithic trust in favour of trust build a conversation at a time

Alex engages with an economics discourse of scarce resources when he comments on consumers' trust investment in business and whether it can be shared or needs to be fought over as a limited resource; like a commodity for which there is a limited market. In this conversation, we see that the meaning of trust, like knowledge, is conceived of as a product of business organisations for consumption by groups of consumers and investors. Indeed, if trust can be commoditised, then, as Alex suggests (paragraph 117), its distribution should be left to market forces since regulating trust is a waste of time. John accepts this curious definition of trust in economic terms, commenting that like other economic resources, evidence of trust in institutions has generally become more scarce, having fallen to an all time low. His evidence for this situation seems to have been determined by surveys, traditional quantitative rather than qualitative instruments for data collection. Yet, as other KnowledgeBoard members observe earlier, a capacity to measure and manage trust is uncertain.

Monica picks up on an earlier comment by Tobias (paragraph 64) concerning creating a mode of organising – organisational infrastructure – that facilitates organisational members to develop trust in each other. There is a specific reason why such trust is necessary: knowledge work can only become organisational knowledge if those who create it can be induced to share it. Only by trusting each other and management will organisational members willingly share knowledge and work collaboratively for the benefit of an organisation. A more effective way of creating such an inducement is to normalise sharing of knowledge through social and cultural considerations which embody notions of community trust and the common good. We have already seen how knowledge work discourses also reflect and critique purposive designing and building of particular corporate cultures (see, Smircich, 1983; Kotter and Heskett, 1992; Denison and Mishra, 1995; Kunda, 1992; 1995; Kärreman and Alvesson, 2004) as a management device to 'encourage' human beings, who create knowledge, to unproblematically share and consolidate their knowledge (Anand *et al*, 1998).

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The distinction here is that Tobias expresses uncertainty about an alignment of trust with management discourses while suggesting that organisational infrastructure – as a mode of organising a working environment – may create willingness for people to trust each other within a working context. Conversely, Monica espouses discourses of organisational rationality and managerial discourses of legitimacy and productivity in her suggestion that there may be a specific role for organisational infrastructure, and thus management, in building trust. Such a twist shifts personalisation of trust relationships between individuals suggested by Mayer *et al* (1995) to one that is part of an organisational process of building trust in an efficient and productive rather than *ad hoc* and personal.

It seems that John recognises this subtle shift away from traditional human methods of developing trust in and with each other to one of institutionalisation, suggesting that such "monolithic trust" is in demise (paragraph 120). John may be influenced by the particular historical context during which the debate occurred, which showed a shift away from generalised trust in institutions in certain sectors – such as NGOs – because they are generally and traditionally seen as good and, therefore, automatically engender trust, to a new situation of uncertainty[56]. This notion speaks to a hierarchy of trust – types of organisation that are considered to have attained particular levels of trust as well as layers of interaction among organisational members within and across organisational hierarchy.

If we remind ourselves that comments by Alex, John and Monica are made, not only within a broad historical context, but also as knowledge practitioners expressing their views based on personal experiences in institutional contexts, we can see that there are, indeed, contradictions and discursive spaces between practitioner 'street level' what is, and managerial dominant discourses of what

[56] Two weeks prior to the KnowledgeBoard debate taking place, the Swedish people had rejected the Euro in place of the Swedish Kroner and, in effect, membership of the European Union, despite expectations that they would do otherwise (*The Guardian*, September 16, 2003) (http://politics.guardian.co.uk/euro/comment/0,,1043058,00.html), accessed 5/3/07. Concurrently, the United States memorialised the second anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks; California was about to unseat its leftwing governor Gray Davis by plebiscite replacing him with actor and Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger (Political Affairs, October 1, 2003 http://www.politicalaffairs.net/article/ view/141/1/76/ accessed 5/3/07), and Italians collected signatures to challenge immunity from possible legal action of their rightwing prime minister Silvio Berlusconi (*The Guardian*, September 16, 2003) (http://politics.guardian.co.uk/euro/comment/0,,1043058,00.html), accessed 5/3/07.

'should be' (Browning, 2000). Through their use of trust discourses to express experiences of knowledge praxis, knowledge practitioners provide insight into fluidity and instability of discursive boundaries of knowledge work. Their rhetoric and shifting positions from dominant managerial and organisational discourses to alternative ones of power, identity and social relations show there is no unified position on trust and knowledge management, but rather contradictions and discursive spaces.

7.5   DISCURSIVE CONNECTIONS TO ORGANISATION

Development of a practitioner discourse reveals patterns of organisational connections, of systems, control, and management, and an alternative discourse concerning intransigence of human relationships. In this section, we see how organisational discourses begin to dominate the forum discussion. Despite evidence at commencement of the forum that several members of the KnowledgeBoard knowledge practitioner community opted for a more humanist approach to knowledge practice, dominance of a business organisational approach quickly emerges as a significant theme.

There are several aspects to locating objects of trust in discourses of organisation. The first focuses on trust *within* organisation; while the second explores notions of trust perceptions *towards* an organisation by external others, such as competitors, customers and consultants.

As an example of this, when Chris expresses a perceived need to systematise trust in organisations (paragraph 7), he is building on dominant managerial discourses that subscribe to a view that systemisation is fundamental to controlling all aspects of organisational life. Systems are a part of organisational management rhetoric, whereas trust is a human characteristic that is subject to vagaries of the human condition. As Chapter 2 describes, dominant management discourses ascribe to a view that it could be risky to rely on human beings to control trust in organisations. Rather, it could be said that in order for Chris' daughter to have a

world "worth growing up in" (paragraph 7), trust needs to be extracted from the control of fallible human beings and embedded in organisation systems that, although not always infallible, at least have ways of monitoring, measuring and controlling trust.

We might ask whether Chris is querying trustworthiness of the internal workings of organisation that takes place between and among organisation members. Alternatively, he may be questioning whether knowledge 'put out' by an organisation to external parties is trustworthy. The following sections look at the ontology of trust to examine these two questions of knowledge praxis: first as an organisational activity by those directly implicated in and sustained by an internal community of business organisation – knowledge practitioners; and second, how outsiders to an organisation perceive processes and the business itself. In this context, outsiders may include those individuals and businesses whose relationship with an organisation is *ad hoc* or not formalised, such as customers and consultants. The KnowledgeBoard text provides us with perceptions from both of these groups since both are represented as participants.

7.5.1 Perceptions of trust within organisations

Although participants in the KnowledgeBoard forum perform different roles as knowledge practitioners, they affirm a clear discursive link between organisations and trust. In his role as organisational business consultant, John sees organisation and trust aligning with potential business consulting opportunities. He relates his consultancy role to a shift from writing about trust to "helping organisations make changes" (paragraph 8).

First, John observes that organisations appear to do little more than talk about trust. Second, he sees there is a need for change in the nature of trust in organisations and that change is considered to be progress and that is good. Third, axiomatic to John's rhetoric is a belief that consultants are seen to have answers and can help organisations make necessary changes. The implication is that without external intervention in the form of paid consulting, organisations can not

or will not make such changes. Indeed, consultants straddle the internal/external boundaries of business organisations by having a unique view as both insider and outsider to machinations of organisation in both structure and process.

John acknowledges that for management, trust has an extrinsic value, that of change, which needs to be capable of measurement in order to be changed. Here, we see an alignment of trust with economic discourses through relating trust projects to consulting opportunities by making the intangibility of trust into a tangible commodity and, therefore, something marketable by a consultant to an organisation. John's statements about trust, organisation and change reveal implicit and explicit perspectives of a state of play and players in knowledge management discourse as a way of making knowledge useful or more useful; to be organisationally amplified as Nonaka suggests (1994: 17).

By creating knowledge through trust in consultancy projects that can be captured by an organisation, John produces his subject position as knowledge worker within a dominant managerial discourse. John's interest in developing consulting opportunities is to develop a method – a system – whereby trust can become organisational knowledge.

Implicit in John's statement about trust and organisation is that organisational knowledge can then be controlled by an organisation, that is, access to such knowledge is specifically controlled by management. More than that, it is organisational management that determines which knowledge has value and the way in which such valuing is expressed to knowledge workers who create knowledge and work with it. Here, it could be argued that it is not only organisational management to whom trust is entrusted but also, and perhaps more specifically, trust in an organisation relates to those who create and work with knowledge.

How is trust manifested in organisational contexts that suggest change is required? In the text below, two KnowledgeBoard participants are discussing organisational contexts for sharing ideas and risk taking. John and Alex identify conflicts between organisational management and knowledge practitioners that have

important implications for organisations. Conflicts may occur, in part because an organisational environment for sharing ideas may exhibit a lack of trust.

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96. *John Moore*: I think trust is what makes it easy for people to share ideas, so is bound to have an impact on an organisation's ability to create intellectual capital
98. *Alex MacGillivray*: Well this is the crucial question. In big companies, that is true. Inside 3M, say, you can afford to take a risk with an idea because you can trust management not to belittle you. Not so at Kodak.
99. *John Moore*: I generally find organisations have cultures that subtly or overtly discourage openness and make vulnerability dangerous.

The picture John and Alex paint is one of uncertainty of trust in a business environment in which to create and share knowledge. A discursive link between knowledge work and organisational intellectual capital is clearly articulated but in order for one to become the other – for the benefit of an organisation – the knowledge creator must be induced to share his or her knowledge. At the same time, they observe that the road is fraught with risk for the knowledge creator. Without trust in an organisation and its management, John and Alex consider it to be difficult for people to share ideas, thus, a goal of developing corporate intellectual capital is also at risk.   Further, if organisational management belittles knowledge workers, acts that discourage openness and sharing of ideas will make vulnerable any benefit to business. The notion of communities of knowledge practice supported by management in which knowledge creators willingly share their knowledge may be locked out of practitioner discourse. Further, if actions of belittlement and other negativity to practitioners by organisational management are widespread, then any concept of an organisational culture of innovation and knowledge creation is contradicted by management.

Statements in the dominant managerial discourse concerning a positive organisational environment for knowledge creating processes and smooth transition of such knowledge to an organisation (discussed in Chapter 2) are not evident in the discourses of knowledge practitioners. Organisationally-sponsored communities of practitioners with organisational learning in a learning organisation as objectives seem quite remote in the environment described by John and Alex. Although many discursive objects and major thematic threads used in the dominant managerial discourse appear in the KnowledgeBoard text,

they tend to be described by statements that engage more closely with alternative knowledge discourses of power and identity. We do not see respect and dignity of an individual or social harmony in a community-like workplace, evinced by theorists of dominant discourses (see for example, Drucker, 1949: 164; 1994: 65; Reich, 1991; Brint, 1984). Neither do we see processes described in dominant discourses of creating valuable knowledge (intellectual capital) so important to economic well-being of a business organisation and organisational competitiveness (Teece, 1981; 1998; Hedlund, 1994; Davenport *et al*, 1998; Nonaka *et al*, 2000). According to KnowledgeBoard practitioners, rather than these processes being supported by organisational management; they are more likely to be derailed.

Similarities with statements reflecting alternative discourses become apparent. Alternative conceptions about knowledge work inscribe knowledge in terms of discourses of power (Deetz 1994b; Clegg and Palmer, 1996; Garrick and Clegg, 2000), knowledge worker identity (Deetz, 1994a; Carr, 1998; Alvesson, 2000; 2001), processes of creativity (Blackler, 1995), and sensitivities to relationships between power and tacit knowledge (Garrick and Clegg, 2000; Marshall and Brady, 2001). In the Knowledgeboard forum, there are clear echoes of power discourses by organisational management, certainly reflected in the above statements by Alex and John. Knowledge worker identity may be vulnerable at the hands of management and, therefore, knowledge workers may distrust management. Processes of creativity may be devalued by management, such that tacit knowledge in the heads of knowledge workers may remain hidden. In such an organisational environment of distrust, potential smooth transfer of knowledge from knowledge workers to an organisation may remain elusive.

Indeed, as Mayer *et al* (1995: 712) noted, trust may be defined as willingness of an individual to be vulnerable to actions of another, insofar as that individual expects the other not to work against the individual's interests, and regardless of whether the other can manage or control the individual. And Lewicki *et al* (1998: 439) describe trust/distrust as confident positive/negative expectations regarding another's conduct. Thus, it could be argued that the KnowledgeBoard practitioners have confident negative expectations in management, or conversely,

confident positive expectations that management will exploit vulnerabilities of knowledge workers in their organisations. It may be that knowledge workers are no longer willing to allow themselves to be made vulnerable to actions of management, because they have experienced and perceived management working against practitioner interests.

If, as some KnowledgeBoard participants state, organisational management is generally unsupportive of knowledge worker creative processes and that trust between the two groups is fragile, it is likely to effect the quality and value of knowledge outcomes for organisations. Innovation may be seen as too risky for practitioners; openness and knowledge sharing may be seen as potentially dangerous. Treading a safer path that lessens knowledge worker vulnerability to management arbitrariness and oppressive organisational culture may be more desirable for knowledge practitioners. And since, to reframe Polanyi's (1962b) words with regard to tacit knowledge that we know more than we can say, management does not know what is hidden in the heads of knowledge workers nor can it know if knowledge workers will express it. The negative effects on such an organisation are obvious, in terms of knowledge intensivity (see, Mintzberg, 1993; Collins, 1997; Deetz, 1994a; Alvesson, 2000; 2001; Garrick and Clegg, 2000; Robertson and Swan, 2003), innovation (see, Nonaka, 1995; Hargadon, 1998; Mokyr, 2002; Hildreth and Kimble, 2002; 2004; Swan *et al*, 2002), intellectual capital (see, Bontis, 1999; Rastogi, 2000), the learning organisation (see, Senge, 1990; McGill *et al*, 1992; Easterby-Smith, 1997; Garrick and Clegg, 2000; Small and Dickie, 2000), and so on.

7.5.2   Trustworthiness of organisations to outsiders

Another aspect associated with alignment of trust discourses with those of organisation relates to trustworthiness <u>of</u> an organisation; as an outsider looking in. In paragraphs 17, 19 and 21, Chris talks about criteria he uses to determine whether an organisation is worth trusting. It appears that Chris has already established his own 'system' for recognising trust. Clarification about whether an organisation is "only image-making, or doing reality-making too" (paragraph 17)

appears to capture the contradictions and discursive spaces between practitioner 'street level' what is, and the managerial large-scale what 'should be' (Browning, 2000). Chris seeks evidence for reality-making through measurement of "intangible purpose(s)" (paragraph 19) and that organisational members/stakeholders are valued intrinsically rather than instrumentally, citing a traditional fiscal view that "people are costs" (paragraph 21).

Of course, a trust discourse among practitioners does not relate to business organisations alone; it extends to stated views about government institutions and their representatives. These include practitioner comments on statements by the US administration about the Iraq war, "Well I found the Iraq war debate a real puzzle because you have (still) three main protagonists who all have been accused of fakery but on this appeared to have the glint of absolute, almost religious conviction – authentic as you like" (Alex, paragraph 52). Here, one may suppose that the three main protagonists are the U.S. (Bush), Britain (Blair) and Iraq (Hussein). While, such comments as these are of obvious interest, particularly in contextualising the forum debate, they are not pertinent to the thesis.

Other ways that practitioners discuss trust of organisations is to differentiate by size of firm and the relationship between social capital and entrepreneurialism (paragraphs 100-114 below).

> 100. *Alex MacGillivray*: But in little firms and micro-enterprise, I wonder whether they don't thrive in a climate of mistrust. We've been looking at enterprise in the UK inner city and they don't 'cluster' - they are adversarial.
> 101. *Alex MacGillivray*: Robert Putnam[57] hasn't looked at the links between social capital in an area and levels of entrepreneurship. My theory is that they may be inversely related - which goes against a lot of what has been written, because it's aimed at the big corporations.

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[57] "Robert D. Putnam is the Peter and Isabel Malkin Professor of Public Policy at Harvard … He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, a Fellow of the British Academy, and past president of the American Political Science Association. In 2006, Putnam received the Skytte Prize, one of the world's highest accolades for a political scientist ... he has served as Dean of the Kennedy School of Government.

"He has written a dozen books, translated into seventeen languages, including the best-selling *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2001), and more recently *Better Together: Restoring the American Community* (2003), a study of promising new forms of social connectedness… "Putnam has worked on these themes with both the Clinton and Bush White Houses, as well as with the Blair Government, the Irish Taoiseach, and other political leaders and grassroots civic activists around the world."
http://ksgfaculty.harvard.edu/robert_putnam, (last accessed November 4, 2007).

102. *John Moore*: Interesting about micro-enterprise. I think it's always possible for a business to accumulate profit by being quite selfish; but that may not be so good for a community. So perhaps "big" business may not be so bad after all?
103. *John Moore*: Yes, being big does make you visible. Nike can't get away with bad sourcing where a small biz could
104. *Alex MacGillivray*: Fine except micro-enterprise is where the jobs and growth are, so that's where the policy is aimed at the moment.
105. *John Moore*: So perhaps the policy effort should be towards greater transparency for small biz? or is that just more red tape?
106. *Alex MacGillivray*: I just don't know if big firms are trusted more than little ones - another question for our research agenda.
107. *Ton Ziljstra*: Maybe the policy should encourage small bizz to form groups 'packs' more for joint innovation etc. Then you have the visibility in the network taking the place of the visibility of big corps
108. *Ton Ziljstra*: the network could foster transparency as well
109. *John Moore*: What I experience with small businesses is that their owners feel isolated and have a lot of sleepless nights! A better sense of community might be what they really need
110. *Tobias Keim*: Micro-enterprises need networks they can rely on. The focus needs to be on the creation of trusted relationships with suppliers, employees and customers
111. *Alex MacGillivray*: Certainly, helping small firms be transparent is key. We've developed plenty of social auditing tools, but not affordable or attractive for little forms [firms]. But we now have one called ethical explorer which is on the NEF[58] website. It's a lot more approachable.
112. *Alex MacGillivray*: I agree about the loneliness of the entrepreneur.
113. *John Moore*: I think it's a mix of hard and soft tools - audits on the one hand, and support from kindred spirits on the other
114. *John Moore*: I do think that regulation alone will not return trust to organisations

In the above section of text, we find knowledge practitioners discussing ways in which organisations can be made to appear to be more trustworthy – through external intervention such as policy and regulation, a community of peers and even technology – to make processes visible. This is to say, disreputable organisational processes, such as exploitation of workers in third-world economies by large companies such as Nike, or revealing secrets of innovation by small firms to overcome 'entrepreneurial loneliness' should have transparency forced upon them in some way in order for them to appear trustworthy. What practitioners are articulating is that, without external intervention at some level, under their own auspices, organisations tend not to be worthy of trust.

A further implication of such comment is that without both observation and intervention by others – visibility and transparency, if you like – organisational

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[58] NEF (New Economics Foundation) is described on its website as "an independent 'think and do' tank. We believe in economics as if people and the planet mattered." http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/

members operate in a hidden world and, therefore, cannot be trusted. Perhaps, here, too, is a sign of the times that unless an entity can be subject to surveillance in some way, it is not, indeed, cannot, be trusted. The downside to the quest for organisational transparency is a demand for evidence of trust, rather than trust as implicit in individual's own judgments.

Knowledge practitioners suggest that not only is surveillance an effective way of overseeing trust in organisations, but also that exposure or a threat of exposure ensures a minimum level of trust can be maintained. In the section below (paragraphs 117-128), practitioners describe methods of providing evidence of trust of business organisations and institutions through surveys, linking discourses of trust through provision of tangible evidence.

Understandings of trust by the practitioners seem to differ somewhat from the definition offered earlier by Mayer *et al* (1995: 712): that trust may be defined as the willingness of an individual to be vulnerable to the actions of another, insofar as that individual expects the other not to work against an individual's interests, and regardless of whether the other can manage or control the individual. It seems to be that evidence of a more concrete nature is a prerequisite to an individual being willing to be vulnerable to another's actions and that expectations that the other will not work against the individual are based on the regularly-surveyed good opinions of others. Moreover, the potentially-vulnerable individual clearly desires forms of control through evidence to mitigate vulnerability.

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117. *Alex MacGillivray*: It may be that there is a limited amount of trust that a given group of consumers have to invest in business - so businesses have to fight for it. If that is true, then regulation is a waste of time. But surely trust has fallen absolutely across business to an all time low, too?
118. *John Moore*: Yes, I think the evidence that trust in institutions of all kinds has fallen, though NGOs seem to do ok in surveys
119. *Monica Andre*: How about the role of organizational infrastructures in building trust?
120. *John Moore*: I think we're seeing the demise of monolithic trust in favour of trust build a conversation at a time
121. *Alex MacGillivray*: Just looking - I may not have time to find it til the end.
122. *pt on firebird*: what is the influence of the fact that more information is available to consumers on trust in institutions?
123. *Alex MacGillivray*: soon the only trusted institution in Europe will be Readers Digest that does the annual survey!
124. *Alex MacGillivray*: and, sorry, Nokia that always wins it.

> 125. **Ton Ziljstra**: NGO's do fine until a flaw is exposed. Politicians and big corps do fine after they've proven. So there is a starting level of trust assigned to orgs based on the group they seem to belong to (?)
> 126. **Alex MacGillivray**: To subscribe to pioneer entrepreneurs, email dbayless@pioneerentrepreneurs.com
> 127. **Alex MacGillivray**: Ton I am sure is right. And the starting level seems to vary by country too.
> 128. **Alex MacGillivray**: But I don't have an answer to pt on firebirds. I wonder if information alone can alter trust levels?

Practitioners connect discourses of trust with economics by referencing trust as a scarce resource for which business organisations need to compete by group and by country. A question arises as to whether more (or indeed, less) information about an organisation or institution influences the trust it can muster. It is as if trust is a global commodity and subject to market forces.

At the same time as linking discourses of trust to organisation, practitioners also align the object of trust within discourses of individual humanity. Monica asks (paragraph 119) whether organisational infrastructure is conducive to building trust, to which John responds that the monolith of organisational infrastructure cannot impose trust. Rather, trust must be built through the most human of activities – conversation, each conversation building on the previous to create trust between individuals.

It seems to be recognised that building of trust occurs from the bottom up via interactions, one conversation at a time, among organisational stakeholders rather than imposition by organisational management. Yet, within an organisational context, stakeholders, including practitioners, link discourses of trust with tangible evidence of its existence. Like management, with its purported need to assess levels of trust among knowledge creators, stakeholders need to assess trustworthiness of organisations. In other words, stakeholders are willing to be vulnerable to other people according to the definition of trust by Mayer *et al* (1995) but need evidence or a history of trust to be authenticated in the case of the collective organisation.

Notions of trust in and for an organisation appear to be only loosely aligned with those of and by an individual; since it seems that individual stakeholders can

assess other individuals on a personal basis but cannot account for the organisations that these individuals may represent. Instead, organisations need to create a reputation of trustworthiness that needs to be observed and commented on by others – documented through regular surveys which, in themselves, are deemed authentic and therefore, trustworthy.

7.5.3   Organisational authenticity

Since authenticity is discussed several times in connection with trust and organisations by forum participants, it will be useful to provide a more careful reading of how it is used within the context of knowledge praxis. Here we shift our attention to an earlier part of the KnowledgeBoard text.

Perhaps recognising that one way of understanding trust concerns differentiating 'authentic' from the 'fake', Chris leads the forum discussion into defining what authenticity means (paragraph 21). At this point, I do not intend to examine in depth the wealth of literature on authenticity in management and organisational studies to determine how KnowledgeBoard participants understand the term, although it may be defined in a number of different ways (see, Erickson, 1994; Harter, 2002; Luthans and Avolio, 2003; May *et al*, 2003). Suffice to say, authenticity is considered to be an individual attribute based on aligning actions and behaviours with internalised values and beliefs (Harvey *et al*, 2006; Jensen and Luthans, 2006) and may be identified within an organisational culture that promotes development of authentic leadership (Gardner *et al*, 2005; Luthans and Avolio, 2003).

Chris questions first whether authenticity is a term used in the context of an individual, group or organisation (paragraph 21). John, as convenor, reasserts his position in the group, first by complimenting Chris on the quality of his question and then by defining authenticity according to his personal interests. John explains authenticity as subjective (paragraph 22), connecting with an individual, rather than a group or an organisation and as something that is felt, that is aligned with internalised values. He then attaches authority to his view by nominating an

individual who he regards as an authority of delimitation – David Boyle[59] – who published on the topic of authenticity[60]. Boyle as an authority is known to other members of the group, such as Alex, who begins to articulate the way in which Boyle defined authenticity.

Chris then picks up on John's personalised explanation of authenticity as felt and extends it to an exploration of emotions aroused (paragraph 24). Chris switches the discussion back to his interests of humanising the discussion, seeking expressions of feeling and emotion from other participants through examples and personal stories (paragraph 27). Subsequently, other members of the group begin to express themselves in emotive terms as they describe their views concerning authenticity.

During the interchange exploring participants' notions of authenticity (paragraphs 21-34), there were several attempts to re-establish the forum in an organisational sphere, yet such organisational references could not be seen as positive experiences. For example, John says: "Ultimately, trust and authenticity can never truly belong to organisations, but to the people inside them" (paragraph 26), and Chris says: "…extraction by an organisation is where KM goes wrong if it goes down that road imo [in my opinion]" (paragraph 30). Alex also complains about organisations, including internet banks that have to open branches and the rules imposed by KnowledgeBoard to enable him to register for the debate (paragraph 31).

As KnowledgeBoard participants explore conceptions of knowledge praxis, they adopt rhetoric that expresses their subject positions. As we have seen above, John takes a pragmatic role and his rhetoric reflects dominant managerial discourse of organisations and economics. Alternatively, Chris adopts a humanist position, again reflected in his rhetoric of emotions and feelings. In the following section, I

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[59] David Boyle is an associate of the New Economics Foundation, where Alex is a senior associate.

[60] Boyle, D. (2003), **Authenticity: Brands, Fakes, Spin and the Lust for Real Life**, London: Flamingo. Boyle, D. (2003), *Brands are no substitute for the real thing*, **Financial Times**, London, UK, Aug 8, 2003. p.19

examine power relations in the system of organisation through subject positions of participants and statements of organisation.

7.6 POWER RELATIONS IN THE SYSTEM OF ORGANISATION STATEMENTS

As discussed in Chapter 3, Foucault (1972) suggests there are several ways that power relations emerge in the way statements about discursive objects are organised. First, the section examines shifts in power relations among participants in the way they construct their identities within the forum and how they adopt or resist subject positions of discourse. Then, I explore how statements are organised and presented by participants, including insertion of new objects and ways in which they are linked to other influencing discourses. Finally, I seek to understand how practitioners use rules and tools to establish their subject positions as authorities of delimitation in newly-developing knowledge fields, such as knowledge work.

A particular feature of the early part of the forum is an obvious 'jockeying' for dominance of the forum between John and Chris. John attempts to stamp his authoritative position on the proceedings by asking the first question, thereby establishing his boundaries to the discussion. Yet, when Alex takes his first tentative steps to participation in the discussion with "Hi everyone - I assume I type in here?" Chris immediately takes charge of the discussion by typing "Yes, Alex …" Under a traditional protocol of courtesy, it would have been normal for John as convenor to conduct all the welcoming procedures before opening up the forum to discussion, since Alex's comment did not fall within the boundaries of discussion but a logistical query of how to participate.

Chris tries to build his own authority by circumscribing the discussion within slightly different boundaries to those established by John. Chris does so by launching into a response that describes both personal interest (his parenthood) and professional interest (systematising trust). John immediately deflects Chris'

comments by interrupting and ignoring them and by re-defining the limits of the discussion in his terms with "I've been writing about trust for a while now, I'm interested in ways of moving on from talking about it, to helping organisations make change". Such reinsertion of his presence into discussion as the convenor, prior to others expressing their personal interest in the debate may be seen as a means of limiting Chris' authority and a power play to re-establish John's legitimacy and authority as convenor. Also, there is a sense of prior frustration about talk versus walk that perhaps John is suggesting he wants action outcomes from the KnowledgeBoard forum. Chris' mention of the reconciliation conference of Collapsing World (concerning talk rather than action) was not taken up by other participants and was completely ignored.

The shifting of authority positioning as negotiating power relations between John and Chris is taken up by other participants, who at various times align themselves with one or the other. This is done in various ways, such as talking over the top of Chris "Coming down to ground level, whenever I enter an organisation these days I have 3 queries about whether its worth trusting...", where Chris was attempting to make three points and was interrupted by both Alex and John who were conversing directly with each other, over the top of Chris.

In this interlude, we see that as John and Chris negotiate a power relationship within the forum, their subject positions as legitimate discussion leader and discussion participant provide antecedents to the relationship. Such predispositions to subject positions predefined by a hierarchy established within this KnowledgeBoard forum do not prevent or inhibit either John or Chris from adopting different subject positions when it suits them, as the next section examines.

7.6.1 Subject positions

In the text, we can observe that participants produce a range of subject positions, that is, they can redefine the relationship of their positions, rather than having to accept (or struggle against) predefined subject positions based on their

relationship to a hierarchy of authority (Hook, 2005). As discussed in Chapter 3, discourse constructs subject positions – and these are variable with respect to location in the discourse and capacity to talk about its objects. They include those individuals and groups who assume the status of authority through their legitimated knowledge on the object/subject that the discourse lays claim to (Foucault, 1972; Kendall and Wickham, 1999). KnowledgeBoard participants produce subject positions that range from truly personal (Chris as a concerned father) to exclusively professional (Alex discussing consulting projects and Tobias' interest in factors and measurement).

As we analyse the section of text more deeply, we see that subjective relationship positions produced by most forum participants are those connected with organisations as consultants or contractors; in this respect only Ian identifies as an organisational practitioner working for a single organisation, rather than an external advisor who may work for many. The positions of consultant and contractor are tenuous and rely on producing some tangible outcomes that have productive benefits for an organisation. Not only do these statements produce subject positions but also they speak to dominant managerial discourses of productivity. This is illustrated in statements about a need to progress from discussion (talk) to some form of action (John, Ton), whereby the value of discussion (thinking and collaborating) is seen as limited and merely a precursor to what is really important – the doing and the making of tangible and, therefore, measurable changes within organisations.

Forum participants produce and are implicated in discourses of productivity that justify their subjective positions as consultants and practitioners. They make statements that link knowledge produced as consultants to knowledge managed by organisations, and discourses of knowledge management are linked to systems of standardisation and measurement. Their subject positions as knowledge practitioners situate them in organisational contexts and dominant managerial discourses of rational progress. These statements and subject positions are repeated throughout the forum in various ways. To illustrate this point, I will concentrate on Ian – his participation in the forum both directly and indirectly. Although Ian's direct involvement in the forum is scant, we can understand the

subject position he produces. His indirect involvement is the subject position that is produced for him by the discourse.

Our first glimpse of Ian's subject position is one of modesty and reserve. In response to John initiating the discussion through his request for participants to introduce themselves and express their interests in the debate, Ian's reply was "Hi All....sorry, only just got smart enough to work out how to 'play'!!" (paragraph 6). At this point, Ian's indication of his interests in the debate is one of playfulness, that is, his participation in the forum represents play rather than work.

Also, Ian's view is one of modesty, expressed by his recent ability or smartness to work out how to play. At the same time, he is alienated from the others in that he suggests that the rules and *modus operandi* of the KnowledgeBoard debate are somehow different from Ian's normalised world of work. It is as if he is saying, I am here but I don't take the discussion seriously. Yet, he is drawn into the discussion, indicated by his forceful comments "I believe trust comes in varying levels – but is the root of ALL relationships which is what business, and life, depends on" (paragraph 13). His emphasis is that ALL relationships depend on trust; not for him are the accountant transactions, which others perceive as implicit in organisational trust. Despite Ian's insistence that trust is the root of all relationships, again he makes a distinction between business and life, work and play.

The distinction between what constitutes work compared to play is revealed in Ian's final comment, "Really sorry everyone – got a phone interrupt from my boss in US at 3.05pm now I must sort something for him urgently – I was enjoying this very much!!" (paragraph 92). Here, Ian indicates that for him, the priority is work over play, even at 3.05 on a Friday afternoon, he feels he must drop the enjoyable play embodied in his participation in a forum of his professional peers to attend to an urgent business matter. Ian produces his subject position as dutiful employee, responding to what he refers to as an interruption, albeit from his boss, to attend to an urgent matter late on a Friday afternoon.

Ian's subject position is not only produced by the discourse in his professional capacity as organisational knowledge practitioner – company vice president – but also, it is imposed on him by other participants in the discourse. However, here, his subject position is not one of obedient employee but one of authority and expertise. Ian becomes part of Chris' reference to his own authority as Chris re-establishes new subject positions for himself – distinct from concerned parent – as authoritative consultant and book author. Chris links his own subject position of authority with that of Ian through a book to which Chris, Ian and others have contributed chapters[61] (paragraph 17).

Ian's subject position in organisational management (as VP Brand & Communications, Unisys) is recognised as having specialised authority that is different from the other participants. This subject position is neither playful observer nor obedient employee, but one that comes from status of his organisational role as vice president. It emerges in the request by John "Ian: I wonder if you'd like to comment on Alex's point about business attitudes – you're at the front line of business at Unisys" (paragraph 75). Until now, Ian's participation in the KnowledgeBoard discourse has not accorded him any particular status of authority as an organisational knowledge practitioner.

However, the request for Ian to respond to Alex's comment (paragraph 71) concerning social capital's lack of attraction to a business audience – since it can not be spent like other capital – suggests that Ian's subject position imposed by the discourse represents him as business audience. John suggests that Ian has authority to speak as business audience, more than other participants who may be contractors, consultants and advisors, or academics.

As Foucault (1972), Kendall and Wickham (1999), and Hook (1995) have suggested, participants produce a range of subject positions, some of which are predefined by the discourse in relation to a hierarchy of participants – such as organisational management, vice president, employee, author – others which they produce for themselves – such as outsider and obedient employee – and subject

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[61] Ind, N. (ed.), (2003), **Beyond Branding: How the New Values of Transparency and Integrity are Changing the World of Brands,** Kogan Page, London.

positions they create for others – such as with Chris in a co-position of authority as author. Thus, Ian's subject positions are produced by the discourse, by the participants in the discourse, and by him. Such subject positions adapt to the evolution of discourse as new statements about objects are made and new objects are inserted into the discourse. How statements and objects are presented and organised is examined in the next section.

7.6.2   How statements of organisation are rendered

Forum discussants draw on a number of discourses in their communications with each other. Initial statements about trust as an object connect it with the discourses of organisation and control. Trust becomes part of a triumvirate of objects of organisation and systems. New statements about the trust objects link them with knowledge, such that trust becomes described as a system of knowledge control within an organisational context. Managerial discourses of control are revealed in rhetoric concerning the need to both detect emerging conflict among organisational members and resolving it. This refers to systemic control rather than transactional management, since elsewhere in the forum it seems that management is the problem.

The rhetoric suggests that perhaps by removing the human project from organisational trust management (if indeed such a thing is possible), then disembodied organisational systems and networks can detect potential conflict and resolve it just as they can detect communications packets on the systems and route them to the right recipient. Such statements concern maintenance or "keeping trusted relationships alive", as in general maintenance of just another organisational system. Questions of creation and establishment of trust are similar sorts of questions that have been asked, and in part have been answered by theorists such as Nonaka and others, concerning creating and establishment of organisational knowledge. Thus, the links between trust and knowledge praxis are further supported.

By centring organisation and control as key objects, they can be aligned with economic discourses of markets and commodities. Smoothing organisational activities of accumulation and expenditure – of both trust and knowledge – receive occasional jolts through innovation or gutsiness, such as used to describe Richard Branson's purchase of BT (British Trains) to create Virgin Rail. At the same time, such activities are not without risk, since they may be seen as mistakes, rather than part of a normalised process of innovation. The riskiness of innovation carries with it a stigma of failure or lack of productive progress (Drucker, 1959); and in the case of some organisations, belittling by management. These are not the processes of knowledge creation spirals suggested by Nonaka (1994) in which an organisation allows people to act autonomously and to have the freedom to take risks and create disorder. These are traditional managerial discourses of control and rational progress.

Links between and among key objects of trust, control and organisation are still emerging and are fragile; economics of activating 'business' opportunities that develop through controlling and organising trust are tenuous. The fragility of discursive links between these objects are evident as new objects are inserted into the discussion, that of relationships and people. These objects can be seen as providing tension between impersonal statements of organisation and control and personal statements of human relationships. Yet the boundaries of statements relating to objects of trust, control and organisation are redeveloped as new accounting discourses of measurement and influencing factors are inserted. Accounting and measuring discourses are extended by new statements concerning a hierarchy of trust, whereby certain measurable attributes must be accounted for before the next level in a trust hierarchy can be reached.

Managerial discourses about progress and productivity are brought into play through statements about accomplishment through action. They are further extended through statements about consumption and markets, and are linked to organisational authority and legitimacy through statements about authenticity of communications. Statements concerning trust describe it in terms of capital acquisition, investment and its potential for expenditure, further strengthening its connectivity with things of organisational and economic value.

Human characteristics of trust, honesty and reciprocity are linked to organisations and technology through associated objects, such as networks, topology, knowledge management and systems; each of which speaks to concerns of organisational management in conceptions of control and manageability. Yet this notion is contested, espoused in limitations of accounting-type transactions, systematising distrust and shrewd conmen.

Technology rhetoric is sustained when groups or 'packs' of innovating small businesses are deemed to be manageable or controllable by government policy to execute network visibility or transparency; a suggestion that is contested by a perception of general untrustworthiness in politicians. The language refers to the way a supervisor of a computerised communications technology network can observe what is occurring in IS networks. A big brotherly approach is justifiable in understandings that small business owners need this to create a sense of community, in much the same way as organisationally-sponsored communities of practice are supposed to. Such rhetoric makes covert other managerial activities as organisational learning and learning organisation in the name of transparency and openness.

Technology discourses are pivotal to a discussion of knowledge praxis. Although 'social auditing tools' may be acceptable for entrepreneurial firms, they still present a technology discourse that is tempered by humanness of kindred spirits, individuals who exhibit a willingness or resistance to sharing innovation processes. As with discourses of knowledge work and its management, discourses of organisational trust cannot truly be systematised and structured to exclude the messiness of human interaction; they will always rely on agreement by people to share their knowledge with others.

Finally, rather than experiencing knowledge praxis through trust as willingness of an individual to be vulnerable to actions of another as suggested by Mayer *et al* (1995: 712), practitioners require evidence that organisations and management are trustworthy. There seems to be a strong view that regardless of type of organisation – its size or whether it is public or private, or even countries – the

inference is that unless there is proof that organisations and management are trustworthy, practitioners are sceptical about its existence. Even such traditionally high-trust organisations like NGOs are fine "until a flaw is exposed". In other words, scepticism may be suspended in some cases, but the expectation is that eventually management and organisations are likely to be exposed as untrustworthy or at best questionable.

In explicating how statements of organisation are rendered, there is a strong presence of polarisation between practitioners and management. Perhaps there is view that, depending on which hat they are wearing at the time, knowledge practitioners who may also be management, can separate self as practitioner from self as management. In the case of the KnowledgeBoard forum, there is little evidence that this is problematic for participants, even for those, such as Ian, who are clearly members of management. Indeed, it is likely that Ian and other management participant practitioners are simply adopting a different subject position.

It is because management practitioners, such as Ian, can maintain separate management and practitioner subject positions, and indeed additional subject positions that they can most effectively participate in such a forum as both legitimating authority and player. The next section shows how these positions can alternate and integrate.

7.6.3 Legitimating authority: Becoming a player

As discussed in Chapter 3, in Foucauldian terms, authorities of delimitation come from established fields of knowledge. However, where such knowledge fields are not established or are in the process of becoming established, acceptance of discursive objects is particularly important to those implicated within and by an emerging discourse as practitioners rather than theory-builders. These rules are tools used to establish *prima facie* evidence of authority by practitioners in newly developing knowledge fields such as knowledge work. Moreover, it is important

for practitioners to employ dominant discourse since to challenge it openly would also challenge their legitimacy, and acceptability, to participate as practitioners.

Having yet to attain legitimation for the emerging domain of knowledge, so too, practitioner authorities of legitimation in these new domains are also tenuous in their roles as both practitioners and authorities of legitimation. Moreover, since they translate theory building into the application of theory in practice, practitioner authorities of legitimation are problem seekers and solution finders. In many cases, they seek to commercialise their definitions and applications of both problems and solutions. As well, the legitimacy of the speaker is frequently supported by a call to other authorities of legitimation as support – such as book co-authors or well-published colleagues.

From the outset, John identifies his own power position as convenor, which he legitimates through his familiarity with some of the other participants. Foucault might explain this as the "interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual domination" (Foucault, 1988: 19), with such technologies of domination residing in his power position within the forum. John (paragraph 1) says "(It's) nice to see some familiar names, and also some ones (sic) that are new to me". The authority of his position as convenor comes through his past participation in KnowledgeBoard and his familiarity with many KnowledgeBoard members (there are more than 5,000). However, his authority as convenor over a known group of participants is limited by his knowledge of only some of the members and that familiarity may be only with their names rather than their persons.[62]

By acknowledging there are 'strangers' in their midst, John uses his legitimate authority as convenor of the forum to establish discursive boundaries of proper introduction and format of the discussion by saying "So shall we begin by saying what our personal interest is in this debate?" (paragraph 3). Here, he invites the other participants to make themselves 'known' in terms of presence and interests

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[62] The KB community is international and participants to the forum are located around the world. Indeed, the 11 active participants to the particular forum come from the UK (5), Italy (1), German (1), USA (1), Netherlands (1), Sweden (1) and Portugal (1). There may also have been others who 'attended' the online discussion but were not active and, therefore, their presence was not visible.

and communicates an expectation that speakers must be legitimated by his authority.

While they are not necessarily mandated by any particular body of knowledge, knowledge practitioners develop their reputations and legitimacy as authorities by proxy through sustaining dominant discourses. This does not necessarily mean that dominant discourse is reproduced exactly, but discourses of knowledge work produced by practitioner authorities contain sufficient similarity in discursive objects and statements about these objects to be considered as sustaining the dominant managerial discourse.

Practitioner authorities of legitimation build their own profile of expertise by sustaining the dominant discourse in the commercial media, frequently citing other mandated authorities from academic bodies of knowledge or other respected practitioners to support their communications. The role of these practitioner authorities is to 'translate' esoteric academic theory into practical commercial solutions. In effect, such translations are a reproduction of the dominant discourse. Privately, they may take an alternative view, one that remains hidden from their presentation as knowledge practitioners to organisations and management.

In effect, practitioners formalise different subject positions, and indeed different identities, depending on the context. Despite such hat juggling, practitioners employ the objects of dominant discourse in order to communicate with each other. The next section summarises how practitioners use dominant discourses as a common ground.

7.6.3.1 The dominant discourse as common ground

The dominant discourse provides a common ground for communication and understanding among knowledge practitioners, that is, it provides a basis through which meaning can be shared. Silverman (1993: 16) argues that 'institutional' talk, such as that which is used by practitioners and professionals when they

communicate statements concerning their professions, modifies patterns of ordinary conversation in order to communicate meaning. Silverman (1993: 15) suggests that a common ground for meaning is derived from everyday language use through 'language games' (Wittgenstein, 1968). Thus, patterns of institutional talk are revealed within the patterns of ordinary conversation so that we can understand meanings that are being constructed in talk among practitioners.

Institutional talk that is adopted by knowledge practitioners may use constructions that are based on resonance with certain ideas but not others, according to their interests, which may generate 'misleading representations of phenomena' (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999: 654). This is due to different understandings of discursive statements, the degree to which individual practitioners subscribe to certain aspects of the dominant managerial discourse, or, through resonance with their practical experience, may reject some or all of it. However, since selective appropriation occurs, at least some of a dominant discourse can legitimise intentions of management interests and be used to reinforce participation in the dominant discourse (Daudi, 1986: 70). Yet, use of statements derived from managerial discourse by practitioners can be employed just as effectively as a common ground or 'interpretive repetoire' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). In this way, alternative discourses may emerge, without engaging in the problems of circularity that may stem from the unexplained use of such a repertoire (Antaki *et al*, 2004).

Further, by accepting that there needs to be a common ground or language framework to facilitate communication in the first instance, it is likely to include knowledge work practices that are associated with the management of knowledge within an organisational context. Such common ground may include normalising actions associated with sharing individual knowledge, as well as processes of monitoring, measuring, and standardising performances of knowledge workers, knowledge production and a knowledge product. Common ground may also emerge through normalising power strategies in discourses of control and processes of 'capturing' explicit knowledge by technology systems. Normalisation occurs when such knowledge is described unproblematically as an organisational asset. By seeking to establish a common ground, knowledge

practitioners subscribe, at least temporarily, to the processes of naming, framing, controlling and normalising discursive practises that constitute organisational and managerial power effects.

As discussed previously, inclusionary and exclusionary power effects are layered and complex. All the more so, since those who participate in the field of knowledge work – both management and/or practitioners – must share at least some assumptions, language and rhetoric about knowledge work in order to reflect their insider status and authenticity as members in the knowledge work field. Thus, we find that knowledge work participants display their authenticity as members in the field of knowledge work, much as do members everywhere, by sharing their stories and experiences (Silverman, 2004; Richardson, 1990; Miller and Glassner, 1997). Moreover, in order to be understood by others in the field, they must use the cultural resources of rhetoric and language of the official dominant discourse. As Richardson (1990) observed,

> Participation in a culture includes participation in the narratives of that culture, a general understanding of the stock of meanings and their relationships to each other. (Richardson, 1990: 24)

Narratives as cultural stories are deployed to make participants' actions explainable and understandable to those who otherwise may not understand (Miller and Glassner, 1997: 107). By using cultural resources of rhetoric language of official and dominant discourses, sense and meaning are given and made; an ability to use rhetoric language and dominant discourse legitimate participant views and thus negotiate, expand and affirm discourse. In relation to knowledge work, cultural stories are deployed to enable participants to identify with the culture *per se* and to show to others through their performances of cultural stories that they are members of this culture. In this way, knowledge work practitioners share a world view in terms of socially-acquired understanding or 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). They express their experiences of that culture in rhetoric that is official to the culture.

Yet this does not necessarily mean that knowledge work practitioners as participants in the knowledge work culture fully or even partially subscribe to the dominant organisational discourse. Depending on the audience, it is possible that

knowledge practitioners do not fully engage with the range of discursive statements or objects of dominant discourse and merely use cultural metaphors within the discourse as a way of showing to other members that they are part of the knowledge work 'in group', that is social identification within a group (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). While this may indicate a level of deceit – an interesting proposition in a discussion about trust – it shows that subject positions adopted by participants speak to their presentation of self as legitimate authority.

Since subject positions may change according to context, it can be argued that practitioners 'talk the talk' of both the dominant conceptions and alternative discourses about knowledge work. Practitioner discourses speak of organisational knowledge, intellectual property, economics and productivity but they also speak of identity and power relations. At the same time, practitioners also 'walk the talk' as they narrate and share their experiences in knowledge praxis. They use them as a means of sharing a world view with their knowledge work cultural colleagues. It shows how knowledge work practitioners engage with both dominant and alternative discourses in their discussions about knowledge work.

Practitioners are implicated in, constituted by, and constitutive of knowledge work discourses, and they perform a crucial role in buttressing the dominant discourse through their use of its rhetoric. At the same time, their perceptions about knowledge praxis are vital to sustaining alternative conceptions of knowledge work that has wider implications for organisations and management. Despite knowledge work heralded by Drucker, Reich, Bell, Nonaka, Mintzberg, Brown and Duguid and others as socially desirable, a status to which individuals would aspire, a new form of economic business class; practitioners still experience power struggles between organisations and individuals, management and workers, that traditionally have been a part of working environments. Their experiences represent new technologies and rhetoric of control, discourses of possession and dispossession, notions of hierarchy and community, of knowledge sharing and extraction, notions of systematising trust and distrust within organisations.

The dislocation between managerial rhetoric and how it is practiced reveals power effects embodied in management practices of naming and framing, which separate

managerial discursive language of what should be, from the discursive practices of what it is that constitutes knowledge work praxis. The discrepancy between the dominant official discourse of knowledge work, as purveyed in an organisational sense, and the discursive practices of individuals who are implicated in the practices of knowledge work as delineated by the practitioners has been explained.

I have shown the complexity in the way in which knowledge work (and other discourses) develop and are legitimated. While the official discourse of knowledge work also presents a resource that may be deployed by practitioners to show participation in the knowledge work culture, in many cases, managers may also be knowledge work practitioners. Thus, the discursive boundaries between management interests and the realities of street-level practices are far more complex and integrated than a simplistic polarisation between two protagonists.

Indeed, we have seen there are multiple layers of protagonists, who, at times, appear to hold views that are antagonistic to or inconsistent with a particular position, and may, in fact, change their subject positions depending on their interests and the context. As the chapter has shown, knowledge practitioners may assert a particular discursive position and adopt elements of multiple discourses during the course of performing various roles, such as a manager or leader, as a subordinate member of an organisational group, and as a participant in a collegiate group such as KnowledgeBoard. Using Foucauldian discourse analysis, I have shown a deeper understanding of how knowledge work practitioners describe their worlds bringing richness and meaning to this tangle of discourse.

7.7   CONCLUSION

We have seen that by default, through their participation in an online community such as KnowledgeBoard, knowledge practitioners inherently adopt certain features of the dominant discourse to provide a common language of understanding. At the same time, they use both the current dominant managerial and alternative conceptions about knowledge work in their discussions of

organisational practices. They do so within the notion of globalisation and a world order and interconnect them with more humanistic discursive objects such as trust, personal relationships and openness.

Since knowledge practitioners are constituted by the discourse (detailed in Chapter 2), they are not simply choosing to define themselves in a particular way but instead become "situated within a structured set of social practices which constructs subjectivity" (Mumby and Stohl, 1991: 327). The set of social practices that are constituted by knowledge practice takes us beyond the basic iterations to be found through data mining using qualitative analytical software alone. Knowledge practitioner subjectivities are constituted within established and normalised systems of power/knowledge relations (Foucault, 1979; 1980) that have already defined the social arena and common language of their interactions. Social practices are most meaningfully be revealed through a genealogical discourse analysis that has illuminated discursive objects employed by knowledge practitioners and the statements they make about these objects. At the same time, the discourse analysis has revealed those subject positions adopted by practitioners and those imposed on them by others. As has been shown, the to-ing and fro-ing between such subject positions forms power relationships between and among participants.

The chapter has shown that while the wider discourses that link knowledge work to disciplines such as economics and technology are still invoked by practitioners, their legitimacy tends to intersect the more human-centric discourses of trust, personal relationships, intuition and the like, that diminish the dominance of managerial discursive objects such as measurability, standardisation and systemisation.

As with any discourse, there are those who subscribe to the dominant orthodox conception of knowledge work who are involved in online groups discussing issues concerned with productivity, technology, control, management, standards, processes, and so on. These discourses are heavily represented in the KnowledgeBoard forum. As well, alternative discourses speaking to notions of identity and power relations are evident in discussions of trust, honesty,

accountability, reciprocity, personal relationships and the human side of knowledge work and its management. Such alternative discourses attempt to wrest control of knowledge away from organisations, management and technology and back into the hands of the knowledge creators. Both are relevant.

At one level of discursive analysis, practitioner authorities of legitimation oppose the dominant discourses of management and organisational authorities by challenging boundaries of the discourse and what is included and excluded within it. Concurrently, they reproduce and transform official discourses while producing new/alternate/oppositional/sub-discourses as they participate in, work through and against the perceived dominance and legitimation of organisational discourses.

Practitioners also reframe the dominant discursive objects within new contextual perspectives of familiarity and practice. In effect, discourses of a knowledge community of practitioners are relative to and intersect with dominant organisational and management discursive concepts of knowledge work. At the same time, they are situated in other locations within the same discursive field as their subject positions change. This has been seen in the discursive object of knowledge sharing in the broader discourse of knowledge work, where sharing, transfer and capture (organisational management discourse) intersect with trust and integrity (practitioner discourse).

While legitimating authorities from organisational management create and police discursive boundaries of inclusion for knowledge sharing through technology, economic value, intellectual capital, organisational ownership and productivity; in this sweeping movement, they also exclude individual ownership from knowledge creators. This occurs at the same time as organisational management attempts to devise mechanistic systems to generate (enforce, control) intra- and inter-organisational trust.

Conversely, practitioner authorities are working to delegitimise these boundaries of discursive closure by representing statements of the knowledge work discourse as an exchange of knowledge among people rather than between people and

machines. In this way, the pivotal relationship of knowledge work to technological systems is transposed to one that reconfigures the discourse to centralise the human element. Moreover, the continuous existence of so many discussions over many years by knowledge workers on the problems of trust and human relationships in organisational praxis indicates continuing contestation of the boundaries of the dominant managerial discourse. In such discussions, practitioner authorities call upon their professional colleagues in praxis to elucidate their perspectives within the context of practice to generate a clamour for discursive transformation.

The chapter has shown that by working to downgrade the managerial control context through which the dominant discourse conceptualises knowledge work, and instead, asserting the primacy of the human identity to the discourse, the relativity of the object of 'knowledge' to 'work' is discursively realigned. Practitioners do not necessarily erect barriers to the dominant discursive objects of technology, economics, and the law, but rather they deflect the integrity of such arguments as central objects to knowledge work discourse. The research has examined them as well as how the knowledge work discourses are being transformed and realigned with practitioner experiences, thereby establishing new discursive transformations at best or at least, challenging closure of the dominant managerial discourse.

CHAPTER 8

COALESCENCE, CONTRIBUTIONS & CONCLUSION: IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The final chapter brings together the findings and analyses of the previous chapters as well as the contributions of the thesis. The implications of the research to management and organisational studies in both a practical sense and theoretically are also here.

8.1   ONCE UPON A TIME …

The thesis is a story about legitimacy; about how an 'official' perspective achieves its officialness and whether there is an 'actual' story that differs from the official one. There are many aspects to the story of knowledge work. Some aspects concern ways in which academics theorise ontologies through diverse lenses of economics, law, management, organisations, power relationships, identity, and more. They challenge each other, adding new perspectives to the story in order to make their version more legitimate and perhaps posit it as truer. There is struggle between and among the theories as scholars attempt to coalesce and configure an official story; one that is narrated by observers and prescribers. There are other aspects to the story, expressed in terms of actual experiences by those who participate in the story. Then, there are historical contexts which reveal environments from which stories of legitimacy and illegitimacy can emerge. Such contexts also challenge the story as truth.

In Foucauldian terms, this is the formation and development of a discourse where certain rules are followed. There is a beginning, perhaps one of a number of possible beginnings, where a thing or discursive object is described in certain ways according to the interests of authorities making such statements and the influence they hold. As a discourse is given traction by other authorities with

similar interests, new statements are made about the object, enriching the discourse and ennobling its origins; perhaps to mythical proportions. In the case of knowledge work, the myths have attained the status of a Golden Age.

The discourse starts to change when more and more authorities with influence take up the discourse, adding new statements and tweaking old ones. As the discourse spreads to other fields of knowledge, authorities effect further transformations making new statements about the object and inserting new objects into the discourse, thereby reflecting these other knowledge realms. There is a recursive effect as the transformed and transforming discourse enjoins new knowledge fields and influences old ones. As the discourse develops, enlarges and is taken up by other fields of knowledge, it gains strength and legitimacy. The more fields of knowledge that the discourse influences and the more statements that are made about the object, the stronger the discourse becomes, until it is so widely accepted that it attains legitimacy and is deemed official. The official perspective is the one that dominates other possible views, relegating other views to the status of alternative or sub-discourses.

Legitimacy of a discourse comes from the authority of some individuals who have credibility to speak on certain topics. Credibility derives from acknowledgement by others of an individual's accreditation in, specific knowledge of, or professional standing through their association with a particular field of knowledge. Authorities such as an economist within the field of economics, or a lawyer within the legal field, an academic within a university, and a consultant whose expertise is recognised in a particular speciality, all have credibility and authority to speak about particular fields of knowledge.

Within the sphere of knowledge work, certain conceptions about knowledge work have been described by authorities in many different fields of knowledge, including economics, law, technology, management and organisation studies, sociology, education and learning, and more. These authorities are recognised in their own as well as aligned knowledge disciplines to speak with authority about who knowledge workers are and how they work with or create knowledge. Thus,

a discourse of knowledge work has emerged and taken shape as authorities from many fields of knowledge describe and explicate knowledge work.

As the discourses are taken up by authorities in other fields of knowledge, the credibility of both the discourse and the legitimating authorities grows. The discourse is like a bandwagon which carries with it the credibility of its early authorities (Drucker, Bell and Reich may be categorised thus). New authorities and would-be authorities climb aboard and travel around the countryside spreading the discourse in an orchestrated musical display (authorities such as Nonaka, Takeuchi, Despres and Hiltrop, and Davenport). Some band members fall off the wagon and join up with other bands with different versions of the knowledge work show, presenting a jazzed up or blues version of the discourse (such as Huber, Teece and Morris) who speak of organisational assets, organisational learning, and knowledge management. Others authorities (Foray and Lundvall, Szulanski, Brown and Duguid, Alavi and Leidner) and would-be authorities (such as consultants IDC and Gartner) join up with the original or the new bandwagons, giving air to transformations of the knowledge work discourse in the realms of globalisation, knowledge transference, communities of practice, and business intelligence. Alternative rhythms, expressing views of power and identity (such as Clegg, Deetz, Alvesson, Kärreman, and Blackler), sounding and looking like performances of hip-hop or *capoeira*, come from other bandwagons as they contest the limits of the knowledge work music.

The various bandwagons represent suites of knowledge work discourses that are variously articulated by academics and echoed by consultant authorities in many fields of knowledge. There are many dividing lines or boundaries to the knowledge work discourses, representing the numerous interests of those who have authority in different fields of knowledge. There is no consensus, but various theorists have hitched their bandwagon to one or more of the discourses, so that the discourse, or discourses, with the most authorities from the most numerous and diverse fields of knowledge, become dominant.

As the discursive bandwagons roll into town, the local inhabitants are drawn this way and that, from one bandwagon to another. Their attentions are captured by

the largest wagon of authorities and noisiest discursive spruikers, who proclaim a new Golden Age of 'post' capitalism as a Knowledge Society. As well, they listen to those wagon members of a less garrulous nature who harmonise around such themes as processes of creativity, power relationships, individual control of knowledge, and knowledge worker identity. The local inhabitants of the town understand that the discussants on each of the bandwagons are talking about them, theorising about their identities, their values, and how they do what they do as knowledge workers.

The local inhabitants call a public meeting for their townsfolk. "Is that who we are?" they ask each other. "Is that what we do when we make our knowledge work music?" they query. The discourses engage their interest, encouraging them to speak about their experiences as practitioners. As they do so, the knowledge practitioners use the language of the discourses in order to explain to each other their understandings of what it is to be a knowledge worker and to perform knowledge work.

The narrative metaphor in the form of the folktale I have used to introduce the final chapter of the thesis encapsulates the principal question addressed in the thesis of how do knowledge practitioners who are constituted by discourse enact the discourse through praxis. Throughout the thesis, the research problem of how knowledge practitioners understand the discourses of knowledge work of who they are and what they do as reflective of their praxis has guided all facets of the research.

8.1.1 Exploring the gaps between the saying & the doing

As the thesis explains, there is a tension in the way academics describe knowledge work and the way practitioners experience knowledge praxis. The relationship between academic discourse and practitioner discourse is an uneasy one. Such a finding may be unexpected by those academics who portray the dominant discourse of knowledge work in terms that favour management and organisations. Nonetheless, the research has shown that while knowledge workers may use the

language of a knowledge work discourse expressed by academics, together with a common linguistic ground for communication, their understanding of and experiences in praxis differ.

The content of knowledge practitioner discussions about their praxis tends to show a distinct lack of trust in management and organisations, which they believe foster a culture of distrust and mistrust. Practitioners tell of their experiences of manipulation by management, of devaluing personal integrity by management, or arbitrary decisions without consultations, and power relationships that are neither normal nor neutral. Practitioners identify organisations and even countries that they deem trustworthy and attempt to explain reasons why such entities fulfil their criteria of trust. Within the notion of trust is a willingness to share their knowledge as well as to create it within organisations that they trust. The reverse is also true; without the trust that an organisation or its management will treat them with respect and value, knowledge practitioners offer up less of themselves and their capabilities for organisational use.

For example, knowledge practitioners recognise that when management speaks of organisationally-sponsored communities of practice, in many cases CoPs are established to control and direct their thought processes in an organisational context by providing them with a manipulated social environment. While, it is true that members of organisations may develop strong friendships and move beyond an organisationally-bound environment into a social context, this does not necessarily occur. The creation of an environment that controls social interactions around a water cooler or campus may not generate knowledge that is useable or valued by management for an organisation. Moreover, a social community environment is not necessarily the best way to engender trust between knowledge workers and their management, particularly if that trust is not seen as reciprocal and is not built one step at a time, as discussed in Chapter 7.

Additionally, there is no consensus in academic discourses of knowledge work but rather broad polarisation. One pole is informed by managerial and organisational interests, whereas the other portrays a more social conscience, as described in Chapter 2. The first speaks to economically-rational prescriptions of efficiency,

productivity and organisational endowment, while the other speaks of humanity relating to social and individual well-being.

Managerial and organisational discourses of economic rationality have gained dominance in discourses of knowledge work. The way in which such dominance could be achieved was apparent from the emergence of the discourse post-World War II. While the war was pivotal to emergence of the discourse and the way that it developed, the discourse is also contextualised in variegated histories throughout the Twentieth Century both before and after the war. Economics was always a key element to success of a knowledge work discourse within an organisational context, proposed by Drucker and explained in Chapter 4.

Even academics who challenge closure of the discourse do not resile from the position of knowledge work as organisationally bound. And even the insertion of aspects of humanity and the social into the dominant organisational and economic conceptions of knowledge work are done within the context of organisations. Alternative views of what a knowledge work discourse might be refocussed on questions of power relationships, identity and the tacitness of creativity and serve to prevent closure of the knowledge work discourse around only organisational economic interests. Instead, they seek to humanise and socialise aspects of knowledge work, such that communities of practice for example, could be seen as modifying effects of power within an organisation.

As has been argued, organisationally-sponsored CoPs (communities of practise) are not totally successful and can be seen by knowledge practitioners as 'staged' social events by management for the benefit of organisations. They are keenly implicated in power relations between management and knowledge workers. It can also be argued that CoPs that are not specifically-organisationally sponsored, such as the KnowledgeBoard Forum, provide a more open venue whereby practitioners from many organisations and representing diverse interests can discuss the generalities of knowledge praxis as they experience it. KnowledgeBoard is described as "a self-moderating global community thinking and collaborating on subjects around (but not limited to) Knowledge Management

and Innovation in the worlds of business and academia"[63]. It is funded by the European Commission as a Special Support Action within the IST FP6 framework[64, 65]. Perhaps, successful CoPs (in terms of open participation) need to be supported by organisations which are not seeking to commercialise aspects of knowledge communicated in such forums.

Further research needs to be done to understand better the relationship between types of CoPs and those whose purpose is to gain advantage from their establishment within an organisational context. The reader should note that the empirical research in the thesis does not look at knowledge work from a management or organisational level of analysis but rather from the perspective of a relationship between discourse and praxis. On the one hand is the discourse as spoken about by academics, while on the other hand is the discourse as praxis experienced by knowledge practitioners. This is discussed further in section 8.2 of this chapter.

8.1.2 Recontextualising the knowledge work discourse

Thus far, the chapter has examined discourses of knowledge work within a contemporary context. The thesis also questions the contemporary world view of a knowledge society being radically different from its antecedents and posits that individuals have always worked with knowledge.

In repositioning the discourse within an earlier period, the thesis shows that, indeed, people have always worked with knowledge, albeit conceptualised differently. Aspects of the Renaissance were explored to recontextualise knowledge work, including analysing the significance of printing and book production as significant to an earlier Knowledge Society.

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[63] http://www.knowledgeboard.com/
[64] http://www.knowledgeboard.com/about/
[65] Described as *Digital switchover: Developing infrastructures for broadband access*, for more information see http://www.ist-athena.org/Deliverables/ATHENA%20D13_1%20Final%20version.pdf (accessed October 5, 2007)

As Chapter 5 explained, discourses of knowledge legitimacy during the Renaissance were contained by institutional hierarchies of the state and Catholic Church. Printers and publishers of the time were the new knowledge workers. They not only disseminated new and old knowledge through the medium of the book, that is knowledge products, but also developed new technologies and processes of printing, that of knowledge creation. The activities of printers and publishers, as well as new readers, who now had access to new and old knowledge and could compare them, were not always acceptable to legitimating authorities of Church and state. Techniques for maintaining control over what was printed and what was read attained sophisticated levels as indices of prohibited books were developed and disseminated. And if the guidelines of knowledge acceptability were not strictly adhered to, the Church had other methods of eliminating individuals who challenged the boundaries of their knowledge discourses.

The micro-history of Sixteenth Century Menocchio the miller, who lived between the times of Copernicus and Galileo, has been used in the thesis to underpin and illustrate the enormity of fear by the legitimating authorities of the Church to any changes in the dominant discourse. Menocchio's story was a complex one, carefully gleaned from the meticulous records of the Roman Inquisition by historian Carlo Ginzburg. Ginzburg's persistence with the Church hierarchy in the Vatican in gaining access to the 500-year old records also showed that the Church was protective of its organisational knowledge and tried to control its dissemination in an unauthorised way.

Using Foucault's genealogy as the framework for discursive analysis, the thesis showed that ways of historicising the past, those argued for by Drucker, Bell and others, are part of an idealistic, truth-constructing project of teleology and rational progress, which emphasise and de-emphasise historical contexts.

In this concluding chapter, the two research questions will be explicated through several propositions in the next section. These questions are:
- How do knowledge practitioners who are constituted by a discourse enact the discourse through praxis?
- Haven't individuals always worked with knowledge?

In this section I summarise the key positions already presented throughout the thesis. They cannot be presented as general theory, since they are derived from particular localised histories. The localised histories contained in the thesis include:

- The KnowledgeBoard Forum – as the source of empirical research data
- The Renaissance, which historicises and recontextualises the discourse of the Knowledge Society within another period – thereby showing that histories can be de-emphasised or may re-emerge to engage contemporary interests
- The emergence of the discourse of knowledge work post-World War II – showing the significance of the unique historical circumstances that enabled the discourse to be conceived and developed.

8.2   THESIS COALESCENCE

The section addresses how the thesis coalesces as a body of work of significance for the fields of organisation and management studies. It identifies key findings of each of the discrete chapters of the thesis, with key propositions of the overall dissertation provided in the chapter conclusion.

In Chapter 2, the contemporary dominant and alternative discourses of knowledge work have been laid out. Here, we have seen there are many significant themes represented in the dominant discourse of knowledge work, and they are shown to reflect subject interests and power effects. The chapter showed how each of these themes arises through alignment of knowledge work with other discourses, which influence and are in turn influenced by the discourse. Major thematic threads weave through the discourse, such as economics (the measurement and value of knowledge work and its ownership), technology (management of and accessibility to knowledge), law (protection of knowledge as intellectual property that is owned by an organisation), and societal (social status of knowledge workers and the environment in which they work, such as CoPs).

Chapter 2 also explained how the discourse configures statements about management of knowledge work as an obvious adjunct to the work of knowledge; where it is broadly discussed, theorised and understood as crucial to organisational competitiveness, globalisation, and theories of knowledge-intensive firms.

Further, we have seen that discourses of knowledge work have had significant effects on discourses from other fields of knowledge, which, in turn have fed back on the field, adding subtle textures. For example, a discourse of intellectual property rights revitalises the interconnection of legal and knowledge work discourses and spirals back on property, knowledge work, and legitimacy objects that speak to legal and organisational discourses. Concurrently, discourses of intellectual property become more meaningful for knowledge work within an organisational context, with management of knowledge and technologies of knowledge management becoming ways to exclude as well as provide access to knowledge. Thus, discourses of knowledge management and intellectual property rights are aligned through the discourse of knowledge work and have a further impact in the knowledge fields of organisational and management studies, economics, sociology and more, to reveal discursive objects of power, legitimacy and ownership of knowledge.

Chapter 2 has shown how various strategies are developed and applied in order to mine the resource that is knowledge for the benefit of organisational entities. In its alignment with the knowledge work discourse, discourses of communities of practice have transformed from an apprenticeship-based form of on-the-job learning to one of organisationally mapping knowledge sharing activities that may occur within a community of knowledge workers. The transformation facilitates prescription of how knowledge work should be performed and it shows how new objects are admitted into discourse. Discursive connections between and among the concepts of knowledge work, communities of practice, organisational learning, organisational knowledge, knowledge management, knowledge creation, innovation, intellectual property, knowledge intensive firms and globalisation, are clearly visible. They reflect managerial and organisational discourses that have emerged through a need to capture and own the intangibility of knowledge work practices as organisational knowledge. Thus, the chapter has explained how certain meaning options have been able to gain

dominance and legitimacy over other possible interpretations and how, in other circumstances, different readings may have achieved dominance.

Chapter 3 explained the methodology most suited for discourse analysis. Foucault (1972) says that discourse is not just a relationship between reality and language (linguistics or semiotics), it performs a different task; discourse reveals practices. In the chapter, I argued that Foucault offers us a suitable research toolkit in his analytical methodologies of archaeology and genealogy, which can be used to examine how discursive practices are historically constituted, gain legitimacy, are reproduced, disseminated and transformed. These methods of analysis have enabled me to tease out various meanings of contemporary knowledge work discourse and explain how objects of the discourse and statements used to describe them in particular ways are constructed through language and texts and may be understood in relation to broader contexts.

The chapter explained the descriptive nature of Foucault's archaeology through its rules of formation. Archaeology describes how a discourse concerns particular objects, such as knowledge and work; how statements are made about those objects, which coalesce into a discourse; who has made statements and with what authority; and how statements and objects of discourse permeate other discourses and are disseminated by them, thereby influencing these other discourses and, in turn, being influenced by them.

The chapter identified criticisms of archaeology as a methodology, such as questions about conceptualising relations of agency and power; types of power; from whence power is derived, and how it is used. It then posited genealogy as both a critique of archaeology and its descendant insofar as it examines power relationships within localised historical contexts. It is then argued that synthesis of archaeology and genealogy addresses both 'big picture' questions explored in an archaeological method as a 'snapshot' in time, while also addressing detailed processes through a localised genealogical analysis of power relations.

In the chapter, key criticisms were identified and resolved in order for genealogy to be considered to be viable as a methodology for discourse analysis. They

include the relationship between small-scale local episodes and centralised power; problematisation of practices and Foucault's ahistoric writing of history; his non-traditional use of historical evidence; his rejection of teleology and totalising history in favour of contingent histories of the present; his rejection of Truth in origins; his use of breaks and irruptions rather than epistemic evolutions and progressions; his integration of discourse with social practices and disciplinary techniques of power; and his unintentional use of critical resolution.

The opportunity for scope and depth in using both archaeology and genealogy as a combined method of analysis facilitated a thorough investigation of how power and its negotiations are implicated in the constitution of a contemporary knowledge work discourse, so that modern practices can be appropriately embedded in historical antecedents. While these antecedents engage with a history of contemporary knowledge work praxis, they are also constrained and legitimised effects of power since other histories may give rise to other meanings.

It has also been argued that genealogy has the potential to produce critiques whose validity is independent of its acceptance by established systems of knowledge, and can desubjugate knowledge that has been dismissed by them. A synthesised archaeological/genealogical perspective facilitates exploration of trajectories of discourses of knowledge work from their emergence as a discourse to their contemporary context, as histories of the present. Genealogy as method aims to avoid judgments and easy assumptions and critically considers and questions the ways in which we perceive objects as givens, that is, how we normalise discourse.

Finally, the chapter posits genealogy as a more structured and methodologically rigorous form of discourse analysis. It does this by examining in depth Kendall's and Wickham's (1999) archaeology in action, based on Foucault's loose framework. The Kendall and Wickham framework is then developed further to incorporate relationships of power, thereby creating an enhanced genealogy in action as a methodological framework.

Chapter 4 examined how discourses of knowledge work arose at a specific time and were influenced by circumstances unique to the period; to be read as an

historical account of the emergence of a knowledge work discourse. It explored historical contexts or, in Foucauldian terms, surfaces of emergence, from which a discourse of knowledge work could materialise and develop.

In the chapter, one of the concerns identified by Foucault, via Nietzsche, was to rule out a search for truth to be found in mythical origins in favour of what he called 'ignoble beginnings', by examining unpredictable occurrences that enabled the entity of knowledge work to be constituted and by focusing on a 'play of dominations' at critical historical irruptions. In the thesis, such ignoble beginnings were examined using a genealogical analysis of such unpredictable occurrences during the Twentieth Century as wars and post-war economic circumstances, and the play of dominations by various political forces to diminish their negative impacts on society at large. The emergence of knowledge work as a discourse was directly related to these broader events and was created as an artifice to resolve potential social upheaval that may have resulted. Knowledge work as discourse did not emerge spontaneously as a break from the past but was carefully orchestrated and managed.

Opportunities arising from further development of the discourse of knowledge work and its associated disciplinary discourses of technology and education were also discussed in the chapter. These opportunities were instrumental in establishing perceptions about a new world order, one which discursively broke away from previously-constructed world orders, and came to be known as a new golden age, as the Knowledge Society.

Chapter 5 built on the theme of how a discourse of a new world order may be created and provided a detailed examination of discursive constructions of 'post' societies or golden ages. Taking as its theme the comparison of the contemporary conception of a Knowledge Society with an earlier knowledge society, the Renaissance, the chapter examined the problems of delineating any society as a 'post' society. It then explored the emergence of the period known as the Renaissance from earlier renascences, with emphasis on the availability and comparison of both new and old knowledges through development of the printing

press. The chapter examined the evolutionary, rather than revolutionary nature of printing, and its broad effects on European society of the time.

The chapter then discussed the various tensions among members of society and how discourses of domination and legitimation were supported by disciplinary regimes established by authorities of delimitation, the Catholic Church, as it attempted to control the knowledge contained in new books and the ideas disseminated into and adopted by the reading public. Through a small localised history of one individual, a broader view of the cultural environment of the Renaissance period could be seen, including the ways in which the Church authorities used repressive and coercive strategies to contain, if not restrain, alternative discourses.

Finally, the chapter reconstituted the theme of a knowledge society to argue that the view of its uniqueness within a contemporary period is misplaced. Instead, knowledge as work is subject to naming and framing of particular yet contingent circumstances through discourse rather than being a new golden age and part of an enlightenment project of rational progress. The chapter provided a comparison of key discursive objects of both the Renaissance and a contemporary Knowledge Society to show there are many similarities in these two periods; sufficient to explain that the contemporary phenomenon is part of a more extensive ancestral knowledge discourse. It compares the institutional hierarchy of the Catholic Church in its Inquisitional search for heretics to the more contemporary globalised institutions as "faceless symbols of world economic order" (Stiglitz, 2002: 3, 225), who also lack transparency and accountability for their actions. As Mills might have argued, the executive management of such institutions, whether in a contemporary Knowledge Society or the Renaissance, form a power elite; they are powerful because of their positions in such institutions (Mills, 1999: 9).

The chapter has also shown how historical systems of thought – that made sense of human experience in an earlier period of the Renaissance but are no longer meaningful in a contemporary context of knowledge work – have been used as a problematising methodology, a genealogy of knowledge work. The chapter clearly articulated how Foucault's 'historical *a priori*' enriches our interpretations

of human experience prior to 'conditions of possibility' of a given epoch, thereby shaping perceptions of that era; but should not be considered to be *a priori* to all experiences with the *imprimatur* of truth. Essentially, features of a knowledge society are individualised within a specific time and space. They speak to a unity, a process of ordering and sense making around a central theme – a golden age – that attempts to ignore disunities and fragmentations that underlie such historical contexts.

Chapter 6 explicated the research and design methods used to select the empirical data and the form of analysis used to interpret the empirical data. It explained that since professional praxis cannot be observed within an organisation nor can its general tenets be specifically discussed, even by its practitioners, the method of genealogical discourse analysis is a most effective way of understanding the experience of knowledge praxis. Such analysis became visible through the processes of interaction among research participants; not as a response to an *a priori* questionnaire or interview strategy but rather as interpretation of an interactive communication among practitioners.

Chapter 7 presented the empirical data and analysed it using the genealogical method described elsewhere. In setting up the analysis, the chapter initially discussed use of the dominant discourse among practitioners as a way of establishing a common ground or language framework to facilitate communication. In order to be understood by others in the field, practitioners used the cultural resources of rhetoric and language of the official dominant discourse. As the chapter explained, use of a common ground does not necessarily mean that practitioners fully subscribed to its dominance, only as a way of at least sharing assumptions, language and rhetoric about knowledge work in order to reflect their insider status and authenticity as members in the knowledge work field.

The chapter then argued that practitioners 'talk the talk' of both the dominant conceptions and alternative discourses about knowledge work. Practitioner discourses speak of organisational knowledge, intellectual property, economics and productivity but they also speak of identity and power relations. At the same

time, practitioners also 'walk the talk' as they narrated and shared their experiences in knowledge praxis. They used their stories of praxis as a means of sharing a world view with their cultural colleagues in knowledge work. The chapter showed how knowledge work practitioners engaged with both dominant and alternative discourses in their discussions about knowledge work. Despite this, it was shown that practitioners still experienced power struggles between organisations and individuals, management and workers, that traditionally have been a part of working environments. Their experiences represented new technologies and rhetoric of control, discourses of possession and dispossession, conceptions of hierarchy and community, of knowledge sharing and extraction, notions of systematising trust and distrust within organisations. They did so within an ambit of globalisation and a world order and interconnected them with more humanistic discursive objects such as trust, personal relationships and openness.

In the chapter, we have seen the dislocation between managerial rhetoric and praxis. The gap revealed power effects embodied in management practices of naming and framing, which separate managerial discursive language of what should be, from the discursive practices of what it is that constitutes knowledge work practices. The discrepancy between the dominant official discourse of knowledge work, as purveyed in an organisational sense and the discursive practices of individuals who are implicated in the practices of knowledge work as delineated by the practitioners has been explained.

It has been shown that discursive boundaries between management interests and the realities of street-level practices are far more complex and integrated than a simplistic polarisation between two protagonists. The chapter identified the existence of multiple layers of protagonists, who, at times, appeared to hold views that were antagonistic to or inconsistent with a particular position, and, in fact, changed their subject positions depending on their interests and the context. As the chapter explained, knowledge practitioners might assert a particular discursive position and adopt elements of multiple discourses during the course of performing various roles, such as a manager or leader, as a subordinate member of an organisational group, and as a participant in a collegiate group such as

KnowledgeBoard. Use of genealogy as discourse analysis facilitated a rich, deep and more meaningful analysis than might otherwise have been possible using other methods of analysis.

The empirical chapter also showed that while the wider discourses linking knowledge work to disciplines such as economics and technology were still invoked by practitioners, their legitimacy tended to intersect more human-centric discourses of trust, personal relationships, intuition and the like, that diminish the dominance of managerial discursive objects such as measurability, standardisation and systemisation.

Thus, the chapter has shown that at one level of discursive analysis, practitioner authorities of legitimation opposed the dominant discourses of management and organisational authorities by challenging boundaries of the discourse and what is included and excluded within it. Concurrently, they reproduced and transformed official discourses while producing new/alternate/oppositional/sub-discourses as they participated in, worked through and against the perceived dominance and legitimation of organisational discourses. Practitioners also reframed dominant discursive objects within new contextual perspectives of familiarity and practice. In effect, it has been shown that discourses of a knowledge community of practitioners are relative to and intersect with dominant organisational and management discursive concepts of knowledge work. At the same time, they are situated in other locations within the same discursive field as their subject positions change.

Finally, the chapter has shown that by working to downgrade the managerial control context through which the dominant discourse conceptualises knowledge work, and instead, asserting the primacy of the human identity to the discourse, the relativity of the object of 'knowledge' to 'work' could be discursively realigned. Practitioners do not necessarily erect barriers to the dominant discursive objects of technology, economics, and the law, but rather they deflect the integrity of such arguments as central objects to knowledge work discourse. The research has examined the ways in which knowledge work discourses could be transmuted and realigned with practitioner experiences, thereby establishing

new discursive transformations, which at best or at least, challenge closure of the dominant managerial discourse.

Specifically, implications relate to how knowledge work practitioners, who are both implicated in and by the discourse, come to terms with the complexity of discursive themes about it. Contradiction is evident between practitioner use of the dominant discourse of knowledge work as a basis of commonality with their peers in contrast to the determination by management authorities who try to delimit boundaries of the dominant discourse to control production and reproduction of discourse to organisational processes and rational systems. At the same time, there are contradictions in practitioner use of the dominant discourse to communicate and the content of their communications, which reveals a more human and diverse face to individual experiences.

Although recent knowledge discourses emanating from organisation and management studies show a pattern of developing prescriptive formulations for a discourse of knowledge work, a key observation is that objects of knowledge work and knowledge worker are now virtually missing from the discourses. However, as the chapter explains, knowledge practitioners see their praxis as integral to the creation and development of organisational knowledge. And despite deployment of the language that represents transition from a previous but untenable period to a new golden age, in expressing their experience of praxis, clearly practitioners do not subscribe to the realities of a new golden age of the Knowledge Society.

8.3   CONTRIBUTIONS

In exploring the gaps in existing research into knowledge praxis and the dominant knowledge discourse, the thesis makes several useful contributions to management and organisational research, in theory, practice and methodology. The research contributes to critical thinking about the normalising effects of discourse, and points to the possibilities that can emerge from an engagement with alternative perspectives.

8.3.1   Theoretical contributions to organisation & management literature

The chapter contributes to organisational and management studies by showing how power relations mediate the discourse on knowledge work and by challenging the taken-for-granted notion that knowledge work is subjected to rational progress; instead one may posit that is shaped by the arbitrary interests of power elites. In using genealogical analysis, it can be seen that notions about 'naturalness' and 'normalcy' as a power effect can be inserted into the so-called logic of institutional authorities. Through analysis of such insertions, a different insight may be provided into organisational and management theory that encourages critical thinking about the normalising effects of discourse and points to possibilities that can emerge from thoughtful consideration of alternative perspectives.

Further contributions to organisation theory provide a way of understanding how a knowledge structure can develop that favours a particular discourse and enables it to gain primacy, not through its truth claims but through power effects arising from contingent and arbitrary conditions. Organisational researchers can make visible a range of other possibilities and other meaning options through a careful analysis of discursive formation. Such an understanding can pave the way for productive challenges to organising traditions about knowledge, innovation, learning and managing.

The thesis makes a contribution to the gap between dominant management discourses of how things should be and practitioner experiences of how things really are. Within the text, this gap has been referred to as discourses of ambition as they relate to realities of praxis. Specifically, the thesis contributes an understanding of how knowledge work practitioners use the dominant discourse as a common language of communication but develop their own sub-discourses by using both dominant and alternative discourses to articulate their experiences of knowledge work as they perform it.

Finally, through a careful analysis of discursive formations of knowledge work, the thesis contributes to a wider spectrum of discourse analysis across a range of other disciplines and areas of practice that address knowledge work, its machinations and its effects. Through use of genealogical discourse analysis, it can be shown how discourses arise and develop but that there is nothing within a discourse that necessarily gives it dominance; rather it achieves such dominance as an effect of power.

8.3.2 Methodological contributions

The thesis makes several methodological contributions. The first of these shows how Foucault's discourse analysis or genealogy can be used to explore the nuances of work practices, not through any specific interventions in a work environment or through questioning practitioners, but rather through a thorough and careful analysis of practitioner discussions as they talk about and participate in praxis. The implications of the method are significant for a broader scope of management and organisational study.

A second methodological contribution is use of the Internet as an appropriate data source for discourse analysis. Through careful site selection, locating it within a broader range of possible sites, the Internet can offer a suitable resource for conducting a discourse analysis. Possible problems of co-presence with participants, researcher intervention or direction, and timeliness are removed.

The sections below further develop the contributions to research methodology for organisation and management studies.

8.3.2.1 Contributions to genealogy as a method of discourse analysis

A contribution to organisational and management theory offered by the thesis is to further develop genealogy as an effective and viable framework of analysis through which to explore aspects of praxis. Genealogy is a particularly appropriate mode of analysis through which to tease out processes of

legitimisation and normalisation of discourse, specifically as they connect to organisation and management theory. In contributing a new dimension to Kendall and Wickham's (1999) 'archaeology in action' (which advocates integration of Foucault's archaeology with genealogy), an enhanced genealogy in action can produce a deeper analysis of power relations and its effects and can be used in the fields of organisational and management studies,

- As an analytical framework that offers a more structured methodology than Foucault offered in his various works, thereby answering criticisms that Foucault was unmethodological.

- To provide a way of explaining and interpreting discursive themes without reliance on mountebank perceptions of truth and origins.

- As a rebuttal of organisational and institutional rhetoric, jargon, slogans and 'spin' that serve particular interests.

- As a method for conceptualising and explaining relationships between and among significant organisational discourses, for example, economics, technology, law and society.

- To show that there is not merely one way of perceiving an object of discourse and creating meaning but there are, in fact, many.

- To explain how a knowledge structure can develop that favours a particular discourse and enables it to gain primacy, not through its truth claims but through power effects arising from contingent and arbitrary conditions.

- To offer a different insight into organisational and management theory that encourages critical thinking about the normalising effects of discourse, and point to the possibilities that can emerge from alternative perspectives.

- To explain that discourses are not fixed but are tenuous and capable of transformation.

- To explain how discourses transform through localised and contingent events and contribute to problematising history as a series of small-scale events.

8.3.2.2   Use of the Internet as a data source for discourse analysis

Other methodological contributions of the thesis relate to the use of Internet texts for discourse analysis. There are several aspects to this; one relates to Internet ethics; a second relates to the viability of an Internet community of professional practice for 'objective' or non-participant observation; and another shows how the Internet can be used as a site for researching praxis in a more general sense rather than specific task performance.

In the field of Internet ethics, the thesis makes the following contributions. After discussions with members of the University Ethics Committee and presenting my case at an Ethics Committee Seminar, it was found that there were no specific guidelines at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) for analysis of Internet-produced texts. Also, there were many different opinions among Committee members regarding the need or otherwise of gaining consent of participants to use their texts, and whether the texts were considered to be public documents, such as those found among newspaper 'letters-to-the-editor' segments.

As a result, multiple strategies were employed, including arguing the case for use of these texts as public documents rather than those of a private forum; the courtesy of requesting consent by participants in the discussion; gaining permission to use their real names; gaining permission by the Internet site 'publisher' to use archived texts; and proving publicness of the site by gaining entry to the chosen text using keyword searches through a general search engine, rather than going directly to the site of the community of practice. Agreement to use the texts in the form in which they were archived was given by each participant with the exception of one, who was unable to be contacted, even by the site administrators, but whose identity is safeguarded since he/she used a *nom de plume* during participation in the forum.

Further methodological contributions are made in the way the data were collected, which achieved a high level of objectivity – at least in quantitative research terms. A preferred qualitative term is non-participant observation, in this case, of a live

Internet discussion. It provided a natural context for research, since it was entirely participant-driven and was conducted without researcher intervention or direction. The term 'live' Internet discussion refers to the context in which the forum occurred rather than the researcher being present during the time when the actual discussion took place. Consent was gained to use the text for analysis quite some time after the forum had occurred.

Another contribution comes from using the Internet as a reliable and rigorous research vehicle for discourse analysis. It provides a means of comparing internalised representations and sense making of participants, through communities of practitioners, with the dominant discourse. The thesis contributes to empirical research of knowledge work as praxis rather than as task performance by particular categories of knowledge workers, such as accountants, designers or engineers.

8.4   PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANISATIONS & MANAGEMENT

Implications for management and organisations from my research are fourfold.

1. There is a gap in the research between what management thinks should be happening in organisations and what really is going on. Much traditional research is based on developing *a priori* hypotheses and then trying to prove them, with little account paid to how such hypotheses are developed. Indeed, many hypotheses are based on selecting an arbitrary point in a continuum of perceived progress instead of understanding what is actually happening at a practitioner level. Management practices often respond to such wishful thinking, which may be supported by hypothetical models and statistical predictions, rather than the reality of praxis as experienced by those who perform it. It is not merely a case of management using suitable rhetoric, also known as 'spin', to talk a mode of organising into being, but of the importance of taking into account the real and current circumstances of organisational experience.

2. In the field of knowledge work, management has failed to acknowledge that traditional ways of dealing with issues of sharing knowledge in organisations are based on who owns and has rights to the knowledge. Knowledge sharing is played as a zero-sum-game of unequal power relationships, whereby certain expectations are made of knowledge workers that are invariably not reciprocated by management, thereby causing a breach or violation of psychological contracts. An implication of the research is that management needs to rethink this strategy in order to achieve real and sustainable benefit from organisation members.

3. Organisational strategies of coercing knowledge from its creators ultimately are not successful, since force itself may be taken as a sign of fear of failure. It seems that management asks the wrong questions about knowledge sharing. Rather than asking why shouldn't knowledge workers share their knowledge in particular organisation environments, a more insightful question would be, why should they? In so doing, a more consultative approach to the relationship between knowledge practitioners and the knowledge they create may yield knowledge that is more insightful, deeper and of greater organisational benefit.

4. The study suggests that uncritical adoption of academic discourses of knowledge work by management as the way knowledge work should be performed needs to be reconsidered in a more nuanced way to reflect concerns articulated by knowledge workers in relation to their praxis. At the same time, disciplinary regimes of power by management that underpin the realms of legitimacy and authority pertaining to knowledge work need to be reconsidered. Management's idealisation of what should be needs to be filtered through discursive processes of what can be, rather than enforced through rhetoric of wishful thinking in the guise of truth. Different decisions are possible by management as a response to the way knowledge work is performed as praxis, thereby creating opportunities for success rather than failure.

8.5   CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

The thesis contributes new interpretations and insights to organisational and management theory and practice as well as providing methodological depth to the ways in which organisations may be studied. The work could be complemented through conducting additional research into individual organisations to represent more diverse types of knowledge workers within various organisation contexts. Further, the work could be complemented by genealogies across a range of organisations – globally, nationally, by industry and size – to explore how successful changes in modes of organisation can occur as a result of attending to praxis, rather than being spoken into existence.

APPENDIX

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KnowledgeBoard SIG ON TRUST, 26-September-2003

Knowledgeboard categories in which forum appeared:
    KM & Trust SIG
    KM and Emotional Intelligence SIG
    KnowledgeBoard Latest, Workshop Transcripts
Transcript published by: Helen Baxter, October 3, 2003
Story read: 1537
Participants (11): John Moore (Chairman), Stephanie Phillips, Alex MacGillivray, Chris Macrae, Ian Ryder, Ton Ziljstra, Tobias Keim, Raniera Gioacchini, Vincent Ribiere, pt on firebird, Monica Andre.
Participants (11) and knowledge practitioner employment during the forum, sourced from KnowledgeBoard members directory:

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John Moore (Chairman) (consultant, UK) works in organisational development and marketing in financial services and education sectors

Stephanie Phillips (taking over as KnowledgeBoard Editor subsequent to the forum, at the time she was editor of TrainingZONE - a community of HRD professionals, UK)

Alex MacGillivray (consultant/academic – senior associate New Economics Foundation NEF and consultant to Institute of Social & Ethical Accountability, London, UK) works in the area of sustainable development, social capital, trust and technology; corporate innovation and responsbility; new economic and social indicators

Chris Macrae (consultant/academic, UK) mathematics and statistics background, works in the area of developing visualisation maps of connected relationship systems as action learning tools

Ian Ryder (organisational practitioner, Vice-President, Brand & Communications EMEIA for Unisys Corporation, UK)

Ton Ziljstra (consultant, Proven Partners, Netherlands) works as knowledge management advisor

Tobias Keim (academic, Institute for Information Systems, Frankfurt, Germany) interests in human resources, partner matching and team building

Raniera Gioacchini (consultant, project designer, facilitator, Italy) interests in communication, storytelling, new media, knowledge development (CoP, networking), edutainment. Works as consultant, project designer, facilitator (interdisciplinary learning) for universities, schools, public and private organizations, NGO.

Vincent Ribiere (academic, assistant professor in MIS at NY Institute of Technology, USA), interested in the role of organisational culture in knowledge management initiatives

pt on firebird[66] (Sweden)

Monica Andre (academic, Portugal), interest in potential use of blogs in organisational settings
Positions:
    Consultants (3)
    Consultant/academic (2)

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[66] 'Pt on firebird' could not be contacted, either through KnowledgeBoard or the other participants, to request permission to use his/her text. However, from the text, it appears that this participant may be an organisational practitioner.

Organisational practitioners (1, possibly 2)
Academic (3)
Unknown (1)
Country where based:
    UK: 5
    Italy: 1
    Germany: 1
    USA: 1
    Netherlands: 1
    Sweden: 1
    Portugal: 1

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1.   *John Moore*: Nice to see some familiar names, and also some ones that are new to me

2.   *Stephanie Phillips*: Hi John

3.   *John Moore*: So shall we begin by saying what our personal interest is in this debate?

4.   *Alex MacGillivray*: Hi everyone - I assume I type in here?

5.   *Chris Macrae*: yes Alex...my personal interest...

6.   *Ian Ryder*: Hi All....sorry, only just got smart enough to work out how to "play"!!

7.   *Chris Macrae* : unless we systemise trust in organisations my 6 year old daughter won't have a world worth growing up in

8.   *John Moore*: I've been writing about trust for a while now, I'm interested in ways of moving on from talking about it, to helping organisations make changes

9.   *Chris Macrae*: but then I spent the weekend at www.collapsingworld.org

10.   *Ton Ziljstra*: my interest in trust: I think personal relationships are at the core of knowledge management, and trust at the heart of the success of those relations.

11.   *Alex MacGillivray*: I don't have any consulting projects on trust running at the moment - so no vested interests. I'd like to, but find that companies haven't really woken up to this yet.

12.   *Tobias Keim*: I am interested in factors influencing trust....and ways to measure it!

13.   *Ian Ryder*: I believe trust comes in varying levels - but is the root of ALL relationships which is what business, and life, depends on

14.   *Stephanie Phillips*: Hi - I'm a spectator at today's session - I'll be taking over from Helen as KnowledgeBoard Editor in the next few months, and am currently editor of TrainingZONE - a community of HRD professionals. I'm interested in getting a feel for some of the issues KB members are involved in.

15.   *Ton Ziljstra*: John: I do agree that we can talk a lot about trust without accomplishing anything. And after all, I would define trust as action oriented

16.   *John Moo*re: I am finding that organisations are starting to get interested in things like trust and authenticity; I find that most people are consumers as well as sellers, and are longing for more authentic communications

17.   *Chris Macrae*: Coming down to ground level, whenever I enter an organisation these days I have 3 queries about whether its worth trusting... Is the organisation only image-making, or doing reality-making too- John, Ian, I and others have written book on that at www.beyond-branding.com

18.   *Alex MacGillivray*: Good point John. My colleague David Boyle has a new book on authenticity - he has tried to aim it as a business book though it may be most interesting to consumers spotting fake brands.

19.   *Chris Macrae*: 2) Is there evidence that organisation makes one intangible purpose measurable - NASA could even manage safety versus conflicts of costs and schedules

20.   *John Moore*: Alex, David's book is excellent, a very good exposition and full of great illustrations; I think he's right to identify our collective appetite for less fakery and more human engagement

21.   *Chris Macrae*: 3) Evidence organisation truly values people; accounting's maths assumes you don't (people are costs). How do you define authenticity? Is authenticity an individual group or organisation-wide term?

22.   *John Moore*: Good Q Chris; I think it's hard to pin authenticity down as it's a subjective thing; David Boyle does a good job of exploring its fuzziness. But I know it when I feel it!

23.   *Alex MacGillivray*: Good question. Boyle sets out ten criteria. They overlap quite a lot, though. Human scale and high touch are the main things, maybe.

24.   *Chris Macrae*: John which emotion is most aroused when you feel authenticity?

25.   *Raniera Gioacchini*: I know authenticity when I feel it too

26.   *John Moore*: Ultimately, trust and authenticity can never truly belong to organisations, but to the people inside them

27.   *Chris Macrae*: I love the phrase human scale - any examples, stories? "feeling"

28.   *Ton Ziljstra*: Indeed, it's a[t] the personal level that authenticity and trust is located --> human voice

29.   *Raniera Gioacchini*: the emotion most aroused is sense of freedom

30.   *Chris Macrae*: yes extraction by an organisation is where KM goes wrong if it goes down that road imo [in my opinion]

31.   *Alex MacGillivray*: Well, internet banks having to open bank branches is one example. Another is that I was told I had to 'enter a city' to register for this debate. I barely live in a village!

32.   *Chris Macrae*: Alex, is part of the problem of human beings that we now have to enter the world every day too, but orgs are not helping us?

33.   *John Moore*: Human example: I sat in an encounter group once where someone was telling a very sad tale in a flat voice and someone admitted, honestly, to feeling bored. A controversial but authentic comment - and one that really energised the meeting

34.   *Chris Macrae*: Funny example, John because I would have interpreted that as change the subject please...

35.   *Alex MacGillivray*: I wonder whether European as a generic brand is more trusted than America in these days, and what this might mean for competitiveness. This is something I've been researching recently.

36.   *John Moore*: That's the point, it was a vital piece of feedback for the speaker... they learnt that they were not really connecting to their experience...

37.   *Chris Macrae*: ...in other words not authentic in terms of empathy, listening, caring but maybe I'm looking at this wrong way round

38.   *Ton Ziljstra*: Ah but how often do you think "pls change the subject" and not act on it, Chris? Being polite and authentic can be at odds somewhat

39.   *John Moore*: Alex, interesting. I am sure America will be paying a big intangible price for its behaviour in terms of lost trust

40.   *Chris Macrae*: Ah Ton, that's why I like to know what the script is supposed to be if I am being paid to be at the meeting; and then I decide whether I want to be paid for that- this is about openness, and...

41.   *Alex MacGillivray*: Do we mainly want to talk about internal knowledge management in biggish companies, or can we go wider?

42.   *Chris Macrae*: if we are seeking to change people telling them passionately why we're trying to make that change

43.   *John Moore*: I'm with Ton (of course) trust is not built by only being nice and empathetic; I like the idea of fierce conversations, where ideas are tested and challenged; too many organisations want trust without honesty!

44.   *John Moore*: Alex, I'm for as wide a debate as you like!

45.   *Chris Macrae*: Alex, I'd like to go far wider- why do I distrust Bush the more I see?...for me trust is also about whether knowledge is an open book or being dissembled

46.   *Tobias Keim*: Of course trust depends on authenticity and empathy, but what about the situation itself?

47. *Ton Ziljstra*: Context plays a role, yes Tobias.
48. *Chris Macrae*: Trust is also about knowing which of the protagonists are backing each up because they came in with the same agenda
49. *Ton Ziljstra*: I trust Joe in situation x, but not in situation y
50. *John Moore*: Good points being raised; I'm conscious that this forum software is making for somewhat disjointed conversations and thanks to all for keeping up!
51. *Tobias Keim*: Chris. So trust depends also on the topology of the network.
52. *Alex MacGillivray*: Well I found the Iraq war debate a real puzzle because you have (still) three main protagonists who all have been accused of fakery but on this appeared to have the glint of absolute, almost religious conviction - authentic as you like. Then you have ultra-cynical Chirac as the good guy.
53. *Chris Macrae*: context is interesting because it means to measure trust you would need context specific measurements, something many organisations under prioritise
54. *Chris Macrae*: yes trust is intimately related to the network, but I guess I'd like a map of it, maybe that's typology?
55. *Vincent Ribiere*: I think that reciprocity plays also a big role in trust
56. *John Moore*: Alex: Good point re Iraq. Important to realise that authenticity doesn't create trust - but it does give us the information on who we do and don't trust
57. *Alex MacGillivray*: Chris, you talk about measurement; who has done the best work on measuring trust in your opinion?
58. *Chris Macrae*: reciprocity is huge; because trust is a word that builds relationships where as many performance measures are only about transactions, i.e. they systemise distrust
59. *Tobias Keim*: Yes, trust involves strength, frequency, reciprocity of successful repeated interaction
60. *Alex MacGillivray*: and then, if you can measure it, can you manage it?
61. *Chris Macrae*: Alex, anyone who isn't an accountant because they only use the operand of add (seperability, linear etc); there's lots of good stuff at www.euintangibles.net - the EU prism group; I also like your work at NEF
62. *John Moore*: I agree in principle with Tobias and Vincent about reciprocity but let's remember that some of the shrewdest conmen use the principle of reciprocity to set their victims up!
63. *Alex MacGillivray*: And then, if you can manage it, then are you allowed to spend it once in a while?
64. *Tobias Keim*: Perhaps you can't manage trust really, but create the infrastructure for the people to do so.
65. *Chris Macrae*: do we need to spend trust or can it multiply unlike cash? e.g. learning can multiply if we trust each other?
66. *John Moore*: Alex, what do you mean by spending trust or are you being ironic? :)
67. *Alex MacGillivray*: I'm thinking of say Virgin, who bought a rubbish train service in the UK, knowing it was going to cost them trust in the short term. They did this without measurements, as far as I know, Branson says he relies on gut instinct.
68. *Ton Ziljstra*: Would the equivalent of spending be not living up to a trustful reputation at some point, followed by a return to acting according to the rep you have?
69. *Chris Macrae*: Tobias, we must manage trust but this depends on detecting emerging conflicts and then resolving them; systemically almost the opposite process of transactional management

70. *John Moore*: Alex: it's interesting that Virgin has created (rightly or wrongly) a relationship that seems to allow forgiveness and seem to have got away with the trains fiasco. There was some interesting research from Stanford which seemed to suggest that more gutsy brands like Virgin recover better from mistakes than "sincere" brands

71. *Alex MacGillivray*: Yes, these issues I think are why social capital has never really attracted a business audience. If it is a capital then you can spend it. If businesses are only allowed to accumulate trust, they end up like BT used to be.
72. *Tobias Keim*: Chris, okay this is to keep trusted relationships alive, but what about ways to create or establish trust
73. *Chris Macrae*: Rightly or wrongly I saw Virgin's entry into trains as brave move so would give them more latitude for trying, though I guess I think the experiment is failing; we must never stop honest experiments
74. *pt on firebird*: social capital & no business audience, Alex: might be true for UK -- not for Scandinavia , e.g.
75. *John Moore*: Ian:I wonder if you'd like to comment on Alex's point about business attitudes - you're at the front line of business at Unisys
76. *Alex MacGillivray*: But Chris, wouldn't our measurements have told Virgin to steer clear if they had hired us?
77. *Chris Macrae*: To create trust, start with a founding purpose that is unique, which you can uniquely deliver, which is valued by other people; trust is about how much does everyone involved communally value you?
78. *Tobias Keim*: So people need to manage themselves and create their own USPs in order to be valued and trusted?
79. *Chris Macrae*: Alex, probably not if Richard's passion seemed true that he might be able to make a better railway; probably yes if you had locked at Railtrack and his interdependency on that low-trust org
80. *Alex MacGillivray*: Tell us more about Scandinavia - I know about work on intellectual capital e.g. Skandia but not trust.
81. *John Moore*: I think that business people talk about the importance of numbers; get them to talk about their personal experience and often a more subtle human truth emerges --- it's not that THEY believe the numbers, it's their perception that EVERYONE ELSE does
82. *Chris Macrae*: Alex, in all the world there is one government I trust- Finland they trust audited themselves
83. *John Moore*: I heard that Skandia has done a huge amount to create a rich culture for employees and that they are actually viewed as a bit gullible for doing so!
84. *Ton Ziljstra*: Chris: any urls for that Finnish example?
85. *Alex MacGillivray*: Good point. M&S is one of the most trusted brands in the UK - their Finance Director told me she didn't measure brand value at all!
86. *Chris Macrae*: gullible by who John?
87. *Ton Ziljstra*: Chris: the Fins are also ahead in the knowledge economy in the EU. Coincidence? Probably not?
88. *John Moore*: Chris: I heard this anecdotally so can't verify it!
89. *Chris Macrae*: Ton, yes go to sig on emotional intelligence and click Finland KM halfway down and you get the pdf of their audit
90. *John Moore*: Alex: interesting story from M&S; how well does the finance director get on with the marketing people there?
91. *Alex MacGillivray*: Well Skandia's intellectual capital monitor does look a bit quaint to the hard nosed. But the key question is whether they actually do anything differently as a result of it. I think they are about to start giving team bonuses to business units that perform well. But intellectual capital is not quite what we mean by trust.

92. *Ian Ryder*: Really sorry everyone - got a phone interrupt from my boss in US at 3.05pm now I must sort something for him urgently - I was enjoying this very much!! Perhaps the next time - I assume I can get a transcript when it's finished - thanks for the invitation.
93. *Tobias Keim*: But trust depends on the added value that someone has to offer, so trust and intellectual capital can be linked

94. *pt on firebird*: sorry, was distracted -- I always had the impression that Scandinavia has a long track record of industrial democracy --- I guess they did something different in the first place

95. *Alex MacGillivray*: John, I don't know, but I think not well - the M&S adverts have not helped the company recently. It is probably the ethical positions on GM, environment etc that have rebuild trust squandered by bad fashions and pulling out of UK production.

96. *John Moore*: I think trust is what makes it easy for people to share ideas, so is bound to have an impact on an organisation's ability to create intellectual capital

97. *John Moore*: Alex: That's kind of par for the course in business; it's interesting that marketing as a profession has lost a lot of credibility and I think that's in large part because it doesn't know the difference between trust and manipulation.

98. *Alex MacGillivray*: Well this is the crucial question. In big companies, that is true. Inside 3M, say, you can afford to take a risk with an idea because you can trust management not to belittle you. Not so at Kodak.

99. *John Moore*: I generally find organisations have cultures that subtly or overtly discourage openness and make vulnerability dangerous.

100. *Alex MacGillivray*: But in little firms and micro-enterprise, I wonder whether they don't thrive in a climate of mistrust. We've been looking at enterprise in the UK inner city and they don't 'cluster' - they are adversarial.

101. *Alex MacGillivray*: Robert Putnam hasn't looked at the links between social capital in an area and levels of entrepreneurship. My theory is that they may be inversely related - which goes against a lot of what has been written, because it's aimed at the big corporations.

102. *John Moore*: Interesting about micro-enterprise. I think it's always possible for a business to accumulate profit by being quite selfish; but that may not be so good for a community. So perhaps "big" business may not be so bad after all?

103. *John Moore*: Yes, being big does make you visible. Nike can't get away with bad sourcing where a small biz could

104. *Alex MacGillivray*: Fine except micro-enterprise is where the jobs and growth are, so that's where the policy is aimed at the moment.

105. *John Moore*: So perhaps the policy effort should be towards greater transparency for small biz? or is that just more red tape?

106. *Alex MacGillivray*: I just don't know if big firms are trusted more than little ones - another question for our research agenda.

107. *Ton Ziljstra*: Maybe the policy should encourage small bizz to form groups 'packs' more for joint innovation etc. Then you have the visibility in the network taking the place of the visibility of big corps

108. *Ton Ziljstra*: the network could foster transparency as well

109. *John Moore*: What I experience with small businesses is that their owners feel isolated and have a lot of sleepless nights! A better sense of community might be what they really need

110. *Tobias Keim*: Micro-enterprises need networks they can rely on. The focus needs to be on the creation of trusted relationships with suppliers, employees and customers

111. *Alex MacGillivray*: Certainly, helping small firms be transparent is key. We've developed plenty of social auditing tools, but not affordable or attractive for little forms. But we now have one called ethical explorer which is on the NEF website. It's a lot more approachable.

112. *Alex MacGillivray*: I agree about the loneliness of the entrepreneur.

113. *John Moore*: I think it's a mix of hard and soft tools - audits on the one hand, and support from kindred spirits on the other

114. *John Moore*: I do think that regulation alone will not return trust to organisations

115. *Alex MacGillivray*: But it's nice talking to you guys. I also recommend Dave Bayliss's newsletter on 'pioneer entrepreneurs' from the wilds of Montana

116. *John Moore*: is there a url for that newsletter?

117. *Alex MacGillivray*: It may be that there is a limited amount of trust that a given group of consumers have to invest in business - so businesses have to fight for it. If that is true, then regulation is a waste of time. But surely trust has fallen absolutely across business to an all time low, too?

118. *John Moore*: Yes, I think the evidence that trust in institutions of all kinds has fallen, though NGOs seem to do ok in surveys

119. *Monica Andre*: How about the role of organizational infrastructures in building trust?

120. *John Moore*: I think we're seeing the demise of monolithic trust in favour of trust build a conversation at a time

121. *Alex MacGillivray*: Just looking - I may not have time to find it til the end.

122. *pt on firebird*: what is the influence of the fact that more information is available to consumers on trust in institutions?

123. *Alex MacGillivray*: soon the only trusted institution in Europe will be Readers Digest that does the annual survey!

124. *Alex MacGillivray*: and, sorry, Nokia that always wins it.

125. *Ton Ziljstra*: NGO's do fine until a flaw is exposed. Politicians and big corps do fine after they've proven. So there is a starting level of trust assigned to orgs based on the group they seem to belong to (?)

126. *Alex MacGillivray*: To subscribe to pioneer entrepreneurs, email dbayless@pioneerentrepreneurs.com

127. *Alex MacGillivray*: Ton I am sure is right. And the starting level seems to vary by country too.

128. *Alex MacGillivray*: But I don't have an answer to pt on firebirds (question). I wonder if information alone can alter trust levels?

129. *Ton Ziljstra*: Cultural aspects will play a role I'm sure. In terms of importance of authority etc. I bet Hofstede's cultural dimensions can be found underneath a lot of trust issues for groups

130. *pt on firebird*: not suggesting info alone -- but contributing factor?

131. *Alex MacGillivray*: John, do we just have 10 minutes left? I've only just got my brain in gear! How do we take some of these ideas forward?

132. *John Moore*: I think that the net, and sites like chasebanksucks.com and internalmemos.com are having a collective impact

133. *John Moore*: Alex: We're scheduled for an hour but I think we're allowed to over-run without the EU closing us down :)

134. *John Moore*: I'm glad you're finding it valuable. There'll be a transcript but perhaps we can talk about meeting face-to-face to keep the conversation going

135. *Alex MacGillivray*: But will all this trust stuff close the EU down, that's the question! What happened in Sweden?

136. *Alex MacGillivray*: You're all thinking...

137. *pt on firebird*: was Sweden a question of trust or of national pride -- if you allude to the SEK/EUR vote

138. *Alex MacGillivray*: I do

139. *Ton Ziljstra*: or just of conservatism?

140. *pt on firebird*: so do you think it was trust?

141. *John Moore*: I think that trust and openness are challenging to people and organisations; but on the whole I think (contrary to Jack Nicholson) they can handle the truth a lot more easily that a framework of half-truths

142. *Alex MacGillivray*: I think trust in the EU is at a low point in the UK; but since we don't participate in any joint ventures if we can help it, that may not matter. But Peter

Mandelson may be the next UK commissioner and he is probably the most mistrusted man in politics

143. *pt on firebird*: UK was never really attached to the continent. In many new member states there is at least high expectations on the EU

144. *John Moore*: I think politicians will be among the last to really understand how to create solid trust in society of intelligent people with easy access to information and endless opportunities to network

145. *Ton Ziljstra*: Sorry, am enjoying the conversation very much, but have to go now. Hope to meet you again, here or face to face.

146. *John Moore*: Ton, thanks for taking part!

147. *Ton Ziljstra*: By all!

148. *Alex MacGillivray*: They can handle the truth I agree - but perhaps see limited options. If you don't quite like McDonalds, don't you just go to KFC instead?

149. *Ton Ziljstra*: Thanks John.

150. *Alex MacGillivray*: Bye Ton

151. *Tobias Keim*: Thanks to everyone, I enjoyed the conversation!

152. *John Moore*: bye tobias!

153. *pt on firebird*: ...ob buy your burgers at Tesco microwave them at home ...

154. *pt on firebird*: this is back to authenticity

155. *John Moore*: Possibly the next big thing in marketing is buyer-centricity (I'm slightly sceptical) where consumers band together to buy stuff, much less dependent on producers to organise it for them

156. *John Moore*: You'd be able to start your own burger buying club!

157. *Alex MacGillivray*: Yes, we British prefer to buy everything at Tesco if we can. So maybe we should be getting them to sponsor the next discussion (face to face?)

158. *pt on firebird*: John: so next we will see "buyer brands"

159. *John Moore*: That's an idea Alex... if they don't, I'll sponsor you to the extent of a nice lunch somewhere though!

160. *Chris Macrae*: interested in how negative energies connect: distrust freeserve, internet rage, being excommunicated for 30 minutes

161. *John Moore*: More seriously, I think there is an opportunity for a real trust debate and it would be good to find a sponsor for it

162. *Chris Macrae*: conversely trust, courage, fun, joy of learning, openness connect

163. *Alex MacGillivray*: I like "buyer brands." But isn't amazon.com sort of blurring the distinction?

164. *pt on firebird*: welcome back then, Chris

165. *Chris Macrae*: hi pt

166. *John Moore*: Yes, Amazon Ebay etc are interesting blurrers

167. *pt on firebird*: Amazon is clearly a seller that tries to pretend to build a user community

168. *Chris Macrae*: brands are all promise, no trust unless proven otherwise, imo [in my opinion]

169. *pt on firebird*: again I'd say eBay is sellers

170. *John Moore*: And I think that real progress will come when we get beyond crude delineations of "Buyer" and "Seller"

171. *Alex MacGillivray*: so would you say it is 'fake'?

172. *pt on firebird*: sort of fake ... abusing naive people

173. *Chris Macrae*: I find it far easier to answer question: who do you trust as a person most in the world on a specific context than any aspect of brand leadership

174. *Alex MacGillivray*: Was it Shakespeare who said neither a buyer nor a seller be?

175. *John Moore*: Yes, (well borrower or lender to be exact) of course he had it said by Polonius, one of the least trustworthy characters he wrote !

176. *Alex MacGillivray*: Good question Chris. Did you know that Nike offered Ralph Nader US$25K to denigrate them in an advert?

177. *Chris Macrae*: but then sensitive people know their reputation is all they have, and orgs don't have that brain in the way they are governed, and currently run mainly for speculators

178. *pt on firebird*: there are these no-shopping-days to start with

179. *Chris Macrae*: Alex, that's news to me - hope he didn't bite

180. *John Moore*: Alex - if you collect Nike anecdotes, you'd enjoy www.blackspotsneaker.org

181. *Alex MacGillivray*: Yes, they are good fun. We tried to bring in a 'buy local' day to be more positive. Hasn't taken off yet but may.

182. *pt on firebird*: might want to steal the idea

183. *Alex MacGillivray*: it's open access!

184. *Chris Macrae*: its sad that the sucks sites don't really seem to have connected consumers www.epinions.com seems very dilute compared with the possibility

185. *pt on firebird*: GNU public licence...

186. *Chris Macrae*: oddly www.vault.com sharing employee opinions gets much closer to the gist of employee trust with orgs. So how bad does the world need to get before we rediscover that we want trustworthy institutions the bigger they are?

187. *John Moore*: Looking at the clock I know I have to move on soon. I suggest that I will take a transcript of this debate and post it at K'board

188. *Alex MacGillivray*: I'll have to have a look. I feel a bit out of touch with these sites. But it's right that companies seem to be well insulated from adverse opinion. But I think GM is an interesting issue - so extreme that people always have a view on it for or against.

189. *Chris Macrae*: ok good party, sorry to lose its middle session, thanks ...

190. *Alex MacGillivray*: Yes, shall we draw to a close and then figure out how to go forward?

191. *pt on firebird*: yes, was good fun & good pointers to sites etc. & lots of loose ends....

192. *John Moore*: Let's swap emails - and I will open a thread in the Trust SIG for any continuing debate online

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