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UNRAVELING SELVES:
A BUTLERIAN READING OF MANAGERIAL SUBJECTIVITIES DURING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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Abstract

Unraveling selves: A Butlerian Reading of Managerial Subjectivities during Organizational Change

Key words: NHS, Judith Butler, Poststructuralist, managers, Organizational Change, identity, subjectivity, gender, ethical relations

This poststructuralist research into managerial subjectivity follows ten senior managers' experience, during significant organizational restructuring in the National Health Service. Located in the North of England the managers were interviewed three times during an eighteen-month period. An autoethnographic component is integral to the study; this recognises the researcher was a practising manager undergoing the same organizational change, whilst researching the field. Judith Butler's theories provide the principle theoretical framework for the study. Whilst the managers narrated a fantasy of having a 'true' and coherent self, the research illustrated how fragile, fleeting and temporary each managerial self is and how passionately attached to their managerial subjectivity (despite how painful) they were. Emotion is presented as inextricably tied up with gender performativity and managerial subjectivity; despite best efforts the emotional 'dirt' of organizations cannot be ordered away; there is a constant seepage and spillage of emotion – as illustrated in the vignettes and profiled in the Butlerian deconstruction. During organizational change there was a fear of a social (organizational) death and even the most senior of managers were profoundly vulnerable. This fear and vulnerability heightened in contact with others perceived as more powerful (in critical conversations and interviews). Failure to receive the desired recognition and the risk of being organizationally unintelligible compounded this vulnerability and triggered recurrent, unpredictable patterns of loss, ek-stasis and unravelling of the managerial self. This acute vulnerability during restructuring anticipates and therefore (re) enacts a Machiavellian discourse, one that excuses unethical behaviour and relations as a 'necessary evil'.

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1.0   Introduction Chapter

> 'Of course, in order to practice this style of reading as art, one thing is above all essential, something that today has been thoroughly forgotten -and so it will require still more time before my writings are "readable" - something for which one almost needs to be a cow, at any rate not a "modern man" - rumination.'
> (Nietzsche, 1998, p7)

1.1   Research Aims

There has been substantial rumination in the production of this thesis. I have followed Nietzsche's (1998) instruction and acquired bovine practices in the mastication, digestion and regurgitation of my reading and research analysis. Starting my research almost a decade ago means I have had plenty of time to ponder, reflect and review; my research reflects this opportunity (as I see it) as ideas have had time to develop and brew. This incubation continued even during a couple of suspensions of study (I lost both of my parents during the course of this research). So in this sense I follow Nietzsche (1998); reading and developing theory takes time, on occasion pain, rumination and effort.

Of course this 'I' who ponders and writes is a variable subject; there are many 'Jane's inhabiting and producing this text; student, researcher, manager and author are just some of my fleetingly held subject positions. And each of these 'selves' continuously change with time and context – as will become apparent. One example of the varying 'Jane's can be found in my autoethnographic study (Mischenko, 2005); this was produced early in my studies and a vulnerable

managerial 'self' is etched across the pages. This piece of work stimulated an interest in managerial subjectivity. Did others experience their working lives and managerial 'identity-work' in a similar way? So my research focus and question were located; serendipity added a further dimension. In 2005 Nigel Crisp, the Chief Executive at the time of the National Health Service (NHS) announced reconfiguration, which included downsizing the number of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) (DH, 2005). Hence my research aims developed into exploring managers' experience of organizational change, with a particular focus on developing insights into managerial subjectivity.

1.2   Managerial Subjectivity: A Psychosocial Butlerian Reading

Exploring managerial subjectivity is tied to compelling philosophical questions, such as 'Who am I?' And 'How do I, and the many others I come into contact with perceive who and what I am?' (Kenny et al, 2011a). There is a substantial body of literature and a diverse range of theoretical frameworks that inform the field. Unfortunately a significant portion of this still draws from normative uncritical managerial discourse, and holds the instrumental goal to 'understand' in order to manage others' subjectivities. My research aligns itself more to the school of Critical Management Studies and takes a poststructuralist and to some extent a psychosocial approach, particularly adopting Judith Butler's philosophical theories and insights to 'read' managerial subjectivities. This tactic informed by poststructuralist, feminist and psychoanalytical theory provides the opportunity to take account of the interface between the social and the psyche (Hall, 2000)

and why certain discourses take hold with such great effect. It also includes the impact of power combined with the affective components of subjectivity (Kenny et al, 2011a), aspects rarely considered in the current field of organizational studies. Despite the promise of Judith Butler's theories she has to date been neglected in management and organizational studies (Borgerson, 2005; for exceptions see Ford & Harding, 2004; Hodgson, 2005; Tyler & Cohen, 2010; Kenny, 2010; Harding 2013). Taking this approach proved as fruitful as anticipated and my key findings are briefly introduced below.

1.3   The Vulnerability; the Dark-side and an Erratic Dance of Subjectivity

My study has identified some promising new insights, worthy of further exploration in future research. Contrary to the majority of the management literature, senior managers in the study were found to be profoundly vulnerable, and this was particularly exacerbated during organizational downsizing. This fragility manifested in a variety of ways and indicated the strength of their subordination to the regulatory norms of managerial discourse. There was a passionate attachment to managerial subjectivity, which exposed them to the vulnerability of exploitation. The desire to persist in their managerial subjectivity is a very exploitable vulnerability; we have 'a primary vulnerability to the Other in order to be' (Butler, 1997a, p21). This is seen in many of the vignettes profiled, where even the most senior of managers at times experienced distress, emotional pain and bullying.

My research emphasises the differing rhythms of 'becoming-in-the-world' that I noted and the theory I have of why and how this links to managers' vulnerability. This has not been reported in previous studies: I propose that it is in our fear, our loss and the unravelling of a known managerial 'self' (or subjectivity) that the rhythm of *performativity*[1] is disturbed. It is the associated terror of a social (organizational) death, a predominant fantasy during times of threat that generates this agitation. This fantasy and associated emotion propels us into the wider sociality where we strive for recognition; to attach to available subjectivities; here we are subordinated by the machinations of power as the only means to achieve a desired intelligibility (in organizational life) (Butler, 1997a).

A key finding is how closely bound to this vulnerability are the dark and threatening shadows of organizational life. The multiple allusions to an unpleasant organizational culture are powerful and include references to power dynamics, abuse and game playing. A Machiavellian discourse dominates during

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[1] *Performativity* is a concept developed by Judith Butler in her seminal work 'Gender Trouble' (1990). In her concept of *performativity* Butler utilises Derridian notions of iteration in new ways: The sign in language is iterable and re-cited in ways not controlled by the author, so too the material sign, the body is iterable, through constant *performative* acts, not fully controlled by the embodied individual, in order to be recognized/ intelligible, through identification and attachment to a subject position, changing fleeting and are open to transformation.

such times; the dying throes of organizations, associated politics and (un)
ethical relations fold into and are reiterated through managerial subjectivity.
Survival appears to be the justification for such behaviour, which is branded by
some as a '*necessary evil*'. But the complexity in the relation between
vulnerability and the game playing rhetoric is missing from most existing
organizational and management literature (an exception being Ford & Harding,
2003).

These Machiavellian ways of framing understanding and the acute vulnerability
of managers are bound together in a knot that strengthens and tightens its hold
during organizational change. In my research, many of the managers' vignettes
illustrate a circular bind of fear, paranoia and a desire to prevail, which are
reinforced through, and emphasise the Machiavellian discourse. This then
produces ways of seeing the world and practising certain kinds of (un) ethical
practice, justified as a 'necessary evil'. It identifies the acute vulnerability of
managers and how the known 'secret' or shadow Machiavellian discourse of
organizational change is the 'real' benchmark for practice at such times (rather
than the officially published Human Resource policy). My research demonstrates
how overly reductive it is to fix managers to any, single subject or moral position.
Subjectivity is a complex dynamic and disruptive process; even during times of
change when the Machiavellian discourse dominates, managers continue to
struggle with ethical dilemmas.

I have highlighted above the main theoretical findings this research contributes

to the field. There is the acute vulnerability of managers through organizational

downsizing, and a reference as to how the performativity of managerial

subjectivities manifests in different rhythms associated with emotions, such as

excitement and fear. Often initiated by contact with others (frequently

conversations with powerful others), managerial performativity stalls, slows

and/or accelerates. Rarely, this includes an acutely conscious free-fall. The

research supports the dynamic 'nature' of subjectivity; how fragile and fleeting

any 'self' is. And finally bound tightly with this vulnerability and continuous

practice of becoming is the reinforcement of the Machiavellian discourse. During

times where managers are anticipating organizational death (through mergers)

and therefore the fantasy of their own extinction, most are seduced by its calling;

those once perceived as peers are viewed with suspicion, paranoia engulfs

perspective and 'secret' conversations multiply. The following section provides

a high level overview of the thesis chapters, particularly noting the unique

contributions they proffer to the field.

1.4   Thesis Chapters

1.4.1 Literature Review

The literature in the field of management, identity and subjectivities is daunting

in its size, variable approaches and in the dominance of normative managerial

texts. The literature review chapter is written in the form of a dialogue between

my early autoethnographic voice (Mischenko, 2005) and what each alternative

approach offers and omits in its particular perspective. Framed partly by Kenny

and colleagues' theoretical framework (2011a) and extended through my

extensive reading, this conversation ultimately sets out the reason I adopt an

approach strongly informed by Judith Butler's theories. As rehearsed earlier this

proffered the opportunity to explore aspects of managerial subjectivity

frequently neglected in the field; the interface of the social and the psyche (Hall,

2000) and how power, the social and affect are integral to subjectivity (Kenny et

al, 2011a).

1.4.2   Methodological Approach

The methodological chapter recounts how my philosophical approach

influenced my research interest and adopted theoretical positioning. I profile the

iterative and messy experience of my research (also noted by Law, 2004) and

how it is counter to the traditional linear mode of 'writing up' such studies.

There are two methodological contributions particularly worth profiling; I

decided to explore the adoption of a longitudinal approach; one that covered the

period the NHS restructuring extended through, and also to review my

experience of researching and living through this time, as both manager

(participant) and researcher. The inclusion of an autoethnographic approach

facilitated this latter aim, and enhanced my reflexivity (see Humphreys, 2005). I

also responded to Gannon's (2006) call for more provocative poststructuralist

autoethnography, where the 'self' is presented, deconstructed and troubled.

Located in the Northern part of England I interviewed nine senior managers from across the region (from the Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) subject to reconfiguration). Recognising my insider and outsider status (as discussed above), I included an autoethnographic component and my supervisor, Jackie interviewed me; I became the tenth participant. Interviewing senior managers three times over the period recognises the construction of meaning by individuals in organizations, rather than seeing this as capturing fragments of reality (Boje, 1991, Boland, 1989, 1994, Forester, 1992, Gabriel, 1995, Barry & Elmes, 1997, Czarniawska, 1999). Poststructuralism does not result in the death of narrative and autobiographical writing; it does draw attention to the difficulty of the "I" to express itself through the language that is available to it (Butler, 1990, p.xxiv); it doesn't stop us trying to give an account of ourselves to others, however opaque we are to ourselves; in order to live and survive (Butler in Kirby, 2006, p154).

My research analysis was influenced by Czarniawska's (1998) concepts of centripetal and centrifugal analysis; the former is where I first explore generalising accounts of my findings in order to demonstrate areas of coherence, such as the key themes that form the focus of my three findings chapters; whereas the latter goes back to the stories (to the vignettes). Here I take a close reading to ruminate and to note how the difference, complexity and details

within these vignettes belie such simplicity. For each of my three findings chapters I particularly profile two key protagonists. This highlights the inconsistency and complexity of managerial subjectivity across and within managers' experience.

1.4.3   Findings Chapters: Key themes and the Complexity within

Chapter four plays out how managers are seduced by the notion they have a coherent and stable 'self' and yet my Butlerian analysis troubles this; close readings suggest varying tempos of becoming and losing managerial subjectivity. Disjointed, fragmented, flailing, fleeting, unravelling and conflicting 'selves' are illustrated and yet all are connected in a passionate attachment to this often, painful subordination to managerial discourse (Butler, 1997a).

Within the chapter there are poignant vignettes that render into sharp relief the fragility, pain and vulnerability of managerial subjectivity. Significant conversations with those who embody power in the new NHS organizations often acted as a catalyst for loss of, or work on the managerial 'self'. This suggestion of vulnerability contrasts with many studies that position senior managers simply as the wielders of power and as the instigators of initiatives aiming to manage workers' subjectivities for organizational instrumental gain.

Chapter five particularly focuses on how (un) ethical relations predominate in the midst of organizational change, heightening as managers experienced

assessment centres and interviews. I was surprised by the Machiavellian discourse that prevailed and was often justified as a '*necessary evil',* having not anticipated this finding. During the period of re-structuring ethical ambivalence heightens as Machiavellian *'frames of war'*, become the principal form of perceiving organizational life and informing behaviour.

The analogy of dirt to emotions and traditional notions of femininity is seen within my sixth chapter. The vignettes suggest that these sentiments are seen as a form of pollution and disorder, needing to be denied, purged, or boxed away from display in organizational settings. Emotion is presented as inextricably tied up with gender performativity and managerial subjectivity. Despite best efforts this emotional 'dirt' of organizations cannot be ordered away; there is a constant seepage and spillage of emotion – as illustrated in the vignettes and profiled in the Butlerian deconstruction.

The next chapter sets the scene for my research as I enter into a dialogue with the literature.

2.0   Literature Review

2.1   Introduction:

I begin with a confession: This was a hard chapter to write and initially I floundered. I enjoyed reading the diverse literature, often taking too much time to ruminate and lose myself in fascinating theories. However, I was very aware of the need to position my work and do justice to a complex field of knowledge. Producing an interesting, coherent, summary and critique of the read volumes was challenging and generated some anxiety. I anticipated, (and indeed produced in earlier drafts), a rather tedious and turgid tome. I imagined what a dreary read the resulting chapter could be; not an impression I want for my first key chapter. In contrast, when I interweave the literature with my research I fully engage and the conversation comes alive. Here there is a two-way critique, a support and challenge between previous authors' insights and my emergent ideas. Now, that is more engaging for both you, (the reader) and I. But clearly it would be premature to introduce my research findings this early in the thesis, so I needed to find another way to inject some vitality.

As highlighted in the introductory chapter it was my experience as a manager and the resulting autoethnographic article (Mischenko, 2005) that initiated my interest and the focus of this research; I wanted to hear and compare other managers' experiences of their working lives and particularly explore managerial subjectivities through a time of organizational restructure. In

crafting this chapter my approach is to draw from that original paper and the rather troubled managerial 'self' I shared within it. I revisit that vulnerable voice to initiate a dialogue with this intriguing and yet substantial body of literature; to critique, probe and contrast what the varying approaches, in theorizing and researching identity, can offer my research; and to identify the current gaps in research, into understanding managerial subjectivities that I hope this study, in part, can contribute to. But prior to introducing my earlier 'self' and launching into that debate, I describe the framework I adopt from Kenny and colleagues (2011a) to organize my initial conversations with the significant volumes of literature; it is following this that our journey and the dialogue will begin.

2.2   Theoretical Perspectives: Identity

I like the simplicity of Kenny and colleagues' introduction of identity; they highlight how the concept traces back to elemental philosophical questions, such as 'who am I?' and 'how do I, and the many others I come into contact with, perceive who and what I am?' (Kenny et al, 2011a). These authors outline how the core tenet of identity, in contrast to notions of personality, suggests that 'who we are is based on our experiences of the society and social groups in which we live' (Op cit, p. 4). They illustrate the many varying categories of identity that we can belong to, from gender, race, class and sexuality, through to politics, occupation, communities and religion (Op cit).

The interest in employees' identity in organizations particularly developed with the Human Relations movement; prior to this, management following Taylor's (1911) scientific management approach, considered notions of identity as a hindrance to effective and productive work settings (Kenny et al, 2011a). In contrast the Human Relations movement was informed by a belief that management should cultivate in employees a strong sense of identification with the norms and values of the organization, again this was at least in part to increase productivity and effectiveness (Op cit).

Acknowledging the myriad of differing approaches to understanding identity, Kenny and colleagues (2011a) developed a useful framework of six key perspectives that inform organizational studies: I adopt this frame as the main outline for this chapter and their model is reproduced in part in the table below. It is worth flagging however, that the extensive literature I draw from doesn't always fit neatly within one of the six perspectives; many approaches overlap and the boundaries blur, as will become apparent later. Also, I found I had a remainder, a surplus body of literature that couldn't quite align to the framework's artefact of neat and distinctive divisions. I explore this towards the end of the chapter. Throughout my dialogue with the literature, the echo of my vulnerable managerial voice assists me; gradually I justify my approach and how my research aims to contribute to such a rich and complex field.

Table 1: Theoretical Perspectives (adapted from Kenny et al, 2011a, p. 14-15)

	Theoretical Assumptions	Founding Thinkers	Examples From org. studies
Social identity theory	People identify with certain social groups (the in-group) and dis-identify with other social groups (the out-group) People have a natural tendency to: • generalise from their experiences • underestimate differences within the in-group • over emphasise differences with the out-group	Henri Tajfel, John Turner	O'Connor & Annison (2002)
Foucauldian	People are formed within, and come to identify with, dominant discourses or systems of thought, which make available certain subject positions and self-understandings These comprise modes of liberation as well as subjection. In each case, Foucauldian thinking questions the autonomy that is attributed to subjects while resisting any suggestion that human behaviour is determined by dominant discourses, power/knowledge regimes, subject positions, etc.	Michel Foucault	Brewis (2004) Knights & Willmott (1989)
Psychoanalysis	The psyche shapes our responses to everyday events • People form their identifications with particular social forces at the level of the psyche • A person's psyche is formed through life experiences that are internalized. These emerge in the form of repressed feelings, fantasies or desires Such elements can help us to understand the power of particular norms, in a given social context	Sigmund Freud Jacques Lacan	Schwartz (1990) Gabriel (1999) Driver (2005)

	Theoretical Assumptions	Founding Thinkers	Examples From org. studies
Symbolic interactionism	People construct their sense of self through interaction with others: • Mead views the self as composed of the 'Me' (how we think others view us) and the 'I' (how we respond to the attitudes and behaviour of others) • Goffman views identity as a continuing process of managing how we present ourselves to others. He uses the metaphor of the theatre: we take on certain roles, scripts and costumes that suit the social setting, in order to manage these impressions	George Herbert Mead Erving Goffman	Gardner & Avolio (1998) Mangham (1986)
Narrative	People's identities are shaped by the narratives and stories they tell about themselves and their lives, and by narratives drawn from the wider social environment that surrounds them People search for a sense of meaning and coherence about themselves by telling stories with particular characters and plots	Paul Ricoeur Kenneth Burke	Czarniawska (1998)
Micro-interactional	People make use of identity categories as part of their methods for accomplishing particular tasks Identity is not something that people 'have' but is something that people can make relevant in certain situations in order to achieve a particular social action, such as declining an invitation, making a compliment, reporting concerns and so on	Harold Garfinkel Harvey Sacks	Llewellyn & Burrow (2007)

So what do the varying perspectives of this framework, into which I have ordered my extensive reading, offer my research question? Before I explore this, let me first introduce you to my device, an entry point into the literature, my 'historic' autoethnographic voice.

2.3   An Autoethnographic Voice

A number of years ago I published and therefore shared, or even exposed, a vulnerable managerial 'self' (Mischenko, 2005); this was in response to undergoing change that resulted in an increase in my work responsibilities, both for operational management and a widening of my portfolio. This reflective piece drew from various critical management theories to assist the analysis of my situation. Given it is this paper that developed my interest and the ultimate focus for this research, it seems appropriate to adopt that autoethnographic voice once again as a tool to probe, critique and engage with the key theoretical perspectives and empirical studies of identity-work in organizations.

In that paper I expressed myself through poetry and I revisit the first verse of the poem below, to introduce my first autoethnographic voice of this thesis, my previous managerial 'self':

Pressure

> *How did this creep up on me?*
> *Me so efficient,*
> *so busy*
> *a deliverer?*
> *Always in control,*
> *always calm.*
> *When did work take over?*
> *Its insidious creep;*
> *staying late,*
> *taking work home,*
> *more and more*
> *hours stolen.*
> *Frustration, anger welling up*
> *trying to catch up:*
> *There's always more.*
> *Where am I?*
> *My children look to me and sigh,*
> *Where is mum?*
> *My rage starts spilling out*
> *to anyone who'll listen.*
> *My tears ever near,*
> *my throat a tight constriction.*
> *Where am I?*

[Mischenko, 2005, p208, part - first verse]

So here it is, my historical and vulnerable 'self': What can each body of literature, drawing from the above framework and beyond, offer this plaintive cry?

2.4   Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) is a social-psychological theory originating in the UK, though increasingly seen in organizational studies in the United States; Henri Tajfel and John Turner (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) developed the theory. SIT emphasises a personal cognitive process that individuals undertake to classify themselves and others into social categories, or groups, in a form of

ordering of the social environment (Op cit). This theory of social identity is both 'relational and comparative' (Tajfel & Turner, 1985, p. 16) and enables a sense of psychological identification and belonging to a social group, described as the 'in-group' (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Kenny et al, 2011a). An example of this could be taken from my autoethnographic piece above, in that I strongly identify as a manager (and one that delivers); however, as Kenny and colleagues (2011a) state in their critique of SIT, this fails to acknowledge the complexity and dynamic nature of identity. Within my poem I alternate dramatically between identification and dis-identification - with being a manager and of being a 'good' mother. The neat categorization and ordering of identities within SIT fails to recognise what I experienced as a very messy and dynamic process; within this poem I waver between being 'in', 'out' and betwixt any number of groups, both occupational and personal.

SIT proposes that an attachment to specific groups is reinforced by an opposite 'dis-identification' with what is classified as the 'out-group', which provokes the 'us and them divide' (Kenny et al, 2011a, p. 16). SIT suggests that we default to this simplistic means of categorization, which is based on often limited personal experience and draw from various stereotypes to produce these 'in and out groups' (Op cit). Those within the group are homogenized to be just like me, whilst we generalise and emphasise the difference of the out-group (Op cit). This theory has a certain face-validity and has been adopted by a number of researchers within organization studies. Kenny and colleagues (2011a) highlight an American study of a community hospital setting that utilises SIT to understand the relations between doctors and

senior administrators (see O'Connor & Annison, 2002). SIT is applied in a similar fashion to a number of research studies in UK hospitals to explain doctors' experience of managerial agendas and the separation of professional and managerial identity to 'in' and 'out' groups (Mueller, et al, 2004; Forbes & Hallier, 2006). However, within the theory, and therefore its application, is a failure to recognise how power informs identification; for example, of how medics resist a managerial discourse perceived as a threat to their professional power and autonomy. And in relation to my poem it would omit the complexity of identifying with a number of social groups, such as manager, woman and mother and yet perhaps not quite fitting or belonging to any, at the point of this expression - according to certain normative values – but here I am getting ahead of the categories and straying into Foucauldian territory.

SIT, for me, provides a simple but rather narrow perspective upon which to understand managers' experience of their subjectivity; as highlighted there is a failure to acknowledge the power and inequalities inherent in social groupings, an omission of the tentative, dynamic and complex nature of belonging to certain 'in' groups, and further, a lack in acknowledgment of how social identification changes over time, or place; for example in the social and historical categorization of gender, race and sexuality. Therefore, this is not an approach I adopt in my research; the erasure of the complexity of managerial subjectivity is not my goal. The next theoretical category that I explore engages me more; this is the Foucauldian approach, which I discuss in the wider context of the poststructuralist literature.

2.4   Foucauldian Perspective

Michel Foucault (1926-84), a French philosopher, (or some would argue a historian of ideas) has significantly influenced organization studies, particularly due to his focus on the relationship between power, knowledge and subjectivity (Kenny et al, 2011a).

According to Foucault objects in the world, including the human subject are constructed, through powerful discursive practices of the time and culture (Foucault, 1980, 1984, 1990). Discourse in poststructuralist[2] terms 'can be understood as a set of concepts, texts and practices that frame the way in which we relate to, understand and act upon a particular phenomenon' (Knights & Morgan, 1991, cited by Whittle, 2005, p. 1302), or rather more simply as 'systems of thought' (Kenny et al, 2011a, p20). Discourses '[do] not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention' (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). In speaking, acting and writing, the human subject reiterates normative conventions (Vasterling, 2003); hence the subject in poststructuralism, rather than a self-determining agent, is a discursive effect (McNay, 2003). However, we should not forget that there are multiple discourses and some more influential than others; those that dominate vary according to historical, cultural and geographical context (Parker, 1997).

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[2] Poststructuralist theory 'reflects postmodernism's reaction against a naive and earnest confidence in objective or scientific truth and a scepticism of the grand narratives of modernity and assumptions of progressism. It denies any fixed meaning, reality and truth, or correspondence between language and the world. Notions of objectivity are revealed as a disguise for power or authority in the academy.'(Blackburn, 2005, p. 285)

Foucault's work is frequently identified as poststructuralist, which is a complex and heterogeneous theoretical field. One commonly shared notion of poststructuralism is that the deconstruction of the subject-as-agent creates an understanding of the (linguistic) subject as a position within a particular discourse. This means that the subject is 'no longer coterminous with the individual' (Henriques et al, 1998, p. 203).

The human subject in Foucault's earlier work is the nodal point where discourse provides intelligibility through language and practice for subjectification, the ongoing process of becoming a subject (Kirby, 2006). Identity, or rather subjectivity, is the site where the social and the psyche meet (Hall, 2000). I think it is worth flagging here how the language I adopt to describe my research has changed during the course of my study. My original research goal was couched in terms of an interest in exploring other managers' identity-work; however, through the process of reading and reviewing the extensive theoretical and empirical literature, I have reframed this as a wish to research managerial subjectivity. Identity-work, for me has connotations of a cognitive and distinct activity at the level of the individual. In contrast, adopting the language and theory of subjectivity recognizes a complexity, the continual process of 'becoming' and how power is integral to this process; through society's regimes of truth, through the constitution and ongoing production of the subject, and through inter-subjectivity (see Butler, 1997a). This refocus complements my philosophical values, which is explored more thoroughly in the following research methodology chapter.

It should be noted that Judith Butler, whilst appropriating much of Foucault's work, does critique his absence of a theory of the psyche through subjectification (Butler, 1997a). It is this conceptual challenge, this problematic, in the meeting of society and the psyche that theorists continue to struggle to theorise (Hall, 2000) and one that fascinates me. In my reading to date many researchers neglect to consider the psyche when studying subjectivity in organizational studies (or even deny its existence), though there are notable exceptions as I discuss in the next section. As becomes apparent, I see much value in adopting a Foucauldian approach to inform my research into managerial subjectivity; however, this alone is not sufficient; I agree with Butler, some theory of the psyche is also needed to help us understand why certain discourses dominate and take hold.

Foucault's earlier work is often critiqued as promoting compliant, passive individuals where powerful discourses uncompromisingly predict and fully determine the available subject positions, within which they unfailingly fall in line. However, his latter publications refute this (McNay, 1994). Power in these latter works is presented as <u>productive</u>; it is present at all levels and generates the interplay of the many fragmented and often conflicting discourses; these can undermine as well as reinforce the power of any single dominant discourse (Foucault, 1984). The latter Foucauldian subject, through 'technologies of the self'', recognises 'her/himself' as a subject to improve (Foucault, 1988). But rather than promoting volunteerism, Foucault here draws from notions in dominant Western discourses, or systems of thought,

that produce taken for granted assumptions of having an individual 'self'. Associated discourse and practice promotes the need to develop, govern and care for the self. Rose (1989), following Foucault, proposes that the freedom in the creation of a self is an illusion and yet a necessity, rather than the act of a free agent; this belief results from subjectification and constitutes an increasingly self-governing subject: A process of which can be researched through a focus on identity-talk.

So to revisit my autoethnographic poem; what could a Foucauldian analysis offer? What identity-talk do I undertake? In their précis of Foucault, Kenny and her colleagues (2011a) highlight Brewis's (2004) adoption of his theory to understand her personal experience of nervous exhaustion and breakdown. In her study Brewis (2004) describes how a cluster of significant changes in her life led to an enduring anxiety; the changes challenged her strong identification with being professional, having self-control and delivering to high standards (Kenny et al, 2011a). Brewis adopted Foucault's 'technologies of the self' to theorise how she continuously governed herself to meet her exacting standards, driven by a wish not to let herself or others down (Op cit). There are traces of this refrain in my poem; there is yearning for the time when I delivered (to mine and others' expectations) and was calm; there is a self-critique and fear that I was increasingly absent to my children and therefore a poor mother. A notion that I had lost both my managerial and mother 'self (or selves)' is evidenced in my plaintive query of, *'where am I?'* and the echo of my children's cry of *'where is mum?'* So here, perhaps similar to Brewis, I am practising a governing of my 'self', trying to

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hold onto notions of being effective, a deliverer and calm. These expectations

and 'qualities' (of efficiency and emotional control) are inherent in

managerial discourse. My cries could be seen to represent an ongoing

struggle to hold onto a promoted managerial subjectivity; the need not to be

emotional (in this case both anxious and angry), the requirement to do

whatever it takes, however many hours, to continue to deliver. Though again,

following Foucault, there are conflicting discourses informing my travail; I

could bring in discussions of power and charges of inequality; there are

gender considerations of the struggle women managers can experience in the

conflicting discourses between organizational masculine assumptions of

managerial identity and the discourses that constitute women with the body,

sexuality, fertility and motherhood (Gatrell, 2008).

2.5.1   Control and Resistance

There are traces of resistance and resentment echoing in my verse, of *'how*

did this creep up on me?' and *'more and more hours stolen'.* Many

organizational studies have drawn from Foucault to explore notions of

managerial control of subjectivity; a number challenge dualistic over

simplified notions of compliance versus resistance and the promotion of a

single authoritative discourse (Leonard, 2003; McDonald, 2004; Thomas &

Davies, 2005). McDonald (2004) identified Foucault's ethics, the

'technologies of the self,' as an apt framework for analysis, of an initiative

within a Primary Care Trust; this was aimed at developing the self-regulating

abilities of middle managers. Participants varied in their response to the

programme; some appeared to fully engage and identified the deficiencies

they needed to address, often relating to emotional management and the production of more rational and positive selves. A few openly resisted, challenging what they perceived to be a paternalistic and evangelistic manner, whilst others quietly resisted and focused on self defined goals. This diversity in response to organizational discourse is also reflected in the feminist poststructuralist research on nurses' and doctors' positioning, within an NHS acute hospital (Leonard, 2003). Again although the discourses were powerful, their effect was variable dependent on a range of factors, including the interplay of a plethora of other influential discourses of profession, gender, home and performance; these destabilised and undermined the organizational ones (Op cit, see also Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). Individuals heard, interpreted and positioned themselves very differently through the mesh of discourses; they moved through various and shifting identity positions experiencing feelings of vulnerability one moment and power the next. Researchers also highlight that those holding positions at the top of the hierarchy are more likely to be strongly predisposed to organizational discourses influencing their identity rather than those at the bottom (Leonard, 2003; Kenny et al, 2011a). This approach, of identifying the discourses informing managers' subjectivities, shows promise for my research, though it does still provoke the question; why do some discourses seize us and take hold so effectively and why is there such a variety of response?

A number of critical theorists recognise that power is wielded through and by workers, not just applied to them. One example of the complexity of power

and managerial subjectivity can be found in Whittle's (2005) study, which focuses on the perspective of those charged with, both producing and promoting managerial discourse. Drawing from an in-depth ethnographic study of management consultants in the UK, who sell and practice the concept of flexible working, she found that the participants demonstrated, 'tensions, schisms, and contradictions in their role as preachers and practitioners of flexibility' (Whittle, 2005, p. 1303). However, as researchers from various theoretical perspectives have noted, workers can be skilled at presenting the required 'self' to those in power when conscious of being visible (Hochschild, 1983; Collinson, 1994; Roberts, 2005).

As highlighted, Foucault's theory is often drawn from in order to explore notions of power and control in organization studies. Management practice has seen a transition from a focus on traditional bureaucratic methods of control (through work standardisation and overt supervision) towards developments that aim to influence workers' beliefs and values (Alvesson & Karreman, 2001; Gotsi et al, 2010), as an alternative means to deliver organizational agendas (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002).

Power and control were initially conceived as wielded by managers, imposed onto the workforce through coercion, technical control and overt supervision (Braverman, 1974), and this approach and assumption can still be found in managerial discourse and practice today. This form of overt power could then be resisted or colluded with. Foucault inverted this assumption; power, control and disciplinary processes became the process and products of

subjectivity (Knights & Willmott, 1989, Roberts, 2005).

However, control is exercised increasingly by policy and practice aimed at managing subjectivities (Alvesson, 2001; Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, Deetz, 2003, du Gay, 1996a, 1996b; Knights & Willmott, 1989, Rosen, 1985), though traditional bureaucratic forms of control continue to be applied (Karreman & Alvesson, 2004). Therefore control is integral to organizational policy; it has become normative (Barley & Kunda, 1992; Fleming & Spicer, 2002; Kunda, 1992; Raz, 2005), or neo-normative (Fleming, 2009; Fleming and Sturdy, 2009; Cederström and Grassman, 2008). It incorporates processes aimed at influencing subjection, alongside the more overt traditional disciplinary practices (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Jermier, 1998; Pullen & Linstead, 2005; Roberts, 2005). Such efforts to control extend beyond the management of behaviour to encompass values, emotions and identities (Webb, 2006; Willmott, 1993) and even the 'selves' (thoughts, experiences and feelings) of workers (Hochschild, 1983, Kunda, 1992); this is reflected in numerous organizational discourses, one example being ethical and legal discourse relating to human rights, equality, and protection against harassment (Westwood & Johnston, 2011). This is not to propose that such discourse and policy is completely successful in managing employees' subjectivities. Humphreys and Brown (2006) found within their research that workers' narratives resisted the senior management team's promoted organizational identity in a manner of differing ways; they described these, drawing from Elsbach (1999), as dis-identification – a negative connection with the organization; schizo-identification – both positive and negative identification

(with different elements of the organizational identity), and neutral identification – where an individual is impartial or detached from the organization. Fleming and Spicer (2003) propose that there are many shades between identification and dis-identification and that it is rare to maintain a consistent position; they also identify disruptive forms of resistance that can be witnessed in parodies of identifying too much, or through working to rule strategies (Op cit).

If applied to my poem, I could be seen to have had, at this time, multiple *schizo-identifications* with the managerial discourse within the organization; on occasions I appear to fully engage with the need to continue to deliver to mine and others' expectations, and yet at others there are clear indications of resentment and resistance.

One example from the literature of employees' resistance relates to the organizational training programme referenced earlier (Westwood & Johnston, 2011). This drew from legal and ethical discourse to promote the equality and diversity agenda and was perceived by managers as an excessive promotion of politically correct behaviour (Op cit). Their resistance was demonstrated by reflecting antipathy to the organizational promoted 'ideal' personas, in relation to their 'authentic' selves. Humour was also used as a resource to resist the training programme and to reinforce traditional dominant gender roles and power dynamics (Op cit). Humour is recognized elsewhere as a tool often adopted to resist and subvert organizational discourse (Collinson, 1988, 2002; Grugulis, 2002; Holmes, 2000; Westwood,

2004) but there is acknowledgement that it can also reinforce the status quo (Holmes, 2000, 2007), by acting as a safety valve.

Cynicism is referred to as a failure to resist and can work as an effective delivery of conformity (Roberts, 2005). The conservative nature of cynicism means that even when we resist the promoted ideology and practice of an organization, 'we often still perform them – sometimes better, ironically than if we did identify with them' (Fleming & Spicer, 2003, p. 160). The authors suggest that cynicism provides the illusion of resistance; despite our cynical 'thoughts' we remain constituted by the power relations: There is nothing outside of this (Op cit). So power works through dis-identification as well as through identification within the prevailing discourse; so 'subjectivity may be 'radically' external rather than something 'inside' us.' (Fleming & Spicer, 2003, p. 161) Despite the expression of cynicism against the dominant organizational discourse, this distancing does not provide a disruptive resistance; we still perform, controlled by the regime and this is probably the 'most potent form' of cultural power (Op cit, p. 166).

Alvesson and Willmott, (2002) identified three identity regulatory approaches, which are often entangled and usually partial in their effect:

1. *Managerial* discourse constitutes the available subject positions employees draw from to create their self-identity; this form of meaning making attempts to promote a collective identity in the interests of organizational goals.

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2. *Cultural-communitarian* patterns of identity regulation develop from shared beliefs and understandings; these can relate to the managerial/ organizational discourse referred to in the first example but are often drawn from occupational or societal sources (Ezzamel & Willmott, 1998) – for example doctors' professional identity. These can work with or be antagonistic to management driven identity regulation.

3. *Quasi-autonomous* approaches reflect the partiality of effect any identity regulation can have given the myriad of discourses in circulation and alternative meaning making attempts; the authors suggest this provides a limited space for micro-emancipation and quasi-autonomy.

How do these theories of control and practices of regulation apply to my poem? In the original analysis of my verse, I reference the open plan office I worked within and associate this with Foucault's appropriation of Bentham's eighteenth century design of the panopticon (Mischenko, 2005). This prison structure enabled prisoners to be overseen by guards within a watchtower but the prisoners could not directly see the observers; therefore the suggestion is that they 'internalise' a notion of constant surveillance and apply self-discipline. In my open plan office I felt very visible to senior managers, colleagues and visitors, and this exposure did enact an increased managerial self-consciousness. But while there is an engagement with the discourse of the need to govern my 'self', to conform to certain machismo, managerial normative standards of long hours and delivery, as discussed earlier there is also an equally persistent message of resentment and resistance. I refer to stolen hours, anger and frustration; I don't fully identify

with the managerial 'regimes of truth'. There is a suggestion that I feel exploited but there is no individual to charge with this crime. However, within my poem there is no utilisation of humour or cynicism (though elements of these are expressed as a strategy in the conclusion to my original paper); there is more an awakening awareness of the oppressive character of the managerial discourse I have perhaps fully identified with, until that point.

The poststructuralist Foucauldian argument proposes that discourse produces, classifies and governs identities, and constitutes what can and cannot be available subject positions. Poststructuralism therefore challenges simplistic notions of individual and society dualism (Collinson, 2003). Identities are constituted through 'difference' and the subject is dislocated but dependent on the universal 'outside' (du Gay et al, 2000); all of which can be explored further in Butlerian notions of subjectivity, which I expand upon towards the end of this chapter.

Hall (2000) highlights that the poststructuralist critique; its deconstruction of notions of the subject and identity, are at the stage of interruption in the Hegelian dialectic method of accruing knowledge[3]. Here the concepts are recognized as no longer 'good to think with' (Hall, 2000, p. 16), but as yet there

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[3] Hegel's dialectic theory of the accrual of knowledge – 'refers to the necessary progress in both thought and the world (which are identified in Hegel's idealism). The process is one of overcoming the contradiction between thesis and antithesis, by means of synthesis; the synthesis in turn becomes contradicted, and the process repeats itself until final perfection is reached.' (Blackburn, 2005, p. 99) Though poststructuralists' use of the dialectic method deny the ability to reach final perfection, or true knowledge.

are no alternatives, no new synthesis proposed; for we are at the limit of current thought (Derrida, 1981, Hall, 2000). Hall identifies that despite this we continue to work with these albeit now deconstructed notions of the subject and identity: the ceaseless proliferation of such studies is a response to the unresolved problematic, the challenge of theorising the relation between discourse and the subject; society and the psyche (Hall, 2000).

In summary taking a poststructuralist and particularly Foucauldian approach would assist my research by profiling how the power and the politics of organizational life constitute the available managerial subjectivities. Not in a structurally determining way but rather in how the tangled mesh of fragmentary, often conflicting discourses are the only means of achieving intelligibility. Managers are both constituted by and through such regimes of 'truth'; power is profiled both in the process of their subjectification and in their engagement with and reiteration of such discourse.

2.5.2   The Psyche and Emotional Aspects of Subjectivity: A Gap

I value the theoretical contribution of Foucault and wish to adopt a poststructuralist framework; however following Butler's critique this theory is not sufficient. As previously noted, there is the absence of the psyche in Foucault's theory of subjectification and therefore a similar gap in research studies informed purely by this approach. What is unexplored by this omission is why and how some discourses dominate; how they take hold so tightly and why some individuals, at times attach more securely to certain subject positions than others? Also, within my poem are emotional

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undercurrents: What does a Foucauldian approach offer to understand and interpret this felt and narrated factor of human experience?

Within the opening verse of my poem are emotional traces of despair, frustration, anger and resentment. Empirical research into identity-work, in its frequent emphasis on the cognitive process, all too often neglects recognition of any emotional components (Sturdy et al, 2006); if emotion is acknowledged it is reduced to a reference of anxiety as a condition of existentialism[4], or 'pathologized as a paralysing state, especially in regard to rational management' (Sturdy et al, 2006, p845). An exception to this is Mirchandani's research (2003); she references the management of multiple identities, self and others' feelings, gender and race, as integral to identity-work. Sturdy and his colleagues (2006) believe that this emotional identity-work is particularly noted during times of transition, and times of paradox or conflicting self-identities; they highlight how rarely research explores the emotional component of identity-work alongside the more traditional elements of cognition, knowledge and power. They perceive that 'identity and its emotional-discursive processes arise from social relationships of power and interdependence' (Op cit, p. 853). This recognition of a frequently neglected aspect of managerial subjectivity is welcomed; however, missing once again is a theoretical proposal of how this power takes hold.

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[4] Existentialism is a 'loose title for various philosophies that emphasize certain common themes; the individual, the experience of choice, and the absence of rational understanding of the universe with a consequent dread or sense of absurdity in human life.' (Blackburn, 2005, p. 125)

Self-confidence is also identified by some authors as crucially linked to managers' emotional identity-work (Sturdy, et al, 2006), as in the 'confidence to do' (Bandura, 1977, p. 194), and a belief in one's ability to meet the demands and requirements in life. Confidence and status are always provisional and even those apparently most confident can have significant anxiety, given they have the most to lose; 'securing a sense of self is a necessarily fragile process, a condition and consequence of a sense of insecurity' (Sturdy et al, 2006, p. 855). Certainly in applying this to my autoethnographic poem, a promotion had shaken my confidence in the first instance. Sturdy and his colleagues proceed to suggest the MBA is used as a means to develop 'the trick of self confidence', of impression management for both self and others via knowledge, performance and language (2006, p. 855). The seductive nature of the managerial identity promoted in the MBA leadership discourse, is also identified in other research (see Sveningsson and Larsson, 2006). Here managers identified with a managerial subjectivity rather than alternative identities, such as 'technology freak,' which held less status (Op cit).

Kenny and her colleagues (2011a) profile an increasingly prominent discourse within leadership systems of thought that promotes the importance of 'emotional intelligence' for effective management (see Goleman, 1998); this suggests that those with certain prerequisite emotional skills are more effective at managing others for organizational benefit. However, as rehearsed earlier, whilst I recognize the value a poststructuralist (Foucauldian) reading of how discourses constitute emotional identity-work,

this alone is insufficient. A critical component in researching aspects of

managerial subjectivity needs to incorporate how these discourses seize and

constitute the subject at the level of the psyche. So whilst reiterating the

strengths of a Foucauldian approach, in addition to the absence of a theory of

the psyche, I also have concerns that a Foucauldian approach negates

experience of struggles and emotion. Parker (1992) highlights a risk that

poststructuralist theories, when adopted by organizational researchers, can

provide a philosophical screen that filters out organizational actors' pain. I

propose that by taking a Butlerian reading and therefore drawing from

psychoanalytic insights, a theoretical opportunity is created that tempers this

risk, which I discuss further in the next section.

2.6   Psychoanalysis

> Any analysis, which focuses on subjective positioning in discourses, requires
> an account of the investment that a person has in taking up one position
> rather than another in a different discourse.
> (Hollway, 1984, p. 238)

How are the fragments of multiple subject positions bound together within

one individual? 'How do we explain the continuity and predictability of the subject

and the subjective experience of identity' (Henriques et al, 1998, p. 204)? Following

posing these questions Henriques and colleagues (1998) turn to

psychoanalysis to complement the poststructuralist decentring of the subject.

Sigmund Freud (1856 - 1939) developed psychoanalysis in the early

twentieth century as a clinical method to respond to patients' mental and

emotional health problems. His complex hypothesis is a theory of psychology that incorporates notions of the unconscious and how it interacts with the conscious mind: It also includes how the psyche develops from infancy and has as a feature how individuals fit within society and personal relationships (Berry, 2000).

Psychoanalytical theory challenges notions of the unitary subject via the unconscious and theorises cognition and affect as integrated; it theorises a stream of continuity in the subject where past experience and infancy are implicated in the present (Henriques et al, 1998).

> Psychoanalysis gives space to our fundamental irrationality: the extent to which will or agency is constantly subverted to desire, and the extent to which   we behave and experience ourselves in ways which are often contradictory.
> (Henriques et al, 1998, p. 205)

The emphasis on unconscious drives and the influence feelings, desires and fantasies has on individuals' identifications provides an alternative lens through which to analyse managers' subjectivities. Following Butler's (1997) critique of Foucault, there is a need to theorise the psychic process of subjectification; to deliver this she proposed the need to explore a theory of the psyche alongside the theory of power.

In Freud's psychoanalysis the human subject includes the unconscious (illustrated by his concept of the 'id'), whereas many notions of self and identity theorised within poststructuralist theory (and for that matter within

humanist, social constructivist and pragmatist theory) include only the ego

and conscious components (Campbell, 2001). For Freud, the unconscious is

the state that holds repressed ideas and desires, which are not readily

accessible to the conscious via reflection but rather require skilled

interpretation: They are traced through various complex forms of expression,

such as, dreams or 'slips of the tongue' (Gabriel, 1999a). The psychoanalytical

approach takes a stance that individuals often deceive themselves, rather

than intentionally lying and distorting the facts for their own interests

(Gabriel, 1999a). Freud:

> 'conceives of the self not as an abstract entity, uniting experience and
> cognition, but as the subject of a struggle between two objective forces –
> unregenerate instincts and overbearing culture. Between these two forces
> there may be compromise but no resolution. Since the individual can neither
> extirpate his instincts nor wholly reject the demands of society, his character
> expresses the way on which he organizes and appeases the conflict between
> the two.'
> (Rieff, 1959 cited in Gabriel, 1999a, p. 15)

A number of psychoanalytical theorists are concerned with the limitations of

the linguistic turn (Mischler, 1991) and point out that such readings belie the

psychic complexities and 'realities' of the subject, and as such are a limited

and simplified presentation (Craib, 2000); such theory they argue relies too

heavily upon notions of the 'self', as an effect of society and discourse, posing

the question of what lies outside of this? (Frosh, 1999, referenced by Day

Sclater, 2003 p. 318) Psychoanalysis discards notions of individuals holding a

single and stable unitary identity; there is recognition of numerous

identifications taking place throughout a person's life, which are focused on various objects (Kenny et al, 2011a).

Roberts (2005) proposes that managers perpetually cling to a fantasy of order, for a sense of control, within their increasingly unpredictable organizational worlds and I suggest that this could become more pronounced during times of significant organizational change. Returning to my poem, this provides an alternate reading of my verse. There are clues that I held on tight to a fantasy of control, one that I perceived I had previously achieved (when I delivered) but was losing (now I was feeling overwhelmed); associated with this are the emotions I referenced earlier, such as, resentment, frustration and anger but also of nostalgia, for that time - when I claim I was calm and in control. I appear to have a strong identification with notions of control, order and delivery; these tie with managerial discourse. As Roberts suggests, control is the 'foundational fantasy for management' (2005, p. 630). Emotions are 'liable to be unpredictable, inconsistent, unmanageable and even chaotic, in spite of the ego's continuing attempts to control them, tame them or isolate them' (Gabriel, 1999a, p. 218). The metaphors I draw from to illustrate my emotions are those of '*welling up'* and '*spilling out';* these epitomize a dynamic and uncontrollable force, my imago of being a calm and controlled manager is troubled.

As discussed in the previous Foucauldian section, my poetic out pouring could be seen as undertaking self-governance, applying technologies of the self, informed by a dominant managerial discourse. Drawing from

psychoanalytical theory 'Stacey has argued that managers hold on to outdated and virtually useless procedures of control in an attempt to contain [...] anxieties, seeking to create islands of calm in a turbulent sea (cited by Gabriel, 1999a, p. 226). Power and knowledge create a 'field of visibility' (Roberts, 2005, p620); as Roberts identifies, this often creates a 'narcissistic preoccupation with how the self and its activities will be seen and judged in its terms, whether defensively or assertively' (Roberts, 2005, p. 620-1).

Within psychoanalytical theory there are varying schools of thought, developed by Freud's successors; and each of these are adopted to a greater or lesser degree within organizational studies.

However, there are a number of critiques of using psychoanalytical theory in organizational studies; one questions the appropriateness and risk of adopting something that was developed in and for clinical practice (Frosh & Baraister, 2008; Kenny et al, 2011a); another points out how it is a system of thought, a discursive strategy, belonging to a particular historical period (early twentieth century) and place (Western civilization), (Op cit; Frosh & Baraister, 2008). Related to this are charges of misogyny (Kenny, 2009a) and of adopting an expert position of knowing more about an individual's subjectivity than they do (Frosh & Baraister, 2008). There is also the challenge that it is not scientific and that it reduces everything to the individual (Frosh & Baraister, 2008) or interpersonal conflicts (Gabriel, 1999a).

I note and share these cautionary critiques; I do not wish to inhabit a narrow, autocratic position; one, which both privileges the researcher and excludes consideration of political and powerful factors of social regimes. However, following Butler (1997), I believe that elements of psychoanalytical theory can offer a critique and balance, to the limitations of Foucault's theory. As noted earlier a Foucauldian framework can facilitate a review of the wider political societal context, through analysis of the powerful dominant discourses evident in organizations and managerial subjectivity. Adopting Butler's technique, a juxtaposition of theoretical ideas from psychoanalysis and Foucault's theory, can offer insights into why and how managers attach with such variability to available subjectivities. I expand on this towards the end of the chapter but first for completeness I provide a brief summary of Lacan, given Kenny and her colleagues' (2011a) include Lacan in their framework.

2.6.1 Jacques Lacan

Jacques Lacan (1901 – 1981) was a French psychoanalyst, psychiatrist and philosopher; he was a self proclaimed Freudian and his theories have been influential within poststructuralism. Lacan deconstructs the unitary subject and utilises semiotics, 'the science of signs and meanings', (Henriques et al, 1998, p. 212) to connect the social and the psyche. For Lacan 'it is the entry into language which is the precondition for becoming conscious or aware of oneself as a distinct entity within the terms set by pre-existing social relations and cultural laws' (Op cit, p. 213).

Lacan's account of the mirror stage can be interpreted as explaining the illusion and misconceptions of the humanist account of the self (Homer, 2005); this reading follows Lacan's poststructuralist sensibilities, to which I also subscribe.

The infant's 'recognition' of self, from a pre-linguistic and undifferentiated experience is the initial moment of subjectivity for Lacan; 'the 'primordial form' of the I, the 'Imaginary' base from which can follow future identifications with others, and the accession to language within which subjectivity will then also be grounded' (Roberts, 2005, p. 628). The infant is seduced by the image (this mirror image can be literal or through the mirror imaging of the caregiver/ mother); there is misrecognition of a substantive unitary self, a fantasy of control and self-mastery (Homer, 2005; Vanheule & Verhaeghe, 2009), which is believed to be real. The infant identifies with this mirror image as him/herself. However, this image is also alienating, in that, this image and fantasy of self-mastery; this impression of a unified self is confused with the self; our mirror image is perceived to be the self. This confusion is a pattern that continues throughout the life span (Homer, 2005; Roberts, 2005); 'we remain prone to seek for and find our existence in the image or the gaze (Roberts, 2005, p. 629) and to believe this as the 'truth' - rather than a fleeting glimpse of becoming (Op cit). The ego is the site of a constant struggle to maintain this identification with a unitary self; this primary 'lack' or misrecognition is integral to our subjectivity; the Imaginary is a realm of identification, distortion and illusion (Homer, 2005).

Therefore Lacan proposes that desire for recognition by others is a social process that is bound to the mirror stage (Roberts, 2005).

So what does this offer to an analysis of my autoethnographic verse? I could be said to have a strong identification, a misrecognition, with the fantasy of self and work mastery; this attachment to notions of having a stable, secure and unitary managerial self are ultimately shaken. This is not just a lament against increasing demands; there are repetitive references to the loss of the known self; my fantasy of coherence slips and emotions begin to surface.

There are an increasing number of organizational research studies, which draw primarily from Lacanian theory and I briefly turn to these next.

Driver (2009) analyses organizational identity via Lacanian theory, suggesting that the less conscious process of identity work should be explored. Driver's work, focuses particularly on language, and the indeterminacy of identity and desire; she references the 'imaginary character of all organizational discourse (Driver, 2009a, p. 56) that assumes that 'the self can be defined and fulfilled' (Lacan cited in Driver, 2009a, p. 56). Such organizational discourse focuses on the desire and conscious work to know identity, whilst omitting the unconscious disruptions that undermine such attempts (Driver, 2009a). Following Lacan, 'the Imaginary refers to a discourse in which the individual is stuck in the fantasy or illusion that the self is a definitive and stable

object, an identity we can refer to that has a clear existence and provides one with the power to control one's circumstances, the self and others' (Driver, 2009a, p. 58).

Here we can find parallels with my autoethnographic experience. For Lacan the identity struggles, the disruptions and the experience of lack are liberating and creative (Op cit); here the similarities cease – there is no sense of liberation within my poetic outpouring, rather I am flailing to attach back to my misrecognition, to my fantasy subjectivity. Driver drawing from Harding's (2007) insights into the value of Lacan's theory for organizational studies, suggests a close reading of disruptions in speech (Driver, 2009b), in that; 'if we listen carefully to the ambiguities, contradictions, unusual constructions, tangents and other failure points in our conversations about who we are and what we want collectively and, instead of moving to interpretation or corrections, just take a moment to repeat them, amplify and reflect on them […] we might notice the many failed illusions but also the power (of becoming) that they contain (Driver, 2009a, p. 67). Rather than a discursive analysis of subject positions, the process of becoming requires us to take a close reading and micro-analysis of our narratives (Roberts, 2005); in effect to ruminate as Nietzsche advocated in the quote that headed up this thesis (Nietzsche, 1998). I find this advice informative for my analytical approach, not a purist adoption of Lacan's theory, who I only draw from indirectly through Butler's theory but rather the advocacy for a slow and close reading. I discuss this further in my research methodology chapter.

If I apply this advice for close scrutiny to my stanza, I particularly notice my shift in pronoun use; during the course of my poem I move from referring to

myself as 'me'; *'How did this creep up on me? Me so efficient'* when referring to my managerial 'self' - towards the end my self referent switches to 'I' as evidenced in my plaintive call of, *'Where am I?'* Harding (2008) combines insight from object relations psychoanalyst and theorist Christopher Bollas, with Mühlhausler and Härré's (1990) emergent theory on personal pronouns; she suggests, that the switches between personal pronouns within narrative indicate the enactments of different selves. The "I", they postulate, is the human agent, and the "me" is that agent's beliefs about itsself. The agentive "I" is the indexical I, the I that can be identified as pondering upon and developing a theory of the self' (Harding, 2008, referring to Mühlhausler and Härré, p. 47).

Adopting this to my poem - my early reference to 'me' could be said to indicate my attachment to my previous belief of having a calm and controlled managerial 'self', whilst my questioning of where 'I' was – this could be interpreted as being at a point of recognition that I am different; at a point of change; becoming a new 'self' but at this point in the poem this is stalled and at a stage of interruption; I appear to be lost, still pondering, still searching. And so, even within the limits of poetry, following advice and taking a close reading (Driver, 2009a; Harding, 2007; Roberts, 2005) can support new insights into subjectivity, in this instance indicating a continual process of becoming.

Returning to the research literature, Driver (2009b) took a Lacanian approach in her analysis of forty stories of organizational change. Here she found such tales provided liberating encounters with 'failed fantasies of self,

work and organization' (Op cit, p. 353). A recurrent theme in her research was one of loss and she presented this as an empowering struggle with fundamental lack (Op cit). Her principle argument is that during times of change the ever-present lack surfaces and that this struggle, with the loss of fantasies of the unitary self, can be liberating. Such struggles profile how we are more than the managerial subjectivities we have fleetingly occupied and yet normally entrap us.

I recognize the value of a theory of subjectivity that is not exclusively discursive and cognitive, one that includes identification and fantasy in its process and acknowledges the disruptions and complexity. I also value how psychoanalytical approaches resists an over simplification and reduction of subjectivity to a transparent cognitive activity. However, the critiques of psychoanalytical approaches rehearsed earlier still apply. Where is the recognition of the powerful regimes both political and cultural within this method? Whilst it effectively troubles simplistic readings of identity there is an absence of exploring the macro context of available discourse that constitutes the available subject positions. Psychosocial research is a relatively new approach with an aim to bring the strengths of both theoretical disciplines together, as explored briefly below.

2.6.2   Psychosocial Approaches

There is a growing adoption of research labelled as psychosocial in organizational research. This development is despite the wariness with

which social scientists view the psychoanalytical focus on the individual and the charges they levy of the expert stance taken by psychoanalytical theorists (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008, Frosh, 2010). The psychosocial approach attempts to respond to the challenge of theorizing how society constitutes the individual and vice versa, and in order to explain the at times irrationality of behaviour and attachment to the 'fantasy of completeness, of narcissistic selfhood.' (Frosh, 2010, p. 12) This turn to psychoanalysis by social scientists includes both object relational and Lacanian alternatives. Judith Butler (2005) is also included in this group (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008); she draws from both Freudian and Lacanian theory, in dialogue with the Foucauldian theory of power, to great effect in her theorising of human subjectivity;

> 'Power acts on the subject in at least two ways: first, as what makes the subject possible, the condition of its possibility and its formative occasion, and second, as what is taken up and reiterated in the subject's "own" acting.' (Butler, 1997a, p. 14)

Frosh (2010) warns of the risk of diluting psychoanalytical theory in superficial application by psychosocial researchers, whilst still promoting the strength of opportunity in this approach. There is also the need to guard against claims that adopting psychoanalytical theory provides access to the deep, intrinsic essence of human character (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008); following the authors' advice, and indeed a Butlerian approach, I see value in using Butler to trouble 'obvious' research readings, as a 'methodology of 'undoing', provoking and questioning (Frosh, 2010, p. 190), and to therefore disrupt simple, single and neat interpretations.

This leads me to the theorist who offers particular interest for my research -

Judith Butler, who creatively juxtaposes these two approaches, drawing from

the strength of both in a productive tension, rather than suggesting a total

synthesis. However, I am again jumping ahead, it is towards the end of this

chapter that I briefly explore Butler and what her theory can offer, and

discuss the to date very small number of research studies adopting her ideas;

for now I return to the remaining three areas Kenny and her colleagues

(2011a) contain in their framework.

As evidenced in the latter two sections, the poststructuralist theorizing of

subjectivity is not a homogenous field. However, where there is agreement, it

is of the fragmentary 'nature' of identity and that subjectivity is a constant

process of becoming, rather than supporting notions of a fixed, essentialist

self. Poststructuralism shares some theoretical concerns with Pragmatism

and Symbolic Interactionism, alternative schools of thought which also

embrace a socially constituted 'self'. These bodies of knowledge are

particularly associated with the United States and are approaches that I now

turn to.

2.7   Symbolic Interactionism (and related approaches)

George Herbert Mead, (1863 – 1931) an American sociologist, identified as a

founding figure in the philosophy of pragmatism, located meaning and

behaviour inside a social self: here in marked difference to traditional

psychological approaches the dualism of self and society is challenged. In

contrast to poststructuralism, within pragmatism there is still a trace of an extra-linguistic self as an agent of interpretation and intentional action, within an inter-subjective network (Dunn, 1997). Mead identified the subject as existing within a social process, defined by symbolic interaction but in contrast to poststructuralist thought he identified the 'subject as a self, understood as a product of socialization through role taking' (Op cit, p. 689). So applying this theory to organization studies, a manager is created through his or her role within the network of organizational actors. I think it is useful to provide a brief summary of the developments later associated with the American philosophical tradition of pragmatism, as there are a number of current day theorists who it could be said exist somewhere within the shadowy intersection of pragmatism and poststructuralism.

Mead alongside a number of other early 20th century American sociologists, later labelled as pragmatists (Holstein & Gubrium, 1999), developed empirically (experience) based theories and the premise of a more socially bound self. Here the self, the operational self of day-to-day life was integral to communication and society. This promoted the possibility of plurality, of numerous social selves, limited only to the number of 'others' with whom one interacted. Subsequently the early pragmatists' development of the social self was further extended by a pupil of Mead, Herbert Blumer. To provide a very brief précis, Blumer initiated the theory, methodology and the research base of symbolic interactionism, which focuses on how people constantly develop and adapt meanings based on and through various life experiences, interactions and roles (Holstein & Gubrium, 1999).

Goffman (1995) extended this notion of a social self still further in his seminal text *'The presentation of self in everyday life.'* In this he proposes a dramaturgical self, using the powerful analogy of the theatre with all its components, stage, scene setting, masks, roles and scripts. The structure of the self is within this performance for and with others and is the product rather than the cause of the scene; the self or selves produced are a collaborative venture (Holstein & Gubrium, 1999). In contrast to Judith Butler's notion of *performativity* described towards the end of the chapter, Goffman's dramaturgical self retains an element of a backstage 'true' self and promotes a self-conscious tactical presentation of socially favourable 'selves', (Kenny et al, 2011a). If we adopt his theory to scrutinize my verse I could be seen to be struggling to maintain the role of an effective manager; my performance (managerial mask) is slipping, a backstage vulnerable self is displayed. Promotion to a role that entails more responsibilities, has at least in the short term, given me stage fright.

A number of organizational study researchers are associated with both the American school of pragmatism, or less radical forms of poststructuralism; less radical in that they seem to hold some trace of a true self (albeit weak) outside of language. These include Hochschild (1983) and her studies into the commercialization of human feelings and Denzin's (1997, 2001) prolific work in interpretive ethnography.

Hochschild's (1983) seminal work on the management of the display of feelings is an example of identity theory incorporating emotional work; here

she emphasizes corporate /role expectations and notions of a core authentic and emotional self and how there is emotional dissonance between these. This promotes an essentialist self and the belief that workers have to act, or be 'fake' to their 'true' self (Tracy & Trethewey, 2005). In her study of correctional officers in the United States, Tracy (2005) takes a more poststructuralist view and profiles some of the macro discourses, juxtaposed with day-to-day organizational practices that produce varying degrees of emotional discomfort in the participants. She flags the connection between the emotion work associated with identity and power in her study, in addition to proposing that 'emotion labour is easier when it confirms a preferred identity' (Op cit, p. 279). However, whilst participants may perceive this as 'authentic', Tracy (2005) sees identity and associated emotion labour as continually being constructed. So to apply these alternate approaches to my poem, following Hochschild (1983) I could be seen to be struggling unsuccessfully to hide my authentic emotions (of anger and frustration) and failing to present the required 'fake' calm and controlled self. However, adopting Tracy's (2005) more poststructuralist stance, my micro emotional management would be seen in the context of the conflicting masculine macro organizational discourses of managerial order and control, with those of gender expectations, those that constitute the subject positions of women and particularly mothers, and their association with the private sphere.

The following section provides a summary of key studies undertaken in relation to managers' identity work that share theoretical approaches to subjectivity with pragmatism; some of the researchers clearly identify with

this school of thought whilst others, as alluded to earlier, hover in ambiguity and liminality, at the intersection of pragmatism and poststructuralism and resist simple categorization.

Watson, (2008, 2011) openly adopts a pragmatist approach, with goals of 'truth' and 'reality,' though he qualifies 'reality' as relative versus absolute and emphasises the need for relevance to practice. He is against the fragmented approach of some poststructuralist organizational studies; he is a strong advocate for ethnography; of the need to get close to how things really happen through immersion in the field; of 'learning the ropes,' rules, culture, and politics, etc of an organization; so the reader could imagine, visit and fit in (Watson, 2009, p. 209). This he claims is superior to relying on interviews when looking at practice or identities (Op cit). He is a strong advocate for a researcher's closeness to the research setting, believing this adds richness and depth. Watson points out the need to incorporate social structures and the impact these have on individuals; he suggests a tension exists between the corporate and other personas an individual may need to adopt (Op cit). This reflects Sveningsson and Alvesson's (2003) study, where they report how the manager in their in-depth case study research identifies more with some organizational discourses than others. Watson (2008) differentiates between the personal 'self' and the available social / discursive 'personas'. He aims to bring together 'self' aspects of identity and these available social 'personas' - one of these latter personas being a managerial one. Like many others he emphasises the active process of identity-work (Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Thomas & Linstead, 2002; Sims, 2003; Sveningsson & Alvesson

, 2003; Symon & Clegg, 2005; Musson & Duberley, 2007; Watson, 2008). There appears to be an assumption within his writing that identity-work is always a conscious practice, which includes notions of self-narrative and agency, though he refers to a variation in whether there is active or passive engagement by individuals at differing times (Op cit). Watson (2008) cites Sveningsson and Alvesson's, (2003) definition of identity-work, as do many other contemporary researchers in this particular field. Quoted below, the definition could be seen to hold traces of humanism and agency in the constant active process of working on the illusion and creation of a coherent self: here the individual is,

> 'engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness.'
> (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003, p. 1165)

For Watson (2009) identity is a 'bridging concept between individual agency, choice and creation of self, on the one hand, and history, culture and social shaping of identities on the other' (Op cit, p. 426). In one study he utilizes narrative, social construction and identity-work as a framework to the life story of one individual. He argues not to forget private experience as well as organizational forms and identities, and talks of internal identity-work as well as external (narrative, discourses etc). Here internal work is the identity-work to develop and create the self-narrative and self-identity from available 'external' narratives; I believe this as with Mead and his followers retains the trace of a self outside of language and the social. I would argue

that the 'internal' creation of a self-narrative cannot be divided from 'external' identity-work, given there could be no notion of a self, an object or narrative to create, devoid of the linguistic mesh: This discursive net is a matrix binding Watson's proposed 'internal' and 'external' environments. Watson therefore, within his theoretical adoption of pragmatism and social construction appears to embrace the notion (even if weak) of a core component to the self and a self that wields individual agency. Rather, I see the organization and the self as bound in mutual mimesis and constitution, as Harding states, 'the organization I am 'in' is at the same time 'in' me; there is no inside and outside (Harding, 2007, p. 1761).

Wieland (2010) following a similar approach to Watson critiques limited psychologically based approaches, those that emphasise reflection and conscious identity-work; she advocates a more dialogical framework that recognises the situated aspect of work and social day-to-day life and practice. This impacts on identity construction; where we utilize 'ideal selves' as discursive resources (Op cit). Wieland is interested in **how** self-narrative occurs rather than the content of it and similar to Mead describes the self as an interpreter; here the self is social and reflexive but she is interested in the discourses facilitating this, rather than supporting an overly agentic view of the individual. Weiland points out that most empirical work on identity focuses on active identity-work, which is most apparent when it is disrupted: She flags the problem of over emphasising saying as identity, versus the actual doing, as an enactment and practice of identity development. Like Watson (2008) and many others drawing from pragmatism, there remains a

distinction, a ghost of an internal 'true' self and the external social identities or personas negotiated with, and with it the proposal that identity-work is a communicative practice that brings these together (bridges them). Wieland describes this process as incorporating performances of the self for others and the fashioning of the self, striving for both a sense of coherence and social acceptability; this includes an evaluative process, which links to morality; hence identity-work here adopts a solely cognitive and fully conscious practice. In an empirical study she reports the 'ideal' managerial self of her participants as a shared collective identity, narrated in terms of what the organization had promoted as a good worker (Wieland, 2010).

The editors of a special issue that focused on identity-work in the journal *Organizational Studies*, particularly highlight the agency versus structure debate and individual /society dualism, as well as the need for reflexivity in such research (Ybema and colleagues, 2009). They emphasise the ongoing practice of identity-work, where any apparent stability in identity is a fleeting accomplishment. They too present an internal/ external divide in their reference to the 'internal strivings and external prescriptions' (Op cit, p. 301). However, they critique research that focuses on either the individual construction of self and identity, or solely on social construction and determinism. They, similar to Watson (2009), advocate identity as a bridging concept that needs to bring both together. As mentioned earlier I have a slight dissonance with the bridge as a metaphor, as this necessarily reinforces notions of a divide between the individual and the social. Ybema and colleagues understand the self and other interactions, the relationship

between individuals and institutions, as constituting identity. They note the identity-work undertaken in positioning and exaggerating the difference between the self against the other, drawing from often simplistic dualisms such as old versus young, good versus bad, etc, and the essentialist claims and language used. This positioning is often moral (MacIntyre, 1985, Watson, 2009, Ybema et al, 2009), emotional and has political and economic interests. It is inherent within power interests and reflective of powerful discourses of the time and setting (Ybema et al, 2009). Calling on various examples Ybema and colleagues promote a sense that individual actors agentively negotiate 'identities' and 'selves' in response to, or against discursive strategies and the restricting structural backdrop. And that the actors present, and narrate a coherent 'self' that usually puts them in a favourable and moral light; this is in contrast to the 'others' in their tales (Op cit; Goffman, 1995; Alvesson et al, 2008; Watson, 2009). However, they also acknowledge examples of 'self' deprecation, pity and doubt (Ybema et al, 2009). They and others suggest that times of personal threat act as a catalyst for active identity-work (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Ybema et al, 2009), and profile the fragility and fragmented formation of identities. There is the assumption of a rational agent here, motivated by self-interest, and one that is transparent; there is no acknowledgement of opacity in knowing the self, of self-deception, or of antagonistic positioning.

Researchers informed by what I have broadly grouped as the pragmatist approach recognise the social component of subjectivity, though to varying degrees retain a notion of individual agency, the trace of a 'true' self. Many of

these researchers also reference narratives in their approach, which leads us into the next theoretical category.

2.8   Narrative Approaches

> A person's identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor - important though this is in the reactions of others, but in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going. The individual's biography, if she is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day-to-day world, cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events, which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing 'story' about the self.
> (Giddens, 1990, p. 54)

A narrative approach to identity promotes the idea of human beings as raconteurs, who story their lives in order to make sense of it and to develop a coherent self-identity (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Kenny et al, 2011a). Giddens (1991) argues that in the post-traditional order, self-identity is reflexive. It is not a quality of a moment, but a retrospective review and account of a person's life. This is in sharp contrast to a psychoanalytical approach that emphasizes the becoming 'nature' of subjectivity (Driver, 2009a; Harding, 2007; Roberts, 2005). Narrative and story as terms are often used interchangeably, and though the latter is often identified as a more discrete entity with a beginning, middle and end, both are phenomenological in that they are a form of meaning making (Czarniawska, 1998; Kenny et al, 2011a). In autoethnography, life story work, and autobiographies, individuals strive to understand and make sense of their experience and who they are, by arranging the past, present and future into some form of coherence (Kenny et

al, 2011a). Stories create self-identity (McAdams, 1993) and are equivalent to identity-work (Holstein & Gubrium, 1999); they can be said to reflect the way individuals think, feel and make moral choices (Sarbin, 1986). However, a psychoanalytical reading would challenge as simplistic any assumption that stories are a window into knowing the self, or others' selves. Rather stories can both reveal and conceal identities; they indicate ideal selves and attempts at coherence but can also contain disruption, gaps, defensive acts and incoherence (Day Sclater, 2003).

As evidenced in much of the research reviewed in the preceding sections, many researchers, whilst working within theoretically diverse fields, adopt a narrative approach. For example, Watson adopts both a pragmatic and narrative method and critiques organizational studies that neglect the personal aspects of manager's life-stories (Watson, 2009); others compare and contrast the narratives of organizational members for understanding either organizational or individual identity (see Brown et al, 2005; Coupland et al, 2008; Humphreys & Brown, 2002b; McDonald, 2004). Some psychoanalytical researchers recognize the power of myths and stories, as an integral component of organizational life (see for example Carr, 2002; Gabriel, 1995, 2000, 2004) and indeed Freud utilises stories from Greek mythology to illustrate his theories, whilst others associated with the psychosocial field emphasise the defensive nature of subjects in their analysis of self-narratives (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Many undertaking poststructuralist research emphasize the fragmentary, deconstructing and

emergent nature of stories (Boje, 1991, 2001).

There are differing emphasises applied to autoethnographic narratives too, ranging from reading them as emotive 'true' representations, through to more critical analysis; something that is discussed in the next chapter (de Freitas & Paton, 2009; Learmonth & Humphreys, 2012).

So returning to my verse, to my vulnerable managerial self, how could the narrative approach contribute to analysis? My poem in total had three parts, the first utilised in this chapter, provided a setting of the scene; here I establish change is taking place, I story how I used to be (calm and controlled) but now I am feeling overwhelmed by work and questioning who I am; I hint at antagonists responsible for stealing hours away from me. In my second verse I 'escape' via a holiday in Italy and reconnect with my family (Mischenko, 2005); there is a slower pace, a more relaxed mood and a time for reflection. My final verse, the 'return', expresses further resentment; the demands and pace seem even harsher after my sojourn. This poem can be recognised as a narrative, in that it could be seen to be a retrospective striving to make sense of my day-to-day life experience, and a form of identity-work, or rather identity struggle. It is an attempt to reconcile a previous self-identity with later developments, an effort to story some coherence. It takes the form of a tragedy, where I am cast in the role of a victim. Stories often take poetic genres, such as epic tales, comedies or tragedies and narrators cast themselves in the role of hero or victim, whilst others are identified as villains (Gabriel, 2000). There is no resolution in my

poem (even if you read all three verses, see appendix 1); it is a story of struggling, of someone who has lost a coherent sense of 'self': It stories a visceral, emotional and painful becoming.

A critique of the narrative approach is that there is a risk, but not an inevitability of too much emphasis being placed at the micro-individual level and an absence of the broader socio-political context. Though many proponents of this method are at the romantic, extreme end, where an individual is able to narrate a single and true coherent story of self-identity, a number of researchers talk of fragmentation, polyphony and power (Boje, 1991; Brown, 2006, Humphreys & Brown, 2002b).

An introductory journal article to a special issue on storytelling and change claims that stories and narratives are crucial to the Critical Management Studies research agenda (Brown, et al, 2009). Here stories are not about a single truth but are about meaning, moral judgements and emotion; organizational change is seen as a 'multi-storied process of competing accounts' (Op cit, p. 326). Stories and sense making are linked to power and identities and therefore contribute to theories of change in organizations. 'Organizational change threatens well-established patterns of identity and expertise and necessitates intensive narrative labour, often against intense resistance, to support and restore them (Op cit, p. 327).' This citation does seem to reflect my experience, though in my case it was in response to a personal promotion rather than organization-wide change. I do seem rather attached to my

previous managerial subjectivity (or fantasy) of delivering and remaining calm and controlled. The narrative approach in research, drawing from peoples' attempts to make sense of their world and who they are, certainly shows promise for my aim to understand how others story their subjectivity. Given that narrative is utilised in many theoretical arenas, including both poststructuralist and psychoanalytically informed research, I believe it can be integrated into my methodological approach to help support my goal of hearing and analysing other managers' experience of their subjectivity. This is something I revisit later in my research methodology chapter.

Within the literature there is a rich body of research, of studies that use stories and narratives to explore various actors' experience of organizational change. Within this genre is a growing field that incorporates the use of poststructuralist analysis, and takes a critical perspective, in that it explores the power dynamics inherent in organizational life and various actors' responses to change; it is to this literature that I now turn.

As Brown and colleagues identify, power and politics are integral to change; questions arise as to who will be the winners and losers; fear is instigated in an anticipation of risks as the potential impact of change is imagined (Brown et al, 2009). One reviewed research study demonstrates this fear and response well; here the study follows a merger in a UK Further Education college. The college had a new senior management team (SMT) and the interviews included a selection of workers, at all levels in the hierarchy.

Three distinct groups were interviewed; the SMT and the two geographical groups, each aligned to different college sites; these had been distinct entities prior to the merger. The groups were 'embroiled in reciprocal and yet asymmetrical relations of power' (Brown & Humphreys, 2006, p. 232).

The researchers based the study on the assumption that organizations are constituted via language and that identities are constituted within discursive regimes (Brown & Humphreys, 2006). Place is understood as a discursive resource upon which people draw to constitute the 'self' and where there are ongoing discursive struggles for power and control of the discursive space. Within the research place was frequently referred to as a prison or mental asylum (Op cit) and participants identified as inmates of such institutions, they shifted between positions of resistance and powerlessness. Place, pre merger, was also used nostalgically by some; shared nostalgia is recognised as an affective and metaphorical space (Collinson, 1994). Some participants used nostalgia and fantasy to maintain self-esteem, to retain a sense of control; this could be interpreted as staff groups constituting themselves as survivors, or coping through detachment; the researchers also suggest that these strategies could be the beginning of the process of adaptation to the hegemonic discursive practices of the SMT (Brown & Humphreys, 2006).

A further study explores the impact of change on organizational and members' collective identity, rather than personal identity (Ybema, 2010); here the researcher highlights how social theorists often emphasise the continuity of identity, self and organization, even through change, whilst his

aim is to highlight the discontinuity of organizational identity and collective self over time. He suggests that holding onto notions of continuity, coherence and unity is a strategy to avoid psychic pain (Op cit; Brown & Starkey, 2000). His research is an ethnographic case study of a Netherlands newspaper and indicates how temporality; the past, present and future, is used within language to inform a sense of a collective self (Ybema, 2010). Ybema (2010) identifies that studies utilising narratives of change incorporate a retrospective perspective; they always include a sense of retrospective sense making (Carlson, 2006), or sense breaking (Pratt, 2000). The chosen narratives of the past are highly selective, chosen and interpreted through the lens of today's framework (Ybema, 2010).

Within stories of organizational change there is frequent reporting of nostalgia (Gabriel, 1993), as indicated in Brown and Humphrey's (2006) study above; or as Ybema suggests its opposite, an idealisation of the future and a dismissal of the past, which he labels 'postalgia' (Ybema, 2004).

As described earlier, a number of Organizational Studies researchers theorise identity as a sense of regulation by self and others (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). These hold varying levels of attributed individual agency, as content in terms of self-narratives of identities, but also as an interpretive activity or *identity-work* (Sturdy et al, 2006); here 'identity is treated as a verb, whereby self-identity is continually reproduced and transformed' (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 627). The ongoing aim of this industry is said to be a striving towards coherence and self esteem (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003), though this is

against a backdrop of multiple discourses and contradictory identity positions; and all of this within a context of regular changes, such as downsizing, re-organizations and a fragmentation of management subjectivities (Sennett, 1998, Webb, 2004). Again at the risk of repetition this account over emphasizes cognitive activity as integral to subjectification, at the expense of unconscious, disruptions and affect.

Despite attempts to story coherent narratives of the self, one study in particular highlights the antagonistic discourses managers working in an engineering company draw on in their self-construction. The researchers' findings demonstrate how individual identity narratives can hold contrasting positions and antagonisms in response to organizational discourse and regulatory practice: The authors reference the assumption that organizational actors strive to narrate a coherent story of self but found that despite this effort managers inevitably incorporated conflicting positions within their interviews, perhaps reflective of the complex and competing discourses they are exposed to (Clarke, Brown & Hailey 2009). Several researchers recognise that 'individuals create several more or less contradictory and often changing managerial identities (identity positions) rather than one stable, continuous and secure, manager identity' (Op cit, p. 326; see also Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; Thomas & Linstead, 2002). They demonstrate the dynamic process and struggle involved as organizational actors strive for coherence (Clarke et al, 2009); despite best efforts, coherence of managerial identity is not achieved. Similar to many they note how managers endeavour to story a moral self (Op cit; Jackall, 1988; Watson, 2003).

Beech (2011) identifies his theoretical positioning as social constructionist and adopts the use of the concept *liminality*, appropriating its use from anthropology and organizational studies. This is used to describe the movement between identities, the 'betwixt and between' (Beech, 2011, p. 286) in identity (re) construction; here there is a disruption of the sense of self; the mutual dialogue and movement to and fro between the self and social identity; this is a more dynamic metaphor than Watson's (2009) bridge (see earlier discussion). Beech (2011) talks of partial and incomplete identities as *liminality* and of particular roles as being at higher risk of experiencing this; roles he includes in this group are temporary workers, freelancers and management consultants; these he sees as careers that promote a constant state of *liminality*, in relation to organizations. This recognises the temporal and spatial influences on identity-work, particularly the latter. Again the emphasis appears to be on cognitive rather than any recognition of unconscious influence. Here identity-work can involve projecting an impression of the self to the social world, or be in response to existing social identities and sometimes in a resistance to them (Beech, 2011). Beech provides two case studies of where he perceives managers experience *liminality;* both are during times of organizational change. His theories hold on to a notion of a core self and reflexivity; they appear to relate to Foucault's latter work re: techniques of the self, though this is not explicitly referenced, and Butler's critique of Foucault can be applied here too; there is no theory of what, or how this happens from the perspective of the psyche.

As rehearsed in the preceding sections of this chapter there are various interpretations of identity, identity-work and subjectivity; many poststructuralist theories promote instability, fluidity and how identity reflects a myriad of subject positions, constantly in motion rather than holding any "core" continuity (Webb, 2006, p. 18); whilst others still sharing this position see identities as governed and formed through regulatory discourse and power (Op cit, Clegg, 1994); the resistance to which is often described as politicized struggles (Hall & du Gay, 1996). In contrast there is the consumerist stance, where individuals can opt to don multiple choices of identities (Gergen, 2000), which has connections with Goffman's (1995) dramaturgical approach. However, in our day-to-day life and language we hold tightly onto notions of authenticity; we narrate of having a 'real' self and 'our continued discursive construction and protection of it is a pivotal means through which we constitute ourselves within power' (Garrety, 2008, p. 98).

Whilst identity as a fixed category is still included in a number of studies, this rigidity has long been challenged (Watson, 2008); identity or subjectivity is increasingly seen as fluid, flexible, transitory and fragmentary (Bendle, 2002), multiple and situational (Alvesson, 2000), and continuously constructed and deconstructed, through identification and differentiation (Collinson & Hearn, 1994). It is seen as reflexively comprehended via numerous and conflicting discourses (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002) and identities are not singular, nor completely integrated (Gabriel, 1999b). There are multiple selves (Collinson, 2003) and antagonistic subject positions can

be adopted (Kreiner et al, 2006); identity-work is shaded by ambiguity and paradox (Knights & Willmott, 1999).

There is a dearth of study into managerial identity, which encompasses both the dominant systems of thought (the social and political context), and a scrutiny of the micro dynamics of how this unfolds and is reproduced in managerial subjectivities. One research study that does adopt this approach utilizes a single case study of a director (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003); it presents the heroine as identifying positively with two organizational discourses and emphasizing the roles within her repertoire that fit with these, and in contrast resisting and downplaying other more problematic ones. The researchers propose that the narrative self-identity akin to McAdams' (1993) 'life story,' is the personally created identity that integrates poststructural subjectivity as formed by discourse with biographical elements, and illustrate the influence this has on the heroine's organizational identity-work. They suggest that self-identity narrative can provide both a sense of coherence (as proposed by McAdams), when applied retrospectively and yet also be a struggle, a source of tension, fragmentation and conflict when juxtaposed with contrasting organizational discourse (Op cit). Whilst bringing together social and psychological theories this approach assumes that the psyche's workings, motivations and identifications are all conscious and transparent upon reflection. This assumption of clarity troubles me; there is an absence of recognition of peoples' scope for self-deception and of influences beyond cognitive and rational processes.

A narrative approach is adopted within many contrasting theoretical perspectives. A poststructuralist reading, when juxtaposed with psychoanalytical insights, offers a promising framework for my research. Despite the plethora of poststructuralist, or psychoanalytical studies adopting various narrative approaches, there are few which, are informed by each of these three perspectives: (Notable exceptions are Driver, 2009b; Ford & Harding, 2004; Ford & Harding, 2008; Ford, 2010; Harding, 2007; Hodgson, 2005; Hoedemaekers, 2010; and Kenny, 2010).

The next section briefly reviews micro-interactional methods, which is the final category of Kenny and colleagues' (2011a) framework of approaches to researching identity.

2.9   Micro-Interactional Approaches

Kenny and colleagues (2011a) include but differentiate between a number of approaches within the micro-interactional category, such as ethnomethodology, conversational analysis and discursive psychology; the common denominator is the scrutiny and analysis of naturally occurring talk or text in social practices (Op cit; Potter, 1997). Various forms of discursive analysis have developed in differing disciplines, such as, linguistics, cognitive psychology, sociolinguistics and poststructuralism (Potter, 1997). Discursive analysis, as described by Potter, has the social constructionist theoretical principle of anti-realism: The importance of the additional 'noise' in conversation, such as, hesitation, overlaps and pauses, is emphasized to inform the analysis of meaning making (Op cit). Cognitive psychological

approaches focus on how 'mental scripts and schemata are used to make sense of narrative' (Potter, 1997, p. 145), and incorporate participants' emphasis on how there are issues of stake and interest (Edwards & Potter, 1992), and ascribed motivations for actions (Potter, 1997). Ethnomethodology, developed by Harold Garfinkel holds a primary concern for day-to-day social practice (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000; Kenny et al, 2011a); the focus is on how social actors practically reason and 'do' social life and how they 'concretely construct and sustain social entities, such as gender, self and family' (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000, p. 490); rather than starting with the grand categories of social science (Kenny et al, 2011a). This is presented as fundamental to human sociality (Schegloff, 1992) in creating 'mutual sense making and social reality construction (Heritage, 1997, p. 161). Garfinkel emphasized social actions as constructing, rather than responding to social order, and ethnomethodology is the means by which this process is captured (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). Similar to phenomenology, there is a focus on meaning making and a suspension of any *a priori* theories of social order; the goal is to focus on how actors constitute their realities (Op cit). Therefore, ethnomethodology studies naturally occurring conversation, in order to understand local meaning making: Whilst conversational analysis has a similar focus on naturally occurring conversations, ethnomethodology incorporates detailed ethnographic descriptions of the local context (Op cit). Conversational analysis evolved from ethnomethodology and proposes a science of conversation (Kenny et al, 2011a); classic studies focus on analysis of conversations taken within institutional settings, associated with particular roles, such as doctors, teachers or managers: The focus here is on how people undertake or draw

from certain identities when interacting with others (Op cit).

My autoethnographic poem is not a natural conversation, or interaction and so I cannot apply a micro- interactional approach to aid analysis here. In the terms of my research goal, to hear and interpret managers' experience of their subjectivities, it is feasible to identify a range of naturally occurring dialogues that could be studied. Boardroom meetings, informal, corridor conversations or even job interviews could provide examples of conversations incorporating identity-work in the 'natural' setting, though both access to the latter examples and achievement of the required absence of the researcher is significantly problematic.

Critics of micro-interactional approaches highlight the absence of the broader, macro level discursive regimes and the structural, hegemonic systems of thought (in contrast to the Foucauldian discursive approach) that influence such local meaning making (Op cit). Some researchers have adopted both a micro-interactional approach and combined this with a Foucauldian approach to address these concerns (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000; Kenny et al, 2011a).

Through this chapter, you, the words of my previous vulnerable managerial 'self', and I, (my ever becoming researcher 'I') have journeyed together exploring and testing the literature. Right from the offset taking a purely individual-centric, humanist and positivist route was discounted; we have travelled the often complex, diverse fields of theory and research that take account of the social self. From the social constructionist and pragmatist

approach, through to more radical and critical poststructuralist perspectives 'I' aimed to identify the strengths and omissions in each.

I value adopting a Foucauldian approach; I recognise how when applied to my poem this highlighted the constitutive power of society, politics, discourse and institutions. And I particularly approach this from a poststructuralist sensibility, in an acknowledgement of the fragmentary and multiplicity of competing and conflicting discourses. However, whilst insightful when applied to my poem, there were elements left unexplored, such as my emotional expression and why such competing discourses of being a 'good mother' and 'effective manager' seized me at varying times. Many of the reviewed approaches risk reducing subjectivity to a purely cognitive process and this is why I explore what the addition of certain psychoanalytical aspects could offer. However, I am also mindful of the numerous critiques of incorporating psychoanalysis, which I rehearsed earlier, particularly the dissonance of appropriating an approach that could be charged by poststructuralists (particularly Foucault) as being an example of a powerful discourse of an elite group of experts.

Throughout this chapter I have alerted you to my affiliation with Judith Butler's theories; as a philosopher and theorist who productively appropriates contrasting philosophical approaches, from Foucault, to Freud and Lacan, with a feminist critique; it is to Butler that I now turn. My vulnerable managerial self, my researcher self (and potentially a myriad of unconscious disruptions) and Butler meet for the final conversation of this

chapter.

2.10   Judith Butler

'What is the relation between desire and recognition, and how is it that the
constitution of the subject entails a radical and constitutive relation to
alterity?' (Butler, 1999a, p. xiv)

Judith Butler (1956 – to date) appropriates poststructuralist theory, such as
Foucault and Derrida, psychoanalysis via Freud and Lacan and feminism
through De Beauvoir and Irigaray, amongst others. Therefore she combines
many of my theoretical interests; and yet her theories remain infrequently
used in organizational studies (Borgerson, 2005). I find this surprising given
the value, though also accepting the difficulty, in applying her highly complex
theories to managers' experience of their subjectivities. For whilst we may be
at the limit of current conceptual development in relation to subjectivity
(Hall, 2000), particularly in the symbiotic relationship between society and
the psyche; I believe Butler's theoretical ideas are perceptive for this
conundrum. Whilst quite abstract and to date underutilised in organizational
studies, her theoretical developments can offer significant value as a
framework to analyse managerial subjectivity.

Butler's most famous works are *Gender Trouble (1990)* and *Bodies that
Matter (1993)*, where she challenges notions of sex, gender and sexuality as
innate core qualities, highlighting how, for example the apparently 'natural'
basis of masculinity, femininity and heterosexuality are socially and

culturally constructed and disciplined by the available normative discourses. Masculinity or femininity, etc is only achieved through a continuous production of the expected repetitive stylised acts (*performativity)* that facilitate intelligibility. And in the constant iteration of these acts is the scope for unintentional change of the dominant and regulating discourses. I do draw from this theory but particularly use her work from *'Psychic Life of Power' (1997)*, which analyses subjectification in an appropriation and critique of Foucault, Freud and Lacan amongst others.

In this chapter I focus on what I originally perceived to be the most productive concepts to draw from Butler's philosophical theories, to theoretically inform my research into subjectivity. In particular, these included the inauguration of the subject, passionate attachment and performativity; each are briefly reviewed prior to engaging with my poem for a final time, to undertake a Butlerian reading. Her notions of the difficulties of giving an account of the self (Butler, 2005) are discussed in the following research methodology chapter. In addition, throughout my analysis I drew from more of Butler's theoretical insights than originally anticipated, where this is the case I have included these within the appropriate chapter (see particularly chapter 5). Finally, I turn to the, all too few, examples of research adopting her theory.

2.10.1 The Inauguration of the Subject

In the *Psychic Life of Power* (1997) Butler provides a political account of subjectivity, which challenges mainstream political thought and its emphasis

on identity politics, suggesting it should instead focus on the subjective performance of power. The *Psychic Life of Power* (1997) includes Butler's principle critical theoretical engagements: Foucault, psychoanalysis and feminism. It begins with Foucault's premise that subjection is the constitution, the materialisation of subjects and that power constitutes subjects: Butler moves on to say that conditions of power continue through a constant reiteration that is performativity. Power is both oppressive and productive in subjectivity and not fully determined; therefore in order to theorise power one needs to theorise the subject and in particular for Butler, understand the psychic process of subjection.

Whilst drawing much from Foucault's body of work, Butler critiques his theories on two accounts in relation to this problematic:

1. He fails to specify how the subject is formed in submission, and
2. He avoids engaging in the 'domain of the psyche'

This is why she appropriates psychoanalytical theory (drawing from both Freud and Lacan), in order to theorise the psychic process, the 'formative and generative effects of restriction' (Butler, 1997a, p. 87) within the constitution of the subject. Butler's work is neither informed purely by psychoanalytic theory or Foucauldian theory but is positioned, through productive appropriation of key theoretical elements within each of them (theory of the subject for the former and theory of power for the latter): This appropriation potentially in tension to the original intention of the founding theorists, is

justified by Butler as necessitated to theorise the intersection of the psyche and power. Butler, challenges both Foucault's critique of psychoanalytic theory as setting desire outside of law, and the psychoanalysis position of there being just one repressive law, through her proposition that it is only through a <u>network of regulating, prohibiting laws</u> that desire and subjects are generated.

Butler's appropriation of Hegel, Althusser, Nietzsche and Freud provides a complex reading of how reflexive turning constitutes the subject's identity: A turning back on oneself (Stern, 2000). This is not internalization; we require these terms, this power, to exist. If there is no subject that turns, if subjectivation occurs through the turn, then in both an appropriation and critique of Althusser's interpellation[5], Butler identifies 'that the turn is a founding moment of whose ontological status remains permanently uncertain' (Butler, 1997a, p. 2-3).

> 'What is it that is said to turn back on what? And what composes the action of 'turning back upon'? I want to suggest that this logical circularity in which the subject appears at once to be presupposed and not yet formed, on the one hand, or formed and hence not presupposed, on the other, is ameliorated when one understands that ... this relationship of reflexivity is always and only <u>figured,</u> and that this figure makes no ontological claim.' (Butler, 1997a, p. 69 original emphasis)

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[5] Althusser used the term interpellation to describe the process by which ideology hails and constitutes individual subjects through social interactions. Individual subjects are presented principally as produced by social forces, rather than acting as powerful independent agents with self-produced identities.

And therefore as rehearsed previously, we are at the frontier of current

thought and theory (Derrida, 1981, Hall, 2000). There is no simple before and

after subjection, though the movement cannot be collapsed into one (Stern,

2000); power produces the subject positions through discursive regulation

but cannot fully determine the result. As Butler states:

> 'If conditions of power are to persist, they must be reiterated; the subject is
> precisely the site of such reiteration', but this is in a 'repetition that is never
> merely mechanical' and is not 'condemned to repeat in exactly the same way.'
> (Butler, 1997a, p. 16 and p. 65)

2.10.2 Passionate Attachment

Butler begins her theory of the subject with the infant and its physical and

emotional dependency (for survival) on its earliest objects of love – parents,

guardians and siblings and the submission and dependent attachment to

them. Therefore she states power always informs the infant parent

relationship and from the beginning, we are formed in (this dependency) and

attached to, relations of power (Butler, 1997a).

Within the aforementioned passionate attachments Butler posits a 'normative

framework of gendered identity'; whereby Foucault's regulatory workings of

power are aligned with psychoanalytic theory, through internalized

prohibitions on the drive (Freudian) that regulate libidinal attachments,

those permitted and those prohibited. Butler names this psychic mechanism

of regulation, which functions as 'internalized social sanctions of object choice',

of how attachments fix to objects, 'foreclosure' (1997a, p. 24). Butler sees

heterosexuality as the internalized regulatory ideal and homosexuality as the foreclosed attachment. According to Butler then '[every] heterosexual identity is founded upon a primary and foundational prohibition upon homosexual attachments' (Campbell, 2001 p. 38).

2.10.3 Performativity

For Butler the subject is the site of turbulence and ambivalence, and continuously emerges as an effect of prior power/discourse and condition (drawing from Foucault). There is however, the possibility of a radically conditional form of agency, which holds unpredictable outcomes through constant *performativity* and coming into being (Kirby, 2006).

In her seminal work *Gender Trouble* (1990) Butler utilises poststructuralist notions of discursive regulation and formation of the subject to challenge the regulatory regime of heterosexuality that she claims produces fixed identities of sex and gender. Appropriating Derridian concepts of iteration she develops the notion of *performativity,* one of her most exciting contributions to theories of subjectivity*:*

> 'It is clear that coherence is desired, wished for, idealized, and that this idealization is an effect of a corporeal signification. In other words, acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produces this on the surface of the body…'

> 'Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are performative in the sense that the essence of identity that they otherwise purport to express

becomes a fabrication manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means.'
(Butler, 1990, p. 336-337)

Identity like the subject then is a discursive effect – an unstable discursive effect – where desire for coherence is constantly threatened. In contrast to Goffman's (1995) dramaturgical component of a social self, there is no notion of a concept of an internal self or cohesive 'self-identical subject' (Butler, 1993, p. 229), rather identity and the subject are discursive effects, enacted through constant reiteration of normative acts. There are a plurality of subject positions, each a function of which discourse defines but does not fully determine (Stern, 2000) and agency within this is an effect of subjection (Butler, 1997a); it is the reworking of the script whilst reciting within the linguistic possibilities of the play; there is no stepping offstage to reflect, outside of discursive convention (Stern, 2000).

'Where there is an 'I' that speaks and thereby produces an effect in discourse, there is first a discourse that precedes and enables that 'I' and forms in language the constraining trajectory of its will. Thus there is no 'I' who stands behind discourse and executes its volition or will through discourse.'

'The 'I' is thus a citation of the place of the 'I' in speech, where that place has a certain priority and anonymity with respect to the life it animates: it is the historically revisable possibility of a name that precedes and exceeds me, but without which I cannot speak.'
(Butler, 1993, p. 225 and 226)

In her concept of *performativity* Butler utilises Derridian notions of iteration in new ways: The sign in language is iterable and re-cited in ways not

controlled by the author, so too the material sign, the body is iterable, through constant *performative* acts, not fully controlled by the embodied individual, in order to be recognized/ intelligible, through identification and attachment to a subject position, changing fleeting and open to transformation.

So how does this complex and abstract theory assist in understanding identity work? Let us explore this by turning back to my poem and vulnerable managerial self. Here there is a suggestion of a passionate attachment to managerial subjectivity, a yearning for a past calm self and yet an almost involuntary performativity of a vulnerable self. This isn't the story of a manager who, following Goffman (1995) selects and enacts certain roles, masks and scripts; here is a story of a struggle for control. I am hailed but fail to attach securely to either the managerial or mother subjectivity. Anxiety, emotion and guilt tear me from a coherent self. There are involuntary physical manifestations, a performativity of anxiety, through tears and a constriction of the throat, and discursive performativity in the constant self-questioning, doubt and threat of spillage *'to anyone who'll listen'*. Within the poem Butler's difficult and abstract theory of inauguration is played out constantly; there is no single definitive turn, but rather a constant vibration, an oscillation that changes imperceptibly on each shimmer. Within this pulsation I am hailed by two prominent conflicting subject positions that 'I' temporarily, yet persistently attach to, in ever congealing layers; there is the manager (constituted through a predominantly masculine discourse) and the mother (seen as Other/feminine to organizational masculine norms).

Butler's theory holds much promise and I see significant potential for generating new insights into this field of study. However, I acknowledge, before progressing any further that she is a very abstract philosopher and I will be applying her concepts beyond (or beneath?) anything she anticipated. As Borgerson (2005) highlights 'perhaps as a researcher, we can never get Butler 'right', attempts to apply her concepts always failing to maintain theoretical levels, drifting towards mundane descriptions altered in the very act of making this theoretical" (p. 76).

There is acknowledgement of a lack of engagement with Butler's theories by those involved in Organizational Studies (Borgerson, 2005; Tyler & Cohen, 2010); a small exclusive group that are a notable exception includes Ford and Harding (2004), Hodgson (2005), Tyler and Cohen (2010, see also Cohen and Tyler, 2008), Kenny (2009a, 2010) and Harding, (2013). The majority of these use Butler's concept of performativity to develop insights into managerial and organizational identities. I briefly review Hodgson's (2005), Tyler and Cohen's (2010) and Kenny's (2010) studies as examples of the use of Butler in organizations before summarizing and concluding this chapter.

Hodgson's work explores *performativity* in relation to the professionalization of project management and the 'simultaneous attraction, insecurity and antipathy that professionalization arouses in employees' (Hodgson, 2005, p. 51) and suggests that parody has the potential to subvert professional initiatives. Here he proposes that *performativity* through workers' enactment of non-conforming

subjectivities, demonstrated through satire, humour and parody, provide a form of resistance. However, as discussed earlier in the chapter, humour and cynicism are not always effective modes of resistance (Holmes, 2000, 2007; Fleming & Spicer, 2003; Roberts, 2005). The site, audience and spectacle of the parody influence its power to subvert and proliferate (Kenny, 2009b). Parody can reinforce and sustain, rather than subvert existing power relations; only certain types of parody can trouble hegemonic practice (Butler, 1990; Kenny, 2009b). Kenny (see Kenny, 2009b) provides a thoughtful review of parody and when it is most likely to be effective in generating new forms of becoming. As Butler notes:

> Parody requires a certain ability to identify, approximate, draw near; it engages an intimacy with the position it appropriates that troubles the voice, the bearing, and the performativity of the subject.
>
> [t]o enter into parody is to enter into a relationship of both desire and ambivalence.
> (Butler, 1997b, p. 34)

Tyler and Cohen (2010) in an innovative study, both methodologically and theoretically, apply gender performativity - juxtaposed with organizational locales, adopting Lefebvre's concept of organizational spaces (1991). The researchers found that space can be understood as 'a materialization of gender performativity; that is, as a site on which gender is played out within organizational life' (Tyler & Cohen, 2010, p. 182). This exploration of how space is integral to performativity is similar to Brown and Humphrey's (2006) study referenced earlier, where they identify place as a resource for constituting identity;

however, the adoption of Butler's notion of performativity in Tyler and Cohen's (2010) work instigates the place, in addition to the individual (body), as an extended realm of gender enactment.

This notion of performativity applying to place as well as body was identified in an earlier study (Ford and Harding, 2004). Here the researchers adopted Butler's theory to research on the merger of two large hospitals. They found that the managers and the organization(s) were collapsed into each other, challenging notions of dualism. Here performativity is in constant constitution of both managers and the organization(s).

Kenny (2010) draws from Butler and her adoption of Hegel's concept of 'ek-stasis', of how the 'self' is always dislocated from itself in wider society in the process of identification. Following Butler the subject and society are 'inescapably intertwined: in a continuous process of co-constitution' (Kenny, 2010, p. 858), which reflects Ford and Harding's (2004) findings. Through participant observation of a small UK development sector organization, supplemented with interviews, Kenny (2010) identified how a dominant discourse of 'ethical living' was sustained; this was through processes of recognition but also policing and exclusion of some colleagues by others. Kenny noted how workers enacted the discourse in passionate and yet ambivalent ways, a continuous process to avoid abjection; here Kenny used Butler (2004) to theorise the emotionality of subjectivity.

2.11   Summary

Adopting my earlier autoethnographic voice has been a useful device to probe the strengths and omissions of each of the alternative theoretical routes into researching managerial subjectivity. Social Identity Theory was quickly discounted as an approach. The analysis of my poem through this lens was over simplistic and failed to acknowledge the dynamic 'nature' of subjectivity or to acknowledge the power and inequalities inherent in social groupings. My aim is not to erase and smooth out the complexity of managerial subjectivity. In contrast Foucault's theories provided a more useful framework for analysis. Here the powerful discourses and their tension are profiled (managerial and gender/ motherhood). Struggles to control my emotions in my attempt to govern my 'self' and yet resentment and a resistance to this call are apparent. However, whilst insightful Foucault's theory is light on explanation of why certain discourses dominate our constitution and why this varies between individuals, or even in within the same manager at differing times.

In psychoanalysis there is recognition of numerous identifications taking place throughout a person's life, which are focused on various objects (Kenny et al, 2011a). Within the poem, my vulnerable managerial self has conflicting identifications of being a good and caring mother and yet also a calm, effective manager who delivers for the organization. The tension between these identifications is heightened during changes to my managerial role and the timing of a holiday. However, whilst insightful, taking a purely

psychoanalytical approach was discounted. The overt focus on the individual (Frosh & Baraister, 2008) to the exclusion of the wider macro context is problematic for me. I also shared concerns discussed earlier that psychoanalysis is a system of thought, a discursive strategy, belonging to a particular historical period and place (Frosh & Baraister, 2008; Kenny et al, 2011a).

Using my poem to test out the remaining theoretical approaches to researching managerial identity in the adopted framework was a very useful tool. Researchers informed by what I have broadly grouped as the pragmatist approach recognise the social component of subjectivity, though to varying degrees retain a notion of individual agency. Many of these approaches held face validity when adopted to analyse my verse, such as Goffman's dramaturgical 'self' and how I refer to 'masks' - but the trace of there being a 'true' and accessible, knowable self troubled me. I also valued aspects of the narrative approach (particularly the poststructuralist interpretation). I could see in my poem the attempt to constitute a coherent narrative of my 'self' and identified this as useful for my methodological approach; this is something I explore further in the next chapter. Micro-interactional methods were quickly discounted as problematic for my particular research aim, which leads me to the approach I adopted.

I use Butler's theories predominantly in my analysis but following her approach, I draw from a number of theoretical perspectives to constantly critique and challenge my findings and resist collapsing divergent

perspectives into one simple approach. Butler's theories and her style of constant questioning offer both promise and challenge in this quest to hear and interpret senior managers' experience of subjectivity. This is an ongoing dialectic between poststructuralist, feminist and psychoanalytical perspectives and the alternative insights they bring; there is no definitive answer or solution, no anticipated closure or arrival.

In summary, whilst there is a wealth of research into the 'identity-work' of managers, as critiqued earlier, these often focus on the conscious cognitive activity involved, of how certain discourses dominate managerial subjectivities and can produce fragmented, continuous and conflicting subject positioning. However, most of these studies neglect disruptions, the affective components of subjectivity and theory on how such discourses seize managers to a different degree, and sometimes with such great effect. Perhaps this reflects the dominance of rationalist and managerial discourse in both organizational and academic worlds. It is in this identified space that I believe my research contributes. A Butlerian reading enables an intertwined macro and microanalysis of subjectivity; her appropriation of Foucault enables recognition of the power and politics of organizational life, whilst her adoption and critique of certain psychoanalytical insights facilitates a focus on the critical intersection of this at the site of managers' psyche. This theoretical framework acknowledges the social, cognitive and affective elements of subjectivity and hence an opportunity to contribute to a field, where this recognition is minimal. I agree with Kenny and colleagues who present Butler's combination of poststructuralism and psychoanalysis as

providing a theoretically stimulating concept of identification; one that incorporates the social, power and affect (Kenny et al, 2011a).

Here is the opportunity to probe deeper into how society and the psyche are mutually productive both in the development of managerial subjectivities and organizational discourse and practice.

The following chapter explores the methodological quandaries and decisions undertaken in this research.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

> [a]t some point in our lives we have to be crazy, we have to lose control, step
> out of our ordinary way of seeing, and learn that the world is not the way we
> think it is, that it isn't solid, structured and forever.
> (Goldberg, cited by Church, 1995, p70)

3.1 Introduction

The last chapter frames my research, within the ever increasingly complex,
ever shifting seas of theoretical and empirical literature; this chapter focuses
on telling the story of how I undertook my research and why. Like many
stories and indeed theses, this simplifies the process and creates an illusion
of chronological order. A linear rationality is suggested; the semblance of a
process and coherence that is missing from the 'reality' and messiness of
social research. However, whilst my research experience has been messy,
iterative and has included a number of 'false' starts, 'dead' ends and
interesting diversions, I am aware that certain conformity is needed in
'writing up' academic study. I therefore follow elements of the sequential,
expected protocol, not least in sympathy for you the reader navigating this
complex text.

My first chapter introduced the topic, the policy and the organizational
setting of my research, and highlighted how an early managerial experience
was formative to this. I wanted to research the managerial subjectivity of
senior managers within the National Health Service (NHS) particularly
through significant organizational change. I adopted a longitudinal approach

that covered the period through which the local NHS restructuring extended; there was an absence of this method within most of the reviewed literature (an exception being Watson's (2009) case-study). I also wished to include my experience of researching and living through this time, as both manager (participant) and researcher. I adopted an autoethnographic component in my research approach to facilitate this latter aim, and to enhance my reflexivity, more of which is explored later in this chapter. Ultimately my hope is to contribute to the theory of managerial subjectivity and the practice of management. As presented in my last chapter, following a dialogical engagement with the literature, my theoretical approach is strongly informed by Judith Butler's theories of subjectivity; whilst, to date, she is not frequently used in organizational research, I see promise in her juxtaposition of poststructuralist and psychoanalytical theories. This third chapter extends this discussion further; I clarify my approach, briefly covering my philosophical beliefs, before setting out how these and my theoretical framework have guided my research methodology, method and analysis.

Right from the start I was clear that I sought to adopt a research methodology and method that drew from senior managers' expression of their experience of organizational life. Having emotively expressed my experience through the medium of poetry in my early autoethnographic piece (Mischenko, 2005), I hoped to hear the excitement, thrills, struggles, and pain, of other managers; and to listen to their attempts to make sense of these events.

As rehearsed in the last chapter, my research interest developed from an early paper, in which I shared my vulnerability, as I undertook what I labelled as managerial identity-work (Op cit). This initiated a research interest; how did others experience their managerial subjectivities? I hoped to explore the identity-work inherent in others' accounts. However, this does not embrace naïve realism; such reports do not provide access to a 'true' fixed self, or world; managers' tales are not a route to understanding organizational 'reality'. Rather, I recognize these as socially constructed accounts, where managers' stories construct and reproduce various meanings of management and organization. I also wished to explore and critique the context that enables such narrative to take place; to understand the dominant discourses and the dynamics of power that flow through and produce such accounts. However, I acknowledged the need to avoid the temptation to homogenize these reports into bland high-level themes that disguise the diversity, messiness and complexity of organizational lives.

Due to serendipity my research occurred during a period of restructuring for Primary Care Trusts, following the publication of new NHS policy (DH, 2005); this inevitably posed a threat to my research participants' existing managerial positions.

My research aims and theoretical perspective inform my research methodology; a mainly Butlerian framework is used, notably informed by Foucault's theories, a feminist perspective and psychoanalytical insights.

Taking a poststructuralist perspective was decided quite early in my studies, though this framework has evolved and adapted in response to my research findings and readings. By this I mean that I have not been purist in my use of Judith Butler's philosophy and theories (Crotty, 1998); rather I have appropriated what I perceive to be her most productive concepts to provide a critique and reflective insight into managers' subjectivities. I have also drawn from additional theoretical and empirical literature in a qualitatively inductive, abductive[6] and iterative process as my analysis developed.

Crotty (1998) identifies that epistemology, 'The way of looking at the world and making sense of it,' (p2) informs the theoretical perspective; this in turn guides the methodology and ultimately leads to the choice and use of methods within the research (Op cit). I would go further and state that my way of looking at the world, my philosophical tendencies, developed my research interest and the framing of my aims. Of course these philosophical assumptions, which I suggest '"underpin"' my research, 'are themselves discursive effects rather than being foundational axioms' (Rhodes, 2000, p8). In taking a poststructuralist approach and troubling fixed truths, I also trouble

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[6] Abductive reasoning, developed by Charles S Peirce (1839-1914), recognises that the analysis of research findings is always already theoretically informed and is a method of extending knowledge through inference, and best possible explanation. (Reichertz, 2009) Abduction is *'sensible and scientific as a form of inference, however it reaches to the sphere of deep insight and new knowledge.' (Op cit, paragraph 9)* It enables social researchers to make new discoveries in a methodological and ordered way. If research findings produce something unexpected then abductive reasoning is a means by which to develop new insights of why these occurred. (Op cit)

my position as researcher. Here, I recognise the need to constantly check my writing and assumptions so as not to privilege my position, or to slip into language that suggests there are final, single or foundational truths.

3.2   Epistemology

My interest in (managerial) subjectivity is associated with some longstanding philosophical questions; for example, what are these notions of 'self', 'identity'? And, 'who am I?' And particularly pertinent for empirical study, and this chapter, it profiles a critical epistemological question; how can I access and 'know' the identity-work the participants in my research, and indeed I, experience? Epistemology identifies the philosophical framework that informs a piece of research; it particularly reflects the understanding we have of, 'what human knowledge is, what it entails, and what status can be ascribed to it. What kind of knowledge do we believe will be attained by our research? What characteristics do we believe that knowledge to have?' (Crotty, 1998, p2) Following Denzin and Lincoln (2000), I believe that all research is hermeneutic, in that its theoretical frameworks and resulting interpretations are informed by its context, whether temporal or spatial; these factors create certain beliefs and comprehension of the world and how it can be studied.

Earlier academic study and reading has had a formative role in my epistemological and theoretical values; my Bachelor degree and Masters adopted constructivist and phenomenological approaches to understand the meaning applied by people to their experiences. A constructivist approach 'focuses on the meaning-making activity of the individual mind' (Crotty, 1998, p58):

However, subsequently I became interested in a social constructionist perspective; of how social actors co-create meaning and therefore 'reality'. Increasingly I became intrigued by the multiple constructed realities available and how analysis, through various theoretical frameworks, profiles certain aspects of human experience and inevitably obscures others. As Oakley (1974) identifies, each 'way of seeing is a way of not seeing.' (Cited in Crotty, 1998, page 55) Even more recently, reading to inform this study has developed a more critical and poststructuralist focus; I have a growing interest in the interplay of powerful discourses and the unequal distribution of power and its potential effects. Increasingly I have been influenced through reading of postmodern and poststructuralist texts that challenge even further ideas of a unitary, essential and coherent 'self'; notions of an obtainable objective reality, and of ways of knowing others' 'self' or subjectivities. The concepts 'self' and 'identity' cannot be understood (epistemologically) or exist (ontologically) outside of, or as distinct from, language and cultural norms. Identity does not belong to an autonomous human agent (Benveniste, 2000) but is rather, as proposed by Lacan, the creative effect of language and culture codes (Redman, 2000).

So, to momentarily categorize my philosophical beliefs according to Crotty's (1998) framework, from an ontological perspective I am a relativist, in that I do not believe there is one single 'true' reality for the researcher to know and study; rather I recognize that our perception of reality is informed by time, culture and place; phenomena can be experienced and described very differently by people, whilst our narratives are imbued with the shared social

meanings of our time and context (Op cit). However, I also consider that the socially constructed reality is 'real' in its effect, in that it appears to subjects as 'real'. This leads to my epistemological approach, which I identify as poststructuralist; here I acknowledge the discursive social generation of multiple 'realities' and meaning making and take a critical stance, in that I also recognize the power inequalities inherent in such ways of knowing and co-production, and how these feed particular hegemonic interests. For power 'reaches into the very grain of individuals, tackles their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives' (Foucault, 1980, p39). This positioning supports the chosen theoretical framework for my study - a Butlerian poststructuralist perspective, which includes psychoanalytical insights for theorising subjectivity (Butler, 1997a); this was debated extensively in the last chapter and is briefly revisited below.

3.3   Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective adopted provides the lens through which the research field is viewed and understood. Poststructuralist theory informs my analytical framework and as rehearsed earlier, I particularly use theories and concepts drawn from Michel Foucault and Judith Butler. However, I agree with Crotty (1998), in that there is no need to be purist in the appropriation of theorists; throughout my research I have applied a productive adoption of Foucault and Butler, amongst others, whilst critiquing certain elements of their thought, much as Butler has gathered, appropriated and challenged a number of theorists herself.

Whilst a heterogeneous field, there is theoretical agreement within poststructuralist theory that there is no essential, true or pre-social self (Hall, 2000). As presented in the last chapter words do not hold a fixed or true meaning of extra-linguistic reality; words do what they do through relations to each other (Blackburn, 2005). Developing this further, poststructuralism challenges the normative assumption that language is a neutral instrument for representing reality. In poststructuralist theory there can be no meaning without language; perception and comprehension are formed through language and thus 'reality' is constituted rather than objectively described (Vasterling, 2003). Here language constrains the access and intelligibility of reality but there is no entry outside of language.

The human subject and notions of a 'self' are constructed through the powerful discursive practices of the time and culture (Foucault, 1980, 1984, 1990); discourses, are the normative frames, the concepts, writings and practices that limit and define how we see and understand the world. And discourses, '[do] not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their own invention' (Foucault, 1972, p49).

If following this, the human subject reiterates normative conventions when speaking, acting and writing (Vasterling, 2003), then the subject in poststructuralism, is presented as a discursive effect (McNay, 2003), rather than a self-determining individual. Foucault's earlier work has been critiqued as deterministic, in that it promotes a passive subject formed through

powerful discourse (McNay, 1994), with little scope for resistance. However, his latter works contest this; here he suggests power is generated at many levels, through the interplay of many fragmented and often conflicting discourses; this mesh undermines as well as reinforces the power of any one single hegemonic discourse (Foucault, 1984).

As recognized in the last chapter, poststructuralist theory, through its deconstruction of notions of the subject and identity, is at the stage of interruption in the Hegelian dialectic method of accruing knowledge. Here current theory is troubled and critiqued but without proffer of an alternative; there is an absence of a synthesis of previous theory and the critique, there is deconstruction but no reconstruction (Hall, 2000). The concepts are troubled, as no longer 'good to think with', (Hall, 2000, p16) but in the absence of any alternatives, we continue to work with the now deconstructed concepts (Op cit). The ceaseless proliferation of studies exploring identity, power and language continues, as highlighted in the last chapter, in an ongoing quest to develop new theoretical insights. However, in addition to poststructuralist research, more traditional modernist concepts of a coherent and essentialist human subject also inform a range of organizational studies and practice (Parker, 1993); as reviewed in the last chapter, the scope of self and identity study is refracted through a kaleidoscope of theoretical lenses. The kaleidoscope is a metaphor used by O'Brien (1993), who recognises that 'by shifting theoretical perspective the world under investigation also changes shape' (cited in Silverman, 2005, p76). This was demonstrated in the last chapter in my various readings of my autoethnographic verse.

3.3.1 Poststructuralist thought and Subjectivity/ the 'Self'

Poststructuralist theory is a broad and heterogeneous field rather than a homogeneous group; however, a consistent thread is the upsetting of many epistemological assumptions within the traditional humanist and positivist approaches. Whereas humanist beliefs privilege notions of an essential nature, a knowing and unified self; one that can provide authentic narratives of experience; poststructuralist thought decentres the subject and troubles such accounts with an opacity that clouds attempts at knowing one's 'self' and others (Butler, 2005).

> 'The ontological claim can never fully capture its object, and this view makes me somewhat different from Foucault and aligns me temporarily with the Kantian tradition as it has been taken up by Derrida. The 'there is' gestures towards a referent it cannot capture, because the referent is not fully built up in language, is not the same as the linguistic effect. There is no access to it outside of the linguistic effect but the linguistic effect is not the same as the referent it fails to capture. This is what allows for a variety of ways of making reference to something, none of which can claim to be that to which reference is made.'
> (Butler interviewed - in Costera Meijer & Prins, 1998, p279)

However, poststructuralism does not result in the death of narrative and autobiographical writing; it does draw attention to the difficulty of the "I" to express itself through the language that is available to it (Butler, 1990, p.xxiv); it doesn't stop us trying to give an account of ourselves to others, however opaque we are to ourselves; in order to live and survive (Butler in Kirby, 2006, p154).

My theoretical framework places emphasis on the inter-subjective, discursive and dynamic nature of subjectivity, the temporary 'nature' and inconsistency of the subject, and challenges notions of language as a transparent medium of meaning. Despite the challenge to the humanist notion of the 'self' by the poststructuralist deconstruction of the subject, we continue to value and narrate a coherent 'self' through self-narrative. I see a productive tension in applying a Butlerian lens to such self-narratives; this scrutiny aims to trouble claims of self-knowledge and coherence, uncover the power dynamics, the alternative readings and the contingent matrix of social and institutional discourse.

Each and every individual is preceded and exceeded by the norms of their culture and society; any agency we have, a notion frequently emphasised in humanist approaches, is a limited and conditioned one; constrained to the scope of possibilities within our available discursive framework (Butler, 2005). One's own temporal boundaries, birth and death, are always outside one's knowledge (Bakhtin, 1990, Butler, 2005). Any biography or story of the 'self' requires 'another' to hear or read, recognise, acknowledge, interpret and consume the story (Barthes, 1975, Cavarero, 2000).

A further quandary is linguistic practice and its norms:

> The moment we want to say <u>who</u> somebody is, our very vocabulary leads us astray into saying <u>what</u> he is; we get entangled in a description of qualities he necessarily shares with others like him; we begin to describe a type or

"character" in the old meaning of the word, with the result that his specific
uniqueness escapes us.
(Arendt, 1957, part cited in Cavarero, 2000, pvii)

Cavarero (2000), an Italian philosopher, following Arendt, distinguishes
between the disciplines of philosophy and biography; philosophy, she states
focuses on the 'what', the universal identity categories of man and woman; in
contrast she sees biography as reporting the unique identity of someone
through the telling of events and story. However, these are not dichotomies;
both are constructed through linguistic norms; any narrated 'who'
necessarily includes and is constricted by any number of given (socially
constructed) 'whats', such as, gender, sex, class and race (Keenleyside, 2001,
Butler, 2005).

There are a number of challenges in capturing and representing managerial
subjectivities in research. The next section explores these in more depth,
prior to moving on to establish my research methodology.

3.4   The Challenges of Representation

The challenge of representation extends beyond the researcher's influence to
the reader. We all select and skip certain sections when reading any text
(Barthes, 1975): we hear, read, story and act through our specific filtered
frameworks; influenced by our education, experience, culture; the dominant
discourses of our society and temporal, contingent influences. The fragile
contingency of narrative, research and interpretation can be illustrated by
one of the first research interviews I undertook. Immediately prior to the

interview Wendy[7] received a telephone call giving her distressing news about her parents: This phone call influenced her narrative throughout the interview; the emotional tone (sadness, regret and tears), the vignettes chosen and meaning she drew from them were all influenced. In this case Wendy had informed me of the call. On how many occasions do we interview unaware of the significant influences on our participants? How many times, through ignorance or choice, do we ignore or forget the idiosyncrasies that impact upon our research?

Returning to Barthes, each time we read a text we skip different parts; we need to recognise as a myth notions of the writer as active and the readers passive (Op cit).

> [we do not read everything with the same intensity of reading; a rhythm is established, casual, unconcerned with the <u>integrity</u> of the text; our very avidity for knowledge impels us to skim or to skip certain passages (anticipated as "boring") in order to get more quickly to the warmer parts of the anecdote
>
> [This] does not occur at the level of the structure of languages but at the moment of their consumption; the author cannot predict tmesis[8]: he cannot choose to write <u>what will not be read</u>
> Barthes, 1975, pages 10-11, (original emphasis)

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[7] Pseudonyms are used for all participants

[8] In a literary context, Tmesis relates to how text is consumed by the reader: French social and literary critic, Roland Barthes, used the concept of tmesis to describe the way in which the reader skims through a text. Tmesis is created by the reader's ability to visually 'cut out' words, sentences and paragraphs and skip to another part of the text. What is read and what is not read is tmesis.

We read, hear and understand theorists, philosophers and participants through our biases and temporal influences (Garfinkel, 1967, Sacks, 1992, Silverman, 2005); we apply their words to our lives and so perform what Kaufman (2005) labels as 'autotheory'. Our language and written prose is a creation, improvisation, a work of art, (Denzin, 1997), though this 'creation' draws from existing fragments, those of learned and heard discourse. It is a constitution of our self and society and as alluded to earlier, whatever the author's meaning or voice intended, once heard or read by others; the baton is passed; readers interpret through their biography, cultural practices; discourse and frameworks: Ultimately we all undertake 'autotheory' (Kaufman, 2005).

The implications of this challenge of representation, for a researcher, requires acknowledgement that I read theory and literature and hear others' stories through my filters, and it beholds me to be as clear as possible as to my influences and interpretation for readers, whilst recognising that: As a researcher (and participant) I am partially opaque to myself, and that any reader, in turn reads my textual offering through their cloudy matrix of understanding and beliefs.

I strive to research and write this thesis, in a manner that accepts and illustrates the messiness, the opacity, the multiple possible readings and contradictions inherent in researching and writing on subjectivities.

I acknowledge a specific ethical concern of representation when undertaking social research, as noted by Bakhtin (1984) and Butler (2005); they each write of the open ended, constant process of identity-work and the resulting ethical challenge for researchers and writers to abstain from foreclosure. In our research we should avoid slotting participants into identity categories and positions; our analysis should resist the temptation of solidifying research participants in the text. To resist perpetuating the falsehood of an ability to 'know' and to give a true and final account of a 'self', rather the aim is to present analysis of the process, flow, disruptions and messiness of subjectivity, and to proffer possible interpretations recognised as insightful by the readers.

Although there is growing recognition of the challenges of representation in hearing, writing and presenting existential matters, there is little specific work undertaken by researchers of the ethical challenges of researching and writing others' stories of identity. I share Frank's (2005) concern that in social research we risk closing down and fixing people; pinning them down by the monologue of research text; resulting in the execution of a literary death, whereby we as researchers and authors judge what there is worth knowing of this person or group.

This ethical and representational concern; this risk of arbitrary definition, quantification and closure of research participants' identities concerns me; I have no desire for omniscience in my analysis of participants' stories; I

recognise both the opacity and ongoing 'nature' of myself and others; I have no wish to present as absolute truths the tentative interpretations within my research. As Bakhtin identifies this is both ethically questionable and empirically flawed; it doesn't represent the unfinished 'nature' of the human condition (Frank, 2005) and I would add, it doesn't represent the complexity and opacity of any given accounts of selves (Butler, 2005).

Although Frank's work carries resonance for me, there are haunting traces of humanistic notions within it; for example his article references the possibility of knowing a person in the moment of interview (see Frank, 2005, p967). This is in contrast to the poststructuralist approach I take; for example Judith Butler emphasises the opacity and unknowable, dynamic processes of an individual's 'self' (Butler, 2005). Butler identifies a number of confounding issues to knowing the self. These include temporal dimensions, the individual is always preceded and exceeded by discursive norms, epistemological challenges, and how the individual cannot fully recall its origin and inter-subjective conditions; the exposure to another, which initiates an account of the self and intensifies the societal norms that constitute the self (Op cit).

However, despite these limitations, Butler still advocates that we elicit and provide accounts in a spirit of openness and questioning (Salih, 2003); following this advice I undertake such an endeavour but guard against the expectation or claim of final or complete knowledge of my own or others' 'selves'.

My resulting research presents the participants as 'sites of struggles' (Frank, 2005, p971) or, perhaps I would substitute and extend this terminology to, sites of jostling subject positions and unconscious disruptions. The autoethnographic trace within the research explores my experience and my turmoil; both as participant, a manager going through similar challenge and change but also as researcher, struggling to comprehend and ethically represent our collective and individual stories.

However, as Kvale (2006) identifies, any form of dialogue incorporates a power dynamic and imbalance; whether as part of social research, management techniques or the recent prevalence of interview formatted entertainment. Ethical research requires acknowledgement of this inequality; despite the association of qualitative research with humanistic and democratic values, it is the researcher who instigates and defines the focus and structure of the interview, the researcher who encourages confidences and the researcher who ultimately determines the use and interpretation of the resulting narratives. As referred to earlier I resist notions of authenticity, of seeing the interviews as a means of accessing reality, of experience, meanings and feelings of others; but rather see stories as just that, evidence of how discourse, power and culture constrain how individuals create a sense of and construct the world (Holstein & Gubrium, 1999; Silverman, 2000). Such storying of personal identities both within and out with the interview setting is 'reality'. Not the reality of a subject who pre-exists such narrative,

there is no autonomous subject behind the doing, but the ceaseless identity-work we undertake is all there is (Butler, 1990).

To borrow once again O'Brien's metaphor (1993 cited in Silverman, 2005), the theoretical kaleidoscope I use in my studies adopts many theoretical mirrors to reflect my research findings; within the poststructuralist genre, it shifts at times to offer differing patterns of interpretation - through Butler, Foucault, psychoanalytical insights and feminist poststructuralist readings. But I need to discuss how I apply this kaleidoscopic lens. The following section moves on from my theoretical framework, and the challenges of representation, to explore and justify the methodological approach; one that recognizing there is no pre-linguistic subject or organization adopts a narrative approach.

3.5   Research Methodology

'We dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticise, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative'.
(Hardy, 1977, p5)

Critical for my research is the relationship between discourses, or regimes of thought, and participants' stories, narrative and subjectivities. Stories create the self according to some theorists (i.e. McAdams, 1993), or are equivalent to identity-work (Holstein & Gubrium, 1999) and the way 'agents' think, feel and make moral decisions (Sarbin, 1986). Horrocks and Callaghan (2006) suggest that stories are a window into identity construction, which includes

emotional experience and management. Following my epistemological

approach and theoretical framework I take a qualitative approach and indeed

elicit stories from my participants. However, far from using these as an

unproblematic window, I adopt them to try to capture glimpses of

subjectivity in progress; stories can provide a thin veneer or shield over the

more complex aspects of subjectivity. I suggest that narratives of the self

reveal dominant discourses that provide the available subject positions and

we strive to constitute coherence through them, whilst unwittingly providing

glimpses of gaps, incoherence and defensive acts.

So, rather than a window, stories access subjectivity as if seen through a

reflection in a funfair mirror, complete with varying degrees of distortion and

flux.

> 'Where you see yourself reflected...[t]o the right and the left, in the ceiling
> and even on the floor, in a hundred glasses each of which distorts and
> perverts your face and figure in a different way – shortening, lengthening,
> broadening, compressing their shape, and still keeping some kind of
> likeness.'
> (Dinesen cited in Keenleyside, 2001, p132)

This metaphor of a distorted funfair mirror for understanding the stories

elicited through research is in sharp contrast to the traditional realist view,

where interviewing is seen as the unproblematic portal into others'

experience (Gubrium & Holstein, 2003): There the participant is presented as

a vessel of authentic thought and feelings; the researcher is the explorer and

entrepreneur, an objective expert who, through rigorous analysis, can elicit

the meaningful truth from the shared narratives. There is increasing

challenge to such simplistic notions of representation (Denzin, 1997, Gubrium & Holstein, 2003); the notion of the existence of a fixed, true and accessible self, or a single social reality is unravelling, and the roles of interviewer and participant, author and reader becoming blurred. Rather than a clear window into subjectivity we have a series of distorted and contrasting images, multiple selves and identifications, they all somehow retain a kind of likeness referred to in Dinesen's quotation above.

> This room of mirrors, of mimesis, the metaphor of narrative, does not reflect directly but transforms and transposes, the self and other in story and the self as other and as story.
> (Keenleyside, 2001, p137)

Researcher and participant, through engagement in the interview, are interdependent, co-producers of possible 'selves' and meaning. The researcher holds additional power in terms of representation through writing up, though this too is subsequently open to multiple readings, and I try to counterbalance the power differential through use of autoethnography as discussed later.

Day Sclater (2003) identifies the fragmentation and ongoing nature of subjectivity in someone narrating their life story - there is the 'speaking subject' - the storyteller (or in this case the research participant); there is the 'I' within the story she produces, or the 'subject-in-language'; the narrating subject is also a linguistic subject (not a person); there is the subject of narration, or rather the character and finally there is the narrated subject –

that signified of narration. And this complexity deepens if applied to the

intersubjective cacophony of selves meeting in an interview room (Harding, 2007). Here my academic, researcher self (selves), jostles with my managerial self (selves); which of these speak at any one point; which discourses do they draw from at any one time? Then there is the participant who will also generate certain versions of 'me' as manager, and/ or researcher, and all of this is before we begin to consider the selves clustering around her as she enters the room! (Op cit)

Poststructuralist theory, informed by Foucault, perceives the way we experience and recount a life-story as a product of subjection through institutional, social and historical discourses (Foucault, 1982, Rose, 1989). 'No 'who' can exist outside the context of all 'whats': every story must have its setting' (Keenleyside, 2001, p 120).

The poststructuralist deconstruction of the unified subject and its presentation of identities as provisional, partial, unstable, 'performative' and discursively produced, create an epistemological and therefore methodological challenge. Through this theoretical lens the narratives of managers' experience, cannot be presented as a simple means of accessing and knowing subjectivity. And even if focusing on the discursive formation of managerial subjectivities through the narratives and their interface with the psyche, as Gamson asks, 'how does one study its operation when one is, by definition, not "outside" of it?' (2000, p357) I support the suggestion later in his

article that whilst researching identities one needs to integrate the multiple, partial and fluid character of it into the research and analysis, incorporating the aim to illustrate the continuously dynamic and partial nature of subjectivity. But first, why take a narrative approach? What is the value of eliciting stories of organizational life?

3.5.1   The Value of Stories

As Yiannis Gabriel (2004) writes, following events people turn to stories, existing ones, or those they develop, to create sense from inchoate experience. Narrative is powerful, in life and research; it is a means by which we try to make sense of the world and strive to achieve the notion of coherence in our stories and sense of self (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

Humans consistently produce stories of themselves, whether by art, sculpture, drama, or the sung and spoken word (Hayward Rolling, 2004). The way people try and make sense of their lives is a route in to try and understand the 'power relations that structure society.' (Weedon, 1987, p8)

> 'Plots are strong because they have been institutionalised, repeated through the centuries, and well-rehearsed with different audiences.
> (Czarniawska, in Gabriel, 2004, pviii)

Reflecting my theoretical positioning I value stories as demonstrating the ongoing multiple constructions of meaning undertaken by individuals in organizations, rather than as capturing fragments of reality (Boje, 1991, Boland, 1989, 1994, Forester, 1992, Gabriel, 1995, Barry & Elmes, 1997,

Czarniawska, 1999). 'Every organizational story, every vignette is an act of translation' (Czarniawska, 1999, p96) by the raconteur and subsequently every research report is subject to further translation by the researcher and finally the reader.

I recognize that the interview is a means of constructing and reconstructing our vulnerable 'selves' (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997) and that stories are constantly flowing, deconstructing and emergent (Boje, 2001); we use narrative 'out of a desire to have *real* events display the coherence, integrity, fullness and closure of an image of life, that is and can only be imaginary' (White, 1989, in Rhodes, 2001, p101, my italics).

I am influenced by Czarniawska's (1999) concepts of centripetal and centrifugal analysis; the former is where the researcher moves towards generalizing accounts of her findings in order to demonstrate commonality and coherence, such as the key themes drawn from my research that inform my next three chapters. My centripetal themes provide a loose framework to order my findings into chapters and describe areas of affinity between numerous stories and vignettes. However, it is within the stories that a centrifugal analysis identifies the difference, complexity and details, which belie the ordered simplicity a purely centripetal approach would offer (Op cit). 'One side of a story masks other sides, and without context, we can miss what is between the lines of a story' (Boje, 2001, p44); through exploring micro-stories we identify 'incoherence, discontinuity, contradictions and ruptures in everyday life' (Op cit, p45). Following Czarniawska's and Boje's advice, whilst initially

identifying stories and grouping them into high-level themes in my analysis, I quickly move to more centrifugal approaches. These micro-stories and close readings of the same, coupled with my theoretical lens, challenge simple representation and profile paradox, difference and conflict.

A further strength in the use of stories and vignettes, is that these by necessity require the inclusion of long lengths of narrative, direct from participants' transcripts: 'Long quotes contain more "noise," more material that isn't exactly about the point being made. You can't make them say just what you want the audience to hear and no more. In postmodern terms it deprivileges the analyst' (Schneider, 1991, cited in Church, 1995, p112).

Reflecting my philosophical and theoretical approach, my interviews do not focus on 'what is the true nature of self', but rather on how do my participants talk about their 'selves'? (Potter & Wetherall, 1987, p102): My interest is in how managers story and constitute their 'selves', in their reflections of day-to-day practice and particularly in response to the potential upset of significant organizational change. What discourses and subject positions do they re-iterate and appropriate within their stories?

I am keen to avoid using Butlerian theory and its method of deconstruction as an expert and true lens, through which to analyse and dissect managers' stories, as if they were specimens in a lab. I am aware and guarded against the risk of exploitation of the emotionally rich experiences shared by the managers (Rhodes, 2000). Narrative and stories provide a limited and

fragmented access to managers' constitution of subjectivities and their sense-making; my approach, following a poststructuralist framework, is to guard against claims of capturing the only truth: I recognise that in taking any individual perspective, whether a single participant's account, or a specific theoretical stance, I risk closing off other ways of seeing (Clegg, 1990).

As highlighted in the last chapter Parker (1992) identifies a further risk in the often, abstract theoretical focus of poststructuralist organizational studies:

> The problems of (fictional) individuals in (mythical) organizations are safely placed behind philosophical double-glazing and their cries are treated as interesting examples of discourse.
> (Parker, 1992, p11)

Such studies risk an omission, one that I am alert to; what of the embodied individual manager, the site of the multiple discourses and institutional practices for identity-work (Richardson, 2000); what of their engagement and potential struggles and disruptions at the interface of their psyche with the Foucauldian (Foucault, 1988) condition of possibilities; what of their experience of excitement and thrills, or conversely of bullying, loss, abuse and exploitation? What of the managers' felt physical and emotional experience? A question that informed my methodological approach was how best to juxtapose the discursive, dynamic social framework of power with the individual as the site of constant production, struggle and possibility. For as I stated earlier in this chapter when framing my epistemological approach, whilst I believe the 'self' and the organization to be socially generated,

through the productive and yet limiting and constraining effects of power, the affects experienced by the individuals living in these constructions is experienced as 'real'. Their experience is also understood as within the effects of power.

Narrative inquiry and analysis needs to avoid the temptation to know and fix participants through their representational stories into identity categories but rather should recognise that such narrative and therefore subjectivity is in a state of 'perpetual generation' (Frank, 2005, p967). This is not to reinstate ideas of self-generation, the notion of a fully autonomous self. But analysis cannot claim the final word or assume there is *one* true interpretation. The researcher's voice and chosen theoretical framework, each represent further discursive effects and create from the co-produced narrative of the research interview, one of a number of possible interpretations but hopefully proffers a persuasive reading, one recognised by readers as offering insight. The research acts as a catalyst for identity-work for both the researcher and participant, rather than as a neutral method of accessing and recording truth (Frank, 2005). The following section explores how I gathered the stories and narratives from my research participants.

3.6   Methods: Interviews

I adopted Crossley's (2000) biographical narrative interview structure to gather managers' narratives (for similar approaches see also Boje, 2001, Czarniawska, 1998, Gabriel, 1998, Holloway & Jefferson, 2000 and Reissman, 1993). My rationale was that this loose, semi-structured approach facilitated

and encouraged participants to tell their stories, as a fashioning of the self and their sense making, or rather construction of their world. The biographical framework encouraged the interviewees to story their lives as chapters in a book; to select particular events they attributed as significant and to describe these latter specific moments in more detail. It is through the co-construction of the research interview, that each participant undertook identity-work, as they narrated and strived to create a sense of self, or indeed selves, for and with the researcher.

I undertook three interviews with each participant over the course of 18 months; this was in order to explore the dynamic, temporal and socially contingent nature of managerial subjectivity throughout this period. I wished to follow the individual managers and note any changes to their construction of self/selves during the period of organizational change; much of the reviewed literature suggested that times of transition acts as a catalyst for active identity work. Would I also find this? The first interview uses the full structure of the biographical narrative framework (see table 2). This provided the managers with the opportunity to present to me key aspects of their lives, from childhood through to current times; through this process they generate images of their 'self/selves' in an active sense making process.

The second interview did not follow this structure: The timing of this interview corresponded to the managers actively experiencing critical elements of the re-organization, for example, participation in Assessment

Centres[9] and interviews for roles in the new organizations. Therefore this second interview had a dual focus; I included some open questions about their current experience of the reorganization (see appendix 2) and also explored their experience of certain issues, which had been raised by a number of the participants in the first interviews; so for example a few had mentioned the conscious management of their appearance and many mentioned struggling with ethical dilemmas, such as game playing, during the course of their careers. In the final and third interview I returned to Crossley's (2000) framework; however, I adapted it and rather than revisiting questions of significant childhood memories, or the more general questions of their values, or spiritual and political beliefs, I focused specifically on the highs and lows and significant events experienced during the last year and a half; (2006-2008) - the time period of this particular NHS reorganization (see appendix 3). Throughout each of the interviews I encouraged participants to share specific vignettes they felt would illustrate a critical event or experience.

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[9] Assessment Centres are where the managers are put through their paces to assess their management and leadership skills; this incorporated linguistic and numeric psychometric testing, tasks, presentations and interviews.

Table 2		
Interview Protocol – Adapted from Crossley (2000)		
1.	Life Chapters	Life is described as a book with a few well defined chapters. Participants are encouraged to share this outline at the beginning of the interview.
2.	Key Events	Significant events are described for 8 key areas: • Peak Experience • Nadir Experience • Turning Point • Earliest Memory • Important Childhood Memory • Important Adolescent Memory • Important Adult Memory • Other Important Memory
3.	Significant People	Key people who have influenced the participant in their life to date.
4.	Future Script	Future plans and or dreams.
5.	Stresses and Problems	Areas of conflict and stress in the participant's life.
6.	Personal Ideology	Fundamental beliefs and values.
7.	Life Theme	Central message through the life story identified by the participant.

Despite my fears that I would find it difficult to recruit participants willing to participate and share their experience and potential vulnerability during the NHS restructure, I was pleasantly surprised at the response to my invitation.

3.6.1 Data Collection

Using a regional electronic network of director and assistant director level managers working in NHS Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), I circulated information and a letter inviting their participation in my research (see

appendix 4). This was a purposeful sample: purposive sampling is primarily used in qualitative research and describes the selection of participants based on a rationale of seeking those who can meet a research study's aims (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). This network incorporated the senior managers in the region and all were within a reasonable travel distance (two hours) for interviewing. Nine managers responded and given I was to interview each one three times this seemed to be large enough sample to generate sufficient information and insight into managerial subjectivity. I knew five of the resulting volunteers through professional networks, and I met the remaining four through the research process. These interviews and my autoethnographic component, described later, generated more than 2000 minutes/ 33.3 hours of interview data to transcribe and analyse.

The series of three interviews were spaced across the particular NHS organizational change timeline. The first interviews were undertaken almost a year after Sir Nigel Crisp, NHS Chief Executive at the time, announced the reorganization (DH, 2005). This delay reflects the months required for the Department of Health to defend their policy of reform against union challenges and to establish its process. In addition had been the decision and therefore requirement to realign and merge the regional strategic health authorities prior to PCT reconfiguration. As justified earlier I undertook three interviews with each participant in order to explore the dynamic, temporal and social contingent nature of identity-work throughout this period of change. The initial interviews took place in the spring of 2006 and the final ones were completed late in the autumn/ winter of 2007. The first interviews

were underway as participants were still anticipating change, as they reflected on the potential impact of this particular NHS reconfiguration; the second corresponded with their experience of Assessment Centres and their applications for new posts, or in the case of assistant directors just the interviews (as only directors experienced the Assessment Centres); and the final took place as participants had secured some kind of position, however temporary, in the newly formed organizational structures. Perhaps inevitably the timing of both the second and third interviews were later than anticipated; the change process had been delayed and extended over many months. I interviewed participants at two management levels, director and assistant/associate director; seven women and two men were recruited, drawn from five PCTs across a Northern region; five were directors, three assistant/associate directors and one a public health consultant. The majority of the interviews took place in NHS premises, often the participant's office; though one preferred to meet me at my home. The initial interviews were arranged in a variety of ways; many liaised through their personal assistants, and my very first contact with them was at the point of the interview; two first discussed the research over the phone, wanting to hear more before committing to join. Others; those I had known for some time, contacted me directly to set the date, time and place. The first interviews took between 90 and 120 minutes, the second interviews were considerably shorter, lasting between 30-45 minutes. The final interviews lasted between 45-90 minutes. All interviews were taped and then transcribed verbatim.

I incorporated an autoethnographic component to my research, in recognition that, as I interviewed managers, I too was working in the NHS. I too was a manager experiencing the reorganization whilst I also acted in the role of researcher. Whilst keen to include this as a form of reflexivity, I was also mindful of a number of risks, of my story dominating and of my exposure, and being able to handle the vulnerability of sharing so much of myself (see Ellis & Berger, 2003). And I was mindful of the epistemological challenges – given Butler's charge of the opacity of the self; here is the potential of a multi-faceted occlusion, in presenting a fantasy of my self, first to my supervisor (who interviewed me) and then to myself (as researcher) for analysis, before exposure to the reader.

3.6.2 Autoethnography

'A single body cannot bridge that mythical divide between insider and outsider, researcher and researched. I am neither, in any simple way, and yet I am both.'
(Weston, 1998, p178)

In recognition that I was an assistant director experiencing the same organizational changes and threats to my managerial role as my participants, I arranged for one of my supervisors to interview me; the first of these was held in her university office, the remaining two in her home.

Autoethnography has elements of an autobiographical approach and uses the personal experience to focus on the vulnerable self whilst also taking a wider ethnographic gaze to the cultural, social aspects of that experience (Reed-Danahay, 1997). The research (graphy) is on the self (auto) in the culture (ethno) and self-other interactions (Op cit, Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Autoethnography blurs a series of taken for granted dichotomies, such as self and society (Spry, 2001) and researcher and participant. 'The personal, biographical, political and social are interwoven with the autoethnography' (Denzin, 1997, p200).

As Church, (1995) Mykhalovsky (cited in Sparkes, 2002, p217) and Gergen (2000) identify, our stories of self (or selves) are saturated with the voices, rules, conventions and stories of others. We cannot separate a unique and essential element of our self as distinct from such influence (du Gay, Evans & Redman, 2000). I incorporate autoethnography into my research to acknowledge that I am both the researcher and researched; I am an insider to the NHS reconfiguration and yet outsider (from a different PCT to many of my participants and with an additional academic interest); I use autoethnography as a tool to profile this blurring of normative research boundaries and the messiness of social research. Autoethnography is my response to concerns of slipping into traditional researcher authority mode, an aide to prevent becoming that absent, but omnipotent presence within the text. As Humphreys (2005) identifies it is a valuable means of enhancing the reflexivity of our work.

There are increasingly differing approaches to autoethnography (Learmonth & Humphreys, 2012); some reflect Saukko's (2002) label of emotivist ethnography, whilst others are political, critical and draw from social theory (Learmonth & Humphreys, 2012); examples of the former can be found in Bochner and Ellis's edited compilation (2002).

Autoethnography can be argued as complementary to a poststructuralist notion of the self, in that it poses as problematic to dualistic assumptions of self and society, private and public (Denzin, 2003), fact and fiction (Rhodes & Brown, 2005) and reason and emotion (Sturdy, 2003). Humans are emotional and embodied and discourses and research methods that place an over emphasis on rationality limit the richness of understanding human experience (Knights & Willmott, 1999). However, some versions hold strong affiliations with humanist approaches and assume an ability of the individual to access, know and articulate her lived experiences (see Ellis, 2001, for an example) and that such evocative stories speak for themselves (Learmonth & Humphreys, 2012); the authority of such publications are associated with drawing from 'the body and memories of the autoethnographic writer' (Gannon, 2006, p475). This is in sharp contrast to the poststructuralist view that stresses 'the (im)possibilities of writing the self from a fractured and fragmented subject position' (Gannon, 2006, p475).

There are certainly examples of autoethnography that emphasise the evocative and emotional power of the created text and have an aversion to

integrating theoretical considerations (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Ellis, 2002).
There are many however, that combine autoethnography and theory (Ronai,
1998, 1999; Pelias, 1999; Spry, 2001; Humphreys, 2005; Learmonth &
Humphreys, 2012); these latter authors recognise that focusing on the
interpretation of the micro practices of everyday life and a critical
questioning of established social order, is congruent with critical research
methods (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000); and I suggest it is possible to use the
method whilst acknowledging the selective and constructed nature of stories,
and the fleeting character of the fragmented, partial subject positions held.
The body is 'a site for the production of knowledge, feelings, emotions and history,
all of which are central to subjectivity' (Probyn, 2003, p290). Similar to Learmonth
and Humphreys, (2012), whilst I value the evocative power of
autoethnography, I also seek to recognize and illustrate some of the multiple
readings possible from such narrative and 'have analytical engagement with
ideas about identity' (p105).

I also agree with Gannon's call for more provocative poststructuralist
autoethnography, where the self is presented, deconstructed and troubled
(2006); and where the embodied self's stories and social theory intermingle,
are dialogical, and provide clues to the jostling disruptions, the alternative
readings and ongoing proliferation of subjectivity.

A further charge levelled at autoethnography is that it is (or can be) vain,
narcissistic and self-indulgent or even an, 'academic wank' (Sparkes, 2002,
p212). I incorporate autoethnography to complement and contrast with,

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rather than to dominate or detract from the narratives of my participants; I use it as described earlier to enhance my reflexivity and to recognise my insider and outsider status. I risk stepping out from the comfort and illusion of a neutral third person voice and mask (Boje, 2001).

So what of ethical considerations; what are the key responsibilities and factors to guard against whilst undertaking social research?

3.7   Ethical Considerations

When engaging in social research there are ongoing ethical considerations to ensure you protect and do no harm to participants within the research study. I ensured that the required ethical processes to undertake research in the NHS context were undertaken. NHS Research Governance and ethical approval were achieved via my local PCT Research Governance assurance measures and the local NHS Research Ethics Committee prior to commencing the interviews.

Potential participants were provided with an information sheet outlining my research area, goals and what I needed from them. Each participant completed a consent form and was assured of the right to withdraw from the research at any time. I have been keen to ensure that the anonymity of my interviewees is protected; I've used pseudonyms throughout the thesis and not used any factors that if shared would lead to the possible identification of individuals, either those directly being interviewed or those that participants referred to within their stories.

I was very conscious that I was interviewing managers at a time of potentially significant anxiety and stress and did not want to add to this through insensitivity, unwitting exposure, or exploitation of their stories. Many participants expressed an appreciation of taking part and having a safe space to share their reflections of their experience of the re-organization, at a time where there was very little opportunity to do so. A number of authors propose that interviews can offer a therapeutic benefit (Bloom, 1996, Rosenwald, 1996). Many participants in my research, as described in chapter five, trusted very few of their colleagues during this time and the interviews were an opportunity to express some of their hopes, fears and challenges within a confidential space. I transferred the tape recordings to my personal computer and then destroyed the tapes; the recordings are saved in a dedicated research iTunes folder. My computer is password protected.

As I progressed with the interviews I generated significant amounts of information, multiple stories, fragments of stories and narrative. My analysis of this was an inductive and iterative process, and certainly did not follow a formulaic, linear approach; as is the theme of this research, it was a messy process. Following Law (2004) I recognized the need to abandon simplistic processes and ways of knowing the world, and tentatively tried to feel my way through the information, 'to think, to practice, to relate, to know in new ways (p2), ...to find ways of knowing the indistinct and the slippery without trying to grasp and hold them tight' (Op cit, p3). In the next section I share the inductive, abductive and iterative generation of my analytical style and how this

evolved through time in the practice of immersion, reflection, close reading and deconstructive analysis.

3.8   Poststructuralist Analysis

Over the period that I met with and interviewed my participants I listened to their recordings several times; I transcribed many myself and used a university contact to transcribe the others; all were fully transcribed verbatim with all the pauses and interruptions, e.g., laughs and tears included. I kept a research journal, one that included post interview notes, micro-stories and reflections of my experience of the organizational change and early ideas generated by my research and reading. I also read and re-read the interview transcripts and jotted down my initial thoughts. This process was iterative; my notes from the first interviews informed the structure of the second, as I checked out issues that had been raised by some but not all participants and followed through specific threads with individuals. Once all thirty interviews were collected, which produced more than 2000 minutes of narrative, and transcribed, I began by undertaking a close reading of each to identify mini-plots and stories (see Gabriel, 2000). In this first reading I identified 155 though some of these on later review were more fragments or proto-stories[10] (Op cit):

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[10] A proto-story is a fragment of a story, sometimes highly emotionally charged but with a very rudimentary plot (Gabriel, 2000)

‘Stories are narratives with plots and characters, generating emotion in narrator and audience, through a poetic elaboration of symbolic material. This material may be a product of fantasy or experience, including an experience of earlier narratives. Story plots entail conflicts, predicaments, trials, and crises, which call for choices, decisions, actions and interactions, whose actual outcomes are often at odds with the characters' intentions and purposes.'

(Gabriel, 2000, p 239)

As described throughout this chapter, I consider social research messy, iterative and creative. I was keen to juxtapose the socially powerful discursive practices identified in the managers' accounts and also to capture how these produced differing and complex subjectivities within the micro-stories. I began with Gabriel's approach as this enabled me to get closer and more familiar with the transcripts and to identify the stories. This was in anticipation of the centrifugal element of my research, of undertaking micro-analysis through close readings as advocated by Roberts (2005), Harding (2007) and Driver (2009b).

Following identification of the stories, for each one, I undertook a preliminary analysis informed by Gabriel (2000); this explored what Gabriel classifies as poetic tropes: In the table below I set out the framework for this initial analysis and populate it with an example drawn from my research *(in italics)*.

A director (Carla) recounted how a number of others were playing political games. She provided one example of how within a Board meeting the 'antagonist' whispered to the new CEO and scribbled notes furiously: she interpreted these communications to be Machiavellian in nature.

Table 3: Gabriel's Poetic Tropes (2000)
The motive of the narrator in sharing the story
To highlight unacceptable behaviour and project this onto peers competing for posts in the new organization.
Any causal connections claimed by the narrator
Conversations of others' are Machiavellian (cunning, duplicitous, questionable morality, motivated by self-interest).
Attribution of responsibility (credit or blame)
Blame projected onto others, previous colleagues now in competition and a vehement denial of ever practicing similar behaviour.
Claims of unity or fixed qualities
Claims of a fixed ethical-self
Emotions present in the story or generated through the telling of it
Anger, denial, fear and frustration
Claims of agency
Able to maintain ethical stance
Any suggestions of providential significance or trigger fantasies
Presentation of self as moral, in the right, versus others, who are seen as without scruples

Once I had completed this analysis for each micro-story, in recognition that a key unit of analysis is the individual manager and their subjectivity, I reviewed each participant and their collection of micro-stories (see example and proforma in appendix 5) to explore:

- The key discourses that informed their talk

- What subject positions they adopted

- What they were trying to tell me, through their stories

- Any areas that they struggled with, or areas of ambiguity

- Any predominant style of story i.e., tragic, comic, epic, etc

These initial stages of analysis began both a semantic and semiotic reading: Semantic reading explores the meaning of the text whereas the semiotic reading is a critical one and aims to understand how it is possible for the text to say what it does (Czarniawska, referencing Eco, 1990 in Gabriel, 2004, pvii). This is in keeping with my aim to include and yet trouble the sense making of individual participants, whilst acknowledging the powerful social discourse that produce such local and personal tales.

I noticed how the majority of the stories naturally bundled into three high level themes; these ultimately became the broad scope of my analytical chapters (four, five and six) and are;

- The conscious working on and yet unravelling of the 'self'

- Game playing, ethical relations and survival

- (Un) doing Gender and Emotions

Hence I had begun to spin the plates of centrifugal and centripetal forces of analysis (Czarniawska, 1999). However, these provide only a broad and loose

frame; continuing to follow Czarniawska (1999), it is the next iteration of analysis that excites me. Whilst Gabriel's poetic tropes began the process of analysis and helped me become reasonably familiar with the collection of stories each individual had generated, this was just the beginning. I was ready to sharpen my theoretical lens and focus for a slower and even closer reading, as advocated by Driver (2009) and Harding (2007).

Adopting my Butlerian kaleidoscope I increasingly concentrated my attention to the centrifugal component of my analysis (Czarniawska, 1999). I created my chapter frameworks following each of the broad themes but within each is a juxtaposition of contrasting and even conflicting micro-stories. I identified two main protagonists for each chapter and compared and contrasted their accounts with the stories of others; all of this profiles the interplay of fluctuating dominant discourses, the fragmentary and fluid 'nature' of participants' subjectivities and deconstructed any notion of homogenous and general claims.

Similar to Frank's (2005) approach, by drawing from specific individual narratives, the complexity and inconsistencies both across and within participants' accounts is profiled. The messy, inconsistent, elusive and yet compelling accounts demonstrate the complexity of understanding managers' subjectivities.

In each of the analytical chapters I analysed the protagonist's micro-stories through a Butlerian lens, I particularly drew from Foucault and Butler to

provide close and alternative readings of the vignettes. Whilst managers

refer to their 'true' self and the 'reality' of organizational life, I trouble these

accounts through this framework; I have explored multiple readings and

interpretations and teased out the discourses generating the tales. Alongside

the close readings of the key protagonists within each chapter is the contrast

of differing participants' micro-stories; all of this I hope assists in illustrating

the complexity of such research. By use of key protagonists and specific

stories the representation of participants does not rely on fragments of

conversations devoid of contingent social and temporal information but are

situated in their sense-making narratives and vignettes. Focusing on key

protagonists also demonstrates the fluid, fragmented, exciting and also at

times painful, jolting and continuous 'nature' of subjectivity. Of course there

is limitation in all research methodological approaches. My final section of

this chapter teases out the benefits and limitations of my approach.

3.9   Advantages and Limitations

The whole premise of my research approach is to gather a richness of

information and interpretation of managers' experience during a period of

significant organizational restructuring. My participants are purposefully

chosen as local and senior managers within the NHS. This qualitative and in-

depth study will not generate findings that can be generalized to the whole

managerial occupation, or even those peculiar to the NHS and public sector.

However, this limitation is also a strength, such close readings of a small

number of cases can proffer insights to contribute to the body of developing

literature on managerial subjectivities. The inclusion of myself as manager/

participant, whilst unusual in combining this alongside the interviewing of others, also adds to this richness. Not only is this a valuable tool for researcher reflexivity but this also troubles traditionally held assumptions about the neutrality and external 'nature' of the researcher.

Rosenblatt (2003) talks of the researcher's influence on what is produced in an interview, which stories are told and he particularly discusses how a researcher's comfort or discomfort with difficult and emotional topics can influence their questions and probing. I wonder how my situation influenced what my participants were able to share. A number of them made reference to and acknowledged that I too was experiencing the round of interviews; they checked out with me that I was Ok listening to their issues. Were there times when I didn't probe, due to my fears and anxieties of the future; or where they didn't share, in a wish to protect me? As highlighted earlier in this chapter, in Wendy's first interview experience, many factors influence an interview and not all of these are known to the interviewer. Of course these limitations can be applied to all social research. What I strive for in this research report is to help counter some of these mysteries; I aim to be as transparent as possible in sharing the stories, my analysis and findings. I include significant lengths of texts, particularly in the form of vignettes, and so provide the reader with the opportunity to review my interpretations and hopefully recognise the 'truth', or rather the persuasiveness, of these but also to generate alternative readings. Thus I hope to generate a dialogue stemming from the layers of multiple readings, some of which are captured

within the following three chapters of my analysis, and provoke others yet to

come.

SECTION 2: THE KEY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Preface

The focus of the next three chapters is upon the centripetal component of my analysis; the shared high-level themes came out of the interview narratives (Czarniawska, 1999). All three chapters are a particular exploration of managerial subjectivities. The first profiles the fragility and fluidity of the managerial self; the second juxtaposes vulnerability and ethical relations, whilst the third notes the gendered emotionality of subjectivity in the organizational world. Power is integral to them all.

For the centrifugal element (Czarniawska, 1999) each chapter follows a pattern of profiling two main protagonists; this is in order to demonstrate what I find to be the shimmering multiplicity, disconnectedness and fragility of managerial subjectivity. The many temporary 'I's of the protagonists are profiled by this approach, both within each vignette and across the eighteen month period of the research. Also evident is the relentless desire and compulsion to attach to the managerial subject position, even at times of quite acute pain and distress. The persistent quality of what Harding (2007) calls becoming-in-the-world is sharply focused on becoming-manager-in-the-new-organizational-world. During a Foucauldian and Butlerian analysis of the main protagonists' vignettes, I compare and contrast the key protagonists' experiences of each chapter with those of the remaining interviewees and my autoethnographic transcripts.

Chapter 4: (Un) doing the 'self': Enacting, Unravelling and being Vulnerable

> The self both is *and* is not a fiction; is unified and transcendent *and* fragmented and always in process of being constituted, can be spoken of in realist ways *and* cannot; its voice can be claimed as authentic *and* there is no guarantee of authenticity.
>
> (Davies & Gannon, 2006, p. 95)

4.1   Introduction

This chapter provides an account of a constant and hopeless effort to hold securely to the managerial 'self' by my participants and I at a time of organizational change. At times there is a slow iterative preamble, at others a sudden shocking jolt, as we are thrown out of ourselves by fear, excitement and anger in our connection with significant others. These others are often powerful and more senior managers who embody organizational power. This occurs in our day-to-day life as managers but is heightened during times of threat, such as the increasing imminence of organizational change. Here our vulnerability is acute; on such occasions our attachment to our managerial subjectivity is tenacious, desperate and dominant.

The beginning of this first data analysis chapter briefly presents and appraises the numerous and conflicting notions of the 'self' identified within the transcripts; a common narrative is noted to apply across the majority of interviews; there is frequent references to having a 'true self' and to a need for self-knowledge, self-improvement and self-development.

In the main body of the chapter I sharpen the focus and taking a centrifugal approach, home in on vignettes from two participants that appear to hold differing traces of self-constitution. These demonstrate both very conscious presentation and in contrast moments of loss, incoherence and unravelling.

Poststructuralist theory challenges humanist notions of a true core and authentic self. Rather, there is an emphasis on fragmentation, partiality and disorientation, on process, multiple selves and on becoming. Despite this, within Western cultures we continue to draw from Humanist discourse as we strive to make sense of and enact our lives. Therefore it is not surprising to find this rhetoric reiterated within my research, to varying extent in all participants' interviews. However, the resulting narrative is not a transparent portal to managers' experience, nor does it reflect the 'true nature' or 'selves' of my interviewees and I. Rather, it illustrates the grip such discourse has on Western society from years of circulation and sedimentation.

In addition the interviews demonstrated the multiple and conflicting discourses that constitute us, the points within the text where we become incoherent, are silent, and on occasion appear to 'undo.' This unravelling was on occasion a slow unfolding; however, at other times this presented vividly as conscious, frightening and an almost freefall, acute loss of 'self.'

So allow me to introduce you to the two main protagonists of this chapter, Carla and Ian:

4.1.1 Carla

I warmed to Carla immediately on hearing her speak. She had a voice and openness of style that made me feel like I'd known her for years, even though this was our first contact. She phoned me to volunteer to participate in the research; she was acting as chief executive officer at the time and I would imagine had many demands on her time but was insistent on how important such research was. I later found out that this was motivated by an involvement in post-graduate study. Carla, from the beginning was very open and passionate in the interviews; she shared her values, passion and also her vulnerability.

4.1.2 Ian

Ian sent me an email, via his secretary offering to participate. We had met briefly before on a leadership development programme. This isn't why he'd volunteered to take part though, as on my arrival for his first interview, he looked and expressed his surprise at recognizing me. Ian was a director in one of the regional PCTs and I had conflicting impressions of him. One was of someone full of humorous stories, someone who liked to be at the centre of a discussion, versus another equally strong impression of a nervous, slightly introverted man. Ian, in contrast to Carla, was keen to present a controlled 'self;' someone who was logical rather than emotional, who particularly in his

responses in the first two interviews, appeared to be consciously managing this presentation of his managerial, rationalist 'self,' though this imago unravelled somewhat by his final interview.

Before too long we will be visiting our protagonists' key vignettes to undertake some close, and ruminating readings but first let us explore how my participants and I story and constitute the 'self.'

4.2   The True 'Self'

> While postmodernists have come to understand that the self is really a bundle of selves socially constituted and organized via power relationships, our daily experience is of the integrity of the "self."
> (Barone & Blemenfeld-Jones, 1997)

If we accept that the subject is discursively constructed; then we acknowledge that in speaking, acting and writing it reiterates given, normative conventions (McNay, 2003; Vasterling, 2003). One such convention is the humanist and modernist notion of having a core and essential 'self' as true to the individual; as Carla demonstrates, *'if I try to start to change the things that are me then I'm not going to be true to myself.'* [Carla, Interview 1]

This assumes possession of a pre-discursive, singular and coherent entity. There are numerous examples of statements within the interview transcripts that reiterate this notion of authenticity, self-knowledge and transparency. Whilst participants were not directly questioned on their understanding of the self within the first interview, humanist discourse of the 'self' weaved

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through their narratives. During the second interview participants were asked if they thought there was a difference between their professional and personal 'self' and the majority expressed a belief in having a core 'self' that remained the same, for example one female director (Jo) claimed, *'I think I decided quite a long time ago that I am who I am and you will either, will want me to be that professionally and personally, or you won't really.'* [Jo, Interview 2] Later in the same interview she reiterated, *'But I can't. I am no good at that. I am who I am, I think. But that doesn't mean I don't adapt. I just think it means I am who I am'* [Op cit]. Many acknowledged that they would perform differently in certain new situations, such as an interview or starting a new job, but that ultimately this couldn't be sustained; here is an example from Charles, a key protagonist of the next chapter, *'I would like to think that actually you can only put a façade on for so long; eventually your true self shows through.'* [Charles, Interview 2]

De Freitas and Paton, (2009) undertook a study that demonstrates well the resilience of this discourse; they researched four students' conception of the self. The students participated in seminars, where they studied poststructuralist theory on the deconstruction of the self; following the seminars the students undertook autoethnographic writing and then completed research questionnaires on their beliefs of the self. The results demonstrated that the students held onto notions of a coherent and 'true self,' despite their exposure to poststructuralist theory. I find this intriguing,

as I have now had a number of years in education informed by poststructuralist reading and thought, and although there are few references to a 'true self' within my autoethnographic interviews, I did also slip into this discourse as transcribed below when discussing the need to self- promote in order to secure a post in the 'new' NHS. Where I *'[C]an't imagine acting kind of completely alien to myself'* [Autoethnography, Interview 2]

These citations and the Barone and Blemenfeld-Jones (1997) quote that opened this section, captures just how seductive and compelling the integrity of the 'self' is to us in our day-to-day sense making. A slight exception to the rule was Ian, but although he starts with a distinction between his private and professional personas, he then finishes with reference to an authentic self, *'the real me'* behind the performance.

> *'Yes immensely big difference: Two completely different characters; in one scenario I can be quite confident....but then there is this other side of me, private, which is extremely introverted and needs lots of time to think and resolve things... So yes, I think there is the two, one I probably play act very effectively, but the <u>real me</u> is the kind of guy who is quite happy being in the corner and be left alone.*

[Ian, Interview 2, my emphasis]

Ian frequently drew on the metaphor of performing in his interviews, an example of which is demonstrated in a vignette I explore later in the chapter.

This attachment to the notion of having a 'true and authentic self' appears to be a dear belief, a frequently unquestioned assumption integral to our sense

making. This demonstrates how compelling discourses can be. Jacques Derrida noted that from Plato through to current time (in Western philosophy) 'any system necessarily posits a centre, a point from which everything comes, and to which everything refers or returns. Sometimes it's God, sometimes it's the human self, the mind, sometimes it's the unconscious, depending on what philosophical system (or set of beliefs) one is talking about.' (Klages, 2013, p. 2) Humanism promotes the 'self' (or the mind or the free will) as the centre of all meaning and truth (Op cit); here in these interviews can be seen significant tracings of this discourse, where the 'self' is seen as a constant, and as the centre of the system.

In one of my interviews, in a defensive justification and response to a question relating to long hours at work, I discuss my reflective 'nature;' there is an implication that this is integral to me; that this is a fixed element of my 'self,'

> *'I made a conscious decision not to, but in terms of my body being there. So I am at home, but then because I'm reflective and introverted, I am particularly at times, where there is great change or I have got a big project on, or just started a new job, I would invest a lot more emotionally and intellectually into thinking and reflecting on work. And that comes home with me; you can't just switch off. I don't wish to switch off. I get a lot from that reflection. It doesn't dominate my life, but I like that little bit extra time.'*
>
> [Autoethnography, Interview 2]

In addition to the assumption of having a particular 'nature', there is an interesting division of body and mind in this quote. There is the reference to the fact that the body is not in the office but that I still spend time thinking

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and reflecting on work issues, whilst the body is in the home. In actual fact I do more than reflect; the home becomes the office; I do a significant number of hours working at home as I suspect many others do and yet here, within this interview I am not explicit about this. Why is this? What motivated me, at that moment, to deny the long hours and play down the blurring of boundaries between work place and home? Ian's interview narrative, in contrast frequently demonstrates an attachment to a managerial subjectivity that includes long hours; this is initially presented by Ian as a macho image of what you needed to do in order 'to be a director.' However, in his final interview Ian loses this self-discourse and expresses significant hurt, anger and resentment at the system, which despite this investment of his time is perceived to have let him down; this is explored later in this chapter.

Many participants emphasised how parenting styles and values, and early childhood experiences had been formative of who they became; the interview structure, drawing as it does from narrative psychology, with its elicitation of life stories, inevitably facilitated this. Ian provides a typical example,

> '[A]round that time, which was quite funny was, and I still laugh at it today, is that one of my school reports and the head teacher said, "Ian has settled well this year and made two friends" and I think he was lying; I think it was one (laugh). So my first formative years were very much about independence, freedom erm, self, erm determination really.
>
> [Ian, Interview 1]

Jo, a director, referenced the influence her parents had had on her application to work, *'My family work ethic is very high; my mum and dad you know, you do a day's work and you work….you work a day's day, a day's work for a day's pay…'* [Jo, Interview 1], whilst Charles alluded to a pressure to achieve,

> *'[B]ut overriding memories really from all the schools, [all] the entire schooling, is actually being driven very hard by parents really. In particular by my mother, but obviously you know; that erm, always quoting other people's children that would appear to be doing better, and so that was quite a lot of sort of intense pressure*
>
> [Charles, Interview 1]

Throughout the interviews participants narrated the importance of knowing the 'self' and of 'self' development, often cultivated through leadership courses and coaching: Ian referenced having four to six years of 'self'-analysis and Carla emphasized her highly reflective nature, the diagnosis of her personality type through various tools such as, Myers Briggs and, as did many others, her use of a professional coach. Carla's interviews in particular demonstrated humanist, psychological and Enlightenment notions of a 'true self' with a strong requirement to work on and improve the self: In the conclusion to her first interview she summarized,

> *'I'm more convinced after the last hour and a half <u>I know who I am</u>…I'm not perfect and I will continue to try and change the bits that are not perfect but fundamentally there is some things that I know I'm not going to change. But actually are <u>me</u> and if I try to start to change the things that are <u>me</u> then I'm not going to be <u>true to myself</u>.'*
>
> [Carla, End of first interview, my emphases]

Carla's conscious 'self-work' increased in intensity during the assessment and interview process, *'In terms of managing myself, I think I have done more managing myself in the last four weeks than I probably have ever done in my life.'*

[Carla, Interview 2, following Assessment centre feedback[11]]

Carla's accounts strongly reflect psychological discourse; Rose, (1989) presents such discourse as the narrative of subjects. Within this discourse subjects have the liberty and responsibility to make their life meaningful and to inform their constitution accordingly. Subjects were seen as having an inherent goal for 'self'-actualization, which could be achieved through work. Here was a subject who was governed through thinking, wanting, feeling, doing and relating to others: a subject whose personal goals became aligned to organizational and societal ones (Op cit).

One manager demonstrates this well in recounting the impact of some early exam results where she had performed well,

> *'[I]t did because it made me feel very special and put me straight in that I've got to use my mind and I'll get out of wherever I am; I'll get where I'm going if I learn properly and do what everybody's recommended.'*

[Emily, Interview 1]

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[11] All senior managers at director level or above had to participate in an Assessment Centre, where external consultants put them through a series of psychological and cognitive tests; these resulted in a set of scores to inform the subsequent interview process.

4.3   Improving the 'Self': the Managerial Mantra

As referenced in the previous section, most participants heavily emphasized the need to improve their managerial 'self'. According to Foucault's earlier work, the numerous occasions upon which participants shared their ongoing analysis and fashioning of 'self,' draws from a longstanding but diverse range of social techniques and external authority, (Rose, 1989) of which psychoanalysis is a more recent addition (Hutton, 1988). This mesh of practice and discourse shapes and constitutes the subject, into socially acceptable norms and is evident in organizational mechanisms of power and control (see Knights & Willmott, 1989; Kunda, 1992; Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Fleming & Spicer, 2002; Fleming & Sturdy, 2009); however, Foucault's latter work does not suggest that such regulation results in fully determined individuals. Also, despite the managers' engagement with the need to know and improve their managerial 'self', 'our human nature is not a hidden reality to be discovered through self-analysis but the aggregate of the forms we have chosen to provide public definitions of who we are' (Foucault, 1970, pp. xx-xxii, 368-69).

Foucault's later work (1980, 1988, 2006) focused on the technology of the self through classical and early Christian times; this element of his work is informative for this section; all interviewees described various means of studying, developing and knowing the self. All had participated in leadership courses; many referenced involvement in self-assessment or peer assessment tools and most included discussion of mentors or coaches in their research interviews.

There were two specific obligations during classical times for certain privileged Greco-Roman men, one "care of the self", and the other to "know the self," in recognition of the different forms of self (Foucault, 1997). Foucault identified that in classical times "care of self," learning, developing and reflecting on the "art of living" ultimately led to "knowledge of self" (Op cit). This was through the discipline of reflection, writing, abstinence, and silences; a method of memory and learning in preparation for life, and particularly a political life. In early Christian writing, the emphasis transferred to the responsibility to "know" the self. Here, in this latter form of self-writing, the body and the emotions, the inner self as well as the outer self are subject to scrutiny, revision and compulsory confession (Gannon, 2006, p. 479).

This introduction of the inner self and confession was instituted for a specific, politically important few men in classical times, these elements were later appropriated by Christianity and increasingly for social regulation, as discussed above (Foucault, 1970; Rose, 1989). It is the latter charge to "know" the self, in addition to the refrain of the need to improve the 'self' that is prevalent in the interview transcripts.

Through the use of a predominantly Foucauldian framework, this preliminary section of the chapter taking a centripetal view has profiled the participants' discourse and practice of the 'self.' Within the interviews are traces of humanist, Christian, and Psychological discourse, with a corresponding and constant refrain to improve and develop the self. The

following section, is where we meet the key protagonists and take a more centrifugal analysis; beginning with Carla's vignette, the main body of the chapter notes the influence of others; both the generalized 'Other' of social norms encountered through intersubjective relations, and the embodied, powerful and influential individual 'others' of the participants' stories. These encounters contribute to managers' analysis and working on the 'self' but also at times to a painful loss and dislocation of the managerial 'self'.

4.4   Assessment and Judgment by Others (power)

There are several examples within the transcripts of early experiences of assessment and judgment through institutions, such as families, schooling, and later through professional training. As participants described their careers these included further reference to methods of being assessed, for example during exams, interviews, and through line management. Due to the focus of this research I particularly use examples from the protagonists' more recent senior management careers and chiefly through the period of NHS organizational change.

Here, is where I introduce a vignette from my first protagonist, Carla, who describes an unsettling conversation with someone of influence. In Carla's eyes this person could significantly influence her future as this individual was already successfully positioned, in authority, within the 'new' iteration of the NHS.

The timing of this is just prior to Carla's participation in the Assessment Centre that all directors had to undergo as part of the re-organization and recruitment process:

'I was on a railway station. And I am never ever quite sure what that person thinks or feels. I think it is a very difficult person to read. And in some respects I don't like that as an individual. I would rather just know what folk are thinking and work with that. And I think I asked a very direct question because I just got to a point where I thought I can't, ...excuse the expression, fanny around much longer with this. I need to know what is what.

And I can't actually remember all of the level of detail but what I do remember is something significant and what she said to me was, "instead of keeping saying things that are deprecating just stop saying it because people get the wrong impression." And for all that I couldn't understand her, in terms of what she actually thought or felt about me, and it doesn't really matter anyway now. I think that really hit home, in terms of ... it is not something I do, because, or did, [brief pause] *.... It is not something I did because I particularly thought I was doing anything with it, it was just <u>who I was</u>. But some of that conversation made me think Ok, well if she is getting the impression that I am self deprecating, ... you know, so I have only come from here or I have only done this.*

She said, "is that because you are, ...then everybody is surprised when you do really well so that makes you feel good?" So it was a bit like you know some psychoanalysis going on there. But it made me think and what it also made me realize, was what people's perceptions may be. And I know this might sound really naïve but what people's perceptions, and actually in the process that we were going through, folk don't know you. People make really snap decisions. And I struggled to square that in my mind.

So where that took me to was this whole bloody assessment process: And
getting through the other end and actually you know thinking then where do
I want to be? And it was like this whole state of chaos and confusion.'

<div align="right">[Carla, Interview 2, my emphasis]</div>

So in this example we hear about an unequal relationship; there is power at

play. The other party to the conversation is someone Carla recognises as

having influence through the forthcoming changes, someone who symbolises

and embodies the future and the 'new' NHS. This is also someone that Carla

states she doesn't feel comfortable with; this person is difficult to read. Carla

does not receive the feedback she desires in this interaction. There is a

resulting confusion and loss of 'self'-certainty. Butler's, (1999) interpretation

of Hegel's Master Slave dialectic points out that the subject is a subject of

desire, a desire for recognition and survival, which informs its constitution

and that desire and 'self'-consciousness emerge side by side: Each self-

consciousness sees the 'Other' in the reflected recognition and is shocked by

the desire reflected back, having expected to engage with a passive medium

and therefore a reflection of itself (Butler, 1999a). Our vulnerability lies in

the need for confirmation of our existence that the processes of subjection

offer; this is not to suggest we have an existential need to belong, rather this

is the seduction of the imaginary, the misrecognition and identification with a

future image (Roberts, 2005).

One interpretation of this railway conversation could be that Carla's

managerial 'self' sought reassurance and recognition from the 'Master,'

someone who symbolized power and Carla's future 'self.' This is not

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necessarily about the individual Carla conversed with, but rather what she was seen to embody. Carla sought this reassurance at a time of vulnerability, in her anticipation of the imminent assessment process, interviews and change. However, instead of recognition, she received critique and misapprehension, a suggestion that her current 'self' didn't meet with approval, didn't quite match up to expectations.

> 'The power of the other is the power of recognition, a power made more forceful by the difficulty of discerning quite what it is that the other wants and therefore what one must be in order to exist. Our vulnerability to the objections of self by others lies precisely in the way in which, as with the mirror, I locate my very existence here.'
> (Roberts, 2005, p. 631)

The recounting of this criticism and the motive subsequently applied to her behaviour unsettled Carla. Her prose becomes disjointed as she, in recounting the experience, continues to struggle with the implications and interpretation of the feedback. *'I think that really hit home in terms of, … it is not something I do because, or did, […] it is not something I did because I particularly thought I was doing anything with it, it was just <u>who</u> I was.*

[My emphasis]

This broken up speech could be seen to represent the subject that is in continuous motion and that, 'must suffer its own loss of identity again and again in order to realize its fullest sense of self' (Butler, 1999a, p. 13, discussing Hegelian notions of the subject). The dearly-held notion of having a desirable managerial 'self' is challenged. The message Carla receives is that it is she, <u>who</u> she is, rather than what she does, or produces, that is the focus of the criticism. She,

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'it was just <u>who</u> I was,' doesn't conform to the required model. Or to use

Butler's adaptation of Hegel, she is not recognized, in the 'new' NHS

organizational world, as a 'socially viable being' (Lloyd, 2007, p. 17). Butler

(2004) appropriates Hegel's theory and develops it to explain 'self' loss upon

encountering the other; each intersubjective encounter results in the self

changing; it can never return to what it was before the encounter; the

interaction is constitutive of a new (fleeting) 'self.' Barthes also captures the

fluid, constant changing status of the subject, though here emphasising the

distance between the subject who acts and then gives an account:

> The subject of the speech-act can never be the same as the one who acted
> yesterday: the *I* of the discourse can no longer be the site where a previously
> stored-up person is innocently restored.
> (Barthes, 1989, p. 17)

So to return to Carla, as she moves from the conversation at the railway

station to the Assessment Centre, her reflections and interactions,

continuously in moment following moment, re-constitute who she is; this of

course ultimately includes my interaction with her, and her reflections and

accounts within the research interviews. This theory incorporates a critical

concept of the subject for Butler that it is in constant movement; adopting

Heidegger's term 'Ek-static' she presents the subject as always in motion, as

outside, or other to itself. Later examples from the research indicate times

when the participants were almost conscious of this loss and movement

outside of the 'self' and I discuss this further and in more detail later in the

chapter but for now lets explore other participants' narratives for similar or

differing tales.

Sally, one of the directors recruited to the study described a recent and prolonged experience of negative feedback from her line manager, the chief executive. This focused on pressurising her to work on her presentation skills and the impact this had on her confidence and ability to be her preferred managerial 'self,'

> *'But I actually believe that when you are passionate about something that's the way things actually change. I have even been known to use the terminology, that they took part of me away'.*
>
> <div align="right">[Sally, interview 1]</div>

This alludes to the unacceptability of displaying emotion as a senior manager; there is a suggestion that to be passionate is critiqued as inappropriate for a director. The participant describes this time as confusing and it appears she perceived this as stifling her 'true' self.

> *'Oh it was always very much turned up in, you need to improve your presentation skills but would say go and present. And then I used to go off on some skills process and I kind of viewed this as confusion, because people were saying, it's great having you come out and talk to us, it's inspiring. And then I'd go back in and be told you need to sort out your presentation skills.*
>
> *It was really bizarre because it became the central point; every time I had an appraisal and meeting or that didn't get through the Board, "It's your presentation skills."*
>
> *And so it was really bizarre. But obviously, whatever that was, didn't meet*

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that person or couple of peoples' agenda. So it coarsely put back to me as
presentation skills.   You know, you and I know, you go, (short pause) you
learn all the skills about that. But I think what they should have said to me,
"I don't like you and the way you look when you are presenting that because
it doesn't suit my presentation skills," but that was never actually said.

[Sally, Interview 1]

So here the director alludes to a form of bullying. Sally perceived the chief executive was critiquing her style and her personality, though packaged in acceptable corporate speech, through referring to a lack of presentation skills. This was over a prolonged period of time where she had contrasting positive feedback from her staff and strived fruitlessly, through coaching and courses, to address her manager's issues. Again, similar to Carla, the account felt personal; a critique of 'who' she was, to the point that she perceived that part of her was denied. Or to return to a Butlerian reading, in the hegemony of the organizational leadership discourse that this chief executive subscribed to, there was no recognition for this subject; a passionate and emotional leader had no place, therefore she experienced normative violence; for those in power, she didn't belong. Here, through the discourse embodied through her chief executive, her preferred leadership identity was perceived as culturally unintelligible.

Jo, a further female director also recounted an experience of rejection and bullying and being stripped of her roles and responsibilities; of being discredited to others in the organization by someone new and recently appointed to a higher position.

'And she cut me dead and said, I will never be able to work with you…I just cried for ages, just on and off all the time. It just crashed everything that I knew about myself down, because I thought I were ok, I thought I were hard working, I thought people… I, I can still recall the feelings that I had of I, I just were anxious, I felt I just challenged everything I did (short pause) This experience taught me a lot, which is it doesn't matter how hard I work, how nice a person I believe I'm gonna be, if my face doesn't fit, it won't fit.'

[Jo, Interview 1]

Contrast the niggling, one-off feedback session that Carla experienced during the railway conversation with the protracted more enduring personal attacks such as the latter two examples. All three involve a dyadic relationship with someone in a more powerful position; all involve critical feedback. Carla's experience unsettled her sense of 'self;' she saw herself reflected through the eyes of another, an embodied other; but also the 'Other' of an NHS leadership discourse that she strived to fit with, to secure her survival. As discussed earlier this resulted in a momentary loss, a readjustment, a reconstitution, an 'Ek-static' moment, or possibly a few such moments of reconstitution, as indicated in the hesitancy and broken text.

The second example is of a more chronic and enduring critique. The director here experienced ongoing criticism for her leadership and presentation style. She experienced confusion through the differing feedback attained from her engagement with her manager, in contrast to the interaction with her staff. The differing norms encountered through these two routes create a sense of loss too, as indicated in her sense that they took part of her away;

nonetheless there is also an equally persistence source of recognition in Sally's account. Whilst her CEO consistently deflated her managerial 'self', her staff provided regular affirmation. Here we see conflicting discourses of leadership; the example provides an illustration of how Sally's preferred managerial self is bolstered in relations with her staff but found wanting in the corporate world.

The director in her 'Ek-static' dance between the alterity of her manager and the validation from her staff enacts differing follower and leadership selves; each interaction and resulting iteration leaves behind a 'self,' a trace, she cannot reclaim and each creates a possibility of change but each new 'self' is bound within the available systems of thought. Butler sees gendering as a 'dynamic and corporeal process' [Lloyd, 2007, p. 37]. I am suggesting here that this applies to all identity-work, which is a process permeated with and generated by encounters with 'others,' whether through societal norms, relations, or through experiencing the 'self' as 'other.'

The final of these three examples is more extreme; in addition to the reference to verbal critique the manager was stripped of her responsibilities, discredited and pushed out of the organization, an often repeated pattern according to Lutgen-Sanvik's (2008) research into bullying in the workplace. For Jo there is anguish, shock and an overriding sense of injustice, particularly as the situation was brought on by the arrival of a new and more powerful 'other.' 'Negative interactions that feel intimidating, insulting or exclusionary constitute bullying' (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008, p100) and these are

believed to be intentionally injurious with a goal to drive the victim out of the workplace (Lutgen-Sandvik et al, 2007).

Suddenly Jo didn't belong to an organization she had a long history with. Here is a dramatic loss of 'self,' a vividly conscious lurch into her 'Ek-static' and increasingly abject existence, brought on by rejection.

> *'I, I talked to you about rejection earlier on and this massive rejection and she, I would say that I felt bullied and it's the first time that I'd ever, ever been bullied in my life.'*

This individual became abject to the organization: her sense of injustice is clear, frequently those experiencing bullying express how undeserved it is and how they come to feel to be undesirables (Einarsen, 1999). Jo goes on to say she sought solace from the Chief Executive, without success, her position thus became untenable.

> *'she would help me out of the organization if I needed to but she won't gonna be able to address the problem.'*

The director reflecting on this earlier experience had felt abandoned by the organization; her status as a valuable organizational subject lost. Butler draws from Kristeva to develop the idea of abjection (Lloyd, 2007). For Butler the abject are those, 'whose living under the sign of the "unlivable" is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject' (Butler, 1993, p. 3). To be abject is to be denied, to be excluded, to not belong; '*it doesn't matter how hard I work, how nice a person I believe I'm gonna be, if my face doesn't fit, it won't fit.*'

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Jo was driven out of the organization, and although she secured a promotion in her move, she described how it took a significant length of time to recover from her experience. What is normally routine and unselfconscious identity work became acutely mindful at this time, shifting to what researchers name as 'intensive remedial identity work' (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 626; see also Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008).

This notion of belonging and its importance; the feeling of being cast out, was alluded to by a number of others; Emily shared a story where this had happened to her chief executive, as the PCT came to an end. She reflected how this impacted on all of the team; how they felt bereft and undervalued for the work they had put in. Ian the second protagonist of this chapter experienced something similar during the NHS reorganization. The following excerpts are from his final interview when Ian recounted how he had heard that his post was at risk.

> 'I think the significant low point is I got this lovely letter from our new chief exec, --- telling me that basically he had reviewed the structure and that my substantive post was ex.'

> 'So we had a meeting, in fact no, before the meeting, I got the letter and it was a bloody Board day; that was it, it was a Board day. And so I said to him, I said I can't see me being very constructive in this Board meeting because actually I am really upset and I think coming to work that has got no fun ...at the moment coming to work makes me want to cry.'

> 'And it wasn't amicable and I personally think although my chief exec said he doesn't bully...and he probably doesn't bully, it to me felt like bullying.'

'Completely undervalued. (short pause). Abused, you know that I kind of for 6 months kind of literally killed myself along with others and this is how you kind of treat me at the end of 6 months. You tell me I am valued and then you do this to me.'

[Ian, Final Interview]

Ian's vignette shares some of the shock and hurt of Jo's, the personal perception and pain of rejection and of not belonging, plus an explicit emphasis of being let down by the organization and its senior management. Here Ian's imago of a rational manager, one emphasized throughout his first interview, and his previous endorsement of the need to invest long hours into a senior management role explodes in an emotional outpouring. Emotions and their entanglement with gender in managers' subjectivities are analysed more extensively in chapter six.

An intriguing question is why do senior managers, subject themselves to such treatment; whether that treatment is perceived as bullying, the requirement to endure long hours, or personal critiques; why do they continue to respond, adapt and be subordinate to such regimes? Despite many interviewees fantasising about alternative lifestyles, such as an opportunity to escape following the reorganization; whether that be a dramatic change such as early retirement and travelling, or the achievement of a work-life balance; all primarily strived for the achievement or maintenance of a senior position within the new NHS. What is the power enacted through these organizations and their potential available subjectivities that has such a magnetic

attraction?

Foucault's focus on power emphasises how subjects self-regulate based on the powerful discourses and practices of society and its institutions (1977); this would suggest that managers are seen as the conduits of organizational regulatory norms. Through such regulatory frameworks they are continuously constituted and formed as organizational subjects; they govern themselves within its network of limited possibilities. Butler (1997) identifies that power is also 'what we depend on for our existence and what we harbour and preserve in the beings that we are.' (Butler, 1997a, p2) We do not choose the discursive regimes; they are present prior to our existence and yet contain the only possibilities available to us – to become and be recognised as subjects (Op cit). So the managerial discourse enables us to be a manager but it also subjectifies and controls what we can be.

Adapting Butler's theory of subjectification (1997a) to interpret the situation, Carla, Sally, Jo and Ian's continued engagement with organizational discourse and practice is inevitable: they flounder to grasp at a recognizable subject position and experience an unpredictable, yet constant and unavoidable pattern of 'self' loss: In their 'Ek-Static' dance, in order to survive, achieve and hold onto managerial intelligibility, they are vulnerable to what Butler names passionate attachment (Op cit); where people are attached to their own subordination through the most insidious workings of power: 'To desire the conditions of one's own subordination is thus required to persist as oneself.' (Op cit, p. 9)

'What does it mean to embrace the very form of power – regulation, prohibition, suppression – that threatens one with dissolution in an effort, precisely, to persist in one's own existence?'

(Butler, 1997a, p. 9)

For Butler the subject's passionate attachment to the available forms of social regulation is an inevitable and fully exploitable vulnerability. The subject is dependent on such norms to survive and persist. The only way to continue as a subject is through subordination to the power that constitutes it. The subject is passionately attached to this power as the only means of survival. Here, within this research, the participants are passionately attached to their managerial subject positions and the system that they rely on to achieve recognition, continuation and constitution as senior managers. Despite their seniority, this desire to persist, this necessary reliance, binds them to the organizational network of regulatory norms and ensures their vulnerability and risk of exploitation. For as Butler states: 'If wretchedness, agony, and pain are sites or modes of stubbornness, ways of attaching to oneself, negatively articulated modes of reflexivity, then that is because they are given by regulatory regimes as the sites available for attachment, and a subject will attach to pain rather than not attach at all.' (Butler, 1997a, p. 61)

This section has profiled and reviewed, particularly using a Butlerian reading, a number of vignettes from participants' interviews; these micro-stories were chosen for their contemporaneous nature to the NHS restructuring period.

They all describe periods in managers' organizational lives at this time, recalled and determined as significant by them. They are examples of intersubjective dynamics, where participants experienced critique from embodied, influential others, others who wield powerful and normative regulatory discourse. These vignettes describe various illustrations of confrontation, of emotional pain, and of iteration following iteration of loss of the 'self.' If becoming-in-the-world is the constant and enduring enactment of subjectivity (Harding, 2007), so too is loss. Layer upon layer of fleeting traces of the lost managerial 'self' settle into a sedimentation of managerial and organizational discourse; there is no turning back to reclaim a lost 'self' but these cumulative sedimentations of our collective enactment of regulatory norms are our only conditions of possibility.

This section has also begun to explore the passionate attachment managers have to their managerial subjectivities and their resulting vulnerability. The final section of this current chapter develops further notions of loss, grief, presentation and momentary absence of the 'self.'

4.5   Performance and (Loss of) Control

This section begins with a vignette from Ian where the emphasis is about being in control of the performance of 'self' and others; in contrast subsequent vignettes, which draw from examples of managers going for interviews, are illustrations of when participants describe what they perceive as a shocking loss of 'self' control.

A number of participants referred to a process of conscious adaptation in response to contexts and audiences. Ian provided a very comprehensive example of this, which demonstrates the complexity of managing the presentation of the managerial 'self' and one's image and how this is strongly associated with emotion, particularly fear and anxiety. Ian describes managing a challenging public meeting and the following excerpts from his transcript demonstrate the level of conscious thought and effort Ian put into his image, and keeping control both of himself and others. He takes into account dress, body language and management of crowds and space; his studied use of non-verbal communication is almost to the point of parody:

'Before the meeting I'd made sure that a) the room was set out in a way that allowed me to be in control. I'd actually put myself at the front with the fire door on my left so I could just leave very easily if I needed to. And actually kind of wore the shirt, the tie fastened properly and stood up there. Before we started, I actually set out the rules of the meeting, which was, "if you do this I will do that, if you shout at me, stop speaking. I'll make sure that everybody gets a turn to answer, so I'll do it, the room that's like this half and this half." So I broke it down from being a big room of probably about 180 people into four rooms of about 40 people each in each client group. So it allowed me to kind of say, "I'll do that quarter then come to you, then you and then you, and I'm only going to look at you when I am doing this." So it just allowed me to manage what was actually quite a hostile and unpleasant environment.'

The metaphor of riot and policing is apparent in the planning for this event, with its divide to rule strategy and this becomes even more apparent in the

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following section where there is reference to being covered, an angry mob and rapid escape routes:

'I spent probably two or three days planning for that. You don't do something like that cold you know; it was two or three days. And the other thing that I did in order to give me some reassurance is, I actually took two managers, and I placed them at either side of the room and kept looking for contact with them to see how the room was going. Because clearly it is quite hard to manage 180, so I had actually placed, really they were to hold them, the mob back in line and made a runner for the door. It potentially could have been that sort of meeting. But yes, that's how I did it. But it was kind of like horrible afterwards, I felt like I wanted to be sick.'

Hidden within this striving to manage others' emotion and potential violence and a management of crowds and space was a very personal control of emotions, felt and displayed. There is a suppression and yet heightened experience of fear that has physical manifestations and integral to this a very contrived management of image:

'It's actually about; I mean I do the shirt and tie bit as a kind of a token of respect I think for me. If I am going to talk to a room, whether its nurses, professionals, whatever it is I would always go with a shirt and tie buttoned. After about five or ten minutes, depending on how the meeting was going I'd actually undo the top button. It's a sign of that this meeting is going well and we can relax a bit if you want to.'

This wording suggests that the suit, shirt and tie are armour for Ian, "*a token of respect I think for me*" a sign that the 'others' in the room should have respect for him; the suit is a signifier of managerial status and power and that

it is only when everything appears to be going smoothly that he loosens up his clothing (armour) and releases some of his tension. This demonstrates well, embodied subjectivity in an organizational context; the body is a visible signifier of identity and of difference (Henriques et al, 1998); and the organization is the context for the iteration and attempted control of managerial subjectivities, for example through dress and behaviour (Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Borgerson, 2005).

Ian's vignette provides an excellent example of what Harding (2002) describes as the manager's 'anankastic' aesthetic; drawing from a medical term to describe the anally retentive personality disorder, she describes the obsessive and repetitive checking and controlling required in the production of the manager's body. The body represents the organization; the organization is folded into the manager's body; it is masculine, order, rationality and control; the suit masks the flesh, only the head and hands are visible; flesh, feelings and 'nature' are banned, bound and suppressed (Op cit).

Then Ian moves on to a more general description of his strategy and self-presentation in meetings, which also indicates that the suit is symbolic for him of his organizational representation and power:

> *'After about fifteen minutes in a room that was potentially hostile, undid the top button and said, see me smart, now I can be more relaxed and open with you about the answers, because the room had warmed very quickly and*

therefore, wasn't going to be. You know they were looking for more of the truth is the wrong word, but more of the how I felt about it, rather than this is the textbook; this is what the policy states. So I suppose I undo the shirt and tie bit which is the sign that says, "I've given you the official policy, but you want to ask me questions about how do I feel about it or what do I think it might mean this part of the policy? I'll give you that."

*'But it's that kind of play-acting bit being able to switch between the two. I am very good at being open; I consciously hold my hands out in front of me like that (*Ian demonstrates the gesture with his arms out and palms facing up*). And before the talk I would be often stood with my arms folded and kind of trying to make myself a size eight to shrink. But then the moment I go out there, it's suddenly the arms have to unfold and you have got to hold your hand out. And I can't remember where I've learnt that. But I've learnt that either by reading about it or I've seen it and I've seen it work well so I adopt that. So I do use my hands.*

Ian's vignette could be read through Goffman's (1995) seminal theory of the performance of 'self;' here the structure of the 'self' is produced within the performance; the self or selves produced are a collaborative venture between involved 'actors' (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). Goffman suggests a social actor has agency through the ability to choose his or her props, so for example, Ian's choice of venue and management of that space, his casting of his 'lookouts' or hench-'men', his pre-planned script and his careful choice of clothing and body language; all read like a detailed screenplay. The social actor (Ian) then strives to keep coherence and order through the performance in his interaction with others. Of course this does not claim to provide absolute agency; there are many confounding factors, writing, planning and enacting the scene is limited by social norms, which impact on

the resulting possibilities; and then there is the unpredictability of other social actors. This notion of individual control and agency certainly reflects Ian's storying of his experience. However, as discussed previously poststructuralist thought challenges this assumption of the autonomous self, outside of discursive influence; following Foucault and Butler any agency is severely limited by the available social regulatory norms. For Butler the question of agency is not resolved in either volunteerism or determinism; rather agency is connected to signification and practice; agency is tied to social norms and contingency, not to the individual (Butler, 1997a).

To return to Ian, the theatre metaphor has value in that this resonates with the language and assumptions Ian draws from to narrate and make sense of his experience. However, theoretical questions remain for me; within the vignette are both overt and oblique references to power and multiple aspects of emotion; this includes the management of others' emotion and Ian's struggle with managing his own felt and display of emotion. Hochschild (1983) developed theory relating to emotional management, feeling rules and socially defined expectations of what is felt in certain situations and the increasing commercialisation of emotion. Emotional labour goes beyond displaying or enacting certain emotions for certain contexts, to an expectation that in particular service jobs emotions will be managed, suppressed and commodified, for example, the flight attendant manages anger at inappropriate or offensive passengers and debt collectors suppress compassion in their dealings with debtors. If we apply this to Ian's narrative, he is attempting to control his fear of the situation through intense planning

and management; as a senior manager, representing his organization he knows he is expected to conceal any anxiety, despite the conflicting social discourse suggesting anxiety is a normal response to dealing with 180 angry people. His management of emotion extends beyond managing his display, through language and body language, to managing and containing others' display; the anger and frustrations of a collective group is controlled through extensive planning and manipulation. This intense production has physical manifestations for Ian, as evidenced in his response, that following the event he felt terrible and sick. This impact on Ian is contrary to research that suggests managers story emotional management as applied to managing others' emotions rather than their own (for example, Coupland et al, 2008), which is something I explore further in the final analysis chapter.

Ian's narrative is informed by the discourse of performance and autonomy, which incorporates the notion of conscious acting. Ian draws on the metaphor of acting frequently during his interviews: he applies this to when he steps out to deal with the crowd. He assumes, that by controlling his performance, to fit with socially approved roles and management strategies (informed perhaps by the increasing promotion of impression management within management discourse and practice) that he can produce the outcomes he needs. In contrast, Foucault (1980) and Butler (1997) deconstruct such notions of agency and argue that the available social discourses enact the subject positions; there is no individual conscious and autonomous production divorced from these powerful social, and cultural norms. Butler (1990), further, developed the concept of 'performativity', as

highlighted in the last chapter, to signify the subject's enactment through the iteration of social norms,

> 'Performativity is neither free play nor theatrical self-presentation; nor can it be simply equated with performance.'
> (Butler, 1993, p. 95)

Therefore, although Ian narrates a story of a free and rational agent; in a poststructuralist interpretation and particularly if reading through a Butlerian lens, all of his acts, thoughts and rationales are enmeshed with western organizational and societal regulations; his careful pre-planning, his 'back-stage' anxiety and embodied fear, for example, *I would be often stood with my arms folded and kind of trying to make myself a size eight to shrink,'* are iterations of available social norms, associated with the achievement, or failure, of desirable managerial subject positions. So whilst this appears to be a vignette of someone in control of his leadership performance, here there is a fiction of control, a necessary fiction perhaps in order to survive, but nonetheless a veneer. Here Ian persists in attaching to a fantasy of self-mastery and a unitary rational managerial subjectivity, mis-recognising himself as whole (Lacan, 1977). However, despite his apparent embodiment of the 'anankastic' aesthetic (Harding, 2002), within his vignette are glimpses of disruptions, not least the reference to a tiny folded man trying to shrink further prior to stepping on stage; this threatens a single reading and any notion that Ian has a single unitary managerial 'I'; this is something analysed further in chapter six, when I explore gender and emotions in managerial subjectivity.

In contrast to Ian's efforts and (temporary) achievements of control, Carla narrates a shocking loss of control in the next vignette. Carla as you'll remember had the 'conversation at the railway station' that unsettled her; she then had some disquieting feedback from the Assessment Centre:

'I am who I am, irrespective of what I'm wearing: And I find that a real struggle that recently had experience of going for an Assessment Centre, when I have been categorized as "lacking a little polish."

[Carla, Interview 2]

The following vignette follows on from this Assessment Centre feedback and describes Carla's experience of being interviewed for a director level post:

'And so I went for this interview and it was probably the worst interview I have ever done in my life. And I wouldn't have paid myself in washers. So I wouldn't have given myself…but I wasn't going to apply for the job and I had a phone call on the Friday of the closing date from my deputy saying, " You have got to apply. What are we going to do if you are not here? You can't not be here, we have got …it is your decision." And I am like right, Ok, so I applied. So I am putting myself through a process and I am like as transparent as the dirt…you know, the glasses. I don't want to be here really.'

'So I am not going to perform even if that is …you know I want to do my best but I was a gibbering wreck. Some of that I think is because it had all caught up with me. ……. But I was getting this really rocky, daily feeling of you know, I don't know who the hell I am anymore. You know my confidence was taking a nosedive. And it all felt like I was, .. I don't know if I could describe it. It was like somebody just shoved me in a tumble drier and it was, you know, …kept reverse spinning. And you know, I had to keep all that emotion inside myself as well.'

[Carla, Interview 2]

Carla's story emphasizes her feeling of a loss of power, an inability to control, whether events, her outward performance, or her emotional display, and ultimately to being undone; to a loss of coherence in her sense of 'self.' Similar to many other participants' reflections, she felt the pressure of having to determine which of the director posts to apply for. This required strategic thinking; decisions had to be informed by knowledge of who else might be applying for the various posts, the timing of the interviews and if it was worth holding out for the preferred post versus securing the first offered.

Due to a plea from her deputy Carla applies for a post she professes not to really want; to put herself through the process and this lack of interest is apparent, "*I am like as transparent as the dirt...you know, the glasses.*" How could this phrase be interpreted? Here Carla identifies as similar to dirt. She equates her behaviour and presence as being like the dirt, a very visible and obvious display, a discordant jarring; the dirt against the shiny, clear glass. What is this dirt that gives her away? Could this be her emotional display? Frequently glass, windows, reflection and mirrors are utilized in reference to subjectivity, and the emergence of the self, from Hegel, through to Lacan. Within a Butlerian perspective Carla can be seen to be alluding to the opacity of the self. Here Carla has lost her managerial 'self'-knowledge and certainty, *'I don't know who the hell I am anymore.'* As noted earlier Carla's subjectivity is strongly influenced by the humanist discourse of self-knowledge and self-improvement. We can imagine that this loss is felt acutely.

Or in an alternative reading of the metaphor, these glasses could refer to a visual form of glass, for example, the mirror, spectacles, or microscope, through which, the interviewing panel scrutinize her and note any flaws. Or on the other hand they could represent drinking vessels, where the smudge or dirt is the ultimate social faux pas. This metaphor could be an unconscious fragment, an association with the earlier comment from the Assessment Centre, the charge of her lacking a little polish. Whichever of these possible interpretations we explore, all of these numerous associations mark Carla as feeling exposed; of identifying as dirt and of feeling out of place; it is useful to draw from Douglas's seminal work here; Douglas identifies that:

> 'There is no such thing as dirt; no single item is dirty apart from a system of classification in which it does not fit.'
> (Douglas, 1966, p. xvii)

So here it appears that Carla is feeling out of place; she is *'as transparent as the dirt'* and therefore like dirt could be seen as 'matter out of place.' [Op cit, p. 44] If 'dirt is essentially disorder,' [Op cit, p. 2] then Carla's vignette could be read to display a manager who has failed to embody 'self' possession, control and organization in accordance to expectation; here the 'anankastic' aesthetic has not been delivered; here there is spillage, a lack of polish and self-mastery; there is disorder and a potential threat of chaos.

Carla uses many metaphors to illustrate her loss of control; she describes her interview performance as *'a gibbering wreck'* and her sense of who she was

continuously threatened, this despite numerous coaching sessions and preparation. In the sessions with her coach she refers to knowing who she is, in contrast to her subsequent day-to-day experience of the interview treadmill. This she likens to reverse spinning in a tumble drier; here her loss of 'self' is acute and erupts into consciousness; the 'Ek-static' dance, which was more of a slow preamble in the previous section, as illustrated by the 'railway conversation,' becomes frenzied. There is significant identity-work here, a struggle to hold onto a coherent sense of 'self,' a striving to manage emotional display, a flailing for attachment, to survive and persist in organizational life.

How do others' compare to Carla's experience? Both the following director and I describe different experiences that could also be understood as a loss of 'self' in the interview situation. The director, Sally reflects on her experience of being interviewed:

> *'The one I remember is on one day I had two interviews and I did the first interview and it was the very first interview and I just thought I don't even know what they are asking me. I don't know what is going on around here. I don't know if I want to be here. Just get me out of this place. So that sets the scene a little bit and then I had to drive across to the next interview and go in there.'*

> *'...I walked into this room and the interview started. And I remember being as high as a kite. And I actually think this was going all very well even though I spilt the water down my front, even when it became quite a male dominated, ...female, ...you could almost feel that, "Oh well I am a female here amongst you lot. I will have to play that one."'*

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'I actually came out of there feeling I had done really well here. And I was driving away and my Chief Executive phoned me up and said, "How are you? How have you done?" … and I blurted, "Oh it was all right." And all of a sudden I took a crash and I just could see what had just happened

<div align="right">[Sally, Interview 2]</div>

This director begins by describing the first interview she attended, where she is disengaged from the situation, "*I just thought I don't even know what they are asking me. I don't know what is going on around here. I don't know if I want to be here. Just get me out of this place.*" This experience bears similarity to mine, and although I didn't mention this in any of my research interviews, I did describe it in my research journal. Within a job interview for a post I really desired, I felt too controlled, I use the phrase *"wound up like a spring"* and that it almost felt like I had an out of body experience; I could view my 'performance' from a distance but felt unable to change it. I was aware that I was too controlled and tight in my responses, which was reflected in my voice and tone. I knew I needed to relax a little but was unable to do so. It could be proposed that I was 'practising' the techniques of the 'anankastic' aesthetic to such an extreme extent that I was in an almost catatonic state.

To return to Sally's tale, she then goes on to recount her journey to a subsequent interview, one she did not want, on the same day; travelling straight from one interview experience to this next challenge, her experience changes dramatically. Here initially and throughout the interview she feels she is performing well. This is the perception, "*even though I spilt the water down my front.*"

Right through until a post interview conversation with her chief executive she describes feeling that the interview went well. Then while recounting the tale, the event plays before her again and she describes a fall, *"And all of a sudden I took a crash and I just could see what had just happened. I could actually see what had gone on in that room."*

Here, similar to Carla, we have a failure to deliver the 'anankastic' aesthetic; there has been a spillage of water; again there is 'matter out of place;' an element of chaos [Douglas, 1966, p44]. Here, Sally provides an account of an 'Ek-static' self; Butler describes this as, 'To be transported beyond oneself in a passion, but also to be beside oneself with rage or grief' (Butler, 1997a, p24). My experience, triggered by anxiety, bound my body tightly, I consciously felt frozen outside of 'myself;' though this dislocation had local physical manifestations, such as a constricted throat. The director, Sally, describes feeling *'as high as a kite'* from the start; she is transported beyond herself in a frenzy, from which she only awakes during her account to her chief exec. Sally also alludes to gender playing a part within the interview; *"even when it became quite a male dominated, ...female, ...you could almost feel that, "Oh well I am a female here amongst you lot. I will have to play that one."* To extend the analysis, using Douglas's theory further, could this suggest that Carla and Sally are matter out of place by virtue of their gender and emotional display? Are they perceived as a threat, as symbolic of chaos and disorder? This is something I explore further in chapter six.

Within this section we began with Ian and his extremely organized public meeting where through great effort he embodies Harding's 'anankastic' aesthetic (2002). We then move to Carla's and others' frenzied 'Ek-static' dance (or trance), where heightened tension and energy are a backdrop to the flickering strobe lights of fragmented iterations of becoming and losing the managerial 'self.'

> I distinguish myself from myself, and in doing so, I am directly aware that what is distinguished from myself is not different from me. I, the self-same being, repel myself from myself; but what is posited as distinct from me, or as unlike me, is immediately, in being so distinguished, not a distinction for me. It is true that consciousness of an "other," of an object in general, is itself in its otherness.
> (Hegel, 1977, p. 164)

4.6   Summary

The theoretical framework informing this chapter is in keeping with a poststructuralist deconstruction of the 'self,' but as demonstrated in the participants' narratives, 'our daily experience is of the integrity of the "self."' (Barone & Blemenfeld-Jones, 1997) Throughout this chapter, participants' narrative reflects an attachment to the notion of a coherent managerial 'self.' However, reading and analysing the vignettes through a Butlerian lens belies this integrity of the self: close readings suggest varying tempos of becoming and losing managerial subjectivity. Disjointed, fragmented, flailing, fleeting, unravelling and conflicting selves are illustrated and yet all connected in a passionate attachment to this subordination. There is a relentless pursuit to attach, to connect and to persist in managerial subjectivity.

There is vulnerability, fragility and a fleetingness of the 'self' within these tales; the vignettes point to the influence of others, both the generalized 'Other' of social norms that form the available subject positions and the embodied, powerful and influential individual 'others' of the participants' stories, and how these trigger both conscious and potentially unconscious activity, of doing and undoing, constituting and unravelling.

We have seen that despite their seniority, this attachment, the desire to persist binds managers to the organizational network of regulatory norms and ensures their susceptibility and risk of exploitation. This suggestion of vulnerability contrasts with many studies that position senior managers as the wielders of power and as the instigators of initiatives aiming to manage workers' subjectivities for organizational instrumental gain. But Carla and indeed Sally, Jo, Ian and I at times floundered to grasp at a recognizable subject position and experienced an unpredictable, constant and unavoidable pattern of 'self' loss: In our 'Ek-Static' moments, profiled within this chapter, in order to survive, achieve and hold onto managerial intelligibility, we are vulnerable to what Butler names passionate attachment (Butler, 1997a).

This loss of coherence in the sense of 'self' is displayed in an 'Ek-static' dance, of varying tempos; moment-to-moment loss and connection is played out, as indicated in the hesitancy, incoherence and broken text of many accounts. These vignettes at times display significant 'self'-work, they profile a striving to manage emotional display, momentary loss, a flailing for attachment, to

survive and persist in organizational life: Each iteration leaves behind a 'self', a trace, that cannot be reclaimed, one that settles in the sedimentation of organizational and managerial discourse.

Butler sees gendering as a 'dynamic and corporeal process' [Lloyd, 2007, p. 37] and I have applied this to managerial subjectivity in its totality. This is a process permeated with and generated by encounters with 'others,' whether through social norms, relations, or through experiencing the "self" as 'other.'

The vignettes of the main protagonists briefly capture a number of these fleeting selves; they demonstrate the fragmentation and multiplicity of selves and how illusory fixing managers' self to one trace would be. For example, Ian in his first interview strives to embody the rational and controlled 'anankastic' aesthetic and particularly illustrates this in his vignette of 'managing' a public meeting. However, this imago is significantly undone at times, such as when he received the letter informing his post was at risk; here there is substantial emotional spillage of anger, frustration and impotence. Carla's vignettes illustrated a number of 'Ek-static' iterations of 'self'-work; from the railway conversation, through to the Assessment centre feedback and the subsequent interviews, we find a manager who is undertaking significant 'self'-work, though this is not to suggest that Carla controlled this work. These vignettes do not point to a manager in full control of their 'self'-development, despite Carla's attachment to that particular psychological discourse and practice. Rather, the shared snippets

demonstrate a manager struggling to hold onto coherence, to attach to a managerial subject position, at a time of extreme vulnerability.

Within this chapter there are poignant vignettes that render into sharp relief the fragility, pain and vulnerability of managerial subjectivity. Significant conversations with those who embody power in the new NHS bodies often acted as a catalyst for these Ek-static moments; these ranged from critical feedback in conversation, through to negative experience of interviews, or receiving a letter that their post was at risk. At such times the managerial 'self' unravelled, sometimes in a gradual dislocation, a questioning moment, at other times in a regular iteration of not fitting the norm. And on occasions there was sudden and significant shock, an acute freefall in this loss of the managerial 'self'. However, within these varying tempos of Ek-stasis there is this relentless and persistent flailing and scrabbling to re-attach.

These vignettes demonstrate the desire for recognition; the passionate attachment senior managers have to managerial discourse and their subjectivities. Despite their seniority they are vulnerable to exploitation, whether through long hours, bullying relations, or ultimately in risking rejection and being cast out; they appear compelled in their strivings to prevail. In order to persist to be recognized in the changing organizational world they (we) strive for intelligibility, however painful the subordination.

The next chapter further develops analysis on vulnerability, power and relations with others. There is a focus on managers' experience of ethics in

organizational life, how this informs managerial subjectivities and how during times of organizational change a certain Machiavellian discourse appears to cloak the scene.

Chapter 5 –Ethical Relations

> To be and not to be itself is self-consciousness's founding predicament. This
> ambiguity must always be fought out, for the ordinary relation of any self to
> itself can't escape this post-Hegelian restlessness to which the pursuit of
> self-definition, a will to be, is also its own undermining.
> (Riley, 2000, p119)

5.1   Introduction

In the last chapter managers' tales of engagement with significant others,

through critical conversations, assessments and interviews, exposed certain

vulnerabilities. My analysis teased out their passionate, fragile and yet

stubborn attachment to managerial subjectivity and how, despite best efforts,

at times they were undone. During these accounts of engagement, loss and

performativity appeared a dominating desire, a compulsive need for

recognition. Here often within an inequality of relation and the foggy

uncertainty of the future the vulnerability of even the most senior of

managers was rendered into sharp relief.

This chapter focuses on the ethical aspects of relations with others within

organizational life and change. I hadn't anticipated this would be such a

dominant theme when initiating my research: However, all but one of the

participants made reference to how the restructuring period impacted on

their relations with others; there was widespread reference to political '*game*

playing' to construct these accounts. Many proffered this as a '*necessary evil*'

that they had engaged in to some extent, whilst others rejected this

Machiavellian frame and denied the need, or indeed their involvement in such behaviour. I profile these findings, drawing from the accounts of two main characters, Charles and Rachel and compare and contrast their experiences with the remaining participants (including my own autoethnographic account).

5.1.1 Charles

But first, allow me to introduce the principle protagonists of the chapter: It is worth pointing out that I chose the key protagonists for each chapter by virtue of how their vignettes emphasised the main narratives of each chapter. In this instance Charles and Rachel exemplified game playing and struggles with ethical relations. Charles responded to my letter inviting senior managers to participate in my research with a diffident offer to be involved. I think part of this stemmed from wanting to be supportive, a genuine underestimation of his contribution and a strong sense of personal privacy. I liked and respected Charles immediately on meeting him. He has a dry sense of humour, a strong value base and a formidable intellect. I strongly encouraged his participation. Within his first interview Charles emphasized the ethical dilemmas of corporate existence, which intensified for him during the re-structuring time period. Charles stressed the importance of being ethical; he was keen to present himself as a virtuous man or at least as wishing to strive to be one in a context where such aims were tested.

5.1.2   Rachel

I'd known Rachel for a significant length of time and so was pleased but not

surprised when she offered to participate in my research: Rachel was an

extrovert in contrast to Charles' reserved style; she was warm and engaging

and keen to entertain when sharing her stories. In contrast to Charles, she

didn't stress the importance of ethical behaviour, though like Charles she

made reference to game playing and the affect of this. For Rachel the

emphasis during her initial interview was excitement, recognizing

opportunities inherent in the organizational change; her emphasis was on

how she could seize these to develop further her plans for an alternative

future. Rachel was the only manager I interviewed that had a primarily

positive response to the changes; Charles was cautious, Ian initially denied

any impact and Carla's narrative as we have seen began with an emphasis on

the need to improve and develop herself. My reaction was ambivalent; there

was a certain nervousness of the future but also, at times, moments of

excitement.

Again I draw from Judith Butler's theories, particularly *'Giving An Account of*

Oneself' (2005), 'Precarious Life' (2004b) and *'Frames of War' (2009),* to

inform my reading of Charles's and Rachel's vignettes. Using Butler and the

theorists she draws from, such as Foucault and Adriana Cavarero (2000), I

deconstruct and provide alternative readings of these accounts of ethical

dilemmas and game playing. Throughout this chapter I weave in my own and

other participants' scripts to either support or contrast with the main protagonists' accounts.

In the final section I contrast key scenarios from Rachel and Charles' accounts of critical conversations that take place outside of official organizational discourse, before summarizing my findings and interpretations.

5.2   Trying to Give an Account....

> The "I" does not stand apart from the prevailing matrix of ethical norms and conflicting moral frameworks. In an important sense, this matrix is also the condition for the emergence of the "I", even though the "I" is not causally induced by those norms.
> (Butler, 2005, p7)

As the above citation refers, for Butler, the individual is not an autonomous, discrete self that reviews and determines her actions distinct from the ethical quandaries, codes and choices available. Rather, the individual's subject position(s) is formed by and through a mesh of available ethical norms. References to social norms informed the talk of participants as they accounted for their experiences and values. However, following Butler, this is not to suggest that their ethical accounts are fully determined by these norms. Rather, the managers' subjectivities are constituted through the available social and ethical customs and their accounts reflect their negotiation through these conflicting moral frameworks.

In Foucault's terms 'giving an account of your life, your *bios,* is [..] not to give a narrative of the historical events that have taken place in your life, but rather to demonstrate whether you are able to show that there is a relation between the rational discourse, the *logos*, you are able to use, and the way that you live' (Foucault, 2001, p97). It is interesting to review how managers gave accounts of their organizational lives through this specific time period, which gives insight into their subjectification as managers through often competing discourses. What are the *logos*, the discourses, that they draw from and how do they strive to live and justify their decisions, in relation to these? I invite you to join me in exploring these questions, beginning with our first main protagonist, Charles.

Charles had only held a senior managerial position for a couple of years before the reorganization; in his previous career he had worked in the clinical field and he emphasized that the change to a corporate existence had required considerable adjustment and an element of uncertainty as to his fit. Right from the very first interview he storied how important values and integrity were to him and how critical were both his own and others' recognition of him as being *'a good bloke'.* He emphasized the importance of honesty and fairness, whilst in contrast his reference to the organizational context was of power games, secrecy and mistrust. This had resonance with me, as reflected in my second interview, when discussing personal integrity, *'that can sometimes, I don't see it everywhere, but it's a really important part of who I am as a manager and it's potentially a struggle within the corporate*

world.' [Autoethnography, Interview 2] This section particularly explores the juxtaposition of these two elements; this notional 'ideal self' that Charles strived towards, and in earlier interviews (Interviews 1 and 2) recounted vignettes to support, versus the increasingly Machiavellian political system he reportedly had to navigate. Though perhaps this distinction isn't so demarked, if we recall Harding's (2007) notion that there is no internal and external; the organization is always folded into the manager. But here I am getting ahead of myself; this is discussed later in the chapter.

Charles reiterated the importance of being *'a decent bloke'* on a number of occasions during his first interview. The statement below is one example,

> *[A]nd I'm ever so lucky that I, I, I can look in the mirror as it were and think I'm a decent bloke, most of the time. Most of the time I look in the mirror and think I'm a decent bloke and that to me is the most important value.*
>
> [Charles, Interview 1]

How should we read this claim? Charles is referring to the *logos* of ethics as critically important in the way he lives his life; indeed he confers a primacy of importance to being '*a decent bloke',* although as we will see later this is not the only *logos* Charles draws from. Charles storied the importance of values, such as honesty and fairness, as critical to how one lived one's life.

Within Charles's claim there is the reference to a mirror, to an objectifying, judging and yet affirmative gaze; the spectator turned back upon himself, and

simultaneously there's a psychic iteration, a reminder, a check, an invocation to an ideal. Perhaps too there are echoes of Foucault's ethics and his notion of a poiesis of the self, where 'a self might take itself to be an object for reflection and cultivation' (Butler, 2005, p15). Here, Foucault acknowledges that there is no subject outside socially contingent codes, rules and norms; however, in his later works there is a broad operation of critique and the scope to expose, 'the limits of the historical scheme of things, the epistemological and ontological horizon within which subjects come to be at all' (Davies, 2008, pxiv). So if as a subject I am conditioned and constituted by norms, then in critiquing the norms I also question my own ontological status. Within this critique is a continuous relation, a self-creation of what the "I" will be within this regime (Butler, 2005). For Foucault self-questioning is the ethical consequence of the broader critique. In answering 'What can I become, given the contemporary order of being?' (Foucault cited in Butler, 2005, p30), I negotiate my way with morality in a living and reflective way (Butler, 2005).

I think this provides a useful analytical starting point for Charles's account of being an ethical man. What can Charles become, particularly in his managerial subjectivity, given the contemporary order of being, within his organizational experience? Increasingly through the interviews Charles shared stories of events, which both supported and challenged his ideal-self. Charles both resists, and is consumed and produced by various conflicting discourses as he struggles to find his reflective and living way through the changing corporate landscape; this will be discussed later but first I need to alert you to a problem.

In Charles's quote above there is an assumption of clarity, of the ability for comprehensive self-reflection and knowledge. His mirror reflects back a clear, true and sharp image; there is an absence of flaws or distortion. His reciprocal gaze with his mirror image reassuringly bestows the sought for recognition, *most* of the time. To adopt the beloved fairy tale chant, "Mirror, mirror on the wall who is the '*fairest*' of them all?" There is a fantasy behind this rhetoric, a seduction of knowing beyond any doubt, a faith in the possibility to both know and account for the "self". But wait, perhaps we should trouble this settled scene a little and shake up the orderliness of a clear and true reflection; perhaps it is time again, as in the last chapter, to prick the assurance of self-knowledge and to smudge the notion of transparent accounts. If we interpret this through Lacan's mirror stage, Charles experiences misrecognition here, in his identification with and fantasy of a unitary ethical self. Following Butler, the subject exists only through mimesis, through continuous and relentless iterations; a subject's status is unceasingly under threat of erasure, and intelligibility is only ever fleetingly grasped. There is no clarity or certainty in relation to the "I", 'When the "I" seeks to give an account of itself, an account that must include the conditions for its own emergence, it must, as a matter of necessity, become a social theorist' (Butler, 2005, p8). My account 'never fully expresses or carries this living self' (Op cit, p36), indeed it 'gives away my incompleteness, incoherence and unravels any sense of a whole and knowable I' (Jenkins, 2008, p40). The following citation demonstrating Butler's post Hegelian 'Ek-static' reading of the self troubles Charles's claim of self-knowledge.

'It is the self over here who considers the reflection over there, but it is equally over there, reflected, and reflecting. Its ontology is precisely to be divided and spanned in irrecoverable ways… To be a self, is on those terms, to be at a distance from who one is, not to enjoy the prerogative of self-identity.'

(Butler 2004, p148)

However, for Butler, it is this acknowledgement of the limits of self-knowledge that opens up the opportunity for ethical relations with others (Butler, 2005). For if I acknowledge the incompleteness and opacity of my own account then there is both the possibility and responsibility to accept the partiality of yours. Butler draws from Italian feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero's question, 'Who are you?' (Cavarero, 2000, p134) to illustrate how we are exposed to each other in our vulnerability, insubstitutable singularity and opacity. The question 'Who are you?' is posed to another, to an embodied, unknown other who we cannot fully know. This question, this exposure of a unique vulnerable other initiates an ethical claim upon me (Butler, 2005). However, we cannot narrate this unique exposure, for any resulting response to the question; 'Who are you?' by necessity has to draw from the 'what', the categories and terms of social norms; 'I will to some degree have to make myself substitutable in order to make myself recognizable' (Butler, 2005, p37). As Cavarero notes, 'Man' is a universal that applies to everyone precisely because it is no one' (Cavarero, 2000, p9). So for example if I try to describe who I am, I can use, amongst others, the terms of woman, researcher and manager, and all of these labels are not exclusively mine. However following Butler, without categories or subject positions and their

constraining and yet productive frames, I fail to be intelligible: 'There is no *who* that is not always already intertwined with its *what,* or that is inseparable from it' (Cavarero, 2000, p73, original emphasis).

Butler combines Foucault's question, 'What can I become?' and Cavarero's, 'Who are you?' to argue that relationality is a necessary resource for ethics; the subject is a 'relational being, one whose early and primary relations are not always available to conscious knowledge' (Butler 2005, p20). The available social norms and subject positions can both stifle and enable us and it is this shared vulnerability and interdependency, this reliance on the willingness of others to bestow the desired recognition of us that provides the 'binding place for ethical life' (Jenkins, 2008, p53). In the next section we return to Charles and his wish to be recognized as a *'decent bloke'* and to the organizational encounters that undermined this.

Charles was keen in his first interview to narrate examples of his integrity, of times when he had resisted conforming to what he perceived as organizational corruption or bullying. These were presented as de facto vignettes of doing the right thing. However, in his second and final interviews there was more ambivalence; there was reference to a perceived necessity to engage in certain organizational rhetoric and practice. In the example below Charles moves rapidly from astonishment to adoption and engagement in what he presents as a corporate game.

I had to justify to him why I had made £1 million cost improvement saving when actually I had asked for £1 million and he had said I couldn't have it.

And you suddenly think well this is all just part of some ...

And so once you know the boundaries and that you are playing a game, Ok, fine I am going to become a good game player, you know.

[Charles, Interview 3]

So Charles's vignette alludes to both a critique and adaptation to organizational expectations of interaction and practice. One route to interpreting this could be to use Aristotelian philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre's (1985) proposition that managers can't be ethical given the corrupting power of the capitalist institutions which they work within, identifying such corporate regimes as motivated by the goals of effectiveness and efficiency. In MacIntyre's seminal work *'After Virtue'* (1985) managers are the instruments by which to achieve ends already determined and indeed managers do not concern themselves with matters of morality but lead a fragmented existence and embody a number of characters and masks (Beadle and Moore, 2006); his later work sees managers as engaging in and contributing to a sectioning of moral stances, in 'acting as co-authors of their divided states' (MacIntyre, 1999, p327). Jackall's (1988) empirical research of managers and morality appears to support MacIntyre's theory, in that he identified that managers bracket the moral values that they normally held, apart from their other social roles, and take their guidance from senior management as to appropriate behaviour in their organizational role.

However, from a Butlerian perspective, the critical question is how do discursive constructions such as this take hold (Peterson, 2008)? How does this interpellation grasp Charles to such an extent that he wants to *'become a good game player'?* For Charles's account points to something more than passive compliance or even begrudging submission. There is a certain heat in the tale; Charles is both critiquing and yet taking up this practice and he takes on this challenge with a certain fire in his belly. He is provoked to the extent that one could say he is seduced and becomes passionately attached. Within the multiple and conflicting norms, which includes the pull of being a '*decent bloke'* and the call of being *'a good game player'* we can imagine him doing management in this way; here perhaps fleetingly, being a *'good game player'* is dominant for Charles, in his ongoing efforts of being a culturally intelligible manager. Is this an example of how 'duplicitous, defective, disjunctive, split and threatening' (Vardoulakis, 2006, cited in Learmonth and Humphreys, 2012, p 110) subjectivity can be?

Although he expressed derision at how the senior manager had reframed his earlier request to invest in the service, Charles later acknowledges that *'the new PCT functions just in the same way as the old one did'* [Interview 3]. This is a reference to those in senior roles managing what is permitted on the Board agenda, what can be discussed and what is excluded; he refers to learning the correct use of language for papers to be taken to the Board, such as, to talk of opportunities rather than problems, or to use his original example, cost improvements versus cuts.

This combination of distaste and yet seduction towards the political games at play in organizations was echoed in many of the interviews. As one participant (Sally) recalled, *'It was dog eat dog; and if we wanted to, in a way we had to change our beliefs, values, and our morals and our ethical basis to actually be fair for our people. And it's a very basic thing, but I can remember the two of us just walked out and went "This is a different world. We have got to play the game"* [Sally, Interview 2]. Prior to these events, Charles and Sally will have been exposed to a plethora of discourse and subject positions that informed their ongoing managerial subjectivity. These events are just further sediments of the managerial 'I's. As Butler states in the *Psychic Life of Power (1997)* power acts on the subject in at least two ways, 'first, as what makes a subject possible, the condition of its possibility and formative occasion, and second, as what is taken up and reiterated in the subject's "own" acting' (Butler, 1997a, p14). Here Sally, the second manager critiques the discourse and practice she had just been exposed to and yet like Charles in her account there is a conviction of the need to learn the rules and play the game. There is a reference, a justification, to having to do this to '*be fair for our people'*, which has a trace of a utilitarian ethical discourse, where achieving a "good" end justifies the means, but more that that, there is this overriding sense of a need to adapt and *belong* in this different world. Here Sally and Charles were being constituted, and yet also were negotiating, resisting and adapting through and against a myriad of social and moral discourses, critiquing yes but also striving to achieve a certain fit with cultural intelligibility. The key vignettes of Charles and Rachel later in this chapter review further ethical dilemmas

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recounted by the main protagonists but next we explore the nature of
relationships during this period.

5.3   Humanity and Ethical Relations...

> One insight that injury affords is that there are others out there on
> whom my life depends, people I do not know and may never know.
> This fundamental dependency on anonymous others is not a condition
> that I can will away. No security measures will foreclose this
> dependency; no violent act of sovereignty will rid the world of this
> fact.
> (Butler, 2004b, xii)

Charles's subsequent tales of organizational life gathered during the second
and third interviews, shifted from tales of day-to-day corporate game playing,
which often referred to political systems and practice within the organization,
to increasingly interpersonal and immediate accounts. There is reference of
mutual and rife mistrust of colleagues, even of peers, as the organizational
restructuring takes hold; *'And I know that was going on (short pause) that was
pervasive across the whole organization; people stopped trusting everybody by
that stage'* [Charles, Interview 2]. This level of mistrust was referred to by
many of the interviewees, including Rachel our second protagonist who
referred to how few she trusted during the period of change, *'I think at
director level the numbers are on one hand, which is a sad indictment really of
colleagues'* [Rachel, Interview 2]. Charles notes that this is because, *'we are
all human and we are all so nervous about our future and we all want to
protect our own future.'* What does Charles mean here, in his reference that
'we are all human?' Could this refer to an essentialist or fully determined

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notion of human nature, to suggest that mistrust is inevitable? Does this follow a Machiavellian reading of human nature during times of threat; that in such circumstances personal survival is always the paramount concern? Or alternatively could we read this as a reference to our corporeal and psychic vulnerability in our relations with others, in relations we cannot escape? In *Precarious life* (2004) Butler equates vulnerability to humanity and suggests that our vulnerability to each other is at the heart of our ethical relations. If in our relations with others we become exposed, given over, and conscious of both our corporeal and psychic vulnerability, could this be why Charles refers to humanity in a defence of the widespread mistrust? In the shock of that exposure do we withdraw? Does such a retreat from relations shield us from our vulnerability, or just our confrontation with it?

Many participants discussed a distancing from previously close peers; those who had been their closest confidantes were now in direct competition for the reduced number of director level jobs. Any conversations that took place now were treated with heightened suspicion, for example, *'somebody is speaking and somebody is scribbling something at the side, which is an assumption around what is being talked about, probably no ground in reality'* [Carla, Interview 2]. Here Carla, one of the main characters from the last chapter recounts how she scrutinizes behaviour within a meeting for clues of allegiance and foul play. One director shared her discomfort at her own activity, *'I found myself listening, which is out of character, to where other people may not be going forward, to try and understand where, where the*

situations are going to be. And it feels so alien' [Sally, Interview 1]. This is a

fascinating statement, this director (Sally) could be said to be demonstrative

of Butler's 'Ek-static' subject; she is suddenly outside herself, observing, '*I*

found myself listening', there is a jarring note, an element of surprise, and a

sense of not wanting to recognize this 'self' that is being observed; of not

wanting to be this political being. Then there is the reference to feeling alien,

again a reference to humanity but here as perhaps feeling alienated, as

outside of 'normal' ethical relations to one's 'self' and others. And yet, 'my own

foreignness to myself is, paradoxically, the source of my ethical connection with

others' (Butler, 2004b, p46). The former chapter's protagonist, Carla, alludes to

a distrust of colleagues, a projection of political conspiracies and

Machiavellian strategies as informing their activities, whilst the latter

director, Sally expresses, in her narrative of an 'Ek-static' moment, her

conscious loss of self and a potential space for an ethical bond.

For Cavarero (2000) it is our exposure to, and our proximity to, embodied

and unsubstitutable others that reminds us of our ethical ties, but following

Butler (2005), our verbal and written attempts can never fully account for

this living self. At the point of taking up the 'I' and explaining myself I unravel,

I become undone, I lose any sense of a coherent and whole, fully knowable I.

For Butler, it is not a primary 'I' that needs to ethically take account of others,

but rather the 'attachment to and immersion in the world of others is primary'

(Jenkins, 2008, p50). Therefore, the tactic of withdrawal is both impotent and

illusory, for we are always entangled and cannot escape our relations with

others. So, although Charles as a rationale or *logos* for mistrust and

prioritizing self–preservation, presents the humanity and vulnerability of the managers, this vulnerability cannot be escaped; it is the site of a 'difficult, intractable, even sometimes unbearable relationality' (Butler, 2005, p100).

Many participants describe the mistrust Charles refers to with the same sense of inevitability. They narrate of attempts to distance themselves from specific others, or their behaviour. 'Self'-protection is referred to and yet also how these actions can result in feeling alien and disconnected from oneself and humanity. Rachel, the second key protagonist of the chapter stated, *'I don't like bad feeling or stress created by bad behaviour. It doesn't feel comfortable but I've got to go through it because that's the name of the game. But I can disassociate myself from it'* [Rachel, Interview 1]. However, this claim of an ability to disassociate oneself from the pain and hurt of social relations is challenged by Butler, 'if one were successful at walling oneself off from injury, one would become inhuman' (Butler, 2005, p103).

Butler talks of how violence and physical vulnerability holds us, in that we are neither 'fully bounded, utterly separate, but, rather, we are in our skins, given over, in each other's hands, at each other's mercy' (Ibid, p101). Although she is talking of our physical vulnerability and the threat of physical violence here, perhaps this theoretical argument can be usefully applied to the psychic pain inherent in the managers' accounts. Whilst the corporeal bodies of the managers are not under obvious or direct physical threat, the vulnerability and potential violence is present in relation to threats to their subjectivity and intelligibility; I suggest that their (and my) fears pertained to a social

death; of a risk of social shame and humiliation through the loss of managerial subjectivity. Perhaps the fear of being cast out, of being abject, of being subject to 'hate speech' initiates a psychic pain that iterates a similar tension between a drive for self-preservation and of giving ourselves over, in and for mercy.

At the time of the changes when, as Charles referenced earlier, no one knew their future, there does appear to be an over riding fear of becoming abject, sometimes explicitly acknowledged and at other times denied. I think this is captured well by Rachel in her following observation:

One camp, which is so difficult, I have got to completely disengage myself in anything and everyone around. And you can see who they are; they look like walking victims; they look drawn. They are grey and haggard and scared like frightened rabbits. And that's awful to say. And because of that they are just near here, physically maybe, mentally as a contribution they have just disengaged completely.

[Rachel, Interview 2]

Here, Rachel talks of a struggle, and yet of the need, for complete disengagement, an echo of her earlier comment of disassociating herself from the stress and bad behaviour inherent in organizational change. There is the tension to separate from the group of others labelled as *'walking victims'* and yet one can sense an underlying compulsion and fascination in her words. As an act of self-preservation she describes the need to separate from any relations with this group. Perhaps she is attempting to remove any sense of

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responsibility and negating the need for an ethical response to their anguish, or perhaps there is a fear that they are contagious in their haunting embodiment of the abject? Avoiding the stigmatized is reported to be a typical social response due 'to the tendency for a stigma to spread from the stigmatized individual to his close connections' (Goffman, 1963, p30). The separation appears not to be motivated by the mistrust referred to earlier, but by fear, pity and perhaps revulsion. Rachel describes a terrible scene, an inhuman scene. Here is an example of managers who have been grouped and labelled as victims, as a collective of failure; the group is seen as abject to the organization; whilst present in body they are absent in mind and spirit. One imagines that their complete disengagement is in response to some injury, rejection, or the failure to secure a position: This is not explicitly stated. These organizational members are branded, scorched with the label of victim and other derogatory adjectives. Butler's *'Frames of War' (2009)* identifies how war is socially and politically framed and endorsed in a wave of affect; one that decides which lives count, the lives that have value and for whom we should grieve (McRobbie, 2009). Is this an example of how the experience and conduct of organizational downsizing is framed? So here Rachel could be drawing from the social and political frames of organizational change, which guides her insistence on distancing herself from this group of 'victims'; whilst apprehending their plight (so grieving to some extent), she avoids association with them, perhaps seeing them as the inevitable losses of this particular 'war?' One can also be framed, 'if one is "framed," then a "frame" is constructed around one's deed such that one's guilty status becomes the viewer's inevitable conclusion' (Butler, 2009, p8). Here Rachel has framed these

managers as guilty of failing, of being injured, victims, and ultimately of being abject.

And yet despite this branding their presence is felt, as only recently identified as abject organizational members they are provocative for Rachel; there is a history of relations, they once belonged but this has been replaced by dislocation. They are likened to *'frightened rabbits,'* they look *'drawn,' 'grey and haggard,'* they are surely not of 'this world'? By this labelling has Rachel obscured their human face? Butler, following Arendt, identifies the face as a condition for humanization (Butler, 2004b); is this obscuring of their humanity also their de-realization? Is this an example of slippage and erasure of such 'misfits' from organizational intelligibility?

A haunting presence, with only fading traces of managerial subjectivity, they trouble the organization, a lingering glimmer of the past and a potential horror; a superimposition of what could be the future. Rachel's account has elements of both recognition and recoil but her recognition is not one that we could imagine is desired by those on the receiving end; it bestows a label of *'victim'* that has the potential to injure and to dismiss; 'there is a certain violence in being addressed, given a name, subject to a set of impositions, compelled to an exacting alterity' (Butler, 2004b, p48). Perhaps this label is already owned and informs these managers' self-perception; perhaps following such injury, 'willingly or not I advertise myself as scarred' (Riley, 2000, p 125) and at least for a period become this 'walking talking wound' (Op cit). This small snippet from

Rachel's account alludes to fear; a fear personally felt and projected onto these others, the fear of a 'non survivable social shame' (Butler quoted in Davies, 2008, p89). This fear then triggers strategies of survival, attempts to separate from those labelled as abject.

In addition to these accounts and dilemmas of relations with peers, in the first interviews many participants drew from leadership *logos* or discourse in describing their responsibility to their existing teams. This responsibility often bearing military metaphors, related to keeping up morale, or as Carla emphasized the need to, *'rally the troops,'* [Carla, Interview 2] and also to developing and positioning their staff in preparation for the interviews ahead. For example one director discussed how she would network to ensure her team were safe, '*I will talk to the right people and I will make sure that my team are secured*' [Jo, Interview 2]. Within my interview I recounted how I ensured my team had a developmental session to prepare for the interviews [Interview 3]. However, for all participants this discourse was interspersed with frequent reference to the priority of securing one's own position and some fearful anticipation of the changes. One director acknowledged the tension between securing a post and supporting the team,

> *'[T]he conflict for me is about me as a person have to drive forward for my own ends to get the role, as opposed to how can I support the people around me who are looking towards my leadership.'*
>
> [Sally, Interview 1]

Carla's rhetoric of keeping up the morale of the team was also juxtaposed

with dramatic narrative describing moments of quite acute personal anxiety,

> *'It's like being on a big dipper. You know when you are coming up to?*
> *I've only been on once because I'm frightened, but when you are coming*
> *right up to the top it's awful that sense of anticipation. You know you*
> *are going to go down, you don't know what it's actually going to be like;*
> *somebody's told you it's, goes ooh, your tummy goes all funny. So you*
> *have sort of got that in your mind, a picture, but it feels like that. It feels*
> *like I've been going up that rollercoaster to that top for such a long time*
> *really. And I actually feel like I don't know how far down I'm going to go,*
> *where I'm going to land, who's going to be with me; all I know is it's*
> *going to turn my stomach. And I have to manage that situation and how*
> *I manage that feeling.'*
>
> [Carla, Interview 2]

I've cited this narrative at some length; I believe it displays well Carla's

construction of the times and the identity-work required for her to mask the

resulting emotional turmoil. Carla's analogy of a big dipper emphasizes the

period leading up to the changes and how she visualized and anticipated both

the experience and potential consequences, '*you have sort of got that in your*

mind, a picture.' The trepidation Carla is expressing here and her related

mental rehearsals could be read as a form of 'metalepsis'. This is a concept

Butler refers to in her preface to the second edition of '*Gender Trouble'*

(1999b, pxiv). Here in a further clarification and elaboration of her concept of

'performativity', Butler draws from Derrida's reading of Kafka's *'Before the*

Law,' where 'the one who waits for the law, sits before the door of the law,

attributes a certain force to the law for which one waits' (Op cit, pxiv). It is the

anticipation of an authoritative occurrence that invests in that authority and

it is this fascination, this investment and the qualities attributed to it that

then constitutes the future. Therefore Carla's apprehension, '*it's awful that*

sense of anticipation', and her fearful sense of foreboding, '*I don't know how*

far down I'm going to go' [Interview 2], installs or rather reinstalls the 'nature'

of her managerial experience of change; it is through the ritualistic repetition

of culturally informed acts that a production of Carla as an anxious manager

is achieved; though this is not to fix Carla in this subjectivity, as this is one

fleeting trace of Carla's managerial self in its performative constitutive work.

And Carla was not alone in this performativity, the majority of participants

expressed at times similar fearful anticipation and symptoms. Charles

referred to a period of four months or so, when he suffered stress and

insomnia. In my second interview I account how variable my response to the

changes are, one day rational and calm, the next apprehensive of what the

outcome would be. One participant talked of the disorientation and challenge

of not having a role or knowledge of what was going to happen next,

> '[y]ou are usually choosing what jobs you are going for and you are
> usually going from a job that you have already got. You know those
> basics, you know those basic things; I had no knowledge of what was
> going to happen beyond this moment.'
>
> [Sally, Interview 2]

Here there are echoes of Carla's combination of a fearful anticipation of the

unknown coupled with the absence of a future with any clear form. The

immediate future promised interviews and being judged but beyond that who knew? Current attachments, whether to managerial subject positions or team and peer relations were insecure.

The following section looks at further accounts of this ethical dilemma of relations with others, attachment to subjectivities and to disengagement and mistrust. It further explores the metaphorical framework of the political game, so frequently used by participants to anticipate and constitute their experiences.

5.4 The Games People Play

Charles described how people became increasingly cautious in their conversations, *'I think we are all becoming just slightly hesitant about what we tell each other'* [Interview 2], as both the result of and a continuation of the level of mistrust. He and a number of others talked of game playing that incorporated an element of undermining others. Rachel ascribes this to fear and described managers as, '*scrabbling, scrabbling over colleagues, often of long standing, and try to get one-upmanship'* [Interview 2]. Charles provided an example of colleagues portraying a lack of interest in a certain post, only for him to later hear that they had met with the chief executive to discuss the position. Again Charles had an element of resignation when describing this activity,

'I don't condone the games that are being played. I don't defend them; I think they are awful but I am doing a little bit of them I am sure. But I think everybody is to an extent. And it's a rotten feeling to be in.'

[Interview 2]

Another participant echoed this recognition, *'[I]t's not that I am naïve to think that people don't or shouldn't play games because I mean that's the way of the world'* [Wendy, Interview 2]. Charles referred to this as '*a necessary evil'* though '*having said that it is kind of a necessary evil, it really is a bit of an evil and I accept that I am as guilty as anybody of doing it'* [Interview 2]. Is it a necessary evil though? Butler in *'Precarious Life'* discusses how interdependency and corporeal vulnerability to each other can, rather than result in retaliatory politics, create the opportunity for ethical relations (Lloyd, 2007). So political game playing rather than a *'necessary evil'* can be understood as a metaleptic norm; it is anticipated, constituted and reinforced through assumptions relating to organizational change and cultural norms. Perhaps we need an openness that we are all vulnerable, we all have precarious lives and are open to suffering, otherwise we sanction political violence (Op cit), or in this setting we endorse political game playing as a *'necessary evil.'*

This dislike of the behaviour and yet the acceptance, engagement and assumed inevitability of it was reflected by other participants, for example, '*It doesn't feel comfortable but I've got to go through it because that's the name of the game'* [Rachel, Interview 1]. However, not all responded in this way, some

expressed reluctant admiration of those skilled in game playing, such as Ian, one of the main protagonists from the previous chapter. During his first interview he provided an example of a leader he identified as having had a significant impact on his career:

'She was extremely good at managing the politics, was extremely good at, forgive me, using people to, for her own objectives, yeh?

It wasn't malicious; it wasn't bad, it was just that she was very clear on what she was going to do for the benefit of, erm I think the kindest way to describe it was for the benefits of [name] *the person, the patient and the organization.*

[a]s long as you could be used to meet one of those three she would use you; very political, very clever, you know…'

[Ian, Interview 1]

So here whilst there is an element of critique, the overriding impression is one of admiration and endorsement of this manager's utilitarian approach of staff and colleagues. Here, rather than seeing this as a *'necessary evil'* during times where survival is threatened, Ian presents this as effective leadership.

And in contrast to both these interpretations, some articulated a strong oppositional stance to certain games. Carla, for example, at times expressed anger and at other times exhaustion at what she perceived as endemic game playing.

'I want a job because I get a job on merit not because I have got it
because I am sucking up to anybody and I never will do.'

[Carla, Interview 2]

Carla reiterates this later in the same interview, '*Well, I won't play it. I will not play the game.*' She subsequently alludes to a sense that everything is then seen through a Machiavellian gaze, '*It's just not helpful the games people are playing. And they almost start to become games in your own head then. So you try and keep your own sanity'.* There is a lot of vehemence in Carla's rejection of the political gaming she perceives occurring around her, a strong sense of, "that is not me!" and an expression of anger towards the perpetrators. Roberts (2005) in a psychoanalytical reading suggests that the 'us' and 'them' approach provides each 'side' with the space 'for projection of all that is disavowed in the self' (Op cit, p635); 'the persecutory ideal of the self can often only be appeased through the projection of all that is inadequate onto others' (p637). So whereas earlier in the chapter Rachel projected and disavowed labels and emotions relating to failure, victim status and being abject, here Carla projects and denies active involvement in political manipulation and game playing. It is through such projection and condemnation that we strive to eliminate our opacity, in doing so we undo our scope for ethical relations and our recognition of our commonality (Butler, 2005).

Carla was particularly expressive about refusing to play others down in order to progress, *'the pulling down, it's just unacceptable. It is to me absolutely*

unacceptable.' Similarly, another participant describes as difficult, watching the extent of '*people slagging a lot of people off*' [Jo, Interview 2]. Many accused others of positioning themselves for the future, for example by '*starting to make false allegiance with people*' [Jo, Interview 2], of muscling into others' projects, and of dropping work, '*because the day job wasn't where their future was*' [Op cit]. This anger was expressed towards peers, usually in generalized terms. Rachel however, directed her disgust to the senior leadership team of her new organization. These were seen as responsible for inflicting an unnecessary level of pain as they engaged in an ultimate game of organizational redesign.

> '*I think **they** are treating us like a huge game of chess, which is destroying. And it's not destroying what I've been part of, it's not about protection around, well, I was…[pause] It's not about, it's more fundamental, it's destroying of people. It's about destroying careers. People have worked for more than 20-30 years in* [name of place] *and that just seems to be completely rough shod.'* [My emphasis]
>
> <div align="right">[Rachel, Interview 2, my emphasis]</div>

Rachel's anger here renders her incoherent. Her accusations draw from what Cavarero refers to as the moral use of pronouns; '***they'*** is used to reference the antagonists, the generalized other, those in this scenario perceived as having the power to determine the future (Cavarero, 2000). Rachel fluctuates between acknowledging and denying a personal loss, of witnessing a destruction of, or tearing apart of what she was previously attached to, and an accusation of more collateral damage, where people and careers are being

destroyed. Here Rachel presents the antagonists as disconnected from the human face and cost of the organizational design; she presents the leadership team as engaging in a strategic game with players utilising people as pawns, instruments of the game, as merely a means to an end. Ironically, does Rachel's presentation of the situation echo this omission? Is she not masking the human face, aka following Butler, the vulnerability of these leaders in her projected anger? Whilst Rachel in this outpouring presents a self-disavowal and projection onto very senior managers' political game playing, and highlights the painful consequences for organizational members, this is not the only position Rachel takes up within these logos. In a number of her narratives there is evidence of her more actively engaging and *playing the game*.

How does this discourse (or *logos*) take hold? How can we interpret this various but repetitive citation of game playing? Whether attributed to peers, distant colleagues, or senior management, whether through an admission of engagement in, or via a refutation of game playing, this discourse is invested in as critical in the matrix of organizational intelligibility. Organizational change, particularly when motivated by the need to downsize, is understood as a threat to survival. As the narratives of the participants has displayed, this fear triggers many responses; we have the mistrust of others, even those who have previously been close colleagues; there can be a distancing from others and a suspicion of their acts, language and behaviour, or a wish to be disassociated from the brand of failure.

In Butler's latest books, *Undoing Gender, (2004), Precarious Life (2004b),*
Giving An Account of Oneself (2005) and Frames of War (2009) she has
developed her notions of performativity further and explored the concern of
what makes a liveable life and the question of the human and ethics as
relations to others. Butler continues to develop her theories in how subjects
are formed 'through normative violence and cultural intelligibility: how, that is,
culturally particular norms define who is recognizable as a subject capable of living
a life that counts' (Lloyd, 2007, p134). However, her latter works focus on
human survival, corporeal vulnerability and how 'an ethical relation requires
the other to be intelligible to us as a subject' (Op cit, p134). These ideas are
developed further in the final section of this chapter; I use a key vignette of
Rachel's from her third interview and compare and contrast this with
Charles's and others' narratives.

First I'll introduce Rachel further; Rachel achieved a director position at a
relatively young age. During her first interview Rachel appeared to feel less
ambivalent about playing the corporate game and saw it as a required
strategy to secure the future she desired. Whereas during the first interview
many participants either expressed or denied anxieties in relation to the
potential changes, Rachel stood out in that she embodied and expressed
excitement.

> *'I feel like I'm metamorphosising, metamorphosed or whatever the verb is*
> *and I feel scared but excited, scared and erm, and I've got plans a foot that*
> *are really, really exciting; slow, they keep getting put back and they keep*

developing; something else comes along and happens but I feel really, really excited.'

The feeling is faith. [A]nd with this bubble locked away in a box of hope and excitement that you didn't want to open up just in case.

<div align="right">[Rachel, Interview 1]</div>

Rachel's alludes to undergoing metamorphoses; there are various ways we could interpret this analogy. The dictionary defines metamorphoses as "a complete change of physical form or substance, or a complete change of character" (Collins, 2000) and it is also the title of Roman poet, Ovid's Latin narrative poem of fifteen books, which in its epilogue applies metamorphoses as a universal principle and informs readers that everything is in flux. Within Ovid's poem Troy falls, Rome rises, and nothing is permanent (Brown, 2011). For Rachel this use of the concept could allude to the rise and fall of the organization, or more probably to Rachel herself, in her managerial subjectivity. Here is a metaphor for a transformation of subjectivity; one managerial 'I' is discarded, whilst another is anticipated, an emergent new ideal-self. Here Rachel engages with a changing managerial self but still holds onto the illusion of agency: Demonstrating a loss of, and being outside of her 'self' in Ek-stasis but here swept away with excitement and desire rather than rage or fear.

In the next section we move on to Rachel's main vignette, where she recounts as critical an encounter with an individual who had the power to determine survival in a new organization.

5.5   Wheeling and Dealing

In the third interview Rachel had a story to share that spoke of unofficial conversations and secret deals, of whisperings that transfigured and created the future, all of which were outside of formal organizational discourse. I use the format of a play scenario to present this and utilize different font styles as an artifice to display the elements within the text. I use a **bold font to set the scene**, *whilst quotes from the main protagonist, Rachel are in an italic font.* Direct citations from the theory and literature are presented in a smaller font, whilst my researcher voice, the critique and analysis is in a normal sized font. I refer to all CEO and senior leadership characters in the female pronoun, to protect identity and to trouble gender assumption; this applies to Rachel's scene and for those in other participants' tales.

Scene

The timing of the scene is when the highest structures (Executive Director level) of the PCT organizations have been published for the region but no formal recruitment process has begun. In Rachel's PCT there is an open meeting for staff; the new CEO is introducing herself and her vision, in conjunction with talking people through the published structure and process. There is a buzz of excitement and anxiety in the audience. The meeting comes to an end and people naturally form into small informal groups; there are multiple conversations.

Rachel

The high point rather, this bit, she [the CEO] pulled me off to one side in the meeting and said

CEO

"I am not saying this to you because I can't but don't go to [name of place]*. I want you here and I want you to have this job."*

Rachel

And it hasn't been anywhere near in terms of appointment or process or anything.

And I was really, really, really, chuffed….she wanted me in it, and then said,

[Rachel, Interview 3]

CEO

"We will have to go through this recruitment process and all of that."

Here we have a conversation that couldn't be had, *"I am not saying this to you because I can't …"*; here we have the offer of a post prior to any formal recruitment process; this assignment took place with a lack of regard to the *'frames'* of Human Resources policy and regulations. However, this is not a successfully hidden subterfuge. Rachel was aware that others had suspicions and amidst her excitement refers to guilt and culpability,

> *'[A] lot of guilt at that time because I knew lots of people thought the job*
> *was made for me and in a lot of ways it was. And I knew that a lot of*
> *people knew that I had crafted that role for myself, and I had.'*
>
> [Rachel, Interview 3]

So is this a further playing out of that '*necessary evil*' Charles refers to that both obstructs and constitutes ethical relations? For if in Butlerian terms the mesh of ethical norms are primary, rather than any 'I' that navigates their way through them, how can Rachel's entanglement in this Machiavellian style of conspiracy be interpreted? Is it the very precariousness of her position that renders her vulnerable to entrapment by these particular *'frames'*?

In this scenario we have secret dealings that many knew about, acts that couldn't be done but were; we have deals struck before the official recruitment process begins. Why are senior managers seduced into believing this to be a '*necessary evil*'? Why do they unwittingly anticipate and ultimately co-create its manifestation in a certain performativity of management? Returning to Rachel, in earlier interviews she like the majority of other participants had accepted the need to '*play the game*' and had framed the changes as an opportunity to undergo her metamorphoses. Rachel narrates how she had actively worked to create this opportunity,

‘And sometimes you can make your own destiny. You have got that
ability sometimes if all the planets do align right, to help craft
something, to make something happen. And the job description I
actually wrote that; this is bizarre.’

<div align="right">[Rachel, Interview 3]</div>

Here we have examples of Rachel drawing from various and at times

conflicting *logos*; like Charles she is both formed by and yet needs to navigate

through the primary mesh of ethical norms. Within the scenario is an

excitement that her plans are coming to fruition and an engagement with the

game playing but also an apprehension of others' suspicion and mistrust.

Rachel appears to engage in Machiavellian strategies more readily than

Charles; rather than expressing any level of repugnance at the '*necessary evil*'

she seems to embrace it as inevitable at certain times. In reference to the

above scenario with the CEO she acknowledged factors that could have

influenced it, '*And if she felt pushed to do that because I was going elsewhere*

then fine.' There is no specific critique of the duplicity of being offered a post

that had yet to go to advert. Contrast this with Charles's experience below:

Here we switch scene, Charles is driving down the motorway on his way
home one evening; his mobile rings; it's the new CEO….

CEO

"Are you interested in the director […] job?"

Charles

[But it was long before you know proper process had started].

> *'And at that point I suddenly thought this whole thing is totally crooked.*
> *This is how the jobs are…[short pause] came about. Yes, and that was*
> *actually added to by another turning point, which was …[short pause]*
> *Oh no that would be telling too much but a similar thing about someone*
> *else's job.*
>
> *But I think it was just …it was making you realise that things don't*
> *follow due process really. No matter how much you think they should, or*
> *do, or don't but they don't.'*

[Charles, Interview 3]

In contrast to Rachel, Charles's account emphasises the dishonesty of the approach, *'this whole thing is totally crooked'* and again as in his earlier vignettes there is an element of surprise. Charles, like Rachel is mindful of others' reactions; he however, is more troubled by and conscious of the impact this has on ethical relations; he anticipates and has a dread of having to play the game,

> *'And then also knowing that for the next 3 months there would be some*
> *sort of a charade being played out around, you know pretending you*
> *hadn't heard anything, kind of thing. Which isn't nice you know, to face*
> *work colleagues.'*

Charles's discomfort led to difficulties sleeping for the first time in his career; he shared how the situation led to broken relationships with peers; this was something he had anticipated,

> *'…some of those fears about the sort of back stabbing have been true and they are quite visible…'*

And Charles also recognised that ultimately he had mimicked this *'crooked'* behaviour, in that he too had held phone conversations before interviewing in order to get the 'right' people in the posts. So again we have an example of an individual trying to negotiate the moral network that produces him. How to be an ethical man in this context? Whilst expressing more discomfort than Rachel, and in contrast to her engagement in active manipulation, he colluded in the process, ultimately though his actions are similar. The desire to survive prevails and his managerial subjectivity as game player dominates. Just to further demonstrate that both protagonists struggled as they enacted numerous managerial 'I's, I provide a further quote from Rachel, who when later in the final interview reflecting on her experience, identified that,

> *'perhaps some of that was around self-preservation and I think emotions. I just had so much racing around… I am just tired of it all. I just wanted to come clean.'*

[Rachel, Interview 3]

So these vignettes challenge any simple notion of fixed identities of ethical man, or female game player; here both Charles and Rachel constantly become nuanced iterations of their managerial subjectivities; multiple subject positions are fleetingly held; numerous *'frames'* adopted. Here in a

kaleidoscope of subjectivity they form, disassemble and reform anew.

There were others who shared stories along the same vein, though their responses differed; one manager succeeded in getting an offer of a director post in an area outside of her original PCT. She was then encouraged to stay for a post that hadn't been visible in the initial published structure. Though she recounted struggling with the decision, in the end she decided to leave.

> *'To be fair […] if you wanted me to stay you should have* [pause] *that should have been in the structure and I would have applied for it'*
>
> [Jo, Interview 3]

Carla shared her experience of being interviewed and of not being successful for a number of posts and her reflections on this,

> *'[t]hat one conversation on that railway station gave me insight into how somebody thinks or doesn't think, whether I am in the bag or out of the bag.'*
>
> [Carla, Interview 3]

And how she'd subsequently found out that someone from the Department of Health had been appointed to one of the posts,

> *'And you think to yourself you know, it is not what you know, it is who you know. … I don't want to be cynical….'*
>
> [Op cit]

So to analyse this through a Butlerian lens, we can adopt Butler's theory of

the *'frames'* that manipulate how we view and section experience during times of war (2009). Here Butler (2009) highlights how those in power protect certain political and social interests by controlling how war is reported and therefore what is and is not comprehended (Op cit). We can apply this to the context of organizational downsizing; this too can be viewed as war, in that it is seemingly also a time for propaganda and fight for survival. If such *'frames'* organise the view of and expected conduct within particular scenarios, then perhaps these senior managers drew from 'Machiavellian *frames'*. And this reinforces their assumption of game playing as the *necessary evil*. However, within organizational change there is more than one set of *'frames'*; there is a proliferation of official communications to the workforce promoting the rhetoric of fairness and transparency, with detailed policies and procedures for re-deployment. Is this just an illusory artefact, a rhetoric everyone knows to be false 'Newspeak'? Rachel and Charles adapted with differing levels of enthusiasm to working outside of these official *'frames'* of Human Resource policy. Are the 'real' frames for senior managers more akin to Machiavellian rules? Do we have here unofficial political strategising that is promulgated as necessary for the elite, for those in the inner circle who can discount more prosaic HR rules?

In her work, Butler theorises an opportunity and ability to break and challenge *'frames'* and to reframe, to provide an alternative perspective, through leakage. In *'Frames of War' (2009)* she uses the example of the leakage and mass publication of the Abu Ghraib photographs and the outrage

they caused amongst the wider populace. '[T]he movement of the image or the text outside of confinement is a kind of "breaking out," so that even though neither the image nor the poetry can free anyone from prison...or, indeed reverse the course of the war, they nevertheless do provide the conditions for breaking out of the quotidian acceptance of war' [Butler, 2009, p11]. How could, and indeed can, this be applied to the scenarios of Rachel and Charles? Here there is a leakage of a kind; practice defied the official Human Resources *'frames'* of organizational change, particularly the policies relating to recruitment and we sense from participants' accounts that this was a known, or suspected practice. But where is the corresponding outrage in response to this leakage? Who do we expect to be affronted? Yes we see discomfort and cynicism, but also collusion, resigned acceptance and even active engagement. Yet again there appears to be a composition of this conduct as a '*necessary evil'*. What does this mean for ethical relations?

But perhaps as the earlier paragraph suggests I am analysing the wrong *'frames'*. Human Resources policy for organizational change is an illusion, a façade, or at best the promoted *'frames'* for the masses, not the elite. The 'insider frames' promote the Machiavellian strategies referenced by so many within this research. So how could this be challenged, by leakage, and to whom? Would or could any leakage be effective to provide an opportunity for change? Could disclosure through research and publication generate some outrage; would 'spilling the beans', cause any upset in the managerial academic world? Or is that naive? Is this a 'known' secret, one that we all

collude with? In this research my participants have been senior managers; this elite group break the (HR) rules that regulate lesser mortals. Would there be such a strong emphasis on *game playing* and how it is all such a *necessary evil* if I had interviewed frontline healthcare deliverers or first line managers?

Following Butler, just as in war, 'it is not the withdrawal or absence of law that produces precariousness, but the very effects of illegitimate legal coercion itself, or the exercise of state power freed from the constraints of all law' [Op cit, p29]. So does the acting outside of law, or in this case human resource policy, by the certain elite management group perpetuate the Machiavellian *'frames'* and precariousness of the very participants who are enmeshed in it? After all it is the available norms and subject positions that both stifle and enable us and it is this shared vulnerability and interdependency, this reliance on achieving desired recognition and cultural intelligibility that provides the 'binding place for ethical life' (Jenkins, 2008, p53).

5.6 Summary

The beginning of this chapter troubled Charles's *bios*, of being an ethical man: Initially he appeared to narrate a clear dichotomy between his ideal 'self' and the corporate setting he had to navigate through, demonstrating an epic hero story of a fight between good and evil. In subsequent interviews there was a blurring of this divide, and Charles, was seen to fleetingly attach to differing and conflicting managerial subjectivities. During the period of re-structuring his ambivalence heightens as Machiavellian *'frames of war'*, become the

predominant form of perceiving organizational life. Increasingly he absorbs, embodies and enacts the game player subjectivity, whilst manifesting intense discomfort. Here, unlike MacIntyre's (1999) theory and Jackall's (1988) research that suggest managers easily bracket their ethics and follow senior managers' instruction whilst in the work environment, Charles struggles to the point of insomnia.

In the first account from Rachel we gained an insight into a fear, the terror of becoming a victim and experiencing a 'non survivable social shame' (Butler quoted in Davies, 2008, p89), a dread of failing to be intelligible. Is it this desire for recognition, the drive to attach to something that informs participants' efforts through the mesh of ethical norms?

Butler in *'Precarious Life'* discusses how interdependency and corporeal vulnerability to each other can, rather than result in retaliatory politics, create the opportunity for ethical relations (Lloyd, 2007). So political game playing rather than a *'necessary evil'* could be understood as a metaleptic norm (Butler, 1999b); it is anticipated, constituted and reinforced through assumptions of the power base within organizational managerial structures and cultural beliefs. How do some discourses take a hold, of the body and desire (Peterson, 2008)? 'It vexes you. You hate it, but at the same time you're passionately attached' (Butler, cited in Davies, 2008, p89).

How can we interpret this various but repetitive citation of game playing,

which is invested in by these senior managers as critical, within the matrix of organizational intelligibility? Organizational change, particularly when motivated by the need to downsize, is understood as a threat to survival. If we are all exposed to this threat; if we all have precarious lives at such times and are therefore open to suffering, would publishing and 'outing' this vulnerability create opportunities for change? Can we challenge and avoid sanctioning political violence and game playing as the *'necessary evil'* of organizational life? Whilst conditioned by norms, we also need to find our way with morality (Butler, 2005).

To revisit the ideas Butler developed in *'Frames of War' (2009),* it is our very precariousness that embodies our humanity and opens us to ethical relations and is at the heart of the ethical struggle.

> 'I find that my very formation implicates the other in me, that my own foreignness to myself is, paradoxically, the source of my ethical connection with others.'
> [Butler, 2004b, p46]

Ethics for Butler is not in relation to an "I" behind the deed but in acknowledgement that the "I" is always immersed in and attached to the world of others and it is the acceptance and negotiating of this relationality that is the scope of ethics and morality (Davies, 2008).

We share this vulnerability; it is the binding of our insecurity and co-dependency that shapes our experience and conduct. Being human is a

balance between self-preservation and our ethical relations to others (Butler, 2009). As identified in the last chapter we attach to pain, to exist as culturally intelligible, rather than not attach at all, and it seems that equally, however fleetingly, we forfeit our ideals, our 'ethical- self', to adopt Machiavellian gaming and attach to managerial subjectivities that subvert our professed ethical standards, perhaps perceiving this as necessary to survive and persevere.

My first two analysis chapters peel back layer upon layer of the complexity of managerial subjectivity; the first profiled the plurality and fleetingness of the occupied managerial 'I's; a vulnerability and fragility was highlighted in each manager's relentless, hopeless and passionate attachment to this subjectivity. The next and final analysis chapter peels back and troubles notions of gender and emotion and how they play out in managerial subjectivities.

Chapter 6: Gendering Emotion

> If we are seeking to disrupt masculine hegemony in organizations, we need
> to have some concept of gender yet, at the same time, we can see that the
> very language and discourse of gender is an aspect or effect of a
> heterosexual masculine hegemony.
> (Knights & Kerfoot, 2004, p439)

6.1   Introduction

In chapter four the brittle fragility of the managerial 'self' was revealed as

vignette after vignette exposed loss, vulnerability, and a continuous agitation

to be, to become, to passionately attach to an intelligible subjectivity.

Momentary ek-stasis, a panicky dislocation, all captured time-and-time again

in a dance of intersubjective desire. Here we witnessed managers as

vulnerable, in their longing and fantasy of a constant and unitary self; how

frequently this became undone, in their interactions with powerful others. In

the last chapter (five) the fleeting, changeable and fluid 'nature' of managerial

subjectivities was profiled, demonstrated well in Charles's early accounts;

here, he fluctuated between the conflicting identity positions of his ideal-self,

of being an *'ethical man'* to the antithesis, to being a good *'game player'*. Here

we explored the challenge of maintaining ethical relations; how game playing

is invested in as a *'necessary evil'* and how this is potentially driven by a

fantasy, a terror of organizational death, of becoming abject, through

organizational unintelligibility. If our relationality is the scope and mesh of

ethics and morality (Davies, 2008), then at times of organizational flux a

Machiavellian discourse appeared to dominate (un) ethical relations.

And so on to my third and final analysis chapter, which has an added complexity because 'I', or rather my many 'I's' become more prominent within the text. Here 'I', the researcher, student and author and 'I' the manager, woman and participant, messy the text; still lingering academic norms of neutrality and objectivity, such as the downplaying of the author's subjectivity, are disregarded (see Höpfl, 2007; Pullen and Rhodes, 2008). Perhaps, this is only to be expected from someone constituted as a 'woman' – as suggested later – we are recognised for our slippage and leakage. This latter provocative sentence gets to the heart of the matter, for autoethnographic writing is almost de-rigueur in certain academic quarters. The 'real dirt' here is the theme of the chapter; of how my research participants and 'I' shared stories that revealed the contamination of certain ways of (un)doing gender and emotion in organizational life.

But first to justify my research method, which holds a frisson of personal risk, for after all, the chapter will be submitted and tested against scholastic norms that often still eschew such researcher presence. Here I risk being 'other' to research convention; in this position of alterity, all wrapped up in reflexivity and autoethnography, I am one of the key protagonists of the chapter. Thus I overtly demonstrate the messiness of research, and of how my researcher, participant and writer 'selves' are entangled. Perhaps in some diminutive way I echo Butler, who positions herself, along with many other

contemporary theorists as outside of purist philosophy; I appropriate and adapt her provocative challenge, of what hope does philosophy (or in my case research) have 'unless it actively engages precisely such impurity' (Butler, 2004a, p245)?

Gender and emotion are two key themes that I notice as both present and enmeshed within the interview transcripts, and interpret as influential in identity-work and managerial subjectivities. I continue to use Butler to frame the reading of the interviews, particularly drawing from her earlier work, *Gender Trouble (1990), Bodies that Matter (1993)* and *Undoing Gender (2004).* Occasionally I appropriate additional theorists, such as Douglas (1966) and Cavarero (2005), to contribute, question and challenge the 'performativity' of gender and emotion within the vignettes of this research. I particularly draw from others when exploring the analysis of emotion, as Butler has written tantalizingly little on this topic to date.

A number of the profiles and vignettes shared and discussed in the two previous chapters are revisited through this frame and two 'new' characters, Sally and I, the key protagonists of this chapter are introduced.

Here I expand the notion teasingly introduced in chapter four, of how emotion in the organizational setting could be perceived as dirt or a form of pollution; in that it is matter 'out of place' (Douglas, 1966, p44); and whilst emotion is not strictly material, both feelings and display are constituted and

perpetuated through the body. I do not suggest by this that emotions are purely physiological. This chapter proposes that emotion is also inextricably tied to normative discourse, practice, to the psyche and to cultural assumptions of gender.

Indeed emotions and the 'female' are historically associated; since the Enlightenment emotion has been coupled with irrationality, 'the personal, and therefore with the domestic sphere and feminine nature' (Rafaeli & Worline, 2001, p100). Normative masculine discourse (discussed below) is ubiquitous within the text and practice of management and organizations, and therefore it is unsurprising to find it echoing and rumbling in the interviews of my research.

Below I begin by exploring examples of how the discourses of gender and emotion twist, erupt and play out across my characters' narratives; I draw from earlier vignettes from the last two chapters, before moving on to key scenarios from the leading figures of the chapter. These focus attention on the 'doing' and 'undoing' of management, gender and emotion. But first let me introduce you to the key protagonists of this chapter:

6.1.1 Sally

You have met Sally before; she was the director who had such a difficult time with her CEO on the need to work on her 'presentation skills' (see chapter four); he didn't share her belief on the need to include a passionate and

enthusiastic display in one's work. Sally was quick to offer to be part of my research; we knew each other through various regional leadership events. Sally was an experienced senior manager and had worked her way through the ranks of nursing before achieving her director post. She was keen to present herself as a nurturer and leader within her research interviews. She reminded me of an approachable 'Head girl' and throughout her interviews she presented as having a strong identification with her nursing profession. Sally also placed great emphasis on her passion for her work, her interpersonal skills and engagement with staff, versus the lack of support and recognition she had received from her CEO.

6.1.2   Me

I am the second protagonist; that is I, Jane; the researcher, student, manager, and writer. As I try and compose this introduction - of myself, I am struck by how difficult and bizarre it is. It is some years since I undertook the research and so the Jane writing this is not the same Jane interviewed by my supervisor, or who interviewed my participants. I am also very aware that following Butler I cannot fully know myself (2005) and that I am vulnerable in this exposure of my opaque and partial sel(f)ves; and that by doing autoethnography I lose any hope of anonymity. At the time of my research I was working as an Assistant Director of Nursing; like the colleagues I researched, I was looking ahead to the organizational changes and wondering what the impact would be on me; would I have a job at the end of it? Would it be a job I wanted? I had the opportunity to hear the directors' experiences of being

interviewed before I began my own; at times this triggered moments of anxiety in recognition and anticipation of what was to come. This inter-subjectivity, this messiness, highlights the problematic of presenting as a neutral and objective researcher. I cannot disentangle my subjectivity from the research context; hence I strive to acknowledge this and make my participant 'self' as transparent as possible within the text. Here within my vignettes I profile my participant side rather than that of researcher; and yet, of course, this artificial distinction is troubled as I move on to interpret and deconstruct my story. But I'm getting ahead of myself; first I take the centripetal review of the key themes participants shared, the discourses they drew from, prior to focusing and deconstructing through the Butlerian lens some of their and my micro-stories.

6.2   Gendering and Emotion

Certain masculine assumptions dominate managerial and organizational discourse; gender in terms of femininity and emotions are already entangled within such rhetoric as the antitheses of order and rationality. Typically masculine discourse within organizations is 'technically rational, professionally-orientated, highly instrumental, devoid of intimacy yet preoccupied with identity, and driven by rarely reflected upon corporate, or bureaucratic goals' (Knights & Kerfoot, 2004, p436).

The fantasy of the ideal leader within managerial and organizational literature is that of the disembodied, controlled and rational man versus the binary opposite image, which is the embodied, uncontrolled female who

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represents irrationality and sexuality (Martin, 1990; Collinson & Hearn, 1996; Knights & Kerfoot, 2004).

I could see the sedimentation of this discourse as I analysed my participants' accounts and vignettes. Let us return to some familiar characters to explore this. Ian, as I have discussed before (see chapter four) was keen to disassociate himself from both emotional feelings and display within his first two interviews. He represented himself as a clear, logical and analytical thinker in his managerial subjectivity, claiming that,

'99.99% of the time emotion doesn't come into my professional self.'
'I can be quite calm and detached and kind of quite cold around   decisions,'

[Ian, Interview 2]

And his rationalization claimed a controlled and utilitarian justification,

> *'I think anger doesn't add a lot to a debate or a discussion. And in my head I can fairly quickly internalize it and kind of rationalize it as being an emotion that is not kind of valid.'*

[Ian, Interview 2]

This combination of dismissal, denial and discomfort with emotion in the work place is reflected in Ian's earlier vignette of managing a large and unruly crowd (see chapter four); here he undertook significant emotional labour to manage and control his and others' emotions. Despite his avowal of rarely experiencing emotion as a manager, his vignette evidences significant work to control and disguise any display of his fear of the 'angry mob.' He

also emphasizes, to great effect the effort and planning required in controlling and containing the crowd's anger. This provides an example of how emotional regulation and experience of the self and of others 'is a key and unavoidable feature of organizational control' (Fineman & Sturdy, 1999, p637).

What I find to be particularly interesting in this 'angry mob' scenario of Ian's, is his reference to his diminished size and body language; this is prior to going 'front of stage' to manage the crowd,

> *"[B]efore the talk I would be often stood with my arms folded and kind of trying to make myself a size eight to shrink."*
>
> [Ian, Interview 1]

How could this be interpreted? For a moment, prior to taking control and fully attaching, or morphing into his managerial subject position, Ian embodies his fear; his closed posture and allusion to a reduced size demonstrate his nerves, vulnerability and perhaps a wish to disappear. Of particular interest is Ian's analogy of trying to shrink to a woman's dress size. What does or could this indicate? Does this reflect Höpfl's (2007) critique of gender discourse, that men are always signified by expansion and extension, whereas women are diminished, reduced and signify lack? Could it be that when feeling weak and vulnerable, when momentarily consumed by particular emotions, Ian perceives himself as 'other' to the masculine social norms of his managerial identity and ideal-self? In such times, given the dominant binary frame of gender, and its supporting discourse, does he identify as feminine?

Butler sees gendering as a 'dynamic and corporeal process' [Lloyd, 2007, p37]; here is an example of Ian doing gender, constituted by and moving through the available regulatory norms, perhaps triggered in part by his emotions. Possibly also captured by a fear of being recognized as 'other', of being a 'girl' and of needing to 'man up'? Here Ian's gendering is dynamic and corporeal, as well as full of ambiguity, as he fleetingly occupies varying gender positions. If 'following Simone de Beauvoir, one is not born a woman but rather becomes one, then becoming is the vehicle, for gender itself' [Butler, 2004a, p65]. There is no fixed and final achievement of gender for individuals; Ian's vignette can be read through Butler's (1990) seminal theory, that of the 'performativity' of gender; in that 'gender is a kind of persistent impersonation that passes as the real' (pxxviii). Gender is a constant motion, a constant doing; however, there is no subject existing before this activity (Op cit). Following Nietzsche, 'there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming; 'the doer' is merely a fiction added to the deed – the deed is everything' (Nietzsche cited in Butler, 1990, p 33). Ian in his pre-stage vulnerability and his dominant presence as a crowd controller is doing gender; his ambivalent performativity as a manager troubles fixed assumptions. He is not alone in this.

A further example of such dynamic and material gendering is demonstrated in Rachel's first interview. Rachel, you may recall, was a key protagonist in the last chapter, and was excited in anticipation of the organizational change; she used the metaphor of metamorphosis to illustrate the developmental opportunities it promised. Within her first interview, Rachel also spoke of a

transitional point earlier in her career, reflecting on her first few years in a
director post,

> *"[T]hinking back, I think bloody hell I got loads wrong, erm and it felt*
> *scary because I was very – I think it took me a while, it must have took,*
> *thinking, eighteen months to two years to feel as though the jacket fitted*
> *me* (said with humour)*; it wasn't me dad's or me uncle's or, – actually I'd*
> *filled out a bit now and I've got it."*
>
> <div align="right">[Rachel, Interview 1]</div>

So here Rachel also uses body size, this time expansion, to signify confidence
and leadership, *"I'd filled out a bit now and I've got it."* Here Rachel uses the
analogy of fitting her jacket; her jacket, not her father or uncle's, as indicative
of inhabiting the director post, leaving behind her fear of inadequacy and
attaching confidently to the director subject position. This isn't just about
experience and maturity – the kinship Rachel draws from is patriarchal; it is
her male relations' jacket that signifies power but here she fills the jacket and
absorbs the power; she is the 'honorary male' (Höpfl, 2007, Kanter, 1977).

Ian and Rachel's examples demonstrate 'the possibility beyond the naturalized
binary' of feminine and masculine (Butler, 2004a, p43), where gender is beyond
man/woman, masculine/feminine, male and female, and they also indicate
the fluidity of the doing of gender; both Ian and Rachel traverse to and fro,
ricocheting between the poles of culturally assumed gender positions,
through and within the mesh of influencing discourse. Could this be an
example, as Harding (2002) suggests, of how managers in organizations are
now polymorphously perverse? Following Freud, the child, prior to the

Oedipal stage is polymorphously perverse; that is the child still holds all possibilities of gender and sex identities. Can this apply to Ian and Rachel in these examples, where they are not fixed to naturalised gender binary positions but rather both consciously and unconsciously shift and flex according to their context?

Also Ian's account supports the notion that gendered cultures and assumptions impact upon men as well as women (Collinson & Hearn, 1994): the effort appears as great for Ian to achieve this 'ideal' masculine managerial subjectivity as it is for Rachel.

Even where there is recognition of multiple masculinities and femininities (Linstead & Thomas, 2002), they still exist in a binary relation where femininities are in subordination (Linstead & Brewis, 2004, Knights & Kerfoot, 2004). Knights & Kerfoot (2004) particularly challenge the hierarchical positioning and whilst advocating a deconstruction of the gender binary, they highlight how a number of feminists resist this, seeing it as a risk of losing political focus and force. They suggest that the discourses that form subjectivities should be profiled through research analysis and that through this we can see how masculine hegemonic discourse impacts on men as well as women (Op cit). Ian and Rachel's accounts support this flexible notion of gendering, and illustrates how both male and female managers can be repressed through certain managerial discourse. The examples also allude to

normative power relations; each vignette in its reference to body size, attire and manner attributes power and status to masculine performativity.

There is a plethora of feminist critiques of the hegemonic masculine discourse prevalent in managerial practice (see Calas & Smircich, 1996; Brewis & Linstead, 2004). Within these are two frequently cited strategies taken in response to the gender binary (Hekman, 1999); the first is where women are promoted as different and superior due to their sensitivities and interpersonal skills and their emotional intelligence. The second is where difference is denied and women are persuaded to 'play the male game' (Knights & Kerfoot, 2004, p432) and become 'honorary men' (Höpfl, 2007, p626). We can read Rachel's story as displaying the need for 'dragging up' in order to become an 'honorary man'; and isn't Ian's story too, indicative of a similar form of parody and performativity? In his fluid movement, from the performativity of a diminutive (feminine) manager, to becoming the anankastic (masculine) manager in controlling the unruly crowd, isn't he also displaying the emptiness of gender's 'reality'?

In *Gender Trouble (1990)* Butler uses drag to illustrate the 'transferability of the attribute' of femininity (Butler, 2004a, p213) but also emphasises how the 'original' is not real (Op cit); presumably this can conversely be applied to the transferability of the attribute of masculinity. How does this inform an analysis of Rachel and Ian's analogies? Rachel didn't actually wear her father's jacket and Ian didn't squeeze himself into a size 8 dress; but perhaps

the reference to these items and sizes indicate a symbolic meaning, culturally attributed to gendered forms of dress, symbolically associated with the presence, or lack, of power, self-control and status. 'Even if we accept the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of "men" will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that "women" will interpret only female bodies' (Butler, 1990, p10).

And indeed whilst not explicit in this excerpt, Rachel and many other female participants, recounted the need to be suited and booted, particularly when attending the Board. In chapter four I explored the role of masculine clothing in relation to Ian and borrowed the term the 'anankastic aesthetic' from Harding (2002); this was to illustrate the extreme efforts taken to achieve control, or the appearance of control, symbolized through dress and managerial practice. Control here relates to the management of one's own and others' emotions; the 'anankastic aesthetic' illustrates how all feelings require severe control (Op cit). Butler proposes that drag profiles the 'signifying gestures through which gender itself is established' (Butler, 1990, pxxviii). Here Rachel and fellow colleagues, both male and female 'man up' by reiterating the binding of their fleshy corporeality in suits long associated with masculine power and status. Ian's account of his use of his attire and particularly his tie in chapter four also reflects this signifying gesture, for after all, 'the origin is understood to be as performative as the copy' [Butler, 2004a, p209].

> Deconstructing the gender binary is simply to challenge the reification of the terms wherein the divisions between male and female, masculine and feminine or men and women are treated as absolute and unchanging. (Knights & Kerfoot, 2004, p430)

To turn to additional participants, Charles had a similar rhetoric to Ian, when it came to emotional display,

> *'I don't tend to show many emotions really. I tend to be a bit the sameish all the time.'*
>
> [Charles, Interview 2]

This is consistent with research, which shows that managers downplay or even deny being emotional subjects (Coupland et al, 2008); however, this same research identifies how teachers, in contrast to managers and administrators, inflate emotion, often appropriating colourful and expressive language (Op cit). Interestingly and in contrast, within my study some directors, such as Carla, strongly identified as emotional subjects and drew from numerous and dramatic metaphors to illustrate this and Ian, whilst the personification of the anankastic man in his early vignettes, changes dramatically in his response to hearing his post was at risk. Does gender, in addition to professional role, play a part in this identification? Not in an essentialist way, in that if you are a female manager you must therefore be emotional, but rather in the sedimentation of multiple sources of social norms, which emphasize the female as emotional. Do these vie with the converse discourse of the managerial subject as rational and emotion as

something that belongs in the private domain? 'Emotions cannot be reduced to purely physiological or even psychological states but are aspects of the social self' (Coupland et al, 2008, p344). Drawing from Ian and Rachel's examples, the specific context (time and space) and perhaps the associated gendering norms compete to inform the emotional rhetoric and practice.

Rather ironically, Charles was quite passionate in his condemnation of emotion and its lack of value in the workplace, particularly attributing a negative motive to those who engaged in its wanton display and highlighting negative consequences for others:

> *'[P]eople who let their emotions show in a negative sense too much and get flustered and angry, stroppy, crying or whatever, I think are a disruptive influence on the whole organization, and disrupt the teamwork and trust feel and disrupt other peoples' day that could have been going well.'*

> *'You know certain characters in this building for example, stomp around and you can just tell they are putting it on and it's attention seeking.'*
>
> [Charles, Interview 2]

Emotions here, or at least loudly expressed and negative emotions, are seen as disrupting the order and efficacy of the organization; additionally concern is expressed on the relational impact emotional outbursts can have on others. Finally he refers to individual motives for such displays, perhaps having a specific person or people in mind he expands,

'You know that's deliberate, that's attention seeking and it doesn't score any points with me. I don't run after them saying, "Oh dear what's wrong?" I think, "You damn person."'

These statements, of Ian, Charles and Rachel, reflect the normative dualisms that provide the taken for granted backdrop of western society and organizations; where we have the division of rationality and emotion, public and private, nature and culture. Whereas rationality is the masculine hegemony that dominates managerial and organizational discourse and practice, emotions are associated with irrationality and women's 'dangerous desires' and 'hysterical bodies' (Williams & Bendelow, 1996, p150-1) and the unpredictable, unmanaged side of organizations (Gabriel, 1995). The vignettes within the next section illustrate the strength of this association and the fear it engenders – when pollution occurs. Charles in particular appears threatened and disgusted by emotional display, a display associated through time with the flows, leakage, spillage and embodiment of women (Höpfl, 2007; Knights and Surman, 2008). For after all, men or even 'honorary men' at work are not expected to display certain emotions (Hearn, 1993).

Tired, overused clichés of masculine/feminine subject positions, where male is dominant and female represents 'other' or 'lack', track back to times of Plato and persist today (Höpfl, 2007). These norms rely on the sedimentation of repeated iterations (Butler, 2004a) but this is not to say that we must be

fully resigned to and determined by such norms, for following Butler it is through repeated iterations that conditional agency (within the limits of the mesh of regulation) and transformation is achieved.

Many of the previous examples appear to reject and deny an emotional 'self' or at least to determine it as inappropriate for professional life; however not all participants present as such. You may remember Carla, a key protagonist from chapter four; Carla strongly identified as an emotional subject but also frequently referred to the need to manage her emotional display. Carla deployed dramatically emotive language and metaphors to describe her feelings within the interviews; the following excerpt demonstrates a sense of overwhelming emotion, a turbulent wave of feelings that swept Carla beyond the boundaries of control,

> *'Last Monday was probably one of the worst Mondays of my life because I just felt like I didn't belong anywhere. I got out of bed, but when I got to work and usually I'm in at 7.00 am, but just didn't like, and by about 10.30, I just wanted to cry. I just wanted to cry and cry. You know the impact that, that was having my heart was on my sleeve, people were reading and they could see that and they don't like.'*

> *'I believe what I have been here to do is rally the troops and to keep people's morale maintained and keep it going, despite whatever my emotions might have felt like inside.'*
>
> <div align="right">[Carla, Interview 2]</div>

Carla, here struggles and fails to deliver the 'anankastic aesthetic', the orderly control and suppression of her emotional self. She acknowledges the need to manage and restrain her emotional display, of the requirement to, *'keep it going, despite whatever my emotions might have felt like inside.'* Carla, to a greater extent than Ian, Rachel or Charles, identifies as an emotional subject and recognizes the work she undertakes to manage this. Charles and Ian deny such effort; this is despite Ian narrating an event that took significant identity work to manage his and others' emotion. Charles as we saw in the last chapter had significant emotional investment in his image of himself as an ethical man and yet also expressed a passion to *'play the game'* well. To return to Ian and Rachel's earlier vignettes, these could be said to illustrate how bodily citations bind together gender and emotional performativity. Prior to folding away his anxiety, masking his insecurity and transforming to fleetingly occupy an expanded, heightened embodiment of masculine managerial subjectivity, Ian's bodily citations strive to stem the leakage of emotion. His initial response to the angry mob is to shrink and fold his arms; could this folding be a bodily citation indicative of a need to stem, to hold back, a hysterical response? Do the folded arms contain and enclose, at least momentarily, his feminine leaky self?

In the next section I reintroduce Sally as one of the key protagonists of the chapter and revisit an earlier vignette of hers to further explore the entwined rhetoric and bodily citations of emotion and gender. Whilst Sally didn't draw from as wide a range of colourful metaphors as Carla, throughout her

interviews she emphasized her passionate, nurturing 'nature' and the value these emotional tones added to her leadership ability.

6.3 The Tale of Two Interviews: Take Two

Sally's initial experience of applying for posts did not go well; for this section I am going to revisit Sally's vignette from Chapter four where she reported feeling 'high' and out of control during her first two job interviews; both of these had taken place on the same day.

I draw from Butler's earlier work to develop the analysis of Sally's tale of two interviews:

'The one I remember is on one day I had two interviews and I did the first interview and it was the very first interview and I just thought I don't even know what they are asking me. I don't know what is going on around here. I don't know if I want to be here. Just get me out of this place. So that sets the scene a little bit and then I had to drive across to the next interview and go in there.'

'...I walked into this room and the interview started. And I remember being as high as a kite. And I actually think this was going all very well, even though I spilt the water down my front, even when it became quite a male dominated, ...female, ...you could almost feel that, "Oh well I am a female here amongst you lot. I will have to play that one."'

'I actually came out of there feeling I had done really well here. And I was driving away and my Chief Executive phoned me up and said, "How are you?

How have you done?" … and I blurted, "Oh it was all right." And all of a

sudden I took a crash and I just could see what had just happened.'

As suggested in my analysis in chapter four the vignette can be said to

demonstrate Butler's ek-static subject. The dichotomy of the 'self–other' is

challenged in Butler's ek-static subject; 'ek-stasis refers to a self that is located

outside itself in a wider sociality' (Kenny, 2010, p861). Sally loses her 'self' within

the scenario in her interaction with the interviewees, and in the resulting

conversation with the CEO she briefly and consciously becomes 'undone'.

Following Butler (and her reading of Hegel) we are bound up in a

dependency on, and passionate attachment to others for recognition (1997);

we need this recognition in order to belong and live a liveable life, otherwise

we are undone, and abject (Kenny, 2010).

It is within her text on becoming undone and the ek-static subject that Butler

refers to emotion, though this is only fleetingly, and not something that is

theoretically developed within the body of her work. For Butler the subject is

psychically formed through power turning back on itself (Butler, 1997a); this

'trope' or turn, develops the 'fabricated' effect of the subject's conscience and

this conscience attaches the subject to the power that constituted it, in a

relationship of psychic self-objectification, reflection and beratement (Kenny,

2010).

For Butler then, becoming undone and to be ek-static as a subject is

associated with significant emotional feelings. These emotional ways are tied to power and identification (2004, see page 235), for in such instances where one achieves or fails to receive the recognition required, one becomes beside oneself in ecstasy or agony, anxiety, fear or rage. 'Emotions tear us from ourselves' and 'binds us to others' (Op cit, p20).

For Butler gender is complexly produced in a mire of conflicting desires, doubts and discourses (Pullen & Knights, 2007), and here my suggestion is that emotional feelings and displays are also triggered by a plethora of ambiguous normative regulations, bound into a psychic relation of doing and a desire to be.

Gender and emotion are frequently intertwined in the hegemonic masculine discourse of organizational studies, for 'gender and employment relations can be particularly emotionally *charged* given their potential in our society for material/ existential insecurity, fear and anxiety' (Fineman & Sturdy, 1999, p660, original emphasis).

Sally's tale reflects considerable ambiguity of what is expected of her within each of the interviews; in her improvisation, her ambiguity of 'doing gender', is particularly noticeable in the second interview, "*… when it became quite a male dominated, …female, …you could almost feel that, "Oh well I am a female here amongst you lot. I will have to play that one."* The inter-subjectivity and the sociality of gender constitution are illustrated well here:

'There is no epistemological approach to gender, no simple way to ask what are women's ways of knowing, or what might it mean to know women. On the contrary, the ways in which women are said to "know" or to "be known" are already orchestrated by power precisely at that moment in which the terms of "acceptable" categorization are instituted.'
(Butler, 2004a, p215)

As Pullen and Knights, following Butler state, doing gender 'involves considerable ambiguity, incompleteness, fragmentation and fluidity' and 'is tied up with processes of undoing at levels of identity, self, text and practice' (2007, p505).

In the second interview Sally is playing to an audience she has to impress, she's trying to interpret cues, but possibly failing, of how to achieve recognition as a manager. Instead she meets an altogether less comfortable gaze, one of being categorized as 'other.' Sally reads into the gaze of the panel an expectation, a desire, for her to play the 'female' for this male audience. As Butler points out at the beginning of *'Undoing Gender' (2004),* whilst the terms of how to do gender are decided beyond any individual subject, doing gender is not an automatic process, rather it is this kind of continual improvisation always done with or for another. From Sally's words we imagine the interview panel is all male; here we have the power dynamics of gender, the hierarchical subtext added to the mix. However, power is beyond just this relational exchange; it operates at the very production of the binary frame, one socially naturalised, by which we think of gender (Butler, 1990). Is the only offer of recognition to Sally, the one of being 'female'? Do we have a

scenario here whereby, playing to the perceived expectations of the audience Sally has 'done' gender, played to the norms of being 'female' and yet by that very practice become undone as a manager? For becoming undone can be experienced in both positive and negative ways and any form of undoing is also a form of doing (Butler, 2004a). Tacit norms are insidious and one can be 'undone' by both 'conferring and withholding recognition' (Butler, 2004a, p2).

> '[D]oes it turn out that the "I" who ought to be bearing its gender is undone by being a gender, that gender is always coming from a source that is elsewhere and directed toward something that is beyond me, constituted in a sociality I do not fully author?'
> (Butler, 2004a, p16)

I wonder what triggered the panel's response to, or predominant recognition of, Sally as 'female'. Could it have been the upset, literally, the water and spillage? Or was it the more metaphorical upset, her emotional state? In her own words, Sally was as *'high as a kite;'* there are at least two possible readings of this. Was she the kite, flying high, soaring, dancing in the winds of change but fragile as epitomized in her crash down to earth? Or was she as if in a drug induced state, high and in a trance? Only to ultimately crash – and suffer the flashback? We can deduce she was anxious, excitable and perhaps a little loud, and just a little out of control? Was the panel looking for the 'ideal' manager or leader? One that reflecting normative masculine discourse portrayed a disembodied control, rationality and containment? Did they instead recognize 'matter out of place' (Douglas, 1966, p44) in the emotional display, an impression of disorder, one emphasized further by the spillage of

water? Did they perceive the antithesis of their desire?

Or is Sally's expression of, *'being as high as a kite'* an example of the emotional ways that Butler theorizes as part of ek-stasis? Is Sally transported beyond and outside of herself, dislocated by the wider sociality of the panel, on an emotional wave of anxiety, through her attachment to and knowledge of normative regulations, which anticipate her failure to receive a desired recognition?

As identified earlier in this chapter, women are long associated with emotionality, whilst managerial and organizational discourse frequently classify emotion as inappropriate; for '...the dominance of rationality in Western (masculinist) thought ...has led to the relative neglect or dismissal of emotions as 'irrational', private, inner sensations which have been tied, historically, to women's 'dangerous desires' and 'hysterical bodies' (Williams and Bendelow, 1996, p150-1). Given this long association, perhaps the panel feared Sally's emotional spillage, as a danger to a rational, ordered world of organization. Here Sally's presence, to use Douglas again, is the dirt, or a form of soiling, since

> 'dirt is matter out of place... and ... dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter...'
> (Douglas, 1966, p44)

Could Sally embody the inherent threat of chaos for this panel? For 'It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without, above and below, male and female, with and against, that a semblance of order is created' (Butler, 1990, p166).

Sally's tale demonstrates the performativity of gender on numerous levels; in her recounting of her experience it appears she reiterates normative masculine assumptions in projection of these onto her panel. Is this a further example of 'metalepsis', as discussed in Chapter five (Butler, 1999b)? Is Sally anticipating and attributing a force to the law, an expectation, which is therefore fulfilled, to be seen as 'other', as female? Can we apply this as Butler (1999b) does to the performativity of gender? Butler suggests that gender 'operates as an interior essence that might be disclosed, an expectation that ends up producing the very phenomenon that it anticipates' (Op cit, pxiv). Does Sally reiterate gender stereotypes in her psycho/emotional/corporeal lack of control, in the spillage of water and in her giddiness? For 'performativity is not just about speech acts. It is also about bodily acts.' The complex relation between the two is named as "chiasmus" in Body That Matters (Butler, 2004a p198).

> 'The very "I" is called into question by its relation to the one to whom I
> address myself. The relation of the Other does not precisely ruin my story or
> reduce me to speechlessness, but it does, invariably, clutter my speech with
> signs of its doing.
> (Butler, 2004a, p19)

Here, it is not just the panel that clutters Sally's speech and gender performativity but the wider sociality, the historical sedimentation and congealment of repeated citations of gender discourse and practice, which inform Sally's 'doing' and 'undoing'.

How do other narratives compare with Sally's vignette of gender and emotional performativity? Next we return to Rachel, to explore a tale of embarrassment, a further example of entangled emotion and gendering but with a difference; here we also have a very somatic display. Rachel shared this brief scenario in her first interview.

6.4   Bodily Matters and Leakage

> The body 'is the referent of the deed; it is that whose activities are reported, relayed, communicated. But in the confession, the body acts again, displaying its capacity for doing a deed, and announces, apart from what is actually said, that it is, actively, sexually there.'
> (Butler, 2004a, p165-66)

Rachel described how earlier in her career, whilst on maternity leave, she had requested an informal meeting; she was anticipating and trying to plan her return to work and it was during a time of organizational restructure. She recounts her meeting with the CEO of the new organization, where she was hoping to secure a post. The meeting took place in his office.

> *'And I remember seeing him and I'd got a breast pad in my left bra,*
> *and I – er and I started oozing, as you do,*
> *and I remember Henry didn't say anything, just handed me a tissue and*
> *he just smirked at me and I liked him. Cos, obviously he'd seen – I had*
> *this – I remember – I had this navy blue skirt on and some, a big baggy*
> *jersey – this navy blue jersey sort of sleeveless top on thinking, "Oh God –*
> *credible candidate or – can't control her lactation in my office."'*

[Rachel, 1st Interview]

Does this snippet hold significant information in terms of gender, emotion and work relations? I adapt elements of Martin's (1990) deconstructionist approach, through use of Butler, (1990, 1993) Sedgwick, (2003) and Douglas (1966) to tease out any 'suppressed gender conflicts implicit in the story' (Martin, 1990, p339).

A useful point of entry is to identify a dichotomy within the text (Op cit); here similar to the speech Martin deconstructed in her seminal paper, the predominant dichotomy is between the public world of work, in this case Henry's office, and the private world of the family. This latter intimate world dominates the text in the form of Rachel's literal embodiment and display of the maternal. Here in this scenario we have the office context, where effectiveness, efficiency, containment and order are the regulatory norms, and via Rachel's presence, a juxtaposition of an organizational taboo – there is a female display of sexuality and fertility, nurturance, intimacy, abundance and leakage.

> '[I]f the body is synecdochal for the social system per se, or a site in which open systems converge, then any kind of unregulated permeability constitutes a site of pollution and endangerment.'
> (Butler, 1990, p168)

The above citation draws from Douglas (1966); what does this say of Rachel's story? Rachel describes how within the meeting, an informal interview, her

breast *'started oozing'*- a bodily citation of her femininity, sexuality and her maternal role. In contrast to her earlier vignette, where the rhetoric of the male jacket indicates her status as a 'honorary man', here Rachel's clothing cannot mask her corporeality, cannot bind, disguise and contain her flesh. Here Rachel literally leaks her femininity into the masculine domain of work. Does this permeability, one associated so closely with the personal, threaten, pollute and endanger Henry's office?

Here in contrast to the 'anankastic aesthetic' (Harding, 2002) of relentless rituals and practice, in the interest of rigid control, we have an 'unbounded aesthetic', one displaying abundance and spillage. As discussed earlier there is a hierarchy associated with the gender binary, one where the masculine is dominant and the feminine relegated to the position of lack or 'Other.' Binaries always have such hierarchies (Derrida, 1982, Irigaray, 1980) and within this binary, masculinity is associated with the public sphere and rationality, whereas the feminine is aligned to the private setting and emotional margins (Linstead & Brewis, 2004). Here this hierarchy is reinforced by the power inherent in the scenario; Henry, as the CEO, is the organization, whilst Rachel, at this moment has no organizational status; here she is the subordinate hoping to belong, hoping to secure a position.

If the universal subject is perceived as abstract, disembodied and masculine, then there is a projection of the 'disavowed and disparaged embodiment on to the female sphere, effectively renaming the body as female' (Butler, 1990, p16-17).

So here we have a further dichotomy, the dualism of the mind and body, respectively associated with male and female. Here there is 'unregulated permeability' (Op cit), the leakage of the milk cannot be stemmed or disguised. Given that losing control of the body is metaphorically equivalent to social disorder and mayhem (Harding, 2002), this unwitting display of the female 'oozing' body is an affront to the 'anankastic aesthetic' and could be perceived as dangerous, alien and threatening within the office environment. Rachel recognizes this in her statement, describing herself in the third person, anticipating Henry's judgment she laments, *"Oh God – credible candidate or – can't control her lactation in my office."* Here is the suggestion that to be credible one must be in control, even of bodily matters – after all 'honorary men' don't become pregnant' (Martin, 1990, p348).

> Mary Douglas's Purity and Danger suggests that the very contours of "the body" are established through markings that seek to establish specific codes of cultural coherence. Any discourse that establishes the boundaries of the body serves the purpose of instating and naturalizing certain taboos regarding the appropriate limits, postures, and modes of exchange that define what it is that constitutes bodies.'
> (Butler, 1990, p166)

Particularly interesting in Rachel's account is the reference to the relationship and response between the two actors. Rachel is acutely aware of her body's leakage, of its potential metaphor of lacking control, and of Henry's observation.

What is the emotional context of this scenario? In this vulnerable and visible

exposure could we anticipate that Rachel felt a moment of embarrassment and shame? Sedgwick, drawing from a number of theorists and psychologists, suggests that this emotion stems from early infancy, where the mirroring expressions between infant and caregiver are an essential component of primary narcissism and that where this breaks down and the infant doesn't receive the recognition it requires, the shame response is triggered, one of 'eyes down, head averted' (2003, p36).

> 'The shame-humiliation response, when it appears, represents the failure or
> absence of the smile of contact, a reaction to the loss of feedback from
> others, indicating social isolation and signaling the need of relief from that
> condition.'
> (Basch, cited in Sedgwick, 2003, p36)

Shame suffuses the moment, often accompanied by the 'fallen face', a blush and a keen desire to establish once again the 'interpersonal bridge' (Sedgwick, 2003, p36). Does this explain Rachel's apparent gratitude, caught up in her announcement, *"and I liked him"*- is this an expression of her relief at Henry's non-verbal acknowledgements, his proffering of tissues and his smirk? Does this smirk signify a shared embarrassment of this intrusion of the personal into the professional space? For shame whilst acutely tied up with individuation is also relational and contagious (Op cit).

Or rather, does the smirk signify something more 'knowing'? When using the thesaurus on my computer, smirk produces the synonyms of leer and sneer; it is defined as an insolent smile. Does this smirk then uncover further gender

conflicts within this scenario; does the bodily citation of a smirk reiterate assumptions of woman's place? What could Henry's gaze and smirk 'really' indicate? Does he see a recently pregnant young woman, who having delivered her infant embodies both fertility and sexuality? Does Henry, with that knowing smirk, bestow a particular form of recognition on Rachel, one of being a sexual object? How does this gaze fit with the available subjectivities of women in organizational life, such as 'honorary man', 'mother', 'pet', or 'seductress' (Kanter, 1977, Martin, 1990)? As referenced earlier in this scenario Rachel is at odds with being a 'honorary man', such women don't become pregnant (Martin, 1990), have babies or leak milk. And why does Rachel appear to be grateful for this smirk? Why does she decide based on this moment of inter-performativity that she 'likes' Henry?

One of Martin's (1990) suggested deconstruction devices is to substitute the gender of the main character of the vignette in order to profile gender specific issues within the narrative. Here, adopting this strategy, I re-write the scenario and instead of Rachel we have Richard, a male manager meeting with the CEO; imagine he is returning from an extended period of sick leave, following complex abdominal surgery,

> *'And I remember seeing him and I'd got a <u>dressing on my wound</u>,*
> *and I – er and I started oozing, as you do, and I remember Henry didn't*
> *say anything, just handed me a tissue and he just smirked at me and I*
> *liked him. Cos, obviously he'd seen – I had this – I*
>
> [substituted words underlined]

Here the familiarity of Henry's smirk and offer of a tissue stand out even more, as does Richard's resulting gratitude and affection. The switch to a male employee underlines the power dynamics: Why would an employee respond so positively to such patronization? Whilst the switch does not quite work, after all, I would hope that a leaking wound would generate a response of concern, it does profile an uncomfortable dynamic. There is a sense of familiarity in the exchange, an inappropriate intimacy, on what was after all a first acquaintance. Was Rachel grateful because a more fearful response was anticipated? Perhaps whilst this form of recognition is far from ideal, it was at least a familiar one and this male/female dynamic was a form of recognition. Similar to Sally's experience, perhaps such recognition is received as better than none. Sally had initially believed that her interview had gone well, it was only during her post-interview telephone recollection with her CEO that she had a moment of clarity. Does Sally and Rachel's initial reactions result from familiarity; do we have here the sedimentation of numerous discourses, conversations and experiences that reinforce the naturalization of this dynamic? Whilst Henry's smirk probably 'undid' Rachel as a manager, perhaps it was received so well because it was preferable to a blank gaze? Better than a lack of recognition, that blank look that would trigger the 'eyes down, head averted' shame response (Sedgwick, 2003, p36)? As identified in chapter four it is better to attach to painful positions, perhaps to receive derogatory recognition than not to attach at all, better to belong than to be abject.

Just as in the examples of Ian and Rachel used to open this chapter, Sally and Rachel's vignettes, demonstrate the various entanglements and knots of discourse and practice that constitute emotion and gender in organizations. These managers in their day-to-day lives, in partial opacity, reiterate the cultural norms associated with gender and emotional display. These vignettes have provided an insight into the constant 'nature' of becoming a manager, of the reiteration of various speech and body citations. They profile the matrix of gender discourse in organizations, the sedimentation of masculine norms in the managerial context and how power and inequality is the backdrop of the scenarios. Various emotional ways take hold of our protagonists and take them out of themselves in ek-stasis; they are tied to other's recognition for their survival, for their intelligibility. This wider organizational sociality holds a network of regulated norms; our protagonists are constituted moment by moment through this complex system.

This section began with Sally and her vignette of ek-stasis, a story of how she became undone in the mesh of gender regulatory norms and assumptions. In a metalepsis of gender assumptions her performativity undoes her, at least momentarily, as a manager. Anxiety is the emotional way that Sally is transported outside of her 'self', in ek-stasis she is *as high as a kite'*. In her post interview reflection, triggered by her telephone account to her CEO she comes face-to-face with her abjection and *'crashes'*. In this performativity she

embodies and cites spillage, disorder and threat; within this brief scenario she is dismissed as matter out of place, abject and undone; she does not belong.

In Rachel's account we have an even more extreme challenge to masculine norms of the managerial identity; here there is the absence of a binding somatic or emotional control. In Rachel's scenario there is a chiasmus, a complex relation, of speech and bodily citations; public and private worlds meet, recognized female roles within the organization are foreclosed; only the old familiar recognition of a female as a sexual object is available. Within the masculine hegemony that is the managerial world the managerial gaze brands her as female; here the familiarity is more blatant, the exclusion and chains of power more overt.

The next section introduces the most overtly autoethnographic element of this research; here I am a key protagonist within the chapter. This profiles, rather than obfuscates my participation. As referenced earlier, I am messily all over this research; I am a manager who lived through these times, as I researched others; I too experienced the fearful anticipation and at times excitement of the organizational restructuring. I was part of the inter-subjectivity that co-created the narratives of my participants and I am the researcher that analyses and presents them to you the reader. This next section is incorporated as a challenge, as an alternative to the positivist norms and regulations that still linger - that all research should be neutral and objective.

6.5 Autoethnography:

> 'To portray autobiography as such a solipsistic act is to resign the self to a
> silent and lifeless 'world' – a 'world,' finally, devoid of self as well as others,
> since the differentiating circumstances of time and space would be collapsed
> into a single, all-inclusive consciousness which would have nothing to be
> conscious of except itself. Was it not such a non-place that Narcissus
> drowned?'
> (Janet Varner Gunn cited in Cavarero, 2000, p32)

One concern of mine (articulated in chapter three) is that through research and autoethnography, I risk exposing and fixing others and myself in prose. There is the inherent menace of closure in the act of writing and publishing. Once written and submitted, any notion of control is lost. However much I try to emphasize the unfinished 'nature' of individuals and the partiality of perspective of any research findings, there remains the jeopardy that the readers, both present and future, will congeal this incomplete account, as all there is to know about my participants and me.

This final section troubles this closure drawing from two autoethnographic extracts of mine; one was written several years ago and ultimately informed the development of my thesis (Mischenko, 2005); and the second is drawn from this study, from my final autoethnographic interview. Both are emotional expressions of identity-work but each differs; the first expressed in the medium of poetry is abundant with metaphor and appears to exemplify my emotional 'self'; the latter in more traditional prose,

acknowledges an emotional strain but at first glance is more constrained than in the first, though as you will come to see, this assumption is troubled in my analysis.

I begin by returning to that earlier 'self', my first autoethnographic piece (Mischenko, 2005), where I explored through my own experience, managerial subjectivity at a time of increased pressure in the workplace. In the following section I revisit this expression of striving to do, or become my managerial 'self' and I draw from additional theorists, particularly Butler in my reinterpretation.

As highlighted above, my first autoethnographic expression used poetry to express my experience; for as Brady identifies, 'poetry puts a semiotic smudge on that window, offers no free vision, shows itself as a method, and plays with metaphor (Brady, 2004, page 628). There were three parts to the poem I included in my original paper; I shared the first verse in the second chapter of this thesis to enter into a dialogue with the literature; below is the final verse where I have returned from a holiday to the pressures of work.

6.5.1 Part 1: The Return

Physically I feel the return,
like a jolt:
A thudding of the heart.
I resist
going back to that pace,
that rat race.
I'm open and vulnerable,
after my break
but I resist.
My chest tightens,
my breathing labours.
Overwhelmingly work looms
but I resist.
AND I hurt!
Tears and anguish,
suppressed.
But again that refrain,
the pressure of work,
plugged into our pods,
we feed the machine,
life sucked dry.
Pull on my armour.
Where are my masks?
Toughen up Jane
Back to my lists
of things to do….
Tight is my chest,
tight is my smile
How can I resist*?*

Mischenko (2005 p208)

In my initial analysis I drew from Foucault and poststructuralist theorists to analyse my poem. I referenced how the open plan office design facilitated the panoptical gaze (Foucault, 1977), and how this could be presented as an effective control device where one, consciously visible, ultimately interiorises a monitoring and supervisory gaze (Hofbauer, 2000).

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But join me in refocusing with a new lens on this poem; let us take a closer reading in the context of this research and particularly this chapter. What further interpretations can I tease out? How does this poetic outpouring compare to Ian, Rachel and Sally's vignettes? How do I 'do', or 'become' a manager? And how do the social, organizational norms of gender and emotion get played out in my verse?

Reading this extract now, I am seized by the proliferation of powerful metaphors; for example, *"rat race", "plugged into our pods", "we feed the machine"* and *"life sucked dry"*; here appears to be a strong theme of exploitation, of instrumental abuse; the metaphors suggest managers are fuel, or fodder for the organizational beast. But similar to Carla, this release, this metaphorical gush of emotional expressiveness is confined to the poem. Here, as I suggested in my original paper, I 'out' my vulnerable and emotional 'self' (Mischenko, 2005). In contrast, in managerial practice there is an almost painful call to suppress this anguish. I need to, *"pull on my armour"* and hide my struggles; *"where are my masks?"*

Then there is the reference to *'the jolt'*; how could this be interpreted? This appears to embrace a dichotomy, a divide between my private and public self; I profile the shock of returning back to the organizational setting, to the change of pace and mounting lists of tasks to do. I believe this poem captures linguistic and bodily citations of emotion; here we have the chiasmus of

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emotional performativity. For in the metaphors we have both linguistic expression, which draws from social managerial norms, where I berate my failure to resist overwhelming demands, and there is also a physical manifestation of this fatal attraction. I reference the tightened chest, the suppressed tears. Perhaps the "*jolt*" signifies my resuscitation to a managerial subjectivity. This can be read as a narrative of becoming; but rather than subtle iterations of managerial subjectivity, here is an abrupt and painful shock. This *'jolt'* suggests a moment of frozen horror, a transitory, consciously ek-static state (Butler, 1997a); my moment of turning, becoming, of being torn from and losing a 'self' in a field of relationality, of momentarily flailing, and then of attaching, however fleetingly to a new iteration of my managerial subjectivity. For even though this is an apparent painful attachment, one that I wanted to resist, **'*How can I resist?'*** For however much I may have detested that available subjectivity, at that time, it is better to attach, to be intelligible, rather than to be abject (Butler, 1994).

This first autoethnographic extract profiles an emotional subjectivity similar to Carla's. Like Carla I draw from multiple metaphors to express powerful emotional ties and similar to Carla, I am conscious that these emotions would be interpreted as a vulnerability and as a certain kind of 'female' leakiness of emotion; a spillage not in keeping with the masculine norms of managerial discourse and practice. They need containing; here similar to Carla, Ian and Rachel my poem demonstrates a recognition that organizational normative regulations prohibit an emotional display and of having a vulnerable 'self'.

So let us travel forward a couple of years, which it is worth noting is still several years removed from the researcher 'self' that writes this chapter; this next section draws from my experience in a job interview, one that I recounted to my supervisor, Jackie in my third and final research interview.

6.5.2   Part 2: An Interview

Prior to the interview had been an extended process where I had been pooled and matched to a number of managerial posts. I then had to prioritise which of these I would apply for. This was an interview for the post I really wanted: I felt a significant pressure to perform well. The selected extract below narrates the level of tension in my attempts to manage and conceal the emotion inherent in the experience:

> *'That you build up anyway for an interview. I mean I was in that place like a tightly wound spring I suppose, where I, ...it had been building up for so long so I was just very, very aware...very, very ...talking a great deal. I had come back and I had talked to my colleagues about how I felt it went. I had sort of rehearsed the whole ...the questions and I thought I had done OK in the interview and I thought I had answered pretty well. But you never know kind of thing, that kind of tension of   waiting for the mobile to go; for the call etc.'*

And my emotional fragility, when I received the call telling me the outcome;

> *I was saying, "wait I will get in the office." So I got just inside* [name of office] *and sat in the reception area where I could hear. And so I was*

there and I think it was the usual kind of phrase. "I am very pleased to be able to tell you that I can offer you the job." And it was like there was this whoosh of relief. Kind of a thank god feeling and thinking ...but then almost immediately she said, "and I want to give you some feedback as soon as possible." And the way she said it, there was obvious things that I had not done right. Or that is how I interpreted it at that moment.

[Autoethnographic, final interview]

So how should I analyse this interview excerpt? Here there is less overt use of emotional metaphor in my vignette and yet if I just prick the surface of my veneer we can shatter any fantasy of managerial control and composure. An initial reading could suppose that I was successfully managing and holding back any pent up anxiety and tension. However, my use of metaphor of a lengthy build up of strain suggests this was with significant effort. This is not an example of a manager in perfect attachment or alignment with the masculine ideal; here there is a partial fixation, enough perhaps to sustain a deceptive image of order but with the threat of slippage imminent.

Here, similar to Sally's earlier tale of two interviews, there is delayed reaction and realization. Whereas Sally was flying high, only to crash to earth, here I am, a *'tightly wound up spring'* who first experiences a *"whoosh of relief"*, only to interpret my need for feedback as a damning and personal critique. Here there is an echo of Carla's first vignette, the conversation at the railway station with a powerful other who failed to provide the desired recognition;

this caused her so much disquiet and became the frame through which to interpret her experience of organizational change, from Assessment Centre through to interviews.

But apart from these similarities, how else can we interpret my vignette? In the first section there are many metaphors alluding to a building up of pressure, of the strain of suppression, of holding back. I remember that interview and how I had an 'out of body experience' (as shared in chapter four), where I appeared to view the process from a dislocated position and how my responses to the questions felt taut, distant and removed. I noted this performativity, this seepage and bodily citation of an anxious manager, recognisable through my strained face and vocal chords, and yet I could not relax. The content in my responses was articulate, appropriate and knowledgeable but my body and particularly my voice gave me away. My speech in my interview with Jackie spills out in a rush, a pressure of disjointed speech, epitomizing and reliving an emotional chaos I briefly embodied, *"I was just very, very aware...very, very ...talking a great deal."*

And then what of the subsequent scene, of how I received my phone call; why did my *"whoosh"* of relief fracture so readily? Why could I not sustain my delight? What triggered my immediate negative reading of the offer of feedback?

Whilst there is no overt mention of gender, no obvious gender corporeal

citation, there is evidence of emotional metaphor. I fleetingly embody a brittle, taut and anxious manager. What mesh of regulatory norms are displayed here? I have failed to successfully attach to the masculine managerial subjectivity of a composed, disembodied talking head. But there is no obvious leakage; I did not spill a drink, or fail to stem bodily fluids; I did not personify a 'giddy' female in my interactive style. But I did not attach securely to the promoted managerial subjectivity; there is disorder, I fell short; there was lack. My broken, squeaky voice gave me away.

Shall we focus a moment on my voice? For me, recalling this vignette, it is the bodily citation of a distant, tight, brittle and fractured voice that dominated my managerial subjectivity within the recalled interview. Here, briefly, I became that 'walking talking wound' discussed in chapter five (Riley, 2000, p125). But how could we interpret this failure, this tight, throaty, and yet fleshy somatic citation? Perhaps, to be provocative, it is as if I am an adolescent boy, my voice not fully broken, likely at any moment to squeak and crack, rather than maintain a steady timbre? Or perhaps my managerial subjectivity is caught momentarily as transgender, or betwixt and between gender? Striving to present as the masculine idea, there is slippage, breakage; did I present as an unintelligible manifestation? If following Harding (2002) managers are polymorphously perverse, do I improvise unconvincingly and therefore fail to be politically intelligible? Despite my efforts to embody the controlled managerial subject position, my voice in an emotional and bodily citation gives me away; rather than 'honorary man', I am found out as a failed 'pretender'.

This is intriguing, this entry into analysis by focusing on the voice. Cavarero following Arendt, 'locates the political sense of speech in the singularity of the speaker's voice' this emerges from, 'the reciprocal communication of voices' (Cavarero, 2005, pviii); she emphasises the embodied uniqueness of the orators in relating with others, within the material, contextual space of the interaction. Whilst many bodily citations can be masked, for example faces, gestures and words, Cavarero advises that voices cannot be concealed (Op cit). In this she is challenging the logo centric philosophical privileging of 'the visual over acoustic, semantic content over vocal utterances, and an abstract, anonymous "what" over a particular, embodied "who"' (Burgess & Murray, 2006, p166). She advocates, rather a focus on the vocal and acoustic, the resonance and quality of the voice (Op cit). Cavarero (2005) suggests the voice is pre-symbolic in origin, drawing from mother and infant interaction, which she proposes is prior to language and law; for her the politics of voice is understood as both 'universal and as radically particular' (Burgess & Murray, 2006, p168).

So to apply this to my vignette and my reflections of the same, it is the constricted and tight 'nature' of my voice that communicates most powerfully and effectively 'who' I am, in my embodied singularity - in this particular moment and place. However, a Butlerian reading would challenge the possibility of capturing 'who' I am as distinct from the 'what' that produces me and is produced through me in managerial practice and discourse.

However, though the voice cannot capture 'who' I am in any essential way, it does give me away in a performativity and emotionality tied up with gender that cannot be escaped.

> 'Just as no prior materiality is accessible without the means of discourse, so no discourse can ever capture that prior materiality; to claim that the body is an elusive referent is not the same as claiming that it is only and always constructed.'
> (Butler quoted in Costera Meijer & Prins, 1998, p278).

And so my broken, tight voice is a bodily citation of an anxious manager, one struggling with and failing to embody the managerial ideal. Discourse cannot fully encapsulate how I do, or become a manager but neither can a unique Jane, even momentarily, be identified as distinct from such discourse.

6.6   Summary

> 'Let us now begin to think again on what it might mean to recognize one another when it is a question of so much more than the two of us.'
> (Butler, 2004a, p151)

So, there has been a more overt presence of me as participant, researcher and author in this final analysis chapter. This reflects the inter-subjective nature of research and whilst I am the author and researcher I am also a participant, and physically and emotionally tied to, and contingent to the study.

The analogy of dirt can be applied to emotions in my analysis, in that the vignettes suggest that these are seen as a form of pollution and disorder, needing to be denied, purged, or boxed away, from display in organizational settings.

I've demonstrated how I understand emotion to be a component of gender performativity – and how, following Butler (1997) we are taken beyond ourselves in emotional ways; we lose a 'self' that can never be returned to, we are tied to sociality, to others through normative regulations. Using Butler to analyse these vignettes contributes to challenging the masculinist hegemony of organizational discourse and the dichotomies, or solidity of gender positions.

Ian and Rachel reiterate citations aligning metaphorical body size and for Ian the 'anankastic aesthetic' (Harding, 2002) to managerial effectiveness; they each 'drag up' to attach to masculine managerial positions; they achieve this fluidly through the available mesh of regulations that informs their performativity. There is no solidified gender, aligned to their naturalised sex, there is fluidity, a polymorphous perversity; however, both recognise the status and power signified in masculine norms of rationality, control and order. Both strive to attach to this subject position as the organizational ideal, with the resulting restriction of emotional expression.

The comparison between Charles and Ian with Carla demonstrates how some participants identify more strongly with being an emotional subject, whilst others deny (suppress) and yet story intense emotional labour. Carla's experience is of needing to undertake significant emotional work to manage her feelings and mask her display. Ian's in contrast is to deny his experience of, or value of emotion, within his professional role, identifying more strongly with the anankastic aesthetic.

Sally's vignette demonstrates how emotion and gender interplay, how in ek-stasis, she is torn from herself in anxiety, losing herself she is grateful for any recognition, even when this fixes her as 'female,' and she is 'undone' as a manager. Rachel challenges the dichotomy of public and private, culture and body, reason and emotion; in contrast to her earlier role as 'honorary man,' in the latter scenario she embodies the maternal and private, nurturance and sexuality. Her vignette demonstrates the threat her maternal display can hold for the organizational setting of Henry's office, where control and efficacy is the order of the day. Like Sally she is grateful for any recognition, even when this has 'knowing' connotations. Patronization is preferable to rejection when you need to belong. This is the 'uneasy dynamic in which one seeks to find oneself in the Other only to find that that reflection is the sign of one's expropriation and self-loss' (Butler, 2004a, p241).

Finally the juxtaposition of my autoethnographic pieces troubles further

simplistic readings of managerial subjectivity and profiles the plaiting of gender and emotional performativity in doing, becoming a manager and becoming 'undone'. Dominant in both is an assumption and a frustrated practice of needing to mask and contain emotional display. In the latter scenario the bodily citation of my tight and broken voice undoes and troubles any attachment to the hegemonic masculine managerial subject position.

Within this research managers, both male and female suffer as a result of the dominant masculine discourse, which so powerfully frames expectations of managerial subjectivity. However, whilst the masculine, rational and disembodied talking head dominates as the managerial ideal, analysis of the vignettes troubles simplistic gender alignment. There is a constant 'doing' and 'undoing' of management, gender and emotion, in a cluttered fluidity of speech and bodily citations. Managers, male and female struggle to attach to such a restricted mode of subjectivity; each protagonist has varying moments of slippage. The emotional 'dirt' of organizations cannot be ordered away; there is a constant seepage and spillage of emotion, often bound up in bodily citations, whether this is indicated by size, manner and attire as referenced by Ian and Rachel; by literal spillage or leakage as seen in Sally and Rachel's vignettes; or by a broken, squeaky voice as seen in mine.

The following final chapter revisits my research to analyse further the findings, and how these contribute to the theory, practice and policy of management and organizational studies.

Chapter 7: A Discussion and beginnings

7.1   Introduction

It is in this final chapter, which bears the synthesis of my research to date, that I discuss the critical aspects of my study. My primary research goal was to delve into and explicate managerial subjectivity, particularly during times of threat (such as significant organizational downsizing). I hoped to develop new theoretical insights and ideas for improved organizational policy and practice. I profile three main findings, developing them into the main theoretical contributions of my thesis. The first is the broken rhythm and variable pace of subjectivity closely associated with emotion; there is a disruptive and erratic pattern to managerial performativity not referenced in the existing literature. Particularly during times of change numerous senior managers' vignettes referenced moments of conscious Ek-stasis. Strong emotional responses (whether excitement, or more frequently fear) dislocated the managers from their fantasy of a coherent organizational self. This loss of the self often indicated by pauses, disruptions and incoherence in the narrative resulted in a momentary stalling; fleetingly the managers, often in response to surprising feedback from powerful others, were confused. The rhythm of managerial performativity was disrupted; however, there was still an overriding desire to persist and attach to a recognisable managerial subject position. Performativity appears to accelerate at such times, not in a Goffman performance reading – where the actor chooses to act a certain way

- rather in an exaggerated enactment of managerial discourses, which is uncontrolled; I provide examples of this later in the chapter.

My next two critical findings took me by surprise; I identified a complex relation: There was an over riding sense of managers' vulnerability, heightened during times of major threat and a symbiotic connection between this and a dark and shadowy Machiavellian cloud. It is the juxtaposition of these two themes that form the most surprising research finding. The fragility and exploitability of the managerial 'self', and how this is bound into ethical relations is rarely mentioned in the literature (for an exception see Ford & Harding, 2004). But this relation was profound in my research. Whether strongly identifying with Machiavellian subjectivities, rejecting them or oscillating betwixt and between, all managers were caught in its discursive net. And this identification was stimulated by their acute and inescapable vulnerability: In their desire to persist as a managerial subject, compounded by the fear of a social (organizational) death, the Machiavellian frame (as the way of perceiving people and events) was an irresistible discourse. A powerful metalepsis anticipated and therefore reiterated the Machiavellian discourse at this time of major organizational change. Bound within this system of thought and practice they promulgated (un) ethical relations, perceiving this as the *necessary evil* of such times.

Throughout this chapter I probe and test how my findings support and differ from the existing literature, and therefore highlight the unique contributions

this study offers. I then set out the critical implications for theory, policy, practice and research and finally 'close' on a reflexive note.

7.2 Managerial Subjectivity: Loose Threads

I have engaged in many dialogues throughout this research; initial conversations took place between my early autoethnographic managerial voice (a vulnerable self) and the existing literature, which holds various approaches of researching and theorising managerial subjectivity. Whilst I found a wealth of research into the 'identity-work' of managers, there was little reference to, or explanation of how, some discourses seize managers to a differing degree and how sometimes this is with such great effect. The majority of studies also neglected the affective components of subjectivity. From a methodological perspective, few had taken a longitudinal approach, to follow managers through a period of organizational change, and even fewer (if any) had combined autoethnographic and ethnographic approaches. It is into this identified space that I position my research.

Further, I adopted a psychosocial approach, strongly but not exclusively informed by Judith Butler's theories. This theoretical framework acknowledges the social, performative and affective elements of subjectivity and hence provides an opportunity to contribute to a field, where this recognition is minimal. Butler's juxtaposition of poststructuralist and psychoanalytical theories provides a stimulating concept of identification, one that incorporates the social, power and affect (Kenny et al, 2011a) and is a

theory largely neglected by organizational studies (Borgerson, 2005, for exceptions see Ford & Harding, 2004; Hodgson, 2005; Tyler & Cohen, 2010; Kenny, 2010; Harding 2013).

This Butlerian (1997) –informed reading of the vignettes of senior managers does not claim to be the singular authoritative text on managerial subjectivity; as discussed in chapters two and three there are numerous prisms through which to view this critical and complex issue; each renders into sharp relief certain useful perceptions but inevitably occludes others in the process. However, this research does contribute new insights and concerns; these trouble the often over simplistic, reductionist interpretations of managerial subjectivities, which incorporate unquestioningly the binaries of reason and emotion; sex and gender; good and evil; power and vulnerability.

The findings of my research were initially presented and analysed in chapters four, five and six; below I summarise what I perceive to be the critical findings within each, prior to developing further the three major theoretical implications highlighted above.

7.2.1 Chapter 4: Unravelling 'Selves'

In chapter four the managers' narratives reflect attachment to claims of a coherent 'self.' However, my Butlerian analysis troubles this; close readings suggest varying rhythms of becoming and losing managerial subjectivity.

Disjointed, fragmented, flailing, fleeting, unravelling and conflicting 'selves' are illustrated and yet all are connected in a passionate attachment to this often, painful subordination (Butler, 1997a). This is despite experiencing game playing, bullying and exploitation (see for examples the vignettes of Jo, Sally, Ian, Charles). There is this relentless pursuit to attach, to connect and to persist in managerial subjectivity. This is a process permeated with and generated by encounters with 'others,' whether through social norms, powerful relations, or through experiencing the "self" as 'other.' The vignettes of the main protagonists (Carla and Ian) briefly capture a number of these fleeting selves; they demonstrate the fragmentation and multiplicity of selves and how illusory fixing managers' self, or subjectivity to one trace would be.

Within the chapter there are poignant vignettes that render into sharp relief the fragility, pain and vulnerability of managerial subjectivity. Significant conversations with those who embody power in the new NHS organizations often acted as a catalyst for these Ek-static moments; these ranged from critical feedback in conversation (Carla), through to negative experience of interviews (Carla, Sally and me), or receiving a letter that their post was at risk (Ian). At such times the managerial 'self' unravelled, sometimes in a gradual dislocation, a questioning moment, at other times in a regular iteration of not fitting the norm. And on occasions there was sudden and significant shock, an acute freefall in this loss of the managerial 'self'. However, Ek-stasis is only momentary and immediately followed by varying

rhythms of performativity, a relentless and persistent flailing, driven by the desire and drive to re-attach.

We have seen that despite their seniority, this passionate attachment, the desire to persist in their managerial subjectivity, binds managers to the organizational network of regulatory norms and ensures their susceptibility and risk of exploitation. This suggestion of vulnerability contrasts with many studies that position senior managers simply as the wielders of power and as the instigators of initiatives aiming to manage workers' subjectivities for organizational instrumental gain.

7.2.2   Chapter 5: The Dark Side

Chapter five particularly focuses on how (un) ethical relations predominate in the midst of organizational change, heightening as managers experienced assessment centres and interviews. I was surprised by the Machiavellian discourse that prevailed and was often justified as a '*necessary evil',* having not anticipated this finding.

Charles, a key protagonist in this chapter, was seen to fleetingly attach to differing and conflicting managerial subjectivities. During the period of re-structuring his ambivalence heightens as Machiavellian *'frames of war'*, become the principal form of perceiving organizational life. Increasingly he absorbs, embodies and enacts the game player subjectivity, even whilst manifesting intense discomfort. Here, unlike MacIntyre's (1999) theory and

Jackall's (1988) research that suggest managers bracket their ethics and follow senior managers' instruction whilst in the work environment, Charles struggles to the point of insomnia when caught up in duplicitous acts. In an account from Rachel, the second key protagonist, we gain an insight into a fear, the terror of becoming a victim and experiencing a 'non survivable social shame' (Butler quoted in Davies, 2008, p89); there is a tangible dread of failing to be organizationally intelligible.

I believe that the findings in chapters four and five are bound together, in that it is managers' passionate attachment to their managerial 'self' that constitutes their vulnerability and yet also facilitates their unethical behaviours in order to persist in that identity. And organizational change, particularly when motivated by the need to downsize, is understood as a threat to survival. This reinstalls the Machiavellian framework, and therefore the discourse and practice of political manoeuvring, suspicion and secret conversations.

7.2.3   Chapter 6: Dirt, Gender and Emotion

In my sixth chapter I apply the analogy of dirt to emotions in my analysis, in that the vignettes suggest that these sentiments are seen as a form of pollution and disorder, needing to be denied, purged, or boxed away from display in organizational settings. Further, I expand that emotion is inextricably tied up with gender performativity and managerial subjectivity. Hegemonic, masculine discourse dominates normative management theory and practice, and therefore managerial subjectivities. My research supports

previous authors who recognise that both male and female managers struggle within these restricted norms where emotional display is highly regulated (Knights & Kerfoot, 2004).

Following Butler (1997) we are taken beyond ourselves in emotional ways; we lose a 'self' that can never be returned to, we are tied to sociality, to others through normative regulations. Using Butler to analyse these vignettes contributes to challenging the masculinist hegemony of organizational discourse and the dichotomies, or solidity of gender positions.

Ian and Rachel reiterate citations aligning metaphorical body size, and for Ian the 'anankastic aesthetic' (Harding, 2002) to managerial effectiveness; they each 'drag up' (in clothes, language and behaviour) to attach to masculine managerial positions. There is no solidified gender, aligned to their naturalised sex, there is fluidity; they are polymorphously perverse (Harding, 2002). However, Ian and Rachel recognise the status and power signified in masculine norms of rationality, control and order. Both strive to attach to this subject position as the organizational ideal, with the resulting restriction of emotional expression.

Despite best efforts the emotional 'dirt' of organizations cannot be ordered away; there is a constant seepage and spillage of emotion, often bound up in bodily citations, whether this is indicated by size, manner and attire as referenced by Ian and Rachel; by literal spillage or leakage (of emotion or bodily secretions) as seen in Sally and Rachel's vignettes; or by a broken, squeaky voice as seen in mine.

I now begin to further develop the theoretical insights my research

contributes to the field, particularly expanding on the three critical findings

highlighted in my introduction to this chapter.

7.3   Theory development

Don't fix me to this broken shard for 'I' pass through a thousand prisms and yet
am captured by none.
[March 2013]

7.3.1   The Ek-static Dance: Emotions, Performativity and Rhythm

The above whimsical quote came to me one night as I was reflecting on this

research. It holds for me one of the principal arguments of the resulting

thesis; that subjectivity is dynamic and not static; whilst ever there is human

life we live this ongoing process of becoming, but not in a progressive

Hegelian way. Rather there is a constant mesh of doing, energy, motion and

morphing. This collective of *performativity,* manifesting through the multiple,

shifting and often colliding operations of power, does not take place at a

constant, steady and predictable pace. And despite the dominance of and the

assumptions within rationalist discourse, neither is it a purely cognitive

process at the point where the social meets the mind. At times as profiled in

the vignettes there is a steady background hum, a phlegmatic rumbling of the

production, or performativity of the managerial 'self'. However, in sharp and

shocking contrast there are occasions when we are consumed in a cacophony

of performativity, which is often visceral and frenzied. At such moments

emotions tear us from ourselves and there is Ek-stasis and even (though rare) acutely conscious free-fall. Both Ian and Sally experienced this latter shocking Ek-stasis. Ian, in sharp contrast to his passionate attachment to a rational masculine managerial subjectivity, lurched into emotional free-fall when receiving his letter, warning him his post was at risk. Sally suddenly crashed when recalling her performance in recent interviews, in a phone call to her CEO.

I want to particularly emphasise the differing rhythms of 'becoming-in-the-world' that I noted in my research and the theory I have of why and how this links to our vulnerability. This is something that has not been reported in previous studies. It is in our fear, our loss and the unravelling of a known managerial 'self' (or subjectivity) that heightens and escalates the pace of performativity. It is the associated terror of a social (organizational) death, a predominant fantasy during times of threat that generates this agitation. This fantasy and emotion propels us into the wider sociality where we strive for recognition; to attach to available subjectivities; here we are subordinated by the machinations of power as the only means to achieve a desired intelligibility (in organizational life). This improvised (but not controlled) dance of subjectivity can be seen in numerous vignettes; in Carla's critical feedback at the railway station and then assessment centre, there is a disruption to the rhythm of her performativity - as doubt and fear momentarily dislocates attachment to her managerial 'self'. This was played out in her interview as she recalled the event and her speech faltered and

slowed. Sally you will remember was as high as a kite in one of her interviews; here excitement and anxiety propelled her into a wider sociality where she anticipated and perceived recognition as female, as 'other' to the masculine managerial norm. We can interpret from her vignette that her response to this was an exaggerated enactment of being female.

Two further findings have powerful theoretical implications for managerial subjectivity through significant organizational change. The acute vulnerability of even the most senior of managers is one; this is associated to the earlier finding of the varying rhythms of performativity noted in becoming and losing the managerial 'self'. And integral to this vulnerability is the shadowy, dark recesses of organizational life. The multiple allusions to the subterranean organizational underbelly are powerful and deserve further analysis. Here we have associated power dynamics and game playing; the Machiavellian discourse dominates; organizational politics and ethics fold into and are reiterated through managerial subjectivity; survival appears to be the name of the game, branded by some as a '*necessary evil*'. But there is a complexity in the relation between vulnerability and the game playing rhetoric that is missing from existing organizational and management literature.

7.3.2   The Dark-side of Managerial Subjectivity and Organizations

I believe that this discovery; the dark side of managerial subjectivities and organizations, and the conversely (but vital to this) heightened sense of the

vulnerability of senior managers, is the most significant finding of my research. To some extent I anticipated the vulnerability, though perhaps not to the degree that was apparent in the process of making sense of the senior managers' narratives. After all my autoethnographic paper written so early in my research studies (Mischenko, 2005) had profiled the fragility and emotionality of my managerial 'self'. However, what was less clear to me at this stage was whether other and more senior managers shared such feelings and vulnerability. Prior to the research interviews, I imagined somehow they were beyond such human frailty.

What was particularly surprising to me was the sheer size, pervasiveness and ambivalence of the Machiavellian discourse, which appeared to be adopted, rejected and treated with uncertainty by so many. This dark underside was the malevolent cloud that closed in and constituted managerial 'selves' and practice. Whilst noticeably dominant through the restructuring period, it was not exclusively present then. Why did I find this so surprising? I have worked in the NHS for 28 years and experienced several organizational changes during that time. Why then did I find this so startling? Or perhaps my knowledge and memory of what organizational change can bring in its wake had dimmed, or been suppressed? Conceivably this was only reawakened through getting close and personal to the disruption again and by hearing my participants' powerful vignettes of conspiracy, division and mistrust.

A major finding in my research is how deeply entangled these two

predominant and apparently dichotomous findings are. These Machiavellian ways of framing understanding and the acute vulnerability of managers are knotted together and this knot strengthens and tightens its hold during organizational change. During reorganization the contagious Machiavellian discourse spreads and multiplies, to the point of stranglehold. This system of thought and practice constitutes and regulates managerial subjectivity at such times; as demonstrated by Carla, even if you vehemently reject game playing as a necessary evil, your perspective of others' behaviour is distorted through this lens. Political manoeuvring is anticipated and therefore reinforced; mistrust becomes prevalent and secret conversations 'necessary'. Such discourse emphasises and constitutes the vulnerability of managers and promotes a distorted frame; even peers are viewed with suspicion and as potential enemies. So let us turn back to the literature to further develop, through a Butlerian lens, these key theoretical findings and compare and contrast this with alternative readings and research.

7.3.3 There is Power at Play: A Butlerian Reading of Managerial Subjectivities and (Un) Ethical Relations

Charles and Rachel illustrated the complexity of managerial subjectivity and ethical relations during times of organizational change. Charles's desire to be ethical was troubled by his seduction into 'game playing' and involvement in secretive conversations to secure his future. Rachel too was attached to varying subject positions, from ingénue manager, 'honorary man', maternal embodiment, and a more active engagement in the role of 'game player;' this last attachment was particularly noted when she recounted how she crafted

her future, and during her pre-recruitment 'secret' dialogues.

That this variability of moral positioning is associated with vulnerability is also seen in the undercurrents of fear and fragility that informed many of the participants' tales. Examples include Carla and Sally's failure to receive the recognition they desired and believed that they deserved from more powerful managerial others; Jo's early experience of bullying, rejection and becoming abject from a beloved organization and Ian's movement from overtly rational man to his emotional outpouring on hearing his post was at risk.

As highlighted in chapter four, Butler's (1997) early work provided a powerful theoretical framework for analysing these vulnerable managerial subjectivities. These managers strive to persist in their subjectivity, regardless of how painful or detestable their situation is; 'no subject emerges without a passionate attachment to those on whom he or she is fundamentally dependent (even if that passion is "negative" in the psychoanalytic sense). ' (Butler, 1997a, p7) Social norms 'operate as psychic phenomena, restricting and producing desire (Butler, 1997a, p21) and the available subject positions signify not only subordination but existence too. Our desire to exist is a very exploitable vulnerability; we have 'a primary vulnerability to the Other in order to be' (Op cit, p21).

My research analysed through this theory facilitates an understanding of how even the most senior of managers are vulnerable in their subjectivity. We all

have this passionate attachment to our subordination, as it is only through

this that we achieve our desired social (organizational) intelligibility. This

helps explain the trauma Jo experienced when earlier in her career she was

rejected by the incoming Director and subsequently let down by the CEO,

who advised she would 'help' her out of the organization; this experience

posed acute danger of a social (organizational) death and threatened her

managerial 'self'. We have already recalled Rachel's fear of becoming abject,

shared through her horrific account of the visible but increasingly

organizationally disassociated group of victims. Ian's response to his 'at risk'

letter is also fuelled by this dreadful fantasy. After all his investment, his long

hours and subordination – his future managerial subjectivity was in jeopardy.

These vignettes demonstrate the power managerial discourse holds in

constituting managers' subjectivity and its sinister psychic manifestation.

> 'The attachment to subjection is produced through the workings of power
> and that part of the operation of power is made clear in this psychic effect,
> one of the most insidious of its productions.'
> (Butler, 1997a, p6)

However, though power continually constitutes us as managers and regulates

the subject positions available, we also wield power in these subjectivities

and though restricted by the available norms, this 'is never merely mechanical'

(Butler, 1997a, p16). And it is in this that there is both the reiteration of the

norm but also the scope for change. We can see examples of this within the

managers' narratives; for example, Carla was constituted through the

Machiavellian discourse during times of change; this is evidenced by her

admission of paranoia when framing peers' behaviour. However, she refused to directly engage in the game playing. Also we are not constituted exclusively by any single discourse; (see also Leonard, 2003) there are many, often conflicting systems of thought as demonstrated well in the managers' narratives. For example, chapter six focused on the many vignettes that displayed how complex the interplay of powerful discourses can be, particularly focusing on gender and management performativity. Within these we saw the juxtaposition of normative masculine managerial discourse of order, rationality and masculinity alongside the historical sedimentation of discourse, which associates femininity with hysteria, emotion, fertility and sexuality (see Ian, Rachel and Sally's vignettes); each protagonist, to differing degrees fluidly enacted both masculine and feminine performativity, though not always consciously.

Here we have begun to appreciate how even the most senior of managers are vulnerable. It is their desire to endure, to achieve intelligibility within the organizational regime. The dominant discourses of their time constitute them with such great affect; it is only through and within these that they can persist. The dominance of the Machiavellian discourse during this significant organizational change was profound within my research; it is worth exploring this further.

7.3.4 The Machiavellian Frame

Butler's *Frames of War* explores the 'cultural modes of regulating affective and ethical dispositions through a selective and differential framing of violence.' (Butler, 2009, p1) So a frame indicates the ways in which we are encouraged to perceive and understand things. In chapter five this theory informed the analysis of managers' vignettes; they struggled with ethical relations as they competed for posts in the future organizations. Here colleagues who would have previously been framed as peers became 'other', the enemy, the competition, whose every action was perceived through a veil of mistrust and paranoia (see Charles's narrative and the earlier example of Carla's account of a meeting).

I believe that the dominant masculine managerial discourse of organizations; a good deal of the normative managerial literature and certain academic institutions propagate the Machiavellian frame and that this is particularly reinforced during organizational change.   Such politically-soaked epistemological framing is power at play in its most insidious form; it restricts both what can be perceived and what is to be valued: We are given over to its machinations, in the social and political norms that constitute our subjectivity and how we subsequently value some 'lives' and subjectivities over others (Butler, 2009).

However, Butler does not support determinism; such frames are both

temporal and contingent. Operations of power surge through differing and overlapping frames creating a limited opportunity for change. I suggest that in publishing and disclosing the current dominance of the Machiavellian frame and its damaging effects, an opportunity is created for change (however incremental).

A frame can also be applied to an act, or to the apprehension of someone in the form of an accusation (Butler, 2009). This latter use of a frame can be seen in Rachel's identification of the abject group as 'victims' (see chapter five); in Carla's railway conversation, when on the receiving end of such framing she fails to receive the recognition she desires (chapter four), or later when she is accused of lacking polish (chapter six) and even in Carla's reading of another manager's behaviour in a meeting (chapter five). These examples highlight the juxtaposition of vulnerability of the senior managers, the precariousness of their managerial subjectivities and the anticipation and therefore the manifestation of the Machiavellian frame. Hence our precariousness or vulnerability leads to the exploitation of certain forfeitable groups (or peers) and this is in part due to the framing of such groups as 'lost causes' or threats (Op cit). Butler asks a series of critical questions that I believe relate well to the organizational context, 'How is affect produced by this structure of the frame? And what is the relation of affect to ethical and political judgment and practice?' (Op cit, p13) My research vignettes illustrate a circular bind of fear, paranoia and a desire to prevail, which reiterates and reinforces the Machiavellian frame. This frame then produces ways of seeing the world

and practising certain kinds of (un) ethical practice, justified as a 'necessary evil'. What I find intriguing is that for Butler, the scope for change is within our shared vulnerability. We all have precarious lives in our social interdependence; right from the start of life we rely on others and our institutions and environments to sustain us (Butler, 2009).

If ethical relations require recognition of our dependence on others and our own vulnerability (Op cit); if we need to accept our opacity and therefore give allowances for others' opacity (Butler, 2004a); why does this so often fail in organizational life (and the wider political life that Butler applies her theory to)? All too often the converse is true and those perceived as vulnerable are particularly threatened, feared and hated (Butler, 2009). One theory is that we fear contagion; that somehow by association we too will be stigmatised, aligned and therefore abject (Goffman, 1963). But a more poststructuralist interpretation draws from the Hegelian Master Slave battle: In that we are currently bound to such discourse, subjected to assumptions that the 'other' is the threat that needs annihilating; the other is the forfeitable loss of this particular 'war'; their sacrifice required for our survival. There has to be the abject group to secure what is the norm.

It is critical that we understand and explore the means to resist the prevalence and resigned acceptance of how the Machiavellian frame rises to dominance during organizational change. We need to challenge this and the associated way of perceiving and performing managerial practice. This is in

order to interrupt the performativity of this frame, and therefore the justification of (un) ethical relations and acceptance of the injury of others as inevitable. I believe that a key strategy is to 'out' the vulnerability of managers and the damage this discourse heralds and excuses. I explore this further later in this chapter.

For Butler ethics are always relational and our vulnerable interdependency (for recognition and survival) is a necessary resource for ethics (Butler, 2004b). They are not down to the autonomous virtuous individual and their positioning, choices and decision-making; Butler rejects the primary 'I' and emphasises rather how our attachment and relations with others is key (Jenkins, 2008). From this there is no escape: The 'attachment to and immersion in the world of others is primary' (Jenkins, 2008, p50). This is not about an autonomous individual making ethical choices or trying to withdraw and protect their 'self'; there is no escape from our at times 'unbearable relationality' (Butler, 2005, p100). This challenges research that emphasises notions of ethical managers, such as Watson's (2003) case study.

Through his case study Watson presents how a senior manager regularly has to deal with moral dilemmas and her sophisticated response. She strives to find a way to navigate through the challenging terrain that both, reflects her personal ethical position (without overtly challenging existing codes) and still contribute towards business goals. 'Business grounds' have to be found for doing the 'morally right thing' (Watson, 2003, p175). This case study of a self-claimed 'ethical' senior manager is interesting and it supports the notion of

organizational norms restricting managers' scope for ethical practice. However, it also provides an example of how a manager reports negotiating her way through this (Op cit). There is an over emphasis on the agency available to the manager. He promotes a notion that the manager takes a moral position when coming into contact with conflicting discourses of business and ethics. Whilst sympathetic to such an interpretation this encourages the notion of a dichotomy between the individual and society; following Butler, I believe that available managerial subjectivities and ethical choices are constituted through the available social, cultural and historical norms; any individual manager practices their 'choices' within this delimited frame. Watson (2003) points out a lack of empirical work into ethics in managerial practice, despite the growing interest in the discourse of business ethics and I believe this gap still stands today. For although much of the research literature reviewed in my thesis made a cursory reference to a moral component, or positioning of managerial subjectivity, few analysed this in any depth. My research offers an additional and alternative contribution to this omission. I found that during significant organizational change managerial subjectivity is acutely vulnerable and bound to others in (un) ethical relations. My research differs to Watson's (2003) and Jackall's (1988) in its emphasis on 'how' the Machiavellian discourse takes hold. It identifies the acute vulnerability of managers (absent in other research apart from Ford and Harding's (2004)) and focuses on a time of significant organizational change. In contrast Watson's (2003) work emphasises the scope and agency of an individual manager in her attempts to be virtuous;

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there is no challenge to this manager's ethical subjectivity, other than a managerial discourse of productivity that she is somehow set apart from. In contrast my research, through the vignettes of Charles and others, demonstrates how attachment is fleeting and how those who identify as ethical can also be seduced by more Machiavellian informed subjectivities. However, his case study does accept the pluralities of value positions; his senior manager though striving to be ethical acknowledges the impossibility of always maintaining this when holding a management position (Op cit).

The vulnerability of senior managers is tied up in the shifting plight of the organizations they are mutually constituted through; there is no inside and outside. During the time of my research many organizations were being abolished and being replaced. Managerial subjectivities are folded within and through the organization (Ford & Harding, 2004; Harding, 2007) and therefore as the organizational context is in turmoil, threat and renewal – so too are the subjectivities available to managers. So, it is the bound together performativity of managers and organizations that provides the clue as to managers' vulnerability, especially during times of organizational death and rebirth (re-structure).

So here we begin to explain the seduction of the Machiavellian frame, the discourse that constitutes secrecy, political alliances and manoeuvres. This insidious system of thought was presented as the known 'secret' or shadow frame of organizational change; the 'real' benchmark for practice at such times, rather than the officially published Human Resource (HR) policy.

Politics, and power are the name of the game, unofficial conversations, secret liaisons, and yet not so secret; rather this obsequious practice is widely known of, often seen as necessary to survive, even whilst at the same time distasteful. As discussed earlier, even those that emphatically rejected such 'game playing', disavowing involvement, are shaped by it, bound up in it. We can see this in Carla's case, in her rejection and projection of such behaviour onto others and yet her admission that she applies this frame to mistrust colleagues. If as noted by Fleming and Spicer (2003) power works through dis-identification as well as identification then even Carla who disavowed game playing and Jo who resisted engagement in the recruitment game are engulfed in this discourse; there is nothing outside of the power relations and regimes; these are the frames of intelligibility (Op cit).

However, I do not wish to suggest that this recurrent metaleptic installation of the Machiavellian frame during organizational change is inevitable, or is always reiterated in the same manner. Through publication, through dialogue, acknowledgement and recognition of its presence and potential consequences and via the plethora of colliding and often conflicting discourses, re-framing can gradually take place. Even incremental changes in awareness, policy and practice can offer hope.

So how does the literature support or differ from my findings and analysis? I explore this briefly in the next section, with a particular focus on various readings of Machiavelli's princely advice and Alasdair MacIntyre's (1985) view of managers as little more than an amoral instrumental function.

7.3.5 Instrumental Managers, or Managers as Instruments?

There are various positions taken by theorists and researchers in relation to managers and ethics. There are those who proffer solutions to the perceived weakness of focus in organizational contexts, where simple business ethics and codes are the norm. These resolutions include strategies to improve management ethics, such as Holland's (2004) advocacy of virtue ethics and Parker's (2003) promotion of the need to combine individual moral theory and political theory. Parker (2003) laments the absence of political theory in the narrow field of business ethics and the exclusive emphasis on moral theory. He compares Kant's emphasis on a private self and inner ethical voice, with Machiavelli's political advice to his Prince; that he should be prepared not to be virtuous in order to secure his power and prosperity. As far back as Aristotle there was no distinction between ethics and politics, they were woven together; ethics rather than an abstract philosophy were integral to social health and order (Parker, 2003).

As discussed in chapter five Machiavelli (2005) is increasingly drawn upon by organizational theory, frequently within the normative managerial literature that advocates managers' adoption of instrumental Machiavellian tactics (Calhoon, 1969; Harris et al, 2000; Harvey, 2001; McGuire & Hutchings, 2006). Machiavelli, a 16th century Italian diplomat, and politician was strategic advisor to the powerful princes of states. He presented an argument for how frequently ethics and politics merge; during his era

individuals could increasingly affect political institutions and critically (if considering his application to organizational studies during change) he recognised the transience of political orders (MacIntyre, 1998).

> 'In periods in which the social order is relatively stable all moral questions can be raised from within the context of norms which the community shares; in periods of instability it is these norms themselves which are questioned and tested against the criteria of human desires and needs.'
> (MacIntyre, 1998, p125)

Machiavelli has long been associated with advocating immoral behaviour in order to achieve 'desired ends' (McGuire & Hutchings, 2006, p193). Some advocate that the guidance Machiavelli provided for the princes of states, embedded as it is in realism, applies well to managers of organisations and is particularly relevant during organisational change (Op cit). This supports instrumentalist principles in the suggestion that his advice supports managers to retain power and influence, through self-serving means. His writing, particularly in *'The Prince'* assumes people always act in their own interest, though he also promoted loyalty from ministers for the prince and from the prince to his followers. Despite an overly simplistic reading often adopted of his writings Machiavelli advocated that leaders initially aim to influence through charm and only if this fails apply force (McGuire & Hutchings, 2006). However he advised that: 'It is much safer to be feared than to be loved, when one of the two must be lacking' (Machiavelli, 2005, p58). Of course both of these strategies can be construed as forms of manipulation to get the desired ends.

This advocacy of Machiavellian advice in some literature is interesting and on the face of it appears to be supported by my research. However, following Butler I suggest that rather than individual managers responding in self-interest to the threat of change, Machiavellian discourse becomes dominant at times of organizational restructure and constitutes the available managerial subjectivities and frames what is 'acceptable' practice. This is metaleptic in that it is anticipated and therefore reiterated: whereas normally the Machiavellian perspective is one amongst many of the circulating organizational discourses, during downsizing my research suggests it becomes prevalent. This dominant frame of the world constitutes the vulnerability, the available managerial subjectivities and the unbearable (un) ethical relations. This is not to suggest that there is no abuse of power enacted by individual managers, for as they are subordinated into such subject positions, they inevitably engage to various degrees in this form of framing. Here certain behaviour (conspiracy, manipulation and mistrust) is justified, deemed as the 'necessary evil' in order to prevail. Certain life within this frame is apprehended as having more value. Butler proposes that some groups are not recognised as worthy of grief and emotional connection. Within war their deaths are not reported, their pain not worthy of noting. This dehumanising can open a space for atrocities; hatred and destructive intent is excused; we see this in Butler's example of Abu Ghraib, where inmates were tortured and humiliated. Whilst the subsequent release of photographic evidence of this resulted in a reframing and public outcry,

those within the original 'frames of war' had condoned it. Whilst within organizational settings the collusion promoting unethical relations does not result in such extreme physical violence, there are examples within my research vignettes of emotional violence through systematic bullying, overt manipulation, conspiracy and rejection.

But interrupting the seemingly inevitability of the Machiavellian frame during organizational restructure is challenging. Its tight hold can be witnessed in the various engagement in, or refutation of game playing during organizational change for my participants. There is a varying response to the frame, even within individual narratives. Game playing was often projected onto others; Carla particularly damned others with this label; Rachel slammed the top management team as using people like pawns in a chess game and Jo rejected an offer to remain in a PCT for a post suddenly created, in order to tempt her to stay. Others (and indeed often the same managers shifting through their various subjectivities) at times openly admitted to such participation. Rachel particularly acknowledged tactics and manipulation to progress her career; Charles occasionally fully engaged and Ian expressed admiration for a previous managers' instrumentalist ways. And finally many also spoke of a resigned acceptance of its inevitability; most clearly articulated by Charles but also acknowledged by Wendy, Sally and I. Sally also at times actively engaged but reported finding it alien. Following Butler this foreignness (opacity) to her 'self' created a space for an ethical bond (Butler, 2004b).

So there is an apparent cultural and critical investment in this discourse more pronounced during the downsizing; there is an acute psychic vulnerability and we are given over to others; there is no escape, despite attempts, disassociation is not possible. Butler sees this as an opportunity to develop ethical relations. I explore this later in the chapter in my examination of the implications of my research for policy and practice. Next I turn briefly to a philosopher who damns managers as amoral.

Alasdair MacIntyre (1985) strongly rejects the possibility of managers being ethical, given as they are bound up in capitalist organizations. He suggests we (managers) are subordinated by impotence rather than power and that even senior managers have little space for moral agency; he presents the assumed rationale of the drive for effectiveness as not morally neutral, even though it is frequently presented as such, in that it condones the manipulation of humans. MacIntyre also suggests that managers' moral agency is restricted by bureaucratic regimes and the dominance of effectiveness over ethics (Nielson, 2006). His is a critical realist position (but anti postmodern) and he talks of compartmentalisation of differing moral positions within managers' private and public roles. He sees relations between structures, roles and characters, context and moral decision-making; he challenges as a myth notions of managerial effectiveness to control social order (Beadle & Moore, 2006). Macintyre is very critical of capitalist organisations and their reliance on utilitarianism, which are seen as the 'instruments for the realisation of ends' (MacIntyre, 1977), cited in Beadle & Moore, 2006, p327).

Within my research Charles' narrative particularly reflects a desire to be ethical. And yet Charles works in the corporate world as a senior manager and so this desire is completely compromised in MacIntyre's eyes. Charles' vignettes throughout the study describe ongoing struggles to practise a virtuous character; frequently he fleetingly embodies an altogether different subjectivity, the one of game player. However, he rationalises this as a 'necessary evil' practised by all in their vulnerability through organizational change. My research demonstrates how overly reductive it is to fix managers to any, single subject or moral position. Subjectivity is a complex dynamic and disruptive process; even during times of change when the Machiavellian frame dominates, managers continue to struggle with ethical dilemmas. MacIntyre's (1985) insight that organizations' severely restrict the scope for ethical behaviour in managers is supported by my research. However his reduction of managers to a mere function of capitalism, and as actors that simply don masks, compartmentalising morality at will, needs troubling.

The problem in MacIntyre's writings is that he sees capitalist institutions as focused on the delivery of external goods[i] and therefore as unsuitable for developing virtue (Weaver, 2006). Managers are seen as faceless organizational instruments whose function is to deliver the external goods of effectiveness, efficiency and career progression (MacIntyre, 1985). So for MacIntyre the managerial 'self' is the equivalent to donning a mask and playing an active part as a 'co-author of his or her own divided state (cited in Beadle & Moore, 2006, p334). He promotes managerial subjectivity as the

amoral 'faceless cipher of capitalist bureaucracy' (Hine, 2007, p360) where

people are manipulated and seen as the means to the end, driven by a culture

of efficiency (Brewer, 1997). Managers are defined and determined by their

function, which erases any calls for an ethical stance (Hine, 2007), and I

would say any ethical consideration of managers. This simplistic

characterisation of a manager as a faceless function (see also Nash, 1995 and

Brewer, 1997) removes the human 'face' of the manager. For MacIntyre

managers are collapsed to mere functionality. In this he takes a singular

perspective - that of the economic order to view the manager, rather than

this just being one of a number of discourses that may inform managerial

practice and subjectivity (Brewer, 1997). It is an overly reductive reading of

managers' morality and assumes a public, private dichotomy where

managers don masks, or fully embody the specified roles within the

organisation. Are managers not also subjected to manipulation by those more

senior, or even peers and staff? Is this one-dimensional view of power and

oppression rather too simplistic? What ethical position could MacIntyre be

accused of in his dismissal of a group of professionals - as mere functions? In

labelling managers as instruments of an organization I believe he has lost the

'face' (human vulnerability) of managers in this framing. Here managers

become MacIntyre's forfeitable group (upon whom to project all that is evil)

in his particular theory.

In contrast to the faceless caricature of MacIntyre's (1985) theoretical

manager, Jackall's (1988) research identified organizations as contested

territories in terms of moral practice. Whilst he described a 'moral muteness' in the managers he studied, similar to my research he also recognised the stresses and strains managers experienced when practising morally dubious activity as promoted by senior management; 'one drinks too much; one is subject to pencil snapping fits of alternating anxiety, depression and rage, and self-disgust for willingly submitting oneself to the knowing and not knowing...' (Jackall, 1988, p204) Ford and Harding's (2003) research also profiles the complexity of managers and their ethical dilemmas. Drawing from managers' narratives during a merger of two hospitals, they highlight the emotional pain, the human cost of such organizational practice. Their participants recounted tales of being unable to switch off, of working long hours, and of being instruments of organizational abuse. However, they also recounted how they perpetuated this abuse of power in their manipulative management of others. In a Faustian informed analysis they had sold their soul to the devil and were therefore subjected to a living hell (Op cit).

These researchers (Jackall, 1988; Ford & Harding, 2003) provide a more nuanced interpretation of managers' morality than MacIntyre (1985). And Jackall supports the notion of the corporate context as a limiting factor,

> '...because moral choices are inextricably tied to personal fates, bureaucracy erodes internal and external standards of morality not only in matters of individual success and failure but in all the issues that managers face in their daily work. Bureaucracy makes its own internal rules and social context the principle gauges for action '
> (Jackall, 1988, p192)

Jackall's research is supportive of some aspects of MacIntyre's theory though; he reports that managers have to bracket personal morality whilst at work and follow organisational codes set by their seniors. Also, almost adopting a Machiavellian frame, he suggests that they are always intent on furthering their careers (Op cit).

Other research also identifies managers as in a constant moral and political struggle, as mistrusting of others and striving for survival (Hine, 2007); this demonstrates how politics and morality are entangled and similar to Ford and Harding (2003) the precariousness of managers' position; suggesting they 'are ultimately expendable' (Hine, 2007, p368; Ford and Harding, 2003). So here managers are not amoral but similar to Jackall's research they are constrained by, and negotiating within an organizational context that delimits the scope for morality.

My research troubles MacIntyre's (1985) writings, which portray managers as faceless functions without ethical concern and Jackall's (1988) research that whilst acknowledging the conflicting moral maze of organizational settings, also suggests that managers are always motivated by self-interest. Ford and Harding's (2004) and Watson's (2003) research studies are more nuanced and generous interpretations of managers' negotiation with ethical ways. My research and theory provide additional insights in its recognition of how the Machiavellian discourse constitutes the available managerial subjectivities and practice, particularly during organizational change. In how

this is bound up with acute vulnerability to exploitation and how fleetingly subject positions are held, such as ethical manager, and game player. The performativity of managerial identity is enfolded in the performativity of organizations, which during restructure are in their dying throes.

The next section presents my contributions to theory, research methodology and policy/ practice.

7.4   Key Contributions to Theory

Much of the existing writings on managers continue to privilege traditional and mainstream interpretations of managerial working lives and obfuscate any complexity, contradictory findings and emotional disruptions. In contrast my research profiles the complexity of managerial subjectivity and troubles such normative readings. This is illustrated in the three main theoretical contributions this research offers. All three are inextricably connected; there is the acute vulnerability of managers, particularly pronounced during times of organizational restructure. The abolition of the organizations that so inform and are folded into managerial subjectivities threatens managers and their organizational intelligibility. This vulnerability is recognisable in the disruption in performativity of the managerial 'self'; an erratic dance ensues, sometimes an increased pace escalates to a frantic flailing to attach to managerial subjectivities; on occasion a sudden and conscious dislocation is described within the narratives. And even, though rarely, there are accounts of an acute and terrifying free-fall. The vulnerability and commonly shared fantasy of an organizational death also heralds in the Machiavellian frame. Here unethical managerial practice is justified as a necessary evil.

7.5   Key Contribution to Research (Methodology)

As identified in chapter three there are three key aspects of my methodological approach worth highlighting. My adoption of a longitudinal approach, where I interviewed participants three times during the time period of the organizational downsizing (18 months) proved useful and yet is not often used within organizational studies. Few researchers have utilised this (for an exception see Watson, 2009) and yet this has provided new and insightful findings from my research. Central to such an approach is the recognition of how contingent managerial subjectivities are to time and place. It is especially noteworthy that it was during the second interview, timed to coincide with participants' experience of interviews (and for some assessment centres) that most of the key theoretical contributions of the research were noted. For example, the fragility of the managerial self, the differing rhythms of ek-stasis and performativity, and the installation of the Machiavellian frame were particularly noticeable; and this all the more so because of the contrast with the first interview. This is not to suggest that for each interview managers held onto a stable 'self', within all interviews there was a continual movement between differing subjectivities. This is demonstrated by Charles's early vignettes of ethical struggles; but the vulnerability and frantic pace of achieving managerial subjectivity was heightened during the second and final interviews. Without such a longitudinal study and the temporal re-interviewing of managers on 3 occasions, some of these finding may not have surfaced in the discussions.

My inclusion of an autoethnographic element within an ethnographic study is also one rarely utilised. Whilst there is increasing use of autoethnography within research (see Learmonth & Humphreys, 2012) this is rarely alongside the involvement of other participants within organizational studies. I agree with Humphreys (2005) that autoethnography enables reflexivity and troubles notions of neutrality by profiling my insider/outsider status. This was particularly relevant for me in this research as I moved between multiple subjectivities, of student, researcher and manager, amongst others; living through the very organizational change I was studying. I was keen to ensure that the adoption of autoethnography did not dominate and this was a fine balancing act; I wanted to be as transparent as possible of how my 'insider status' could influence my research, recognising how the participants were fully cognisant of this fact. All research is influenced by the inter-subjectivity between researcher and participants; this was a methodological means to profile this.

And finally, whilst not a unique approach, I think it is worth referencing the use of vignettes in this research. This enabled me to embed sections of narrative meaningful to my participants. The inclusion of the 'bite size' vignettes proffered by the participants as meaningful to their identity and my resulting interpretation and deconstruction of them enhances the visibility of the research analysis. The reader has the opportunity to review the study and accept or prefer other interpretations.

7.6   Key Contribution to Policy and Practice

A key question for any research is the "so what" factor. From the beginning I wanted to undertake research that would proffer some insight into future organizational policy and practice. However, I aim to do more than 'trouble' certain managerial discourse and the damage it perpetuates. Rather, I want to use my Butlerian analysis to develop theoretical insights to enable reform. I question the damage done through the constant restructuring of public sector organizations, a policy adopted by all main political parties and also challenge the subsequent reiteration of the Machiavellian frame.

In a political context that increasingly promotes the instability of organizations and regularly reforms the public sector, the findings of my research are ever more relevant. Even as I complete this thesis I am reflecting on a more recent upheaval within the NHS, one that resulted in the abolition of Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities (Health & Social Care Act, 2012). This pattern of sweeping structural reform of the public sector is likely to continue; it is timely to turn to my recommendations for organizational policy and practice.

What are the implications for the practice of management and organization? Why does HR policy so frequently fail to anticipate, recognise and contain reference to the shadow Machiavellian frame? So often HR policy, follows the managerial fantasy that it is possible to neatly predict and order the closing

down of organizations (or downsizing and mergers) and the redeployment of staff without pain. My research significantly troubles this assumption and highlights the impotence of such policy. Managers are vulnerable during this period and most of those within my study experienced moments of emotional distress; many also alluded to this 'known secret' of Machiavellian practice, which clearly in the case of Charles and Rachel's recruitment was outside of the artefact of HR policy. Roberts (2005) adopting a psychoanalytical reading suggests that managers adhere persistently to the fantasy of order and control within their ever increasingly unpredictable organizational worlds. Perhaps this explains HR departments' prolific production of policy on redeployment, attempting to define the (official) 'frames of war' to inform behaviour during such times. This then is a means to cope (by denial) with the 'dark side' of organizational life and therefore the inevitable failure to address it.

As discussed earlier Butler (2009) advises how breaking frames; the leaking information outside of a normative circle of regulation can disrupt, challenge and aid transformation. The authority of the Machiavellian frame that appears to have such a stronghold during times of organizational change needs such disruption. Publishing and outing this known but publically unacknowledged dark side of organizational life could loosen its grip. This leakage could – in time facilitate alternative frames, those that promote dialogue between managers and within the academic field; eventually differing policies, managers' heightened awareness, through education and

practice could emerge. Alternatives are needed that offer an understanding of our shared vulnerability and interdependence, meanwhile the Machiavellian cloud hovers, ever ready to enfold us. The detail of such reform to HR practice goes beyond the remit of this thesis, and informs part of the recommendations for further research that I propose in subsequent sections. This research, whilst a small study, has profiled the complexity of managers' working lives and their subjectivity through organizational change. I have identified insights into the vulnerability and fragility of managers and their (un) ethical relations that can provide fruitful for others to explore further. The following section reviews the limitations of my research and how I would have done things differently in hindsight.

7.7   Reflexivity and Limitations

Butler (2005) troubles the ability to give an account of the self and profiles the opacity of the self. If the unconscious is the state that holds repressed ideas and desires and these are not readily accessible to the conscience via reflection but rather require skilled interpretation (according to Freud) (Gabriel, 1999a); then this proves problematic to claims of reflexivity, or at the very least severely limits it. However, I attempt through autoethnography (as discussed earlier) and my deconstructed analysis of my own vignette (see chapter six) to both accept this challenge and to 'trouble' claims of transparency. This critical interpretive approach 'turns back and takes account of itself' (Alvesson, et al, 2008, p480). However, I acknowledge that despite my efforts there remains ample scope for self-deception and defensive intellectualising.

In addition to my multi-voicing method of reflexivity (aided by the vignettes and autoethnographic component), I also take a multi- perspective approach (Alvesson, et al, 2008). Here I juxtaposition differing perspectives to demonstrate the limitations of adopting any singular framework and to proffer new insights; so whilst my main theoretical lens is guided by Butler and the many theorists she draws from, I also illustrate different available readings. One example of this is in the reading of Ian's challenging public meeting, where I began with an interpretation informed by Goffman (1995) before taking a more Butlerian approach. I also adopt on occasions a destabilising method (Alvesson, et al, 2008), I particularly use this in chapter six to deconstruct traditional notions of gender; an example is Rachel's meeting with the CEO to discuss her return from maternity leave; here I adopt Martin's (1990) Derridian informed and feminist approach to deconstruction.

I have identified where there was an existing relationship between the participants and I versus where our relationship began with the research process; I recognise this will have influenced the interviews, stories chosen and potentially the analysis. I acknowledge that I selected the vignettes and protagonists to profile in this 'write up', which led to the six dominant characters of the research (including my self), whereas others had a more diminutive role. It is worth noting here that two of interviewees were slotted into their post at the beginning of the process; they did not express the same insecurity and vulnerability of the others, and had no experience of the

interviews and assessment centres. Rather, though they observed and commented on others' pain and behaviour, their vignettes often focussed on significant issues at home, for example, for one, on the dramatic failing health of someone in the family. It is important to note that though I did not profile them as key protagonists all recounted earlier experiences in their career of game playing, or observed it in others during this re-organization but on this occasion did not have direct experience. Therefore, the vulnerability and performativity of their managerial subjectivity was less overt but nonetheless palpable.

'I' have many 'I's within this thesis; there is the researcher; the manager; the student; the colleague, the author and the participant. These are not static interchangeable 'selves' but reflect how subjectivity is a constant process of becoming, losing and becoming anew; through this thesis you have met my autoethnographic vulnerable managerial self (through my poem, Mischenko, 2005), the interview participant of 2008, and the more recent authorial writer of 2012 and 2013. Each of these is lost and cannot be reclaimed but inevitably they are fixed to some extent in the text and are open to multiple further interpretations by future readers.

The experience of this research has been so developmental, so iterative that the initial broad aim to hear and understand other managers' experiences of their subjectivity has produced something I could not have imagined when setting off on this journey so many years ago. I have been down many

different paths in my reading, theorising and writing, many of which are not reflected in this final piece. However, each of these has been formative and has in some part contributed to the 'final' product, or to future projects. There are limitations to this research. It is a small study, only nine managers (and I) participated; however, this does contribute new insights to the field (as set out above) and the small cohort enabled multiple meetings and readings of their vignettes. Though small-scale, this focus enabled that slow and close reading of the micro-stories and the multiple interpretations of the same that would be difficult to achieve in a larger study.

7.8   Future Research

There needs to be further critical research into the subjectivities of employees when experiencing significant change. Research that incorporates the affective impact and that tests out my foundling theories of ethical relations. My research has profiled the damaging impact that large scale restructuring can have on senior managers. This area needs further exploration not just for senior managerial staff but also for employees across all levels in the hierarchy of organizations. As I reflect on recent changes in the English NHS, the constant wave of reform in the UK public sector and the current political rhetoric 'against management' (see the Nuffield commentary -Timmins, 2013), I wonder what the impact is on managerial subjectivity. I also ponder on how the new clinical commissioners' (General Practitioners) subjectivities are constituted; how the differing professional and managerial discourses collide.

7.9   Summary and Momentary Pause

'The word 'however' is like an imp coiled beneath your chair. It induces ink
to form words you have not yet seen, and lines to march across the page and
overshoot the margin. There are no endings. If you think so you are deceived
as to their nature. They are all beginnings. Here is one.'
(Mantel, 2012, p407)

Expect no ending to this thesis – no final absolute closure; as you may have

gathered I am against fixing as final, any word of managerial subjectivities;

discourses of knowledge; or to pin down as interesting specimens my

participants. They and I continue to 'become-in-this-world' in our ever-

changing organizational contexts. But I would like to leave you with a few

'final' thoughts to take away.

My research has troubled the all too often simplistic reduction of managers

as merely wielders of power; as manipulators of employees' subjectivities; as

faceless functions of bureaucracy, the embodiment of efficiency and order.

Whilst these discourses are prevalent and do indeed constitute in part the

available managerial subjectivities; I suggest that organizational life and

therefore managerial subjectivities is far more complex. So, the key findings

that I wish to emphasise are that managers are vulnerable in their

subordination and constitution, and particularly so during times of

significant organizational change (downsizing, merger and closure). Integral

to this vulnerability is an increasingly erratic dance of managerial

performativity associated with the fantasy and terror of a (social) death. This

in turn installs a Machiavellian frame, a way of viewing the organizational

world that promotes and is even seen to excuse suspicion, secret liaisons and mistrust. This 'dark side' of organizational change is injurious and in a circuitous relationship with managers' vulnerability. As organizations seismically shift, the aftershocks continue, there is an ongoing impact through managers' subjectivities and the fallout of traces of 'selves' never to be reclaimed.

Endnotes

[1] In his seminal work *After Virtue* MacIntyre (1985) distinguishes between internal and external goods; the former he presents as proper ends and these are achieved through the exercise of virtues, in search of excellence of a particular practice. The latter are done for other ends, status, prestige, and money (Beadle & Moore, 2006). Though he recognises that these are not exclusive and 'are mutually reinforcing', the former should be privileged (Op cit, p331). Virtues are seen as the means of becoming an ethical 'man' and are integral to personal identity (Weaver, 2006).

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Appendix 1: Autoethnographic Poem

Pressure

How did this creep up on me?
Me so efficient,
so busy
a deliverer?
Always in control,
always calm.
When did work take over?
Its insidious creep;
staying late,
taking work home,
more and more
hours stolen.
Frustration, anger welling up
trying to catch up:
There's always more.
Where am I?
My children look to me and sigh,
Where is mum?
My rage starts spilling out
to anyone who'll listen.
My tears ever near,
my throat a tight constriction.
Where am I?

Escape

The tension eases.
The spring uncoils.
Urgency dissipates
as time goes slow.
I unfurl and stretch out
to possibilities.
I determine not to think of work:
I am soothed
by the orange heat of the sun
and the touch of the turquoise sea.
I am healed
by golden childish laughter,
where time passes gently.
I relax
as I drink full bodied wine
squeezed from lush local vines.
The azure blue sky embraces me
as I eat my rich pasta dish.

Italian chatter dances around me
as my family remember,
well rehearsed stories.

In the colour and sensuality of Italy
I find a balanced me.

The Return

Physically I feel the return;
like a jolt:
A thudding of the heart.
I resist
going back to that pace,
that rat race.
I'm open and vulnerable;
after my break
but I resist
My chest tightens,
my breathing labours.
Overwhelmingly work looms
but I resist
AND I HURT!
Tears and anguish,
suppressed.
But again that refrain,
the pressure of work,
plugged into our pods,
we feed the machine,
life sucked dry.
Pull on my armour.
Where are my masks?
Toughen up Jane
Back to my lists
of things to do....
Tight is my chest,
tight is my smile
How can I resist*?*

(Mischenko 2005, p208)

Appendix 2: The Second Interview Framework

The first one, what does professional identity mean to you? Can you give me some specifics?

Do you see that there is a difference in your professional self? Between your professional self and your private self?

Can you tell me about a time when you perceive your values or principles as being tested or compromised? Can you give me any examples?

Tell me how do you manage your emotions in your professional self?

Can you tell me about the impact that the ongoing changes at work presumably are having on you?

Is there anything else that you wanted to add?

Appendix 3: The Third Interview Framework

This is very similar to the first interview. So the first thing is that we are looking at significant events. So if I just remind you that a key event is a very specific happening so it is not a general feeling or something you have noticed over a period of time. But it is a critical conversation you had with somebody one afternoon, or a meeting attended or a presentation you gave, something very tangible. And I will prompt you but what I am looking for in these events is to be very specific about what happened, where you were, who was involved with you and what you said and did and what you were feeling and thinking at that specific time. OK, and then I will prompt you again to kind of convey the impact that that had on you. OK so we start as we did with the earlier interview looking at a high point, so a peak experience going through the change programme.

And the next one would be a kind of lowest point over the last couple of years.

OK so the third one is a turning point. So this is maybe a particular episode where you underwent a significant change in your understanding of yourself. What is important is in retrospect you see the event as a turning point, not necessarily at the time. It will have been a profound moment but when you look back on it you think gosh that really has triggered a change in me, or a different sense of self.

OK so next it is just a section for you to explore significant people through those couple of years and it can be anything from one to as many people as you can flag up. Is there anybody in that that has been particularly significant in whatever way through those 2 years and their relationship with you and why they were significant etc?

Ok the next one is, I don't know if you remember, the future script when we talked about kind of your future career plans. Do you think the last two years have changed that at all?

If you look back over that time period is there anything you would like to kind of highlight in terms of the impact of going through the two years

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PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Exploration into the identity work of senior managers in the NHS v1

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Talk to others about the study if you wish.

- This sheet tells you the purpose of this study and what will happen to you if you take part.

Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of this study?
I am undertaking a piece of research as part fulfilment of an award of Professional Doctorate in Public Management. I am researching and trying to make sense of the self-construction of senior professional managers in Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). I want to explore with them how they undertake identity work (how we as individuals make sense of who we are, in relation to work, our home and social lives, etc); particularly during this time of significant reorganisation in the NHS.

Why have I been chosen?
I have circulated this participant information sheet through various networks to reach senior professional managers (assistant director level and above with a clinical background) who work in PCTs in the West Yorkshire region.

Do I have to take part?
No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?
If you agree to take part I will be interviewing you three to four times over the next 12-15 months. The interviews will be face to face in a place of your choice

Jane Mischenko April 28rd 2006

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and may last between one and two hours each. The interviews are unstructured, so there is no set format, though the first interview will start with discussion about your biography and career pathway. It is anticipated that the first interview will take place in June/July 2006. The interviews are to enable me to hear your story; the significant moments to date and the identity work you do over the next 12-15 months.

The interviews will be audio taped and transcribed by myself or an administrator at the University. The tapes will not be labelled with your name but will be identified by a code i.e. A1. Within my report (thesis) or any publications, although I may use direct quotes from the interviews, I will not attribute them to an individual participant. I will ensure there are no identifying elements such as job title, name, or organisation within any publication/reports. I will destroy the tapes and transcripts once the research is completed.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?
It is possible that in the discussion of the identity work you are undertaking through the current reorganisation you may experience increased anxiety.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
You may find it positive to have the space and time to reflect on how you construct yourself and undertake identity work through the major reconstruction of the PCTs.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?
Yes. All the information about your participation in this study will be kept strictly confidential in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Contact Details
You can discuss the study and receive further information by contacting me (Jane Mischenko) on 07949 102171 or emailing me at
jane.mischenko@leedssouth-pct.nhs.uk

What will happen to the results of the research study?
The results of the study will be incorporated into my Doctorate thesis and may in the future be published in professional journals. You will not be identified in any report or publication.

Who has reviewed the study?
The study has been reviewed by the Harrogate Ethics Committee.

Thank you for taking the time to read this sheet.

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Appendix 5

			Source of [?] and refs
1.		What are the key recognisable discourses (meta narratives) they draw from	
B		Idealised childhood adventure/freedom; Rationalism value of reason over emotion. Romanticised unity/Lourdes Parenting – passing on values Control emotions – ok to cry at 6 Dream – travel/work balance Stress/ not sleeping	
2.		What are they trying to tell me (in their stories) regardless of the question	
		Free spirit / adventure. Expectations of parents (esp. mother); pride in grandfather association – genes wish to live up to that; reasonable person, integrity - won't compromise values.	
3.		What subject positions do they adopt	
		Scholar Medic Father (more complete) /family man As the focus of humour (laughed at/humiliation/mishap) Decent bloke Controlled	
4.		What areas/subjects do they struggle with?	
		Worry/angst – wife/baby Losing face (sack race) Organisational & individual /power game playing/does to some extent – <u>necessary</u> evil but implies not to extent of others. Crooked – appointments/ in advance; agenda setting/ gaming/ spin in writing papers for Board. Responsibility – other's pain/not apptd	
5.		Other things that stand out	
		Polemic in dislike of nuns & Catholism Intellectualising/ rationalising emotions Look in the mirror (Hegel) & see a decent bloke Stress & mistrust. Long hours	
6.		Areas of ambiguity	
		Game playing – intense dislike – against values vs. necessary evil.	
7.		Story(ies) mode (tragic, comic, epic?)	Yiannis Gabriel
		Epic/ comic – to cover embarrassment.	
9.		Crystallisation of above?????? With others see Gabriel p 42	
		Control a big issue – not losing face/ brunt of humour/ losing control of emotions. Family important. Values – being a decent bloke.	

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