

## Inner and Outer Life at Work

The Roots and Horizon of Psycho-analytically Informed Work Life Research

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## Inner and Outer Life at Work. The Roots and Horizon of Psychoanalytically Informed Work Life Research

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**Key words:** work  
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research;  
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processes

**Abstract:** The modern labour market has increasingly put the inner working life on the agenda. This stems from a number of societal changes: the knowledge society and its need of personalised competences and work investments in welfare services, the transformation from subject-object relationships to subject-subject relationships and the emergence of the "learning organisations" and reflexive leadership. All of this has been the subject of critical analyses tracing modern work life identities, conflicts, organisational and societal structuration. Against this background the accounts and conceptualisations of work life involving people to people interactions offered by psychodynamic theories and methods take up a pivotal position. Psychoanalytic organisational and work life research explores how work, organisations and individuals are affected by psychic dynamics, the influence of the unconscious in the forms of human development and interaction situated in a societal context. Based on this substantial work I draw upon two influential psychoanalytical positions—the British Tavistock position and German psychoanalytic social psychology in order to situate and identify how to understand the inner and outer life at work—in a generic display of concepts, methods and epistemology.

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### 1. The Inner Work Life

The modern labour market has increasingly put the inner working life on the agenda. This is a result of a number of developments. Firstly, the replacement of industrial society by the knowledge society has necessitated an ever growing involvement of personalised capacities and investments in work execution. Secondly, increasingly more sophisticated work arrangements based on independent knowledge acquisition require different skills, competences and qualifications than industrial society and earlier forms of knowledge work. Thirdly, work tasks in the fields of health care, social work and education require the development of personalised skills profiles as an indispensable component of professional identity. Fourthly, the relations of professionals to clients in welfare settings have developed from subject-object relationships to subject-subject relationships and from this follows an intensified need for inner reflection by

professionals and citizens. Finally, the trend towards learning organisations and the blossoming of theories of reflexive leadership and management reflect the growing recognition of work as internal and external interactions. These developments have also been the subject of critical analysis. Research into work life, organisational sociology, social policy and education has documented that although the discourse of modernisation gradually has acknowledged the emotional aspect, these very same processes tend to exclude, manipulate and discipline the emotional and professional aspects of work life. Many workplace environments establish an emotional discourse which constructs the employees within rhetoric of love demanding engagement and dedication and the investment of emotional capital from the staff (ÅKERSTRØM ANDERSEN, 2009). Some businesses require their employees to attend personal development courses, which take place in a setting apparently devoid of power—even though such a thing is not possible (BOVBJERG, 2010, 2011). In Scandinavian human service institutions the need for evidence and documentation of the effectiveness of welfare services has increased the implementation of target-driven and monitoring procedures in hierarchical workplace structures. In this process the focus moves away from professional interpretation and reflection and consequently the development of practice near knowledge, professional doubt, unsuccessful work processes and the troubling dimensions of work become more and more "unspeakable" due to the focus on rational performance measurement (ANDERSEN & DYBBROE, 2011, p.264). Research studies investigating the neo-liberal development of welfare services has pointed to yet another tendency with far-reaching consequences for practice, policy and services: the classic neo-liberal construction of the "welfare subjects" shaped in terms of a deficit model, lacking certain enlightenment traits: as dependent, unpredictable, unable to act in their own best interests and lacking agency. The implications of this are that clients and citizens become positioned as passive and long-term objects of welfare policies and that practitioners become a long-term necessity in welfare development. This stands in contrast to the psycho-social paradigm in which the subject is theorised and positioned as ambivalent, driven by defence and emotions, a unique centre of subjective experiences with agency saturated by, impacting on and impacted by its social world (FROGGETT, 2002; HOGGETT & FROST, 2008, p.440). The implication of the latter approach thus situates client/citizen development as possible but sometimes unpredictable, as a dynamic part of their family, network and local community. [1]

Against this background the accounts and conceptualisations of work life involving people to people interactions offered by psychodynamic theories and methods take up a pivotal position, since they offer critical and deconstructive contributions (MEEK, 2003). Based on their theoretical and empirical work I draw upon two influential psychoanalytical positions, the British Tavistock position and German psychoanalytic social psychology, in order to situate and identify how to understand the inner and outer life at work—in a generic display of concepts, methods and epistemology. In short, the Tavistock tradition rooted in action research and the original Kleinian and Bionian tradition form the methodological and knowledge base for many international further education courses and consultancies within the private and public labour market as well as for a

substantial number of publications. Meanwhile German psychoanalytic social psychology rooted in critical theory has served as inspiration within educational, cultural and work life research. These are two distinctive traditions that have developed through several decades of theoretical and methodological work, research publications and practical organisational activity leading to sophisticated, detailed analyses of modern work life recognising the significance of the unconscious. Thus, the topic in question is investigated and discussed by means of selecting a number of "classical" texts and publications and consequently putting certain relevant contributions aside. The virtue of classical texts in this setting might be considered as how these texts define a subsequent "canon" of theoretical and methodological scholarship and hence shape the thinking and research practice of subsequent researchers within the field (SAVAGE, 2005). [2]

## **2. Psychoanalytic Work Life and Organisational Research**

A high-profile cultural workshop, representing a radical drive to bring culture to all, faced a number of problems. In reality the people who joined the activities were not the citizens that the workshop was set out to attract. The workshop employees had great difficulties perceiving the problems, they lacked initiative and the workshop found itself in a deadlock where nothing really happened (SCHORN, 1994, 1996). [3]

An old people's home has had major problems with some of its employees and their qualifications, which seem inadequate or inappropriate. The work tasks have exposed quality problems, which have led to dissatisfactory treatment of the elderly. The newly appointed manager was frustrated and perplexed as to how he could understand the problems and not least how—and if—he could solve them (OBHOLZER & ZAVIER, 1994). [4]

Psychoanalytic organisational and work life research is concerned with understanding how work, organisations and individuals are affected by psychic dynamics, the influence of the unconscious in various forms of human development and interaction situated in a societal context. The cases in focus crystallise the following questions: How can we understand the problems in the old people's home and the cultural workshop; how can these be analysed and what actions and strategies can be developed and implemented? In a broader perspective the principal conceptual work focuses on: why do people go to work in modern society? How do they do their work, what problems or satisfaction do they find and what ambitions do they fulfil? What conflicts are embedded in work life and what perceptions and fantasies do professionals and clients have regarding management, colleagues, clients, work products, their history and their future? How do human resources, development perspectives, power constellations, social and political factors affect how the individual worker and the staff as a whole act and find professional and personal gratification? As illustrated in the cases presented here, psychoanalytic work life and organisational research takes a point of departure in everyday work life and its features and problems and as a predominantly empirical science seeks to "translate" everyday phenomena

into epistemological and methodological forms of inquiry: in the Tavistock application often into consultancy-based change processes and analyses derived from this and in psychoanalytic social psychology into interpretive (innovative) representations of modern working life (LEITHÄUSER, MEYERHUBER & SCHOTTMAYER, 2009, p.316). There is a great variety of empirical data: typically in depth interviews with individuals or groups, informal conversations, consultancy-based dialogues and discussions, observations or field work, document and text analysis, drawings, artefacts and spatial relationships. Organisational development and consultation are often paramount. The fundamental view is that organisations do not merely pursue consciously formulated tasks and functions, since unconscious processes also influence task performance and the experience of stress (MOSSE, 1994, p.1; LEITHÄUSER et al., 2009). Organisations serve as projection screens for various subjective feelings such as anxiety, defence and identification. The key factor in psychoanalytic oriented organisational analysis is the importance and implications of the unconscious (MENZIES LYTH, 1989, p.28). The Tavistock organisational analysts provide insight into organisational life, establish free space for reflection, where entrenched and unconstructive patterns and responses can be discarded (MILLER, 1999). The organisational consultant retains a visible presence in the organisation, when the client's chosen actions are implemented to cope with setbacks and regressions (MENZIES LYTH, 1989, p.33). OBHOLZER (1994b, p.210) describes the consultant's role as "licensed stupidity", where her capacity as non-member of the organisation gives her the liberty to ask naive questions about the nature of structures and policies. When studying work life the dialectic between individuals, people in groups and societal structures is in focus. This requires combining psychology, culture and gender theory and social theory. The theories in question have developed their interface for the dialectic between the subject and the societal. In the Tavistock tradition the organisation is defined as a social arena where the subjective meets the societal, while psychoanalytic social psychology reconstructs the distorted power and oppression features of society from a subjective perspective. The epistemological ambition is to transcend individual phenomena and adapt these into larger frameworks. It is a crucial point with far-reaching consequences that societal organisation and power relations appear in distorted forms, which can thus only be understood through the development of a critical historical consciousness and a sociological imagination. Theory must be able to translate the concepts it offers from an outside point of view into the concepts and understandings that the object has about itself, and thereby dissolve the tension between the possible and the real. Both factors are linked to each other and in this way the theory is thus inevitably critical (ADORNO, 1998 [1963]). [5]

### 3. Organisations as Projection Screens

Work and work life are subject to specific theoretical understandings and methodological approaches (as implied in the two cases above) and these allow organisations, employees and work processes to be constructed in certain ways. A brief concentrated sketch of key concepts points to the following. The concepts of projective identification and transference focus on the different kinds of meanings and exchanges that often form part of everyday working life. In paid work, people perform and interact, thus establishing a platform for relations, transference and projections. Workplaces often serve as arenas for processes and circumstances where reciprocal exchanges of expectations and concerns exert a strong influence, as described in the cultural workshop case study. In human services which rely on human interaction related to human problems and pain a fertile ground for the projections and transferences is present but in all workplaces transference processes and symbolisation form part of everyday work (ANDERSEN, 2003, 2005; ANDERSEN & DYBBROE, 2011). The concept of transference describes how organisations (or people) function as projection screens for various subjective feelings such as anxiety, defence and identification. Jobs are basically goal-means oriented through rational and task-oriented descriptions of function and objectives, but they also serve as a projection screen for a series of unconscious defence mechanisms by employees (see e.g. HUFFINGTON et al., 2004; WELLENDORF, 1986; VOLMERG et al., 1995; MENZIES LYTH, 1988, 1989). Employees may respond with stress, performance anxiety, competition, insecurity, illness, passivity, indifference, grievances, subversion, etc. These are all reactions that can be understood as different ways of subjectively processing a specific work situation. Employees use the many facets and functions of the organisation as a defence and protection against the anxiety that can be aroused in varying degrees by work performance and human interaction. These socially organised defence mechanisms will gradually emerge and materialise in the structure, culture and functionality of the organisation. In this process, individuals attempt to externalise their characteristic psychological defence mechanisms and give them an outer visible substance and form (MENZIES LYTH, 1988, p.50). In his theory of everyday life consciousness, Thomas LEITHÄUSER operates with the concept of a "transference screen". The transference screen is an attempt to visualise and explain the complicated interaction between an individual's societal background and experience and his/her interpretation of concrete everyday situations which is constantly taking place (LEITHÄUSER, 2009). The point here is to illustrate how the actual perception and handling of a situation is influenced by a multitude of factors. Firstly, there is the individual's upbringing and social background, which in LEITHÄUSER and VOLMERG's application are socially shaped. Secondly, a particular consciousness and drive structure is operating that trisects thoughts, feelings and memories into the conscious, unconscious and non-conscious (LEITHÄUSER, 1976). The concept of the "psychic economy" of work introduces how wage labour must be understood through the individual's psychodynamic structures and processes, which are shaped by life history and society. The concept was originally linked to the alienated structures of industrial production, but a more contemporary application adds the social reproduction of the utility-

and needs-related value of work in the form of a dynamic paradigm of work-related psychology (MEYERHUBER, 2009, p.102; VOLMERG, 1994, p.103 (1990)). This structural display of work was inspired by Maria JAHODA, who assigned institutionalised work five categories of experience: regular externally enforced mental and physical activity, social contact, the provision of a social identity or status, the imposition of a time structure and a collective effort or purpose (JAHODA, 1982, 1995). Through this dynamic paradigm it is possible to develop a matrix of interrelated and dynamic dimensions of the societal and psycho-dynamics of individuals and organisations (MEYERHUBER, 2009, p.102). The fact that paid work activates a series of individual life history developmental traits can be understood through the psychoanalytic concepts of transference and displacement. A variety of drive needs are displaced from the individual to the specific work itself and to the work relationships in order to satisfy these needs. In paid work it is therefore possible to identify and analyse specific psychodynamic processes where impulse gratification consists of a certain mix, depending on each individual's life history and the available opportunities for drive satisfaction. In the following I discuss further how this approach to work life research calls for the development of a methodical and conceptual hermeneutic repertoire enabling the researcher to represent both the inner and outer dimension of work life. [6]

#### **4. Welfare Institutions as Social Systems of Conscious and Unconscious Motives**

The interpretation of the case study about the old people's home demonstrates how various manifestations such as grumbling staff and lack of work quality should not only be understood in their immediate and readily understandable form, i.e. as complaining individuals who need to be pacified or ignored. The analytic approach should include the context of a complicated exchange of meanings and displacements, where management, co-workers and clients are involved, just as the management structure, expertise, communication and history of the organisation play their part. Thus, it is important to reconfigure and combine several seemingly unrelated factors to provide a deeper comprehensive insight. [7]

Tavistock operates with a number of basic concepts that form the analytic composition of organisational analysis. Welfare institutions are defined as social systems that enable an analysis of how conscious and unconscious motives and goal-rational and regressive actions interact. Institutions have a "primary task", which defines the main objectives and thus the assessment criteria for its fulfilment. The primary task should be given priority for the institution to survive and is often a result of political and professional compromises (HUFFINGTON et al., 2004). BION's theoretical delineation of the "work group" and "basic assumption group" enables us to understand how different groups in working life as in civil society operate through collective and individual expression. In the work group rational operations may be studied, while the basic assumption group provides an insight into how regressive and irrational forces also affect group and work processes (STOKES, 1994, p.19). [8]

The human service institution Links, which performed services for senior citizens in the community had for a period been suffering from a lack of competence among the staff which a newly appointed director had taken over from the previous management. This problem was characterised by a small field of applicants in spite of pressure for recruitment of new staff. A new advertisement led to a large group of applicants, followed by a long and careful selection process. But at the end of this process, the director still expressed doubt as to whether the right person had been recruited. The chosen applicant had not presented a convincing understanding of the commitment and approach the institution represented. It later turned out that the new employee soon found her role within the staff group, where she appeared confused and challenging in relation to the fundamental policies and procedures of the institution—despite her excellent paper qualifications. This was a role which was completely identical to that of the previous employee (OBHOLZER & ZAVIER, 1994, p.131). [9]

The interpretation of this case study highlights the fact that the applicant at an unconscious level responded to an advertisement that between the lines was aimed at an employee who was able to maintain a certain employee type: grumbling and anti-performance. The difficult employees acted unconsciously on behalf of the majority. A problem solution must therefore seek to avoid problem behaviour being linked to dysfunctional personalities, and should instead be transferred to an interactional and group level, i.e. to the institution as a working community (OBHOLZER & ZAVIER, 1994, p.132). Employees react differently to being exposed to anxiety-generating situations in their daily work and the Tavistock tradition uses Melanie KLEIN's concept of "splitting" in relation to the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive positions for a more detailed illumination of these processes. In work with challenging social and health functions the inevitable process is that employees, management and clients transfer feelings of pain, anger, jealousy, competition, etc. through a projective identification to different people in their environment; this is known as splitting. HALTON gives the example of an institution for young people, where staff can represent different and potentially conflicting emotional aspects of the psychological state of the client group—one employee expresses a need for independence, another a need to set clear limits. Or an abortion clinic, where one employee can relate to the woman's feelings of sadness, while another feels the woman's sense of relief (HALTON, 1994, p.14). In the paranoid-schizoid position, the driving force is the relief provided by externalising feelings of badness, hatred and envy, which leads to an immediate illusory goodness and self-idealisation. The depressive position describes a situation where it is possible and bearable to embrace the painful realisation that we can have many kinds of feelings towards colleagues, clients and work goals—all expressed by the term containing. It is often the role of the organisational consultant to enable (without condemnation) the staff to receive and process projections from clients and colleagues through an analysis of the transference processes involved (HALTON, 1994, p.18; HUFFINGTON, 2004, p.26). Using the concepts of Melanie KLEIN, the Tavistock tradition seeks to establish a "deep link" between organisational manifestations and early stages and developments in the individual's life history. This theoretical tradition stresses the intrapsychic verbalisation and interaction between subject and object, the

infant and mother, as essential for personality development. Tavistock also works with BION's concept of valence, which describes the fact that people may be predisposed to maintain and reproduce certain kinds of positions and patterns (HUFFINGTON et al. 2004, pp.35,125; OBHOLZER & ZAVIER, 1999, pp.25,112,133). [10]

The Kleinian positions do not provide a comprehensive picture of early psychology because the typology positions operate with quite static concepts, tending to underemphasise an active dynamic development perspective (STERN, 2000). It is however important to recognise that these are positions, not a stage; a position must be seen as a personality-related synthesis of emotion, anxiety and defence, which may change throughout life (OGDEN, 2003). But perhaps it is more suitable, as other researchers have proposed, to use the term "organisational modes" for the Kleinian positions as this gives a certain distance to the correspondence of the positions with the personality of specific persons (OGDEN, 2003). The Kleinian interpretations of organisations may also play down the fact that organisations can enable the employees' implementation of work functions and objectives to lead to social and psychological gratification, and thus contribute to identity work and identity gratification (ORTMANN, 1995, p.213). It is debatable whether the Kleinian understanding of organisations is capable of balancing early and "deep" influences with a more ego-oriented understanding. Tavistock has a strong focus on prescriptive analyses of practice, which raises the question of whether this reproduces basic power relationships and organisational forms, since this practice orientation must conform to existing divisions of labour and forms of knowledge within the organisation. If the practice analysis is oriented towards identifying and qualifying the interplay between the subjective level and the material conditions (organisation, management structure, communication, collaboration, etc.), based on existing premises, the analysis can run the risk of creating its own closed space at the expense of a critical overarching perspective. [11]

## **5. The Societal in the Subjective—the Subjective in the Societal**

The cultural workshop Westend aimed to establish and offer cultural activities for workers who basically did not feel that they were "consumers and performers of culture", inspired by the democratic movement "Art for All". Through a series of performances of theatre, cabaret and musical productions, the local people had the opportunity not only to consume cultural products but also to produce them. This could be achieved through courses or longer projects. In the context of a comprehensive research analysis of artists, cultural educators and users of the workshop, the phenomenon of "shame" appeared as a significant and active factor. Both staff and users of the cultural workshop experienced alienation, anxiety and shame in connection with the activities of the workshop. The local workers were reluctant to use the workshop because of their anxiety of feeling alone and in an unfamiliar environment. They thought out various explanations for why they did not take up the offer of the workshop. They spoke of chaos in the workshop, their fear of being rejected and how they had to change their clothes, their way of speaking and themselves to fit in. The staff of the cultural workshop

also expressed in interviews with researchers their uneasiness at the thought of having to meet new, unfamiliar participants and the sense of security of being among their own. The research group also stated how tired and exhausted they felt when spending a whole day in the cultural workshop (SCHORN, 1994, 1996). [12]

The further analysis revealed that the cultural workshop was perceived as an identity-threatening venue. To take advantage of the workshop activities, the workers had to leave a familiar everyday social setting and move into an unfamiliar environment and statements show that this led to uncertainty and irritation. A cultural workshop represents another world with different norms and values, giving rise to perceptions of being judged negatively, and this seemed to threaten the identity of the workers. At a deeper level, the unfamiliar threatening element can be interpreted as a projection screen for drives and chaos (SCHORN, 1994, p.96). Psychoanalytic social psychology explores the interfaces between the subject and a societal context—as illustrated in this case. In modern society, wage labour serves as a crucial socio-economically, culturally and subjectively constitutive phenomenon. Wage labour is a value-creating activity in societal terms, and it is also of great significance for the individual. It represents a necessary outer reality, as it is essential for sustaining life. But it is also the focal point of needs satisfaction, fantasies and displacements, which are fulfilled and lived out by e.g. being good at one's job and interacting with colleagues and management. There is a close, albeit complicated, relationship between power relations in society and ways to reproduce oneself and the child-rearing landscape revealed by the family which are central for a later work identity (LEITHÄUSER & VOLMERG, 1988, p.55). In other words, the family represents an effective basis for the internalisation of the identity-creating necessity of wage labour within the particular form of exploitation typical of late capitalist society. Everyday consciousness and everyday actions are concentrated expressions, which link up both inwardly to the individual's particular life, experiences and background and outwardly to social conditions, history and culture (LEITHÄUSER, 1976). The case of the cultural centre displays this: the active and democratic production and consumption of culture is regulated by class, culture and life history. Consequently, it is a much longer process than just making plans and inviting local citizens unfamiliar with middle-class culture production. Analysing these processes implies concepts such as "consciousness", "socialisation", "individualisation" and "societalisation" and thereby creates search processes on two tracks: firstly, in what ways do societal factors establish themselves in psychological structures and how are they transformed into regulatory mechanisms? Secondly, the reverse movement: how do psychological drives, wishes and needs support and connect to social and societal roles and situations in a search for gratification (LEITHÄUSER & VOLMERG, 1988, p.10). Performing such an analysis is not a question of applying the psychoanalytic discipline directly to societal phenomena—this is neither possible nor desirable. However, the ambition is to further develop the epistemological and methodological dimensions of the position, partly by establishing a social analysis on a psychoanalytic basis and partly by developing empirical research using psychoanalytic oriented methods (p.116). [13]

The methodological basis for psychoanalytic social psychology positions the theme-centred group interview as central. LEITHÄUSER and VOLMERG have developed the classical group interview with a neutral group interviewer into a theme-centred discussion practice with an active discussion moderator to facilitate theme retention and association. Centring on a theme is meant to create good conditions for "everyday talk" and the leader must strive to be genuine and available in word and deed (LEITHÄUSER & VOLMERG, 1988, p.226; WEBER, 1995, p.130; SCHORN, 2000). In their analysis LEITHÄUSER and VOLMERG apply Alfred LORENZER's three levels of interpretation: a logical level (a reconstruction of what is said), a psychological level (a reconstruction of how it is said) and a scenic level of analysis (reconstruction of interaction figures, reaction patterns and scenes) (LORENZER, 1986). The methodological work also involves a number of visual techniques such as drawings and other visualisation techniques of research themes and questions (e.g. STALHKE et al., 1994, 1995). The interview can also be seen as an inter-relational space in which the degree of ability to create an open, reflective space directly affects the quality of the interview in the form of a limited degree of insight (TIETEL, 2000). The critical objections to critical theory question the dominance and the structuration of societal driving forces as well as its early influence and shaping of the individual (ALVESSON & SKJÖLDBERG, 2009). Representatives of the "late" Frankfurt School, where psychoanalytic social psychology belongs, have scrutinised a range of modern everyday phenomena, e.g. Axel HONNETT's concept of recognition (1996) and Regina BECKER-SCHMIDT's concept of ambivalence in a gendered context (1987, 2003), both representing characteristic features of modern working life. But it is the hallmark of critical theory that it originally has had a strong focus on the interpretation and conceptualisation of late modern life; however, in the past twenty years researchers and scholars based in psychoanalytic social psychology have developed a variety of collaborative forms and action research inspirations, in organisational supervision and evaluation (e.g. LEITHÄUSER et al, 2009). [14]

## **6. Epistemology and Knowledge Creation**

Any theory and analytic representation reflects an epistemology and knowledge format driven by the scholar's background and motivation, achievements, hopes, position and preconceptions—as well as the implicated societal formats for knowledge production. In the Tavistock tradition MENZIES LYTH (1989, p.37) advocates a threefold analysis of working life based on a role analysis, structural analysis and workplace culture. The epistemology is thus directed towards the development of holistic and triangulated analyses since she warns against unilateral working life analyses focusing either on the "soft" or "hard" dimensions or on a work life system approach. OBHOLZ and ROBERTS for their part start from an explicit basis in the political reality (in England), characterised by globalisation, efficiency and cost benefit, which increases the pressure on welfare institutions and their staff. Welfare institutions develop stress-related reactions, which in turn leads to pressure on clients. The Tavistock workshop approach therefore focuses on the institutions' "dark sides", i.e. processes where "anti-task" activities have taken the upper hand—even though this might hold the potential of

disciplining the work force (OBHOLZER, 1994, p.xvii; HUFFINGTON et al., 2004). In psychoanalytic social psychology, LEITHÄUSER and VOLMERG argue that the epistemology cannot be separated from a self-directed perspective. They refer to *self*-experience, *self*-analysis, *self*-reflection and *self*-cognition as all woven into the psychoanalytic understanding. The question is then what is the object of our cognition? They suggest that it is what we know nothing of and what we may have an idea about. The critical social scientist studies how the traces of the unconscious in the form of the unfamiliar can be revealed in societal factors. But the unfamiliar, being often associated with the unconscious, is a part of us. Thus, establishing the critical gaze is closely linked to processes of self-experience and self-reflection (LEITHÄUSER & VOLMERG, 1988, p.9). This approach leads to a particular interest in the researcher's role and subjectivity and how these influence the choice of research area, method and theory. It is indisputable that both traditions for decades have produced detailed and extensive explanations of how working life serves as a crucial identity-providing but also stressful life context. At the same time they have sought to develop an intersectional view which insists that working life and organisations are influenced by societal, economic and oppressive factors. This is however easier said than done. HOGGETT criticises one of the classics among Tavistock's publications, "The Unconscious at Work" (OBHOLZER & ZAGIER, 1994), for not relating to how power and domination affect the unconscious at work. Reflections of how power plays out between the state and public organisations, between professionals, clients and citizens, between management and employees and between genders, races and classes are largely absent (HOGGETT, 1996). This may be related to the way the systemic approach emphasises the systems between individual phenomena, e.g. person/organisation within the whole of organisation/community, but does not include power relations systematically. This focus is also reflected in the unilateral and simplified definition of an organisation's "primary task", which maintains a monolithic view of only one goal. HOGGETT argues that modern organisations are precisely characterised by the fact that their many actors, various professionals, a diversity of clients, administrators, politicians and other citizens can have many different and even conflicting understandings of the primary task and also that this may change over time. MILLER and ROSE have also critically analysed the Tavistock contribution to Britain's mental health, psychological well-being and transformation of economic life in society. It is more fruitful, they argue, to document the ways in which regulatory systems seek to promote subjectivity than to document the ways in which the same systems crush subjectivity. Subjectivity should not be construed as an unchanged imperative in the evaluation of social interaction, but should rather be considered as a product of certain regimes of knowledge and systems. Unlike other critics who refer to Tavistock's marginalised position (e.g. HOGGETT, 1996), they find that Tavistock has had a prominent role as a model and example in a wide range of areas which have proven to constitute the "body" of modern welfare interventions; this is precisely why their knowledge production is significant (MILLER & ROSE, 1988, p.174). [15]

The question then remains: What is gained and lost by the subjective turn in work life research? Deep hermeneutic interpretive practice stresses that a partial

aspect can be only understood in its entirety. This is expressed in the hermeneutical spiral, where new cognition issues are added to the part through confrontation with the whole, which then leads to a continued spiral motion. In further hermeneutical interpretive practice, "empathy" has been given prominence, based on the point of view that an individual's psyche is ultimately not penetrable by another individual's sense of reason, which seeks to analyse from the outside; only intuitive empathy might seek to represent another's perspective. This kind of scientific empathy, combined with the interpreter's knowledge, may be able to produce an analysis to go beyond the other's understanding (ALVESSON & SKJÖLDBERG, 1994, p.117). Returning to this chapter's opening scenario which sketches the profile of current human service work life, this scientifically theoretical ambition is particularly interesting since we need research capable of delineating an insider's perspective, as the related processes are central to professional work. As demonstrated the psychoanalytic informed research tradition is capable of providing this—and still maintaining a dynamic interplay of how the inner work life world is related to the outer world and vice versa. [16]

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