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Rationality and collaborative supervision, feminist collectivity and reflexive ethics: backstories for a collaborative memory project

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works, yet where there is probably more recognition than ever before that each of us is an odds-and-sods assortment or patchwork of influences from various subjectivities who skirt around in cyberspace. This special issue expresses various hopes for more ethically reflexive doctoral supervision. It has been created through our struggles with collaborative theorising aimed at claiming and perhaps re-framing academic practice.

NOTES

1. CODIS would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of the six anonymous reviewers involved in this special issue. Sincere thanks are also due to Elizabeth Adams St.Pierre for her insightful commentary on the papers in this issue. Thanks are also due to the University of Waikato Education Research and Leave Committee for funding the writing retreats in Hamilton and providing the secure online Moodle site for the discussions. Finally, thanks are due to Michael Peters for his encouragement of this feminist-inspired project of collaborative theorising.

2. CODIS (Collaborative Online Discussion Involving Supervision) is an acronym agreed upon by a subgroup of the researchers involved in this project. It should be noted that, as with all collaborative research, some researchers did not want to have an identity subsumed into an acronym. This introduction might have been written more collaboratively had there been more time for sending drafts around the whole group; invoking CODIS here as the one-time-only author of this introduction, however, pays some homage to the entire group that together created the work in this special issue. The instigators of the project were New Zealand academics Lise Bird Claiborne (University of Waikato) and Sue Cornforth (Victoria University of Wellington). Additional researchers in the first phase of the research were Marian Court and Mandy Morgan (Massey University), Catherine Manathunga (now at Victoria University in Australia) and Kathie Crocket (University of Waikato). The discussions were taken further online with the addition of researchers Joanna Kidman (Victoria University of Wellington) and Terry Locke (University of Waikato).

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RATIONALITY AND COLLABORATIVE SUPERVISION, FEMINIST COLLECTIVITY AND REFLEXIVE ETHICS: BACKSTORIES FOR A COLLABORATIVE MEMORY PROJECT

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ABSTRACT. In university doctoral supervision, both supervisors and students have been positioned as autonomous rational scholars within a masculinist Enlightenment discourse that has continued to shape both sole and collaborative approaches. The latter are increasingly hedged by neoliberal policies and risk management practices that aim to efficiently expedite transparent and accountable research. Alternative feminist understandings and practices of ethically reflexive collaboration, such as those that underpin the various types of memory work methodology such as the one used in our research, have been largely marginalized in these developments. In this article we set the scene for the rest of the contributions in this issue by bringing to the fore some "backstories" that influence ethical supervisory practices, and which leave their traces in the research ethics of our respective university codes and policies. We point to some of the dilemmas that ensue and problematics that are devolved on supervisors that inform other articles in this issue.

Keywords: neoliberal risk management; doctoral supervision; feminist collectivity; research ethics; care

1. Introduction

Glowing stories abound about how rewarding the doctoral journey in the humanities and social sciences can be. There are opportunities to investigate

nagging problems and the satisfaction of finding answers that, in the case of studies of education for example, "provide teachers with information that could help to improve practice" (Middleton, 2001, p. 41). Doctoral students such as Jane Strachan have also described the pleasure that arises from interacting with and learning from other's lives. "I absolutely loved it", she said, referring to her ethnographic field-work with women principals: "It was such a privilege to be part of these women's lives ... they were so open" (Middleton, 2001, p. 51). While students have also talked about the barriers and loneliness they have encountered along the way, less is known about the pleasures or pain of doctoral supervision. While some analyses of doctoral research supervision have critically explored tensions and ambiguities in the supervision relationship (e.g., Green & Lee, 1997) literature in this area has focused in the main on how to do it successfully, providing warnings about pitfalls to avoid and advice on how to achieve timely completions (e.g., Delamont, Atkinson & Parry, 2001). Within a proliferation of often mandatory bureaucratic and quality management policies and strategies for improving doctoral supervision (Manathunga, 2005), there has been a focus also on tightening doctorate regulation and "increasing its transparency and accountability" (Halse, 2011, p. 557).

Despite the existence of universities' carefully framed ethical policies and procedures for research that aim to protect the individual rights, confidentiality and safety of both supervisors and students, powerful forces of the market are encroaching on these arenas of academic work. In enterprise universities governed within political agendas of economic rationalism, risk management policies and strategies are hedging the parameters of "viable" research and effective supervision. These market forces add extra dimensions to our reflection on our moral beliefs, dimensions that go beyond the compliance demanded by institutional ethics. We have floundered at times in ethical quandaries as we have attempted to provide authoritative knowledge, as well as emotional and sometimes financial support, while enmeshed in "surveilling" students for compliance with ever-increasing forms of accountability and pressures towards a "timely" completion. Although positioned as knowledgeable authorities in our work and disciplines, there have been moments of gut-wrenching doubt or of incomprehension at our own collusion with institutional processes with which we have disagreed. We have asked ourselves how we could continue to be ethical practitioners in the challenging and often conflicting relational spaces of supervision.

Over the years we have encountered problems, such as in the case of students who were facing complex personal, financial, cultural and motivational problems that were not clearly addressed in our universities' policies, procedures and protocols. While many of the most difficult issues were talked about briefly and confidentially on an ad hoc basis with local col-

leagues, these sporadic private conversations gave little chance for wisdom to emerge. At various times, however, we all remembered the value of making the personal political through sharing and reflecting on private stories, as happened for many women who participated in "consciousness raising groups" during the rise of the women's movement during the 1970s. We thought some of those participatory approaches could be employed with the help of input from theorists of ethics to enable a stronger reflexive examination of our university supervision practices.

As senior academics in faculties of education, with backgrounds in critical developmental and educational psychology (Claiborne), counselling (Cornforth) and reflexive clinical supervision, the initiators of this project had undertaken with some other researchers a collective biography (Claiborne, Cornforth, Davies, Milligan & White, 2009). They wondered whether a version of this methodology could be adapted to help them "trouble" the largely taken for granted nature of doctoral research supervision and illuminate its often hidden complex problems. More importantly, could the reflexive co-supervision practices common in counselling be adapted to provide support and development for academics in other fields who did not have ready access to those kinds of clinical supervision? Exploring some difficult incidents within a small group of other experienced supervisors might provide them all with a reflexive and transgressive space for conversation about subjects seldom broached in faculty meetings or supervision courses, or even in everyday chat with colleagues. (We use transgressive deliberately, as University risk-averse management structures and ethical procedures have made such research supervision "chats" difficult and ethically problematic.)

And so the project "Enhancing Doctoral Supervision through Collaborative Reflexivity" was born. While its collaborative memory work research methodology is described and illustrated in Claiborne, Cornforth, Court, Crocket & Manathunga (this issue), this article aims to "set the scene" for this special issue's collection of analytical discussions of doctoral supervision issues by exploring some backstories from literatures that have contributed to understandings underpinning the project. In the first section we trace some shifts from early practices of sole supervision (shaped within an Enlightenment discourse of supervisor and student as autonomous rational scholars) to more collaborative approaches. While team supervision has been promoted as "best practice" within neoliberal risk management concerns, Manathunga (2012) found that in this approach gendered experiences of powerlessness/inauthenticity (which we suggest reflect the ubiquity of masculinist versions of rationality and authority) can have negative impacts on collaborative supervision relationships.

In the second section, we trace the development of some resistant, alternative feminist forms of teamwork and collectivity that promote collaborative practices of critical reflexivity and relational ethics of care. Practices such as these have provided the members of the collaborative memory project with views of supervision that are sometimes at odds with our university requirements.

The last section explores the influence of master discourses of neoliberalism and rationality on the ethical codes and policies that guide our practices. We show how the dominant principled approach is problematic where feminist collective work is concerned, and set the scene for the ethically reflexive approach that informs the articles in the rest of this issue.

2. The Autonomous Rational Scholar and Collaborative Supervision

Until relatively recently in the humanities and social sciences, postgraduate supervision was constructed as a private pedagogical space between one supervisor and one student. Often there were very few expectations of collaboration even between them, as doctoral students were regarded as always/already independent scholars (Johnson, Lee & Green, 2000). As such, they and their supervisors were assumed to be rational, autonomous figures of the Enlightenment, engaged in a life of the mind and committed to the exercise of Reason. Reason was to be achieved, as Johnson and her colleagues (2000) argued, by the independent and mature application of abstract thought that did not require the guidance of other people. In other words, research was regarded as an individual, autonomous activity. Collaboration or interdependence were constructed in these discourses as immature and feminine and therefore irrational and unscholarly (Johnson et al., 2000).

Where did such ideas originate? Feminist researchers have traced how such discourses have a long history in Western thought. For example, classical Greek philosophical views of the world understood human life and activity in oppositional categories, such culture/nature, mind/body, rationality/emotionality, spirit/matter (Cox & James, 1987; Hekman, 1990; Warner, 1976). While the first category in each pair was associated with freedom, the second was seen as necessary for life, but of lesser value. The "place" of free men was seen as in the public/civic sphere of politics, culture, mind, rationality and spirituality, while women and slaves were linked with nature, the body, sexuality, emotionality and work in the private sphere of home and family. These associations were argued to be a natural consequence of men's and women's different biology, as well as of natural laws of domination, wherein the conqueror had rights over slaves and "the male is by nature superior, the female inferior, the male ruler, the female subject" (Aristotle, *Politics* 1,11,9, 11–12, cited in Cox & James, 1987, p. 211). In this Greek

formulation, the only role for most women and slaves was to provide for the necessities of bodily material existence¹, to allow free men to carry out their rational work as citizens, policy makers, leaders and scholars.

Such discursive associations of freedom, rationality and authority in the civic sphere with white, elite men were endorsed within Enlightenment epistemology, becoming embedded in the bourgeois civic sphere (Fraser, 1997). Liberal individualism's construction of the citizen in abstract (disembodied) universal terms further stressed the necessity for individual autonomy and rationality. As McNay (1992, p. 91) commented, "supposedly objective, impartial standards, such as universal reason and autonomy, are, in fact, historically situated and contingent terms" often extrapolated from elite men's experiences, characteristics and values.

In their study of doctoral supervision, Johnson et al. (2000) showed how Enlightenment discourses continued to shape supervision practices well into the late 20th century. However, from the mid-1990s onwards, as neoliberal discourses of risk and risk management gained momentum in the university sector, supervision increasingly became framed as a high risk practice (Evans et al., 2005; McWilliam et al., 2005). Prompted by concerns about low completion rates, lengthy times to completion and wasting public money, universities began to subject supervision to increased surveillance, policy intervention and regulation (Manathunga, 2005). At this time also research into supervision practices was raising concerns about how sole supervision may expose students to neglect or exploitation (Johnson et al., 2000; Lee & Williams, 1999). Some of this literature urged supervisors to adopt more active and engaged supervision pedagogies and to provide doctoral students with more support, guidance and mentoring (e.g. Pearson & Brew, 2002). Research practices also were becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, requiring greater collaboration and knowledge exchange across disciplinary boundaries.

All of these trends contributed to the growing support for broadening the sole supervisor model to a more collaborative team-based approach to supervision (Manathunga, 2012a). The rhetoric supporting team supervision policies argued that they provide students with greater access to a wider range of expertise and guidance, enable supervisors to share the workload of supervision and provide mentoring and support to novice supervisors (Manathunga, 2012a). Instead, in countries like Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, team supervision came to be positioned as "best practice" because it was seen as an effective risk management strategy, that could "make supervision more transparent, visible and calculable" (Manathunga, 2012a, p. 50). Thus collaborative approaches made their entrance in supervision policy and practice more as a result of neoliberal pressures for ac-

countability and efficiency than because of a desire to engage in more supportive, democratic and facilitative pedagogies.

Although there has been a significant body of feminist and poststructuralist work calling for more collaborative approaches to doctoral education (e.g., Johnson et al., 2000; Lee & Williams, 1999), very few of these critical and in-depth understandings of collaboration of the kind underpinning the collaborative memory-work (CBM) methodology we have used in our research, appear to have been taken up in recent supervision policies about team supervision. So too, experiences from collaborative clinical supervision practice, of the kind that Claiborne and Cornforth are familiar with, are not engaged with in most postgraduate supervision practices. As a result, there has been no real shift in the philosophies underpinning supervision from the Enlightenment commitment to Reason. The desired supervisor and student subjectivities have remained those of the rational, autonomous scholar even though there is now commonly more than one supervisor working with each doctoral student. Further, neoliberal discourse that construct supervision as a form of unproblematic project management only serve to reinforce the reification of rationality and Reason over the relationality and ethic of care that is central to feminist and poststructuralist understandings of collaborative work.

The majority of studies of team supervision endorse it as highly beneficial to students and supervisors (Andresen, 1999; Pang, 1999; Sutcliffe, 1999), and there are very few studies that seek to investigate the potential difficulties, ambiguities and tensions that can occur (Pole, 1998; Watts, 2010). Thus, in a Foucauldian study of power, desire and governmentality in team supervision, Manathunga (2012b) sought to foreground the complexities and gender dynamics around authority, knowledge and rationality that may emerge in collaborative supervision. She traced the ways in which team supervision heightens the surveillance and disciplining not only of students but also of supervisors, noting that "in team supervision, both (or many) supervisors are not only ... watching and disciplining students. They are also watching each other and causing each other to display particular supervisory technologies of self" (Manathunga, 2012b, p. 32). Her study demonstrates how communication becomes incredibly complicated in team supervision: often it can "be difficult to determine who is actually addressing who" as "each member of the team is managing their relations with and through each other as well as through the thesis" (ibid.). Alongside self-regulation "as supervisors monitor their own words and actions more carefully in team supervision meetings" there was some direct peer-regulation between supervisors, where one supervisor intervened in the discussion "to offer the student a hint about how they might respond to the critique of their other supervisor" (Manathunga, 2012b, p. 36).

Some problematic gendered experiences of powerlessness and lack of authority were also uncovered in this study, with one female principal supervisor spending more time in team meetings explaining and defending her supervision practices to the two other male supervisors. The analysis of the observed meeting and the follow-up interview shows how this principal supervisor was discomforted and indicated that she did not feel that she was fully "authorized" or had access to the subjectivity of the rational, autonomous scholar, fearing exposure as an inadequate supervisor (Manathunga, 2012b). Viewing this incident through the lens of a feminist poststructural discourse analysis suggests to us that this woman supervisor had difficulties comfortably inhabiting the public, disembodied, rational space of scholarly supervision constructed by Enlightenment discourses and reinforced by neoliberal preoccupations with efficiency and accountability, because she "belonged" to the private, embodied, emotional space typically constructed by these discourses for women and others who are not white men.

3. Feminist Collectives

Although the ubiquity of white masculinist discourses of universal rationality, knowledge and authority legitimated the subordinated status of women and minority groups in many public institutions, including education and universities in particular, this has not gone unchallenged. As Fraser has argued, through building their own albeit "subaltern" public spaces, "members of subordinated groups invent and circulate counter discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs" (Fraser, 1997, p. 81).² The women's movement and consciousness raising groups were significant in this regard for many women during the 1960s and 70s and influential in the rise of feminist collectives.

In the United States, grounded initially in radical feminism, consciousness raising groups of six to twelve women were formed to support others who were seeking to understand themselves and their most intimate relations in ways that would help them build their confidence to combat what they identified as patriarchal domination (Mansbridge, 1994, p. 546). Mansbridge reported that for many women, experiencing for the first time a sense of community and sisterhood based on "bonds of friendship, equality and respect" (p. 551), enabled them to develop strength, new ideas and new energy. Similar consciousness raising groups also arose in Aotearoa/New Zealand during the early 1970s, alongside more politically focused action groups (Dann, 1985). In many of those early feminist collectives the size of groups was kept small, to enable direct, face-to-face meetings that could use consensus decision making. Egalitarianism was stressed as a fundamental value: every member was to have equal status and rights of participation.

(In particular, all of the collectives had the dual aims of educating their members and bringing about change in specific issues affecting women (Court, 2001; Leidner, 1991; Sirianni, 1994; Vanderpyl, 1998).

The emergence of varying forms of feminist collectivity can be understood in part as a reaction to bureaucratic organisation (Rothschild, 1994). Although it can be argued that bureaucratic hierarchical management and lines of decision making are a technical necessity for the co-ordination of subdivided tasks, bureaucracy was criticised as instrumentally rationalist and controlling (Fergusson, 1984). It required all situations to be treated according to a set of rules that left out the particular and eschewed feelings as subjective and likely to bias judgement. As women and femininity have long been equated with emotional empathetic qualities seen as the opposite of objective rationality, it is not surprising that few women were advancing to positions of responsibility or supervision in bureaucratic organisations, including universities. And it is also not surprising that, given the current ascendancy of neo-liberal managerialist discourse and practices in universities, the kinds of emotionally painful and puzzling supervision difficulties that we commented on earlier and wrote about and explored in our CBM project (see in particular Claiborne et al., this issue; Cornforth, this issue), are not easily addressed in universities' bureaucratically informed ethical guidelines and procedures.

As Rothschild (1994) has noted, in the ideal bureaucratic organisational structures and processes, authority is held by an individual as a consequence of rank or expertise, and control is enforced through hierarchically directive supervision, rules and sanctions. Control within the ideal democratic collectivist organisation, however, is based in personal and moral factors, and authority resides in a consensus of the collectivity as a whole, being based in shared substantive values (such as equality). Consensus is treated as fluid and open to negotiation, with decisions being made in relation to particular cases. Thus a strong incentive for those who choose to work in collectivist ways is the potential for increased control over their own work and opportunities to work together with others in ways that are "congruent with their ideals" (Rothschild, 1994, p. 457). These collectivist principles and dynamics are evident also in the CBM methodology and processes that guided this current project on supervision (see Claiborne et al., this issue).

One further point is worth making here. The egalitarianism that is such a prized value of collectivist-democratic organisations is practised typically through teamwork, which is advocated also as part of educating all in specialised knowledge areas so that "in the fully democratic organisation, everyone manages and everyone works" (Rothschild, 1994, p. 459). Apart from the kinds of difficulties Manathunga (2012b) found in her study of team supervision, there are difficulties that can arise from an eschewing of

leadership or a masking of unspecified rules, that can lead to the development of an elite in-group, as Freeman's (1973) influential analysis of the "tyrannies of structurelessness" identified. Freeman pointed out that if a group did not select who among their ranks will exercise power, it did not get rid of power, only the right to demand responsibility from those who exercise it. Democratic strategies to ensure responsibility was adequately taken up, such as negotiated delegations, distribution of authority as widely as possible through rotation of tasks and a supported apprenticeship approach, along with systems for ensuring frequent diffusion of information and equal access to resources, were proposed by both Freeman (1973) and Hartsock (1981). Each of these particular strategies was evident in our project and two of the authors of this article, (Court and Manathunga) definitely considered ourselves as apprentices in the CBM research approach, with ongoing support and guidance from the more experienced members (Claiborne and Cornforth) as we "learned on the job" how initial individual memory writing could be developed into a collective biography that opened up theoretical insights we could all own and express.

Some of the other processes used in early feminist collectives were evident also during Mary O'Regan's work as the first CEO of the New Zealand Ministry of Women's Affairs when this was established in the mid 1980s. O'Regan aimed to build not only a governmental department that would "work for women to influence policies and legislation so that they were better for women," but also to use feminist organisational principles to "provide a model of a way of working to which women could relate" (O'Regan, 1992, p. 98). During her four years in the Ministry she demonstrated "a commitment to establishing working relationships that were as egalitarian as possible" (p.205). Frazer and Lacey commented that as part of this ideal in feminist organisational approaches, there is a "constant scrutiny" of habits and established ways of doing things in groups (1993, p. 122). O'Regan reported that "this soul searching about what feminism meant in relation to organisational practices, involved the whole staff" (O'Regan, 1992, p. 205). In our project we also found ourselves scrutinising our espoused collective processes at times. During our early attempts at collaborative writing processes, for example, one of us emailed, "I have been agonising yet again about the whole CBM process and turned to Davies and Gannon (2006) for their view of the collective bio work." She gave a large quote here and then continued, "The whole point of this method is the working together, which we are doing in this great group. According to the usual protocol, the paper would now be handed on to the next person in the group round robin style using track changes for people to add their bit. I hope people can see the point of discussing this issue. I don't care who authors what as long as we are being ethical, true to the feminist goals of

the method, etc. and other lofty principles. I think this could all be very interesting, but I will await developments.”

This is but one example of the agonistic ethical struggles, the “constant scrutiny”, that we argue is a necessary corollary of feminist collective work, including the work of supervision. However, our institutional ethical processes and policies, located within the master discourse of neo-liberalism, take somewhat different trajectories, creating further difficulties for collaborative researchers, as will be seen in the next section.

4. Ethics, Collectives and Feminism

Research ethics since the Nuremberg Code (1949) have consistently foregrounded three research principles: respect (of autonomy and people’s rights to make decisions for themselves), beneficence (protecting innocent participants) and justice (ensuring research for the benefit of all humanity, not just one elite group) (Fisher & Anushko, 2008; Gallagher, 2009; Greig, Taylor, & MacKay, 2007; Rhodes, 2005). These principles evolved out of concern for participants’ safety after medical atrocities committed under the guise of scientific experimentation during the Third Reich, and were retained as researchers and physicians developed more detailed guidelines for ethical biomedical research. These three persistent principles are evident in our universities’ ethics policies and guidelines, although there are differences in the emphasis/status given to each principle and in how they are prioritized, as will be seen later.

A principled approach owes much to the work of Kant (1785/1964) that sought to identify and define the abstract concepts (principles) that any reasonable “man” would define as “right conduct.” These principles, based in rationality, became a form of ethical law, imposing a duty of conduct, often referred to as a “deontological” approach. As has become more obvious in recent times, however, there is a potential for conflict between principles, and a utilitarian approach, drawing on Mill (1861/1910), has been commonly used to determine which course of action benefits the most people. This is sometimes called a “chunk and count” approach. Hugman notes the connection between rule based deontology and utilitarianism, and subsequent emergence of “principlism”, even more firmly grounded in rationality. As she explains,

Contemporary approaches to ethics are grounded in the liberal individualism that has distinguished the ‘modernist’ period of industrial society that followed the European ‘Enlightenment’. Both deontology and utilitarianism embody this world-view, which privileges rationalism and positivist science against tradition, religion and other ways of seeing the world that increasingly were

seen as ‘irrational’. Principlism is derived from an interplay between the two. (Hugman, 2005, p. 105)

This currently dominant “principled” approach (Gallagher, 1999) informs all our university codes.

Ethical thinking, however, has been further challenged in the last few decades by influential discourses of multiculturalism, feminism and environmentalism (Sterba, 2001), and theoretical advances made possible by post-structuralism with its focus on language, power, difference and multiplicity (e.g Bauman, 1993; Foucault, 1973). Arguments drawing on these new perspectives have problematised the work principles are expected to do, the certainty they imply, and the dominance of the rational positivist medical model, as ethical thinking recognizes more and more the impossibility of certainty in a diverse world. For example, the Foucauldian concept of multiple subjectivities and multiple truths draws attention to the diverse positions people take up in different discourses at different times. Levinas’ (1989) more embodied concept of human response-ability that informs much of Bauman’s work, questions the autonomy of the rational subject: in the words of Levinas: “the Other becomes my neighbour precisely through the way the face summons me, calls for me, begs for me, and in so doing recalls my responsibility, and calls me into question” (1989, p. 83). In a slightly different vein, Gilligan’s (1982) work has done much to undo the male gender dominance of the rational subject. Gilligan critiqued a masculinist hierarchy of moral development, arguing that women’s different moral perceptions needed to be heard: morality needed to be understood in terms of relationships, not autonomy. In response to this unsettling of universal rationality and other ethical developments, especially the indigenous peoples’ claims for rights in the 1980s, the majority of ethicists now agree that we are in an age of pluralism, and that we must learn to negotiate between different ethical approaches (Hugman, 2005).

It is noted here that two of our universities’ ethics codes have made some acknowledgement of the changing context within which we endeavor to be ethical researchers. The Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations Involving Human Participants states that “staff are...required not only to abide by ethical principles...but also attend to the evolving understanding of how these principles are expressed in society at a particular time” (1.1). The Victoria University Human Ethics Policy notes “Ethical standards are evolving, not fixed; they are grounded in our best current understanding of the fundamental rights, responsibilities, and interrelationships of human beings” (1). These statements imply that some move has been made away from the pure forms of rule-based deontology. Be that as it may university institutional ethics still take, in the main, a protective, risk averse, principled approach, based on neoliberal normative

values and the rights of individual (male) persons (see also Locke, Alcorn & O'Neill, 2013).

The tenacity of this principled approach creates particular problems for collective research such as ours. Locke et al. (2013), in their consideration of institutional ethical approval process and their effect on collaborative action research, note three areas of contestation where principles are concerned: the objectification of research participants, the problem of anonymity, and the ownership and dissemination of findings. Similar problems trouble our work. Where the assumed separation of interests between researcher and researched, and resultant objectification of participant, is problematic for collaborative action research, it is particularly problematic for CBM. In CBM, all members of the collective are involved in producing memories from their own experience, then recursively and jointly re-visiting and rewriting these memories, so that they eventually become collectively owned, as is illustrated in several articles in this Special Issue (see CODIS, this issue). The distinctions between researcher and researched are thus blurred, and attributing authorship a matter for ongoing negotiation (as illustrated in our email example earlier). As in collaborative action research, as well as arguably all research (Loveridge & Cornforth, 2013), since the outcome of any investigation cannot be predicted, ethical thinking needs to be an ongoing process of negotiation, which is somewhat at odds with ethical codes that demand compliance. We raise three further problems that set our ethical work somewhat at odds with our university prescriptions: lack of alignment between the principles of different institutional review boards; conflicting versions of care; and the problem of social justice. We take each in turn.

Members of our research collective are from three different universities and as all three value the same core principles, alignment might not seem to be problematic. However, the way that these principles are prioritized differently can give rise to some dilemmas for collaborating researchers, as we discovered. For example, the University of Waikato Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities document follows its procedural section with a full discussion of informed consent and minimisation of harm to participants. The Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations Involving Human Participants, however, after briefly introducing a set of principles (expanded later) pays particular attention to building respectful relationships with Māori, beginning with the enactment of Treaty responsibilities, noting matters of special relevance to Māori throughout, and including a section on advice concerning culturally sensitive research practice. On the other hand, the Victoria University Human Ethics Policy names "respect and care for persons" as its first principle, and adds an extra principle not considered by the other universities – "respect and care for the natural environment". These differences placed different

obligations on our planning of the project and considerations of whom to invite to join our team. For example, was it ethical to prioritise respect and care for participants in funding travel to a retreat, over an environmental concern to limit carbon emissions? And how ethical were our considerations about whom to invite into the project? After working previously with beginning researchers who drew on a range of different theoretical orientations, we had decided this time to invite a number of experienced supervisors who worked within a feminist poststructuralist approach. Our reasoning behind this will be discussed more fully in Claiborne, Cornforth, Court, Crocket and Manathunga (this issue). The second point of difference between our ethical stance and that of our ethics codes is the way that we interpret the concept of care. Collective and feminist work has traditionally drawn on an ethic of care (Gilligan, 1982), and values of equality, as well as respect (Mansbridge, 1994; Rothschild, 1994). Set against the abstract forms of deductive reasoning that inform principled ethics, and challenging what she saw as a masculinist "justice perspective" of morality based in rights and formal reasoning, Gilligan (1982) argued that an ethic of care is embedded in the responsibilities we have to various networks of relationships. While Gilligan's form of "particularist ethics" (McNay, 1992, p. 93) has been criticized for generalizing a "feminine" principle (Fraser & Nicholson, 1988), as Noddings (1986) maintained, care values people, not principles.

However, a consideration of our different university ethics documents shows how, within principled frameworks, care has changed allegiances and become principled. Sometimes it is elided with respect as in the Victoria University Policy where the first, third and fourth principles are "care and respect" (of persons, social and cultural contexts, and the environment) (4.1, a, c, d). Sometimes it is framed as "taking care", in the sense of being careful/watchful/wary. The Massey University Code, for example, in one of the rare times that it uses the word "care", notes in relation to absence of pressure or coercion: "Researchers whose prospective participants may perceive themselves to be in any sort of dependent relationship with them (e.g. students, patients or clients) need to be particularly careful" (11.d). Meanwhile the University of Waikato document makes a direct link with principles: "the researcher must take care to apply other ethical principles" (11.4).

This linking back of care to observance of principles and reliance on an autonomous moral agent is different from a care perspective that focuses on "relationships, interactions and collaborative decision-making" (Stokes, 2007, p. 496). And it does not take into account the asymmetrical and sometimes interchangeable relationships of power that exist in supervisory relationships, such as those we discussed earlier in this article in the example of gendered team supervision interactions. Furthermore, if we are to "care for" our students, as advocated by Noddings (1986), then how do we manage

situations in which we are obliged to “let go” the student who is not meeting deadlines, without taking into account, let alone taking action on, what such failure might mean for them in the rest of their lives (Claiborne, this issue).

This brings us to the last concern: what is socially just research? All our universities have made some, often indirect, reference to the importance of conducting research that is of social benefit. Massey University names “justice” as one of its core principles (2, h), and admonishes researchers to not only abide by this and all other principles, “but also to attend to the evolving understanding of how [justice] is expressed in society at a particular time” (Introduction). Whilst Victoria University’s third principle, “respect and care for social and cultural contexts” (4.1.c), does not directly refer to social justice, the Policy does imply that research should be socially beneficial: “Any level of harm... must be balanced against potential benefit to the participants and/or to society” (4.2.b). The University of Waikato document has a section on the “Value of research or related activities and the public interest” (8) which states: “researchers must be able to justify to his or her peers the goals and methodology of the research and/or related activity in terms of its reasonable anticipated benefits” (8.1). Thus, all three universities appear to read “justice” in terms of adherence to universal human rights, responsibilities and legislative compliance.

Yet, both feminist and poststructural approaches problematise justice and the work it is expected to do. As touched on earlier, one important strand of care theorizing has been the care versus justice binary, which later care theorists have argued should be deconstructed (e.g., Sevenhuijsen, 1998; Tronto, 1995). Whilst justice arguably is becoming observable in the private domain, as in some availability of hardship grants, the public domain, including our ethics documents, is still largely dominated by individualised, neoliberal, rights-based discourses of risk aversion. Relying on rights to do the work of justice is at best a limited approach according to many feminist ethicists and poststructural theorists, who argue that such universal perspectives are inadequate when all meanings are contested, fluid and uncertain (Foucault, 1982). Furthermore, as Hugman (2005) writes: “although the idea of ‘human rights’ may seem to apply to all people, what it actually means is culturally loaded in that the very notion derives from western political and social thought in a particular period” (p. 8).

Thus a principled approach discourages researchers and supervisors from engaging with the uncertain/unstable power dynamics of wider socio/cultural/political contexts, many of which were the focus of our ethical discussions. Where Grant (2008, p. 11) notes that there has been a “willed forgetting” of unequal relationships of power between supervisors and students, there has been an even more willed forgetting of unequal relationships

of power in wider social contexts. How, for example, are we to assess the social benefit of research carried out by international students in their own countries – especially when research findings might be politically unacceptable (see Cornforth, this issue).

In countering movements towards an ethic based in universal moral principles, poststructural theorists argue for vigilant attention to our involvement in multiple relationships of power. Foucault (1982), for example, argued that individuals must engage in self critique, rather than practising criticism in the search for formal structures with universal value. In his later work, Foucault re-considered his earlier ideas about disciplinary power and freedom in the light of some revised notions of the self that he drew in part from the following: ancient Greek/Roman ideas about an ethic of care of the self; the metaphor of wrestling (the agon); the existential work of Nietzsche; and the evolutionary struggles of Darwin. For Foucault, power and freedom co-existed, not as things but as relations, observable as “actions upon other actions” (Foucault, 1982, p. 220), as an ongoing agonistic struggle, in which the driving force is the will to freedom/power. To know oneself as ethical, ‘man’ must exercise freedom by engaging with the “permanent provocation” (Foucault, 1982, p. 222) of power. Critics of this view, however, argue that a focus on the “aesthetics of existence” not only promotes a masculinist view but also removes the self from its social context (Burkitt, 1993, p. 67).

Feminist developments address these issues. Mouffe’s (2009) work, for example, places agonism in the politico/social sphere through arguing for a multipolar form of democracy, in which recognition of the importance of agonistic debate/struggle between groups is a necessary preventative against escalating antagonistic relations. Mouffe re-cognises, and urges us to engage with, and embrace, the political as conflictual, contestable, and undecidable, irresponsive to essentialised arguments, but always everywhere present. Meanwhile Cloyes (2002) brings together agonistic feminism and care ethics to propose an alternative version of care-agonism. She encourages a move away from essentialised, naturalized, maternalist and feminized versions of care to re-situate it in the context of power and politics, viewing it as a marker of certain asymmetrical relationships of power. In this version, care as articulated in various discourses, is not set against power or justice, but is viewed as indicative of a political move – an asymmetrical relationship that could be differently articulated and effected. Care thus becomes a site for agonistic debate and struggle, in the sense that the “‘agon’ is openly performative, collective, public and dialogic” (Cloyes, 2002, p. 211). Care-agonism is thus presented as a praxical theory that is also a political undertaking, continually identifying and addressing asymmetrical relationships of power. As such it requires consideration of the following questions:

How is care constructed as a category within different discourses? How is care figured in social relations, and what distinctions are made pertinent? How are relations of subordination constructed through such distinctions? Further, 'Who cares?' and 'Why care?' (Cloyes, 2002, p. 211)

The "openly performative, collective, public and dialogic" nature of the collective work in forming this issue (see Claiborne, this issue), clearly indicates some affinity with an agonistic approach. Articles in the rest of this issue share some of our agonistic struggles to produce a supervision that is ethical and values relationship, whilst at the same time being a political undertaking.

5. Conclusion

In this article we have drawn together three strands of collective/collaborative theorizing. The first critiqued the dominant storyline of supervision as the facilitated emergence of the autonomous, rational scholar. The second traced the emergence of feminist collective work, setting it against the assumed rationality of agentic male. The third considered how this same autonomous universal rationality has imbued the ethical processes of our academic institutions, posing problems for feminist collective research into supervision. In our collaborative discussions, and in subsequent articles, we have attempted to "remember" those troubling relationships of power through engaging with "an ethic of getting lost with the other" (Lather, 2008, p. 192), in the hope of moving supervisory discussions beyond principled ethical compliance.

NOTES

1. An example of how Greek thinkers devalued women is Tertullian's argument that "in birth the whole fruit is present in the semen" while women's menstrual blood provided only the matter for the development of the embryo (Warner, 1976, cited in Cox & James, 1987). Cox and James commented, "in a society in which matter drew contempt and form belonged to the realm of the rational and the spiritual, such an argument reinforced the misogyny of Aristotelian philosophy" (1987, p. 4).

2. Examples are the suffragette movement, women's publishing houses, the Kohanga Reo (Māori pre-school immersion language centres) movement and academic courses in both feminism and radical race analyses.

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EXPLORING ETHICAL DIFFICULTIES IN DOCTORAL SUPERVISION: REFLEXIVE COLLABORATIVE THEORISING AROUND MEMORY AND PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT. This study explored ways that doctoral supervisors working together across distance can enhance ethically reflexive practice through collegial support. A form of collaborative biographical memory-work was used to enhance theorising around the discursive positionings and subjectivities that emerged from experiences remembered and shared. This method is usually based on memories from childhood assumed to have undergone less re-scripting through re-telling over time. In contrast, in this study six experienced doctoral supervisors worked over two years to remember and theorise ethical difficulties in their adult professional practice before turning to shared memories of childhood experiences linked to adult concerns. These insights led supervisors to re-articulate earlier difficulties in supervision, linking earlier experiences of mothering and schooling to ethical stances taken in later life. The collaborative memories elicited unexpected intersections between dominant discourses of rational authority/ knowledge and power and feminist understandings of disciplined bodies/emotions and care within the constraints of contemporary university environments. The research points not only to the value of collaboration in the work of theorising, but to the contribution of biographical memory exploration to reflexive ethical practice.

Keywords: doctoral education; postgraduate supervision; ethics; embodiment; feminist poststructural theory