

# Editorial

Nielsen's article is a critical analysis of recent tendencies to reverse traditional views on knowledge by advocating tacit knowledge. He argues that we must understand the re-emphasis on tacit knowledge based on the practical functionality of particular modes of knowledge and of matters of knowing altogether in social practice. In so doing, Nielsen unfolds a critique of tacit knowledge from the perspective of a historically changing social practice in which the concept is launched to deal with issues emanating from changes in the forms of knowledge and expertise. Growing information technologies raise issues for the expertise of the growing professions, and problems arise from using tacit knowledge as a legitimating concept for professional practitioners. The inexpressibility of tacit knowledge may sustain and strengthen a professional mystique, reifying the conduct of professional practice while making it more inaccessible to outsiders and practitioners alike. By defining a certain tacit knowledge as the common core of a profession each profession is construed as a unity different from all other professional groups, and all members of a group are believed to be alike in possessing the same common core. Experiences not fitting into this common construct are marginalized, and individuality, knowledge and competence

de-contextualized. All in all, the concept of tacit knowledge tends to turn power relations into questions of knowledge and epistemology and to deal with them as such.

Solheim offers another critique of knowledge in a theoretical conception: conversational analysis. Warning against a narrow empiricism he looks at the status of its basic conceptual assumptions pledging for a broader conceptual foundation in studying ongoing talk. Using materials from his study of educational talk in classrooms Solheim argues that an analysis of the sequential organization of discourse through participants' turn-taking cannot capture their concerns, learning and meaning making. Warning, like Nielsen, against privileging expert knowledge he appreciates that order is understood through the ways in which people themselves make this order available to each other in local activity and that subjects are seen as knowledgeable. Still, this easily leads into a version of empiricism. Researchers also need to focus on the taken for granted, the tacit, the unsaid, even on how the repression of knowledgeability is accomplished. A conceptual focus on the content of talk is missing, and the fundamental ideas, practices and methods of pedagogical school activities are insufficiently understood. That calls for a situated, empirical demonstration of the significance

of persistent social, institutional structures. Solheim, therefore, ends with a critical look at activity theory which emphasizes that organizations have histories and operate as meeting grounds for multiple argumentative threads, searches for the dynamics and possibilities of change and considers the use of artifacts and tools.

The three remaining articles are about drug taking and stem from the same seminar, organized by Outlines and the "Center for Health, Humanity and Culture", as Valverde's article in our previous issue. The first article here is also about the subjectivity of drug use while the two last ones are about drug policies and professional treatment practices.

Nissen's wide-ranging, searching and outlining theoretical essay studies issues of subjectivity in contemporary practices of drug taking. Setting out from the socio-cultural dichotomy between individual autonomy and determinism that makes drug misuse appear as a negation of autonomous self-control, he insists that we cannot get around the issue of the self-dissolution of the subject in drug taking as (feigned) surrender or suicide. His critical-psychological approach does not, as some critics complain, confuse subjectivity with individual control and self-mastery. Drug taking also involves relations between the subject and the body. The experience of intoxication draws attention to the fragility of our bodily existence, and drugs facilitate and shape our ways of transforming or avoiding pain and exhaustion. Indeed, the industrial production and mass consumption of all sorts of drugs must be taken into account in understanding drug taking. Drugs exist as culturally given fixes to solve human problems which, nonetheless, like other commodities, change us in unintended ways. We may use drugs instrumentally as a collective chemical technology of the self, and they may recreate

us as dependent subjects. But willfully surrendering to the effect of the drug in our body is a special kind of surrendering to something we invented to suit our purposes. Nissen introduces a case study of a young woman coming to an understanding of herself and with herself about her drug taking and her relationship to the communities of Narcotics Anonymous and Wild Learning arguing that merging into these communities as powers larger than herself she illustrates a benevolent surrender.

Pedersen also takes an historical approach to drug addiction studying the conceptions of subjectivity involved in the historically changing Danish regimes of drug treatment, in particular the place of methadone therein. According to his Foucauldian analysis, in liberal societies the free will of client subject is constituted both as a reality and as something to be produced as a governable object. Pedersen illustrates how the changing Danish treatment regimes produce different forms of subjectification of drug addicts governing how they develop relations to themselves, work upon them selves and construct themselves as subjects performing their freedom in particular ways.

Svensson's article is a historical analysis too, namely of the history of compulsory care of drug misusers as a part of the Swedish welfare state with its historically changing legislations, institutions, understandings and practices. She shows us the kind of understanding we may be led to if we stop believing that it is possible to separate power and care. From a broad Foucauldian conception of power she emphasizes that there is no room for separating support and control in social work, that care can be a technique of power and that coercion may also be understood as giving opportunities for a better life.

*Ole Dreier*