

AUTHENTICITY AND POWER IN THE ACADEMIC PROFESSION

By

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To the Faculty of Washington State University

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the dissertation of PHILLIP VANNINI find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

Chair

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

As a young aspiring academic studying my future occupation I embarked upon my dissertation quite fearful of winding up jaded to the problems that seem to constantly beset my older mentors. Yet much hope and faith alleviated my anxiety. The deep emotional significance of my work became apparent to me one late summer day in Ottawa after two separate conversations with newly-made acquaintances. The first exchange took place in the early afternoon on the steps of Tabaret Hall, on the University of Ottawa campus: “I study the personal experience of authenticity and inauthenticity in academic work” – I answered in response to the query of an older academic curious about my dissertation. “Perfect!” – He replied with a jaded smile – “You have found the perfect social context to inquire about inauthenticity and alienation. I am sure you will have an easy time selecting a large and diverse sample!” This was not the first time an academic had shared with me his frustration, sense of meaninglessness, lack of final purpose, and apathy. Just about anyone with a few more years on their back than me had been warning me about the personal emotional repercussions of my dissertation me along the lines of: “Careful, curiosity killed the cat!” Yet, this time such realization seemed to reach deeper than usual. I had very recently failed one of my comprehensive doctoral exams, and had taken this failure in deep spite. It seemed as if I was just about to find out that my career of choice offered me nothing but the prospect of becoming a perennial victim of this very system, a sell-out. I felt doomed.

I mumbled my day in Ottawa away keeping to myself, walking around the city carrying a small backpack half empty of clothes and half full of books meant to keep me company over the weekend-long journey. Bound to fly back home very early in the morning I had decided to spare my risible graduate student-like savings and spend the night away from a hotel. I ended up in a crowded bar, sitting alone at a table slowly sipping hard apple cider and reading Rousseau until two o'clock in the morning. As I began to gather my stuff before heading to the bus stop, the young waitress that

had been serving me all night handed me my bill and inquired about my reclusive manners: “I was here for a conference, I am a doctoral candidate from Washington State” – I uttered to satisfy her curiosity. Upon learning what a doctoral candidate does and what as a sociologist I would be, the young lady then asked: “So, you’ve basically been in school all your life and you will be in school for all your life... WHY?” It was then, I believe, that the hard cider soaking up my consciousness inspired me to reply with unimaginable lucidity: “Because that’s who I am. That’s what I’ve chosen to do.” The fears and doubts that had assailed me throughout the entire day and for the days and weeks before had been washed away in a peak moment of self-discovery: before my eyes laid my authentic self, and I finally knew with exuberant certainty what to do with it.

Reawakening to my personal authenticity and to that of others became much simpler after that day. I became sensitive to that somewhat ineffable concept of authenticity interview after interview, story after story, thought after thought, emotion after emotion, and I learned to empathize with those academics with whom I have chosen to share the joys and pains of a common occupation. Throughout our “chats” I became dirty with them, so to speak, as through their words they washed away their angers, joys, fears, frustrations, hopes, dreams, and failures. Some, if not most, opened themselves so much to me that they asked me to come back for more talk. Others are now patiently waiting to read my work about them, or as I told them, our work about us. And some others, I am arrogant enough to hope and believe, now know themselves a bit more, just as I know them a bit more. In this getting dirty indeed lies the beauty of ethnographic work.

It is the forty-six academics whose stories fill these pages that I want to thank first and foremost. Without them this work simply would not be. And this very work would not be were it not for the help of my advisor, Viktor Gecas. For the time I have been in Pullman, and for the time we have both been away from Pullman Vik has been a professor, a mentor, and at times even a father. Over the years I have developed a unique relationship with Vik’s office door. That door,

always open for me, in a strange twist of circumstances one day opened up on the 33rd floor of the Hotel Regency Hyatt in Vancouver, British Columbia. It was on that day and that incredible weekend that I thought that without Vik I would still be stuck down in the basement of Wilson Hall – just as I was in my first year in the department.

Scott Myers helped me write this dissertation more than he would ever imagine. The first day I met him in his office he told me about “the game.” It was not a smart idea; given how jaded about academic work I was at the time. But at the end of his speech he told me: “it’s a fun game to play though. It’s like a competition, and it’s always fun to win. Besides, it beats any other job in the world!” If there has been something throughout my life that has motivated me is competition. After that little chat with a “prof” that looked more like a cool surfer dude than a stuffy academic this “job” was nothing but fun for me. Lisa McIntyre’s advice was just as important in my early days in the department. I will never know what exactly she was referring to, but her exhortation proffered one day as I was leaving her office – “Learn to exercise your self-control...” – started to assume so many different meaning over the years that it became my motto. It just seems to work in every context. Louis Gray’s trust and faith in me over the years have also kept me going. Any time I have needed a “strategy” to solve a problem I have asked Louis and found an answer from him. Louis welcomed me into his department at the very beginning and into his office every time I needed it. I can’t wait for the day that I’ll walk into his office to talk about the Seattle Mariners winning the World Series. Let’s keep the faith...! I cannot thank enough Arleen Hites and Dorothy Casavant for all their patience with my scatter-brained manners around the department. Not to mention the fact they have literally fed me just about every other day.

Friends and family help you survive a dissertation in many different ways. Aaron McCright distracted me with side-projects. And I always need that so badly. Without him I would still be editing my first and only paper, stuck and bored. Over the year Chris Biga became my buddy-ol’ pal

in the department. He has not done much to help me on my dissertation but the man can build a fence, and he gets all my admiration for that. A big thank you also goes to my friends Ned, Xiao, Michelle, Lonnie, and Anne for making life in the computer lab fun. And finally, the biggest thank you of all goes to my family. My mother and father have allowed me the opportunity to educate myself and given me the keys to my own slice of paradise here in the Northwest. And here in paradise I found my wife April, who – if I know her well enough – is reading this with a grin on her face because I mentioned her. April has done so much for me that it is impossible to mention it all, but perhaps she is proudest for her greatest achievement; to have taken me out of Pullman. Thank you!

AUTHENTICITY AND POWER IN THE ACADEMIC PROFESSION

Abstract

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Drawing from in-depth interviews with forty-six faculty members working in departments spanning the social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities at a large state university, I focus on how institutional practices, organizational structures, conventions, and resources of the academic social world impinge on faculty members' work. I describe how these practices vary across academic fields, rank, hiring cohort, and also throughout the course of an individual's career. In particular, I evaluate the extent to which dynamics of meta-power intersect with each individual's experience of personal authenticity. I conceptualize authenticity by building on symbolic interaction theory on self-meanings and self-feelings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
PART ONE	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
2. REFLEXIVITY AND POLISEMY.....	17
3. SELF-MEANINGS AND SELF-FEELINGS.....	34
PART TWO	
4. ACADEMIC WORK.....	59
5. ACADEMIC WORLDS.....	76
6. ACADEMIC LIFE AND AUTHENTICITY.....	97
PART THREE	
7. METHOD.....	114
8. THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF WORK AT MSU.....	121
9. THE EXPERIENCE OF (IN)AUTHENTICITY.....	159
10. THE CONTEXTS OF (IN)AUTHENTICITY.....	191
11. CONCLUSION.....	251
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	267
APPENDIX	
A. CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM.....	289
B. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	292

LIST OF FIGURES

1 THE SEMIOTIC SELF..... 29

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

For a long time symbolic interactionists have remarked that the work that men and women do is of great importance not only for the social order, but also for an individual worker's sense of self. In an often cited passage, Everett Hughes (1958, p. 42) remarked: "[A] man's¹ work is one of the things by which he is judged, and certainly one of the more significant things by which he judges himself." People work not only to earn a living but also and just as importantly to give meaning to their lives. As a sociological perspective concerned with the symbolic meanings of action and experience, symbolic interactionism has shed light on two main substantive areas of the study of work: the individual experience of work and the collective construction of the meanings of work (Shaffir and Pawluch 2003). My study of the occupation of professors follows such tradition, as I pay equal attention to both the institution of the university and to professors' sense of (in)authenticity at work.

The particular institution under analysis is the university I fictitiously named Mountain State University (MSU from here on).² My study of MSU is based on forty-six interviews I conducted with faculty members in nine departments: psychology, anthropology, and political science in the social sciences; biology, chemistry, and physics in the natural sciences; and philosophy, music, and English in the humanities. In the following pages and chapters I report about MSU's organization of work, about the cultures of its departments, and about the experiences of authenticity and inauthenticity of their faculty across ranks, career stage, and departments. My ultimate goal in conducting this study is to understand how professors experience authenticity and inauthenticity at work, how such feelings shape their conduct and sense of self and how such feelings and conduct

¹ I strongly lament and condemn the use of the sexist expression "man" or "men" in order to refer to all human beings. But I prefer not to write the usual [sic] in each and every quote in which "men" or "man" appear in a sexist manner, in order to improve readability.

² Mountain State University is a fictitious name created to protect the confidentiality of those employed by it.

shape, and are in turned shaped by, the institution in which they work. I begin this introductory chapter by discussing how we can study work and occupations from a symbolic interactionist perspective. Subsequently, I offer a very brief historical sketch of authenticity, from modernity to postmodernity. Finally, I offer an overview of my argument against postmodern criticism and begin to advance my approach to the study of authenticity.

Interactionist Research on Work and Occupations

Early precursors of later symbolic interactionist studies on work and occupations include Anderson's (1923) study on hoboes, Shaw's (1930) ethnography of jack rollers, Cressey's (1932) gaze into the world of the taxi dance hall girl, Hayner's (1936) study of waitress work, and Donovan's (1929) writing on saleswomen. But the forefather of interactionist research on work and occupations is undoubtedly the late University of Chicago professor Everett C. Hughes, who influenced two generations of symbolic interactionists through his writings (see Hughes 1958, 1971) and his teaching (see Strauss 1996). Throughout his career Hughes emphasized the importance of understanding the comparatively similar nature of occupational experiences (see Hughes 1970), posed important conceptual distinctions between failures and mistakes, and routines and emergencies, and perhaps more notably conceptualized institutions as "going concerns" (Hughes 1984).

Hughes' view of institutions as going concerns is especially important for the scope of this dissertation: the study of authenticity within the context of professional work. The concept of a going concern highlights the discursive and interactional nature of institutions and characterizes "relatively stable, routinized, ongoing patterns of action and interaction. [...] Large or small, formal or informal, each [going concern] represents an ongoing commitment to a particular moral order, a way of being who and what we are in relation to the immediate scheme of things" (Gubrium and Holstein 2000, p. 102). In their narrative approach to the study of the authentic self Gubrium and

Holstein (2000, 2002; Holstein and Gubrium 2000) argued that we constantly engage in a multitude of going concerns in our everyday life, but despite the power that institutions have in shaping subjectivity these going concerns are not static and deterministic entities but rather patterns of ongoing collective activity. Thus, viewing an institution, such as an occupational structure and culture, as a going concern leaves space for agency and also allows us to avoid the pitfalls of blind voluntarism.

Such is the nature of much symbolic interactionist research on occupations: the view of work as a process. And of all work-related processes, arguably the most important is that of worker socialization. The process of socialization is one of situational learning, of workers “learning the ropes” of an occupation (Geer et al. 1970; also see Prus 1989). Rather than a more or less long phase of role and norm absorption or imitational learning, symbolic interactionists treat socialization as a process of ongoing negotiation and adjustment to (but also interactive shaping of) a work environment. Work socialization is the process through which members of social groups acquire an occupational culture and shape a new set of identities and statuses based on such culture (Becker, Geer, Hughes 1968). We ought not to see an occupational culture as an ontological monolith. Symbolic interactionist studies of organizational cultures have repeatedly discovered the presence of occupational and organizational subcultures whose symbolic boundaries are quite meaningful in shaping workers’ sense of belonging. A subculture refers to a group of people who share a sense of distinction from a broader cultural formation, a distinction often grounded in the alternative and often anti-mainstream use of symbols and carrying out of action (Fine and Kleinman 1979). Within academia, for example, not only do we find sharply demarcated subcultures from field to field (e.g. social sciences vs. natural sciences vs. humanities), or from department to department (e.g. biology vs. physics), but also within departments (e.g. quantitative sociologists vs. qualitative sociologists, or cultural anthropologists vs. archaeologists), and even within sub-disciplinary specialization (e.g.

structural symbolic interactionists vs. processual symbolic interactionists). Subcultural systems of beliefs, meanings, values, and practices enable group members to develop differential “involvements, continuing and identifying pursuits, disenchantments, and possible reinvolvements” (Prus 1997, p. 59). Berger (1964) has even suggested that subcultural groups may develop highly complex ideological systems providing members with ready-made explanations and justifications of the legitimacy of certain occupational practices. We will see an example of this when we reflect on how certain faculty members choose to focus on teaching while accusing their more research-focused colleagues of being oblivious to the “true” mission of higher education.

Whether a new member is being socialized into an official occupational culture or into an occupational subculture or more obviously into aspects of both, it is through this complex process of “becoming” that an individual learns to master job-specific skills, terminology, norms, tools, qualities, and even ways of appearing in front of others (see Haas 1977). As Gary Allan Fine (1985, p. 5) pointed out in his study of student chefs preparing for the culture of restaurant kitchen work, occupational socialization involves “taking over specific standards, beliefs, and moral concerns.” For academics, socialization into such standards, beliefs, and concerns begins as early as the first days of graduate school when students are taught to manage and distribute their time carefully between research and teaching demands, and as soon as they begin to grapple with such notions as academic honesty and academic freedom.

The socialization process is best studied longitudinally, but even cross-sectional research approaches that allows one to focus on the temporal trajectory of life at work is liable to yield powerful tales. Symbolic interactionist research on work and occupations often builds around the notion of “career,” which in Howard Becker’s (1962, p. 24) words is “a person’s movements from one position to another in that occupational system by an individual working in that system.” Careers, from a temporal perspective, encompass significant pasts and their constant interpretations

and re-interpretations, as well as old and new goals, ideals, hopes, present occupational conditions, and future projects. A career also includes turning points, often called epiphanies, at which an individual is moved to the point of deep reflection and often to change. These transition points (Becker 1953; Faulkner 1973; Glaser and Strauss 1971) are often evident in the lives of professors when for example a long-sought-after goal like tenure is achieved or when a difficult and important research project is brought to completion. Because of the temporally segmented nature of academic careers, academic work lends itself well to the analysis of turning points. Both immediate contingencies and long-held traditions affect rites of passage in academic work, such as for example the passage from doctoral student to assistant professor, that from untenured to tenured faculty, and that to retirement or perhaps to an emeritus status. Such turning points – often present during the socialization process – give rise to remarkably dissimilar, but often also similar, experiences and sources of motivation, pride, sadness, fear, and contentment. Occupational socialization then is intimately connected to another important process, that of the *interpretation* of the meanings of significant occupational events (Becker 1952, 1953, 1962; Becker and Strauss 1956; Glaser 1964).

Professions differ somewhat from other occupations. In the normal, everyday denotation of the word a profession indicates an occupation requiring “specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation,” but the word profession also indicates “the act of taking the vows of a religious community,” and “openly declaring or publicly claiming a belief, faith, or opinion,” and a “calling” and “vocation.”³ Becker (1962) suggested that the honorific title of profession has more to do with the strategies of professionals than with the essence of professional work. Members of professions are constantly engaged in boundary work to keep their professional status and privileges intact. For example Virginia Olesen and Elvi Whittaker (1968) argued that the initiation into a profession has deeply moral undertones that provide new insiders with an ethical

³ From the Merriam-Webster Dictionary of English, online edition.

system and a sense of belonging that serve to separate them from outsiders to the profession. Fred Davis (1968, pp. 235-251) called this moral passage a “doctrinal conversion,” a process that radically alters a person’s sense of self and identity. But it is important to emphasize, once again, that a great deal of negotiation between new members and institutional forces takes place and that we ought to think of occupations and their underlying institutions as negotiated orders (Becker, Geer, Hughes, and Strauss 1961). Among the elements that are negotiated are a profession’s changing ideals and individual professionals’ changing goals, for examples. Becker and Geer (1958) were among the first to capture this phenomenon. In their study of medical students they found that the idealism of early school days was soon supplanted by a somewhat cynical pragmatism as their career progressed, a phenomenon not too dissimilar from that observed in the academic profession as we will observe in the chapters to follow. Given the constant need to speak with an authoritative voice in the context of academic work, I should also remark that effective impression management (Goffman 1959) is central to the development of a successful career. Professors need to constantly tend to their performances to come across as being professional before audiences who may not necessarily be familiar with the highly technical nature of their work. This type of face work is of course a critical component of the boundary maintenance of many professions. To put it in the words of yet another central figure in the history of symbolic interactionism and social constructionism: “professionalization in many instances is not far away from [a] pathetic confidence trick” (Berger 1964, p. 216).

I conclude this overview of historical symbolic interactionist contributions to the study of work and occupations where I began, that is, with the work of Everett Hughes. Among Hughes’ favorite concepts was that of “dirty work” (Hughes 1958). Dirty work in general refers to the undesirable aspects of a specific occupation; aspects which, however debasing must be necessarily carried out. Dirty work is quite common in the academic profession, but interestingly enough as we

will see, it is quite difficult for any observer to come to a general conclusion on which aspects of academic work are “dirty.” For some research-oriented professors teaching is dirty work. For others it may be administration, and for motivated teachers it may even be research. Whatever dirty work is and however it is performed and negotiated, a symbolic interactionist approach to the study of work allows us to focus on the temporal aspects of careers, on the interpretive process of assigning meaning to work practices and going concerns, and on the negotiation constantly ongoing between professionals and the social organizational context and forces with which they interact. The necessity to perform dirty work and the “confidence tricks” that the academic profession demands lead us to wonder about professors’ experiences of (in)authenticity, and it is to the latter concept to which I now turn.

Authenticity: A Brief Historical Overview

What is authenticity? Simply put, authenticity is the experience of being true to one’s self, whereas inauthenticity is the experience of being untrue to one’s self. Let us make no mistake: there is a very important difference between “the experience of being *true to one’s self*” and the notion of “*being a true self*.” In fact, the notion of authenticity I embrace here does *not* rely on the existence of an absolute and universal “True” self. The image of the self portrayed here:

offers a challenging contrast [to deterministic and structural versions]: the human agent is seen as a volitional being who seeks to find meaning in his transactions with the reality in which he is intrinsically related by the nature of existence; he is a being who fundamentally seeks meaning and a sense of life (Tiryakian 1968, p. 76).

In contrast to sociological paradigms that problematize human nature and existence by theoretical fiat I adopt here an approach that is at one time cognizant of the power of individuals and groups to shape their lives, but also of their limitations in doing so. Human beings, I believe are “varied, changeable, uncertain, conflictful and partially free to choose what [they] will do and what

[they] will become, because [they] must do so in order to exist in a world that is very changeable, uncertain, and conflictful” (Douglas and Johnson 1977, p. 14). This view is the precondition for the sociological study of authenticity within the context of going concerns, or institutions.⁴

We should also be careful to avoid another mistake: authenticity and sincerity are *not* synonymous. Whereas sincerity and insincerity imply the presence of another person whose “reality” is communicated to us, authenticity is said to exist by “laws of its own being” (Trilling 1972, p. 93), or in other words: “(in)authenticity is an entirely self-referential concept – unlike sincerity, it does not include any reference to ‘others’” (Erickson 1991, p. 88). When put in these terms, the *experience* of being true to one’s self – it turns out – is much simpler to study than it would seem at first sight. Yet, the histories of philosophy, sociology, and psychology are marked by fascinating yet controversial attempts to speculate on the nature of the *ideal* of a *True* self. The concrete experience of authenticity – i.e. the private and uniquely personal sensation of one’s authenticity – has instead captured far less attention.

The place of authenticity in the history of sociology has been object of some reflection and analysis. In her historical overview of the changing meanings of the experience of authenticity Rebecca Erickson (1991) traced the development of authenticity through three “waves” of interpretive sociological theory. During the first wave such founders of American philosophical Pragmatism as William James, John Dewey, Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead, William Isaac Thomas, and Robert Ezra Park placed authenticity more or less explicitly at the very center of their theories on the self. Later, the debate between the competing visions of the self of the Chicago and Iowa school of symbolic interactionism marked the second developmental wave. During this phase the debate on the consequences of the expansion of mass society and culture on self-development played a very significant role in shaping visions of authenticity. Finally, during the

⁴ In this sense here I build upon the work of symbolic interactionists and humanistic sociologists like Douglas and Johnson (1977), Kotarba and Fontana (1984), Kotarba and Johnson (2002), Manning (1973), and Tiryakian (1962).

third wave the emergence of Goffman's dramaturgy and later of postmodern theory led many observers to question whether authenticity was but a relic of the past.

Holstein and Gubrium(2000) similarly argued that the popularity of authenticity has been in constant decline, and is only now beginning to occupy a central place in the sociological agenda. Holstein and Gubrium (2000) in particular argued that the self has endured a crisis that, while evident to everyone after the turbulent 1960s, had already captured the attention of perspicacious cultural commentators as early as the years immediately following World War II. Among these figures were David Riesman (1950) and William Whyte (1956).⁵

In his immensely popular book *The Lonely Crowd* American sociologist David Riesman (1950) observed that as modernization, industrialization, and urbanization began to take hold in society, the character type which he called "inner-directed" became quite common. Riesman identified the inner-directed character type with traditional modern traits such as autonomy, independence, and moral superiority. The inner-directed person "becomes capable of maintaining a delicate balance between the demands upon him of his life-goal and the buffetings of his external environment" (Riesman 1950, p. 16). The inner-directed character is also more stable and coherent across the life course than its counterpart, the "other-directed" character. The other-directed character is more common in societies where industrialism has taken a deeper hold, and where the logic of consumption has replaced that of production. For other-directed characters "their contemporaries are the source of direction [...] – either those known to him or those with whom he is indirectly acquainted, through friends and through the mass media" (Riesman 1950, p. 22). Other-directed persons are conformists, sensitive to external influence, and often in need of the approval of others. While Riesman never explicitly spoke of "authenticity" or even of the "self" in *The Lonely Crowd*, it is clear that his concern was with the emergence of a character excessively shaped, even controlled, by

⁵ However, the postmodern critique of the logic of conspicuous consumption should be traced back to an even earlier work, Veblen's (1905) *Theory of the Leisure Class*.

social demands and expectations. Riesman was explicitly fearful of the shallowness, superficiality, vulnerability, and narcissism of the other-directed type (see Holstein and Gubrium 2000, p. 43). The other-directed person wants “approval, not fame” (Riesman 1950, p. 282) and even less so wants to obtain distinction by standing above and outside of the crowd, unlike the prototypical modern hero of authenticity and self-determination epitomized in Ayn Rand’s (1957) *Atlas Shrugged*. The other-directed person’s lack of ability to innovate and to rely upon and govern oneself is especially in contrast with the traditional spirit of individual autonomy underlying the growth of liberal democracy (see Weber 1958).

A similar political concern with the spread of conformity and the demise of self-governance is evident throughout the pages of William Whyte’s (1956) *The Organization Man*. Whyte attacked the shallow materialism of the American Dream and the demise of self-determination evident in the then nascent drudgery of suburban life. The villain, whose life story the book tells, is a mediocre middle management junior executive who willingly surrenders himself to the visionless goals of his corporate employer. In analyzing the significance of the villain’s life Whyte observed the emergence of a “social ethic” (1956, p. 6) which overlapped to a great extent with the bureaucratic ethic of state and private organizations. Such social ethic was the “contemporary body of thought which makes morally legitimate the pressures of society against the individual” (Whyte 1956, p. 7). Holstein and Gubrium (2000, p. 45) found that three main propositions underlined such ethic: “(1) the belief in the group as the source of creativity, (2) the belief in ‘belongingness’ as the ultimate desire of the individual, and (3) the belief in the application of science to achieve belongingness.” Whyte’s organization man ceased to exist as a unit in itself. It was only through his sublimation to group demands that he assumed existential meaning, and it was only through his collaboration that he could fulfill his social function. The organization man’s existence is the struggle to be normal, “the apotheosis of the well-rounded man: obtrusive in no particular, excessive in no zeal...the man in the

middle” (Whyte 1956, p. 147). Whereas Riesman was much more subtle in his moral condemnation of the other-directed type, Whyte implored his reader to struggle against the rise of the uncreative, conformist, and bland organization man, in other words to fight against the *triumph of the social over the individual*.

Despite the fact that Riesman’s (1950) and Whyte’s (1956) books appeared well before the advent of postmodern theory, we can trace the dawn of postmodernity back to the years that Riesman and White described. The postmodern turn is largely believed to have occurred with the transition from a production society to a socio-cultural system based on consumption (see Bell 1976; Lash 1990). Together with the rise in consumption, the postmodern period also began together with the rapid diffusion of mass-mediated images and information. The combined effects of these forces has brought us to our contemporary postmodern condition (see Bauman 1992), a condition marked by deep skepticism toward the possibility of authenticity and selfhood (see chapter one). Today – Kenneth Gergen (1991) suggested – the postmodern self is saturated with the pervasive influence of mediated realities, torn apart by conflicting social demands, overwhelmed by contradictory interpersonal relationships and obligations, suspended in a void of time and space, and incapable of finding one’s own identity in a world of ephemeral meanings and evanescent beliefs. Echoing Lyotard’s (1984, p. 15) famous dictum that the self “does not amount to much any more,” Gergen (1991, p. 6) remarked:

For everything we “know to be true” about ourselves, other voices within respond with doubt and even derision. This fragmentation of self-conceptions corresponds to a multiplicity of incoherent and disconnected relationships. These relationships pull us in myriad directions, inviting us to play such a variety of roles that the very concept of an “authentic self” with knowable characteristics recedes from view. The fully saturated self becomes no self at all.

The postmodern self has seemingly lost confidence in morality, faith, and in the meaningfulness of social and personal goals (Gottschalk 1993). New technologies shape and possess our selves, resulting in the commercialization of our bodies for the sake of fitness and attractive physical appearance (Featherstone 1991; Glassner 1989). Similarly, Arlie Hochschild (1983, 2003) tells us, the self is increasingly commodified and its feelings rendered inauthentic by the demands of emotional display imposed upon it by the rules of our service economy. The self is rapidly becoming engulfed in a swirl of images and ready-to-consume-meanings, adds Denzin (1991). In sum, the advent of postmodernism and postmodern theory authenticity seem to sweep away authenticity and leave no traces of the self.

Have we then truly witnessed the demise of authenticity and selfhood? Has the postmodern self indeed buried its modern counterpart? I remain skeptical toward the postmodern contention that meaning had demised and that the self has died. Authenticity is still possible, I believe, as long as we are careful in conceptualizing it. In the following session I begin to lay the foundations for such conceptualization by building upon some important sociological studies of authenticity.

The Possibility of Authenticity

For a symbolic interactionist, there is little about the postmodern self that truly makes its modern counterpart obsolete (Maines 1996; Schwalbe 1993). In fact, the postmodern critique of the self and authenticity is valid – I believe following David Maines (1996) – insofar as it debunks the ideology of self-determination typical of Cartesian philosophy, but Pragmatism and symbolic interactionism had done that before (Maines 1996). Symbolic interactionism, much like affirmative postmodern theory (see Rosenau 1992) sees the self “in terms of its contingent, assembled, changeable, and precarious modalities” (Lyman 1984, p. vii). But symbolic interactionists still believe that the experience of being true to oneself is important (Kotarba and Johnson 2003). Even Goffman – despite the postmodern reading that dramaturgy places insincerity, cynicism and

connivance at the center of its view of interpersonal communication – believed that the experience of authenticity is very meaningful (Goffman 1963; also see Erickson 1991). Goffman realized that appearances, rather than substance, played a very significant role in strategic interaction, but despite his concern with outward consequences of impression management Goffman also reflected on the intrapersonal impact of face-work. When the interaction order is threatened, for example by the occurrence of an incident:

unless the disturbance is checked, unless the interactants regain their proper involvement, the illusion of reality will be shattered, the minute social system that is brought into being with each encounter will be disorganized, and the participants will feel unruly, unreal, and anomic (Goffman 1959, p. 135).

A careful reading of Goffman's concept of felt-identity should lead anyone to question the postmodern interpretation of his work. Goffman (1963, p. 106) believed that social agents have an ego identity that is "first of all a subjective, reflexive matter that necessarily must be felt by the individual whose identity is at issue" Goffman also believed that such felt-identity demanded some level of coherence between an actor's performances and her ego. Whenever individuals fail to be coherent – and let us keep in mind that "this intricate maneuver of self-delusion constantly occurs" – "we have [...] what has been called 'self-distantiation,' namely, that process by which a person comes to feel estranged from himself" (Goffman 1959, p. 81).

In her attempt to study how the postmodern self can still feel authentic, Rebecca Erickson (1991) followed Goffman's lead and focused on the *emotional* experience of authenticity. Through her work Erickson offered an important corrective to the two most relevant empirical treatments of (in)authenticity in sociology, those of Ralph Turner and Arlie Hochschild. Ralph Turner (Turner 1976; Turner and Schutte 1981) argued that sociologists could empirically study (in)authenticity only through phenomenological methods. For Turner feeling authentic was the experience of feeling

true to one's self, of feeling real and meaningful. Turner (1976) also speculated that broad cultural changes in the American society have led to a shift from institutional to impulsive selves. The decline of moral and religious authority, the demise of tightly-knit communities, collective memory, and tradition, together with the parallel rise of individualism have driven increasingly more selves to find fulfillment on impulses, rather than normative expectations. Whereas the institutional self feels authentic when fulfilling the obligations demanded of one's social roles, the impulsive self feels authentic when possibilities for individual expression and self-coherent and value-driven conduct exist. Both selves coexist, even though institutional selves are on the decline.

Whereas Turner understood the experience of authenticity to vary according to the institutional or impulsive foundation of the self, Arlie Hochschild (1983) saw the mechanisms of the late industrial economy as being responsible for shaping the experience of authenticity. In *The Managed Heart* Hochschild (1983) extended Goffman's dramaturgic perspective to the realm of emotional display management by conducting an ethnography of female flight attendants. Hochschild found that consumer service regulations issued by the airline demanding that flight attendants be nice, courteous, kind, and cheerful at all times resulted in estranging some of these flight attendants from their own true emotions and true self. Hochschild's approach also was grounded in phenomenology, as once again, it was the *experience*, and not the ideal, of authenticity that mattered to the researcher. But according to Erickson (1991) neither Turner's nor Hochschild's work was exempt from criticism. According to Erickson (1991) Turner committed the mistake of adopting an overly cognitive view of authenticity, whereas Hochschild's polemical impetus had led her to become oblivious to the fact that some of her subjects may indeed have had a more institutional self – rather than an impulsive as she assumed – and therefore may have experienced authenticity when she instead assumed they felt inauthentic.

Following Erickson's re-evaluation of Goffman, Turner, and Hochschild then, I believe that authenticity is the experience of feeling true to one's self and inauthenticity is the experience of feeling untrue to one's self, as mentioned above. Understood this way, authenticity neither requires complete autonomy nor self-determination. Rather, authenticity simply presupposes reflexivity (Ferrara 1998; Holstein and Gubrium 2000). Furthermore, the concept of authenticity I espouse here rejects the metaphysical view of a transcendently true self. Authenticity is rather a postmetaphysical discursive practice of self-construction (Holstein and Gubrium 2000). This is at once both a new and an old way of conceptualizing authenticity. It is old in that it relies on the pragmatic existence of selfhood and the importance of subjective and intersubjective meaning. But it is new in that it contrasts itself both to metaphysical essentialism, structuralism, and post-structuralism. The postmodern turn in the social sciences and humanities has led many to question authenticity, but as I argue in the next chapters, authenticity is still alive and it resides in two theoretical stalwarts of American Pragmatism: reflexivity and polisemy.

Chapter Organization

This dissertation is divided into three parts. In the first part I reflect on the concept of authenticity, and in particular on the notions of reflexivity and polisemy (chapter two), and the relation between self-meanings and self-feelings (chapter three). In part two I focus on the institution of academic work, in particular by reviewing the research literature on the professoriate (chapter four), by examining the conventions, practices, and resources of the social world of authenticity (chapter five), and finally by paying close attention to the crisis of the professoriate and the university (chapter six). In part three, I introduce my method (chapter seven) and then report on the data I collected (chapters eight through ten). Chapter eleven includes a final set of reflections on authenticity and the negotiated order of the academic world.

CHAPTER TWO

REFLEXIVITY AND POLISEMY

In this chapter I discuss how we can approach the study of authenticity by building on the pragmatism of such thinkers as George Herbert Mead, Charles Sanders Peirce, Charles Horton Cooley, and William James. The key to the vision of authenticity I advance here lies in understanding the self's properties of reflexivity and polisemy. My argument is that the concepts of reflexivity and polisemy allow us to surpass the limitations associated with the idea of authenticity as self-determination. The ideology of self-determination – in relation to authenticity – is rather simple to explain, and can be stated as follows: a self will be authentic when it will be true to one's own personality rather than to the social character imposed upon it by other people. The main problem I find with the ideology of self-determination is that it excludes the possibility that the authentic self can be social. In order to avoid the pitfalls of self-determination and in order to advance a sociological understanding of authenticity I then begin my conceptualization of it with the mechanism of the looking glass self (Cooley 1964 [1902]).

Reflexivity in Charles Horton Cooley and William James

Charles Horton Cooley believed that self emerged out of social interaction. In a famous passage he wrote: "A self idea of this sort seems to have three principal elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance, and some sort of self-feeling such as pride or mortification" (Cooley 1964 [1902], p. 84) While many have mistakenly taken Cooley's dictum to mean that our feelings and thoughts toward ourselves are nothing but representations of what other people feel and think about us (Felson 1981), it is more appropriate to say that "our feelings about ourselves are not mere mechanical reflections of others' actual responses, but our own conceptions about others' ideas of us" (Franks and Gecas 1992, p. 51). Early studies of reflected appraisals confirmed that the looking glass self is an *active* process (see

Backman and Secord 1962; Rosenberg 1979) of interpretation of others' responses to the self. Rosenberg (1979) suggested that such interpretive process will depend on the subject's awareness and agreement with reflected appraisals, as well as their personal relevance and interpersonal significance. But as Franks and Gecas (1992) remarked, Cooley's looking-glass self has often been taken to connote disturbing images of "other-directed," chameleon-like selves. This general misunderstanding – Franks and Gecas (1992) argued – has led people to be oblivious to the active and interpretive qualities of the process of self-development.

Cooley's self differs from the metaphysical self of the European Enlightenment in radical and numerous ways (see Meltzer, Petras, and Reynolds 1975). Much like other pragmatists', Cooley's self was mundane and more deeply anchored in the social circumstances of everyday life and interpersonal relations. Holstein and Gubrium (2000, p. 20) wrote that the self of the pragmatists:

was not some idealized or abstract position from which one contemplated nature, the cosmos, and our place in relation to them. Rather [the pragmatists] were more interested in how selves operate in the world, especially how individuals managed their relations with each other as they reflected upon themselves and upon those with whom they interacted.

The pragmatists introduced a radical break with metaphysical thought, a break of a magnitude so great that many – including the postmodernists – have failed to acknowledge and understand (Maines 1996, 2001). The pragmatists advocated the study of selves enmeshed in specific everyday situations – plural selves differing from one another in many ways and yet sharing a similar process of construction and a similar structure. For Cooley and the other pragmatists the self was never the Self with a capital S, but rather a much more localized point of reference for diverse I's, Me's, and Mine's. As Norbert Wiley (1994) explained, the self of the pragmatists also had different political aspirations than the Cartesian self by evoking, as it did, the idea of a radically democratic society

based on true equality of all subjects. This vision sharply contrasted the political ideology affiliated with a metaphysical self, a self believed to be the incarnation of spiritual leadership and monarchic authority (see Berman 1970).

Cooley's self resides in "daily speech and thought," in the empirical reality of the common use of the pronouns "I," "Me," "Mine," and "Myself," and in what can be "apprehended or verified by ordinary observation" (Cooley 1964 [1902], p. 168). Cooley's self is primarily social, and it is precisely from the social that it derives its existence. His self is also clearly embodied, in contrast to the metaphysical reality of the pure ego of the transcendental self typical of Cartesian thought.

Building from the thought of William James, Cooley (1964 [1902], p. 169) in fact wrote that:

The distinctive thing in the idea for which the pronouns of the first person are names is apparently a characteristic kind of feeling which may be called the "my-feeling" or sense of appropriation. Almost any sort of idea may be associated with this feeling, and so come to be named "I" or "mine," but the feeling and that alone it would seem, is the determining factor in that matter.

The reality of the self lies in its empirical consequentiality: in the reality of feelings for the self, and in the vividness of experience. In this sense Cooley shared much with William James, for whom also the self was an actively reflexive structure and process, embodied in the reality of one's own feelings. James (1961 [1892]) believed that self emerged out of reflexive awareness. More precisely, he argued that individual awareness originates out of everyday reflection on one's own self:

Whatever I may be thinking of, I am always at the same time more or less aware of *myself*, of my *personal existence*. At the same time it is I who am aware; so that the total self of me, being as it were duplex, partly known and partly knower, partly object and partly subject, must have two aspects discriminated in it, of which for shortness we may call one the *Me* and the other the *I*. I call these "discriminated aspects" and not separate things, because the identity

of *I* with *Me*, even in the very act of their discrimination, is perhaps the most ineradicable dictum of common-sense... (James 1961 [1892], p. 43, emphasis in the original).

James' "dictum of common-sense," the ineradicable relationality of the *I* and the *Me*, reminds us that reifying the two main components of the self is a terrible mistake. The self arises out of reflection and everyday experience, for the *I* and the *Me* emerge out of the relation of the subject with the social. The *I* and the *Me* are not essences. We may have words for these terms of reference of the self but these words do not refer to metaphysical entities pre-existing the reflexive awareness or the emergence of the self in social interaction (see Holstein and Gubrium 2000, pp. 22-23).

The *I* and the *Me* are terms of reference indicating that the self is both a subject and an object to itself. I may be a subject of my own action as I think, feel, and act, but I am also an object of my thoughts, feelings, and actions as these are directed to me. The self arises out of reflexivity, and it cannot exist out of communication. The self is a local relation constituted in and through communicative acts with others. "A man" – James (1961 [1892], p. 46) wrote – "has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry in image of him in their mind." The postmodern self begins to sound less and less original and less and less a unique condition as we rediscover the pragmatists' vision of the self and their "philosophies of flux" (Dewey 1958, p. 50; also see Maines 1996). Gergen's (1991) condition of saturation, caused by his many social relationships and fluid identities, would not surprise James a bit. In a fashion similar to the postmodern idea of the self as a floating signifier James himself (1961 [1892], p. 44) saw the self as "fluctuating material" and denied that consciousness "stands for an entity." Furthermore, the postmodern decentered self, swallowed in a swirl of material objects and competing images, sounds much less uniquely postmodern when we take into consideration James' words:

In its widest possible sense, however, a man's Me is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank account (James 1961 [1892], p. 44).⁶

The emergence of the self out of the communication process and social interaction reached its clearest formulation with the work of George Herbert Mead.

George Herbert Mead

In the social psychology of George Herbert Mead the inner conversation with oneself and the external conversation with others are both forms of communication equally necessary for the development of self and society, and there is little distinction among the two. Inner life and social interaction are both dependent on the use of symbols whose meanings are socially shared and agreed upon (Mead 1934). The empirical self is neither a part of inner life, nor a part of external social life, but rather a necessary component of both.

Mead (1934) used the same terminology of Cooley and James in referring to the I and the Me, but his social psychology was decidedly more social and more profoundly based in social interaction. For Mead the self emerges out of communicative interaction, and it is in the act of reflexive communication that the self develops:

The self has a character which is different from that of the physiological organism proper.

The self is something which has a development; it is not initially there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process (Mead 1934, p. 135).

⁶ The Similarities end, however, when postmodernists attack the notion of agency (see Shalin 1993).

It is through symbol-mediated experience that the self arises. Mead extensively built on Cooley's looking-glass self theory in order to explain how individuals come to think of themselves:

The individual experiences himself as such, not directly, but only indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs. For he enters his own experience as a self, or individual, not directly or immediately, not by becoming a subject to himself, but only insofar as he first becomes an object to himself just as other individuals are objects to him or in his experience; and he becomes an object to himself only by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within a social environment or context of experience or behavior in which both he and they are involved (Mead 1934, p. 138).

By describing the play of children Mead (1934) explained that individuals play a role and then respond to it. In doing so we interact internally with social structures of roles and other selves, and in the process of calling out such meaningful responses we – as children and then throughout the socialization process – take “this group of responses and organiz[e] them into a certain whole” (Mead 1934, p. 150). As we do so we become another to one's own self, an other “which is an organization of the attitudes of those involved in the same process. The organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self may be called the ‘generalized other’” (Mead 1934, p. 154). Mead's social self should remind us once again that the saturated condition of the impression-manager, superficial, playful, decentered, postmodern self is in actuality quite “normal” as Mead's (1934, p. 142) words remind us:

We realize in everyday conduct and experience that an individual does not mean a great deal of what he is doing and saying. We frequently say that such individual is not himself. [...]

What determines the amount of the self that gets into communication is the social

experience itself. Of course a good deal of the self does not need to get expression. We carry on a whole series of different relationships to different people. We are one thing to one man and another thing to another. There are parts of the self which exist only for the self in relationship to itself. We divide ourselves up in all sorts of different selves with reference to our acquaintances. We discuss politics with one and religion with another. There are all sorts of different selves answering to all sorts of different social reactions. It is the social process itself that is responsible for the appearance of the self; it is not there as a self apart from this type of experience.

The self, with Mead, is then fully social. But if this is the case, is not the internalization of the attitude of others a condition of inauthenticity? How can an authentic self exist when the Me is a reflection of the generalized other? The solution can be found in looking at the process of self-constitution. Much like Cooley, Mead finds this process to be active:

Both aspects of the “I” and the “Me” are essential to the self in its full expression. One must take the attitude of the others in a group in order to belong to a community; he has to employ that outer social world taken within himself in order to carry on a thought. It is through his relationship with others in that community, that he has being as a citizen. *On the other hand the individual is constantly reacting to the social attitudes, and changing in this co-operative process the very community to which he belongs* (Mead 1934, pp. 199-200, my emphasis).

For Mead, the “conventional” individual’s ideas “are exactly the same as those of his neighbors,” and such individual “is hardly more than a ‘me.’” In contrast, the person with a “definite personality... replies to the organized attitude in a way which makes a significant difference.” Mead (1934, p. 201) continues that, in the latter case “it is the ‘I’ that is the more important phase of the experience.” Thus,

The fact that all selves are constituted by or in terms of the social process, and are individual reflections of it [...] is not in the least incompatible with, or destructive of, the fact that every individual self has its own peculiar individuality, in its own unique pattern; because each individual self within that process, while it reflects in its organized structure the behavior pattern of that process as a whole, does so from its own particular and unique standpoint within that process, and thus reflects in its organized structure a different aspect or perspective of this whole social behavior pattern from that which is reflected in the organized structure of any other individual self within that process (Mead, 1934, p. 201).

The conditions for the authenticity of the social self do exist, according to Mead, and it is precisely from here that we need to depart in our exploration of authenticity as a set of self-meanings and self-feelings. But before we proceed any further, we must give the definite coup de grace to the ideological view of authenticity as self-determination. In order to do so we must debunk the very logic upon which it rests. For this reason let us turn to the father of pragmatist logic, Charles Sanders Peirce.

The Self as a Sign

Despite the central place he occupied in the development of American philosophy, Charles Sanders Peirce's contribution to pragmatism and symbolic interaction has been considerably overlooked (Halton 1995; Rochberg-Halton 1986; Wiley 1994). Peirce's thought, to be fair, is not always easy to penetrate, furthermore its vastness – spanning the universes of logic, cosmology, mathematics, philosophy, epistemology, and semiotics – may be downright overwhelming for most observers. Peirce's semeiotic – or as we now refer to it, semiotics – is however central to symbolic interactionism and in particular to the conceptualization of authenticity advanced here. In this section I am going to argue that the demise of authenticity and selfhood caused by the spread of the postmodern condition is in actuality an analytical mistake caused by the generalized adoption of the

foundations of Saussurean semiology and the neglect of Peircean semiotics. I begin with Saussure, and later proceed to discussing Peirce.

Together with Charles Sanders Peirce, Ferdinand de Saussure's (1959) work lies at the very foundations of the school of semiotics. Saussurean semiology is characterized by a number of dichotomies which specify the field of structural semiological analysis. Saussure set up definite and sharp boundaries between the two terms of each dichotomy. The most famous of these dichotomies is that of the signifier and the signified, the unity of which is called the sign. The signifier is the acoustic image of the signified, which in turn is the meaning brought forth in one's mind by the use of the signifier. The unity of signified and signifier is determined by a system of combination rules; a structural system which Saussure identified with language and called *la langue*. Language thus codifies and structures meaning and it does so by existing at any one time for a linguistic community – it is at this synchronic level of analysis that Saussurean structural semiology operates. The opposite of language is speech, or *la parole*, that is individual discursive events relatively open to synchronic change, that is, change over time. Other dichotomies exist in the thought of Ferdinand de Saussure, and for these as well Saussure identified a conceptual term at whose level semiology is to operate while excluding a term which is thought to lie outside the purview of structural analysis. We have already seen how Saussure chose to privilege language over speech and synchrony over diachrony. The same goes for the linguistic signifier over the material signified, for language over other symbolic systems, for the semiotic level over the exo-semiotic level (culture, the economy, politics, etc.), for the paradigmatic code over the syntagmatic, and for the value of the structural unity of the sign over the process of signification (construction, transmission, and use/interpretation).

Saussurean semiology has been quite influential in the development of a semiotic interactionism. Important symbolic interactionist works that have made use of Saussure's

structuralism have appeared over the years (Denzin 1987; Manning 1987a, 1987b, 1988; Perinbanayagam 1985, 1991). Yet, as I argued elsewhere (Vannini 2004) Saussure's thought is more likely to hinder than to aide the development of a truly *symbolic* interactionism. In fact, Blumer's second premise of symbolic interactionism is that the meaning of things "is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows" (1969, p. 2). Blumer continued by stating that "the third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he [sic] encounters" (1969, p. 3). If we are to believe in these premises, there is no possibility of redemption for Saussurean semiology and there is equally no possibility of fashioning a semiological interactionist theory of the sign (see Gottdiener 1995). Saussurean semiology sees meaning as structured not by social interaction but rather by the relatively unchanging system of language, and in particular by the structural linguistic system of binary oppositions. Meaning is not modified through an interactive or interpretive process, but rather determined by the system of differences between signifiers along the paradigmatic code. Saussurean semiology hypothesizes the existence of signifying systems and posits their functioning outside of social processes, change, and development. There is little attention given to context, to the individual, or to interaction in Saussurean semiology.

In addition, Saussurean semiology has been heavily criticized for its reliance on an idealistic vision of the sign (see Gottdiener 1995). As illustrated, the unity of the sign in Saussurean semiology is dependent on the association between signifier and signified and the consequent determination of meaning by the structure of language. Language, or *la langue*, exists in the mind of all members of a particular culture for whom the determination of meaning is never dependent on interpretation. Saussure's neglect of interpretation, Derrida (1967) pointed out, is ignorant of the polisemic property of the sign and dependent on a transcendental vision of the signified. If signifieds could be easily and immediately matched to their corresponding signifiers there would be

no possibility for communicative misunderstandings and disagreements over truth, at least within a shared socio-linguistic system. But this is far from the actuality of communication and signification. Signifiers are not transcendental metaphysical realities existing outside of interpretation, Derrida (1967) argues, but rather are dependent on interpretive processes. It is thus no accident that the critique to authenticity and the agency of the self comes from a corpus of European theorists – such as Foucault, Barthes, and Baudrillard – who base their criticism on the foundations of Saussurean semiology (see Rochberg-Halton 1986). I will say more on this briefly, but let us now turn our attention to Peirce’s theory of signs.

Whereas dyads pervade the thought of Saussure, Peirce’s fascination lies with triads. The Peircean model of the sign is the triad of a representamen, of an interpretant, and an object: “A sign stands for something to the idea which it produces, or modifies. Or it is a vehicle conveying into the mind something from without. That for which it stands is called its object; that for which it conveys its meaning; and the idea to which it gives rise, its interpretant” (Peirce 1931, 1.339). The dynamism implicit in the Peircean model of the sign is infinitesimally superior to Saussure’s. Rather than seeing meaning as determined by the structure of language as Saussure did, Peirce thought that the interpretant played a very important part in semiosis. Semiosis indeed is here a process, not a static system of codes or a structure; semiosis is the *social* process by which signification occurs through the interplay of interpretants, representamens, and objects. The Peircean model of the sign avoids the trap of idealism and posits semiosis as a symbolic, social, and material process.

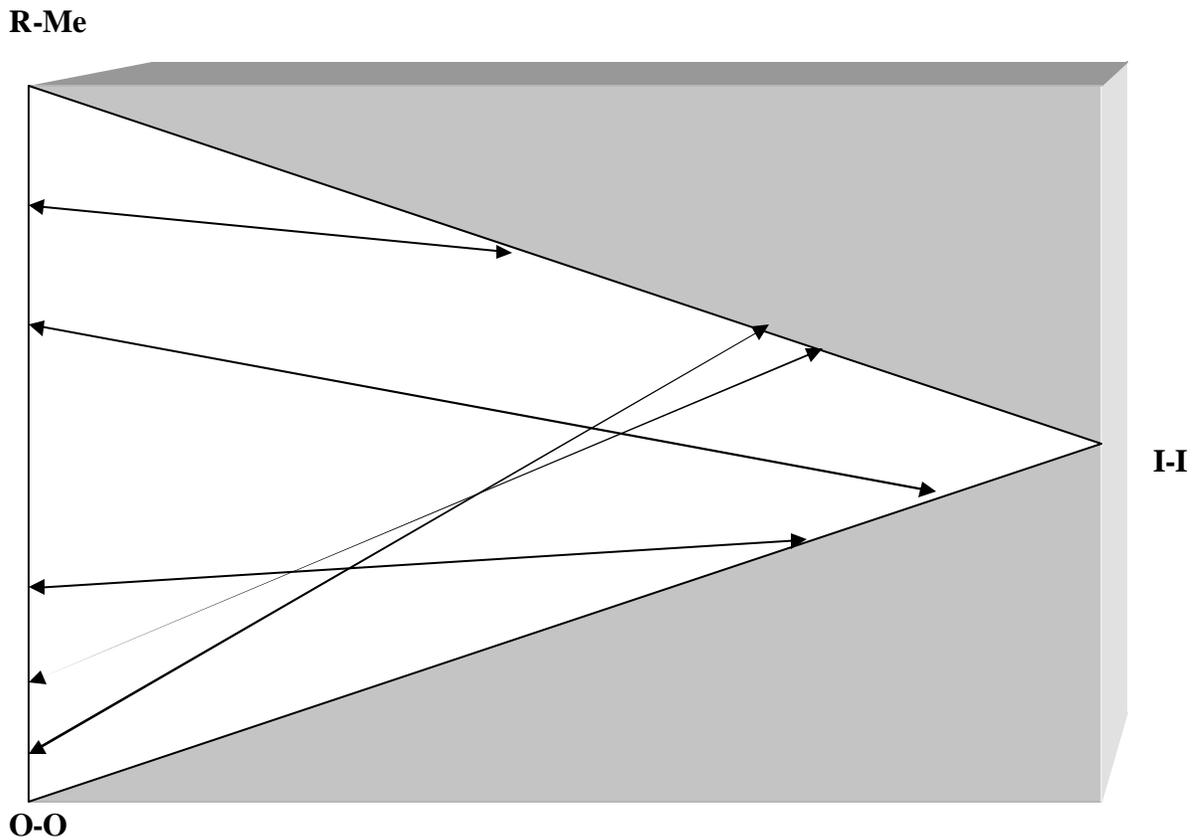
Peirce (1931) believed that the self as well was a sign.⁷ In a recent important monograph Wiley (1994), building upon Colapietro’s (1989) earlier investigation on Peirce’s theory of the self, proposed an integration of Mead’s and Peirce’s theories of the self. Wiley’s intent was to rediscover the value of such semiotic self at a time when various versions of theoretical determinism – such as

⁷ This, as Wiley (1994) remarked, is not supposed to mean that the self is a nominal reality.

postmodernism and post-structuralism – menace to obliterate selfhood. Without adopting Wiley’s conceptualization of the self, I base my view of authenticity on a semiotic view of the self. In figure 1 below I illustrate the Meadian self understood from the perspective of Peircean semiotics. The self is a sign, thus the triangle drawn below represents the self as a sign. Such semiotic self is composed of a set of relations. Following Mead these are the relations between the I and the Me, and between the I, the Me, and the Generalized Other. It is important to emphasize, following Mead (1934) and James (1961 [1892]), that the I, the Me, and the Generalized Others are terms of reference constituted by the very relations they have with one another. In other words, the I, the Me, and the Generalized Other have no existence outside of their reflexive relationality. Similarly, the triadic components of Peirce’s model of the sign cannot exist out of their relationality.

I drew the I, the Me, and the Generalized Other following Peirce’s theory of signs. R stands for representamen, I stands for interpretant, and O stands for object. In figure 1 Peirce’s representamen corresponds to Mead’s Me, Peirce’s interpretant corresponds to Mead’s I, and Peirce’s object corresponds to Mead’s Generalized Other. I drew the triangle inside a tri-dimensional box which represents the natural context in which the self takes shape (more on this in chapter three). Such box is tri-dimensional to represent time (depth) and social setting (represented by width and length). Finally, I drew casual arrows to represent specific relations hypothetically taking place between the I, the Me, and the Generalized Other. The arrows represent actual meanings of the self, such as identities. I will develop these arguments further in chapter three.

Figure 1: The Semiotic Self



The fundamental characteristic of this pragmatic and semiotic self is its reflexivity. Just like Mead's self cannot exist outside of the relation among the I, the Me, and the Generalized Other, Peirce's sign does not exist outside of the relation among the Interpretant, the Representamen, and the Object (Peirce 1931). The self is of course a special sign because it is human, and humans have the capability to reflect on themselves (thus being both subjects and objects of their own reflexive awareness) whereas inanimate signs do not. It is precisely because of its nature of being reflexive and relational that *the self is an active interpreter of itself*, or in other words an interpreter of its meaning. And it is precisely in this reflexivity and relationality that lies the self's ability to construct its own authenticity based on meanings attributed to the self (as an object) by the self (as a subject).

Figure 1 shows the self/sign to emerge out of the relation between Peirce's triadic model of the sign, and Mead's triadic model of the self, but how does Mead's I correspond to Peirce's Interpretant? Furthermore, how does Mead's Me correspond to Peirce's Representamen, and how does Mead's Generalized Other correspond to Peirce's object? A thorough justification of my model of the semiotic self would require an extended exegesis of the writings of Mead and Peirce, but here I am much less concerned with staying true to the intent of the two fathers of pragmatism than I am with setting up a working model for the purpose at hand.⁸ It is also worth overstressing that I am not interested in combining Peirce's model of the self with Mead's – here I am simply using Mead's and integrating it with Peirce's model of the *sign, and not of the self*. My intent in doing this is twofold: (a) I intend to do away with determinism of any kind by demonstrating how determinism is inconsistent with reflexivity and relationality (i.e. emergence); (b) I intend to ground authenticity in polisemy by offering a view of the self as a polisemic reflexive sign.

Wiley (1994) argued that the semiotic self, i.e. the self of both Mead and Peirce, is a structure. By structure Wiley meant a *container*; the self "contains" the stuff of which the self of everyday life is made, such as emotions, identities, and so forth. We ought to be careful not to reify structure. A structure is a relation, and simply that. Similarly, we ought to be careful not to reify the components of the semiotic self. Peirce's Representamen, Object, and Interpretant are not persons or essences, but simply the terms of the structure of meaning. And Mead's I, Me, and Generalized Other are not persons either, nor are they essences of any kind – they are also components of the structure of the self that cannot exist apart from one another. Overlapping the three terms of the structure of meaning with the three terms of the structure of the self creates the structure of a meaningful self, a self that is meaningful to itself as it is to others. If this self is semiotic, that is, if it

⁸ The interested reader may pursue the issue of a Peirce-Mead synthesis by referring to Wiley (1994) and Rochberg-Halton (1986).

has meaning(s), what are its meanings? My contention, following Holstein and Gubrium (2000; also see Gubrium and Holstein 1994, 1998, 2000) is that *the self is polisemic, i.e. the self it has plural meanings in virtue of being a sign.*

The self is polisemic because its meanings are not determined, either by a transcendental ego or by society, history, language, culture, or political economy. The self is polisemic because different individuals assign different meanings to their self and because the meanings of one's self change across time and across social settings. The self is polisemic because its structure is built around a process of active interpretation and reflexivity, rather than passive representation. It is precisely because of its property of being polisemic that the self can be authentic according to laws of its own being. Authenticity, from a pragmatic standpoint, does not consist in behavioral adherence to a pre-determined body of knowledge and moral laws, but rather in active interpretation of the meaning(s) of a sign, such as the self, and consequent action toward this sign. In Peirce's words: "the ultimate meaning of any sign consists either of an idea predominantly of feeling or of acting or being acted on" (Peirce 1958, p. 7). Pragmatism and symbolic interactionism are based on the study of experience and conduct, following the social behaviorism of Mead (1934), and we cannot study authenticity by divorcing it from action and its consequences. There is no such thing as the authentic self then, but rather *authenticities* constructed and enacted by different *selves* (Holstein and Gubrium 2000), or in other words *practices and experiences of self-meanings.*

By laws of its own being I do not mean to return to an ideology of self-determination. Authentic selves exist in virtue of their social constitution. The authentic self neither relies in the I, nor in the Me, but rather in the *emerging* product of the triadic relation between the I-Interpretant, the Me-Representamen, and the Generalized Other-Object. Let us observe how this works. According to Mead (1913 [1964]) the I is spontaneous and free, whereas the Me is "committed to and merged with the generalized other, the internalized norms of the community or society" (Wiley

1994, p. 47). The generalized other, again in Wiley's (1994, p. 47) words "is a close replica of the community's rules." The relation between the Me and the Generalized Other then seems to be that a sign-vehicle (the Me) standing for an object (the Generalized Other). But this relation is not complete, for the self is the result of spontaneous activity as well. Hence the I (as the Interpretant) is the idea to which the relation between the Me and the Generalized Other give rise. The relation between the I – the spontaneous and free agent – and the Me – the internalized Generalized Other – gives rise to the reflexive and semiotic self: "The stuff that goes on to make up the 'me' whom the 'I' addresses and whom he observes, is the experience which is induced by the action of the 'I.' If the 'I' speaks the 'me' hears. If the 'I' strikes the 'me' feels the blow" (Mead 1964 [1913], p. 143).⁹

It is precisely in the relation among the I-Interpretant, the Me-Representamen, and the Generalized Other-Object that the self is constituted and it is precisely within the very process and structure of reflexive construction that the semiotic self's polisemic property grants it the possibility of becoming authentic. It is a mistake to suggest that the I is the authentic component of the self and the Me its inauthentic component. The "separate 'I,' the 'private I' if you will, is the fiction of modern individualism" (Rochberg-Halton 1986, p. 38). Such argument relies on an ideological and moral view of authenticity, and not a pragmatic understanding of it. If an individual feels authentic while being part of a social collective and while meeting the expectations of others significant to her, it may be because such individual's self-meanings and self-feelings lead her to such experience. The sociologist, the moralist, and the ideologues have no space telling a self what is authentic and what is not authentic. In the words of Gubrium and Holstein (1994, p. 699):

⁹ This triadic relation is more complicated than it seems. Peirce (1931) wrote of an important distinction between firstness (qualitative immediacy), secondness (reaction), and thirdness (reflection). Following this argument a sign is made by "a First which stands in such genuine triadic relation to a Second, called its Object, as to be capable of determining a Third, called its Interpretant, to assume the same triadic relation to its object in which it stands itself to the same Object" (Peirce 1931, 2.274). Paraphrasing Peirce, my argument is that the Me is the first element of a sign, its object (Mead's Generalized Other, or even Peirce's [1931, 5.421] "man's circle of society") is the second element of the self-sign, and its interpretant (the I) is the third (on this see Rochberg-Halton 1986, p. 35). The model I described is original as I include the Generalized Other *within* the triad. Once again, I am less concerned with an objective hermeneutic interpretation of Mead's and Peirce's work than I am with creating a model that works for me.

We need not assume a priori that a universalistic criterion of authenticity is the final test of self knowledge. [...]Authenticity continues, directly or indirectly, to be an indigenous concern across situations. Participants take accounts of [their] local understandings and interpretations, looking for the “true,” “the genuine,” “the real.” Authenticity is thus a member’s criterion, not an analytic standard.

Authenticity operates by laws of its own being, and if we want to understand how selves create such “laws” we need to turn to individual selves constructing self-meanings and experiencing self-feelings in natural settings. Such is the idea of the polisemic semiotic self, a self that is reflexive and dialogic and “is neither socially isolated, nor socially absorbed. Rather it is in a balanced, interpenetrating relation with society. It disperses agency throughout the semiotic triad, but nevertheless recognizes human agency”^{10 11} (Wiley 1994, p. 29).

If postmodernism has taught us anything, it has taught us that “self-interpretation is more prevalent in today’s world than ever before” (Holstein and Gubrium 2000, p. 81). For this reason, it is particularly important to understand how selves construct their own authenticities through ordinary interpretive practices in natural settings. By investigating selves’ vocabularies of motive emerging out of different social relations in natural settings (Mills 1940) we can understand authenticity from a pragmatic and interactional standpoint. The following chapter then focuses on practices of self-authenticity and does so by building upon symbolic interactionist theory and research on self-feelings and self-meanings.

¹⁰ Also see Colapietro (1989).

¹¹ Interestingly enough, this vision of the self is also quite consistent with a postmodern vision of the subject based on polisemy, difference, and decenteredness (see Gubrium and Holstein 1994).

CHAPTER THREE

SELF-MEANINGS AND SELF-FEELINGS

Throughout chapter one and two I have critically engaged postmodern criticism of the self and authenticity and proposed a new understanding of authenticity based on reflexivity and polisemy. By following the pragmatism of Mead, James, Cooley, and Peirce, and by rejecting the structuralism and idealism of Saussure and followers I have argued that the reflexive and semiotic constitution of the self is the very condition of its grounding in locally contingent meanings and experiences. We can view such self, as “a particular set of sited language games whose rules discursively construct the semblance of a more or less unified subjectivity centered in experience” (Holstein and Gubrium 2000, p. 70). Selfhood and (in)authenticity in this sense cannot be understood as universal inevitabilities, but rather as local possibilities existing within individual selves’ mind and body and within local interpretive communities. Therefore, we ought to speak of discursive practices of *authenticities* – in the plural – located in symbolic interaction and in culturally diverse modes of living. The self as I understand it here is then

...first and foremost a practical project of everyday life. It is a self not necessarily referenced in quotation marks, because our experience of it is not cosmically evanescent; it is as real as its ordinary production and by-products. Its authenticities are situated and plural – locally articulated, locally recognized, and locally accountable. Self no longer references an experientially constant entity, [or] a central presence [...], it is now as much narratively constituted as actually lived (Holstein and Gubrium 2000, pp. 70-71).¹²

To speak of selves attempting to construct and live out their projects of personal authenticity – in contrast to the apocalyptic nihilism of radical postmodernists (Rosenau 1992) – is then to speak of the personal, experience-based, practical representation of felt meaning and agency framed within

¹² Echoing W.I. Thomas (1931), this is a self real in its consequences.

the background of cultural, political, and historical discourses which attempt to objectify the subject, but can never fully determine it. It is of this reflexive, semiotic, narratively constructed, and agentic self that I will write about in this chapter and in the ones to follow.

Hitherto, I have been careful to argue against the postmodern prophecy of doom without dismissing it outright as an empty intellectual fad. Postmodern life – or life in the period of high-modernity – is admittedly marked by a decentered moral character, a plurality of cultural voices, and a multitude of mass-mediated images, as well as by the erosion of traditions and the diversity of lifestyles (Giddens 1991). Even though these tendencies were present in much of Western culture since the movement toward urbanization took a strong hold at the turn of the twentieth century, high-modernity seems to be uniquely characterized by the placement of culture within the realm of everyday life and by the posing of selfhood as a public project grounded in this new understanding of everyday life (Jameson 1991).¹³ As a consequence of the nature and pervasiveness of these trends contemporary selves find interpretation and agentic choice to be more important than ever. Choosing who we want to be is now more than ever a symbolic practice in which we all need to participate every day. Authenticities therefore become more important than ever *not* as a response to the moral responsibility to be authentic in the modern sense, but instead because through our discursive practices of self construction we can actually ground our identities in personally meaningful realities (Giddens 1991; Holstein and Gubrium 2000).

The focus of this chapter and of the rest of this dissertation is precisely upon these practices of construction of selves and their authenticities. There are four essential aspects of these processes that we need to investigate: (1) the anchoring of self-construction in temporality and (2) in specific social worlds; (3) the construction of self-meanings; and (4) the reflexive, lived experiences of such self-meanings, which I refer to as self-feelings. In the remaining pages of this chapter I will lay out

¹³ Interestingly, however, Georg Simmel (1964) identified these trends as early as a century ago.

the theoretical framework for the interpretive analysis of (1), (2), and (4). The concept of social worlds will receive extensive attention in part two of this dissertation. For now, I will begin with temporality and then move to the narrative construction of the self and authenticity. Subsequently, I will discuss self-feelings in relation to self-meanings and in relation to their pragmatic reality and grounding in temporality.

Temporality, Continuity, and Heterochrony

Figure 1 illustrated the semiotic self as a triadic relation embedded in a tri-dimensional box representing time. I represented time tri-dimensionally in order to highlight the constitution of the self in temporality (Mead 1959 [1932], 1934; Peirce 1931) and the anchoring of the Me-I-Generalized Other relation within semiosis. The semiotic self, as discussed by the founding fathers of pragmatism (see Rochberg-Halton 1986; Wiley 1994) is suspended in a web of temporal continuity spanning present, past, and future, and figure 1 is meant to show that while we may analyze being at any point in the present time, we should keep in mind that the self is always projected toward the past and the future in a continuous tension of becoming.¹⁴

Despite the elegance and validity of Mead's (1959 [1932]) theory of the past only a handful of contemporary symbolic interactionists have thoroughly built upon it (Ezzy 1998; Maines 1983) (for some good examples, however, see Charmaz 1991; Evans and Maines 1995; Glaser and Strauss 1968; Maines, Sugrue, and Katovich 1983; Mattley 2002; McCall and Simmons 1966; Strauss 1971). Mead's (1959 [1932]) reflections on time in *The Philosophy of the Present* described the importance of the temporal dimension for his understanding of the self. Mead located the connection between temporality and the constitution of the self in what he called "organized response[s]" (1959 [1932], p. 76). Organized responses are a person's memories and feelings of anticipation which connect past and future in the present moment. Memories and anticipation are treated by a self as objects,

¹⁴ It is important to remark that Mead's theory of time does not fully overlap Peirce's (see Rochberg-Halton 1986; Wiley 1994). In what follows I adopt Mead's theory (Mead 1959 [1932]).

that is, as symbolically organized responses including the imagined responses of others and the self. Role-taking and reflexivity are therefore to be understood as being fully grounded in temporality (Ezzy 1998; Maines, Sugrue, and Katovich 1983).

The relation between the objective reality of the past and the present reconstruction of it is a delicate and important one for Mead. Maines, Sugrue, and Katovich (1983) suggested that in Mead's view social agents reconstruct the past in order to give it *continuity* with the present, the future, and diverse memories. Mead in fact suggested that we reconstruct the past in light of current experience and we interpret experience in light of past circumstances:

The past which we construct from the standpoint of the new problem of today is based upon continuities which we discover in that which has arisen, and it serves us until the rising novelty of tomorrow necessitates a new history which interprets the new future (Mead 1970 [1929], p. 241).

Past experiences have an empirical quality in terms of their consequences, but it is the continuity of past moments which allows us to organize responses and attitudes:

Now it is by these ideational processes that we get hold of the conditions of future conduct as these are found in the organized response which we have formed, and so construct our pasts in anticipation of that future. The individual who can thus get hold of them can further organize them through the selection of the stimulations which call them out and can thus build up his plan of action (Mead 1959 [1932], p. 76).

Mead's theory of time has been very influential for the contemporary development of theory on narrative and the self (e.g. Ricoeur 1988, 1991). Narratives, in Ricoeur's (1988, 1991) view, are shaped by interpretation, imagination, and historical action. Ricoeur's hermeneutics calls for a study of lived experiences, that is, temporally-contingent experiences that are shaped by processes of interpretation and storytelling. Just like Mead, Ricoeur (1988, 1991) argued that experiences have

the character of empirical realities, but these experiences are nothing but quasi-experiences until they undergo symbolic interpretation. In other words, *the quasi-experiences of everyday life become fully meaningful experiences after they are interpreted and composed in plots*. Plots are the frames within which narratives are constructed, and through which, stories are made coherent.

Gubrium and Holstein (1994, 1998) point out that the narrative interplay between self and identity is deep and complex. Identity, through narrative, grants the self a sense of continuity, sameness through time, and character. Identities are neither linguistic fabrications nor immutable entities. Individuals undergo change, but they make sense of change through evolving narrative plots that afford the self a sense of identity and continuity. Gubrium and Holstein (1994, p. 697) also argued that both the fluidity and substantiality of the self are grounded in local interpretive practices and locally produced in discourse vocabularies: “Lives are narratively constructed, made coherent and meaningful, through the ‘biographical work’ that links experiences into circumstantially compelling life courses” (Gubrium and Holstein 1994, p. 697).

An important qualification to the continuity thesis needs to be made at this point. Continuity of time ought not to be understood as a condition for the *linear* development of narrative; continuity is a narrative and semiotic product and not an essential property of temporality. Following and developing Peirce’s thought Jay Lemke (2000) argued that there exist a number of temporal forces relatively different in strength which shape semiosis (hence, the constitution of the self) at any given point in time. These temporal forces cannot be reduced to spatial (linear) dimensions as classical systems theory does, and cannot be explained away by the adiabatic principle either. In fact, in contrast to the adiabatic principle, points that are even vastly distant in time and/or space may in actuality be closely linked by network relations in human ecosocial systems. For example, temporal forces distant in time may still shape an individual’s (or even a group’s) identity, whereas much more recent events may be discounted by an individual on the basis of their

personal insignificance. This spherical topology describing the strength of reflexive interaction, rather than temporal linearity and causality, should lead us to conclude in agreement with Latour (1994) that 'flat' binary views on the dimensions of ecosocial contexts are but simplistic. This flat view sees the local and the global as a binary opposition, treating one or the other as a contingent epiphenomenal reality. It is precisely for this reason that in figure 1 I did not present the social context underlying self-formation as a 'spherical' topology divided into local and global, but intended instead its temporal continuity to reflect the dynamism of the becoming of selfhood at a meso-level (more on this in chapter five). Arrows representing self-meanings (to be further explained later in this chapter) are indeed not bi-dimensional, but tri-dimensional as well, thus appearing much like "grooves" indicating the temporal continuity of meanings. Now that my understanding of temporality is clarified, let us move to the discussion of narrative and self-meanings.

Self-Meanings

Now that I have explained the triadic relation between the semiotic components of the self as well as its constitution in temporality, it is time to begin our discussion of the "stuff" of which the self is made. This "stuff" is portrayed in figure 1 by the casually drawn arrows, each representing a practice of self-reflection. These practices of self-reflection – which originate self-meanings and self-feelings – are the dynamics linking the Me-Representamen with the I-Interpretant and with the Generalized Other-Object and will demand our attention in the remaining pages of this chapter. I begin with self-meanings.

Blumer (1969) interpreted Mead's proposition that the human *has* a self, as saying that humans have the capacity to reflect on their self: "the human being may perceive himself, have conceptions of himself, communicate with himself, and act toward himself. This gives him the means of interacting with himself – addressing himself, responding to the address, and addressing

himself anew” (Blumer 1969, p 62). In this reflexive awareness of the self we see the basis for the constitution of self-meanings, the meanings that the self assigns to itself. Blumer’s interpretation of Mead led him to believe that there is no intrinsic nature arising from an object, such as the self, but rather the self emerges out of interpretation, intentionality, and symbolic interaction. Let us recall that the first premise upon which the Blumerian version of symbolic interactionism relies is that “humans will act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them” (Blumer 1969, p. 2). *Consequently, the meanings that an individual has for herself will significantly shape her action.* Indeed an individual, following once again Blumer (1969, p. 62): “through further interaction with himself, he may judge, analyze, and evaluate the things he has designated to himself. And by continuing to interact with himself he may plan and organize his action with regard to what he has designated and evaluated.”

We can find a more recent formulation of the motivating properties of self-meanings in Gecas (1986, 1991). Gecas (1986, 1991) proposed a triadic model of the self-concept as basis for motivation. Gecas argued that the self-concept functions as a motivational force through the three interrelated self-motives of self-esteem, self-efficacy, and authenticity.¹⁵ Gecas (1986) described authenticity as the emotional response to the self’s reflective assessment of the meaning of its own conduct and being. In other words, *authenticity is a self-feeling in relation to self-meanings.*

While the self assigns meaning through its interpretive interaction with all social objects, only some of these objects will be organized in systems of self-meanings that are more significant for the self than other objects are. These systems of self-meanings are the self’s identities. Various identities compose the self, some more significant than others, some more motivating than others. Because different identities are competing in specific social situations (in accordance to specific context-dependent demands), Gecas (1986) believes that feelings of authenticity will arise when the

¹⁵ While some overlap is inevitable, these three self-motivates can be said to work in different ways, but let us leave self-esteem and self-efficacy to the side for the moment.

self's conduct is coherent with identities that are more significant than others. Because humans are interpretive beings striving to make their world, their selves and their conduct meaningful and coherent with one another they are bound to experience inauthenticity whenever they do not do so. The struggle for coherence of a belief system does not work as a primary motivation, however. Gecas instead believes that what truly matters in the first place is self-meanings, the meanings that individuals attribute to one's being in the world. These self-meanings take the form of identities; representations of the self in terms of valued meanings to which one becomes committed (Gecas 2000). The continuous construction of identities and self-meanings becomes a source of motivation because acting in congruence with these self-meanings and reflecting on such conduct and such being gives rise to the positive emotion called authenticity (Gecas 1986). The opposite scenario, that of a self that betrays significant identities, meaningful values, and acts incoherently with one's true self gives rise to inauthenticity. In this sense, Gecas's (1986) understanding of self-meanings and authenticity is quite similar to that of Holstein and Gubrium who argued that specific qualities of the self influence conduct, and thus "the self [is] a *resource* for explaining action" (Holstein and Gubrium 2000, p. 90). Self-meanings are constructed throughout life and organized in sets, more or less internally coherent, and more or less temporally consistent. These sets are structured as meaningful narratives.

Constructing Self-Meanings: Narrative and the Self

As part of a life course perspective that takes into analytical consideration human agency, timing in lives, historical time and place, and relationship networks (Elder 1999), *narrative analysis* is a broad umbrella category of various methods that attempt to study narrative as the organizing principle for human conduct (Riessman 1993). Narrative analysis is based on the principle that storytelling is an important form of relating to others and to our self, and that it can be used to understand individual and group experience as occurring through time (Maines 1993; Maines and

Ulmer 1993).¹⁶ Through stories we construct meanings for our experiences, create order among experiences and their meanings, and organize self-meanings into identities (Fisher 1987). The recent narrative turn in sociology and communication (see Fisher 1987; Maines 1993; Maines and Ulmer 1993) highlights how identities are interactively constructed through the interpretation of the narratives of everyday life in various social contexts (Bruner 1986; Denzin 1989; Gergen and Gergen 1984, 1986; Holstein and Gubrium 2000; Linde 1993; Maines 1993; Maines and Ulmer 1993; Polkinghorne 1988; Richardson 1990, 1991; Riessman, 1990, 1993; Sarbin 1986). Through narrative, individuals strive to cohesively organize space and time, identity of themselves and others, and relatedness of actions across contexts by creating themes, plots, and drama. Through narrative people make sense of themselves, their situations, and history.

A narrative approach to the self is perfectly compatible with symbolic interaction theory: “both are constructionist, emphasize communication and temporality, focus on structure-process and determinancy-indeterminancy as ongoing dialectics, and understand the reconstructive phases of social action” (Maines and Ulmer 1993, p. 110). The storytelling self organizes its subjectivity by interpreting, shaping, absorbing, resisting, negotiating institutional discourses and casting one’s difference in the language of preferred vocabularies (Garfinkel 1967). Holstein and Gubrium (2000) liken narrative practice to music composition. Just like musical notes, experiences do not exist in our mind as isolated and self-sufficient units mechanically related to others. Rather, it is in the narration or composition of stories that experiences take the particular shape of narrative. In this sense narration is a moment of construction, as experiences come to assume a particular meaning and order through narrative (Fisher 1987). People undergo numerous and diverse experiences relatively disconnected from one another in everyday life. However, from a potentially infinite number of reportable items, we select a certain few and incorporate them into meaningful and

¹⁶ The narrative tradition is richer and deeper than it may appear – David Maines (Maines 1993) argued – going as far back as the writings of Park and Burgess (1925) and Thomas and Znaniecki (1927).

coherent accounts. Stories are not synonymous with fantasies. Both local and global cultural discourses offer specific vocabularies from which we derive elements for our stories. These vocabularies – Holstein and Gubrium (2000) argued following Garfinkel (1967) – do not however determine what people will narrate and how they will narrate it. Rather, storytelling emerges out of the complex interplay of experience, preferred personal vocabularies, locally available discourses, and situational demands. This complex interplay is dubbed “narrative slippage” and herein lies the agency of the storyteller (Gubrium and Holstein 1998, p. 167).

Storying is a narrative practice, a personal technology of self construction: “It is a form of *interpretive practice*, a term we use to simultaneously characterize the activities of storytelling, the resources used to tell stories, and the auspices under which stories are told” (Holstein and Gubrium 2000, p. 104). Studying narrative practice allows researchers to focus on the everyday work of active and spontaneous construction of the self and identity, as well as on the local resources, constraints, costs, and opportunities implicated in construction. Stories, after all, are shaped in different ways. Stories may be extensive narrative descriptions of diverse lifetime experiences weaved into a uniform plot, or rather simple and short accounts of a single event.

By studying the diversity of personal narrative studies researchers focus on the intersections between individual biography and a society’s political-economic and cultural history. Personal troubles told in narratives are in fact organized by the self within the greater context of the structural and cultural processes in which personal experiences are lived (Mills 1959). The self is indeed a bricoleur, as we craft stories from locally available resources “all the while constrained, but not completely controlled, by the working conditions of the moment” (Holstein and Gubrium 2000, p. 153). Obvious resources for the formation of narratives are biographical particulars – the personal experiences and events that shape the life of an individual (Holstein and Gubrium 2000). We construct stories out of biographical particulars all the time, for example when we relate a distinctive

character trait by referring to a formative childhood story. But biographical particulars do not *determine* how we structure the self either. Rather, because biographical particulars are always used in-context, re-shaped, and re-interpreted at the light of later experiences, they are only one component of the complex process of construction of the self. Biographical resources undergo what some have called biographical work – the process of assembling, sifting, even distorting material for the construction of personal stories (Gubrium and Holstein 1995, 1998; Gubrium, Holstein, and Buckholdt 1994).

Biographical particulars intersect with so-called narrative standpoints. Standpoints, such as race, class, age, and gender constitute distinctive frames and perspectives that actors use to construct their stories (Denzin 1997a, 1997b). In turn, these standpoints interact with numerous other frames that are locally produced and interpreted for self-construction, and thus none of these should not be reified or essentialized, as Holstein and Gubrium (2000) pointed out. Researchers also pay careful attention to how storytellers position themselves in their stories (Harré and van Langenhove 1991). Through fluid positioning narrators may describe their own characters as victims, heroes, rulers, martyrs, antagonists, protagonists, or even in supporting roles, etc. Understanding positioning is particularly important for narrative analysts interested in the extent to which individuals exercise different levels of agency in their life.

The veridicality of narratives is an important concern of narrative analysis. Whether stories correspond to objective truth or not assumes a secondary role to what these stories mean to the individuals involved in them (Riessman 2002). Personal narratives are understood here as “meaning-making units of discourse [through which] narrators interpret the past in stories rather than reproduce the past as it was” (Riessman 2002, p. 705). Also, narratives are evidently shaped by the selective filters of memory and time (for a review of these arguments see Hinchman and Hinchman 1997), but for narrative analysts operating within the general framework of social

constructionism selection is an interesting phenomenon in and of itself. Life stories and past experiences do not have a fixed meaning that remains unchanged throughout the years, but rather evolve and change under the influence of later experience. Mischler (1999, p. 5) for example stated that:

As we access and make sense of events and experiences in our pasts and how they are related to our current selves, we change their meanings. We continually restory our pasts, shifting the relative significance of different events for whom we have become, discovering connections we had previously been unaware of, repositioning ourselves and others in our networks of relationships.

Stories, therefore, are not used as objective narrative descriptions of existing realities, but rather as representations mediated by the same historical, linguistic, political, interpersonal, and intrapersonal factors that shape the experiences themselves (Holstein and Gubrium 2000). Stories, in other words, are analyzed not simply for their contents, but also for the ways in which storytellers and contexts of storytelling shape the stories themselves (Holstein and Gubrium 2000). Stories then are framed performances enacted before audiences (Goffman 1959, 1974) used to give sense to one's temporal continuity, past experiences, present sensations, and future intentions. Of course, this raises the issue of the coherence of narratives, to which I now turn.

The Coherence of Narrative Self-Meanings

As said, life stories express who we are, how we have become who we are, and who we are becoming and how. Through life stories not only do we *communicate* our sense of self but we also *accomplish* it and *negotiate* it during interaction. There are both personal and social demands made on life stories (Goffman 1969). Among these demands is the issue of coherence (Linde 1993).

Coherence can be understood as a property of the text and also as an achievement of the communicative exchange of such text between a storyteller and an audience. As a property of texts

coherence refers to the internal relations between the different parts of the text and also to the relation between the text and the genre to which it belongs (Gergen and Gergen 1984, 1986). As a property of interpersonal communication coherence allows a text to be understood and recognized as meaningful (Gergen and Gergen 1984, 1986). A story requires sequentiality rather than a random collection of insignificant facts and events. Such accounts need order because temporal ordering works an essential function in human understanding.

Thus, the act and context of narration has much to do with how stories are made coherent and whether they are internally coherent and externally consistent across different narrations. Stories are only complete once they are told to an audience, and different audiences may make explicit their preference for specific vocabularies and plots (Riessman 1990). Denzin (1987b, 1989) for example emphasized how stories of former alcohol addicts narrated within the context of self-support groups tend to follow the narrative frame provided by twelve-step programs. Narratives, as any other form of communication, are impressions given to meet the expectations of certain significant listeners (see Goffman 1959). As Holstein and Gubrium (2000, p. 107) put it:

Such occasioned differences suggest that anyone's personal story may have multiple coherences, linked to the circumstances of its telling. As a result, the diverse circumstances and shifting narrative auspices of contemporary life present remarkable diversity in who and what we are taken to be.

This argument further highlights the fact that individuals create their own stories within natural settings – stories in fact do not come pre-formed by events themselves or by institutional discourses:

[Storytellers] display their reflexive agency when, for example, they state that they have to think things over before answering, or that they recognize diverse contexts for interpretation, or need to take certain matters into account in deciding how to put something, what to say, or what point to make. They also tell their listeners how they can or

should be heard, thus shaping others' narrative identities in the process (Holstein and Gubrium 2000, p. 113).

But coherence is also an *intra-personal* personal demand because we desire to understand different events and experiences and make sense of them as a significant whole (Sternberg 1999). This activity is normally taken for granted during everyday life, but its character becomes more urgent and apparent when we need to make sense of problematic experiences. As Garfinkel (1967) showed, we interpret events within customary frames which allow us to conduct the extraordinary to the ordinary. While it is often taken-for-granted on an everyday basis, coherence is a very important aspect of narrative practice. Storytellers build personal accounts from past and present experiences and cast their stories in the vocabularies they prefer, and not simply in discourse vocabularies imposed by the institutions of which they are members (Garfinkel 1967; Holstein and Gubrium 2000; Sacks 1974, 1992).

The extent to which coherence is possible is an important question related to the agency of the storyteller. Bourdieu (1986) – whose deterministic views testify to his skepticism about agency (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Bourdieu 1984) – dismissed altogether the possibility that individuals may reach some level of coherence within their life stories. But as Denzin (1989, p. 62) noted:

The point to make is not whether biographical coherence is an illusion or reality. Rather, what must be established is how individuals give coherence to their lives when they write or talk self-autobiographies. The sources of this coherence, the narratives that lie behind them, and the larger ideologies that structure them must be uncovered. Bourdieu's general position glosses [over] the complexities of this process.

Indeed, without diving once again into the modern/postmodern diatribe over the centered/decentered self, we should ask: "How do individuals give both coherence and diversity to their lives when they write or speak self-autobiographies?" (Hyvärinen 1996, p. 3).

The answer to the intrapersonal coherence quandary lies precisely in the resolution of the two issues of textual coherence and interpersonal coherence mentioned above. The first issue deals with the qualities of a story: as said, in order to be coherent a story has to “have sequentiality and make a point” (Gubrium and Holstein 1998, p. 178). The story of a self, for example, in order to be coherent needs to organize and order personal experiences which show a consistent, however complex, image of the self. The second issue deals with the practice of coherent storytelling. Because stories are told to diverse audiences and under different circumstances, what is told and how this ought to be told varies considerably. We need then to understand that we ought to reflect on “*occasioned* coherences” (Gubrium and Holstein 1998, p. 178) rather than absolute or ultimate coherence. The authenticity of storytelling is always obtained in practice, and therefore authenticit(ies) should “*only be viewed as locally attained, not as essential or transcendent*” (Gubrium and Holstein 1998, p. 178, my emphasis).

Despite their being potentially coherent we should not derive the impression that life stories are closed structures. Life stories change constantly, and their properties of temporal discontinuity and interpretive openness allow them to be fluid and flexible, open to new narrative additions, and new evaluations. Our stories change with our shifting points of view, ideologies, values, beliefs, experiences, and understanding of the meanings of our experiences. Basically, our self-meanings change with the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of the meanings of social objects and our own self. The best way to describe a life story is then:

a temporally discontinuous unit told over many occasions and altered to fit the specific occasions of speaking, as well as specific addressees, and to reflect changes in the speaker’s long term situation, values, understanding, and (consequently) discursive practices” (Linde 1993, p. 51).

From Self-Meanings to Self-Feelings

The importance of the last two decades for the sociological study of emotions is incalculable. Sociologists and cultural anthropologists have challenged the old psychological views on emotion as a physiological process exclusively anchored in the relation between the psyche and an external stimulus and have brought social constructionism to the forefront of the debate (Harré 1986; Hochschild 1979). Social constructionists understand emotion as a practical and mundane concern grounded in interpersonal relationship dynamics and within the background of structural and cultural forces (see Harré 1986).

The impetus of social constructionism (Berger and Luckmann 1966) has also prompted many symbolic interactionists to rediscover emotionality, a topic long neglected in favor of an overly cognitive view of the subject. Recent symbolic interactionist approaches to the study of emotions have fruitfully built on the philosophical work of the early pragmatists, for whom emotionality was a very important concern (Denzin 1984). Symbolic interactionists view emotions as a function signaling our state in the social environment (Shibutani 1961), as an internal feeling critical in the evaluation of phenomena external to the body (Lyman 1981), as a link connecting the embodied self and its world (Denzin 1984), and generally as a process closely interconnected with reflexive thought, communication, and culture (Douglas 1977; Ellis 1991; Farberman 1989; Johnson 1992). Of particular importance to the development of my arguments are the writings of those symbolic interactionists who have turned to existentialist literature in their approach to the study of emotionality. Douglas (1977), Denzin (1984), Kotarba and Fontana (1984) and Kotarba and Johnson (2002) view emotions as self-feelings, forms of reflexive consciousness “lived, experienced, articulated and felt” (Denzin 1984, p. 1).

Denzin’s (1984) work, *On Understanding Emotion*, is especially important for the study of authenticity as a self-feeling. Emotions play a constitutive role in the formation of the person, as

without emotions the relation between the self and society would be empty and meaningless (Denzin 1984; also see Douglas 1977; Kotarba and Fontana 1984; Kotarba and Johnson 2002). Following an inspiration derived in part from existentialist and in part from pragmatist philosophy, Denzin saw emotions as acts of disclosures of the self to its world. Emotions lie at the core of the person, Denzin argued, and through them the self defines meaning. Without denying the rootedness of emotions in physiological processes, Denzin (1984) argued that we need to study emotions from an interactionist, phenomenological, and interpretive perspective. Denzin's thesis is that emotions are self-feelings, "sequences of lived emotionality, often involving the feeling and experiencing of more than one specific, named emotion" (1984, p. 3). Feelings are embodied, and through the complex whole of these sensations social agents meaningfully locate themselves in the world of social interaction. All emotional experiences are temporal, situational, reflexive, relational, deeply personal and expressive of the person's self. Denzin also suggested that emotions should not be essentialized; in other words they should not be separated from cognition, reflexivity, or interpretation. In addition, emotional experiences are rarely one-dimensional; often do negative and positive sensations mix. Furthermore, Denzin pointed out that while institutional discourses and various social structures enter the subject's lived world of emotionality, the subject retains its capability to feel, think, and interpret for itself. This is not, however, a denial of the importance of structure and culture. The subject remains embodied and located within a defined historical, linguistic, and geo-political context, without ever becoming determined by it.

Understanding emotions in this way allowed Denzin to formulate a new definition of emotional experience: "The dwelling place of emotion is the self. Emotion is self-feeling. Emotions are temporally embodied, situated self-feelings that arise from emotional and cognitive social acts that people direct to self or have directed toward them by others" (Denzin 1984, p. 49). Since emotionality is lodged in social and symbolic interaction all emotions refer both to others and to

one's self. Emotions are therefore grounded in the symbolic construction of reality and dependent on symbolic systems. Symbolic systems such as language and nonverbal behavior allow us to make sense of situations, derive meaning from these situations through interpretation, and make sense of emotional experience. Because emotional experience has the self as its referent, emotion is also dependent on intentionality, as "their referent is always the self that feels" (Denzin 1984, pp. 50-51). Self-feelings always call for the self to be aware, define, and reflect on the qualities and the object of emotional experience, as well as on the meaningfulness of this experience for the self.

The connection between self-meanings and self-feelings should be clear by now. Self-feelings and self-meanings have the same referent, the self, and because emotionality is a form of self-interaction with a meaningful self, self-meanings are obviously extremely important for our understanding of emotions. If "emotionality is a circular process that begins and ends with the transactions and actions of the self" (Denzin 1984, p. 58), then we can define (in)authenticity as that self-feeling which has the self as its object. We can thus understand authenticity as a complex self-feeling beginning and ending with transactions and actions of the authentic self, and inauthenticity as that complex self-feeling beginning and ending with transactions and actions of the inauthentic self. In other words, because authenticity plays an important positive motivating function for the self¹⁷ (Gecas 1986, 1991), whenever self-meanings are coherent with either the external conduct or internal reflection (thought or emotion) of the self, such self may experience the self-feeling of authenticity. In contrast, because inauthenticity plays an important negative motivating function for the self (Gecas 1986, 1991), whenever self-meanings are incoherent with the external conduct or internal reflection of the self, such self may experience the self-feeling of inauthenticity.

¹⁷ Clearly this is an important assumption, but not an untested one. As I will explain in chapter seven, I empirically investigated whether authenticity is positively motivating or not.

Studying the Emotional Reality of the (In)Authentic Self

Denzin (1984) did not doubt that *feelings are real for the self*. Grounded in the immediacy of corporeal sensation, self-feelings signal important messages to the self. The ontological reality of feelings lies in their consequences for the self, or in other words (and fully in line with pragmatism), the meaning of emotions lies in the self's ways of interacting with them. For this reason, there can be no such thing as a universal meaning and feeling of (in)authenticity. The meanings that the reflexive and semiotic self has assigned to its self give rise to unique self-feelings. Of course the abstract referent of self-feelings (the self) is the same across individuals, but the concrete referent of a specific individual's self-feelings (that individual's set of self-meanings) is different across persons. Therefore, as mentioned before throughout part one of this dissertation there can be no way of defining authenticity in the same way for all people. What makes *me* feel authentic may not make *you* feel the same way, and vice versa. Consequently, a pragmatic and symbolic interactionist study of (in)authenticity as a self-meaning and a self-feeling has to start precisely with how selves define their authenticity.

A hastened judgment of this phenomenological approach to authenticity would conclude that when authenticity is defined this way it loses its moral and political significance and turns into a form of solipsism. My reply is simple and straightforward: first, it is precisely my intention to take away Morality and Politics from authenticity. Morality and Politics, with capital initials, are precisely the grand-narratives of modernity *and* postmodernity which have confused the hegemonic ideology of humanism with the diversity and complexity of human societies and turned authenticity into a political weapon. Second, by studying authenticity as a self-meaning and self-feeling I am by no means recurring to solipsism or to antiquated views of self-determination, as my critique of Saussurean idealism should have shown. Rather, by viewing the self and its products (meanings, feelings) as inherently social I am studying practices of authenticities in a well-defined social world

(see part two of this dissertation). In this sense, I fully agree with Denzin (1984), who argued that the phenomenological, interpretive, and interactionist study of self-feelings ought to rely on assumptions specifying their social constitution. Denzin's (1984, pp. 11-12) assumptions in brief are that:

- a) Self-feelings connect people to their world. The lack of separation between people, their emotions, and their worlds demand we study the self's lived experiences of emotions in interaction with others.
- b) Self-feelings are not accidental or episodic to lived experience, but rather clearly situated in specific contexts.
- c) Students of emotional experience must bracket these instances of emotions from their world. Bracketing means suspending our previous scientific, natural, and ideological knowledge of a phenomenon to understand it from the perspective of the informant (rather than the researcher's own).
- d) Once we have thus obtained a phenomenological description of lived emotional instances, we must re-contextualize such experience in its context in order to interpret the import of structural conditions, circumstances, and so forth.
- e) Studying emotional experience is by necessity a hermeneutic process. Through interpretation of the qualities of an emotional experience within the background of everyday contexts and their meanings, we can arrive at a fuller description of the totality of emotionality.
- f) Emotions must at all times be studied as lived experiences and understood from within, rather than outside, those experiences.

- g) Interpretation is a temporal process since emotionality is a temporal process. Emotional experiences are always grounded within past experiences, present interpretation and feeling, and anticipation of the future in terms of goals, projects, hopes, fears, anxieties, etc.
- h) Such phenomenological, interpretive, and interactionist study of emotionality ought not to be concerned with linear factors, causes, or in other words the absolute why's of emotions but rather with the concrete how's of emotional experience.
- i) Such study of emotion ought to be based on intuition, emphatic understanding, interpretation, and reconstruction.
- j) Finally, the ultimate goal of this approach ought not to be theory testing or the formulation of universal laws, but rather description, understanding, interpretation of processes of lived emotional experience in the world of being.

One of the most important components of the study of self-feelings to keep in mind is that the notion of self-feeling is not dependent for its existence on an outdated vision of the self as a stable and centered subject unchanging across time and space. Authenticity may be a feeling associated with being true to one's self, but we must not rely on assumptions which render such self static and the act of "being true to it" stifling. People change; they change identities, they play differing roles, and they enact contradicting performances and often times become radically different from what they used to be as they grow up, age, and die. In a sense human beings derive their uniqueness and complexity precisely from this strong tension of becoming, and we should not confuse our ideas on authenticity with simplistic ideologies of what a "True" self *should* be in universal and absolute terms across all stages of life. But if people change their conduct, identities (Goffman 1959), and even appearances (Stone 1962), across social settings how can we speak of a true self? And if the self is so ephemeral, so evanescent – as the postmodernists argue – how can we reasonably suggest that *the self is real*? The answer lies in differentiating between the self and self-

meanings. As Wiley (1994) pointed out the self is a semiotic structure, i.e. a container of reflexive relations, and not an unchanging essence. Selves have self-meanings such as identities, “meanings...typically based on category membership (e.g. being male or female) or other culturally significant pieces of biography (e.g. having been married)” (Schwalbe 1993, p. 334). Identities, as Schwalbe (1993, pp. 334-335) remarked, are “response-evoking signs:”

acquiring identities is...the process of acquiring sign values, or more simply, the process whereby a person becomes a complex sign. The ability to function as a sign, and thus to evoke conditioned responses in others, is part of what gives an individual force as a social entity. Identities are thus signs of the pragmatic value of the individual; they provide a basis for inferring how a person is likely to function as an interactant. These signs, which can be manifested in speech, posture, dress, body type and so forth, evoke responses in others, and in the individual as s/he reflects on him or herself.

Therefore, while certain semiotic structures – such as the system of self-meanings associated with an identity and the performances this entails – may be fully situational, this does not contradict the idea that behind these signs there is a real self managing and reflecting on its actions and transactions. As Schwalbe (1993, p. 335) nicely put it: “While the self cannot disappear, identities can.” And because the self cannot disappear, the capacity to reflect on its own meanings and have feelings as a consequence of its meaningfulness will not disappear either. Response-evoking signs may then elicit certain actions – both of the self and of others toward the self – more or less authenticating across situations, but it is precisely this condition of “more or less” that we should study. No one is ever entirely authentic or fully inauthentic at all times; rather we all fall in between these poles and oscillate from one side of the continuum to the other at different times. Nevertheless, what we feel is real to us; our feelings and their meanings are real in their pragmatic consequences for the self (see Denzin 1984).

When we read appearances of the self and its identities as self-presentational texts with no fixed meanings across situations – as postmodernists might do in their rejection of the possibilities of authenticity – we come away with the impression that there is no reality underlying the self. But such a reading of symbolic interaction, informed by a partial reading of Goffman (see Schwalbe 1993), is mistaken. Emotions are the key to the grounding of the self in a meaningful reality. As Schwalbe (1993, p. 337) remarked: “I read Goffman as saying that the reality of the self, as an enduring, unified, psychobiological entity, is evident in moments of decision, of resistance, and of *feeling* – all of which regularly arise in face-to-face encounters” (my emphasis). The self is thus a manager of competing demands for performance, demands such as its feelings (associated with its ego identity), goals, resources, and social demands. It is in this act of managing that agency transpires. It is in the self’s resistance against others through the secondary adjustments that even within total institutions “provide the inmate with important evidence that he is still his own man, with some control over his environment” (Goffman 1961, p. 319). And also, it is in the self’s choice to associate with significant others through which “our sense of being can come from being drawn into a wider social unit” (Goffman 1961, p. 320) that agency and the possibility for authenticity transpires. In sum:

The reality of the self is...evident in the emotion that grows out of it, and in the feelings its image evokes. [...] It is these feelings that in turn give form to agency in interaction. That is to say, we choose a face or a line to protect these feelings. We make identity claims, do face work, engage in role distancing and show deference and present demeanor in interaction because of the extraordinary strength of the feelings arising out of the self as a psychic process. When these feelings are threatened by incidents in interaction, we react by doing some kind of repair work. In part, this is to repair the encounter, to ensure that a piece of joint action is completed. But this is also to restore the self’s coherence as a psychic process,

for when this coherence is disrupted, noxious bodily feelings arise. In these moments of threat, feeling and repair the firm reality of the self is undeniable; there is something sacred and vital to our existence that we strive to protect (Schwalbe 1993, p. 338).

Feelings are real, because the self is real to itself, and the feeling of authenticity lies at the core of this process. And the keyword here is *process*. A self-feeling arises in relation to a self-meaning, as said earlier. For example, if I think of myself as a very altruistic person willing to help all others under all circumstances I may feel a sense of inauthenticity when I realize that I have contributed no time or money to helping the cause of the needy. Temporality then plays a critical role in emotionality, as we can deduct from this example. Individuals create a sense of themselves, such as being an altruistic person, through time and through a narrative ordering of their identities and character, as discussed earlier in this chapter. Emotions do not arise out of thin air then. Emotions are “temporally and relationally rooted in the social situation” (Denzin 1984, p. 52) and “emerg[e] within social acts” (McCarthy 1989, p. 56). The relation between emotion and the process of self-construction through self-reflection is then of quintessential importance: “feelings give rise to reflective understanding. They provoke reflection. Feelings also represent a response to reflection and thought. In both cases experience and emotion form part of a process of knowing oneself, another, a situation” (McCarty 1989, p. 60). As Mattley (2002, p. 365) pointed out: “this reflexive process gives emotions a temporal framework. Emotions are social objects that when experienced, invite appraisals of here-and-now experiences as well as reconstructions of the past and projections of hypothetical futures.” In sum, self-feeling and self-meanings are connected through temporality as well as their relationality.

PART TWO

CHAPTER FOUR

ACADEMIC WORK

Now that the foundations of a theoretical approach to the study of authenticity are fully laid out, let us shift our attention to the context of the experience of (in)authenticity: academic work. The three chapters included in part two of this dissertation focus on the academic profession (chapter four), the social organization of academic work (chapter five), and on the interactional dynamics of power and authenticity in relation to the deprofessionalization of the professoriate (chapter six). While many of the arguments made in part one revolved around the self, self-feelings, and self-meanings, among the most important concepts treated in part two figure such tenets of symbolic interactionism as mesodomain analysis, negotiated order, social worlds, and meta-power. By the end of chapter six it is hoped that the links between self-meanings and self-feelings on one side and institutional forces on the other side will be clear and explicit. This chapter then begins with an overview of the work that professors do. In the second section of this chapter I will examine some of the differences as well as some of the similarities shared by faculty members in America, since professors' work greatly varies across different rank, age, specialization, gender, and place of employment. Finally, in the last section of this chapter I will introduce the debate on the crisis of higher education and the professoriate. In the next chapter I will then examine some of these changes in greater depth, especially in relation to the social organization of academic work.

Academic Work: the Basics

While we can conceptualize and study a large institution such as the system of higher education from a macro-sociological perspective, we must keep in mind that everyday work in any given occupation is made not of abstract structural relations, but rather of concrete and specific problems, goals, actions, and experiences that straddle the continuum between routine and emergency, between local and global contexts of action. These "micro going-concerns" are the

“stuff” of which work is made, the stuff that awaits people at their desks, counters, cash-registers, fields, steering wheels, and street-corners every workday of the week. Academic work, following Everett Hughes’ lessons, is not much different from other types of work. Just like other occupations faculty members have peers (other faculty members), superiors (department chairs, deans, provosts, university presidents, etc.), support staff (a department’s staff members, administrators), and even customers of some kind or another (audiences of their work, students, etc.). The institution of academic work does not even differ too much from other seemingly conceptually distant institutions, such as the family (Thorne and Hochschild 1997). Academic work – much like other types of work – is indeed a very meaningful activity for faculty members, a going concern that spans and defines different areas of their life (Richardson 1997) and a going concern that demands specific face work and performances (Hermanowicz 1998a).

In a comprehensive survey of the academic profession Bowen and Schuster (1986) divided professorial work in the following conventional categories: research, teaching, governance, and public service. The meanings associated with these vary considerably by type of institution (college, four-year university, or post-graduate university), institutional control and ownership (private or public), institution history, prestige, and size, and finally by academic discipline. In their study, Bowen and Schuster (1986) examined the differences and similarities in working environments and organizational culture, work force composition, as well as historical, political, economic, and interpersonal problems of the academic world. Bowen and Schuster’s (1986) study first and foremost emphasized the social significance of professorial work. Our nation’s faculties are entrusted with the production and reproduction of culture, collective historical memory, artistic heritage, technical knowledge, practical skills, public policy, and philosophical grounding. They are in charge of educating between a third and a half of every cohort of American youth, as well as a diverse international student elite. They train and create the knowledge necessary to train leaders in

the world of business, technology, public administration, journalism, medicine, law, and the fine arts. In short, our nation's universities constitute the reservoir of life-improving knowledge that allows our civilization to progress (Bowen and Schuster 1986, pp. 3-4).

But let us look at what exactly it is that professors do. Teaching or instruction is arguably the main function of professorial work as it entails the distribution and reproduction of the knowledge that ideally serves to sustain the democratic basis of our society. The majority of faculty members see teaching as their main responsibility, and even at many doctoral universities, where research is a strong commitment, in many cases teaching occupies more time than any other activity (Bowen and Schuster 1986). Teaching of course does not end in the classroom. Faculty members are often responsible for grading, conducting laboratory or studio sessions, accompanying students on field studies, organizing tutorials and student conferences, keeping up with the literature and instructional technology, preparing lectures and other material for new courses, and examining students. In addition, a substantial amount of time is spent advising students, helping them plan for future career goals, writing recommendations, counseling, and serving as mentors.

Whereas teaching is a faculty member's obligation to the greater social community, research represents a faculty member's obligation to the intellectual and scientific community. In contrast to some European and Asian nations, scientific research in America is conducted within universities rather than in separate institutes. As a result, American faculties must accommodate to competing demands and interests and find time and resources for both instruction and research. Of course the greater social community benefits directly not only from instruction but also from research and advancements in many fields. Research is a broad term that includes not only scientific discovery and application, but also intellectual and artistic pursuits that enhance the cultural capital of a society, as well as public policy analysis, criticism, and inquiry (Bowen and Schuster 1986). There are various shapes and forms that research takes. In the humanities research includes "the discovery

and rediscovery of past human experience, the preservation of texts and artifacts, the constant interpretation and reinterpretation of the knowledge acquired, and transmission of this knowledge from generation to generation” (Bowen and Schuster 1986, p. 16). Scientific research includes instead discovery and application. Scientific research, whether in the social or natural sciences involves the formulation of laws and general trends that describe, explain, and help predict various phenomena. Because of the emphasis placed on research by higher education institutions, especially universities, the career success of a faculty member is often determined by the quality and quantity of his or her research output (more on this later).

Institutional governance and operation also occupy a considerable portion of time of professorial work. While these responsibilities are often shielded from the public eye, faculty members’ contributions to the smooth running of universities and its departments are very important. Faculty members are in charge of numerous administrative activities individually and collectively, in large part due to the highly abstract and specialized nature of the work of academia requiring the expertise of insiders. Institutional governance tasks include the hiring, firing, and promotion of faculty members, departmental policy-making, consulting with the administration on long and short term plans, organizing instruction, communicating with students, alumni, and administration through cabinets, senate committees, councils, task forces, etc., conducting commencement and other ceremonies, contributing to innumerable extra-curricular activities and campus life and much more.

Finally, due to the very nature of professorial work, faculty members are often asked to perform services for the public in different ways. These may include testifying in court in the role of specialists, addressing citizens’ groups, appearing on mass media, delivering health care, collaborating with administrative and legislative local, state, and federal units, providing cultural and

recreational activities and services, consulting with businesses or interest groups and organizations, and meeting a vast number of social needs (Bowen and Schuster 1986, pp. 14-24).¹⁸

With this broad overview of the nature of academic work in mind, why is (in)authenticity in the academic world important? Arguably, because a faculty member who feels authentic will be prone to carry out good work, that is, to teach with care and passion, to find difficult research answers that mirror truths rather than serve particular interests, to recreate an institutional environment that fosters the pursuit of knowledge in an effective and responsible way, and to offer direct benefits to society. Arguably, a faculty member who feels inauthentic would instead be prone to perceive the meaninglessness and uselessness of the academic world, would become alienated from him or herself and knowledge, would neglect students and publics alike, and would not serve in the quest for knowledge and progress from which our society can benefit so much. As we will see, forces leading faculty members to experience inauthenticity are strong and constantly growing and increasingly become reason for concern.

The Academic Profession: A Brief Literature Review

Professors, like many other types of workers, very often talk about their job with one another. But for many professors work is not just a job, but a vocation; a passion that deeply encompasses many aspects of their existence. Professors' lifestyle demands and peculiar taste (Bourdieu 1984) often even lead them to marry among their kind, thus further blurring the boundaries between the home and the workplace, and between family and work (Ferber and Loeb 1997). But while an enormously vast *opinion-based* literature is available on their working conditions, experiences, and social environment, professors study their own profession *empirically* with much less frequency. In 1969 the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching began to correct this trend by supporting a wave of survey-based studies of professors' attitudes, characteristics,

¹⁸ Despite the difference between service and governance, professors use service to refer to both.

emotional experiences, and behavior. Some of these studies will occupy our attention in the following pages, but it is important to note that a high number of interpretive and more or less explicitly theoretical works on the professoriate have appeared throughout the last century. Many eminent social theorists of the nineteenth and twentieth century have penned these works, and even the most cursory glance at them will reveal the sweeping changes that the profession has undergone throughout time.¹⁹ Sociologists Peter Blau (1973), Diana Crane (1972), Paul Lazarsfeld (Lazarsfeld and Thielens 1958), Seymour Martin Lipset (1982), Talcott Parsons (Parsons and Platt 1973), David Riesman (1956, 1980), Thorstein Veblen (1918), Max Weber (1946), Alfred North Whitehead (1928), Logan Wilson (1942, 1979), and even philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1873) have reflected about life in academia and its changing shape. While the historical significance of these works cannot be stressed enough, a proper exegesis of these writings would require much more space than is available here. My intent in the next few pages is to review recent empirical research on issues relevant to the scope of this dissertation.

Institutional Diversity

Let us begin with the issue of diversity. In contrast to some European nations, the American higher education system is one in which research and teaching – the two “core” activities of professors’ work – are carried out in the same institutions. Nevertheless, universities vary greatly in terms of size of student enrollment (ranging from 2,000 student-strong liberal arts colleges to 50,000 student state universities), ownership (public or private), affiliation (religious or non-religious), type of degrees conferred (universities, colleges, and two-year colleges), and quantity of the highest types of degrees conferred (doctoral universities vs. community colleges for example). Traditionally, the Carnegie system for the classification of institutions of higher education divided universities and colleges into the following categories: Research Universities I, Research Universities

¹⁹ The reader interested in a historical perspective on the professoriate and higher education in America is invited to consult Finkelstein (1984).

II, Doctoral-Granting Universities I, Doctoral-Granting Universities II, Comprehensive Universities and Colleges I, Comprehensive Universities and Colleges II, Liberal Arts Colleges I, Liberal Arts Colleges II, and two-year Colleges. Criteria for category assignment were mainly the number of certain types of degrees conferred (such as doctorates) and financial endowments and grants. The more recent Carnegie classification system has simplified this somewhat cumbersome classification. Doctoral and Research Universities, for example, are now part of the same category, but this category is divided into extensive and intensive institutions based on the number of doctoral degrees conferred during a single academic year. MSU, the institution under study here, is considered an Extensive Doctoral/Research University. Please refer to appendix one for more detailed information on the Carnegie classification system.

Hermanowicz (1998a, 1998b, 2003) proposed an alternative and much more practical way of classifying higher education institutions based on only three categories: elite (universities whose departments are ranked at or near the top by the National Research Council); pluralist (universities that emphasize research but also teaching and are middle-ranked by the NRC); and communitarian universities (whose faculty mostly but not exclusively focus on teaching and whose departments are ranked near the bottom by the NRC). Hermanowicz (1998a, 1998b, 2003) also suggested that elite, pluralist, and communitarian universities and departments share distinctly different cultures. In elite schools faculty members aspire to be the best and among the few that are universally recognized in their discipline. In communitarian universities faculty members' realm of activity is much less cosmopolitan and more clearly local (for this distinction see Gouldner 1957). Whereas elite universities seek to hire world-renowned academic stars who specialize in one narrow area of research, communitarian institutions generally employ faculty committed to teaching a variety of classes, sharing numerous and diverse responsibilities, and developing close relationships at the institutional level. Pluralist schools share mixed elements of both. The idea of pluralism comes

precisely from the vast diversity of faculty “types” found at this school, with some professors aiming for the top of the research world, and some others who almost exclusively dedicate their time to mass undergraduate education and to closer rapports with graduate students through mentoring and advising. Examples of elite universities are Stanford University, the University of California at Berkeley, and Harvard University. Examples of pluralist institutions are Michigan State, the University of Colorado, and also the institution studied here. Finally, examples of communitarian schools would be Northern Illinois University and Central Washington University.²⁰

A number of works that have shed light on professors’ attitudes, experiences, and behavior in terms of institutional differences have appeared over the years. Among the largest and most comprehensive monographs are the works by Clark (1987), Bowen and Schuster (1986), and Blackburn and Lawrence (1995). All three research projects were based on large surveys of national samples of professors employed in different institutions. Clark’s (1987) work is discussed in the following section on faculty socialization, whereas Blackburn and Lawrence’s (1995) book will receive our attention in the section on professors’ emotional experiences. Bowen and Schuster’s study (1986) is arguably the most comprehensive and the most pessimistic of all recent empirical works on the professoriate. Their survey collected statistical information on faculty’s personal attributes, quantity and quality of work, salary, the academic labor market, and work environment. Bowen and Schuster (1986) collected interview data as well, and it is from this type of data that their most critical observations came. Interviews conducted with 532 faculty members on thirty-eight campuses revealed sharp differences from institution to institution, as the authors found that:

campus moods ranged from buoyance [sic] to deep depression, that changes in faculty compensation ranged from substantial increases to sharp declines in real earnings, and that perceptions of the work environment ranged from highly positive to wretchedly negative.

²⁰ It is worthwhile to note that Hermanowicz’s system refers to physics departments, and yet they seem to be quite valid for many other disciplines as well.

At one extreme, faculty characterized campus administrators as autocratic adversaries; at the other, as effective, vigorous, supportive leaders (Bowen and Schuster 1986, p. 137).

Drawing from their interviews with dissatisfied faculty members Bowen and Schuster (1986) noted that three negative themes emerged: professors were dispirited, fragmented, and devalued. Dispirited faculty members told interviewers that their morale was low for a number of reasons, including poor university leadership, pressure from external agencies, the low level of monetary compensation, deteriorating working conditions, and increasing and competing work demands. Dispirited faculty also lamented the worsening of collegiality and conflict with university administration. In terms of fragmentation Bowen and Schuster (1986) noted that the trend toward narrow research specialization had resulted in professors feeling isolated from their colleagues. Research pressures, in the form of publish-or-perish expectations were especially strong for junior faculty, but even tenured faculty had to cope with newer organizational pressures. Both associate professors and full professors in fact were found to be having difficulty adapting to the rapid changes in organizational culture caused by the adoption of marketplace-type policies and practices (see chapter six). Strengthening the collective feeling of departmental and professional fragmentation was also the presence of part-time instructors and adjuncts, whose status ranged from marginal at best, to exploited at worst. Faculty who felt devalued also felt underpaid and underappreciated. But despite these problems, Bowen and Schuster (1986, p. 158) found that professors were still dedicated: “no single finding stands out so consistently across all thirty-eight campuses than the unwillingness of faculty to abandon their academic careers. They like their work, whatever its shortcomings.”

Faculty Socialization

Socialization never stops. Socialization is a lifelong lasting process that goes through diverse stages, touches on diverse areas of life, includes different role transitions and changing expectations,

and involves diverse socializing agents (see Gecas 1992). The process of socialization to academic work, much like other forms of work socialization, consists in the integration of new members into an organizational culture (see Tierney and Rhoads 1993). The socialization to academic work per se begins in graduate school, where students undergo a series of courses, seminars, workshops, roundtables, meetings, and advising sessions meant to prepare them for the diverse demands of academic work. But while there are similarities, every college and university has a unique organizational culture and equally unique subcultures (see Kuh and Whitt 1988). Such organizational cultures have different functions. Freedman (1979, p. 8) for example suggested that faculty cultures are “set[s] of shared ways and views designed to make [faculty’s] ills bearable and to contain their anxieties and uncertainties,” whereas Tierney (1988) identified the main function of organizational culture in its stratification of roles and statuses. Even though when we think of the professoriate we tend to think of professors we should not forget to consider the individuals and the groups with whom professors constantly interact. Bergquist (1992) for example found academic culture to be made of networks of four different but closely interrelated subcultures: (1) the managerial culture of administrators; (2) a developmental culture including the rapport between students and faculty; (3) a negotiation culture constituted around the processes of negotiation of resources; and finally (4) a collegial faculty built around departmental communities.

Regardless of how many subcultures a faculty member has, and no matter how many subcultures exist within an institution, faculty members will normally undergo a socialization process consisting of at least two stages. The first stage, in chronological order, is the recruitment and selection process when new potential hires are brought onto a campus to learn more about their place of employment while the existing faculty begins to socialize the newcomer through more or less subtle clues about their culture. Once a right “fit” is found, the newcomer – more often than not an untenured junior professor – has to learn how his/her competence and work disposition can

best be performed for an audience of careful scrutinizers (Baldwin 1990). During this stage, which often lasts the entire six or seven year period before a tenure decision is made, a new faculty member learns to refine his/her goals, motives, abilities, and values. Baldwin (1990) found that this is a very intense period when new faculty members feel the intense pressure and need for individual growth, whereas others found that new faculty's adjustment is often marked by disillusion (Olsen and Sorcinelli 1992; Sorcinelli 1992), loneliness, and lack of intellectual stimulation (Boice 1992).

With all its subcultural idiosyncrasies and differences from one institution to the next, it is important to realize that there also are important similarities in the work of professors. Faculty life is first of all marked by the sense of collective identity that comes with being members of a common professional organization (Etzioni 1961). Clark (1987) identified three additional components of this professional culture. First, academics share a belief in the value of the production and diffusion of knowledge. Second, professors share similar notions of academic honesty and professional integrity. Third, they highly value academic freedom.

While there are many important components to the development of a full-blown academic identity, there are some aspects of the socialization to academic culture that are more unique than others. One of these is the socialization of doctoral students and junior academics, but also of senior professors, to the "paradox" of academic work (Clark 1987, p. 99). In his large survey Clark found that even though there are large differences in how faculty members at different institutions distribute their time – with professors in more prestigious institutions teaching far less than those in less prestigious institutions – on average the greatest majority of professors spend more time on teaching than on anything else, with some professors even dedicating *all* of their time to teaching. Yet, "teaching is not the activity most rewarded by the academic profession nor most valued by the system at large. [...] Professors themselves do the one [teaching] and acclaim the other [research]" (Clark 1987, p. 99). The contradictions inherent in this system of values are often sources of much

emotional upheaval, as the data gathered for this dissertation will show. Let us then shift to this important component of the socialization process, the whole of emotional experiences that professors live.

The Emotional Experiences of Faculty Members

Much early research on the professoriate attempted to build on Robert Merton's (1942) theory of science's normative structure and thus focused on issues of stratification and universalism (see Hermanowicz 2003). But as Hermanowicz (2003) pointed out, this highly quantitative research has failed to produce thick descriptions of *experiences* in academia. Later research based exclusively on survey methodology or some combination of survey and fieldwork research has generally shown that professors are highly satisfied with their job and that work satisfaction is common across different types and prestige of institutions (Blackburn and Lawrence 1995; Clark 1987; National Center for Educational Statistics 1990). In a recent survey, researchers for the National Opinion Research Center found that over 90% of faculty members were highly satisfied with their work and would choose the same career all over if they were to start again (National Opinion Research Center 2000). Clark (1987) found that academics share common frustrations, such as low pay and having to deal with increasingly poorly prepared students, but in spite of these frustrations Clark's respondents – much like Bowen and Schusters' (1986) – manifested their attachment to the intrinsic rewards of the profession. Intrinsic rewards include a strong belief in the value of education and the instrumentality of their job in furthering education, the pleasure of interacting with young people and actively shaping their minds, and most importantly, in Clark's (1987, p. 222) words: “the rewards of doing academic work for its own sake, its own challenge and passion.”

Researchers working within the social constructionism paradigm have paid attention to the collective construction of the meanings of scientific work, the constitution of scientists' subjectivity, the reception of their work, the reproduction of scientific knowledge in relation to professors'

activities, and their reputation in relation to their strategies of impression management (Clarke and Fujimura 1992; Jasanoff et al. 1995; Hermanowicz 1998a; Pickering 1995).²¹ Some researchers have also begun to abandon the cognitive bias and focus exclusively on emotions. Bloch (2002) studied professors' emotional labor in Danish universities and found that uncertainty, shame, anger, and pride are managed in different ways but all respond to the social norms and expectations common in academia's emotional culture. Hermanowicz (2003) studied professors' self-doubts, or in other words their feelings of anxieties and insecurities about their accomplishments and their self-perceived shortcomings. By interviewing sixty physicists employed at differently-ranked institutions in the United States he found that the more elite institutions employed the most successful, but also the most self-doubting professors. In Hermanowicz's (2003, p. 67) words: "the further 'up' one goes in the institutional hierarchy – moving toward the elite end of the continuum – the more one finds individuals with the same anxieties: doubts tied to work get more common and more intense among higher status people."

Laurel Richardson's (1997) work also showed that self-doubts are a matter of everyday life in academic work. In her autobiographical and autoethnographic existential reflections in *Fields of Play: Constructing an Academic Life*, Richardson (1997) pondered upon how the specific circumstances (i.e. work contexts and biographical contingencies) in which professors write affect what they write, and how what they write affects who they become. Her writings, as well as her career memories and emotions betray the struggles of her academic "I," the voice meant to be suppressed in scientific writing and yet the voice always present and constantly speaking through her research and writing. Richardson (1997) argued that writing needs to be "demystified" if fields of knowledge – knowledge of oneself and other subjects – are to be unbounded. And once the fields are freed of institutional practices that restrict writers/professors' true individuality, "play" or passionate work will be

²¹ Obviously this is an area closely related to vast areas of sociology research, such as the sociology of scientific knowledge (for a review see Shapin 1995), and the sociology of intellectuals (see Kurzman and Owens 2002).

possible. Through her reflections Richardson (1997, p. 5) “raises questions about finding or creating spaces that support our [professors’] writing so that we can keep writing, developing a care for the self, despite conflict and marginalization.” Richardson also noted that fields of play are also fields of professional legitimacy, where certain practices of knowledge production (e.g. externally-funded positivist research) are perceived to be more authoritative than others (e.g. critical, feminist, and post-positivist emancipatory research). Such practices are the source of tension, hostile competition, marginalization, and the loss of academic integrity, but also the source of hopes, goals, and broken dreams of professors.

Often, loneliness makes academic work very emotionally-demanding. Professors’ work, despite the emphasis departments put on collegiality, is often solitary work demanding endless hours and long days spent in isolation from the outside world. During these times, books, or computers, or lab instruments seem to be professors’ only friends. New faculty members are often “frustrated by lack of opportunities to meet other new faculty” (Sorcinelli 1988, p. 128). Boice (1991, 1992), Whitt (1991), and Reynolds (1992) found that new faculty members frequently report some level of distress over their feelings of isolation, marginalization, and lack of support. But the most challenging of all demands, especially for untenured faculty, is managing time. Even though junior faculty are often shielded from major administrative responsibilities, their research expectations and teaching demands make it very difficult for them to have a life outside of their area of professional specialty. Van der Bogert (1991), who attempted to study how many hours per week new professors worked, found that his question was often met with laughs – and in my research for this dissertation similar questions of mine were often met with the same response. Similarly, Ylijoki and Mantyla (2003), Sorcinelli (1988), Thorsen (1996), and Whitt (1991) found time demands to be a notable source of stress for faculty.

Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) investigated faculty's self-evaluations of success, job satisfaction, and motivation, as well as their perceptions of the demands and expectations made on them by their academic environments. They found that the largest predictor of faculty's expectation, success, and satisfaction was self-efficacy (see Gecas 1989). Next to self-efficacy, faculty support, professors' interest in their work, and their beliefs of how well-deserving their academic employer was, accounted for the greater variance.²²

Issues of motivation, expectation, and satisfaction are also closely linked with gender dynamics. Krefting (2003) has argued that academic life has a gendered nature, as women still suffer from ambivalent attitudes about the validity of their work. For example, it is not uncommon for women to be perceived as teachers and for men to be perceived as researchers, and for students to address female professors by their first name but to address male professors by their professional title and last name (see Bellas 1999; Benschop and Brouns 2003; Krefting 2003). In her unpublished dissertation Armenti (2001) found that many of the nineteen female professors she interviewed had considerable difficulty in meeting family expectations and career demands. Armenti argued that academic women are expected to follow the norms of the life course of men at work, but those of the life course of women at home. Women are also found to endure more stress than their male colleagues (Doyle and Hind 1998). Bellas (1999) argued that the reward structure is gendered as well, as teaching and service are devalued in comparison to research and administration. It is not accidental that teaching and service require emotional – and thus “feminine” – labor whereas research and administration supposedly require intellectual, technical, and leadership traits generally defined as masculine (Bellas 1999). Harris, Thiele, and Currie's (1999) research on the stratification

²² Interestingly enough, faculty support was defined as a composite measure of having a credible department, working in a collegial department, and receiving grant support. In my opinion there were several problems with Blackburn and Lawrence's (1995) research and theoretical background. Nevertheless, their results seem to be validated in virtue of their conformity to other research findings.

of gender in Australian universities also shows that production (research) is favored over reproduction (teaching).

A Crumbling Ivory Tower?

The picture of academic work drawn thus far appears to be puzzling. Consider some of the most evident contradictions:

- Professors derive their collective identity from being equal members of their profession, and yet they belong to highly differentiated subcultures;
- The main function of the system of higher education is to educate citizens, and even though most professors spend most of their time with teaching and teaching-related activities, research and possibly even administration are far more valued;
- Professors have innumerable complaints about their place of employment and about their occupation, and yet the greatest majority of them are so highly satisfied with their work that they would never consider abandoning academia, and would choose the same career path all over.

How to make sense of this? Throughout part three of my dissertation I will attempt to explain these contradictions by studying professors' experiences of authenticity and inauthenticity. But before that, it is important to understand the main elements of the social organization of professors' work in greater depth.

Over recent years the social organization of academic work has changed considerably. Whereas the powers of the faculty expanded constantly up to the early 1970s, a number of factors including massive enrollment shifts from department to department and from certain institution types to others, controversial public fund allocation policies, higher governmental and public opinion scrutiny, deeper connections to the private business sector, professors' salary deflation, downward hiring trends, and increased administrative control have caused a considerable erosion of

faculty power and resulted in lowering job satisfaction (Bowen and Schuster 1986). Pressures and demands on the faculty have mounted while professional benefits have not, forcing a number of professors to reassess their careers. While many faculty members have remained intimately attached to their profession, increasing numbers have begun to lament the loss of academic freedom, the lack of deserved financial recognition, the worsening of facilities, and the lack of visionary leadership. With decreases in autonomy from external agencies and internal organs, continuous attacks on the tenure system, erosion of collegial spirit, growing resentment toward careerism and blind specialization, and the mounting criticism toward a system that practices a pervasive rank discrimination, present conditions and future prospects appear problematic (Bowen and Schuster 1986). This is the picture of American academia in 2004, one of uncertainty and insecurity. Let us then move on to the next chapter, in which the context of academic work will be our primary focus.

CHAPTER FIVE

ACADEMIC WORLDS

In the previous chapter I began to introduce issues concerning the social organization of academic work, but I concentrated my attention on the individual experiences, feelings, and beliefs of professors. In this chapter and in the following I shift the focus to the institutional side of academic life. More precisely, in this chapter I draw on symbolic interactionist theory on social organization and the next chapter on literature on the academic profession and the contemporary American university. I begin with an in-depth look into symbolic interactionist theory on the negotiated order and mesodomain, relying in particular on the work of Anselm Strauss, David Maines, and Peter Hall. Subsequently, once again building upon the work of Anselm Strauss and also Howard Becker, I examine the social world of academia. Throughout the chapter I use examples and hypothetical situations derived from academic life to illustrate theory. I conclude the chapter with a brief reflection on the links between social organization and the experience of authenticity.

Social Organization and the Negotiated Order

A common critique of symbolic interactionism is that it is “haunted by an astructural bias” (Sjoberg, Gill, and Tan 2003, p. 411). While this may have been somewhat true in the past, much progress has been made in the three decades since the publication of Reynolds and Reynolds’ (1973) critical survey. Today, interactionist institutional analysis is more common than ever, as the large space dedicated to this area by the recent *Handbook of Symbolic Interactionism* testifies (Reynolds and Herman-Kinney 2003). Broadly speaking, from the perspective of symbolic interaction, institutions are the product of their members’ action in circumstances not entirely of their own making (Dingwall and Strong 1985). More precisely we could say that institutions are going concerns (Hughes 1971), or in other words collective enterprises subject to dynamic change over time in

response to changing environments. Institutions are therefore social constructions that act back on the behavior of those who construct them. As relatively (thus not strictly) bounded domains institutions are characterized by an internal social organization and an ensemble of its members' networks of action. Institutions interact with a surrounding culture, history, social geography, demography, and social actors, privileging some of its members and disadvantaging others (Hall 2003). It is common in symbolic interactionism to view institutions as shaped by a fluid and emergent social organization that may contain contradiction, conflict but also agreement, loose couplings, and multiple perspectives on rules, practices, and belief systems. In short, not only does symbolic interactionism offer a recent and wide corpus of theory and empirical research on social institutions, but it also offers a complex view of social organization as "historical, processual, contingent, conditioned, and action-oriented" (Hall 2003, p. 45).

In their recent review Gideon Sjoberg and colleagues (Sjoberg, Gill, and Tan 2003) have traced the existence of five "schools" of interactionist thought on social organization and structure. One is associated with the work of Herbert Blumer (1954, 1958, 1969; Blumer, Maines, and Morrione 1991) on labor relations and economic power. A second one derives from Goffman's (1961) view of institutions. A third one has emerged from the writings of Anselm Strauss (1978a) on the negotiated order concept. A fourth perspective, closely related to the negotiated order perspective, is epitomized by the research of Farberman (1975) on the car industry and Denzin (1978) on the liquor industry. And finally, a fifth school of symbolic interactionist thought on social organization revolves around the contributions of Peter Hall (e.g. 1987, 1995, 1997; Hall and McGinty 1997) to the concept of power. While there are obvious differences among these five perspectives we should be careful not to exaggerate them. Indeed, I believe that an interactionist approach to the study of social organization can benefit from the combination of all these and other

similar approaches. For this reason I begin with Anselm Strauss and then expand my treatment of the social organization of higher education in multiple theoretical directions.

Anselm Strauss (Strauss 1964) began to explore the negotiated order idea in his attempt to understand social interaction within a psychiatric institution. All organizations are negotiated social orders hence a structural order is to be understood as a constantly shifting social construction that is neither predetermined nor accidental but instead directly reflective of social actors' interests and strategies. The negotiated order concept is meant to explain the relation between contextual conditions and interaction and in particular the mutual interplay between action and the consequences of action (Strauss 1993). In formulating the idea of the negotiated order Strauss (1978a, 1982) denied that structures are fixed or that they hold determining force over individual or concerted action. Strauss accused functionalists and structuralists of committing the mistake of structural determinism and suggested that what is occurring in social interaction is some level of negotiation, a "processual ordering" (Strauss 1993, p. 258) of acting. Negotiated order stands for "flexible organizational arrangements, the fluidity of overall interactional patterns at any level of scale and that social orders are forms of activity" (Strauss 1993, p. 254). As Anselm Strauss (1993, p. 255) specified:

[T]he concept of negotiated order was designed to refer not merely to negotiation and negotiative processes. It also points to the lack of fixity of social order, its temporal, mobile and unstable character, and the flexibility of interactants faced with the need to act through interactional processes in specific localized situations where although rules and regulations exist nevertheless these are not necessarily precisely prescriptive or peremptorily constraining.

Negotiation occurs because actors' interests are often conflicting and undergoing constant change as an organization develops. Conflicting interests give rise to conflicting demands and the

manifestation of these inevitably leads to negotiation and ultimately to structural change. Examples of negotiation abound. Interdependent units within a university may contend and negotiate over values, goals, role expectations and relationships, response strategies, hierarchies, rules, resource distribution, and collective, group, and individual interests. For instance a college of science and a college of arts and humanities at a small liberal arts college may conflict over the administration's proposal to launch a ten-year plan on the revitalization of the science curriculum. Even though faculties in the arts and humanities may recognize the financial need to attract a larger and more diverse student population as well as lucrative research grants, they may be opposed to the new image that the school will have in the eyes of alumni and current students. Such opposition may manifest itself in a number of requests to the administration that the arts and humanities also receive some form of attention, for example in the building of a new music audition lab or in the funding of a large new scholarship.

Viewing the interaction among such units as flexible and emergent rather than fixed allows organizational researchers to keep their mind open to the fluidity of structural orders. According to this perspective, organizational rules and procedures are constantly reviewed, revoked, and renewed over time (Strauss 1978a, p. 5). The negotiated order concept thus strikes a balance between the binary oppositions of structural determination and the free-will of involved actors:

A social order, even the most repressive, without some form of negotiation would be inconceivable. Even dictators find it impossible and inexpedient simply to order, command, demand, threaten, manipulate, or use force; about some issues and activities they must persuade and negotiate (Strauss 1978a, p. ix).²³

As I will discuss later, the middle-of-the-road position of the negotiated order perspective is especially useful for the treatment of authenticity. Authenticity itself in fact requires some form of

²³ It is important to emphasize that not everything is always negotiated (Maines 1982; Strauss 1978).

negotiation between a set of personal ideals and a pattern of possibilities open in a specific social situation. Negotiation is indeed an important condition for a pragmatic understanding of authenticity.

It is important to note that Strauss distinguished among three central components of the negotiated order. The first is negotiation, which refers to processes such as bargaining, mediating, compromising, brokering, and so forth. The second is the notion of negotiation context, which refers to the features of the negotiation setting and to how such features affect the course of the negotiation. The third is the structural context, which refers to the broad socio-political, historical, and geographical circumstances of negotiation (Strauss 1978a; also see Maines 1982). For example, let us go back to the hypothetical scenario described above of a college of sciences and a college of arts and humanities negotiating over long-term school goals. Negotiation will occur within the context of a meeting of deans and department chairs bounded by administrative procedural rules and local conventions and such. But this context is also embedded within a larger configuration of dynamics over which the chairs and the deans have little control. Despite his determination, for example, the dean of the college of arts and humanities must come to grips with the state of declining power of classical education. Such a trend is in part political, in part economic, and in part cultural and historical and in such sense negotiation will be to some extent bounded by arrays of structural costs and opportunities transcending the local context. It is also worth remarking that negotiation processes affect their contexts, but the changed contexts in turn affect negotiation.

An organization is a system that is fluid both internally and externally. For example, as mentioned, universities must accommodate their students,' faculties,' and staff's demands but must also negotiate with external agents such as state legislatures, capitalistic market agents, and the general public. These networks of negotiations involve different and sometimes numerous agents with diverse strategies and objectives, and essential to our understanding of negotiation is an

appropriate conceptualization of power. Power is to be intended as an attribute and a resource that all agents in the negotiating process possess in different amounts. There are no oppressors or oppressed – contrary to Marxism, for example – within this perspective, but instead necessary preconditions based on power differences leading to negotiations within changing conditions. Following the lead of Strauss, Peter Hall has elaborated a notion of power, or as he called it “meta-power” (Hall 1987), that fits to some extent with the negotiated order perspective. To meta-power I now turn.

Meta-Power

Central to the thought of Peter Hall (e.g. Hall 1987) is the idea that “organizations, as we interpret them, not only are created to accomplish particular objectives but also in the process become the foundation for sustaining social positions (and power) in modern social orders” (Sjoberg, Gill, and Tan 2003, p. 416). In other words Hall’s focus is on the consequences of social organization for social action and social situations and in particular on how the consequences of action become the conditions for future action (Hall 1997).

Hall conceptualizes organizations as structures of meta-power, intended broadly as “the creation and control of distal [across space and time] social conditions and situations” (Hall 1997, p. 398). Building on the concept of mesodomain analysis (Hall 1987; Maines 1977, 1982)²⁴ Hall intends to show how social organization lies at the intersection of structure, history, and action:

Within this approach social organization is reconfigured as processual, conditional, and dialectical. It is dissolved as a determining object into constituting and consequential processes. The forms, arrangements, and distributions of organizations provide conditions that shape but do not determine activity. The conditions are simultaneously but variably constraining and facilitating. Conditioned and constituted activity in the past and at distant

²⁴ For more on this concept see the section of this chapter titled “Mesostructure.”

site can have consequences and create conditions for future sites. For consequences to have conditions, however, require construction and action taken to establish a linkage between sites (or times) (Hall 1997, p. 401).

In sum, Peter Hall suggests that rather than merely focusing on the regularities of situated action we ought to pay attention to how complex networks of linked sites interact and fit together.

In a recent empirical study Hall (Hall and McGinty 1997) researched the process of educational policy formation at the state level and found that “at each site and in each phase, actors build on past consequences and, through collective activity, they further the process by constructing policy” (Hall 1997, p. 401). Thus the process of policy formulation is one in which actors (e.g. at the state level) create the conditions and shape the resources with which actors at a distant site (e.g. school districts) will operate. This is not a fixed order, however. Actors at distant sites will utilize their own resources to shape, subvert, amend, resist, and re-interpret policy content and the conditions in which policy is to operate. Even though Hall and McGinty’s (1997) focus was on primary and secondary education, their remarks may be easily extended to the system of higher education as well. It is easy to observe how policies and economic plans drawn at the state level affect actors at the university level, and even how policies and plans at the federal level affect the costs and opportunities with which actors at the state level must interact. The relative fluidity of this structure becomes apparent, however, when a university whose funds have been cut by the state legislature decides to raise student tuition thus turning students and parents against the state capitol. In turn, out of fear of losing public support, a legislature may strike a bargain with university administrators. The bargain may call for tuition to remain intact but for the university to cut a number of less well-attended courses and to increase the size of classes. In this case, in the end it may be professors who get the short end of the stick by getting stuck with large and unmanageable

classrooms and losing the possibility of teaching more intimate seminars. But then again the negotiation process may begin all over again with professors' re-claiming lost privileges.

As we have seen, the process of negotiation always involves the mobilization and utilization of different resources in concerted action toward the realization of some strategic goal. Underlying these dynamics is of course social power. Hall (1997, p. 403) treats power as the manifestation of the intended creation "by some actors of the conditions and contexts in which other actors may find themselves." Building on Blumer (1954, 1969) and Baumgartner (Baumgartner et al. 1976) Hall zeroes in on asymmetric relations and makes an important distinction between power as behavioral control and power as relational control:

The former refers to the ability to select a preferred outcome or to realize one's will over others *within* a situation. The latter (meta-power) refers to the *shaping* of social relationships, social structures, and *situations* by altering the matrix of possibilities and orientations within which social action occurs (i.e. to remove certain actions from actors' repertoires and to create or facilitate others). Meta-power refers to altering the type of game actors play: it refers to changing the distribution of resources or the conditions governing interaction (Hall 1997, p. 405 italics in the original).

Meta-power structures organizations through a number of different practices and processes and Hall (1997) suggests that at least five are often visible. The first is *strategic agency*, which refers to the positioning of an organizational member within a nodal point in the network of action. An agent's place in the network is the origin of her power to shape social conditions for other, interrelated organizational members. The second is the whole of organizational *rules and conventions* that structure action by setting costs and opportunities. Rules and conventions are clearly cultural in nature, as they function as both a cause and justification of action and communication. The third and most explicit form of meta-power is the *establishment and re-creation of situations*. Through these

networks of concerted action an organization comes to shape what its members accomplish together and the temporal and spatial sites for their action. The fourth form is the formation of an *organizational culture*. Organizations explicitly shape their own culture when they stipulate the mission statement or when they formulate strategic long term plans, for example. And finally, the fifth form is the complex process of *delegation*. Through various acts of delegation hierarchical superiors assign responsibilities to other members located further down the organizational ladder, and do so while trying to ensure cooperative and compliant behavior with the mission of the organization and its various agendas.

Studying processes of meta-power allows the researcher to focus on the structural consequences and social conditions of individual and collective action, thus overcoming the limitation of research at both the micro and macro level. In pressing the need for mesodomain analysis Hall (1995) follows the lead of other symbolic interactionists who have stressed the relevance of the study of mesostructure, to which I now turn.

Mesostructure

The concept of mesostructure is closely related to the negotiated order perspective (Maines 1979, 1982). In fact, it is in the inherent dialectic of the negotiated order – concerted action structuring social order and in turn the resulting social order shaping the conditions of concerted action and future negotiation – that we find the *raison d'être* for the mesostructure concept. David Maines (1977, 1979, 1982), who was among the first proponents of the meso concept, argued that the negotiated order perspective transcends the micro-macro split since through its explicit temporality it offers the possibility “for advancing dialectical research, since it contains the potential for examining the unity of subject-object by defining a domain of symbolic interaction which, through symbolic representations, creates the material conditions of social existence” (Maines 1982, p. 275). The concept of mesostructure calls into question the distinction between interactional and

structural and sees the social order as made meaningful through interaction. As Maines (1982, p. 275) suggested:

The domain of mesostructure incorporates the concepts of consequences and conditions but seeks to treat them processually by encouraging the analysis of the interaction between the elements that *constitute* consequences and the persons or groups for whom those elements *are* consequences. It also seeks to treat the concept of conditions, not in terms of the fixity of structure, but as conditioning processes that are very much a part of lines of activity.

Mesostructure also recognizes that social transactions have a species character to them – that there is direction, form, and mandate. Social interaction is always contextualized interaction in the dual sense that the elements of situation, circumstances, and setting shape what identities and relevancies will be transacted by participants, and in the sense that such interaction can be thought of generically as participants mutually contextualizing one another's activity in the situation (*italics in the original*).

In short then mesostructures are realms of concerted action through which individuals and groups engage in processing social structures and in so doing end up structuring social processes (Maines 1982). Central to this conceptualization of social order is temporality. Katovich and Maines (2003, p. 293) suggested that a mesostructure is a “temporal nexus in which actors fit their lines of action together in ways that will affect themselves and other in the future.” In other words a mesostructure is a way of conceptualizing the links between a present situation and its past and future conditions. Pasts and futures, as going concerns, are continuously negotiated by social agents.

The empirical study of mesostructure is conducted through what over the years has come to be known as mesodomain analysis. In the words of Peter Hall (2003, p. 37):

Mesodomain analysis explores social organization as recurring patterns of collective activity, linked contexts, and social conditions across space and time. It examines the intersection of

historical, structural, and action contexts, showing how history and “structure” shape action and how actions (re)produce history and “structure.” Its conceptual framework includes collective activity, networks, power, conventions, intentions, processibility, and temporality. The key in mesodomain analysis is to transcend the traditional limitations of qualitative analysis, namely the pitfalls of excessive idealism, voluntarism, subjectivism, ahistoricism, astructuralism, and the general overemphasis on the micro and contingency and to move close to a level of social analysis that allows researchers to ask questions about the emergence of social organization out of interaction (Hall 1987). In sum then, mesodomain analysis manages to attend to the intersection of history, biography, agency, and structure by exploring how “past and contemporary social conditions and forces (historical and structural contexts) shape situated activity (action context)” (Hall 1995, p. 399).

Mesodomain analysis is based on the principle that collective activity is connected to its local contexts. The connection to context, however, goes well beyond the local as it encompasses the employment of conventions, practices, and resources across temporally and spatially distant sites (Hall 1995). Mesodomain analysis then focuses at least on six areas of symbolic interaction: collective activity, networks, conventions-practices, resources, temporality, and grounding (Hall 1987, p. 11). I review these briefly below.²⁵

- *Collective activity* is of course the basic unit of sociological investigation. Howard Becker (1982) sees collective activity simply as what people do together, whereas Hall (1987, p. 11) defines collective activity as “the sequencing of series of social acts by two or more persons in relation to social objects.”
- The concept of *network* refers to “the set of linkages, representing transactions and relationships, between the actors of a population” (Hall 1987, p. 12). By actors it is meant

²⁵ The interested reader should consult Hall (1987) for further information.

more than individuals. A social actor could be a team, a loosely or formally organized group, or an entire organization. By studying networks a mesodomain analysis attempts to arrive at a complex understanding of the relational and dynamic nature of human conduct.

- Symbolic interactionists generally refer to *conventions and practices* rather than to values, norms, rules, as the latter terms connote fixity and order typical of functionalism and structuralism. Conventions and practices differ from norms, values, and rules as they generally entail that some level of negotiation has occurred in their stipulation, evolution, and interpretation. Conventions and practices thus refer to “generally accepted and shared, habitual, taken-for-granted ways of understanding, communicating, cooperating and doing [...] and reveal the concrete procedures by which collective activity is accomplished” (Hall 1987, p. 13).
- A *resource* is “any attribute, possession, or circumstance that claimants may use to achieve ends” (Hall 1987, p. 14). Power, following this approach to resources, “is a tool in gaining compliance, overcoming resistance, or limiting the options of others” (Hall 1987, p. 14). Without resources of some kind people cannot get things done. Obviously, resources are differentially distributed, differentially accessible, and their value is differentially interpreted.
- Because social organization is continuously evolving, *temporality* is a necessary component of any mesodomain analysis. Collective activity always takes shape within a temporal context and is always organized in terms of temporal frames, hence temporality “stands in a dialectical relationship to activity. On the one hand, pasts, for instance, represent limits and constraints [...] yet pasts continually are partially reconstructed and selectively recast to generate new futures” (Hall 1987, p. 15).
- Finally, mesodomain analysis must offer various levels of *grounding* of social processes in different contexts. Hall in particular views grounding of networks of collective activity in history (through historical explanation) and in social structural conditions as necessary.

With such concepts as mesostructure, meta-power, and negotiated order we may now begin to take a closer look at the collective activity typical of academic work.

The Social World of Academia

Borrowing from Howard Becker (1982, p. 1), work “like all human activity, involves the joint activity of a number, often a large number, of people.” While Becker’s (1982) focus was on the world of art, his fundamental assumption remains valid for the academic world as well: work always entails cooperation and conflict. Symbolic interactionists such as Anselm Strauss (1978b, 1982, 1984) and Howard Becker (1974, 1982, 1986) have come to refer to the patterns of collective activity through which art, science, work, politics, or any form of social organization occurs, as social worlds. A social world is a conceptual framework through which complex organizational forms, phenomena, and processes can be analyzed (Clarke 1991). Social world/arenas²⁶ theory is rooted in pragmatist epistemology and deep within the tradition of the Chicago school of community and social ecology studies (see Clarke 1991). The concept of social world is also clearly linked to Everett Hughes’ (1958, 1971) view of institutions as “going concerns.”

By social world Strauss (1978b) and Becker (1982) meant shared commitments to common activities, but also the sharing of resources and the building of group cultures to achieve goals and get things done. In indicating a field of action and interaction such as cooperation, conflict, exchange, and negotiation, the social world concept highlights both structural and cultural processes of social organization, as well as the negotiative properties of both. In Clarke’s (1991, p. 131) synthesis:

Social worlds are the principal affiliative mechanisms through which people organize social life. A social world is an interactive unit, a “universe of regularized mutual response,” communication or discourse; it is not bounded by geography or formal membership “but by

²⁶ Social world/arenas theory overlap in numerous ways and are often referred to together. The concept of social arenas is often used within the area of the sociological study of social problems.

the limits of effective communication” (Shibutani 1955, p. 566). Society as a whole, then, can be conceptualized as consisting of a mosaic of social worlds that both touch and interpenetrate...

It is important to avoid the mistake of essentializing the social world concept. Social worlds, to begin with, have fluid boundaries that undergo the continuous negotiation of an organization’s social agents. Furthermore, membership to a social world is fluid and ever shifting, given the common presence of social sub-worlds within the boundaries of the same organization. Take for example the academic social world. Within it there are a number of various sub-worlds, corresponding for example to various colleges, departments, and academic units, whose boundaries are also quite permeable given individuals’ shifting ideological allegiance and ways of getting things done. For example a department chair may belong to the sub-world of her department but may also be closely tied to the dean’s interests and side intermittently with one or the other in different situations. But even within a world or sub-world some participants remain at the periphery whereas others concentrate right around the core of activity (Hughes 1971). It is also possible that previously separate sub-worlds intersect to form a new one or that one sub-world may split into two or more. Despite the fluidity of social worlds and sub-worlds, what is clear about them is that:

In each social world, at least one primary *activity* (along with related activities) is strikingly evident [...]. There are *sites* where activities occur: hence space and a shaped landscape are relevant. *Technology* (inherited or innovative means of carrying out the social world’s activities) is always involved [...]. In social worlds at their outset, there may be only a temporary division of labor, but once underway, *organizations* inevitably evolve to further one aspect or another of the world’s activities (Strauss 1978b, p. 122, emphasis in the original).

Let us then examine in some detail how things get done in the academic world. In what follows I will examine action and cooperation, and its conventions and hierarchical labor division and

conclude with a look at some of the human agents that populate this social world: professors. In the writing of the next few pages I am patently deriving my inspiration from Howard Becker's (1982) book *Art Worlds*.

Science and Education as Action

It is not an uncommon sight to see a professor pulling out of his driveway on his way to work at some point during the early hours of the afternoon. Obviously, the cynical thought that comes to mind is: "Nice job, I wish I could get off the bed at noon and head to work after lunch!" But while a good chunk of the population may indeed think that a professor who teaches two classes a week for a grand total of six hours spent in the classroom is a lazy and overpaid burden on public finances, it is mistake to measure work input by the time it takes to consume its output. In fact, how accurate would it be to judge the merit of an artist by the amount of time it takes us to stare at her work in a museum? Or how accurate would it be to judge a chef's work by the amount of time it takes us to eat his roast? The truth of the matter is that many components must be in place before a final performance is produced.

Let us take a look at teaching for example, while keeping in mind that teaching is only one of four activities in which professors engage. With teaching there obviously must be a great amount of preparation that goes into the time the actual teaching is performed in the classroom. Professors need to prepare for a class everyday, whether the material they are presenting is new or whether it has been prepared in the past already. In case the material is new the rule of thumb is that for an hour of teaching there must be at least five hours of preparation. Professors refer to courses they have to teach for the first time as "new-preps." New-preps require the selection of new textbooks and collected readings, the evaluation of different ideas of each class activity, the consultation of various resources from which a lecture is drawn, the writing of lecture notes, the writing of lecture overheads and handouts, and a general attention to the reception of the teaching performance, so

that professors may change their approach whenever something does not work as they wish. While new-preps require a great amount of time and attention, even course and lectures prepared in the past need to be updated, sources need to be verified, information needs to be double-checked for consistency across time, and so forth. After spending time in the classroom there must be office hours, time spent answering students' queries over the phone, via email, in the hall, on the way to the library, on the way home, etc. Then there is the grading of homework, and not every professor has teaching assistants available for help. Six hours a week begin to look more like thirty, and we have not even begun to consider the time that must go into other activities, especially research.

The Division of Academic Labor

In order to carry out their job professors need a large web of support personnel. Let us take research for example. One of the first things a graduate student learns as she publishes her first article is how little there is of "herself" in the final product. While a published research piece may be single-authored, an entire network of people becomes involved at different stages. Research is never original. Writing on any topic requires a professor to seek "leads" in a variety of sites. Library personnel may be involved at this stage, by helping a professor recover old documentation, or by finding interlibrary loan material, or simply by purchasing, cataloguing, administering, and checking out library resources. A professor may then become immersed in reading material written by other professors elsewhere, kept in easily accessible computer databases by research database companies, and produced and distributed by publishing houses. While professors attempt to read in peace in offices kept clean by courteous custodians and kept clear of undergraduate students by teaching assistants on duty, departmental staff assist faculty in countless and priceless ways. It may then be time to start collecting data, well, at least after initial rounds of consultations with colleagues and research assistants are made. At this stage a professor will normally request the protection of the Institutional Review Board. Approval is granted or rejected after other professors have spent some

time debating the ethical components or proposed research. It is at this point that some professors may involve yet other faculty members across the country, together with administrators at various levels, by requesting a grant. In case the grant is awarded an entire network of school administrators will become involved, from a departmental chair to an office of grant development, to the dean's office. Already dozens of people have become involved and our professor has not even started conducting his research yet!

The final product that is eventually achieved will have received the support of people ranging from journal or book editors, reviewers, research assistants, computer network administrators, other colleagues consulted at various points during the research process, and in the social sciences even the help of the research subjects themselves. Throughout this process various hierarchies of labor division will be involved. A professor may require the help of various subordinates (graduate assistants, support staff, etc.), but she may be required to respect the will of various superiors. For example a professor may be pressured by a department chair to refocus her research agenda, or she may have to deal with anonymous peer reviewers who ask her against her desire to make significant changes to her work. It is hardly possible then to think of a professor getting things done alone, and this awareness is of extreme importance as we study the experience of authenticity.

Conventions

The main contribution of Howard Becker's (1982) work on art worlds was his treatment of artistic conventions. According to Becker (1982, p. 29):

People who cooperate to produce a work of art usually do not decide things afresh. Instead they rely on earlier agreements now become customary, agreements that have become part of the conventional way of doing things in that art. Artistic conventions cover all the decisions that must be made with respect to the works produced, even though a particular

convention may be revised for a given work. Conventions dictate the materials to be used [...], the abstractions to be used [...and], the form in which materials and abstractions will be combined.

While artistic conventions and scientific conventions are not the same, the academic social world is far from being free from conventions. Take the example of this dissertation. Conventions existing at the university level combine with conventions at the departmental level and conventions at the dissertation committee level to stipulate how my work is to be conducted if it is to meet certain standards. In that sense, I, the author, have limited freedom in how I produce my work.

Conventions and commonly followed practices regulate the topic and how I am to go about researching it and writing about it. Conventions regulate the kind of language and style I am to use, the form my citations must take, the amount of information I can give about my informants, the nature of the theoretical and empirical literature which I need to follow, and so forth.

While conventions place strong limitations on the work of professors and aspiring professors (such as myself) they also make my work possible. Conventions work to define the subjectivity of a work of scientific production as well as the identity of its producer. In other words, if I adhere to the conventions created for me my writing will be recognized as a dissertation, instead of, say, a novel, and I will be recognized as a doctor instead of a novelist. But as said earlier conventions are not totally un-negotiable. Negotiation over academic conventions occurs at different levels; for example I negotiated the font (Garamond) with the school of graduate studies when I stubbornly refused to write in the conventional Times New Roman, and I negotiated the length of my dissertation with my committee. Conventions can be resisted and broken, and this in science even may lead to new scientific revolutions (Kuhn 1970).

Conventions, cooperation, and hierarchies of power demand we study the professoriate as a social world and not just as a set of individual professional patterns. Our study of the individual

experience of authenticity must then be conducted at the meso level of the social world of academia. In the following section I elucidate the link between individual authenticity and what professors do together.

Authenticity as Negotiation

Let us go back to the researcher whose networks of cooperative activity we have examined a few pages ago. As we have seen research (but also and just as equally all other spheres of professors' responsibility) is a collective process and not an individual creation. Therefore, our understanding of authenticity must take into account the social conditions of the individual experience of authenticity. As said in the introductory chapter the concept of agency is important for our understanding of authenticity, but neither agency nor authenticity should be confused with autonomy. This raises a number of important questions for the study of authenticity. To begin with, can the study of the individual experience of authenticity take place at the micro level or should such analysis occur at the mesodomain level? The answer is straightforward: the experience of authenticity occurs through a process of negotiation which takes place between the self and its social world(s). Hence, a sociological analysis of the experience of authenticity should not exhaust at the phenomenological level, but rather it must take into consideration the conventions and practices, collective activities, networks of action and interaction, and resources that structure the social situation where conditions for the experience of (in)authenticity emerge (see chapter six).

Let us explore in some more depth the conceptualization of authenticity as a result of negotiation by referring once again to the hypothetical researcher whose work I described earlier. All along the research process the collaborative nature of human activity demands that professors make *compromises*. Compromises are among the most quintessential and mundane expressions of negotiation. Our hypothetical professor may need to compromise with, amongst many other social agents:

- Funding agencies who desire that certain research variables be measured or that certain research questions be asked;
- Editors and reviewers who demand that certain cuts or additions to the final research report be made;
- Students who may demand more time is spent on them and consequently less time is spent on research;
- Department chairs who may impose demands of various nature and may limit the amount of resources available for research;
- Family members who may demand professors' attention.
- The nature of the data collected themselves, as it is often the case especially in secondary analysis, that certain variables be discounted from the initial research goal as they are poorly measured, inappropriate, or simply unavailable.

The list is potentially endless but all items on it result in our hypothetical researcher having to sacrifice something away from the ideal state of affairs and negotiate for a less than perfect process and outcome. Now, the question is: is authenticity at all possible given what we know about the negotiated order of interaction? The answer, once again, is straightforward: the experience of (in)authenticity varies on a continuum of intensity and it is only by studying the process of negotiation (hence interaction) that we can understand the variation in the intensity of authenticity.

As I mentioned in the first paragraph of the introduction to this dissertation it is impossible to discuss authenticity without taking into considerations dynamics of power. Now that authenticity and power (meta-power) are precisely conceptualized for the task at hand we simply need to connect the dots together in the final chapter of part two of this dissertation. In fact, while in chapter four we have seen some of the microsociological forces shaping professors' feelings, thoughts, and

conduct, in chapter six we will look at the macrosociological forces interacting with professors' self-meanings and self-feelings.

CHAPTER SIX

ACADEMIC LIFE AND AUTHENTICITY

In recent years the system of higher education has been subject to an inordinate amount of pressures toward change. State and federal governments, economic downturns, and even the general public have pushed for universities to become more efficient, productive, accountable, and flexible. Besieged by multiple challenges, private and public universities have undergone a significant metamorphosis while the professoriate has been struggling to endure the required adaptation. While it may be premature to call for the demise of the professoriate, it seems reasonable to state that universities are less desirable workplaces for professors than they used to be (Altbach, Berdhal, and Gumport 1994). Decades of unprecedented rising economic opportunity and public support ended in the 1980s and American professors are increasingly faced with uncertainty and the prospect of losing even more ground to public scrutiny and the economic marketplace. But what exactly has happened to the professoriate? And how are these changes affecting professors' work? In this chapter I attempt to provide initial answers to these questions by examining the crisis of academia and the deprofessionalization of the professoriate. I begin by offering an overview of the main changes universities are facing. Subsequently I turn to the controversial argument that the professoriate is rapidly losing its professional status. After examining the deprofessionalization thesis I turn to authenticity and connect it to some of the theoretical arguments on meta-power, social organization, and the negotiated order advanced in chapter five. Finally, I summarize the arguments presented throughout part two of this dissertation and move my argument forward toward part three of my work.

The Crises of the Academic World

The use of the plural *crises* instead of the singular *crisis* in this section heading is no mistake. There is a “crisis” for just about anything under the sun in the academic social world. Today, among

the most widely lamented are the crisis of freedom of academic expression, the crisis of the professoriate, the crisis of the tenure system, the crisis of academic administration, the crisis of the humanities, the crisis of teaching, the crisis concerning the student population's level of preparation, the crisis in the public worth of the university, the crisis of intellectual leadership, and not to mention various crises of economic and financial nature. In short, judging from the wealth of the crisis literature (see Altbach 1997 for a review) one would not be too hasty in declaring the imminent finale collapse of higher education and its replacement with some no-longer-so-utopian combination of corporate-financed, consumer-friendly, computer-based, trade-driven training of some sort. Is the condition of higher education truly so desperate? Obviously it depends on whom one asks. But this is precisely the point: very few academic doomsayers actually bother to *ask* anyone of their colleagues. The "academic crisis" market book seems to be in great part a stage for the disgruntled but self-indulgent professor who tends to forget the rules of statistical inference in extrapolating to the entire population based on evidence gathered on one's own experiences alone or perhaps some amount of hearsay (Oakley 1997). As we have seen in chapter four in fact only a small number of empirical studies have investigated the experiences, feelings, and thoughts of professors. The majority of these studies reached the conclusion that despite the growing sense of dissatisfaction with their working environment professors still loved their work (see chapter four, and also see Boyer, Altbach, and Whitelaw 1994). How is this possible? While it is premature to answer this question, since after all it depends on the empirical assessment of authenticity that is object of this study, it is time to take a look at some of the most problematic trends of the academic profession. I begin with an overview and subsequently I examine in some depth the contention that the professoriate is becoming deprofessionalized.

Overview

Without any pretension of being exhaustive let us take a closer look into the crisis, broadly defined, of academia.²⁷ To begin with, are the changing work conditions of American professors unique or are they similar to those of some of their foreign colleagues? Despite their differences on a number of important fronts, Philip Altbach (1997, p. 315) remarked that:

The academic profession faces significant challenges. Financial pressures have contributed to ever-increasing demands for accountability. The privatization of public higher education and the expansion of private academic institutions in many countries have changed the configuration of academe. Questions about the relevance of much of academic research have been linked to demands that professors teach more. The traditional high status of the professoriate has been diminished by unrelenting criticism in the media and elsewhere. [...] It is quite likely that the working conditions of the professoriate will continue to deteriorate. The profession's "golden age," characterized by institutional expansion, increased autonomy, availability of research funds, and growing prestige and salaries, at least in the industrialized countries, has come to an end.

Standing at the geographical, political, and intellectual center of the scientific world, American universities employ the largest staff and faculty and enroll the largest numbers of students, both domestic and foreign. The United States is also the largest academic market for educational products and services, such as technology, research and teaching publications, financial investment, and so forth. Consequently, trends beginning in the United States generally spread to or somehow indirectly affect other regions of the world. Among these global trends, one of the most evident is the substitution of full-time tenured faculty with part-time and untenured faculty (Leslie 1998). The

²⁷ Due to space limitations I will base my observations on a selected number of manuscripts. For this scope, the 1997 Fall edition of the journal *Daedalus* is of great help. For this special forum *Daedalus* gathered some of the most esteemed observers of academic affairs in what turned out to be one of the most balanced, well-thought, and critically minded set of reflections on the topic.

shift toward the hiring of untenured faculty is in part a response to the crisis of the tenure system and in larger part a necessary adaptation to dwindling resources. Untenured faculty are usually appointed to teach – not to conduct research – on a semester or year basis and paid by course taught. Their pay is significantly lower, their realm of responsibilities much smaller,²⁸ their appointments are perennially unstable, and their benefits minimal (see Leslie 1998). But while these appointments are more and more common and while traditional appointments are less and less frequent, the *old* standard of the tenured professor remains the cultural ideal that everyone uses as a basis for comparison.

The truth of the matter is that the *old* standard is becoming a bit of a historical anomaly. In the United States roughly thirty-five percent of all faculty are part-timers and more than one third of those who are full-time hold term appointments (Gappa and Leslie 1993). Today as Altbach (1997, p. 322) noted American university departments tend to resemble more and more caste systems “with the tenured Brahmins at the top... the lower castes occupying subservient positions, and... the part-timers [as] equivalent to the Untouchables, relegated to do the work that other do not wish to do and denied the possibility of joining the privileged.”²⁹ These changes are significantly altering the nature of university departments. Despite the obvious presence of hierarchies, American departments were traditionally built with rank equality and collegiality in mind. It was from this community of equals that the American university department derived its strength, especially in comparison to some European and Asian nations. If only full-time tenure-stream faculty (rapidly becoming a minority) have the resources necessary to conduct research, and if only part-time non-tenure-stream faculty become in charge of doing the majority of instruction, research and teaching

²⁸ Generally, non-tenure track and part-time faculty have no say on matters of institutional governance.

²⁹ Altbach (1997, p. 322) offers a very elegant simile of part-timers that is worth quoting in full: “Hired to teach a specific course or two, provided no benefits, often given no office space, and expected simply to show up to teach a class, part-timers are the *ronin* of traditional Japan – the masterless samurai who traveled the countryside offering their services and hoping to be chosen as apprentices. These *ronin* have all the qualifications of samurai; they lack only a sponsor (permanent employer).”

may become fully disjointed. As a result the quality of teaching may suffer not only because teachers become isolated from recent research developments, but also because these part-timers have no power over the definition of the curriculum. To boot, research may be disadvantaged by becoming even more insulated than it is now.

Obviously this is only one of many problems that academe is facing, but it is definitely a very interesting one as it epitomizes a number of problematic changes in the work environment of professors. Among the most common challenges that university faculty and administrators need to face are the following:

- The need to emphasize undergraduate teaching more and research less (Boyer 1990).³⁰

Universities have come under attack from state and federal administrations for privileging research over teaching with the result of offering poor-quality undergraduate education and engaging in research that tends to be considered inconsequential, useless, and isolated in an ever-increasing number of limited-distribution journals and abstract sub-disciplines (Layzell 1992; Sykes 1990). This, despite the fact that in actuality teaching still takes up more of faculty's time than any other activity (Levine 1997).

- The related need to offer a service designed with the demands of its customers in mind is growing (Levine 1997). Whereas in the past universities enjoyed a great deal of freedom in designing the general academic curriculum and the individual form and content of each course, now universities face the pressure of offering teaching as a consumer service oriented to the needs of the capitalistic market. For example, in terms of the general curriculum, demands of accountability of fund expenditure have pressured universities to re-evaluate the "usefulness" of such disciplines as the humanities (Slaughter and Leslie 1997).

The usefulness of classical education is now often judged with the utilitarian imperatives of a

³⁰ This is especially true for all universities other than Research-Extensive institutions.

market economy in mind: for example, is a future corporate employee better off knowing Plato or international marketing law? This has resulted in the redefinition of the curriculum as well as in the re-distribution of resources across campus (Slaughter and Leslie 1997). In a related twist, universities have started to push for courses that cater to the demands of its students, i.e. customers, rather than being shaped by the informed opinion of its teachers (see Levine 1997). In a leisure society such as ours teachers face the pressure of having to compete with other media over the way they distribute information (Schroeder 1993). It is not uncommon for a teacher to be disliked by his students, and hence by his department, whenever the content and form of a course is branded “boring.” But while the demand for technology-heavy, entertaining, and interactive university courses driven by the mode of communication typical of mass media is on the rise, faculty and university administrators seem to be caught unprepared trying to deal with this demand.

- In a parallel fashion the expansion of the student population has resulted in the lowering the educational barriers to higher education (Levine 1997). More and more under-prepared students find their way to higher education. As a result universities need to offer remedial courses to bring less qualified students up to speed. A broader student population also means a more diverse population, and universities need to change their curriculum and even their personnel to offer culturally sensitive courses.
- The need to revamp the image of the professor in the public’s eyes is also evident. In an era of shrinking state budgets and widespread cuts over tax-funded programs the public has grown dissatisfied with the idea of irremovable public employees that are guaranteed a well-compensated job for life. In the public mind professors should be accountable to taxpayers just like everyone else. Books like Charles Sykes’ (1988) *ProfScam*, and Martin Anderson’s (1992) *Impostors in the Temple* have contributed heavily to fomenting public disapproval. Some

states have even pushed for forms of faculty compensation based on precisely measurable indicators of a professor's work, like hours spent in the classroom. In general, schools are now considering a variety of forms of assessment of professors' work. Many universities have also attempted to launch various programs and measures to achieve their goal of higher administrative flexibility (see Glassick, Huber, and Maroff 1997). Hiring temporary faculty is only one example of this trend.

- As Altbach (1997) noted, faculty are increasingly disapproving of the work of university administrators at various levels. At the global level faculty resent governmental interference over their work and believe that national political priorities much too often sacrifice higher education. At the local level faculty resent the increasing influence of non-academic administration technocrats hired by universities for their managerial business skills. Increasingly deprived of their traditional influence over institutional governance faculty lament losing professional autonomy and even prestige, given administrators' high levels of responsibility and monetary compensation (Clark 1987; Gumport 1997).
- The commercialization of academic life is also among the most visible changes in the contemporary academic world (Gould 2003; Smith 2000; White and Hauck 2000). Years of state budget crises have left universities struggling to remain solvent (Gumport 1997). While all universities have increased tuition, student-derived income is only one small component of a large university's budget. Thus, many universities have turned to the "grant market" as well as to the corporate market in search of funds. A growing number of colleges and universities have signed financial partnerships with corporations, some have become in part privatized, and many others have turned to their faculty for help. Faculty may help raise funds in two ways: by obtaining research grants from both public and private agencies, and by patenting and marketing research and development. These pressures on professors do

not come without a heavy toll; as some have suggested the professoriate is becoming deprofessionalized (Roberts and Donahue 2000).

Toward the Deprofessionalization of the Professoriate?

We should not make the mistake of thinking that this brief list of trends in higher education is exhaustive. American universities and the professoriate are undergoing numerous other changes and at this point the future of this social world is anyone's guess. What is certain, however, is that the social organization of academic work is at a nodal point in its historical development. As the conventions and practices of the academic institution change, new power configurations emerge and new social agents form to defend old and new interests. Among the objects of negotiation are now the boundaries of the academic profession themselves. As new forces contend to redefine the professoriate according to capitalistic standards professors must adapt to a changing environment by defending their social role and status. How much power faculty members will retain in the future depends on how well they will negotiate their grounds.

Some observers, such as Roberts and Donahue (2000) are pessimistic. In a recent alarming piece Roberts and Donahue (2000) manifest concern over the deprofessionalization of the academy in the context of rampant bureaucratization, a sign of a much broader trend toward streamlining in higher education. Roberts and Donahue (2000) argue that such process of rationalization resembles closely the process commonly referred to as McDonaldization (Ritzer 1996). Characteristic of McDonaldization – i.e. the process of adoption of the business model typical of the corporate fast-food chain McDonald's – are trends toward efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. But incidentally, the McDonaldization process also results in institutional trends toward deskilling and irrationality. All of the above are evident in the new social organization of academic work. And this is a problem, according to Roberts and Donahue (2000), because the bureaucratization typical of McDonaldization conflicts with the culture of professionalism.

Before we examine how bureaucratization and professionalism collide let us take a quick look at what is meant by professionalism. According to Roberts and Donahue (2000, p. 366-368; but also see Forsyth and Danisiewicz 1985) the characteristics of professionalism are:

- “Mastery of specialized theory;”
- “Autonomy and control of one’s work, and how one’s work is performed;”
- “Motivation based on the interests of clients – which take precedence over the professional’s self-interests;”
- “Commitment to the profession as a career and to the service objectives for the organization for which one works;”
- “Sense of community and feelings of collegiality with others in the profession, and accountability to those colleagues;”
- “Self-monitoring and regulation by the profession of ethical and professional standards in keeping with a detailed code of ethics.”

Bureaucratization and professionalism conflict with one another for two reasons. The first reason is because bureaucratic conventions push an organization’s members to promote and represent the interests of the organization whereas professionals expect the interests of their “clients,” i.e. those who benefit from them, to be supreme. For instance, traditionally, in academe a professor provides a service (the creation and distribution of knowledge) for the welfare of the public and for the sake of knowledge, and not for the sake of a university’s good financial standing. The second reason is that bureaucracy places authority within the abstract and impersonal norms of legal contracts backed by formal sanctions. However, professionals rely on a different view of authority as rooted in the individual professional’s expertise rather than in the predetermined power associated with an abstract role (see Rhoades 1998). Roberts and Donahue (2000) take for example

the changing relationship between teachers and students. If students become consumers, then bureaucratization forces faculty members to take the formalized role of salespersons:

as a business model this turns the employee of the organization into a person who must protect the self-interests of the organization at all costs... further some businesses – as a business strategy – insist that ‘their customer is always right’...the authority in the relationship is transferred away from the professor to the customer (Roberts and Donahue 2000, p. 369).

Six closely related trends in which bureaucratization manifests itself in academia are evident according to Roberts and Donahue (2000, p. 365): accountability and supervision, post-tenure review, assessment, merit pay, increases in adjunct faculty, strict cost accounting approaches to management and conflict with academic culture. We have already examined the nature of most of these trends earlier, so let us now look briefly at how they intersect with professionalism.

The movement toward accountability and recognition fails to recognize that professionals are usually internally motivated to pursue their work as a passion and a vocation, and that the alienation resulting from being objectified through various forms of assessment can have a much higher cost than the lack of accountability (Clark 1997). As Roberts and Donahue (2000, p. 370) argued “alienation may be such a powerful demotivator that any gains from supervision, top-down quality control, and cost-effectiveness may be short-lived.” In a related trend toward assessment, summative review for purposes of tenure, promotion, salary increments, and other institutional rewards can result in deprofessionalizing the professoriate if it also causes feelings of exploitation, demoralization, and alienation:

Mandates for assessment passed down from legislatures, accrediting agencies, and boards of trustees are often about accountability to a hierarchy or distant population (such as a legislature). In some cases the assessment process is instituted and implemented by an

assessment office responsible to a dean or vice president, and the information is used to cut programs or to determine levels of funding. The faculty may be alienated from the process, and the data gathered may actually be used as weapons against a program. The data are interpreted with primary attention to cost-effectiveness; the process is undertaken to enhance supervision (Roberts and Donahue 2000, p. 372).

In some schools the push toward assessment has resulted in the implementation of some forms of merit pay. However, merit pay in academia is often poorly administered. The criteria for the definition and compensation of merit are not always equal and the process is far from being always fair. More importantly, as mentioned, professionals are not primarily motivated by financial gain and creating different levels of pay based on objectively defined merit criteria results in demoralizing those who do not receive salary increments without giving the administration the power to dismiss them. External rewards can also transform a faculty member's motivation from intrinsic satisfaction to extrinsic compensation (Deci 1975), thus resulting in further alienating and deprofessionalizing faculty. A poorly administered merit pay also results in conflict between 'under-rewarded faculty, over-rewarded faculty, and administration. And if the administration delegates the responsibility of assessment to departments, this further strains collegiality within departments. Merit pay is especially controversial if we think of activities such as teaching which are notoriously difficult to assess.

The employment of adjunct faculty (part-time and non-tenure-track) may allow for organizational flexibility but it also causes deprofessionalization as it makes employees vulnerable and dependent on the organization's changing short-term plans. Additionally, the role of the adjunct tends to be depreciated of the value of the knowledge and technical expertise that teachers bring to the classroom. Adjuncts are also extremely vulnerable because they must often abide by narrow stipulations of their tasks and responsibilities. When in search of efficiency, predictability,

calculability, and control, a university hires a non-tenure-track part-timer – that is, a deskilled McProf – it creates the condition for trading away the critical, divergent, creative, and sensitive thinking that teaching requires. Ultimately then, universities may bargain for rationality and get irrationality.

Deprofessionalization and Authenticity

Part two of this dissertation has shed light on the difficulties of professors' work. In chapter four we looked at the various sources of stress that professors must cope with on an everyday basis. In chapter five we examined the extent to which the social organization of academic work restricts a professor's free will. And in this chapter we glanced at some of the many crises of the system of higher education, including the menace of the deprofessionalization of the professoriate. Problems, threats, pressures, stresses, and more trouble affect faculty members, and nevertheless professors seem to remain relatively happy and content with their profession;³¹ how is this possible? I am inclined to believe that the answer lies in the dynamics of the experience of authenticity. Inspired by their passion to be who they are, professors live their work and work their lives in search of authenticity, as we will see in part three. Now, while I have conceptualized the individual experience of authenticity from a purely theoretical perspective in part one, what remains to be done at this point is the theoretical linking of authenticity with social organization. Instead of offering an abstract account of this link I attempt to ground it in the context and process of deprofessionalization of the professoriate.

If indeed professors are witnessing some level of erosion in autonomy and self-control over their work performance, capacity for self-monitoring, internal motivation, professional commitment, and sense of community it is possible to hypothesize that at least some of them are experiencing more and more often sentiments of inauthenticity as the movement toward deprofessionalization

³¹ See chapter four.

continues. The link between professionalism, authenticity, and professors' work is to be found in the notion of agency. If professors lose the freedom to define goals for themselves and if their work situations become increasingly defined for them by social agents external to the profession, it is plausible that they will increasingly lose the capacity to define their own self-meanings or at least lose the capacity to act congruently in relation to such self-meanings. Therefore, there is a precise relation between authenticity and meta-power: the changing social organization of academic work has precise consequences on the social situations within which professors define their self-meanings and perceive their self-feelings. The shaping of social situations, such as the conventions and practices of professionalism, intersects with professors' biographical particulars without determining professors' experiences. The new conditions of professors' work are not to be reified for they too demand negotiation. While the conditions and resources of professors' work may be shaped at distal sites professors will utilize their own resources to shape, subvert, resist, and re-interpret the new definition of the situation. Hence, the conditions for the experience of authenticity continue to exist.

Authenticity, we now begin to realize, is connected to power because the selection of a preferred outcome and the realization of one's goals demand some level of social power. But authenticity is also closely connected to meta-power (Hall 1987, 1997; and see chapter five) because the shaping of social relationships, social structures, and situations alters the possibilities that one's authenticity, as well as others' authenticity be experienced. Meta-power and authenticity are connected through at least four of the five components that Peter Hall (1997) believes are necessary for the structuration of social organization.³² Without strategic agency there can be no condition for the definition of one's authentic self, as we have seen in part one. Without some levels of negotiation over the conventions and practices of a social world there would be no authenticity, as

³² Delegation is the fifth component indicated by Peter Hall (1987, 1997) that cannot be easily linked to authenticity for the sake of this argument.

people's subjectivity would be entirely determined by their social worlds (without their influence). Without the continuous re-creation of situations there would be no possibility to agentially re-direct one's self-meanings toward the accomplishment of changing goals. Finally, without an organizational culture authenticity would have to exist in a vacuum, and obviously this would not be possible. The experience of one's authenticity can only occur within the context of a social world where objects have meanings toward which agents can agentially act. Therefore, the study of authenticity from a research perspective that does not take into account power configurations in a specific social world cannot be but partial. The study of authenticity, it appears, requires we take an institutional analytic approach.

Authenticity and Institutions

The negotiation-based view of authenticity that I have posited is closely related to the concept of mesostructure. The self takes shape through interaction with the social order, and the self that has thus arisen then works as the basis for the reproduction of such social order (Mead 1934). In this pragmatist conception of emergence of the self and society lies the potential for surpassing the subject-object dichotomy. Authenticity cannot exist outside of a social order, and the social order could not exist outside of the concerted interaction of selves acting, at least sometimes, authentically in relation to themselves. Therefore, the study of authenticity in the context of an institution has to encompass the *consequences* and *conditions* of self-meaningful action. Rather than studying either the psychological consequences of self-meaningful action – as a microsociological or even psychological approach would – or the socio-cultural conditions of authenticity from a macro/structural perspective, an institutional analysis of authenticity needs to focus on “the interaction between the elements that *constitute* consequences and the persons or groups for whom those elements *are* consequences” (Maines 1982, p. 275, italics in the original). Therefore studying the experience of (in)authenticity in the naturalistic context of social interaction allows us to zero in

on the situations and circumstances shaping social agents' self-meanings and self-feelings and on the situations and consequences of actors' (in)authentic action. In short then, individuals feeling and acting (in)authentically engage in processing the structure of their social worlds and in so doing end up structuring the social processes that make up such social worlds (see Maines 1982).

There are a number of important components to my institutional study of authenticity. First, there is the issue of temporality. As explained at length in the first part of this dissertation it is imperative to conceptualize authenticity heterochronically. Consequently, we must pay close attention to the temporal evolution of the conditions and circumstances of authenticity. In simpler words, not only do people change, but so do their environments. Secondly, there is the issue of collective activity. Authenticity, once again, is not synonymous with autonomy. Authenticity, from a symbolic interactionist perspective, is the individual response to what the self and others *do together*. Next is the necessity to study networks of concerted action, with close attention being paid to issues of social organization, hierarchies, power, conventions, practices, and so forth. Fourthly, my institutional analysis of authenticity must focus on the distributions of resources. As said earlier authenticity is closely connected to meta-power and the negotiated order; a study of people at work would hardly make sense without a close scrutiny of these dynamics.

Borrowing again from Peter Hall (1987), by adopting the perspective of institutional analysis we avoid the microsociological pitfalls of excessive idealism, voluntarism, subjectivism, ahistoricism, and astructuralism, and move closer to the study of authenticity as emerging out of social organization and interaction. In sum then, an institutional analysis allows us to focus on intersection of the experience of authenticity, history, biography, agency, and structure by exploring how “past and contemporary social conditions and forces (historical and structural contexts) shape situated activity (action context)” (Hall 1995, p. 399).

Coda

Throughout part one and part two of this dissertation I have placed authenticity at the center of subjectivity and agency. But instead of relegating subjectivity and agency to the realm of the microsociological, or instead of viewing subjectivity as pre-determined by macrosociological structures, I have attempted to connect the self and authenticity to the negotiated social order by positing such experience as a link between individuals and their social worlds. Throughout part two of my dissertation I have also brought to the foreground of my study the experiences, situations, and conditions of professors' work. But despite paying a good amount of attention to the social organization of academic work my focus has remained mostly over theoretical issues connected to the concept of authenticity. It is now time to put theory behind and move to the description and analysis of empirical data. Throughout part three of this dissertation the focus will be entirely on professors' accounts of themselves and their working environment. The theory that I hitherto laid out will allow us to interpret the sociological significance of professors' authentic and inauthentic moments. Part three will begin with chapter seven, in which I present my methodology. Subsequently, chapters eight, nine, ten, and eleven will discuss authenticity and power in academic culture.

PART THREE

CHAPTER SEVEN

METHOD

The main research question of my dissertation concerns professors' experience of authenticity at work, and can be phrased in the following succinct way:

- *How (to what extent, in what work contexts, and through what organizational processes) do faculty members experience (in)authenticity?*

Such question calls for the qualitative study of an experience situated both temporally across the career of an individual and the history of an institution, and within the context of the social organization of work of a university. Such question also calls for the investigation of varying institutional practices and conventions, for example across the social sub-worlds of the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

I draw data from semi-structured interviews with forty-six faculty members employed at Mountain State University during the academic year 2002-2003. I obtained lists of faculty members employed in three departments in each of three academic fields: the social sciences (psychology, political science, and anthropology), natural sciences (physics, chemistry, and biology), and the humanities (English, music, and philosophy), and divided faculty members according to their rank. I then selected randomly two names from each of the following three categories: assistant professor, associate professor, and full professor. Whenever a department employed part-time or adjunct faculty I also made a list of all such employees and drew randomly one name from the list.

I then proceeded to contact the selected names. I began my first round of five contacts by sending a letter in which I outlined the purpose of my research and requested to schedule an interview. I followed up the letter with a phone call, but this method proved highly unsatisfactory. Reaching any professor by phone in their office turned out to be an endless phone-tag play, at least whenever I was lucky enough to receive a call back. And upon finally getting through the phone-

tagging it immediately emerged that my letter had not caught their attention at all. I then decided to adopt a different strategy: I ceased sending out letters and relying on the telephone and began using email instead. The new method paid off immediately: professors would reply within hours or even minutes, and appointments were easily set up after just a couple of messages were exchanged.

All interviews were scheduled and completed during the academic year 2002-2003. While some interviews were postponed after an initial scheduling, only two were cancelled altogether after scheduling. In the end, I made contact with sixty-two professors, sixteen of whom declined my request.³³ In the majority of the cases the reason for declining was lack of time, and in the remaining cases the reason was their absence from town due to sabbaticals, field research, etc.

All interviews took place in professors' own offices or labs, and lasted in length between one hour and one and one half hour. All interviews were taped and transcribed. All faculty members interviewed were fully aware of the purposes and nature of my research, and it became immediately clear that all were enthusiastic about the opportunity to "open up and let it all out" before a patient listener. Indeed it became immediately clear to me that many professors found my research project very interesting and some were so interested that they openly invited me to go back to their offices "any time." This made my interviews with them much easier and our conversations more natural and in-depth.

It was always important to reassure professors that my research was fully confidential and that the information they would give me would be protected in all possible ways. In order to maintain such confidentiality, in the following pages not only do I use pseudonyms to protect faculty members' names, but I also use a pseudonym for the institution that employs them, as said such pseudonym will be MSU.

³³ It is interesting to note that it was most difficult to schedule an appointment with chemists and physicists.

MSU is a mid-size public university currently classified by the Carnegie system as a Doctoral/Research University – Extensive. As it often happens with classifications, some subunits within a category may be very different from other subunits within the same category. At MSU some departments are clearly more nationally competitive than others, whereas some departments do not even offer doctoral degrees. In general, however, MSU seems to be far less competitive than other schools in the same Carnegie category, as it will become apparent throughout the following chapters.

Data Analysis

Because my main interest is with professors' description of their experiences of (in)authenticity I generally began my interpretation of transcribed interviews by searching for linguistic indicators of professors' perception of self-meanings and self-feelings. In the majority of cases this turned out to be a rather simple process as many informants explicitly made reference to what their "true self" was. Common indicators were such sentences as: "this is who I am," "I know myself and this is why I...", " ...I wouldn't be true to my self if ...," and so forth. Normally, I found the presence of such indicators dispersed throughout the entire interview, but with higher frequency in response to questions such as:

- What specific goals, values, and ideals motivated your initial choice to become a professor?
- I'd like you to reflect for a moment about that initial choice. In light of all you have experienced throughout your career, what do you now think about that choice, and those initial ideals, values, and goals?
- What is now the meaning of your work to you personally?
- I am particularly interested in the study of the self and the experience of personal authenticity, or being true to oneself, in the context of academic work. When I say "being true to your self" or "personal authenticity," what does that mean to you?

Reading responses to such questions, combined with informants' response to the interview opening question ("Could you tell me the story of how you came to choose this profession?"), allowed me to reach a good understanding of professors' self-meanings. I made a schematic summary of these self-meanings by using thematic descriptors and by grouping short quotes under each thematic category. Then, I checked to see whether these self-meanings were actually *meaningful* for informants. In this sense, the question "Is feeling true to your self, or authentic, important to you in relation to your work?" worked to verify whether authenticity is a motivator or not, and to what extent it is.

Subsequently, I proceeded to evaluate professors' answers to two of the questions found in Turner and Shutte's (1981) True-Self Test:

- I'm very interested in understanding what it means to you to be authentic, or true to your self, in the context of your work. Can you tell me some personal stories of times when you felt that you were being authentic, true to your self, in the context of work? What was it about your experience on each of those occasions that made you feel you were true to your self?
- I'm very interested in understanding what it means to you to be authentic, or true to your self, in the context of your work. Can you tell me some personal stories of times when you felt that you were being inauthentic, untrue to your self, in the context of work? What was it about your experience on each of those occasions that made you feel you were true to your self?

Generally, answers to such questions encompassed the phenomenological description of feelings. And generally, professors told narratives from which a sense of self and others transpired (Holstein and Gubrium 2000). Interviews so clearly revolved around these two questions that reading interview transcripts was basically an exercise in placing stories of (in)authenticity in the various

contexts of academic work (teaching, research, governance, service), and drawing the links between a self-feeling and its connections within the social world.

My interpretation required a reading of professors' self-meanings and self-feelings, and a reading of the stories through which these experiences are articulated and connected to their work context. The key in my interpretation was to bring out empirical evidence for a theoretical argument in the informant's own words, rather than in the researcher's. *Beginning with experience* is what my research approach is about. In fact, throughout chapter eight, nine, and ten, I mostly report, describe, and summarize professors' experiences, keeping my observations to a minimum. My use of excerpts from the data is meant to make my data analysis as transparent as possible for the reader:

As exhibits, the excerpts create windows within the text, bringing into view the social organization of my informants' lives for myself and for my readers to examine. Though what is brought into view emerges out of the dialogic relations of the interview, excerpts must not be read as extensions of my description. As exhibits, they make available the social organization of the everyday... lives of the individuals I interviewed (Smith 1998, p. 312).

It is only after bringing these data to the forefront of my analysis that my attention can shift to the description of the links between institutional processes and individual experiences. And it is only at this point that comparisons across institutional settings can be made. But even when comparisons are made (for example across departments, rank, age, gender) I keep the focus not on categorical descriptions, but on the different circumstances through which organizational processes manifest themselves at the experiential level. Rather than pigeon-holing informants into categories I attempt to expose the diversity of their experiences and make sense of such diversity by linking it to differing institutional forces. In sum, I do not present my data under such categories as "Inauthentic Selves" and "Authentic Selves" and then offer subgroups for each category (e.g. authentic male physicians vs. inauthentic female political scientists, or authentic associate professors

vs. inauthentic adjuncts). Rather, I present my data in relation to institutional forces shaping self-feelings and self-meanings and in relation to how through self-meanings and self-feelings social selves negotiate with the organizational order.

Persuasiveness, Correspondence, Coherence, and Pragmatic Validity

My interview study is concerned with the study of *one* institution, but it is not blind to the issue of generalizability. While people's experiences are unique, similarities are also possible and in fact quite frequent. Generalization from a study such as this may occur, but not through the positivist principles of scientific validity and reliability, but via the validating principles of persuasiveness, correspondence, coherence, and pragmatic use of research findings (Riessman, 1993). As Riessman (1993, p. 64) points out in relation to narrative analysis: "the historical truth of an individual's account is not the primary issue. Narrativization assumes point of view. Facts are products of an interpretive process."

Rather than being based on validity and reliability a n interpretive and critical analysis such as my dissertation needs to follow the principles of persuasiveness, correspondence, coherence, and pragmatism. The principle of persuasiveness demands that research be reasonable and convincing. Therefore, theoretical claims must be accompanied by informants' own accounts. The principle of correspondence calls for the achievement of validation through a close collaboration with informants. In order to validate my theoretical thinking and interpretation I always offered my interpretation to all informants after each interview. This correspondence is especially important I am armed with a strong theoretical arsenal to understand my informants' experiences. Some relations could be misguided, or some interpretations could be forced, if I were to proceed without a close collaboration with my informants. The third principle is that of coherence. Coherence must be as 'thick' as possible in a global, local, and themal sense (Agar and Hobbs, 1982). In other words I had to continuously hermeneutically modify and re-adjust my causal interpretations of informants'

experience within their institutional contexts (global coherence) “in light of the structure of particular narratives (local coherence) and recurrent themes that unify the [se] texts (thematic coherence)” (Riessman 1993, p. 67). Finally, in carrying out writing my research I needed to have a pragmatic goal in the sense that my informants, readers, and other practitioners may learn from its use. Therefore, even though I will not generalize my findings to a broader population, I will describe how I produce interpretations, offer thick descriptions of informants’ accounts, and render visible what I do at every step.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ORGANIZATION OF WORK AT MSU

As I begin to discuss my data analysis here in chapter eight I commence with a consideration on time pressures, and in particular with one of the aspects of academic work that are most obviously bounded by time restrictions: the tenure process. Assistant professors on a tenure track are not just limited by time, however. There is a variety of conventions and practices, as well as a peculiar distribution of resources that shape the tenure process, and it is the scope of this chapter to shed light on how this process plays out at MSU. As a form of promotion tenure is closely related to other forms of promotion (i.e. the passage from associate to full professor) and more in general to organizational hierarchies and power distribution. After discussing the tenure process I then move to consider the negotiated order of academic work at MSU in its most striking characteristics, that is, its conventions on teaching and research. These conventions will lead me to discuss issues of power, resource distribution, and agency. This chapter, then, works as an introduction to the following chapters on professors' experiences of authenticity and inauthenticity. It is in this chapter that the networks, resources, practices, and dynamics of meta-power at MSU are brought to light in an attempt to show the link between the social organization of work and the work experiences of professors.

The Tenure Process

By granting tenure to a professor a university makes an important economic commitment. A tenured professor is granted a stable and generally well-paid job until retirement and is invested with the responsibility to teach present and future cohorts of students, possibly for periods as long as thirty-five years.³⁴ But while there is arguably unanimous agreement on the importance of tenure,

³⁴ The stability of tenure is subject to a number of exceptions. Professors may be fired for severe violations of university regulations and/or civil and criminal laws, and lately, in times of economic upheaval in higher education some tenured professors have also been laid off as entire academic units and departments have been shut down.

both from the perspective of professors and from that of administrators, there is much less agreement and clarity surrounding the meanings, functions, and more generally the process of tenure. While there is clarity on the players involved in the tenure process, much diversity exists on how a professor is socialized and mentored with the goal of tenure in mind.

I asked MSU professors what they believed was necessary for receiving tenure. I found that currently, at MSU there are two types of socialization to tenure: implicit and explicit. Explicit socialization occurs when an assistant professor is explicitly told by his/her department chair and/or tenure committee what the expectations for tenure clearly are. A new professor may be told about tenure requirements at the time she interviews for a departmental opening or after the hiring process, as this assistant professor was:

I've been told that I need to get three publications a year (Assistant Professor, Natural Sciences).

Departments that opt for such explicit socialization also often tend to provide the tenure track professor with a variety of employee-friendly services destined to guide the new professor through the process. For example a department may match the tenure track professor to a senior mentor or even to a tenure committee made of three senior professors who dispense advice, counsel, and guidance to the novice.

Implicit tenure socialization is much different. Department chairs in this case are much vaguer in regard to expectations for tenure, relying on the awareness that:

Academics just know, because it is part of the culture (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

As some professors at MSU pointed out to me, the implicit socialization to tenure had begun quite early in their academic career, and such knowledge was widespread and taken-for-granted enough that explicit information was unnecessary:

I had learned the basic rules back in graduate school (Professor, Natural Sciences).

I didn't have to ask. It was understood, it was part of the culture. We talk to people; you pick it up in informal conversations (Professor, Natural Sciences).

Expectations were really clear. So I just stated doing it (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

Tenure socialization at MSU tended to be implicit in the past but it is more explicit now. Senior professors had all received minimal communication, while new, young assistant professors were being "babied" as a department chair put it:

Nobody told me anything. Now we nurse assistant professors, much like we nurse students. Back then you'd get a job; you didn't know what you had to do. You just asked yourself who the successful people were and tried to find out what they did to be successful. But I didn't stress about getting tenure (Professor, Chair, Humanities).

Not many current senior professors admitted they stressed too much about getting tenure in the past. In fact, not only has tenure socialization at MSU changed, but the conventions and practices associated with getting tenure have also changed considerably.

Back then tenure was a fairly routine thing. I wasn't even aware of being voted on. My chair called me and said you got tenure (Professor, Humanities).

When I started out it was much less competitive than it is now. Basically I'm not sure I would get tenure now (Professor, Natural Sciences).

I remember worrying a little bit that I'd get tenure and worrying a little bit that I'd get promoted to full professor. But it was so long ago, that frankly it's a different system than it is now. If you're speaking to younger professors, assistant professors, they'll tell you that the way the university works now, the tenure process is so rigorous and so demanding and I'm not sure that the things we look for ensure that we make the best possible choices. This university is so stuck in a rut in finding evidence in certain kinds of publications, and in certain kinds of pieces of evidence that will swing the power whether that person should be tenured. So, it creates an artificial atmosphere in which you really don't find the best qualities of someone who can be a really brilliant teacher and really inspire students and really make this university a world-class institution and a teaching institution, which ought to be two of our main objectives (Professor, Chair, Natural Sciences).

Alterations in the tenure system at MSU have come about as the academic market and the entire system of higher education has gone through the changes described throughout part two of this dissertation. With decreasing funds and mounting skepticism toward the economic feasibility of the tenure system, with an increasing public demand for accountability and higher productivity, and with the high volume of PhD's seeking employment (see Atlbach 1997; Levine 1997), universities like

MSU can now afford to raise tenure expectations and impose new and more demands on young professors. New demands and the people who face them, however, coexist along old expectations and the people who benefited from a less demanding system, and this is often a source of friction between junior and senior professors in higher education in general (Levine 1997) and also at MSU:

There are a lot of old professors here, who have been able to afford their houses on the coast or on the mountains, but they are really not here anymore, they're more like virtual professors now (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

In my interviews with department chairs I discovered that just about any department at MSU has the “dead-wood” problem: salary money going to old professors who abuse the tenure system and “cruise,” or “coast,” instead of working hard like others, thus making it impossible for departments and colleges to have the monetary resources to hire new, younger professors. The “dead-wood” problem is also closely related to the role that instructors have begun to play in the contemporary American university, and also at MSU. The hiring of instructors, as explained in chapter six, gives universities the necessary economic flexibility that they need to deal with shrinking resources, but it also creates a highly hierarchical system in which tenure works as the main discriminating factor. While at MSU most instructors turned out to be completely disinterested in tenure, others admitted that they were exasperated with their second-class citizen condition. A temporary instructor in the humanities told me that after *twelve years* of being a *temporary* instructor he felt like an untouchable in a caste system, lower in the departmental hierarchy than even graduate students. Tenure is then to be understood as the cornerstone of the social organization of academic work.

Interestingly enough, the meaning of tenure is highly variable from professor to professor and from department to department, as we will see throughout the next chapters. I asked all

professors what the meanings of tenure were for them, and found that for some tenure is relatively meaningless in the continuous socialization process of academic work:

Tenure is a rite of passage. Everything is gradual step-ups in academia. You graduate with your Bachelor degree and you go on to graduate school. Then you defend your thesis and get your Master's. Then you take your preliminary exams. Then you defend your thesis and get your PhD. Then you become a professor and go up for tenure. Then you become a full professor after you've become an associate professor, and then you become an emeritus and retire. So I would say it is part of a larger process made of many rites of passage (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

I don't foresee any changes next year, not really. There is a sense that the pressure is off, but that doesn't mean that I'll be slowing down on my research (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

But for others tenure assumes the meaning of a turning point and even a standpoint for the evaluation of an entire career:

Tenure is just being able to take a deep breath and re-evaluate what you've done. Ultimately you have to compromise a lot of your ideals to get tenure, and then re-evaluate what it is you want to be doing. After tenure you're still restricted by what kind of things are fundable but it's a lot less pressure, and you can speak your mind more freely (Professor, Natural Sciences).

The meanings of tenure and the tenure process of course have deep consequences for professors' experiences of authenticity, which I will examine in depth in the following chapters.

Freedom

Tenure is meant to give a professor freedom, in a variety of ways. Freedom is an important value in the academic institution, as I learned from professors' answers to questions such as "to what extent do you believe you are free to make your choices in the context of your work?" and "how important is such freedom to make your choices in the context of your work?" Freedom has many different meanings that range from freedom of speech and thought, to freedom of creative expression, and even to freedom of going to the office or lab whenever one pleases. The value of freedom, in all its meanings, is important both for the definition of professors' selves and for the definition of academic culture at MSU and presumably at other universities as well. Seemingly, the benefits of working in an environment where freedom is so highly valued even offsets the relatively low pay that most professors receive and the large amount of work they perform.

Academia fits my life really well. It's a heck of a lot of work, and it's a heck of lot of stress, but it allows me to..., well, it fits my personality, the academic freedom that we have, and the freedom that we have to structure our time, and I've always been someone who works very well on my own, and structure myself. And I love to travel, and being free to take summers off or travel for conferences is really nice (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

I found that I liked the lifestyle. I wanted to have a job that would allow me to continue learning for the rest of my life, and a job in which I would have freedom to pursue my interests without asking for someone's permission. The academic lifestyle is absolutely my ideal (Professor, Social Sciences).

I worked in the industry before and was restricted to work in a very narrow area of research and did not like that. In academia you are free to pursue where your interests take you. The negative thing about academia is that you don't get much support. We hardly get a penny (Assistant Professor, Natural Sciences).

We could say that professors enjoy two types of freedom, "freedom *from*," and "freedom *to*." While there is some overlap between these two types of freedom, in academia "freedom *from*" is mostly intended as independence. For example, some of the professors I interviewed believe that in the corporate world workers constantly have to respond to superiors and meet the demands of clients. There is little freedom from supervision in such a job, and this creates an environment where pressure makes it difficult to regulate oneself. In sum, all professors I interviewed agreed that despite its limitations, in their mind academic work is characterized by more freedom than any other occupation. In chapter nine we will see how the *feeling*, rather than the organizational condition, of freedom is closely related to the experience of authenticity, but for now, let us consider to what extent freedom is limited at MSU.

The Social Organization of Research and Teaching

Even though professors agree that their work gives them much freedom, at least in comparison to other occupations, many of them also believe that their freedom is restricted in many, more or less subtle ways. As said earlier, I asked professors to tell me whether and to what extent their freedom was restricted and learned that among the most important sources of restrictions were the academic conventions and practices of what many called "the game." Carl, an older associate professor in the Natural Sciences, was clear about the nature of such "game:"

It is a political game; work at a university is a political game. If you're here for your idealism, if you want to solve research problems, it's not set up to do that easily unless you have a lot of political skills that go with it. If you want to dedicate yourself to the research and solving the problem, you will fail. What you need in addition to those skills is the skills of fundraising, which is a political skill. If you're smart, why aren't you making yourself rich? Well I wasn't interested in being rich, but as I went along I started to realize that you need money to accomplish those goals, you need to spend some time in the political realm, if you want to be successful in the intellectual realm.

All of the professors I interviewed were *aware* of the existence of such "game" and many explicitly referred to the conventions and practices that shape research and teaching as "the game." But there is a difference between being *aware* of "the game" and being *consciously affected* by it, in a positive, or more likely in a negative way. In other words, while all MSU professors were cognizant of the practices, conventions, and related ways of distributing resources typical of their institution, only a very small minority believed that such "game" invalidated the meaningfulness of their work outright, thus making the entire institution "false" or "hypocritical". The majority of professors instead believed that the social organization of work they called "the game" only had a tendency to occasionally shape their work in specific contexts, and only occasionally led them to feel inauthentic. In chapter nine and ten I describe these dynamics at the level of the experience of authenticity, whereas for now I limit myself to describing the social organization of work at MSU.

"The game," – as professors called it – at first sight, is quite simple: one either publishes a good amount of research articles or else one is not granted tenure. This is known in academia as "publish or perish." As a matter of fact this "publish or perish" mechanism seems at first sight to

have very few game-like characteristics, and seems to resemble more a business arrangement than anything else:

Four papers a year, straight peer-review journal articles are needed for tenure (Professor, Natural Sciences).

Quality of publications, judging by all accounts, seemed to matter less than quantity. Quality is difficult to estimate and most departments will be happy enough to measure simpler indicators, such as the number of publications. And, seemingly, to make it even more straightforward:

One of the biggest issues these days is the volume of publications. It's really volume, not quality. It really gets to the point where you have no options. It's not a particular good strategy because there are so many journals and so many are just crap. But publish your volume and you've done what you need to do (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

However, the true "game" has its own peculiarities that need to be played right – professors explained to me. One of these peculiarities has to do with the negotiation with the cultural contradictions that most professors at MSU have to face. Despite the "lip service" paid to quality, most MSU departments are not nationally ranked high enough to demand that professors publish *exclusively* in top quality journals. While a tier-one journal publication is always highly acclaimed in any department, "cranking out" articles that end up in tier-two journals may be a wiser option, as most faculty believe. Professors "crank out" articles by using a variety of approaches, which I call data-splitting, data-sharing, and recycling – categories that emerged from the data, and in particular from professors' explanation of how they deal with the pressure of publishing in great volume.

Data-splitting entails using the same data set for a various number of publications. Some professors at MSU are so skilled at data splitting that sometimes they can publish a series of articles very similar to one another simply by reproducing the same basic manuscript and focusing on one or very few new variables each time. So, instead of publishing one single book or one long manuscript, a data-splitting professor can get credit for five, six, eight, or even ten short publications. Data-sharing is also common. Some professors specialize in collecting their own data, but secondary data analysis is widely more common. Many large data sets are available for free, and some are available for purchase. Some professors, I learned, “data-cruise” the World Wide Web in search of data sets that allow them to invest more time on writing and studying statistical relations and less time on gathering data. This procedure is easily justified by the need to gather large probability samples, which are costly to collect on one’s own. And once again, data-sharing leads to more publications. Finally, a professor can recycle old ideas and get more “pubs” (publications) or conference presentations on his/her curriculum vita (henceforth, CV) simply by reshaping old publications of theirs into newer writings more in tune with the times. An old chapter appeared in an undersold edited book can be easily made-over for a peer-reviewed journal, as a professor explained.

A wide variety of conventions and practices shape the “publish or perish game.” Writing textbooks, for example, is discouraged in academia, at least for assistant professors seeking tenure. As an associate professor in the Natural Sciences who had written a textbook explained to me, writing a textbook takes time, often years, and it demands the constant attention of a professor over time because textbook publishers continually need new editions be produced in order to beat the second-hand book market. Departments in the Natural Sciences and Social Sciences at MSU frown upon book publishing in general as it is too time-consuming and after all, as the associate professor mentioned earlier put it: “it only counts as one pub on your CV.” Also in the column of less favored publications are edited books. Chapters appearing in edited books are often invited

publications and therefore do not go through the supposedly rigorous refereed peer review typical of academic journals.

It is important to remark that the social organization of work at MSU takes on many different conventions in relation to the university, field, and the department where it is played. At MSU, a research-extensive university, it is unequivocally important to publish research, but there are many significant variations across disciplines. For example, natural scientists conduct empirical research in teams, and it is not uncommon for a journal article to have four, six, eight, or even more authors. Sometimes, everyone who works in a lab over a certain period of time is automatically entitled to authorship. While negotiating whether one's lab contribution should qualify a researcher for fifth, sixth, or seventh place in the authorship list may seem like a difficult task, natural scientists may reap good career benefits from this practice. CVs grow longer and longer and it is not uncommon for a natural scientist to easily meet demands of four or five publications a year. Demands regarding quantity of publications are much lower in the humanities. This occurs for two reasons: first because teamwork is much less frequent, and secondly because research occupies a less central place in professors' work. Differences in disciplinary and departmental cultures are very sharp, for example, while in a discipline like Psychology at MSU professors seek mostly publications per se, in the natural sciences publications and research need be accompanied by successful "grantsmanship:"

At the beginning the name of the game was "publish or perish," I'm sure you heard that. By the time I had been here for a while the game had transformed into bring-research-money-or-perish. As an associate professor I had three papers in the most prestigious journal in the field, and I still was not promoted. And that's because I did my work somewhere else and the money that was associated with my work was somewhere else. I worked on \$10 million

experiments using \$200 million accelerators, but that didn't bring any money to the university. And the other thing was that no one in the department knew what I was doing, because I didn't promote myself. I had no interest in promoting myself (Carl, Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

Carl's experience is not uncommon:

I'm still not a full professor after all these years here and it's pretty much got to do with publications. I'm in an area that's not very well funded, so I don't have million dollar grants. I don't have well-stocked labs, and I don't have a whole army of graduate students... I've given up. I don't think it makes much difference. The area that I'm in, there's just not enough funding (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

If you ain't got money, you ain't shit. So what that does unfortunately, it overloads intellectual achievement. There was someone in this department who a few years ago had a research program that was basically off-the-wall, people thought. He's now leaving because his "crazy" ideas have made him one of the most worldwide know names in his area. He has enormous funding and has just received a very good offer from a university, which this school cannot match. And even if it could match it, he would still leave because he's been so underappreciated all these years, and the reason why he was underappreciated was because he didn't have any money (Professor, Natural Sciences).

The "publish or perish game" turns into the "get grants or perish game" in all those fields where money is available. Biology, chemistry, and physics at MSU are prime examples, but extramural

funding is also important in sub-disciplines like physiological psychology (housed within psychology), criminal justice (housed within political science), and archaeology (housed within anthropology).³⁵ While in all these disciplines extramural funding is never made an explicit requirement for tenure at MSU, as one professor put it:

Getting funding is a requirement in the sense that without it I can't do the research that I want to do (Professor, Natural Sciences).

Wherever money is available, money is desirable:

The university culture is that money is valued here. I think this university seems to be profit-driven in the sense that it keeps complaining about not getting enough money (Professor, Natural Sciences).

As state funding decreases (and it has been declining for two decades now) there is increasing pressure on faculty to bring in grant money and the indirect costs (forty-seven percent) that come to the university:

Given the direction that the university and higher education are taking, and given the position of the humanities, I feel that at some point I have to be a salesman for my discipline. Take all these grants that are made available to various professors in this school, the various Boeing grants, and Microsoft grants; it seems that corporations want us to train better workers for them, and where is the place of the humanities in all of this? You know,

³⁵ There are other departments where receiving extramural funding is expected of professors, but I limit my observations to those departments that I investigated empirically.

you feel like you have to justify your existence. And it bothers me, you know, I mean, I feel like I should be able to talk about what I do, but to sell it, or to justify your existence, you know, that bothers me (Assistant Professor, Humanities).

I feel like a businessman at times, it's weird. There are a lot of aspects of the job that you are never trained for. Dealing with money for lab spending is something you have to learn on your own (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

But while “the game” has its benefits and its beneficiaries, those who cannot “play it” well are eventually marginalized, as Carl explained. This marginalization process has two types of victims: those who cannot get money because they are in the “wrong” field, and those who cannot get money because they have the “wrong priorities.” Among the former are people like Carl, whose promotion to full professor was denied, as he claimed, due to his inability to get grants for the university, and whose field of research is now in peril of being shutdown:

I was working on fine-tuning, filling in little details here and there; there were no important, broad questions that were easily accessible to someone working in a small university like this, with a small accelerator. The funding agencies were looking for ways to shut down programs like this, but I had an interesting topic and when I wrote proposals to get funded I was turned down because people thought I couldn't do it here. Well, I found a research corporation that was willing to fund me. So, with a little bit of money, and some chewing gum and some chicken wire I was able to put together a research program that was interesting and exciting (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

Ever since then Carl, as he told me, has been marginalized by the university and for the past dozen or so years he has been trying to save his program from budget-conscious university administrators. Alongside people like him are other young assistant professors who work in an impoverished sub-discipline within a well-to-do larger discipline:

The field that I'm in, evolution, is more like music than another science. Because in evolution you're finding out interesting things, that might end up in museums some day, or information that might end up in a book. We're not producing a product. In evolution we're just producing knowledge that's interesting. It's the same way in the arts: we're producing something that people enjoy. In evolution we're producing stories. We're storytellers. You're finding out interesting things about the natural world. Their value is that they're interesting. It's like the value of some art that's interesting. Evolution is different than other scientific sub-disciplines, where you're creating products. So there is a big question politically that our research should be private or public (Assistant Professor, Natural Sciences).

The value of these disciplines or sub-disciplines is now judged in relation to their economic impact on society and the university, as these professors explained and as I will discuss in more detail later in this chapter. And because universities like MSU need the big research grants to survive, that is where their priorities lie. Such institutional conventions make students and teachers become almost unimportant. Universities can only get a relatively limited amount of money from their student population because of a variety reasons: tuition increases are unpopular and end up lowering the demand for education – clearly something that the state administration does not like to see – and enrollment can only be raised to the level where buildings can fit students. Consequently, teaching

and students become less important, monetarily, than research and grant-getting professors. When getting money becomes the main goal and education turns out to be secondary, as one professor remarked:

We get caught up in the game so much that we lose sight of what academia is all about
(Professor, Humanities).

The final result at MSU is that teaching is devalued, research becomes instrumental, and financing the university becomes the main goal, as this associate professor remarked:

The university is now run by a bunch of businesspeople and I think one of the situations that are now common is the issue of selling property, natural areas. For example we have an area out on the countryside that has been used for a number of research projects and now the university wants to sell that property or at least try and develop it in economic terms. There have been some sales of lots traditionally used for agricultural research on the west side and they're looking at a lot of properties that have no financial return. In their eyes they are useless research areas that bring no money and are often used by and for graduate student research. You know, the university is being run by bean-counters now. My view is that traditionally university administrators have been in charge of making research possible by finding the funds it takes. Now that responsibility has been turned to faculty members who are basically told: "if you want to do research, if you want technology, if you want advancement you need to bring in money into the university." Of course that also leads to publications, and of course professors who are doing well and having a nice career are professors who have multi-million dollar grants for research and some of these people are

not very good teachers. So, on one side we have the university saying that we have a great faculty and you can meet them one on one and interact with them and be close to them in the classroom and naturally many of these people are not. So essentially we have two kinds of things going on here: we have the judging of the faculty along one criterion and we're telling the public about another criterion (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

Such is the central element of the social organization of work at MSU: the institutional reality that is contradicted by the university's slogan "Global Leaders: One on One."³⁶

"Global Leaders: One on One"

Work conventions at MSU, whether they emphasize publication or the pursuit of grant money, have repercussions well larger than those at the level of tenure or promotion. Institutional practices and conventions deeply shape departmental cultures and professors' work. As this associate professor explained (see excerpt below), such institutional forces tend to masquerade where the true priorities lie:

I think many faculty in all universities sell out, they play the game, they get into huge research groups and they try to do as little teaching as possible, and get all their recognition from publications, and here I think at this university it's been less of a problem than at other universities, but I still see it, and I refuse to play those games. At other universities it leads to the big academic lie, which hurts the public so much. Parents who send their kids as undergraduates to college think that it is for undergraduate education and learning, but in

³⁶ "Global Leaders: One on One" is not the actual slogan of the actual school I investigated. Just like MSU is a fictitious name used to protect the confidentiality of my informants, "Global Leaders: One on One" is a fictitious slogan. In choosing such fictitious slogan, however, I attempted to capture the essence of the true slogan of MSU.

reality most universities ignore the undergraduates and get the big research bucks (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

The “big academic lie” is that teaching, of the “One on One” kind at MSU, really exists or matters – at least in the departments where global leaders truly are. Almost anyone whom I interviewed would more or less agree with the following statements:

I honestly feel that if you really put your heart into teaching you’re not going to be rewarded for that. If you have a poor research record and you’re the best teacher in the world, you’re not gonna get tenure. It’s a thankless portion of the job. I wish the university was honest about its priorities (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

The whole “Global Leaders: One on One” is just a slogan. It may be true for some juniors and some seniors, but in most cases a lot of classes are taught by graduate students and people who are not global leaders in anything. The university is a research university. Certainly undergraduate education is not a priority of the university or my department. In the natural sciences the main goal is to get the big research grants in. As for undergraduate teaching, I don’t think so (Professor, Natural Sciences).

Teaching faculty are decidedly second-class citizens. I knew that coming in. We have far less influence. I resent it occasionally, but it’s the reality of academia (Instructor, Humanities).

One of the things that are frustrating for faculty is when your budget line is cut every year. You sacrifice staff, you sacrifice TAs, you sacrifice faculty, and then you see that salaries in administration are higher every year and new people are hired every year. That does not convey a good message of your values if teaching is supposed to lie at the core of your institution (Professor, Chair, Humanities).

The slogan doesn't mean anything. It doesn't happen all that often. You rarely get students involved in research and you rarely get researchers involved in teaching (Professor, Natural Sciences).

The separation between teaching faculty and research faculty most sharply exists in the natural sciences. In Biology, Chemistry, and Physics at MSU is where I found the highest concentration of the following:

- Large class sizes;
- Professors' lack of interest and involvement in teaching;
- Professors' cynicism toward the quality of both undergraduate and graduate students;
- Instructors (who dedicate their time exclusively to teaching);
- "Buy out" practices. According to the "buy out" mechanism a research-active professor buys out of teaching responsibilities with grant money;
- Labeling. Through labeling a professor is either labeled research-active or research-inactive. Research-inactive professors are assigned to teach four or more classes per year. Research-active professors are only assigned two or less a year.

In the natural sciences then, where the professors are more likely to be true global leaders, there is seemingly little one on one education. In philosophy and music, where research expectations are

much lower and where the likelihood of running into a true global leader is also lower, things are altogether different:

PV: “Global Leaders: One on One,” what does that mean to you?

(Associate Professor, Humanities): (Laughs) Well, I know every student here. I know everybody in my choir. When it comes to letters of recommendation they ask me, even if they’re in chemistry or physics. I know my students, I know their background, sometimes I know their family. We teach one on one. We have great faculty but we have a very small budget to make our faculty’s impact truly global.

Besides the lack of monetary resources to attract global leaders in performance and research, departments in the humanities at MSU need to deal with increasing class sizes, a problem created by shrinking budgets and consequently shrinking faculty sizes:

I learn students’ names. I know everybody’s name by the middle of the semester. I have a student in one of my classes who comes to class everyday and falls asleep. The class is at 11am. Anyway, one day, she didn’t fall asleep. So I talked to her and said: “Vanessa, you didn’t fall asleep: Congratulations!” She never fell asleep again. She never did. I think it was probably the first time that somebody knew her name and noticed her, and she never fell asleep again. And I think that’s a product of these enormous-sized classes where they go or don’t go and nobody cares. Nobody can deal with 150 students (Instructor, Humanities).

Large size classes, the opposite of the one on one rhetoric promoted by MSU, are also hardly ever taught by tenured or tenure-track professors, let alone global leaders. In actuality students may not

resent that. While speaking informally to undergraduate students at MSU I learned that many of them prefer to take courses taught by instructors and by some graduate assistants, because after all many professors simply do not care enough to be good teachers. Instructors stuck with large classes try to do their best to “personalize class, know all the students, and make it seem like a small class environment,” and some even try, to no avail, to get beyond the cycle of large introductory classes they are asked to teach, as this excerpt shows:

Here’s an example of how hierarchies work against you when you’re an instructor. Not too long ago I proposed that a new class be on the curriculum and I offered to teach it. The proposal went to the undergraduate studies committee and a couple of folks on that committee, sort of the old guard around here in the department, were outraged that an instructor would want to offer a special topic class. That kind of callousness is what I mean when I say that instructors teach and are not involved in anything else that goes on in the department (Instructor, Humanities).

Interview after interview, I learned how “the game” at the private core of MSU annihilates MSU’s superficial public rhetoric in all its aspects. The political “game” tears research and teaching apart from one another, and pits researchers and teachers, tenure-track/tenured professors and instructors, and undergraduate and graduate students in universes of discourse remotely separate from one another, as this assistant professor remarked:

I do think that having to produce; having to publish does make you a better teacher. My own interest is to use my research to teach my students. I don’t think that this is how it should be for everybody, but I think that it should be like this for more people, or the entire

institution is a complete rip-off of its undergraduate population..., which to some extent it is because the interests of faculty and staff and students is not on undergraduate education (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

In the end, in the minds of professors “Global Leaders: One on One” becomes at best an exercise in meaningless rhetoric and self-illusion, and at worst a model followed in the only discipline where students’ results really do matter to the university and the general public, football:

At this school the best teaching is done in football. That is real teaching. It’s one-on-one, or at least it’s a very good ratio of student to teacher (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

We don’t have very high standards. This is a place that has a high level of complacency. What I constantly hear is a lot of bragging about how good we are. Yeah, but we need to do is aspire to something better, and there is very little aspiration here (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

The former point is especially insightful. With increasing sums of money being diverted to collegiate football it becomes necessary for MSU to produce results. Friendly corporations, commercial sponsors, and especially alumni view MSU only as successful as its football team is. School pride, tradition, and collective identity are on the line when the ball is snapped to the quarterback and nothing can be left to chance in training that student or in keeping his teacher happily employed.

Interdisciplinary Distribution of Resources

As I mentioned earlier, the pursuit of grant money and its side effects results in the marginalization not only of teachers and unfunded researchers, but also of entire fields and sub-

disciplines. All the professors in music, philosophy, and English I interviewed at MSU lamented their condition of second-class citizens, and accused the university, the system of higher education, and society as a whole of being oblivious to their needs. The bottom line of the political “game” at MSU is quite simple in this sense: the Humanities cannot compete for funding with the Natural Sciences, and as a result their survival is in danger. Professors in philosophy almost had their telephone lines cut a few years ago, English PhDs need to cope with years of likely unemployment, and professors in the School of Music and Theater work by far the longest days and weeks and feel underpaid more than anyone else on campus. Furthermore, music and philosophy have budgets so small that they cannot afford PhD programs, or even a Master’s program, in the case of philosophy.

The work of the professoriate in these departments is informed by the “CYA” and “JYE” modus operandi, as one assistant professor in music put it. CYA stands for “Cover Your Ass” and JYE stands for “Justify Your Existence.” Both CYA and JYE refer to the need that professors have in the Humanities to continuously justify both their own employment and the very existence of their department in face of their status as financial liabilities. CYA and JYE, as an everyday modus operandi, calls for carefully documenting every aspect of work in order to defend one’s employment whenever asked to justify it. Music professors for example are credited with teaching hours and performance hours outside the classroom, but the university has a tendency to dismiss these activities as voluntary service rendered by professors out of the goodness of their own heart:

If you did it for the money you wouldn’t do it for the passion. But we have to be careful. Music can be seen as a service. Whenever we have people coming in to visit the university, or for commencement, people like to have some entertainment, so they go “let’s call music!” And they do call us and ask us to perform. And it kind of reminds me of church service, when I was a kid, or even when I was in college. People want music at the service in church,

but do they think they should pay you? No, “that’s your service, that’s your gift, so we don’t pay you, that’s your gift to god!” That’s the kind of attitude you deal with in music. And in many ways it is the same here, where we get this attitude: “What, you mean you want be paid too?” (Associate Professor, Music)

The situation is very similar in the English department, where an extramural grant is practically impossible to obtain, given the very small budget of the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities. In order to justify its existence English is made responsible for training or better yet *re*-training undergraduate students to write in proper English. In an effort to emphasize the importance of writing skills MSU has even recently instituted undergraduate writing portfolios. A writing portfolio is a collection of supposedly well written homework assignments that undergraduate students must collect in order to graduate. For any particular written assignment to become part of a student’s writing portfolio a professor or teaching-graduate assistant must verify that the student’s writing on any one assignment is either acceptable or outstanding. While this works well in theory, in actuality writing portfolio slips have a tendency to pile up on professors and instructors’ desks all at once, at the time during the semester when writing portfolios are due. As I have been told, professors who are generally busy with “more important business” sign off writing portfolio slips without giving students any feedback on their writing, and thus a writing portfolio becomes nothing but another hoop that undergraduate students need to jump in order to get their degree. As many professors have explained to me, it is not their responsibility to teach university students how to write, it is the responsibility of high schools and of the English department. But hardly anyone in the English department is interested in composition. Composition and remedial writing courses are often assigned to graduate students who went to graduate school to study

literature and not to teach high school-level writing. But this is only the tip of the iceberg, however. As I was told by a professor in the English department, “funding literacy is only a token interest:”

Since the Reagan era funding for the humanities is not existent. So we can't compete with folks in the sciences. Part of being able to get million dollar grants is by providing a line of information that is of interest to the state. Funding literacy is only a token interest. And there is the conception that it is only an amateur field. In other words, if you can read and write you can teach reading and writing, anyone can. There is also the perception that most of the work of an English department is literary criticism, and that literary critics are parasites that exist on the talents of others. So funding for us is not an option. What keep us alive is the literacy needs of the university as a whole (Professor, Humanities).

But the true interests and mission of the English department are not in composition, as said, but elsewhere. MSU English professors and graduate students are by far the most politically progressive and active on campus. Their radical politics has often pitted them against both university administration and the state and federal administration. Aware of being underdogs, underappreciated, under-funded, and marginalized they bite back:

The state won't pay for rhetoricians. There's no money there. But in figuring out how to get an atom to explode as it's going through a lot of dirt and getting 1200 feet underground, oh yeah, that's the big one. I just heard that one yesterday on the news. But look, in order for the state to survive, to continue to do what it does, it needs to maintain the consensus of the people. So it's funny that they don't recognize that the greatest weapon must be communication. And so the school is affected in two ways by this current political climate.

One is in the budgets and funding being cut. And two is in the students who now come to the classroom and see themselves as consumers and make the demands that are typical of consumers, and education becomes compromised in the process (Professor, Humanities).

The greatest majority of students/consumers come to MSU not for a liberal education, but rather for a piece of paper that works as the passport to obtaining a job. These student/consumers demand not a critical political consciousness, but a narrow education that will allow them to be qualified enough for a job, a career, or a trade. As a result, few come to MSU to study music, English, or philosophy. Indeed, most MSU students who are even mildly interested in a liberal arts curriculum choose to become communications majors, an education that more clearly gives them marketable skills (broadcasting, advertising, marketing, journalism, etc.).³⁷ Choked on one side by the lack of extramural funding, and on the other by small student populations, departments like English and music are forced to hire armies of PhDs overqualified to be instructors, whereas the department of philosophy can only afford to employ half a dozen professors in total. On this subject, a professor in the Humanities opined:

It's a national trend. It's much cheaper to hire folks that you don't have to tenure. They're underpaid and on-call. I think it is patently wrong. But it is the system. It is typical of this phase of capitalism in which we see more and more temp hiring and off-shoring. And we can't ship our 101 classes out... It is plainly disrespectful when you put it in these terms: any student who comes through our school must take English but *anybody* can teach it. The system does not recognize that it requires professionals. And yet from our side, we do hire professionals because they are available, it is a weak market, and so it is the worst case of

³⁷ The communication major at MSU enrolls more students than any other major.

exploitation: people who are desperate for jobs and we give them bad ones (Professor, Humanities).

While the English department has the opportunity to teach required courses for all majors like 101, philosophy has to recruit students in the most ingenious ways. For example, the one and only department secretary in that department has made it her own call to recruit students across campus, much like a talent scout (who is not terribly interested in talent, however). And in the meantime professors have begun to offer “pop” courses like philosophy of sex, philosophy of film, and philosophy of sports.

Our secretary here is incredible. Some student from some other department will come up to her desk to inquire about one of our newer classes or simply just to ask any type of question and she'll start telling them how much fun philosophy is. She gets students across campus, it's incredible. I don't know how she does it. She'll be talking to someone at a party and before you know it she's recruiting them for our department and making phone calls, I've never seen anything like that. She already got us about sixty or so new students that way in just a few years! (Assistant Professor, Humanities).

While feelings of resentment and marginalization grow and spread in the Humanities, Natural Science professors at MSU seem to think that they may be the more disadvantaged. As this associate professor in the natural sciences explained to me, it may be unfair to accuse the Natural Sciences of being a privileged academic aristocracy:

We're subsidizing the other units. The overall budget for the university has expanded seventeen percent but the college of science has expanded eleven percent. Not only are some of the overheads used to subsidize them, but our resources are also decreasing (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

While this is true, there is still a general feeling of marginalization at MSU that pervades all those departments that struggle to survive while they "play the academic game" on a daily basis. "The game" then, is more than just inconsequential play. MSU's political "game" of "get grants or perish" at MSU is more precisely the specific shape that institutional practices and conventions within this institution have taken. I have shown examples of such practices and conventions in the realms of tenure, teaching, and inter-departmental relations. Let us now observe how institutional forces shape the nature of research and the work of researchers within departments.

Intradepartmental Distribution of Resources

Academic departments have great internal diversity. Consider anthropology, for example. In contrast to many European nations, in North America many departments of anthropology house both archaeology and cultural anthropology programs despite the fact that there are very few similarities between, say, a post-colonial ethno-linguist and an evolutionary paleontologist. An ethno-linguist and an evolutionary paleontologist have different interests, speak different specialized languages, publish in different journals, use different research methods, share different ideologies, and have different resources. Consequently, their cohabitation can be difficult at times.

Anthropology is not the only chimera-like department at MSU. The department of political science houses both political scientists and criminologists, for example, and much like archaeologists criminologists have an important advantage in the "get grants or perish game:" the availability of much more extramural funding. Whenever departments need to group sub-disciplines that are

remarkably different in their economic profitability, inequalities are likely to arise. For example in biology zoologists have more students than botanists, while conservationists have fewer resources than crop scientists; in political science criminologists have more money and students than their next door colleagues interested in comparative politics; and in anthropology cultural anthropologists have fewer students and fewer resources than archaeologists. These inequalities have great consequences for collegiality and for the distribution of power and prestige within a department, as we will see in the next chapters.

A similar situation with all the typical consequences for the social organization of work exists in chemistry, as I learned from the department chair. I report a rather long excerpt of our conversation as it clearly sheds light on the ruling relations of academic work at MSU, and summarizes neatly all that I said so far about the structure of inequalities across and within departments, and amongst professors:

(PV): But what about those sub-areas within one discipline where publication isn't as easy because getting grants isn't as easy?

(Professor and Chair, Physics): You'll lose out. It's the nature of academia, and it's the nature of life. You have to find an ecological niche in which to survive. You have to find an area with funds, with interesting problems, with problems that people are interested in, in order to keep your area going. It's social Darwinism.

(PV): But in the sciences the practices of social Darwinism seems to result in the marginalization of those progressive scientific interventions that are bound to constitute scientific resolutions in the future.

(Professor and Chair, Physics): Yes. Look, it's based on value judgments. Everyone is a salesperson. You have to convince people that your job is important. You have to sell your

teaching if you're a teacher; you have to sell your research if you're researcher. And if you sell a new program you have to propose it to a provost, or a dean, and you have to sell it to faculty if you want people to buy in. It's something that everybody has to do. There's nothing dirty about it. Going after money is not a bad thing, because it gives you freedom to do things. And if you're really sharp and looking to the future you'll shape the field. If you don't, you become extinct.

(PV): So, at least we can say that academic freedom is restricted by...

(Professor and Chair, Physics): Well you're restricted only until you have tenure. Once you get tenure you can do everything you want...

(PV): Well, if you have the money.

(Professor and Chair, Physics): Well, yeah. In the sciences you have to have the money. But if you're in the Humanities it doesn't take much money. If you're willing to live at a modest level you can study a really obscure English poet and you'll survive. You'd survive in the sciences too but you'll end up with a lot of teaching!

(PV): So teaching is a punishment around here?

(Professor and Chair, Physics): Well, it is if you like to do research and don't like to teach.

(PV): So teaching and research are separated after all?

(Professor and Chair, Physics): Yes, definitely.

As it turns out the situation is slightly more complicated than this. Teaching and research are not so clearly separate in all departments. Some of the professors to whom I spoke, especially in the Humanities, make it an explicit goal of integrating research and teaching. As for teaching as punishment there are cases when punishment through increased teaching truly takes place. I found the best example of this in the case of research-active associate professors who were never

promoted to full professorship because they were conducting research in a marginal area of study. These are professors who are truly passionate about their research who are asked to teach three or more courses per semester (often large, undergraduate courses at that) by their department. Carl, of whom I spoke earlier, is the epitome of this case, at least before he moved to his administrative position.

Carl's case, like others in his situation, is interesting for a variety of reasons that go beyond the structure of the "political game." Carl's experience is also particularly illuminating because it highlights the importance of agency and authenticity, and the role that professors play in shaping a structure that is all but fixed and determined. "The game," after all, demands that its players act toward each other and ultimately toward the rules of "the game" in an agentic manner. Arguably then the political "game" that Carl described is an instance of the negotiated order, and Carl's authenticity is what drives his playing:

I got tired of doing research out of a suitcase. Doing research at my level required me to go to a national lab. So, I needed to go on sabbatical, or in the summer I would go for two months, three months, to do research at a national lab. During that time I'd have to leave my family, and so I would go down there and live in poverty for three months. As I got older I got tired of that. In 1990 I became aware of this position at the nuclear reactor and at the time they were considering closing down the reactor, and because I'm a nuclear physicist I had an interest in what was going to happen to this reactor. So I told the administration that I would not be interested in babysitting the reactor unless I had an opportunity to take it over and do something with it. I came out here and tried to turn this program around, because they were really thinking of closing this place down. As a matter of fact a few years ago they had a cease-and-desist order, which we fought. We convinced

them that this would not be a good choice. I think they had in mind that if they could turn this place down they could save some money, but I convinced them that if they tried to shut it down the reactor would become a nuclear waste storage facility, which would require the same amount of staffing, but there would be no benefits from having the reactor up. So we managed to say that the reactor would allow a research program that would last quite some time. [...] There is the maverick element. I'm happy to work and promote good people and good ideas, and the maverick element in me comes at the point when an individual becomes too selfish and I will step in and allow them not to do that, as long as I possibly can. So when you have a group of faculty who say this is the tradition of the discipline and this faculty member has to meet this disciplinary construct, I will be the first one who says: "Oh no, they don't!" So there has always been an element of moral ground in what I have done (Carl, Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

Let us recap briefly what is going on here: Carl worked in a sub-disciplinary area where funding was not easily available given the limited infrastructural resources available at MSU. As a result he was not promoted to full professor and as a form of "punishment" he was first asked to teach large classes that he hated teaching. Tired of doing so, and tired of periodically having to leave his family to do research elsewhere he found new meaning for his work in a different program at MSU, where he has been fighting the hypocrisy of the "get grants or perish game". What we can derive from all this is that despite the shape that ruling relations take at MSU there is still space within this institution for individual agency and authenticity.

The Negotiated Order at MSU

So far in this chapter I have made one basic argument: professors' work at MSU is shaped by the conventions and practices of a political "game" that puts a premium on funded research.

Professors who engage in funded research are the game winners: not only are they more likely to be tenured, promoted, and paid more, but they are also more likely to have more freedom in how they choose to organize their work. The losers in this game are those who, for one reason or another, do not “play the game” well. The losers fail to realize that MSU’s true priorities – despite its slogan – are not invested in teaching undergraduates or in engaging in research (or performance) that is unfunded, and as a result these professors risk being denied tenure and promotions, and are paid less, while their departments constantly lose resources. If this were all there is to describe the social organization of work at MSU, my analysis would be fairly simple: I would locate professors somewhere along the axes of “the game” and connect their experience of (in)authenticity to their position. Things, however, are not so simple. The social organization of work at MSU does not have a fixed structure. The rules of ‘the game,’ or better yet its conventions and practices, are in actuality quite flexible and it is up to the players to negotiate with one another about the rules of the game. As a departmental chair put it:

In academia you cannot force people to do anything. So you always have to negotiate
(Professor, Chair, Humanities).

The negotiated order concept is of great usefulness for the study of an academic institution. At MSU hardly anything is structured in a stable, fixed, and homogenous manner. Every department chair I interviewed, for instance, explained to me that the nature of the “game” is such that it is best played when its conventions are played “around,” rather than “within.” Chairs and all professors in general know that it takes negotiation to obtain anything. Carl, for example, admitted that it would have taken him some “self-promotion” around the department to be promoted, and by

that he meant not only publicity but some basic diplomacy. Other examples of negotiation abound, and the work of a chair is the epitome of what it means to negotiate for everything:

I rule by consensus. You have to. In the sciences for example one major issue is space, lab space. So you spend a lot of time negotiating with people about what their needs are and you have to provide matching money for grants, and finding money for people to travel (Professor, Chair, Natural Sciences).

As a chair you are in a position of having to persuade people. I mean, faculty are not the kind of people you can boss around. What you need to do is to persuade them to do things rather than to tell them to do things (Professor, Chair, Humanities).

As an individual administrator your only power is through consultation and consensus building. If you try to run things by fiat, if it's your style sometimes you can get away with it, but it's not my style. So my power comes from working with people and convincing them of the values of my ideas and of the relation of those ideas to their own ideas (Professor, Program Director, Humanities).

Chairs are obviously not the only ones who play with the flexibility of the academic game.

Professors negotiate compromises and exceptions in different areas of their work. For example, I spoke to an associate professor who had “negotiated two years off the tenure-stream because of a high number of publications,” and learned from a young assistant professor in the Natural Sciences that even federal agencies like the National Science Foundation (NSF) expect professors to play around their rules:

I definitely think that the Clinton administration has been more supportive of conservation than the Bush administration has. But it's still possible to get government money and do conservation-driven research even if the grant isn't labeled conservation. In conservation-driven research we're told all the time to make the titles of our proposed research less "conservationist" so as to minimize the chance that some conservative group will raise a scandal (Assistant Professor, Natural Sciences).

Possibly the area in which negotiation is most common is when it comes to salary. Despite the impression held by the public that salaries of professors, as public employees, are rather inflexible, professors skilled at playing the "game" know very well the meaning of a "bargaining chip." I learned that there are mostly two types of bargaining chips at MSU, internal and external. An internal bargaining chip is used when a faculty member asks for a pay raise or a promotion or another concession such as buying out of a class, while putting on a table a service that the department needs done. For example an associate professor may agree to become a department chair on the proviso that full professorship be granted earlier. An external bargaining chip is used when a faculty member asks for a pay raise, a promotion, or another concession when he/she has received a job offer from another department. Contrary to what one might believe even instructors can and have used such bargaining chips at MSU, in more than one department. The price of a bargaining chip can be very high, and it can give rise to a vast number of negotiations, from academic unit to academic unit:

(PV): How much leeway do you have in dealing with these cases?

(Professor, Chair, Natural Sciences): It depends on who the provost is. When Jane Doe was the provost – she was in the Humanities – she almost killed the sciences. Now that John Doe is the provost, and he’s a scientist, he understands what our needs are. He’s been enormously helpful in helping us recruit and keep people, unlike Jane Doe who would do nothing to keep people. Say, somebody is getting ready to leave because they got an offer somewhere else, John Doe will cancel appointments, come here, and go to their office and talk to them. [...] The thing is that we can’t always compete. What the legislature doesn’t realize is that every faculty member is a free agent. Just like in sports, you know. Every professor is a free agent, at all times. You try to do whatever you can, that’s why I spend all my time here trying to keep them. But I can’t always keep them. Like with Fred (fictitious name). He was making close to \$100,000 and they offered him \$180,000, plus \$ 4 million to start up his lab. I can’t do anything about that.

(PV): That is a lot of money for a professor...

(Professor, Chair, Natural Sciences): It is, and I tell them: “never complain when people make more money than you do if you’re as good as they are.” Remember, if you go into academia: never prevent someone from making more money! If you prevent it they won’t get it. And you won’t get it. It’ll go to somebody else. You’re better off if you let them get that salary raise. And then the next year you go and tell your chair you want a raise too. If you deserve more you’ll get a raise too.

Negotiation is the norm at MSU. This department chair’s advice for me and my future career exemplifies what I explained earlier: to play strictly by the rules of the “game,” as if they were actual fixed norms rather than flexible practices (i.e. complaining about a colleague’s excessive salary raise) is not a good idea because it creates a fixed structure that is atypical of the game; it is better to let

others negotiate and stretch the boundaries of the game further so that others in the future can stretch them to their own advantage.

The power to negotiate is not unlimited, but everyone at MSU and more generally in academia has some. Undergraduate students may negotiate for a B instead of a B-, graduate students may negotiate with their advisors over the specifics of their dissertations, and instructors may negotiate the amount of freedom they have to develop new courses, and so on up to the higher echelons of the university. Of course, there are limitations to how much one can negotiate within any given realm, but these limitations rather than disprove the negotiated order thesis seem to confirm its validity:

The power is limited. I couldn't for instance, reshape the department because there is faculty governance. I have the same power as any other faculty member, in the sense that I have the power to make my case and argue it, but the power to change is not there. Only the power to instigate a process whereby change might happen is there. I do have the power of a limited budget, however (Professor, Chair, Humanities).

How much power do MSU professors have in how they choose to play the political "game" of academia? And what kinds of power do they have? I begin to examine these issues in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

THE EXPERIENCE OF (IN)AUTHENTICITY

I begin the chapter by describing a number of stories of how some MSU professors chose to work in academia. These stories are particularly interesting because they are full of personal values, goals, and ideals – all components of self-meanings. Subsequently, I reflect on how truly significant such self-meanings are for professors. Instead of assuming that authenticity was important, I asked MSU professors if their own self-meanings mattered to them in how they experienced their life at work, and in the section titled “The Importance of Authenticity” I reflect on these matters. In order to arrive at a thick description of what it means to feel authentic and inauthentic, in the section titled “The Emotional Content of (In)Authenticity” I report and reflect on a few examples of self-feelings. Throughout this chapter I analyze authenticity from a temporal perspective, by examining change in professors’ self-meanings and self-feelings throughout their career.

The Stories Professors Live by

As I began each interview I asked faculty to tell me the story of how they became interested in their field of study and how they became professors. Their reactions to this question were always amusing for me to witness; many were surprised that anyone would care enough to ask, whereas others seemed ready to launch into well-rehearsed stories. As each told their story I was able to learn how their work had become meaningful in their life and how their own professional identity had assumed significance and how it had changed throughout time. Stories could best fit in one of three groups: career as a calling, career as an accident, and the career by default. I use these three categories not as analytical tools, but simply in order to organize my presentation.

Career as a Calling

Professors who made the conscious and firm decision to study and teach their field of interest and to become academics early on in their life told stories marked by such qualifiers as

“fateful,” “destined,” and “determined.” In other words, these professors knew it was their “mission” to become men and women of arts, letters, or science. For example, as a professor in philosophy told me: “I didn’t choose it, it chose me.” Generally, professors who believe that research or teaching were their vocation had this vision often as early as their childhood years:

Physics was always something I enjoyed ever since I was a little kid, even though I didn’t know it was physics and I realized it when I took my first class (Professor, Natural Sciences).

I’ve always been very interested in science and astronomy. I was four years old when I decided I was going to be an astronomer (laughs), seriously. I’ve always liked it (Instructor, Natural Sciences).

When I was in third grade we would do vocational tests to see what we were interested in, and my result would always be school. That’s because I had such a variety of interests. Ever since then I knew I would be a teacher (Instructor, Natural Sciences).

Several would-be professors grew up in families of academics where they were weaned on science, politics, arts, or literature. As young children they became interested in what they saw their parents do and some of them like this political scientist (see excerpt below), later on in life even coauthored work with their parents:

My dad and my mom were both professors, my father was a political scientist like me. I grew up during the Vietnam War, and my family was very active in opposition to the war. Normally families would load up their kids on a car and go for a picnic and instead we got

loaded on a car and went to a demonstration. It was the normal thing for me to become a political scientist (Professor, Social Sciences).

Other would-be professors became fascinated in their field just as early in their childhood, but only later became certain that they would spend the rest of their lives following their vocation. Rather than a default turn-back to their original interests these stories marked the natural evolution of a fateful passion:

I always was involved in music growing up. My parents thought it was a really good thing for me to be well rounded, and so I started piano lessons at five. I was always involved in chorus and bands. But in my undergraduate years I didn't plan on going into music. I was a chemistry major and I was planning on going to pre-med, and medicine. My last year I went to an interview to get into graduate school in pre-med and they asked why I was so involved in music. And they started asking me questions that made me wonder why I was so interested in music after all these years and maybe that is what I wanted to do. I got accepted to medical school, and I almost went, but had one of those epiphanies. I met somebody who was in medical school and had decided to quit and go into piano performance. We started talking about music and med school, and that moment seemed to me perfect for me to make that decision too (Associate Professor, Humanities).

Career as a Default

Epiphanies are common for many professors, whether the trajectory toward academia is accidental, "fateful," or whether their decision was in part a default. Epiphanies, as fundamental turning points in a person's life, are illuminating moments in a person's life, and by bringing to light

the nature of the authentic self they cast all existential doubts away (Denzin 1989). Professors for whom epiphanies were most revealing chose academia as a default, after suddenly realizing that no other options were feasible for their true self, as these examples show:

Between my junior and senior year in college I worked for a chemical company and I found out I didn't like industrial research the way it was structured, because it's bottom line driven. If you get on a problem and you find that you're not making much progress and the costs go up, it is no longer economically feasible and they drop it almost immediately. So it's really frustrating because you can't complete what you started [...] I didn't want to spend my life improving a corporate coffin. I didn't want to have to do what someone else told me that I had to do. For example, I visited Proctor and Gamble, and throughout the visit I was taken to a secluded lab area where I would do some of my work. This area was protected and gated and you needed a pass to get in. So I asked "how do you do work here at night?" And I was told I couldn't; no one could come in after six. You know, I do my best work at midnight, or on Saturday mornings; why would they not take advantage of that? I was told it just was not the way things worked. I decided that I did not want economics to structure my life like that; I did not want economics to structure when I can have ideas. Here I can come in at any time I have an idea that I want to work on. And besides, here there is an element of intellectual freedom. You have the freedom to choose a problem and the freedom to find the way to solve that problem (Professor, Natural Sciences).

This chemistry professor's story has much in common with other professors' work experiences in the corporate world. Judging from the stories faculty told me, the fundamental difference between a business job and the academic profession lies in the amount of freedom that the two options

provide. Professors, no matter how they came to the profession, have a deep passion and interest in the knowledge they consume and produce, as the following excerpt shows:

I was an attorney; I practiced law for three years. I hated practicing law. I always had an academic interest in law. I recall a couple of instances when I was doing research in the library for my firm. I'd be alone in the library and I'd get caught in the research and all carried away. So I'd go on and read about issues that interested me but had nothing to do with my client. Of course you spend most of your life dealing with other attorneys, and as an attorney you're a hired gun doing other people's work. So, I had an interest in law but I didn't want to do other people's work, I wanted to pursue my own interests. Academia had always been in the back of my mind. I had always had the idea of influencing public debates and being a public intellectual, and I always liked teaching. So eventually it all happened (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

A profession of a radically different nature is available to those professors who have a background in the fine arts and performing arts. Almost all the professors that I interviewed in the School of Music and Theater Arts at MSU had considerable experience with the world of the classical music industry, and for all of them the choice to become professors was motivated by their dual interest in both their own performance and the education of others. But whereas a chemist or a lawyer may take a significant financial hit in leaving a private enterprise for a public university, an artist is more likely to find academia as providing a stable source of income. All these motivations were present in the story of Frank, an assistant professor in music whose experiences will be at the center of our attention throughout the next chapter. Frank was a professional singer and a high

school teacher throughout his adult life, but at some point in his forties he decided he had to make an important decision and was then drawn to academia:

I went to graduate school to get a doctorate for the express purpose of teaching in college. I went back to graduate school when I was forty-seven. With regard to other things that I wanted to do, I had already done them to my satisfaction. I taught high school for five years and I was very successful. The idea of singing for a living kept floating around in my head. But I left high school partly due to burnout, and partly because I wanted to explore singing for a living. That led to a period of finding out how difficult that was. I did however do that for a few years, and got a still clearer idea of how difficult the profession was. While that was going on I missed the education-part of me. So eventually I went back to school and got a master's when I was in my mid thirties. But then I found out that a master's degree is not going to get you anywhere. So I looked for another high school job, and taught in different high schools for six years and once again very successfully. And by that I mean that I took a program and made it one of the best if not the best in the state. Then our daughter was all grown up, ready to go on with her own life, and our financial condition was such that I could have pursued my singing career if I had wanted to. And by that time I was burned out on teaching. So I gave myself five more years, as a second try with professional singing. By the time the fourth year rolled around I had figured out that this was not what I wanted to do with my life. So at that point I thought that it would be better to work at the college level than at the high school level. I was tired, I guess, of living a very isolated and very alienating life that the singing career demands and I missed educating students, and conducting, and interacting with people. What drew me to college teaching was the thought

that I could teach, but also that I could perform. And I was right, this job fits me, it's a great match (Assistant Professor, Humanities).

So far in this chapter I have associated professors' work exclusively with teaching or research, and neglected to discuss how professors who deal mostly with administrative duties came to make their choice. With no exception, all MSU professors who define themselves first and foremost as administrators chose to dedicate themselves to institutional governance only as a default, particularly after various disappointments with teaching or research, as the following excerpt documents:

Musicians spend a great deal of time alone, practicing in a room, and then we do some of the most public things you can do, like performing in front of an audience. And you bring to that experience not only the skill of playing an instrument or singing but all of the communicative skills that relate to emotions and emotionality, and excitement and disappointment. So generally I'd say about myself that the early stages of my training were not conducive to the physical apparatus of playing. I did not have a fine instrument and my teachers were not particularly effective at taking whatever talents I had and bringing them to the highest level. And I was not individually talented enough to overcome any of those shortcomings. So while I had done performances even at high levels, there were always frustrations at that level. I was never happy with myself although I practiced so much. Somehow I never overcame my limitations. And so as I moved to higher levels of intensity performance what became clear to me was that my interest in academic administration were going to move me further along in satisfaction than was continuing to beat my head against the wall as a performer. As an administrator I began to have considerable success. At my

former school we started with 250 music majors and when I left there were 450. And here I pretty much was the central person instrumental in getting the new building and in bringing enrollment up by one-hundred percent and lots of those kinds went on where there were satisfactions about administration that I had never really experienced as a performer. What that did for me was significantly reduce the amount of time that I was teaching individual students but you see, I was helping all of them, and it also reduced the amount of time that I was practicing... It was hard to do in a way, but once I did I was really glad (Daniel, Professor, Program Director, Humanities).

For this professor – much like for others who define their work identity primarily in relation to their governance function – administration may have been a default solution, but nevertheless a motivated one and also a deeply significant decision for the definition of one’s self-meanings. There is a sharp difference between administrators who have enthusiastically embraced this new self-definition, and administrators who chair programs or departments simply “because somebody has to.” As we will see in the next chapter when we look at professors’ disposition toward service and governance, professors who define their work identity in relation to administration are likely to experience authenticity when performing service and governance duties, as opposed to their research and teaching oriented counterparts.

Career as an Accident

As said, professors may choose academia as a natural vocation, by default, or by accident. Those who choose it by accident found themselves on the spot and “fell into it” or got “suckered in.” The professors I interviewed at MSU who chose academia by accident were usually engaged in something else when an opportunity came along and they took it. This professor in Political Science had different plans altogether, but once she was faced with the culture and the freedom of the

academic world she decided that it would be best for her, since she was interested in traveling and sports, rather than becoming married, having children, and working a regular nine-to-five job:

I kind of fell into it. My parents really encouraged me to go to grad school but I just wanted to be a ski bum. I really was a ski bum for quite some time, actually. So, I thought I was going to do just my Master's, I mean, I was completely clueless, and when I arrived in my department everybody assumed I was going to do my PhD. I really had no idea at the time what a PhD was, but I was told that as a PhD student I'd have a semester paid for in Paris and I thought, hey I'll do a PhD! (Professor, Social Sciences).

The following excerpt tells the story of an assistant professor in Anthropology, Martha, whose experiences will occupy our attention in the next chapter as well. Despite being raised by a family of academics Martha initially had little interest in school, but later she was "suckered in:"

I was a philosophy major as an undergrad. I did awful. I was a horrible student, I almost flunked out. I didn't have the grades to get into grad school, so I went into the domestic peace core and they sent me to the Texas-Mexico border, where I met my husband. And I worked there doing economic development with impoverished people and it occurred to me that nobody really knew how to do anything. The program was very poorly planned and I thought that the only way you could know what work was to be done was to understand the culture, and that was anthropology. I wanted to do applied anthropology but I got suckered into the academic life because my father was a professor, and my mother was a professor, my husband was a professor. What I specifically want to do is make students aware of cultures that are different from theirs, and to make their approach to people that are not

exactly like them more humane. That's my primary goal in doing what I do (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

Self-Meanings

During most of my interviews it would be common for a professor to tell me about their values, goals, and ideals at the same time they told me the story of how they chose to work in academia. Whenever they did not do so, I asked questions such as: "Did you have any particular values, goals, or ideals that led you to choose this profession?" and "Do you now have any particular values, goals, or ideals in relation to your work?" Among my findings is the issue of freedom. Freedom is a *condition of work*, as we have seen in chapter eight, but it is also a *feeling or passion* that may or may not be directly related to the conditions of one's work. The following excerpt shows that for most professors freedom is a meaningful passion:

My goal in life – and this sounds pretty selfish – is to minimize the things that come along, that get me off track and the invasions of space that I want to be in. You know, within the realization of the reality that really life has all these things (Professor, Social Sciences).

Whenever work condition allow faculty to pursue their passion for freedom, a professor will be likely to feel quite satisfied, as the following excerpt shows:

What has really brought me to the academic career is the autonomy and independence that it gives you. I hated being told when to be in office, when to be in places. I'm just not that type of person; I don't think most academics are. Yeah, autonomy and flexibility are very important: I get to choose what I want to study, I get to choose when I want to do it, for the

most part, and I like the idea of tenure. You have a lot of things within your control
(Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

Many of the professors I interviewed enjoy similar feelings, the freedom “to be left alone.” Being free *from* close supervision and control allows professors to dedicate fully to the pursuit of their interests and to feel authentic. Professors are not simply interested in learning or in diffusing knowledge; many professors are deeply passionate about their work. Passion shapes their work as much as it shapes their identity. Passion drives professors to work sixty or seventy hours a week for a relatively modest salary. Passion drives professors to read thousands of books and articles throughout their lives about very narrow topics. Passion drives professors to fight with colleagues over the definition of a department curriculum at faculty meetings. Passion in short, whatever its object, shapes professors’ self-meanings. For this reason professors may feel the need to be free *to* follow their goals, ideals, and values, as we can tell from these brief excerpts:

I am driven by an insatiable truth for knowledge and finding out what the world is all about. We all pretend that we know what it’s all about, but we don’t have a clue (Professor, Humanities).

Some of it [my passion] is just the compulsion to read one more thing. At first it was the compulsion of traveling, you know, to travel with your mind to one more place and one more time through reading (Professor, Humanities).

I never wanted a position in the industry because I didn’t want *just a job*. That has no appeal to me (Assistant Professor, Natural Sciences).

Why this job? My two loves in life are books and music (Associate Professor, Humanities).

I have a cool job. I have a job that allows me to ask cool questions and look for answers.

It's the best part of the job. ...The discovery process is just cool; it's the primary component of my motivation (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

There are very few fields in which you have the autonomy to do what you want to do, and no one says "no, you can't do that." You really do get to follow your passions in terms what you are interested in. But what I value about the work is the teaching and the research in that you get to use social science to help others and to be an advocate for things that you believe in. In how many occupations do you get to do that? (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

The last interview excerpt raises an important issue. Professors, at least most of the professors and instructors I interviewed at MSU, are not selfish loners maniacally devoted to the pursuit of knowledge. While there are a few who admit their reason for working in academia is rather selfish, most professors feel they have a calling to serve the public and help others by spreading the knowledge they have acquired and produced, and by applying such knowledge to the solution of important problems. As an instructor put it to me "in addition to being interested in something I want to do something that is of some general worth." Faculty members believe they can be socially responsible and true to themselves mostly through their teaching and research:

What drives me? This job is not financially lucrative. I like what I do, what is interesting to me, and I feel that by teaching I'm doing back to society by teaching and educating (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

My goal is to get people to like chemical science (Instructor, Natural Sciences).

I knew that I had the talent for teaching, and I wanted to do a better job for students than I had seen professors do with me when I was a student. I thought I had a talent, I thought I'd enjoy, and I thought I could give my students something (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

I think my role is to fulfill for others the same kind of passion for curiosity that I have. So my goal is to be an educator, to educate young adults (Instructor, Natural Sciences).

In addition to teaching students in the classroom and publishing research for peers, faculty members feel they have a stake in being public intellectuals, and many, especially in the social sciences feel that through their teaching and through the knowledge they produce as researchers they can actively shape people's socio-political consciousness and bring about emancipatory change. While none of the professors I interviewed were politically active through state or federal parties, some professors explicitly define themselves in relation to their personal political ideology and in relation to the political consequences of their action:

I used to work in the corporate world, at double the salary, but that world was just ugly. In public education is where I wanted to be, in various kinds of teaching positions, from k-12

to the university, I wanted to be responsible. I tend to be far more left than even some of my colleagues, I believe that the state has the responsibility to fund education for everyone and I believe that my central responsibility, through critical pedagogy, is to lead my students to question social inequalities (Instructor, Social Sciences/Humanities).

I'm interested in big social problems.... My values are pretty consistent today with what they were before, and that is, to understand social problems and the causes of these social problems. My research balances an experimental approach with applied approaches. And I feel that in a lot of ways this job allows me the opportunity to do that. I think there are a lot of structural limitations and pressures, but I also think that ultimately you're doing what you're doing because you originally thought that it was a good idea and that eventually this knowledge that we build can be used to solve social problems (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

One is inclined to wonder whether professors have an emotional affiliation with the school for which they are employed. Many students and alumni, after all, often don school colors every day of the week and even spend considerable amounts of money to support the school sports teams on weekends, but do professors define themselves in terms of their school's collective identity? Only two professors admitted they take pride in being "scorpions" (fictitious school mascot). Both were born in the geographical area around the school, and one even had MSU as his alma mater:

I publish so much also because I do have a huge emotional investment in this institution. I have an emotional investment in how this institution is perceived in the community. Part of

what drives me, production wise, is that I want to make this place look good (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

Temporal Variability of Self-Meanings

How do self-meanings change across time for professors? In other words, do the reasons that draw people into academia cease to make sense as time goes by, or do they change in any way? In order to find out, I asked my informants questions such as: “Have your values, goals, or ideals changed from the time you chose to become a professor to now?” and “Has the meaning that you personally give to your work changed over the years?” as well as “Do you foresee making any future changes in relation to how you perform your work?” It was quite uncommon to find cases of drastic change in self-meanings in my interviews. There are some examples, however, and they are particularly interesting in relation to the experience of inauthenticity, which I describe later in the chapter. All these examples go to show that as self-meanings change and conduct remains the same, self-feelings of inauthenticity become more and more probable. For example, when I interviewed Jane, a young instructor with a part-time appointment in the humanities and a part time appointment in the social sciences, she told me that she had just realized that the academic world had come to resemble more and more the corporate world that she had left in disgust. In the recent past Jane had turned to radical progressive politics for the definition of her self, and as her identity changed so did her views of the meanings of academic research and teaching. Jane explained to me that she was getting ready to leave academia, as she had never felt as untrue to herself as she was feeling now. Carl, whose story was told in the previous chapter, was also at a turning point in his life, approaching retirement out of mixture of fatigue, under-appreciation, and annoyance:

I feel in some cases like I have too much... I mean, all my life I have handled things through sheer, brute force work. I've worked like crazy, long hours, worked at it till I get it done. Now I'm getting tired. But it's been fun. I could have retired last year if I wanted to. It's been fun, but now, I'm getting annoyed. When the pressure of the university is to shut you down, you feel very underappreciated. There is no greater proof of under-appreciation than "We're trying to shut you down!" (laughs). I could get my own satisfaction from my work, but if the people that you're working for want to get rid of you, you have to ignore it or to make it motivate you (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

With all the formal steps that the academic career has, it would not be surprising if tenure or promotion constituted important turning points for drastic self-change. In fact, for some tenure represents a turning point, as we will see in more depth in the next chapter, but for most it is relatively inconsequential. For example, as this professor in the Social Sciences told me:

I've changed in the sense that I've started to write more books. In the past I'd write more articles than books, because, you know, that was the requirement (Professor, Social Sciences).

But for this professor this small change in work-conduct was only mildly significant, after all as she put it: "I've never done something I didn't want to do." For a variety of reasons, for most professors tenure is seldom a watershed event for the definition of self-meanings, as we can learn from these brief excerpts:

If I wanted to coast, I could. But why? I like what I do (Professor, Social Sciences).

Getting tenure was a good relief from pressure, but then that's when a lot of the budget crises began so there wasn't a whole lot of change. Very little changed (Professor, Natural Sciences).

For this professor (see excerpt below) in the Natural Sciences a much more significant turning point was looming on the horizon when I spoke to him: retirement, and he did not sound very optimistic:

Nothing has changed. I'm still as passionate as ever. If it wasn't for my wife I wouldn't retire. I've been at it for forty-two or forty-three years and she's a little...huh, she likes to travel and take off and I tell her I can't, I have a meeting... (Professor, Natural Sciences)

In sum, by looking at professors' self-meanings we can understand both their true self as well as much of the culture of academic work. But in order to understand the experience of (in)authenticity we must move a few steps further and examine whether and how self-meanings actually matter. I do so in the following section.

The Importance of (In)Authenticity

Because authenticity is not a common expression, and because there is little empirical research that shows how meaningful it truly is, each interview had to be carefully structured so that I could understand what (in)authenticity was for each of my informants and how much it mattered to them. The only way I could do this was by asking professors such questions as "Is it important to you to be true to yourself in the context of your work?" or "Does your sense of authenticity matter to you?" I generally asked these questions after asking professors to tell me what being true to themselves meant to them, a question and topic that I discuss later. From their answers I learned

two things: that authenticity mattered, and that its meanings were incredibly varied. In this section I address the first of these concerns.

The clearest example that authenticity mattered came to me from a professor and chair in the Humanities. After listening to what he meant by authenticity and by his true self I simply asked him: “Well, does this really matter to you, though?” He replied: “I can’t operate any other way!” I report an excerpt from this interview below:

I can’t operate any other way! During the tenure stream, when I was worried about that, a while back, it seemed to me that I had two directions in which to go. One would assure tenure by writing about things that I really didn’t care about but I knew was the concern of the profession and the other was to write about what I did care about and in the way I cared about writing it. So I took the risk and wrote very unconventional things. As it turned out it catapulted my career, but at the time I didn’t know that was the way that it was going to turn out. What I thought was going to happen was that I was putting my neck on the notch. But it didn’t feel good otherwise. And even prior to that I had made the choice to work in academia instead of working for a profitable computer company and put myself and my family through years of uncertainty and poverty (Professor, Humanities).

This was not the only straightforward answer to my question. While many professors explained to me that negotiation and compromise is acceptable to them and even necessary in order to coexist alongside other people, all agreed that respect for one’s self-meanings is necessary to them in how they conduct their work and in how they live their lives, and in how they negotiate between their own self-meanings and the values around them. Authenticity matters, as we can see from these examples:

In a job, or in life in general, having a central conceptual core of who you are and where you are... and screw everybody else (laughs) is necessary. A typical example is when you get teaching evaluations back, because you are never going to please more than thirty percent of the students, you know. For thirty percent it's going to be too difficult, for thirty percent it's going to be too easy, so you're lucky if you're going to please the other thirty percent, so it's essential to have a central core of who you are and where you are (Assistant Professor, Natural Sciences).

Screw marketability, I'm just going to do what I love (Associate Professor, Humanities).

There was no discussion whether there was an opportunity for promotion. I wasn't interested. I did what I wanted. I liked that freedom. In the scheme of things there was no room for a maverick and a strange person like me [...] I basically did what I chose to do, and it was very risky. I was doing stuff that required a lot of different skills, I mean I had to learn how to do welding, you know. My dissertation was impossible (laughs), but that was me, I wanted to do something that was difficult, that was challenging, and that broke new ground, and do something that wasn't just routine (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

I have never had to compromise. I won't do it, I just won't do it. It's in my nature, it's who I am. I always try to be transparent and authentic (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

I never played the game. I refused to..., I just didn't do it. I never once proposed what I didn't feel like doing (Professor, Natural Sciences).

The question that I must raise at this point is the following: how is it possible to be truly authentic to one's self given the demands of the academic structure of expectations at MSU? While this is a difficult analytical issue that will require our full attention in the next chapter, it is worthwhile to introduce it now as we discuss how much authenticity truly matters. The brief answer to this question is that one can feel authentic by either resisting the conventions and practices of their institution or by embracing them. An example of a professor who resists institutional forces, would be Carl, who acts "against" the "game of academia." In a different department in the natural sciences I found an example of a professor who embraces the structure and culture of his work organization by doing what he believes the institution asks him to do, and by feeling true to himself in the process. There is also a third possibility of authenticity – much more common than the previous two – which occurs whenever a professor finds a way to "carve a niche" by negotiating with institutional networks, resources, practices, and conventions. Professors may carve a niche for themselves in different ways. For example, choosing MSU instead of an institution that is much higher in the national rankings is such a form of negotiation between one's ideals and the larger institution of higher education. Top-ranked institutions – professors explained – have a tendency to expect much of their faculty and pressure them into producing very high-quality results in specific areas of research that may not match professors' interests. The following excerpts show how authenticity mattered in choosing the right institution:

I never compromised because I'm not part of the mainstream. I don't do that, I wouldn't do that, and again that's why I'm not at a high-power university (Professor, Social Sciences).

I chose to come to an institution that wasn't on the map, at the time, so I could be free to do what I wanted to do (Professor, Humanities).

Other professors explained to me that they made a conscious decision to work at MSU because there they could be true to themselves, even at the cost of losing money and similar material rewards:

A lot of work is under my control here. I can say no. Once you're tenured you can't say no. I mean you won't be promoted to full professor if you say no too much, but so what? They can't fire you. People in this job have a choice, and they work hard because they have goals they want to achieve. But you know the rewards aren't even that high. You don't get salary raises here very often. You have to like what you're doing; you have to do it for some reason other than rewards or punishment. You do it because you enjoy discovering things, and you like to get some reinforcement from your research, and just because it is fun drawing graphs (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

I knew I wasn't going to make much money but I knew that I'd enjoy what I'd be doing (Instructor, Natural Sciences).

I like the research I was doing; I have no interest in money. I get no motivation that way. I like thinking about what I want to think about. I like being independent to pursue what I like to pursue, my own ideas, and not being constrained (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

For me, money is not a huge deal. For me it's the job that I really have to like (Professor, Humanities).

We're really lucky to get paid to come in every day and think about the things that we care about. For someone like me who's highly susceptible to boredom, and I think a lot of academics are, this job can't be beaten (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

Despite the fact that there is much freedom in academia, at least compared to many other occupations, some compromise is necessary, as I mentioned. People are not alone in the universe, and occasionally they have to compromise with others for the sake of getting along. As I explained in the previous chapter we should understand the intersection of these forces as the necessary condition for the existence of the self and its authenticity, rather than attribute each episode of compromise to the inescapable evils of power and structural determination. The following excerpt from an interview with a music instructor shows that some negotiation is not only inevitable, but perhaps not necessarily so painful either:

I see it as living within a family: you have to give and you have to take. If I want to do this and this causes me problems, I may be true to myself but then I have to deal with the consequences. If I find a way of staying close to what I need to do but that doesn't cause all those negative consequences, have I negated myself? No? Yes? We don't live alone. I don't see that as being inauthentic, because I never do anything that is completely against what I believe in (Instructor, Humanities).

As other professors remarked, while authenticity is important to them, it should not rule their lives. For anyone to be authentic, at all costs, at all times, it would require so much emotional energy and effort that life would become impossible. Some negotiation with one's self meanings and self-feelings makes life in the university and in greater society possible. After all, as some professors told me, as faculty and public employees of a state university our research and teaching "must have some value to society." In other words, while passions and feelings of authenticity do matter, so does negotiation and compromise:

This is who I am. I'm a guy who loves books, and music, and the arts. And the way to live that out is to hold this kind of position and to contribute whatever you can. You have to make some compromises. You can't always get to do whatever you want to do, but that's like anywhere in the world (Associate Professor, Humanities).

The Emotional Content of (In)Authenticity

Up to this point I have mostly focused on self-meanings and their personal significance, but I have neglected to describe self-feelings of (in)authenticity. In order to arrive at a phenomenological description of what it feels like to be true or untrue to one's self, I asked each informant to tell me about episodes, stories, situations, or simply examples derived from their work experiences. I also asked them to tell me what it was like, from an emotional perspective, to live such experiences. In this section I describe the main emotional components of the experience of authenticity and inauthenticity.

Authenticity

From professors' answers I learned that among the characteristics of the experience of authenticity is the almost-religious experience of finding one's true self, of feeling realized and

accomplished. This experience is a peak moment when the self and the external environment object of one's true passion seem to cohere together and make sense:

I went to China a year ago and I looked at these fossils that I thought would be showing that it would be the first backbone animal half a billion years ago, I mean, that's how old they are, a half a billion years, and everything about the fossils showed that they belonged to a backbone animal, and that was an essential discovery for me, after all these years in search of that. That was a religious experience for me, discovering where we came from, that was the highest point of my career (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

This associate professor had explained to me that ever since he was a child he was interested in the origin of life. For him, after going through some considerable departmental pressure as an assistant professor to "re-focus" his research agenda on something "more practical," discovering that what he was passionate about was finally before his eyes in all its truth, allowed him to see his true self in a fossil, the object of his research. Seeing one's true self in a product of one's action is an important component of the self-feeling of authenticity, as the following excerpt shows:

[Authenticity for me is] The passion for knowledge, the trying to understand a problem, the feeling of having achieved something that goes beyond me, like having created an article that helps other people as well (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

For many professors authentic moments are accompanied by the realization that one's true self is most authentic when alone, free from the outside world. As a matter of fact many professors are drawn to academia because it demands long hours spent in isolation at the library, in their office,

or in their lab. But despite their proneness to enjoy themselves by themselves, many faculty members need to deal with several social demands during the work day: from undergraduate students inquiring about class credit and graduate students seeking help in the lab, to colleagues and chairs seeking help, the time that professors can spend alone is minimal. Finding one's own true self in aloneness is then an occasion for authenticity to arise:

I had never written a solo paper, until recently, and maybe that's the best story, you know. I was in sabbatical for a semester and I decided to write a solo paper on a theoretical idea that had interested me for a while. I wrote this theoretical piece and published and it was very successful, it was very rewarding for me. That's one example when I pursued something that I really liked that was very rewarding for me. And you know it was better than working with other people because I could concentrate on just the physics, and it was contained enough that I could just do it by myself, so..., you know a lot of the time when you're involved in a project that involves a lot of people you spend a lot of time communicating and that can take up a lot of time. To me, I'm the most satisfied when I'm just doing physics, I don't care about recognition from my peers, or students, or anybody, the only reason I do it is because it helps me get funding which helps me to do the work. If I had all the resources I needed and I could sit in a cave thinking about physics I would do that and then I would occasionally come out of the cave to teach a few courses, because I still enjoy the teaching. But when it comes to research it would be more fun to do it by yourself. I would still publish papers because it helps refine your thought when you're writing something (Professor, Natural Sciences).

There are some obvious contradictions in this professor's story. For example, he tells that he could feel true to himself best when left alone in a cage, but he also speaks of needing to come out and educate students and share his thoughts with others, and therefore leads us to wonder if others' approval is necessary for self-feelings of authenticity to exist. I will address this issue in great depth in the next chapter, but for now let it suffice that more than the actual aloneness, what seems to matter for the experience of authenticity is the *absence of intrusions*. By intrusions I mean the presence of undesired others, either individuals whose presence makes it impossible to be truly oneself, or other aspects of one's self that make it just as impossible. Whether one is isolated from others or not then does not matter for the experience of authenticity – what truly matters is the feeling of being free from intrusions. As a matter of fact for many professors feelings of authenticity come about when one's work is beneficial to others and when others' approval is manifest:

When I get students to . . . , well, when I get people to appreciate the beauty of music I feel like I've done something good. I feel I've brought beauty into the life of a person or a community and that's what drives me, and at one point in my career early on I finally realized that I didn't want to do anything else (Associate Professor, Humanities).

True to myself in my work means to me that I'm intellectually interested in it and I believe that it will make a difference, and it will be a significant contribution, versus cranking something out just to crank it out (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

Another emotional component of the experience of authenticity has to do with being close to one's passion. Much like the professor who wished to be in a cave alone with physics, others told

me that they feel most authentic when they can dedicate themselves fully to what they have chosen to do:

For me it means working on the things I'm interested in and not working on the things I'm not interested in. When I work on something that I'm interested in, that's when I feel authentic (Professor, Natural Sciences).

Even though at times the experience of authenticity feels like a peak moment that one can never forget, at other times self-feelings of authenticity remind one that perfect and maximal authenticity is impossible. These realizations tend to resemble transcendent epiphanies much less than the peak moments I describe above. Some professors told me that their authenticity does not often come in the form of peaks, but rather in the form of plateaus that can last semesters or even years. For this professor, who chose philosophy as a career in order to approach truth and knowledge, important components of his experience of authenticity were truthfulness and honesty, both toward others and toward oneself:

Authenticity to me is closely related to my quest for truth and knowledge. Just like it's impossible to arrive at the final truth and at perfect knowledge, it's impossible to be totally authentic. It's more of a continuous struggle to be more and more authentic. [...] Being true to myself means to me not deceiving myself about the importance or unimportance of any particular thing I'm working on. If I'm acting as though this is an important thing, then it really needs to be important and I'm doing it because I'm not trying to impress others. [...] I've never thought about authenticity per se but I've often thought of aspects that for me overlap with it, and I think it's a great term. You know, I often think about honesty, and

truthfulness, and academic ethics. But authenticity, as I understand it, works differently because someone personalizes all those concepts together for one's self (Professor, Humanities).

By saying that authenticity works differently than honesty, and truthfulness, and academic ethics because one person may "personalize" all these values "for one's self" this professor gets at the idea of self-meanings and self-feelings. And just as it is impossible to be perfectly truthful, perfectly honest, perfectly knowledgeable, and perfectly ethical, it is impossible to be perfectly authentic – a realization that comes clearest when one experiences self-feelings of authenticity as a plateau, rather than as a peak.

Inauthenticity

It becomes easier to describe and understand authenticity when we take into consideration its opposite: the experience of inauthenticity. Just as I asked professors to tell me about experiences they may have had when they felt true to themselves, I asked them to tell me about experiences they may have had when they felt untrue to themselves, and how that felt. The most common feeling used to describe inauthenticity is that of unfamiliarity with oneself, or in other words when one's self becomes false:

Some time ago I became really frustrated with work, and my position, and the school, and all that. So finally I told my sister, who had been trying to convince me for a while, that she could help me convert my CV into a résumé for the corporate world, with all the differences that there are, you know. So, she took my vita and turned it all around, and I mean, some activity that I had maybe spent an afternoon on, like learning power-point, was all nice and highlighted on my résumé, and all my writings and research were somewhere in a corner, all

jammed up in one line, you know, like one line for these thirty-one articles, and that wasn't me, you know, that wasn't any reflection of me on paper (Instructor, Humanities).

The self's unfamiliarity derives from the realization that one is no longer "oneself," no longer the true self that one is used to feeling. When one is being untrue to oneself, upon reflection on one's conduct and feelings, the self seems to escape, to hide away from its own moral condemnation. This escape is unsuccessful however, as the reflexive self cannot escape from its own reflexivity in the inauthentic moment. As an assistant professor in philosophy explained to me, this is the time when the self "feels the pinch" of its own judgment.

Feelings of inauthenticity may take place when a professor is with others or when alone. Once again, what truly matters is the absence of presence of intrusions. As I explained earlier, the feeling of intrusion is the feeling that one's true self is being "squelched," "infringed upon," "suppressed," and "shushed." Martha's true self was literally shushed one time by her tenure-mentor who reminded her that no matter what her true self was, her duty was to spend time exclusively on activities beneficial to her quest for tenure:

One day I was sitting here teaching conversational French to a bunch of students who were going to West Africa, and they didn't speak any French. They asked me if I could help and I said yes. So we're here at my desk, and right then and there my tenure mentor comes in, looking for her TA. I felt like a kid caught with a hand in the cookie jar. She'd found me. I wasn't supposed to be doing anything but teaching my classes and doing research. The next day she convened a meeting of my pre-tenure committee, and they all said: "You're never to do that again! It's the students' problem, it's their own problem. You can't do that, it has nothing to do with your tenure decision." I was so angry. If I could have quit my job then,

I would have. I was furious. So did I feel pressured? I felt tremendous pressure. I felt unbelievably pressured. I wasn't allowed to change my syllabus, in any class because it would take additional time. It was awful (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

Much like authenticity occurs as peaks and plateaus, inauthenticity occurs as lows and depressed lands. The occasional pinch is a low that may or may not appear again for months or years, whereas the lowland is a place where inauthenticity becomes the everyday norm. In the academic world at MSU lowlands of inauthenticity seem to mark the life of professors who become "burned out" with their work, with their youthful idealism, with the ultimate meanings of research, teaching, and knowledge. Professors who told me they felt burned out explained that their feelings of inauthenticity often come from realizing that their self-meanings were gradually changing, but the pace of this internal revolution was such that at times the new and the old self were coexisting in constant struggle. An associate professor in the humanities narrated this revolution in the following terms:

Sure I look back and I say I'm not the idealist I used to be [...] I'm an educational opportunist. I'm not out there actively shaping my career; I'm more simply taking opportunities when they come along. [...] I feel like I'm in a holding pattern. I'm waiting to retire in three years and move out of this daycare for nineteen year olds. [...] I've tried to help the department, focusing on the students. I don't give a darn about the university. They call me a [scorpion] and I'm embarrassed (Associate Professor, Humanities)

A burned out professor, usually an associate or full professor, has lost all interest in research and no longer publishes anything. Burned out tenured professors are often labeled "dead wood" by their

colleagues, and such labeling fosters even more resentment toward the institution. Burned out professors cease to conduct research because “it no longer means anything, it’s all bullshit,” and because “the world doesn’t need it.” As I explain in the next chapter feelings of inauthenticity are common in the different realms of professors’ work, from research to teaching and service. In terms of emotional content, however, burned out professors all feel the same: *meaningless*.

Inauthenticity then in this case comes from the feeling that one is actively engaging in activities that have no meaning. One feels very much like work is a waste of time. As an assistant professor in the social sciences put it, when one becomes disenchanted the academic world “is a drag, but you have to do it; you have to pay your dues one way or another.”

The emotional content of inauthenticity is unpleasant for everyone, in all circumstances. When inauthenticity occurs as a low, the “pinch” feels like a betrayal of one’s self, like a self-directed insult. But when inauthenticity becomes a lowland the burned out professor dwells in it in perennial disgust. In both cases, passion plays an important role. As said, for all professors academia is a choice. Whether drawn to the academic life by vocation, by accident, or by default, every single professor at MSU admits having entered the academic world with much enthusiasm and passion. Academic work is different in this sense from other occupations which people may enter out of sheer necessity to put food on the table. Passion then informs professors’ self-meanings from day one and any time such passion is stymied by restrictive institutional practices, or whenever such passion is lost, professors’ self-feelings go through considerable turmoil. Consider the following excerpt, for example. This professor in the humanities had experienced an emotionally difficult tenure process as an assistant professor. Throughout those years she had experienced so many inauthentic moments that the vast number of lows were causing her to become burned out. Her self-meanings did not change, however, as she decided to hold strong and wait for tenure to save her:

I saw that the university had a destructive effect on any kind of radical teaching, radical writing, and radical thinking. So at first I had to compromise, but then I went back to what I wanted to do. So I think you do sell out, to a certain extent. The structure of the university and of society is what it is and you have to fit in, somewhere. I mean, I wasn't willing to become a martyr and I wasn't foreseeing the arrival of a utopian world, so some compromise is necessary (Professor, Humanities).

Truly enough some compromise is necessary, but this begs the question: how much compromise is acceptable and when does compromise cause inauthenticity? The only way to answer this question is by looking into the contexts in which professors experience (in)authenticity in search of the link between their self-meanings/feelings and the institutional practices that interact with them. Such will be the object of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TEN

THE CONTEXTS OF INAUTHENTICITY

In order to address my research question (How do faculty members experience (in)authenticity?) so far I have analyzed the content of interviews with MSU professors in order to shed light on the characteristics of the social organization of their work (chapter eight) and the nature of their experiences (chapter nine). In this chapter I draw from chapter eight and nine in order to discover the links between social organization and individual experiences. I have divided this chapter into six parts. In the first section I explain how institutional practices differ across time. By time I refer to both institutional time and individual careers, as I am interested in the diversity of institutional practices across ranks and across professors' employment cohorts. In that section I address the issue of whether (in)authenticity is more or less common as professors move through institutional ranks. Subsequently, I discuss the pressures that professors receive as they go about doing their work. Pressures of different nature assume a very peculiar meaning in academia, where freedom is so highly valued. Pressures may infringe upon professors' academic freedom and may also lead them to feel inauthentic. In the subsequent three sections I look at the three realms of professors' work (teaching, research, and service/governance) in search of the relations between experiences of (in)authenticity and institutional practices. These three sections are particularly important as throughout them I attempt to link the negotiated order of the academic game with individual experiences of (in)authenticity. The subsequent section, as an extension of the previous three, looks at the "others" of MSU professors' work: undergraduate and graduate students, departmental colleagues, peers at other universities, and the general public. In that section I discuss such issues as the importance of peer approval and professors' perceived sense of usefulness of their work. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of professors' feelings about their salary and about

the issue of overtime work and stress. Throughout the chapter, I give special attention to differences across departments.

(In)Authenticity across Time

How does the experience of (in)authenticity vary across ranks? Are there differences, for example between instructors and assistant professors, or between tenured and untenured faculty? Do professors experience more or less (in)authenticity as they go through the ranks, promotion after promotion? And are there generational differences, say between professors in their sixties and professors in their thirties? I begin to discuss the changing experience of (in)authenticity and the issue of generational differences.

I became aware of the possibility that (in)authenticity might have had different meanings across generations when I spoke to a professor in the Natural Sciences, well in his sixties, who – it seemed to me – was in the midst of describing a different institution than the one I had learned about up to that point. He defined himself as a Scorpion, a local man who did his work, who received both public and private funding, and who had earned and learned about tenure well over thirty years ago. When I asked him about authenticity he seemed confused at first. He reflected for a while about my question and then proceeded to ask me how that could be a problem for anyone working in academia. He told me he had a very good salary, and he had no idea what to do with all the money he had been receiving for over twenty-five years. He had always studied what he was interested in, and had always been doing the work of a public employee at the service of the state and the economy. I realized that after forty or so interviews I had finally met an institutional man, in the sense intended by Ralph Turner (1976). For this professor authenticity consisted in doing his work, in meeting the relatively few demands of his employer, and in providing a service to the community. There was a different vocabulary of motives expressed here: no mention of choice, desire, or passion. This is not to say that he was not passionate about his work, or that he did not

care about being true to himself, but to say that his self-meanings derived considerably from MSU's public mission and collective identity.

This interview was interesting for two reasons: first, it proved that Turner's (1976) distinction between institutional and impulsive authenticity was a valid one, despite the fact that our individualistic culture has almost somehow driven institutional selves into extinction. Second, it confirmed once again that MSU, and arguably academia in general, had drastically changed over time. As I explained in chapter eight, other faculty had told me stories about MSU along the lines of:

It's been a good career on the whole. I think that the people that were here early had a bit of better situation. I'm just worried about the people that are coming in. The squeeze is becoming tighter and tighter (Professor, Natural Sciences).

Academia is really weird in how it is administered. You have the old guard and the old culture with an old concept of tenure and then you have the new guard in the administration that came in during the 1980s, with this sort of yuppie mentality and these business rules, but then they don't fully go by the business model, you still have the tenure system and all these old rules (Instructor, Humanities).

Because of the change in institutional practices at MSU over the years those who received tenure in the 1970s or earlier had to deal with different expectations and fewer pressures. Back in the 1970s, professors explained, budget crises had not strangled the university yet. With "the squeeze becoming tighter and tighter" from the years of the Reagan administration on, universities are more careful about tenure, promotion, and even hiring tenure-track faculty. Indeed then, there are

important differences between senior and junior faculty. Many young MSU professors – currently in their thirties – told me they feel that tenure is/would be a highly desirable state of things for them, not because they foresee drastic changes in their work activities, but because it will give them or has given them the stability that senior professors now have. Among these young professors, those who have just earned tenure clearly feel the relief, as the following excerpts clarify:

Once I got tenure it felt liberating in the fact that I felt more comfortable (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

It's not as life or death anymore as it was when I was an assistant professor (Associate Professor, Humanities).

After I got tenure I felt like I wasn't forced to do this by the system, I felt like I was doing this because of my values, or work ethics, or whatever (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

I think that realizing that I can now make the choice of not working all summer makes a huge difference. I have started to travel a lot lately (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

Right after I got tenure I literally worked myself into the hospital. Because what happened was that I was sick, I had a cold, and of course the brave soul that I am, instead of going to bed I decided to work through it and before I could get rid of it I contracted a second virus that settled in my heart. My heart started to swell and so my doctor said: "you can't do this!" So I raised my arm and I said, but I'm a professor and there's the academic ethic that blah, blah, blah, and he just said: "But you're tenured now, you don't have to work at this pace

anymore.” And I said you’re right. And from that point on deadlines have taken on a different meaning. Before tenure I’d go home, have dinner and work at the computer for three or four hours. I don’t do that anymore. I’m at the point where nobody should be questioning if I said I’m going to knock off at 3.30 today (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

I would be in my office almost every night till midnight when I was getting all of my tenure stuff together and I was trying to finish an article, and I would look out the window to the building across from here and I would see that someone’s office light was on, that late at night, and I could see a man working. So I’d tell myself that I could not go home as long as his light is on, I gotta be here too. Now I don’t have to stay up till two o’clock in the morning anymore (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

The clock is always ticking, and then you get tenure and things don’t change. I mean, in terms of workload things don’t change that much..., well maybe I don’t feel as pressured to come in on a Sunday at nine at night to get that manuscript reviewed and out, but generally the difference really isn’t that much. Your life doesn’t change when you get tenure, your life changes when you don’t get tenure (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

Current senior professors who earned tenure earlier were much less stressed, especially if they earned as early as the 1970s. For them, the demands and pressures that come with being an untenured professor were much lighter and experiences of inauthenticity were fewer.

Despite all the differences in the tenure process, and despite all the various meanings assigned to it (some even compare it to “Nirvana”), everyone at MSU agrees that tenure is important

and is always a pleasant event. Nevertheless, getting there is sometimes so painful that the promotion turns out to be the constant reminder of much bitterness and conflict. For this professor and chair in the Natural Sciences getting tenure was a non-event that turned out to be very unpleasant:

Getting tenure was a non-event. Sometimes your institution has a way of making a promotion feel like it's nothing, like they're trying to ruin it for you. I felt that they were trying to hold my career back. Like the more powerful and older people wanted to hold younger people back, as if they were moving too fast. I got tenure and I felt like it should have arrived a lot earlier. The same thing is true of becoming a professor. The dean and the department didn't talk and so they got mad at each other. No administrators showed up at the thing they had at the alumni center for us and they put out cheap crackers and water. Everybody was clueless, there was no program, no one spoke, no one had a sense of what was going on. They showed no respect for the meaning of the ritual, I can't imagine an uglier way of treating the people you're promoting. They made you feel valueless, like a garbage can.

While it is fair to say that current assistant professors are pressured more than assistant professors were thirty or twenty years ago, it would not be accurate to say that current MSU assistant professors have more or fewer occasions to feel authentic than current senior professors. In fact, while young professors on a tenure track need to deal with the demands of a tenure-track position, tenured professors need to deal with the increasing demands, responsibilities, and expectations. Senior professors are often asked to become a department chair, for example, and

because “somebody has to do it” senior faculty who end up deciding to chair half-heartedly find themselves at the risk of feeling much inauthenticity:

The big change for me was becoming a chair. People treat you differently. There’s multiple kinds of people in terms of personality but also multiple work roles. You have people who are class-conscious, people who are very hierarchical, then you have brown-nosers, and then others who are uncertain, and you don’t know how to treat them and they don’t know how to treat you because all of a sudden they see you as a different person when in reality you’re not. There are people with whom you used to have an informal relationship and then they’re all of a sudden more standoffish, isolated, formal, they become all of a sudden very self-conscious (Professor, Chair, Natural Sciences).

When you have tenure you tend to help all people who need your help and you no longer have any time for yourself (Professor, Humanities).

Beside administrative duties a lot of senior professors feel they have the responsibility to serve the university, the social community in which they live, or the larger community of intellectuals with whom they interact, and as a result the time that they can freely dedicate to the pursuit of their passions decreases:

Demands have increased as my career has gone on. Some people have taken tenure as a sign that they could relax and they have done that. I’m not like that. Because I love to do research and I love to play with discovery. And then there is a whole bunch of stuff that is quite positive. You get invited to lectures and conferences, you get invited into

governmental committees, you know all these things put you in the spotlight and they're ego-massaging.

The people who have “taken tenure as a sign that they could relax” do not have it easy either, however. Dead wood feels the force of the current just as strongly. This associate professor (see excerpt below) is near retirement, and as a result of not having published much after getting tenure he was never promoted and was often asked to put more effort into writing:

Before I became a chair twenty years ago the dean asked me what my career trajectory was and I looked kind of dumbfounded and said “I don't think I have one, sorry.” At that point simply doing my job, doing it well, raising a family, playing music, keeping the ship afloat, that was enough for me. [...] So later on, our previous dean at one point said to me “Gee, I'd really like to promote you to full professor, but we have got to show something in research.” And I simply leveled and said “I'm sorry, I simply will never have a world class reputation, and I will never catch up on certain topics that I should be up on, and I really don't give a darn, I'll do what I'm doing, and I'll do it as well as I can. I'll live and die an associate professor!” (Associate Professor, Humanities).

Both tenure-track and tenured professors have their different pressures to deal with, and their different reasons for feeling inauthentic at times, but what about instructors? Do instructors feel underprivileged and marginalized for being somewhat like peons in the academic world? Instructors are a very diverse group, and it is almost impossible to come to general conclusions about them collectively. Perhaps then, as it often goes, it might be more interesting to reflect on differences. There are at least two groups of instructors: instructors who have chosen their position

willingly, and those who find themselves to be “stuck” in search of something better. Much of the literature on faculty paints instructors as marginalized, alienated victims of a system that has spun out of control, but at MSU the majority of instructors are actually among the happiest, less stressed, and most authentic faculty that one can find. If they have chosen to work as instructors, rather than as tenure-track faculty, instructors are quite skeptical about their tenure-track or tenured colleagues. Happy in their basements – where their offices are usually located – many instructors at MSU in fact want nothing to do with the “rat race,” the “publish or perish,” and the “business” world typical of the upper floors. These instructors are perfectly true to themselves while teaching, spending time with otherwise neglected students, writing letters of recommendation (even twenty a month!), and helping undergraduates to catch up on homework. After working in their position for anywhere in between four and twelve years, these instructors have mixed feelings about the idea of tenure:

That’s a double-edged sword. The tenure track is a nightmare, in a lot of ways. There is security in it, and at the same time there are a lot of advantages to my current job in that I don’t have to do committee work, I don’t have the tenure bear on my shoulders. Sure on the other hand I could be fired, but why? The department needs me. No one wants to teach the classes I do. So in a sense they need me and they leave me alone to do what I do because nobody is interested (Instructor, Natural Sciences).

They’ve been very good to me. I feel as if I’ve been treated well. The only thing that happens is that there is a status issue, the full professors speak, and then there are the tenure track people who are sort of the “yes-men, yes I do want tenure” and then there are the instructors who tend to be marginalized and left outside the decision-making, and I don’t think it’s intentional, I just think that’s the way things are. I feel that I’m very much

respected and if I were to voice an opinion I would be listened to, but I don't feel compelled to voice an opinion, and a lot of time I don't feel it is my place to voice an opinion, as if I'm not a player, although I am. And there are other instructors in this department who are very vocal. But you know, within the context of teaching I feel very free (Instructor, Humanities).

As for the two instructors I interviewed at MSU who could reasonably belong to this category, they feel very much under-appreciated, underpaid, and overworked.

There are a other changes in professors' careers over time which are quite common from department to department. The volume of publications, for example, becomes less and less meaningful as time goes on. There is an insignificant difference between forty-four and forty-five publications, for example, so after a while professors feel it is more rewarding and authenticating to pursue more meaningful goals, such as truly consequential research or different types of service:

The longer I'm here the more my reputation grows. I guess when you have tenure you pick and choose better (Professor, Natural Sciences).

It's important at this point in my career to be influential within my academic network. I think eventually I'd like to have a larger social impact and become more of a public intellectual (Professor, Social Sciences).

In conclusion then, what things can be said of the variation of the experience of authenticity across biographical and institutional time? For certain, we can say that MSU's academic "games" have changed across time, becoming more and more intense in recent years when the university's

financial difficulties have led the new “get-grants or perish game” to get a stronger hold, at the same time that the demand of work from a growing number of well-qualified PhDs have led the old “publish or perish” game” to become more intense as well. This has resulted in higher pressure and a higher frequency of inauthentic moments for young, assistant professors. Junior faculty now find themselves in highly hierarchical departments where they have to go through a long climb to the top, and feel the pinch of inauthenticity at various points, and for various reasons:

Up until you have tenure you are pretty much powerless, so you don't speak up, you just follow the flock (Assistant Professor, Natural Sciences).

The only thing that I would say I was restricted on was speaking freely. Not that I was totally muted, it was more like having to be strategic in terms of the battles I took on. The process was open, but there were battles that had to be carefully thought out in terms of what the political results would be (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

In the meanwhile senior faculty feel the pressure of having to become businesspeople and “fundraisers” and/or the pressure of having to become senior administrators for their department and for the university. For many professors this results in much disenchantment, change, and at times even inauthenticity, as their old self-meanings struggle to adapt to the new demands of the “games:”

I think right now I put forty hours of work a week into administrative duties. I have to make a decision about my career. Do I want to be an academic administrator, or do I want

to be a researcher and a teacher? I think you've caught me at a time when all those questions are in my mind (Professor, Chair, Social Sciences).

Can I change the role of [classical] music in the USA? Well I finally decided that my role in trying to produce that change was limited. I couldn't do it as a department chair, I was not only tired but I felt that I couldn't say what I needed to say, so I felt I could say more and I did say more, and after two a half years I said, you know, I'm not sure I love this. I wanted to do other things. My heart is somewhere else now (Professor, Humanities).

Pressures

In order to find out what pressures professors receive, in my interviews I asked them what specific pressures they receive at work, from whom pressures come, what shape they take, and in relation to what work contexts these pressures exist. Additionally, I also asked them how they deal with those pressures, emotionally and behaviorally. More detail on the general questions asked is available in appendix two. So, how do professors at MSU experience work-related pressure? It is possible to identify a number of differences and similarities across professors that help us understand how the social organization of work at MSU affects professors' self-meanings and self-feelings. Let us begin with the amount and type of pressures received. Given what was said in chapter eight we should expect professors to feel much pressure to produce and bring grant money to the school. As a matter of fact this pressure does exist, but it is highly variable across departments. Professors in the natural Sciences and to less extent in the Social Sciences, tenured and untenured, *know* that their obligation to the university is to produce publications and obtain grants. Pressures are more likely to be indirect than direct:

The pressures are never direct, but there is a drift (Assistant Professor, Natural Sciences).

It wasn't pressure, it was advice. My colleagues here have been very supportive since the get-go (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

There are limitations, but having been in the industry this is like heaven. There, they tell you: you can't do this. Having said that, there are more pressures at the level of the university to get patents, and bring in royalties. I think we're not probably as strong, I mean we're not forced to do that as much as at other universities. It's a little more subtle, you know. Nobody ever tells us to do that, it's just every now and then you get this little piece of paper that is like an invention report, or an essential properties report, to see if there is any stock value coming out of your work, so it's not a direct pressure but you know that one of the pressures of your work is to get patents (Professor, Natural Sciences).

Such pressures may be implicit in the departments of biology, chemistry, and physics – and to less extent in psychology, anthropology, and political science – because the departmental culture is such that everyone is socialized to commonly shared values by the time they are hired. As a department chair explained to me, the pressure is not to produce a specific number of publications, rather the pressure is to build a research program, fund a lab, and support graduate students, and junior professors know this because graduate school socializes them to understand the importance of these practices. This is their job, and this requires them to finance themselves by obtaining extramural grant money. This does not mean that there is no pressure on these professors; it simply means that the pressure is internalized, and that the demands of the game have become an essential component of their work:

It's a lot easier to continue to do research and teaching well if you have extramural funding. But it's tough to get, and it's a continuous pressure to get research funded to make your research and your life easier (Assistant Professor, Natural Sciences).

I don't understand why you're in academia if you don't do those things. It's in the job description. So, it's not pressure, it's what you do as part of the job (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

As long as you can find a way to support what you want do you're free to do whatever you're interested in doing it (Assistant Professor, Natural Sciences).

For this reason professors are hardly ever actually *told* that they should do something, or *reprimanded* for doing the "wrong" thing. Indeed it was somewhat less common in my interviews to hear stories of despotic pressure that it was to hear optimistic accounts along the lines of the following:

The amount of freedom in this job is tremendous. You can do anything you want (Professor, Social Sciences).

I'm one-hundred percent free (Professor, Natural Sciences).

But these same professors also told me that they know very well that some expectations for their work exist, as after all they are paid public employees and they know they have to perform well at something:

As long as you are really strong in something that you're doing, at least one area, no one tells you what you're supposed to be doing (Professor, Social Sciences).

I feel like I have a lot of freedom in choosing the kind of work that I do. There is a fair amount of latitude in choosing the projects I want to work on. Ideally I'm supposed to do research in the area that I was hired in, and ideally I'm supposed to do research that employs graduate students, and has potential for publications and for receiving funding, but as far as what I want to do, I have great freedom (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

Pressure becomes direct in the Natural Sciences and to some extent in the Social Sciences only when a professor, especially an assistant professor and to less extent an associate professor, seems to produce less than is expected of him/her. For example, I spoke with an assistant professor in biology who lamented the lack of federal funding in the areas of basic ecological research and evolution, and because he had been unable to secure stable and consistent funding he was specifically told by his chair to publish more papers and bring in more funding if he wanted to get tenure. As for pressure coming from grant agencies, only one professor lamented receiving some considerable pressure:

Because we don't make much money in this business, we simply can't compromise on issues of integrity. For example for a data set that I was analyzing, they wanted a particular estimate to be high. It's a private law firm that represents a particular corporation and we were doing an independent evaluation of this project and the numbers that we would produce have massive financial implications. So it would be to their benefit that we produce very large numbers and it was my job to produce accurate numbers and there were a lot of

subtle pressures for that to be pumped up. And I essentially told them “it’s gonna be large anyway, so get off my back” (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

Things are slightly different in the Social Sciences because extramural funding is less easily available. Some sub-disciplinary areas within the departments of anthropology (such as archaeology), psychology (such as physiological psychology), and political science (such as criminology) have more extramural funds available than other sub-disciplinary areas within the same departments, and for professors in these areas receiving grant money is more important and at times object of more pressure than it is for their colleagues across the hall. But in these departments in the Social Sciences there *are very delicate departmental balances*. In both anthropology and political sciences, for example, coalitions have formed and conflict is likely to light up every now and then between the more and the less affluent parties. Chairs in these departments are often supposed to be mediators, and the culture of these departments is so loosely defined that the pressure to bring in extramural funding is never fully explicit. As professors and chairs in these departments explained to me, there is an understanding that getting grant money is a difficult process and while grants are never expected as a condition of continued employment, there is pressure to “at least try” and much “happiness” when one is successful. Interestingly, however, when a professor or a group of professor working within the same sub-disciplinary area in these departments becomes too successful at getting grant money, less affluent colleagues start to feel envious and marginalized. Whenever this has happened in the past in the Social Sciences at MSU, less affluent colleagues have seemingly questioned the nature and future direction of the department and even more friction occurred, often resulting in professors leaving and departmental cultures changing as a result. Pressure in such department is then a very delicate matter, and chairs and senior professors often understand – in contrast to faculty in the natural sciences – that it should not be taken for granted.

In the Social Sciences, pressure is more likely to exist whenever a professor publishes less than expected or does research that lies too far from the bounds of the mainstream:

In this department if you were doing something that would be considered illegitimate without a legitimate or scholarly scientific basis that would raise highbrows (Professor, Chair, Social Sciences).

Then again, the three departments in the Social Sciences that I researched at MSU are not ranked very high in the nation, and therefore pressure on the type and outlet of publication is not very high.

The amount and type of pressure is radically different in the Humanities. In the Humanities at MSU there is a long history of failures in getting extramural grant money from federal agencies. These departments depend mostly on donations and occasional small endowments to fund research, performance, and faculty travel, and for their faculty it is quite unusual to receive pressure to bring in grants, as we can gather from the following excerpts:

I've almost never received pressure. I think it's the advantage of being in a small department. We tend not to compete much, we tend not to be aware of what the others are doing, we have a very strong emotional support for each other, and we have an exceptional work environment here. We're not trying to create an order or a structure, and so maybe when you take away that desire we don't have a real need to figure out who's the best philosopher and we don't deal with all the baloney that other departments deal with. We have fewer funds and less resources and that makes it easier to get along. Requirements for tenure are much lower. Getting publications is not difficult at all. I mean, I think I only had a grant for \$2000 once (Professor, Humanities).

Here it's not so much pressure as it is encouragement. That makes your life a lot better
(Associate Professor, Humanities).

Whereas professors in the natural sciences are supposed to publish at least three articles per year, in the Humanities one is more likely to run into expectations such as this:

I have pretty minimal research expectations. If I publish a paper or go to a conference and present an original paper at a meeting a year it's pretty damn good (Professor, Humanities).

By no means does this mean that faculty in the Humanities work less, however. Pressures, for people who are truly passionate about their work, are more likely to be internal than external. When a professor is passionate about her work and is somewhat free to pursue her interests, her only limitation becomes the amount of time available to get everything done. "Every academic is a perfectionist" – a professor told me – and that is why time, of all pressures, is the strongest:

You're always eager to get things out because the review process takes so long. So instead of sending out one and waiting, you send out two or three manuscripts (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

I'm a full professor, so why do I work so hard? I want to work less. I should work less. But then again we're alcoholics, that's why we do work so much. There's always another book, there's always another publication, there's always another grant. We never take a break, we

never relax. Oh, speaking of which I need to send off an email to a colleague who's three hours ahead before I forget, so hold on a second... (Professor, Social Sciences).

That's probably why I'm single; I just don't have any time for anything else. I mean, it's not just a day job (Associate Professor, Humanities).

Beside the pressure to publish and the pressure to obtain grant money, another significant source of pressure that professors at MSU receive is the pressure to take on more service and governance responsibilities. Assistant professors are generally sheltered from such demands, as their time goes almost exclusively toward research and teaching, but as professors age and accumulate years of experience within the same institution they become expected to spend time directing programs, chairing committees, and so forth, as this excerpt testifies:

One pressure that I have felt in this institution is working toward becoming an administrator. It feels like it's an upwardly mobile culture where the goal is to become a bigger and bigger player. [...] I can see that it gives people power but I still like writing better (Professor, Humanities).

This may be a source of considerable grief and inauthenticity for professors who do not define themselves as administrators.

An additional source of pressure, which only two professors mentioned, is the limitation of freedom of speech imposed on professors by the need to be culturally sensitive, or "politically correct." This associate professor in Music (see excerpt below) told me that she had never felt as inauthentic as the time when ACLU muted her.

The person that was in charge of conducting the concert choir at the time was going to conduct a mass that was composed by one of our faculty. It was going to be performed during service at a church here in town, and the ACLU came down and stopped it and told us that we could not do it because it was part of the church service. Even though a mass is written for a church! And so that was the place where I felt my academic freedom was infringed upon and that of the students, because the students wanted to sing it.

In sum, how are institutional pressures and (in)authenticity related? For all the professors I interviewed pressures inevitably led to feelings of inauthenticity and the absence of pressures made it easier for them to feel authentic. Institutional pressures lead to inauthenticity because professors feel obligated to perform duties that are either meaningless to them or that go against their values, desires, passions, interests, and goals. There are different ways of dealing with pressures, and different outcomes for each response. While bending to demands against one's will is often a source of inauthenticity, resistance seems to also be a source of authenticity:

When I arrived here I was given a lot of pressure to go to the learning center and spend a lot of time on developing a new technology – later made obsolete by power point – that would be used to create lectures for large introductory classes. And I said: “No, I’m not going to do that.” I knew publishing was important to get tenure and at the time I was very interested in turning my dissertation into a book, so I resisted the pressure. That was very authenticating (Professor, Humanities).

In cases where pressure is expected, professors may respond with compliance and still feel authentic simply because such pressure is internalized and legitimate:

I've been rather free. I'm constrained in the sense that I need to produce results, but it's the direction that I've chosen to pursue. But it is true that when I think of future projects I do take into consideration which ones have a better chance of getting funded. I don't follow the money trail but if I'm equally interested in number of projects, you know..., there is a constraint but I don't feel coerced.

Institutional demands, in this sense, are so taken for granted by some that they do not become a source of inauthenticity:

Look, there are similarities between the demands of the private sector and the demands of the university. It's true. But it's always been true in the sciences. The difference is that you can work on your own projects. You think of a research area, something you want work on, then you develop your project, and then you sell it. And if it's feasible the government will finance it. But you get to work on your project, you can work at your own pace, and your own philosophy, and in many ways you are like a small business person. But you're not forced to work on something else when suddenly the economics change (Professor, Natural Sciences).

Ultimately, what matters to professors in how they deal with pressure is choice. If they have a choice, such as the choice to accept the legitimacy of pressures, then they will not feel inauthentic.

But whenever there is no choice and whenever there is no possibility to negotiate with institutional forces, inauthenticity feelings will arise.

(In)Authenticity in the Context of Teaching

Teaching – probably more than any other aspect of professors’ work at MSU – is a mixed bag of joys and pains. If there is any general trend about teaching at MSU that is “Global Leaders: One on One” is somewhat of a contradiction. By this, I do not mean to suggest that there are no MSU professors who are good teachers who enjoy teaching and feel authentic when teaching. Rather, I mean to suggest that in most cases good teachers seem to be under-valued, under-paid, and often under-promoted. In the Natural Sciences it is just plain difficult to find many professors who feel authentic in the classroom. In the Humanities, it is just as difficult to find professors who feel inauthentic in the context of teaching. And yet mostly because of limitations caused by their limited budgets, English, philosophy, and music are nationally ranked far less below than biology, physics, and chemistry and the relatively low ranking makes it difficult to hire universally recognized names. In the Natural Sciences instead true “global leaders” are not much interested in one on one teaching. The Social Sciences, once again, present an interesting mixture of elements “typical” of the Humanities and elements “typical” of the Social Sciences. But let us abandon all generalizations and discuss in more depth what it is about teaching that leads to feelings of authenticity and inauthenticity.

In the previous chapters I have explained that self-feelings of authenticity coexist alongside passions and interests. As I asked professors to tell me about what it is that makes them feel authentic and inauthentic in relation to teaching, I learned that this relation is true for teaching as well: those professors who are passionate about teaching feel authentic when teaching – at least most of the time – and those professors with little or no interest in educating students (especially undergraduates) feel that teaching for them is “a necessary evil.” Of all faculty ranks, those who feel

most authentic about their teaching, by far, are instructors. The majority of instructors I interviewed had willfully chosen to stay away from a research position in order to dedicate themselves fully to their passion for teaching. And even those instructors who would like to have more time for their own research and performance admit that teaching is what truly gives meaning to their work. These instructors enjoy having the time to prepare themselves for class adequately and to dedicate themselves to students' questions and requests:

Students often come back and ask for letters of recommendation. I'll write fifteen-twenty letters of recommendation a month. And it's nice, because I get to know them. It's a great service to both the students and their potential employers. Also I do a science camp every summer. It's a week long. It's for six to eight year olds and I get them interested in science and interested in going to college. So hopefully the idea of getting to these six to eight year olds will inspire them (Instructor, Natural Sciences).

Having more time for teaching allows instructors to be fully consistent with their self-meanings. Instructors believe that education is important and that undergraduate students do not deserve to be treated like a nuisance. Instructors are quite critical of their research-active colleagues, who – according to them – could not care less about improving labs, interacting with introductory level class students, grading, and answering students' queries. Instructors believe that teaching is pleasant and self-fulfilling work, rather than a time-consuming chore:

I come in, I work my hours, sometimes it's nine and sometimes it's ten. I work a lot for my classes. I re-invent a lot of courses, I spend weeks choosing textbooks, I have websites for all my courses. I am writing a lab manual this summer (Instructor, Natural Sciences).

The picture is not too dissimilar in the Humanities, in general. In English, philosophy, and especially music is where I found the most dedicated teachers who see teaching as “intriguing, interesting, creative, and engaging kind of work.” Music faculty feel inauthentic when they are away from the classroom, as they invest much of their emotional energy and identity into developing their students, as we can see from these excerpts:

I enjoy classroom teaching, I find it intriguing. I love working with individuals to create one kind of idea about music, one common idea (Associate Professor, Music).

Students are the reason why I do the things I do (Instructor, Music).

It’s important for me to incorporate a lot of interaction with students. And one of the things that make me feel genuine and authentic is to connect with each individual student (Professor, Music).

I was on sabbatical last semester, and I missed teaching... it killed me not to be teaching (Associate Professor, Music).

I like the freedom that we have in what we are allowed to do as faculty. First of all working with the students who are somewhat intellectually mature and know what they want to do. Second, working with students who are developing musically. We can take them from a certain level and take them to the next level. Then, I feel that my mission is in teaching and

that teaching is important despite the culture of the university. And finally to be creative (Assistant Professor, Music).

In the context of teaching, self-feelings of authenticity occur when the self *connects* with others, by making a positive impact. Professors who feel true to themselves in the realm of teaching, advising, mentoring, and helping students in general believe that what gives meaning to their work is their power and ability to inspire. Frank, an assistant professor in music who decided to abandon his singing career to be closer to students, explained to me that he feels most authentic when he can hear, see, and feel his self in his students' voice. For Frank (and for others as well), there are multiple work identities and thus multiples sources and modes of authenticity that interconnect with one another:

(Frank): I used to think of myself as... ok, I'm a teacher, but when I'm conducting I'm a conductor, or when I'm singing I'm a singer. I think the older I got, the more those three areas have become integrated. They are aspects of the same job, of the same self. They are different, but they are aspects of the same. When I sing, I need to be very self-focused, very self-oriented. But when I teach I need to be very other-oriented. You see when I teach the goal is to get them, the students, to communicate to the audience. When I sing, the goal is to communicate to the audience; there is no middle-man.

(PV): Which one is your real self?

(Frank): You see, that's a great question and one that I have wrestled with to a great extent. I don't think any one aspect is more authentic than the others. I think, however, that if I spend too much time doing one or the other, wearing just one hat and ignoring the others, then it is frustrating. I need to go back and forth. My personality is such that I need to go

back and forth. I need to be alone, and absorb, and reflect, and then I need to get into a group situation. I think it depends on each person, I tend to be very pragmatic about this, I mean it's my nature [...and in each context] I've always made the choice to be myself.

Frank is not alone in feeling authentic by inspiring and by forming a connection with students. Many other professors, across ranks and departments explained that the most authentic component of teaching is the possibility to be useful for students, to make a difference in their lives, and to educate, at least in small part, young people. The following excerpts are quite representative of experiences of authenticity in the context of teaching:

A great example of authenticity is when you see a graduate student whose “light” clicks, when you know that what you're doing is making a difference outside of your brain (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

My goal at this point is to continue to make contributions to the field, and to do a good job at prepping graduate students to enter their careers. It's more gratifying for me to hear that a graduate student of mine has been accepted into the graduate school that he wanted to get into, than to get a letter in the mail that says your paper has been accepted. For example I had a female student last year who wanted to get into the graduate program at Minnesota and she thought that she had no chance whatsoever. It turns out that she called me on a Sunday, at home, and she said to me I was just on the phone with Minnesota, and she was incredulous that this had happened. That's a lot better than a publication, at this point in my career that's more gratifying (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

That's what gives meaning to my work, that's what I'm here for: help the students unlock their own best abilities and be successful (Assistant Professor, Humanities).

I get emails from students who go to law school and they tell me they learned more from me than from the very high-profile professors they're taking classes with now (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

I feel really good about myself if I read a dissertation or a thesis and I give really good feedback. It's definitely mentoring that makes me feel that way. I mean if you look back at a career, and say what is it that really mattered? It's when you had an impact, you know. What difference does it make to have one publication more when you have sixty? What really matters to me is when I can do something for students. It's really a paradox. I really like research but when I look back at my life and think about where I made a contribution, I think of interaction with students, when I've helped in nurturing this person as opposed to, you know, I got another three publications. So I feel really true to myself in relation to those situations (Professor, Social Sciences).

All these excerpts show that despite the contradictions of the "Global Leaders: One on One" slogan there are many MSU professors who truly enjoy teaching. These are not isolated or random cases. In fact, it would be a mistake that conclude there is no connection between professors' passion for teaching and the negotiated order of MSU. The link between the authenticating power of teaching and the cultural value of teaching at MSU is to be found in the array of costs and opportunities that teaching entails. For instance, for Frank, whose story we learned earlier, it is easy to integrate the different aspects of his self and his work because his

department highly values both performance and teaching, and because it is quite easy for him to “bring performance and teaching together.”³⁸ But for professors whose research is too abstract, difficult, or even irrelevant for undergraduate classes, research and teaching are so remotely separate from one another that it is difficult to integrate work and self-meanings. This is another instance where the slogan “Global Leaders: One on One” is misleading: there may very well be global leaders in their field at MSU, but these are global leaders who separate their world class reputation in research from teaching in the local classroom. After all in academia, in general, one can only be a “global leader” by being a leading researcher. The separation between research and teaching then makes it possible for great researchers to feel inauthentic and underappreciated in the classroom:

I can't stand teaching, especially with the kinds of students here. [...] The students don't take it seriously. It's a miserable experience. They don't think they have to do any reading. It's hell of a lot of work and it's so depressing how cynical students are and how much time they spend avoiding any intellectual activity, and how much we're expected to entertain. I'm not an entertainer, I'm a scholar and I never get to talk about the research I do. They look at you and they go “who is this person?” There is no sense of who you are and what you do, there is no respect. They're rude. And I don't want tell them what to do and how to behave. I'm not a policeman, I'm not a socializer, I'm not their mother, and it's a horrible position I'm in, and I have to compromise with them and with myself and I don't want to, and I hate it (Professor, Social Sciences).

Why are research and teaching seemingly so separate for many professors? Many believe that this is the case because the emphasis at MSU is in producing future corporate employees and

³⁸ Instead of research (writing, publishing) per se, the School of Theater Arts at MSU expects faculty to focus on performance (singing, playing, performing, scripting).

consumers rather than producing independent, politically-conscious, critical minds. As a professor explained to me, when a student is treated much like a customer with the “get in, get your service, and get out” mentality typical of a bank or a drive-through restaurant, there is little opportunity for creative ideas to be exchanged. Professors believe they could be more active in bringing their own research to the classroom, and thus in being better teachers, if the university made this possible by cutting some of the red tape involved in creating new courses, and by rewarding teaching and especially innovative teaching. Of course there are other reasons why research and teaching are separate. For example in the Natural and Social Sciences graduate students stand between undergraduates and faculty. When Master’s, and especially PhD students are in the department professors tend to share their interests exclusively with them and delegate undergraduate teaching to instructors and graduate assistants. In such departments as Philosophy and Music where there are no graduate students to occupy professors’ attentions, the relationship between undergraduate students and professors is much more fulfilling, as faculty in these departments explained.

Another reason why teaching may be a source of inauthenticity is because of the lack of time. Teaching is rewarded far less than research, so most MSU professors end up putting teaching on the back burner in order to focus on publishing:

The problem with teaching is that it takes away time from research, and so there is a tendency to cut corners. But you become more efficient with time. I’m not a naturally inspiring teacher but I have found ways to become more efficient (Professor, Natural Sciences).

The negative aspect of teaching is time. There is no time for teaching. Let's not joke ourselves this is a doctoral institution. Teaching takes times away from research (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

Time for teaching is especially scarce in the sciences, where professors spend a considerable amount of their time managing their research labs. Time scarcity may cause a professor who sees herself as a teacher to feel inauthentic because he has to compromise on the quality of her teaching. For instance:

Because I don't want to compromise the quality of the work I do, maybe sometimes I tend to do less. And in dealing with students one-to-one, because we have expectations that are so high, sometimes you have to compromise (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

I feel most inauthentic when you walk into a class and you're not prepared, and you're really stretching it out just to get a way out of there. You know, when you really go in and try to wing it, that's when I don't feel good about myself. It happened to me recently and I walked out of class and I asked myself, what the hell am I doing? (Professor, Social Sciences)

Time scarcity, however, does not lead to inauthenticity when a professor sees herself mostly as a researcher. In the Natural Sciences, and to a less extent in the social sciences, where professors mostly see themselves as researchers, teaching is a source of inauthenticity for a large variety of reasons. Among the most often cited are the sense of obligation that teaching elicits for research-active professors, the routine of teaching, the low quality of the students, the typical forms of assessment, and the current "education-as-leisure" culture:

Teaching is not a uniform pleasure. There are some times when I teach that I feel it's part of my obligation. I like it as long as I don't have to do too much teaching and as long as I can mix everything I can enjoy teaching. I wouldn't enjoy teaching if that's all I had to do (Professor, Social Sciences).

I'm no longer fascinated with teaching. Teaching tends to be the same thing over and over. The reinforcement that you get from teaching does not compare very well with the reinforcement that you get from doing research, and I mean, the recognition that you get from colleagues in your field. The pleasure comes from both discovery and recognition (Professor, Natural Sciences).

In the last five or ten years I have not enjoyed teaching as much, because of the quality of the students. And also because we moved to different classrooms, and the size of classes increased from 100 to 250. Teaching classes that large is impossible, especially because every time there is an exam there are funerals, illnesses, all sorts of problems and you find yourself having to write not one but 8 or 10 different exams. It became a logistical nightmare. It's important, ideally, to have one on one interactions, but with classes that large you just can't afford to have students ask questions or you'll never get anywhere (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

I personally think the US high school system sucks, and here we are trying to do back-flips to compensate and remediate. I'm still trying to figure out what it is that they do in high school. Advising here is just as problematic. The whole purpose of advising is to try and

disentangle the system to find out all the classes you have to take and such. Advising should be based more on mentoring. I don't think we do a good job here of nurturing people as individuals (Assistant Professor, Natural Sciences).

With graduate students it's like preaching to the choir. When I chose to become a teacher I didn't want to just talk to the converted, though. I wanted to reach people who weren't already convinced and modify their world. I mean, I've imagined that I've reached some students, but "some" is a bit of a cop-out. I just don't think that many of our students want to change their mind. Many of these students are resentful when you try and give them information that does not validate their opinion. So it makes me think that I'm a cop-out and that I should have done something that has more direct action in the practical world. But you know, you get complacent into the self-congratulatory nature of a job like this and you just keep on doing it. You know, it's easier than doing something that really counts. I don't feel that I've taken the moral course that I planned (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

The classroom is a place where all sorts of things could happen. It's a free place. So, as a teacher one may try to make the classroom a more truthful, open, and authentic place, but it's difficult. Bureaucracy, student preparation, the teacher, and the administrators often get in the way. For example, accountability and evaluations, like standardized tests, can be problematic, because they're supposed to count something but they end up being false assessments (Professor, Humanities).

Students think classes should be entertaining. We live in a leisure society, and this is a problem with American culture, you know. I put a lot of time into creating my lectures and my notes, and it bothers me immensely when I go to a class and all they want is entertainment (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

An additional source of grief for professors is grading. Many professors feel that students put too much emotional energy on their grades, and as a result the grading process becomes stressful for everyone involved. Grade-begging is so common that many professors have one or two stories of moments when their sense of authenticity was at stake. Refusing to compromise on a grade previously assigned may be a source of authenticity, but the opposite case is probably much more common, when a professor feels inauthentic for passing a border-line graduate student on a doctoral exam, or when raising an undergraduate student's course grade:

I had one experience when a student came in with a C-. It was a borderline grade and he was trying to negotiate for a higher grade because that was his last semester and there was an issue of a scholarship involved or whatnot. I talked about it with my colleagues and found out he had failed the class before and this was his last semester and was not planning on coming back. So I gave him a higher grade. And a few months later I found out that he had benefited from that to get into nursing school (Instructor, Natural Sciences).

A final issue that deserves our attention is the presentation of self in the classroom. Teaching – lecturing in particular – is a public performance, and as such it demands professors to be skilled at impression management. Many of the professors who feel authentic teaching explained that their sense of authenticity comes from playing a role to which they feel closely attached.

There is something of the theatrical performance that I'm going to miss. You step on, you feel the adrenaline pumping, and all of a sudden you're on the stage and all the attention is on you (Professor, Social Sciences).

Teaching is like a performance. You really get into this show mode. Everyone who likes teaching will tell you that it's not just another role that you play, but it's your authentic self, and when you perform it right everything gets very electric, discussions get animated, students participate, and everything goes well (Instructor, Humanities).

I will offer further reflections on this issue in the next and final chapter.

(In)Authenticity in the Context of Research

As professors told their stories of how they chose to work in academia, their passion for acquiring knowledge transpired vividly and constantly. There are certain intangibles in learning about people's passions that make reporting and summarizing truly difficult for a qualitative researcher. The intangibles to which I refer are mostly nonverbal cues such a slow, comfortable, inspired, and relaxed pace of speech or possibly a frenzied and enthusiastic one. No matter what their form was, such signs would unequivocally betray the presence of a true and meaningful self profoundly invested in a strong emotional bond with the object of storytelling. As it turns out, these intangibles would most often make their appearance whenever professors would speak about their passion for research and learning. In this section I attempt to describe the content and form of this passion, by focusing on professors' experiences of authenticity in the context of research. Later in this section, I will discuss the frustrations and the moments of inauthenticity in the same context.

There are two main objects to which professors' authenticity is directed in the research realm: the pleasure of discovery and the sense of social worth of one's research. The pleasures of discovery, largely defined, were best described to me by a professor in psychology, whose eyes were almost moved to tears as he spoke:

It's a wonderful feeling to come up with an idea and discover something that didn't exist before. It's the joy of... well, there are two aspects. One aspect is the joy of conceptualizing something and seeing some idea, and then seeing if it can get done. There's a good example of that: I was reading a book chapter and I saw something that struck my attention. So I went back and read it again and again and I thought: you know what, I can test that hypothesis! Nobody had done that, and I knew I could do it in a very different way. And so I think about it and I go and draw it out. And so there is really the joy of conceptualizing something and the freedom of going in and asking nature a question. And the other aspect is when I'm doing clinical work and I'm working with kids together with my graduate students and I can see my graduate students progress and mature (Professor, Social Sciences).

There are two aspects that this professor finds authenticating in research. One is the pleasure of finding out something, of being able to play with an idea and seeing it take shape in the research process. Such discovery, such element of uniqueness, of novelty, or originality is connected to the creative power of the self. Such element of novel creation and discovery is authenticating simply because it allows professors – and most creative people in general – to find an aspect of their true and unique self in their unique work. The next excerpt brings this to light:

I had an idea for my dissertation that my committee wasn't particularly fond of. I wanted to observe an aspect related to gender and my committee thought it wasn't important enough to be included in my dissertation, but they let me use it in my survey and they let me collect data on it, provided I wouldn't touch upon it in my dissertation. I got my dissertation done, published a few pieces from it, some were totally cranked out, some were nicer, but anyway, three years later I decided to go back to that issue of gender and I published a piece on it in a top-journal. And now it's getting reprinted, and it's getting cited all over the place and it really is a good contribution to the field that makes me feel good about myself (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

The second aspect that the psychology professor mentioned above relates to the worth of one's research, to its impact on people's lives. Research is driven by individual curiosity, but it is also often directly applicable to the solution of important problems. Seeing that one's research can be used to solve problems and push progress, or seeing that one's artistic performance truly has the power to bring beauty to life is a deeply authenticating experience, as the following excerpts show:

But it's the study of gender, the scientific contribution, that's where my authenticity comes from. To allow people to realize that gender plays a role in the development of democracy, to make them question gender policy... (Professor, Social Sciences).

You know I came to work here during a week when the air looked like that [shows picture of smoky skies with fields burning in the background]. I said to myself gee, when I moved here in 1989 there was none of this stuff, what's going on? At that time I was walking to work, about mile each day, and my lungs started to hurt. I thought, gee if I wanted to breathe air

like that I would have stayed in Los Angeles! I wondered if anybody knew what was in that. I asked around, did some research. Nobody knew what was in it. I decided to test it. I mean, it wasn't my area of research, but I caught up and did the research and found out. Here was a problem that as a chemist I would approach, an everyday problem that had killed two people in the area. It took me two years. It cost me \$6,000 of my own money, but I figured it out (Professor, Natural Sciences).

The connection, almost the *fusion* between researcher and object of research is of great importance. Whenever this connection fails to come to life a sense of detachment will arise and lead to boredom, loss of interest, and inauthenticity. As this musician explained (see excerpt below), without such connection the true self is lost:

There are times when you feel inauthentic when you perform. There are times when you have to play a certain piece that you just cannot connect with. But you have to play. It's like telling a story without really knowing it. It's pretty bad. You need to connect with a piece psychologically, emotionally, spiritually, and if you do not have enough time to prepare for it, you'll feel pretty bad about yourself (Associate Professor, Humanities).

Feelings of inauthenticity also arise when professors feel that their research has no impact on others, no social value. Martha – the assistant professor in anthropology that we have come to know earlier – feels that the “system” has a tendency to foster useless research that has value only in relation to itself. As she put it: “we judge the value of research by looking to see how many times we've been cited.” She then added:

I feel guilty or I feel as though I sold out. Because it seems to me that I'd have more direct impact on the university if I had done applied anthropology. Yeah, I feel like a fraud. I feel as though what I should really be doing is something that affects directly the lives of people in need, in fact what I'm doing is try to do that VERY indirectly by affecting the lives of people who have way way way too much power, as I have way too much, and I am imagining that it will somehow trickle down. But I don't think that I have too much of an effect. The research that I do is useful to the extent that I can use it in the classroom and not to the extent that it can be published and circulated to a bunch of other anthropologists who nod their heads and say yeah this is so true. What I want to do is talk to people who otherwise wouldn't have talked about it, whatever it is. I don't think conventional research is wrong; it's just not what I want do.

Research is a source of many pleasures for professors, but it is just as likely to cause much frustration, stress, anger, and resentment. Professors in the Natural Sciences and to less extent in the Social Sciences are especially concerned with having to "sell out and chase the money trail," as one professor put it and others mentioned, however in different words. This means that professors may feel inauthentic while focusing their attention on subject matter that is uninteresting but well-funded. Assistant professors are particularly subject to having to "chase the money trail":

Until I have tenure I don't feel comfortable taking risks. Therefore, I'm mostly doing research in one area that I'm not closely interested in, but I know it will get me tenure (Assistant Professor, Natural Sciences).

Before getting tenure the liberty is fairly limited. I did feel that I had to go where the money was and I went off into a field that I wasn't very interested in. And I spent eight, nine years on that, and I'm still proud of that work but I feel that wasn't really me, there was little bit of unhappiness there, but then I came back to what I love there wasn't money there, but I don't care (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

Everywhere there is money we go for it. We get money from the defense department, I got money from NSF, I got money from various corporations, private money, foundations, non-private foundations. We have also had contracts instead of grants, which means the money is specifically given for a purpose (Professor, Natural Sciences).

The money trail does not lead exclusively into Natural Sciences laboratories; professors in the Social Sciences too know that extramural grant money may make the difference between being promoted and not being promoted:

When I received word of my NSF grant I basically turned to my wife and said "I think I officially got tenured." Once I got my NSF grant the clock wasn't ticking as loudly (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

In the Social Sciences, while professors are aware of the extent to which the "get grants or perish game" informs their work, they are also well aware that such "game" is not as intense at other universities, as we learn from the following excerpt:

The university here, they encourage you to get funded. They want you to get funded, and they like you a lot if you do. But they don't expect you, as part of your terms of employment, to have funding. When I was at [Private-University] even full-tenured professors would be moved out of their laboratory if their grants lagged. I don't want to be at a university that says: "you have to do all these things and you still have to pay for your research." Here we say that we may not be the best research university in the world, but we support your research. And if you get grants everybody is better off (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

Professors need the support of grant money for a variety of reasons. Obviously grant money allows them to have a higher prestige in the department, and just as obviously it makes it easier to conduct research and publish innovative work. But professors also need to "keep the ball rolling" in order to support their research program and all the people involved in it:

The last few years I haven't been getting any grants, and it's been very, very stressful. When you do biopsychology, it's very costly, and I need to have at least \$10,000 a year. This summer will be the very first summer in eight years where I can't hire any graduate students. It bothers me because I can't offer that opportunity to my students, but it's also stressful because if I don't have funding then I don't have a research program anymore. The department really can't afford to support my work (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

Once you've been working so hard to build up the momentum, then I go into my lab and I see a dozen people that I need to feed. And that I can't just say screw them and not write proposals (Professor, Natural Sciences).

Such practices, however, can be deeply inauthenticating. Grants require professors to focus on business matters, such as furnishing a lab, justifying expenses, making purchases, employing various personnel, and so forth. When professors who are truly passionate about discovery and research find themselves “managing,” and “doing business” unhappy sentiments are likely to arise:

I'm like an entrepreneur that has constantly to bring in funding, though I hate to be a businessman. Everybody that goes into physics goes into it because they really like to do what they do, but once you become an academic you have to be a business man, you have to schmooze a little bit, you have to learn the right people to contact to bring in funding and I really do hate that part of it (Professor, Natural Sciences).

Interestingly enough, once again, instructors may have it easier. Even though none of the instructors with whom I spoke were expected or rewarded for doing research, all did. Their research was purely curiosity-driven, and they often coupled it with applications to classroom activities. It is somewhat ironic that an instructor, who is not paid and not is expected to do research, can find the opportunity to feel so authentic in the context of research “outside of the game” as one instructor put it. Said instructor in the Natural Sciences had graduated from a very prestigious university and had been exposed to the realities of the “game” as a doctoral student, while observing his constantly over-preoccupied advisor:

You really stop doing research once you get in that professor position. Your job is really to write papers and write grant applications. You're directing research, but you're really not doing it anymore. You're in an office, all day; dealing with the politics. And it just struck me

as “wow, that’s really not what I wanted to do!” One of the perks of this job here is that I get my little lab here and I get to do demonstrations and play with things without that overhead of constantly having to worry about where the money for this is. [...] I get good students in here and I do research with them, so in some sense I get the best of both worlds. It’s not the kind of research that gets you the big respect, again that’s because it’s all judged in terms of the dollar that’s coming in (Instructor, Natural Sciences).

Indeed “the game” ends up leading many (but not all) professors to feel inauthentic, mostly for having to chase external recognition and the validation of a community that is more political than impartial. To professors it is no secret that the money is where economic interests are, and economic interests are always tied to political ones. Research in politically critical fields, such as critical linguistics and postcolonial studies is under-funded – Martha explained – because public administrations “have no interest in laying down the foundations for truly emancipatory and revolutionary research.” As Martha suggested, “the game” may end up making risk-taking research practically unfeasible and institutionalizing work of a “conservative” nature:

It really pisses me off, the idea that I have to be a fundraiser for the university. There is a lot of work that you can do in cultural anthropology and linguistics that comes without outside money, and yet it loses value because it comes without outside funding. There are two functions of outside funding. One is to institutionalize work. Money validates an academic discipline. The second is to fund the university. And I just resent the hell out of that one. I think it is wrong to value work in proportion to the amount of money that I bring. That is evil (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

Resisting “the game” may be a source of professors’ authenticity, for some professors, for a very simple reason: by refusing to abide by the rules of the system these professors choose to remain coherent with their self-meanings and therefore to stay true to themselves. Of course, resisting to playing “the game” may cause a professor to miss out on promotion, salary increases and more. In many cases, however, authenticity is a more meaningful motivation:

I did everything my tenure mentor suggested I do, except for one thing. I went to the national meetings but I did not do one thing that she asked me to do. She told me to go talk to people and network, and I can’t do it. I CANNOT do it. I can’t, I can’t do it. I can’t go talk to people like that; it’s not in my nature (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

That’s where I had to be true to myself and just say that I’ll do what I want to do, and in that sense it makes me perfectly happy. The tradeoff is that one of the reasons I had to write those textbooks was to get money to pay for my lab that I couldn’t get funded otherwise. Because my work is not highly practical and highly related to the economy – you know, I tend to look at big questions like where do humans come from, where did the first mammals come from, and those are big, philosophical, almost religious questions – so in a sense I get light recognition for addressing those questions (Associate Professor, Natural Sciences).

I have modest research accomplishments, but I’m proud of them because of my motivation in writing. I feel that they weren’t done out of the motive to achieve an academic quest, but they were from the heart, and they were really based on a genuine quest for the truth. It was my decision. And so I feel that is sort of self-affirming rather than done to achieve rank, or standing, or recognition from others. I try to follow the path because then you really have a

uniqueness about your work and your life and it's not yet another formula paper that you see so often in academic life. [...] Seeking fame is not very important to me, and I'm not very good at it. Sometimes it feels that the Hollywood mentality so typical of American culture is being transplanted into the culture of the university (Associate Professor, Humanities).

(In)Authenticity in the Context of Service and Governance

There should be little uncertainty about this: service and institutional governance are not fun. Professors have made a conscious choice to be researchers and/or teachers and have trained expressly to become expert professionals. On the other hand, none of the professors I interviewed told me they chose to work in academia in order to become a dean, a senior administrator, or a department chair. Furthermore, none of them had received professional training as an administrator. Service and governance are then seen, for the most part, as a nuisance.

As a faculty member goes through the steps of the academic ladder, from assistant professor to full professor, she may expect to be asked to perform more and more service as time goes by. There are no differences in this across departments; every tenured professor is expected to contribute. If any differences exist, these come from personal preferences. Some faculty believe that service is a waste of their time and energy, and therefore they will often negotiate ways to do as little as possible. Others see service as a necessary evil, and will do enough to feel at peace with themselves and colleagues. A small minority, mostly because of their natural talent, are perceived to be good at it. These faculty members will then be asked to do more and more, simply "because somebody has to do it." This is how most professors will end up becoming department chairs or program directors at one point or another in their career: the story is always the same: "somebody has to do it and I was afraid nobody would do a decent enough job." Then, there is a very small minority who actually enjoy institutional governance tasks. I provide an overview of the major issues in the context of service, in relation to the experience of (in)authenticity, by reporting a few

interview excerpts, generally drawn from answers to such question as “how are service and governance rewarding or unrewarding to you?” and “could you tell me of experiences of (in)authenticity that you may have had in relation to service or governance?”

The most common statement that MSU professors made about service is: “If I could, I would get rid of the service.” The reasons are often the same: service chores may be necessary, somehow, but for the most part they are trite, meaningless, unimaginative bureaucracy that leads professors away from their true self and true passions. Department chairs – who dedicate almost all their time to administration – are often very unsatisfied:

For me, the administrative side is the one that I struggle with. I don't feel that I'm very good at it, and I have to tell you that I was never trained to be an administrator. And that is one of the faults of MSU within the department-chair-structure. People get into it because they're good in the field, not because they know how to lead. Not that I feel that I'm a good leader, but the things that I have done have not come about because of the fact that I have really learned how to be a good department head. I don't know how to manage the finances as well as I should. So it is research and it is teaching that is sacrificed. Something has to go; it isn't possible to keep all those balls in the air. You know, it really wasn't my choice. The previous chair was getting really burned out. So he called me in here and said, I have to ask you something, we need a new chair to run this place and I really can't think of anybody here that could run this place. I really did not want to. I had to sacrifice in certain ways in doing it. So, I said, well, for the good of the program I will. But it wasn't without a great deal of soul searching, and a lot of sacrifices, but I'm close enough to the end of my career that it's okay, if I were a younger professor with more need to improve myself and become an internationally known scholar I wouldn't be able to do this (Professor, Chair, Humanities).

Sometimes I am being untrue to myself when I'm consciously bullshitting. It's always a mean toward an end; it's what I do as a chair. Like, I know that when I have to ask something from the dean I know that I have to put it in such a way that it will be a benefit to the dean, to the college, and the university at large (Professor, Chair, Humanities).

Last year I think I spent a total of eight days doing research. Being a chair can be frustrating. I think I excel at that, but I like to do research, and I like to teach, but there aren't enough hours in the week. It's very frustrating. One of the biggest problems with doing administration is that I don't have time for my graduate students. Right now I have a few graduate students who are really struggling with their thesis, and I feel that they wouldn't be struggling as much if I had more time for them. So I'm worried about that. [...] I do stay awake a lot thinking of all the different things that I have to take care of. So when I spend time ruminating on all kinds of administrative decisions, then I stand back and I think, why am I doing this? It's frustrating (Professor, Chair, Social Sciences).

Even if a professor is never asked to chair a department, she is still asked to perform some service and governance duties. But whereas all tenured professors do some service, no one I interviewed, with the exception of two professors, feels authentic doing any of it. One of these exceptions is Carl, whose experiences as a program-director I discussed in chapter eight. Carl takes pleasure in "being against" an institution that for so long has tried to "marginalize" his research program and even tried to "shut [him] down." His administration is a personal battle against an antagonist that has more power than he does.

Daniel's story is different. Daniel realized as a young performer that his future in the world of classical music was limited. He discovered that he derived much pleasure by doing administrative work, and decided to dedicate all of his energy to music, not by teaching or performing, but by making the teaching of music at MSU better. His true self was still in music but his strategies had changed. It was amazing to see how Daniel's self-meanings as a musician worked in the context of service; he literally described directing a program much like he would have directed an orchestra:

I never wanted to lead by control; I wanted to lead by consensus. [...] I became very interested into administration and I had always been interested in helping people more than in my own projects. Working as a chair, and being a very other-oriented person, I had a very difficult time getting many me-oriented professors to see that their egoism went against the interest of the department as a whole. It's less of what I'm interested in than a synthesis of what everybody is interested in. [...] So my inclination to be expressive and to allow for my individual expression, you know, that essential core value for my self is there in everything that I do. It's there when I play in an orchestra and it's there when I do administrative works. You know if you're simply *dealing* with a budget, if the budget is *just there*, it's meaningless, and you can't advocate for it, you can't even feel good when you get an addition to it (Professor, Humanities).

Daniel's experience of authenticity shows us that a professor may feel true to himself/herself even in the context of service and governance, as long as his self-meanings allow for him to feel coherent with his conduct.

Audiences and Colleagues

In the earlier section on teaching and research we have seen how professors experience such activities as lecturing, grading, managing grants, writing, and so forth. With the exception of the issue of professors' connection with students, however, I neglected to discuss how professors' perceive the people with whom they most closely interact, such as department colleagues and peers at other institutions. I asked professors if and how collegiality was important to them, and I found that collegiality is very important for a professors' career. Not only are professors granted tenure for being a "good colleague" – among other things – but a department's environment may make a tremendous difference in the life of faculty by providing valued resources as emotional support, guidance and advice, technical help, friendship and companionship, and more. Do MSU professors feel that collegiality matters? And do the nine MSU departments I studied provide their faculty with such collegiality? Once again there are some important differences across departments. Faculty in the Natural Sciences seemed to be the most isolated from one another, and the most unaware of each other's work interests and even presence. In the Humanities and Social Sciences, faculty in philosophy, music, psychology and political science seemed instead to be living in much peace and harmony and to find such a friendly atmosphere to be conducive to good work. These two professors (see excerpts below) manifested their preference for a good collegial environment:

There is little pressure here. Our department is very good at being very supporting, and very good at giving you early warnings if you go off track. The senior faculty in this department are very careful to make sure that the junior faculty are treated as citizens, rather than scrubs. For example the junior faculty get all the travel money (Professor, Chair, Social Sciences).

My colleagues are very supportive. If my creative outlet was going to be publications, they would support that. If my creative support was performance, they would support that (Associate Professor, Humanities).

My faculty colleagues have been very understanding, and they have a lot of respect for me, and are very appreciative of me. They have made a strong concerted effort to make themselves available for me and mentor me toward tenure. And you know, you don't make a lot of money in this business, so a pat on the back goes a long way (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

Collegiality matters a great deal in relation to the experience of (in)authenticity. A professor in Political Science explained that in the recent past her department was deeply divided and this caused her to spend much energy in fighting political battles instead of focusing on her work:

This is a really hard working department. It has changed a lot. People get along really well too now. This didn't used to be the case. There was a terrible division in the department with criminal justice faculty on one side and political scientists and the other side, and on top of that you had junior vs. senior faculty and also some gender issues. It was nasty. We would fight over classes, graduate TAs, resources, principles. All the old guard has left though; actually most of them are dead. But now it's very collegial and it's a very supportive environment.

I also learned that departmental divisions may translate into a highly stressful work environment when a coalition uses its superior power to pressure the other side into complying with their

demands. As said before, many professors enjoy being left to their own devices to perform their work, and therefore having to concentrate on peripheral issues (such as frequent faculty meetings) may be a source of inauthenticity for them, as the following excerpt shows:

I hate meetings, I hate paperwork, and I hate the organizational stuff. People who do that are really good at networking and I'm not. I'm shy. There are people who love meetings. They go to meeting and they talk and talk and never get anything done. I hate the "meeting people" (Professor, Humanities).

Many of the professors with whom I spoke had stories of terrible conflicts among colleagues. Chairs are often responsible for the mediation and reconciliation of professors (much to their own chagrin), but sometimes a grudge can last for years, for the most seemingly insignificant reason, as a department chair in the Natural Sciences explained:

There are some peculiar people that get into academia. But sometimes people become irrational and they begin to irrationally dislike another person – and even highly educated people do this – and other times it's a question of turf. Someone may want more of everything that's available, they want more resources, more attention, or they want to be more dominant in the department. And they'll get in conflict with someone else who feels the same way but has a completely different perspective. And so you have completely irreconcilable points of view.

Personality issues may be reinforced by generational/cultural differences, and whenever this happens department will be divided along line of the "old guard" and the "new guard," as it is

currently happening at MSU in anthropology, for example, and it happened in the recent past in physics and political science. Such conflicts have caused some professors to have their promotion delayed and other desires unmet.

Aside from the “waste of time,” however necessary at times a faculty meeting may be, meeting colleagues in formal departmental meetings may turn into a difficult experience for young professors that are low in the departmental hierarchy. Many of the assistant professors and instructors explained that a faculty meeting is not the place for them to express their opinions and take strong stance, and many senior faculty indirectly agreed with them.

I’m careful in department committees. There are a number of people that you have to be careful with (Assistant Professor, Social Sciences).

You need to keep your mouth shut until you have tenure. It is a constraint that helps people grow collegially (Professor, Natural Sciences).

“Shushing” oneself may be a cause of inauthenticity for some who want to share their opinions, but others may not care to speak up. Instructors have little power in a department, and rarely do they feel comfortable speaking up at a faculty meeting, but for many of them, in the majority of cases, this may not be a concern, as the following excerpt testifies:

Sometimes I wish I had more say but I don’t worry about it. In the things that I’m involved I have plenty of say. For example I get to teach off the textbooks that I want to use, nobody would come in and say anything about that to me, and I have a lot of say in how I want to structure my class, so in those things that really involve me and matter to me I have a lot of

say. I don't need a whole lot of say in other parts of the department (Instructor, Natural Sciences).

An entirely different set of possibilities for professors' interactions is opened up by electronic communication. Even though "virtual faculty" may be nothing but a buzzword these days, what is changing is the geographical range of interactions in which faculty can engage because of the Internet. A professor may be isolated in his own department and have more interaction with a peer across the world than with one across the hall:

I'm just now learning a new set of techniques that no one has used in my area. And I think what also keeps me excited is that I have a friend who's at another university, and who's a measurement theorist, and so every time I run into some problem I send him an email and if we're working on something together we might exchange several emails per day. And there is a colleague of mine, who's from Australia and whom I've never met. And this is an interesting story, actually. I was working with a graduate student on a problem and we ran into this article that addressed exactly what we were interested in finding out and it was using measures similar to what we wanted to use. So I sent him an email to ask him a question and he replied right away and sent me the entire dataset that he had used. So I have stimulating colleagues who are not here and who really keep my academic life going (Professor, Social Sciences).

While collegiality within the department is important, interaction beyond the walls of the university is just as important, as the last excerpt reminds us. Teaching is mostly a local activity, as it ends in the university classroom, but research is a cosmopolitan activity as its products may reach

around the world. Professors' audiences then are not only university students, but also peers from other universities across the country and the globe. How much does the approval of such peers matter to professors? The answer is straightforward: it matters a great deal. The objective value of research or performance can only be measured by consensus on its validity, and professors at MSU are well aware of the importance of being verified by their colleagues' approval. Approval and positive reception are quite often connected to self-feelings of authenticity:

I love it when attorneys call me and they want copies of my article or they need to ask me questions. Or when I was invited by NPR to go speak as an expert, and then I received letters from inmates, and lawyers, I mean it's a great pat on the back. I love it because it's not only my peers who appreciate my work, but it's actually evident that it has a greater effect within society (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

I am at a point in my career when I get invited to write articles for books, and it's very flattering (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

How many times have we busted our ass, put together a research project, written a paper, gone to a conference, and there's fifteen people in the room, and after you're done with your talk there are no questions, and you go: "why did I just do that?" Oh gosh, I don't know, like I said we don't go into this profession because of the money, but if you go to conferences and you do get congratulated by your peers – and we do depend on peer approval quite bit in this profession – and if we get our ego stroked a little bit, it's a good thing, I mean, we don't get much money we might as well get our egos stroked a little bit. We have a different value system than most Americans do, I mean why would we spend our

money, I mean our own money and buy a plane ticket and go to a city where a conference is to give a talk and get something out of it if not for some peer approval. I'm part of this culture that, you know, I like to receive approval from my peers. At the same time you have to be tough because you are going to be rejected. Our culture can be very adversarial (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

Martha, the assistant professor in the Social Sciences whose feelings of inauthenticity have been at the center of our attention before, had a different perspective on peer approval. For her, research is so insulated that the measure of its validity is absolutely meaningless:

I think that the goal of faculty is to contribute to their discipline and be recognized by other practitioners of that discipline. I think that's fine, and we have got to do that, but I think that it takes over and people cease to remember what the whole point of it was, and now the whole point of it is to get another article published and get yourself cited thirty-six more times. If you aren't affecting how people live, who gives a crap? I'm just tired of being around a bunch of self-congratulatory academics and I tend to be just like them. I want to change people who wouldn't otherwise change.

Martha is not the only one who feels inauthentic around peers. "Putting on an act" at a conference is also another way to be untrue to one's self, according to others. For professors whose self-meanings are invested in teaching, the approval of students is also authenticating. Faculty receive constant feedback from students through formal end-of-course teaching evaluations, and through informal praise, and both can be very meaningful in different ways:

Throughout my life I've often said I don't care about what this person or that person thinks about me. That's not true. I realize that when I get good student evaluations it gives me a great thrill and I hear the really wonderful comments, it makes me go "aww." So that means a lot to me (Associate Professor, Humanities).

I try to keep feedback from students coming. Without that you risk becoming arrogant and detached. If you allow that kind of feedback going that you allow yourself to stay in check and try to stay real. Sometimes I get feedback from students, like when little things I've done in class and I found out they've really grown as individuals and intellectually. For example I have been discussing the issue of abortion in class and I received just recently a letter, a touching little note, from a female student who just this semester has had to make a difficult choice in regard to abortion. She felt that we treated the issue in the class neither in a whitewashed manner nor in an extremist fashion and through our class interaction she really felt that she understood her position much better (Associate Professor, Humanities).

Negative feedback from students or peers can affect professors deeply. A letter of rejection from a journal or the grumbling of dissatisfied students can make a professor who has invested much emotional energy in developing good work feel inauthentic:

There are times when I wondered whether I'm in the right profession. I've had to teach world civilization classes where there are 120 students who don't want to be there. And the classroom I was in was shaped in such a way, that it was an acoustic nightmare. Every minimal noise would echo throughout the room. The class wouldn't listen to me. I was having problems with conduct. Students would get up and walk out, and walk back in. I put

so much effort in developing lectures that would give them the philosophical background necessary to understand a civilization in progress that was not founded on the linear progress toward truth, and anyway, when the evaluations came back, I was well below the average as a teacher. One of the students in the evaluations said that the lecture was mind-numbingly dull. My lectures were not mind-numbingly dull! (Professor, Humanities).

In sum, the approval of students, department colleagues, and peers at other universities is a very important component of faculty work. Professors are often very uncertain about how their work is received by others for two reasons. First, it is always difficult to know what students really think. Second, research has a very slow turn-around. Something that is researched and written today may only get reviewed four months later, accepted for publication after three more months, and finally come out in press another year later. If citations are a good measure of the validity of one's work, years may go by before work is clearly recognized. When recognition finally comes a professor may feel that his/her work was truly meaningful not just for oneself, but for important reference groups as well.

Time and Money

Professors at MSU, irrespective of rank and discipline, all wish they had more time to perform their work. For some, as we have seen, time pressures cause feelings of inauthenticity, whereas for others tenure and the promotion to full professor represent the freedom to take small breaks from the time crunch. In an attempt to understand how long work days and weeks, salary, and issues of (in)authenticity are related I asked all forty-six professors how they felt about the amount of time they work and the pay they receive. As a general trend, professors at MSU feel they are overworked and underpaid, but not exploited. Exploitation would occur – professors explained – if it were not their *choice* to work so much for so little.

The professors who seem to be most affected by the time crunch are assistant professors. An assistant professor striving for tenure has to produce a great volume of work and spend a lot of time at the office, and this may be cause of inauthenticity especially for those professors who care about spending time with their families. Before I began to conduct interviews I expected to find gender to be an important factor for how professors experience pressures and how divide themselves between work and family, but I did not find this to be true. This male professor in psychology (see excerpt below) explained how difficult it was for him to have a life outside of academia before getting tenure:

I didn't get married until 1995, but we knew each other since 1984. In between we broke up half a dozen times. My wife would tell you that I only become available for commitment after I got tenure. And I would laugh and say it's not true, but she'd tell you that I only had time for a relationship after I got tenure, and that's why we got married when we did. And I disagree with her but she makes a good case. Maybe after tenure I really did realize that there was more to life (Professor, Social Sciences).

I chose not to quantify how much time professors – of different ranks – work on a daily or weekly basis, and instead relied on a different and perhaps more telling indicator. Almost every time I asked the question: “how many hours do you work?” I received laughter for an answer.

Whenever I complain about my job to a friend I say: “it'd be nice if I only had one job” (Professor, Chair).

What I wanted was a career that granted me some prestige and relative autonomy, and not having to punch a clock, although it turned out that the clock punches me. We don't get to punch a clock; the clock punches us (Professor, Chair).

Days, nights, breaks. I never had a break. It always irritates me when people say college professors take summers off. I think it is exploitation and I've complained about this before with my chair. He didn't disagree with me; he said that whenever I don't feel like taking responsibilities I can say no. And I have started doing that. I've started saying no to people, but I have to do some things, with service especially I can say no but I have to be doing something because I'll be evaluated on it. But after all it's my job, and it's my choice, so I can't bitch about it too much. But on the other hand we should make this place more employee-friendly. I think we ought to unionize, for example. It's very hard to have a life outside of academia. I call it a lifestyle, rather than a job. It's very difficult, I have to set some boundaries for things that I do just for me. Sometimes it bothers me, but then again because I've been doing it for so long, it doesn't affect me as much (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

Once again the issue of choice is important. Professors are willingly making the decision to work so much because this is their passion:

This is a very large part of my identity. I'm not sure that I would be happy in another profession. I always loved to be in the university, I love to be around students and I love the atmosphere, and I do work a lot of hours. And after my second or third year when I was working eighty hours a week, I even developed outside interests. I mean, back then I ate,

drank, and slept on the job. Now I only work fifty hours a week, and only forty in the summer, but I don't get paid in the summer. I still work some weekends and holidays, and stuff like that. And I take some time off too. And going to a conference is like taking time off (laughs) (Associate Professor, Social Sciences).

Many professors feel that education is not a valued priority in contemporary society. MSU professors are aware that relative to the majority of the population they are quite affluent. However, most admit being somewhat resentful of the fact that colleagues at other universities have higher salaries than they do. Many professors are especially upset with the fact that MSU administrators, and just about any coach on the football team have higher salaries than they do. Dissatisfaction with salary does not affect professors' authenticity directly – since self-meanings are a form of internal and intrinsic motivation – but indirectly it makes them feel that, since there is less social recognition and value for their work than there should be:

I feel like I'm at the peak of my productivity and I feel that there are no rewards for it. I think of people at other schools and we're behind them. It's not even as prestigious as it used to be. If you talk to the general population they think that we're a bunch of lazy people who are always on vacation (Professor, Natural Sciences).

Interestingly enough, instructors – who are the poorest paid – have also fewer complaints about their salary. This may be due to the fact that most of the instructors I interviewed had made the conscious choice to stay away from tenure-track positions, and all the money and prestige that these entail. An instructor then may have internalized limitations and thinks of himself as deserving of less money. This is an interesting phenomenon that would require further empirical investigation

on issues of self-esteem, perceptions of justice, and other issues that lay outside the scope of my research. What is more interesting to me, in relation to my focus on ruling relations, is that instructors feel resentful toward MSU. These instructors (see below) explain:

There is a letter that comes at the end of March or beginning of April that says “thank you so much for your service to the institution, we would not be what we are without you, and thank you for your hard work...” so basically it says that I’m fired. And along with it comes a letter from my chair saying: “this is what you’ll be teaching next semester!” (laughs). Psychologically, it’s quite a lovely state (Instructor, Humanities).

As instructors we get this form letter every so often that basically says unless you heard otherwise you’re fired..., I mean, then you can get hired again and again of course, and then fired again... but it’s another one of those demeaning things..., it’s pretty vile (Instructor, Humanities).

Most instructors, however, believe that their job is quite stable as the structure of teaching at MSU, with research being separate from teaching and researchers being separated from instructors, is “not likely to change any time soon.”

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION

I began my research study of MSU faculty's experience of (in)authenticity by posing the following question: How (to what extent, in what work contexts, and through what institutional processes) do faculty members experience (in)authenticity? After conducting and reporting on forty-six interviews with MSU faculty members I offer here a summary of their answers to my research question. Later, in the last section of this chapter I conclude with a final reflection on authenticity and power in the academic occupation.

Summary

To What Extent is (In)Authenticity Experienced?

Faculty members at MSU experience authenticity in two main forms: as peaks and as plateaus. Both forms are marked by the sensation of being true to one's self – the congruence between self-meanings and conduct, and the consequent self-feeling of being true to one's self-meanings.

Professors experience inauthenticity in two main forms: as nadirs and as lowlands. Both forms are marked by the sensation that one is being untrue to one's self, and/or that one's self feels false or meaningless. In the case of inauthenticity one feels that there is a lack of congruence between conduct and self-meanings and a self-feeling of being untrue to one's self-meanings.

MSU Faculty experience authenticity whenever there are no intrusions on their work. Such lack of intrusions allows them to dedicate fully to the pursuit of their passions, goals, values, and ideals. Professors then experience authenticity as a form of fusion with one's object of research/performance and/or by making an impact on those who benefit from their work such as students, administrators, peers, social groups, or society in general.

MSU professors experience inauthenticity whenever their freedom to pursue their passions, goals, values, and ideals is limited by others or even by conflicting roles and identities within themselves. Professors then experience inauthenticity as a feeling of being stifled and frustrated, or as a feeling of being meaningless, or as a feeling of being somehow obligated to do actions that violate one's self-meanings. In such cases professors feel that their research, teaching, and/or service/governance are meaningless, useless, or that they are incongruent with one's self-meanings.

It is very difficult to quantify authenticity and state that x feels more authentic than y, as it was not the purpose of this study to *measure the intensity* of the experience of (in)authenticity across individuals. However, certain such generalizations could be made in a tentative fashion:

- There seemed to be no differences in relation to such variables as gender, race, or ethnicity of faculty members. However, we should keep in mind that almost everyone in the sample was white.
- There seemed to be differences in the extent to which tenured professors and untenured professors felt (in)authenticity. While it would be *wrong* to make a statement such as “assistant professors at MSU were less likely to experience authenticity than full professors,” it is reasonable to state that assistant professors in general experienced inauthenticity because of a number of restrictions imposed on their freedom to conduct research as they wished. It is also reasonable to state that tenured professors in general experienced inauthenticity because of a number of pressures imposed on their freedom to distribute their time and energy to what they wished. In other words, while many tenured professors lamented being pressured to do too much service/governance, many untenured professors lamented not being completely free to dedicate their energy to pursue research goals congruent with their self-meanings. There were numerous exceptions to these tendencies, however.

It was very clear that authenticity worked as a positive motivation and inauthenticity worked as a negative motivation. All faculty members I interviewed, in fact, believe that being true to one's self in the context of one's work was very important.

The experience of authenticity, as explained in part one and part two of this dissertation, is related to the perception that one's self and one's world are meaningful. MSU professors had chosen to become academics because they consciously made the choice to pursue their goals, values, ideals, and especially passions through the avenue of the academic profession. Even though for some such choice was less accidental than others, for all the academic profession allowed them at least in part to be true to themselves.

In What Contexts is (In)Authenticity Experienced?

Service/Governance is often a source of inauthenticity because professors choose to work in academia in order to pursue their passion for research and/or teaching. With the exception of one professor whose self-meanings had undergone considerable change over time and were now congruent with the work of administration, all professors had more emotional energy invested in teaching and/or research than in service/governance. Those who occasionally experienced authenticity in the realm of service/governance felt true to themselves insofar as they felt that their service/governance had a concrete value from which others could benefit. However, in the majority of cases and for most professors service/governance tasks led to experiences of inauthenticity because professors felt that they were engaging in time-consuming, boring, inconsequential activities.

Teaching is a source of authenticity whenever professors feel that they can make a significant impact on their undergraduate or graduate students' intellectual development. Authenticity in these cases comes from the feeling that one's self is connecting with others in a positive way. For many professors such connection is important because they place much value in education. In contrast,

professors feel most inauthentic when they feel that their teaching is meaningless. Professors may feel this way because they are unable to establish an emotional and intellectual connection with students. Whenever this happens teaching becomes a chore and a painful routine. In this case it is common for professor to complain that the quality of their students or the structure of classroom teaching (such as class size, topic, etc.) makes it impossible for their teaching to be truly meaningful.

All my informants have chosen to work in academia in order to have an occupation that would allow them to continue learning throughout their lives. Research is then an aspect of work in which they are naturally interested as it allows them to learn as well as to produce original knowledge and beauty. For both instructors and professors research is authenticating because it is deeply meaningful and intrinsically interesting. But research is also authenticating because it can have positive consequences for other people. Research becomes a source of inauthenticity whenever professors feel that what they are researching is something that has no meaning, or interest to them, or is something without any practical applications.

There are no differences across departments in relation to professors' experience of (in)authenticity in regards to service/governance.

In relation to teaching, it is more likely to find MSU professors who enjoy teaching in the humanities than it is in the natural sciences. Faculty members in the humanities are closer to students in general and especially to undergraduate students in particular. In general, faculty members in the natural sciences teach far less than their colleagues in the social sciences and humanities and dedicate themselves more to research. It is in the realm of research that most professors in the general sciences get close to students, and in particular to graduate students working for them in their labs. Faculty in the social sciences have elements typical of faculty in the humanities and in the natural sciences. Some psychologists and archeologists become quite close to graduate students working in their lab – much like natural scientists do – but they also spend more

time dealing with undergraduate education than their colleagues in biology, chemistry, and physics do.

In regards to research one thing is clear: all the instructors I interviewed – who are not expected to conduct research – enjoy more freedom in this realm of work than any of their tenured or tenure-track colleagues. Such freedom allows them to be independent to choose what they want to study and how they want to study it. Nevertheless, limited material and time resources make it difficult for instructors to dedicate much energy to research. This is not a great problem for many of them, since most of the instructors I interviewed were primarily interested in teaching. In regards to departmental differences in the realm of research, it is fair to say the following:

- Faculty in the natural sciences have the largest amount of resources (e.g. time, funds) to conduct research. But they also have the strongest pressures to secure grants and to publish in great volume. These professors are quite likely to feel inauthentic when their subfield is under-funded and outside of the mainstream. These professors are also quite likely to feel inauthentic when they have to “chase the money trail” but it is quite likely for them to feel authentic when they resist pressure. Instead, for those professors who are in well-funded subfields it is quite likely to experience authenticity regularly in the realm of research. Nevertheless, for professors in well-funded areas it is not an uncommon experience to feel untrue to themselves when much of their time is spent doing “business,” i.e. administering grants.
- Faculty members in the humanities seem to have the smallest amount of time and monetary resources, yet they also receive little institutional pressure to publish and basically no pressure to secure grant support. For them experiences of authenticity in the realm of research are common when they manage to find the time to dedicate themselves to the pursuit of their research interests.

- Professors in the social sciences are seemingly caught in a rapidly changing world. With the partial exception of some subfields in which grant support has been important for a long time, these professors feel the *new* pressure of having to secure grant support. For them authenticity is a difficult process of negotiation among competing goals and values, and it is common in social science departments to notice significant differences between the cultures of younger and older professors. Younger professors feel more institutional pressure than their older colleagues felt when they were young, but this does not result in drastically different experiences of (in)authenticity as younger professors now enter academia with clear expectations about the new nature of their work. In other words, younger professors make a conscious choice to enter a profession marked by declining freedom and privileges.
- There is a general agreement among professors in all departments that pressures to produce in large volume and time scarcity end up sacrificing the quality of publications.

As professors continue to work over time and move through ranks, their experience of authenticity undergoes important changes. As I spoke to senior faculty I learned that occasions that may have led them to feel authentic in the past were now less emotionally intense for them. As professors age the meanings of research, teaching, and service-related achievements change considerably. For example, a new publication is considerably less meaningful when a professor already has accumulated fifty or sixty. For some professors then only truly important research will be rewarding. For other professors institutional governance becomes more meaningful over time. Many senior faculty members feel authentic working as graduate studies coordinators, program directors, and department chairs even though they may have hated “wasting their time” on service/governance related matters early in their career. Finally for other older professors, teaching – especially graduate student supervision and mentoring – becomes more meaningful as time goes by.

As I spoke to younger faculty, I learned that tenure constituted an important temporal transition. Many assistant professors likened tenure to a “ticking clock” that seemingly ticks louder and louder as the sixth year draws nearer. Much like their senior counterparts, young assistant professors experience authenticity when they can fully dedicate themselves to their passions and interests. But for instance, in contrast to their older colleagues, young untenured faculty will find such experiences as receiving news of a manuscript accepted for publication rewarding. This is because it gets them closer to achieving the goal of tenure, which is very important at their career stage. Young assistant professors view tenure as moment when their freedom will increase, but in speaking with young associate professors I learned that receiving tenure did not radically alter their work. What is certain, as a professor put it, is that what truly matters is not *getting tenure* but instead *not getting it*.

Temporal transitions and career trajectories are especially interesting to observe in relation to the changing experience of inauthenticity. Some senior professors experience inauthenticity as they begin to feel more and more disenchanted over the years. When faculty begin to feel that their work is meaningless they lose their emotional attachment to their occupation and they feel stuck in the lowlands of inauthenticity, sometimes for years. Other professors may still retain their enthusiasm for some aspects of their work, but begin to dislike other aspects. For example, some senior professors may begin to find undergraduate teaching unrewarding, whereas others may feel inauthentic in their research writing, and others may experience inauthenticity “any time they have to deal with administrators.” Younger professors may feel that their career demands that they engage in conduct that violates their self-meanings for other reasons. For example, heavy work demands lead many young assistant professors to sacrifice the time they can dedicate to their families. Other assistant professors may feel that as tenure gets closer they need to re-focus their research on mainstream topics that will get them the departmental recognition they need to earn tenure. For

them such re-focusing may mean setting aside research topics in which they are truly interested and thus having to act incongruently with their self-meanings.

Institutional Forces and Authenticity

As I explained in chapters eight, nine, and ten many faculty members at MSU explicitly refer to the conventions and practices of their institution as “the game.” By “the game” they mean a set of contradictions between what is publicly avowed and what is actually valued. By “the game” they also mean a set of conventions and practices on tenure and promotion that are commonly shared by all faculty members. I highlighted two important components of “the game:”

- The first component is the role that extramural grants play in the occupation of professors. Grant support is necessary in the natural sciences, insufficient in the humanities, and irregular in the social sciences. All departments in the natural sciences and social sciences exert considerable pressure on professors to focus their research on topics likely to receive grant support. Such pressure is especially strong in the natural sciences, where lack of funding (i.e. the lack of a “research program”) clearly results in failed promotions. MSU places so much importance on getting extramural grant support that grantsmanship is now seemingly valued even more than success with publishing. Departments in the humanities, however, place much less emphasis on research and practically no emphasis on securing grants.
- MSU’s public slogan “Global Leaders: One on One” is hypocritical, almost all professors believe. The only one on one teaching occurs in music. Great individual attention to undergraduate students is also common in the philosophy department. Nevertheless, departments in the humanities struggle so much with their limited monetary resources that it becomes difficult for them to hire and keep true global academic stars employed for long. Both in the social sciences departments and in the natural sciences it is also difficult to hire

and keep global leaders employed at MSU for long. Some world class professors are employed by these departments, but it is quite common for these faculty members to be labeled “research-active” and thus to be expected to teach very little. Ironically, the clearest example of one on one teaching that is meant to develop successful talent is in the football program, as an associate professor remarked.

The conventions and practices of “the game” shape professors’ experience of (in)authenticity in significant ways. To begin with, pressures to publish may restrict professors’ freedom to re-distribute their time from one area of work to another. Pressures to publish in large volumes often cause professors to sacrifice teaching and may cause them to feel inauthentic if they believe that their self-meanings as a teacher are incongruent with the little teaching they actually do. Secondly, pressures to publish may force professors to “crank out” research pieces that fail to meet professors’ internal standards, which may cause some professors to feel inauthentic. Thirdly, pressures to seek grant support may result in professors feeling that they must “chase the money trail” and abandon their true research goals, passions, and ideals. Fourthly, pressures to secure constant grant support may cause in professors to feel inauthentic with their new role of “businesspeople” and “fundraisers.”

Nevertheless, “the game” *shapes*, but does not *determine* MSU professors’ feelings or conduct. As I explain further in the coda to this chapter “the game” is a negotiated order that allows professors to “play” it in different “styles.” Leaving aside the game metaphor, the negotiated order perspective allows us to make sense of the structure of academia and the power relations which inform it as fluid and negotiable, rather than fixed and determining. Professors in fact, no matter what their position is in the structure of work at MSU, have at least some power to shape the system in their favor and thus carve niches where they can be true to themselves. Some professors then may engage in form of active or passive resistance which allows them to feel authentic.

We should not forget that the structure of “the game” can even be the source of authenticity for some professors who view themselves as competitive players. At least one of my informants was explicit about this: “the game” can be fun to play.

The structure of work at MSU, and the distribution of resources in particular is the object of resentment of many professors. The greatest majority of professors at MSU feel underpaid and overworked. While all of them easily justify being overworked – after all it is their choice, they believe – many of them feel that their pay is simply insufficient when compared to colleagues at other universities or even when compared to MSU administrators. Professors in the humanities are especially negatively affected in this sense: many of them complain that an unjust reward structure favors their colleagues in the sciences. On the other hand, many professors in the natural sciences believe that their work subsidizes the humanities, and also believe that ultimately their work has a more direct application to society’s needs and problems.

Furthermore, most faculty in the humanities and to some extent even in the social sciences believe that socio-political priorities at the federal level have resulted in suffocating entire disciplines. As for politics at the state level, every professor I interviewed believes that state budget crises have affected work at MSU in a deeply negative way.

Coda

Authenticity and the Negotiated Order

My scope in writing the conclusion of this dissertation is to delineate the links between professors’ experience of (in)authenticity and the institutional practices and conventions of the university that employs them. I have found that institutional forces shape professors’ experiences and conduct in a variety of ways. Among the most interesting of my findings is the realization that the social organization of work at MSU is such that certain conventions are publicly avowed but contradicted in actual practice. Such “academic lies” – together with other more explicit

conventions and practices that are commonly shared in the social world of academic work – constitute a large component of what MSU professors call “the game.” Despite its negative connotations of falsity and hypocrisy, the structure of “the game” does *not* outright falsify the meaning of academic work for professors, and neither does it determine the experiences and conduct of its players. In fact, as I found, authenticity is still possible and is quite a common experience and an important source of motivation for professors. Authenticity is possible, I argue, because professors engage in negotiating practices with both their institution and their own self.

Negotiated practices allow professors to assign their own meanings to “the game” and to their occupation. For some professors “the game” may very well be how “things should be.” For others it may be a minor encumbrance, whereas some others may even find it to be an intriguing challenge. Faculty members at MSU also negotiate with the conventions and practices of their social world by reviewing, revoking, and renewing organizational rules and procedures over time (see Strauss 1978a, p. 5). In fact, while in search of authenticity professors may adjust their conduct to the demands of their institution, but they may also actively shape institutional forces to fit their own ideals. Thus, viewing interaction within the social organization of work at MSU as flexible and emergent rather than fixed allows us to keep our mind open to the fluidity of structural orders. The negotiated order concept and the view of institutions as going concerns thus allows us to strike a balance between structural determination and the free-will of actors.

Surpassing simplistic notions of voluntarism is especially important given the scope of the dissertation, as authenticity has long been confused with autonomy and self-determination (see chapter one). A sociological account of authenticity cannot depend on autonomy and self-determination, however. The self is a social product and its authenticity cannot be otherwise. For the experience of authenticity to be possible, at the individual level, what is then necessary is the condition of reflexivity typical of the self as explained by pragmatists and symbolic interactionists

(see Mead 1934). The concept of reflexivity allows us to conceptualize authenticity as a self-feeling in relation to other self-feelings and view authenticity as an interpretive and negotiated practice with a symbolic object, the self or its social world.

A pragmatic perspective on authenticity allows us to posit that the self undergoes some form of negotiation between a set of self-meanings and a pattern of behavioral options available in a specific social situation. When we keep in mind that social life, no matter what its specific context is, demands that a process of negotiation ought to take place between the self and its social world(s) we realize that a sociological analysis of the experience of authenticity should not exhaust at the phenomenological level, but rather it ought take into consideration the conventions and practices, collective activities, networks of action and interaction, and resources that structure the social situation where conditions for the experience of (in)authenticity emerge. We should also keep in mind that compromises are among the most quintessential and mundane expressions of negotiation. Despite their culture of academic freedom all professors find themselves at times having to sacrifice something from the ideal state of affairs and negotiate for a less than perfect process and outcome.

The nature of “the game” ought to lead us to question how much freedom there truly is in the academic profession. As we have seen freedom is an important component of the culture of academic work, but recent changes in the social organization of higher education may be limiting professors’ freedom of intellectual expression in variety of ways. Admittedly, in the structure of the scientific world there have always been practices that have resulted in the marginalization of subfields and counter-hegemonic paradigms (Kuhn 1970), but the recent commercialization of the university may continue to shape academic work in at least two negative ways that ought to be the object of final reflection in a research study such as this. One negative outcome is that undergraduate teaching, at least at large and prestigious universities may turn out to occupy an even more peripheral role in the future as departments continue to emphasize grant-supported research

and de-emphasize all other areas of professors' work. While such practice has allegedly been common for some time in natural science departments at research universities, it is now becoming more and more common for other fields – such as the social sciences, and to some extent the humanities as they are mostly cut off from “the game” and thus in dire straits – at most if not all universities and even colleges. This does not bode well for the role that university education should play in a democratic society. A second negative outcome is that the occupation of professors may in future lose some more of its characteristics and trade at least in part academic freedom for economic viability. For those professors who are caught in the middle of this social transition, like arguably many of the readers of this article, (in)authenticity cannot but be an everyday concern.

Performing the Academic Self

The occupation of professors demands that specific fronts be performed in stages of work at times radically different from one another. Governance demands that a professor possess leadership and administrative skills, and further demands institutional loyalty, transparency, organization, and an intimate knowledge of the functioning of one's organization. Research and performance demand creativity, mastery of specialized language, theory, and method, accuracy, self-organization, and self-motivation. Teaching demands preparation, patience, empathy, good motivational skills, clarity, open-mindedness, willingness to listen and support, and of course much more. Not many occupations demand as much from workers. The academic profession is not only a great occupation to study for the nature of its social organization, but also for the heterogeneous character of its workers. Performing the self in everyday academic life is a difficult task that requires much emotional involvements and refined skills.

Contrary to professors at teaching colleges and to professors at elite research universities MSU faculty must perform a credible front as teachers and researchers and administrators and colleagues. It is then inevitable that they may occasionally become disassociated from their true self

at one point or another. For many, as we have seen, the experience of inauthenticity becomes common when research and teaching have to be set aside in order to clear up the pile of service/governance paperwork sitting on their desk. For others feelings of inauthenticity may come about when it is time to perform as a lecturer for a large class of disinterested undergraduates, and for some others inauthenticity may be the *ordre du jour* when yet another meaningless paper has to be cranked out. But perhaps, the most important finding is that in this occupation a professor may be perfectly true to herself in all stages of work. As we saw with the case of Frank, the assistant professor in music who had chosen the academic life to make space for all his diverse identities, it is perfectly possible to feel authentic when putting on a classroom show, a conference presentation, and an auditorium solo. Such realization ought to lead us to feel reassured that a pragmatic and symbolic interactionist approach to authenticity is a valid one. Furthermore, it ought to confirm that the best way to conceptualize the authentic self is by relying on the notion of a *reflexive and polisemic self*, as I suggested in chapter two and throughout part one. With such conceptualization of authenticity we fully reject the metaphysical notion of authenticity as *being a true self* and we instead embrace the pragmatic notion of *being true to one's self*, whatever one's self-meanings and self-feelings, and whatever the conduct associated with these may be.

Final Words: Authenticity and the Academic Profession

As I discussed in the introduction, the study of occupations from a symbolic interactionist perspective compels us to view work as socially organized action but also as meaningful individual experience. The self of everyday/everynight life is the self at work, and studying an occupation affords us with the unique opportunity to make sense of how people do mundane things together and how in turn what they do shapes their subjectivity. Whether people perform face work on an airplane cabin – like Arlie Hochschild's (1983) flight attendants – or in academic offices, classrooms, and hallways, their experience of authenticity defines their relation with their colleagues, superiors,

clients, subordinates, and themselves. And whether it is emotional display management (Hochschild 1983) or restrictions to one's academic freedom, occupations make demands that push workers to question their personal values, ideals, goals, and motivation. How workers will negotiate with personal and institutional pulls and pushes will ultimately define the nature of their occupation and their own experiences at work; such has been the focus of this dissertation.

Throughout the pages of this dissertation I have argued that for the self to experience authenticity what is needed is not a metaphysical notion of the True Self but instead a pragmatic view of the reflexive self's ability to define its own authenticity. In doing so my argument has been in line with the work of Turner (1976), Hochschild (1983), Erickson (1991), Gecas (1986, 1991), and Holstein and Gubrium (2000). Such social psychological and symbolic interactionist conceptualization of authenticity has allowed me to ground authenticity not in ideology but in phenomenological experience, and precisely in the experience of being true to one's self. Such experience, as I explained, is the self-feeling that one's self-meanings are congruent with one's conduct. The value of this conceptualization resides in its pragmatic simplicity but also in its breadth. In fact, because individuals may assign different meanings to their selves, the sociological study of authenticity becomes a true exercise in understanding people, their feelings, and their conduct rather than an act of moral judgment. Such conceptualization, as explained earlier, also allows us to see authenticity within everyday contexts of concerted action, thus enabling us to focus not on micro dynamics exclusively but instead on the meso domain of sociological analysis.

Viewing the self as reflexive and polisemic and viewing institutions as going concerns (Hughes 1984) ought to lead us away from thinking of occupations and workers in terms of rigidity, determination, and fixed ordering. Nevertheless, we ought to keep in mind that all occupations have their dirty work, and all institutions have the necessary force to shape certain groups' definition of the situation over others. For professors, as a collective, dirty work is not research or teaching, and

it is neither service nor governance. For professors dirty work is any work that leads them to act incongruently with their self-meanings, or in other words any experience that pushes them to perceive self-feelings of inauthenticity. In an occupational culture that puts the highest premium on freedom and intrinsic motivation authenticity cannot be anything but the most important aspect of work. Whether professors will have to yield even more freedom to various institutional forces, and whether authenticity and intrinsic motivation will continue to play an important role in the definition of the occupational culture of faculty will ultimately depend on how well they will utilize their own power to negotiate with the changing going concerns of American higher education. As a young, aspiring academic I cannot but hope that my research will have some value in raising collective awareness over the condition of professors' work and hope for the best for the future of my profession.

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APPENDIX ONE

CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION

Category Definitions

The 2000 Carnegie Classification includes all colleges and universities in the United States that are degree-granting and accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. The 2000 edition classifies institutions based on their degree-granting activities from 1995-96 through 1997-98.

Doctorate-granting Institutions

Doctoral/Research Universities—Extensive: These institutions typically offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs, and they are committed to graduate education through the doctorate. During the period studied, they awarded 50 or more doctoral degrees per year across at least 15 disciplines.

Doctoral/Research Universities—Intensive: These institutions typically offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs, and they are committed to graduate education through the doctorate. During the period studied, they awarded at least ten doctoral degrees per year across three or more disciplines, or at least 20 doctoral degrees per year overall.

Master's Colleges and Universities

Master's Colleges and Universities I: These institutions typically offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs, and they are committed to graduate education through the master's degree. During the period studied, they awarded 40 or more master's degrees per year across three or more disciplines.

Master's Colleges and Universities II: These institutions typically offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs, and they are committed to graduate education through the master's degree. During the period studied, they awarded 20 or more master's degrees per year.

Baccalaureate Colleges

Baccalaureate Colleges—Liberal Arts: These institutions are primarily undergraduate colleges with major emphasis on baccalaureate programs. During the period studied, they awarded at least half of their baccalaureate degrees in liberal arts fields.

Baccalaureate Colleges—General: These institutions are primarily undergraduate colleges with major emphasis on baccalaureate programs. During the period studied, they awarded less than half of their baccalaureate degrees in liberal arts fields.

Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges: These institutions are undergraduate colleges where the majority of conferrals are below the baccalaureate level (associate's degrees and certificates). During the period studied, bachelor's degrees accounted for at least ten percent of undergraduate awards.

Associate's Colleges

These institutions offer associate's degree and certificate programs but, with few exceptions, award no baccalaureate degrees. This group includes institutions where, during the period studied, bachelor's degrees represented less than 10 percent of all undergraduate awards.

Specialized Institutions

These institutions offer degrees ranging from the bachelor's to the doctorate, and typically award a majority of degrees in a single field. The list includes only institutions that are listed as separate campuses in the *2000 Higher Education Directory*. Specialized institutions include:

Theological seminaries and other specialized faith-related institutions: These institutions primarily offer religious instruction or train members of the clergy.

Medical schools and medical centers: These institutions award most of their professional degrees in medicine. In some instances, they include other health professions programs, such as dentistry, pharmacy, or nursing.

Other separate health profession schools: These institutions award most of their degrees in such fields as chiropractic, nursing, pharmacy, or podiatry.

Schools of engineering and technology: These institutions award most of their bachelor's or graduate degrees in technical fields of study.

Schools of business and management: These institutions award most of their bachelor's or graduate degrees in business or business-related programs.

Schools of art, music, and design: These institutions award most of their bachelor's or graduate degrees in art, music, design, architecture, or some combination of such fields.

Schools of law: These institutions award most of their degrees in law.

Teachers colleges: These institutions award most of their bachelor's or graduate degrees in education or education-related fields.

Other specialized institutions: Institutions in this category include graduate centers, maritime academies, military institutes, and institutions that do not fit any other classification category.

Tribal Colleges and Universities

These colleges are, with few exceptions, tribally controlled and located on reservations. They are all members of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium.

APPENDIX TWO

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

The list of interview questions reported below is a guideline that I followed for most interviews. I never meant to follow a specific order other than starting with general questions such as those grouped under introduction below. I also never meant to ask all these questions to all professors, as each interview followed a natural conversational path.

Introduction

(Gender – without actually asking)

How old are you?

Are you married? [What is your spouse's occupation?]

Do you have children? [How many – How old are they?]

What is your position here (Assistant, Associate, Full Professor?)

How long have you been working as a professor here?

What is your assignment here (teaching/research/governance ratio)?

The Experience of Authenticity/Inauthenticity

Could you tell me the story of how you came to choose this profession?

What specific goals, values, and ideals motivated your initial choice to become a professor?

I'd like you to reflect for a moment about that initial choice. In light of all you have experienced throughout your career, what do you now think about that choice, and those initial ideals, values, and goals?

What is now the meaning of your work to you personally?

To what extent has your motivation to do this work changed throughout your career?]

You see, I am particularly interested in the study of the self and the experience of personal authenticity, or being true to oneself, in the context of academic work. When I say “being true to your self” or “personal authenticity,” what does that mean to you?

Is feeling true to your self, or authentic, important to you in relation to your work?

I’m very interested in understanding what it means to you to be authentic, or true to your self, in the context of your work. Can you tell me some personal stories of times when you felt that you were being authentic, true to your self, in the context of work?

What was it about your experience on each of those occasions that made you feel you were true to your self?

Would you say that these experiences are most common for you when you do research, when you teach, when you carry out administrative work, or when you perform public service?

What is it about (teaching or research or governance or service) that makes you feel that way?

Can you now tell me, instead, some personal stories of times when you felt that you were being false, inauthentic, untrue to your self, in the context of work?

What was it about your experience on each of those occasions that made you feel you false and inauthentic in regard to your self?

Would you say that these experiences are most common for you when you do research, when you teach, when you carry out administrative work, or when you perform public service?

What is it about (teaching or research or governance or service) that makes you feel that way?

Some people feel that as their career progresses it is easier and more common for them to feel that they are true to their self. Others feel just the opposite, that the experience of authenticity is less common as they move through the various stages of their career. What do you personally feel in regard to this, reflecting on your career so far?

The Contexts of In/Authenticity

Do you believe that power in academia is well balanced? In other words do you feel that some institutions or people exercise too much power over others?

Do you think that monetary resources are fairly allocated to your field/sub-field?

Do you feel that university budget priorities sacrifice the significance of your work in any way?

When you compare the quantity and quality of your work production to what you obtain in return, say in terms of income, status, perks, etc., do you feel that the exchange is fair?

Do you feel you are overworked?

Do you feel that you have enough time and flexibility to have a fulfilling life outside of academia?

To what extent is academic work a priority, in your life?

Research

How meaningful, to you, is doing research?

Do you feel there are pressures imposed on you or rather do you feel free in regard to the type of research questions that you are to select? (Probes –see bracketed questions below)

Do you feel there are pressures imposed on you or rather do you feel free in regard to the amount of research that you do and ought to do?

Do you feel there are pressures imposed on you or rather do you feel free regarding your selection of the theories you use to conduct your research?

Do you feel there are pressures imposed on you or rather do you feel free in regard to the methods you adopt to conduct research?

(What do you think plays the most crucial role in allowing you freedom at work: intellectual freedom, the tenure system, funding, collegiality, the flexibility of your job...?)

(Do you believe that this freedom allows you to become closer to your work?)

(What is the nature and extent of these pressures?)

(Are most of these pressures and expectations coming from your department, your school, or funding agencies?)

(Do you feel that such pressures lead you to sacrifice the meaning of your work? Perhaps by having to sacrifice quality at the expense of quantity?)

(Do you feel that these pressures ever lead you to distance yourself from your work?)

Is conducting research something you enjoy? What do you enjoy about it?

Do you see a part of your self in the work you create?

What audiences do you reach with the publication and distribution of your work?

What audiences would you ideally try to reach?

Do you feel that these people benefit directly from your work?

Do you feel that the general public benefits directly from your work? Is this important to you?

Teaching

How meaningful is teaching, to you?

How enthusiastic are you about teaching?

What do you enjoy the most and the least about teaching?

Service and Governance

How meaningful are, to you personally, your administrative and governance practice?

What do you enjoy the most and the least about administrative governance?

How meaningful is, to you personally, your public service function?

What do you enjoy the most and the least about your public service function?

Do you find your own department community to be well integrated and conducive to doing good work?

Do you think that the tenure system has been fair to mostly everyone in your department?

Do you ever feel that inter-office politics restricts your freedom of expression in any way?

Do you believe that you have benefited much from collegiality in your department, or rather that throughout your career you have benefited more from being left on your own?

Have you been influenced by any specific figure(s) in your career, say, mentors or advisors...? Are these figures still close to you or have separated yourself from them?

Do you feel you have control over how you organize your work day? Is what you do on any given day pretty much what you wish like doing?

Do you feel that you have enough say in the governance of administrative matters? Do you care about this?

Do you believe you have any power to improve the system, or do you even care about changing the system in any way?