# Museletter of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism

Notework
May 2007

SCOS is an international and interdisciplinary network of academics and practitioners interested in organizational symbolism, culture and change. The SCOS philosophy of 'serious fun' is articulated throughout the network's activities, particularly in the encouraging of unusual and groundbreaking ideas in the analysis of organizing and organization. We are committed to providing a forum for research that crosses traditional disciplinary and functional boundaries, and a reflective space for the development of new forms and new voices for this work.

Broken Brogues?
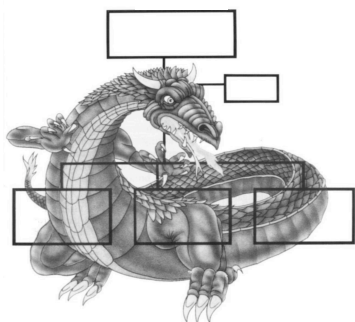
First up: **Immense gratitude** is to be shown to Sam and Damian for the spirit of humour and passion with which they have edited *Notework* over the past three years. Your **new editors**, Stephen Dunne and Sheena Vachhani, through inheriting said spirit, certainly have some very big shoes to fill. Stylish shoes, of course, but sizeable nonetheless. Not clown shoes, for sure, but the shoes of a proper and right businessman (*sic*).

Let's simplify! Sam and Damian's editorial tenure is no more. **Let us therefore pause momentarily for the wiping of our collective tear from our deeply saddened visage**…And now, with renewed composure, let us allow the new regime of *Notework* to enter all of our lives!

The first edition of the new era is stocked-up, perhaps somewhat predictably, with many of the old faithfuls! In time, we will build a host of **new features**. Whether we are successful in the achievement of these plans is, of course, a matter to be presided over in **the future**. We're looking forward to discussing this future with you, in the future, at the SCOS conference on the future, unless, of course, you're reading these notes after the conference, in which case we hope you enjoyed discussing the future with us, in the past, at the future conference. Either way, you can now find out everything you need to know about the conference at http://www.scos.org/2007/

The edition commences with some **Notes from the Chair**. Peter Case seems in upbeat mood. He has good cause to be! SCOS is entering its 25th year, a fact which offers our very own Leviathan in Levis considerable cause for reflection. Levi-than takes a proud glance backwards and a confident gaze forwards on both its heritage and its prospects, pre-figuring the work to be done within our **retro and PhD conference streams**.

Meanwhile, **Ed Says!** takes on a distinctively Hell-ish flavour whilst the Musery remains as undeniably brilliant as ever. This time round, Sam Warren chips in with her musings as our **board secretary**, Daniel King gives us his **views as a new academic** and Beatriz Acevedo reviews a recent **Gilbert and George** exhibition. Continuing in the artistic vein, we have two reports on the wonderfully brilliant **Novel and Organization** conference recently hosted by the University of Essex.

And the fun doesn't stop there!! Our **regional reps** proceed to do what they do best, namely, offering reports on SCOS and relevant information from their respective regions. Worth special mentioning here is the fact that **Rowland Curtis** is taking to the road for the first time. How's his driving? Let him know! **Janet Sayers** contribution to the section takes the form of a parody on the idea of emotional contagion. **Thinking Point:** If we laugh at this, do we become the butt of Janet's joke, the object of her parody? Hmm…

From theatre to table, Zoe offers yet another tale from the field within which the **eating habits of a highly respected intellectual figure** are revealed. No lie! We close with a series of **calls and announcements** and a taster for a whole host of **new features** you can expect to find yourselves subjected to. We look forward to meeting you in Ljubljana and to hunting you down for future submissions to our mighty fine newsletter. By then, we hope to have broken in the shoes!

Sheena and Stephen

In this issue…

SCOS: the Standing Conference on Organization and Symbolism
(oo-r-ya?)
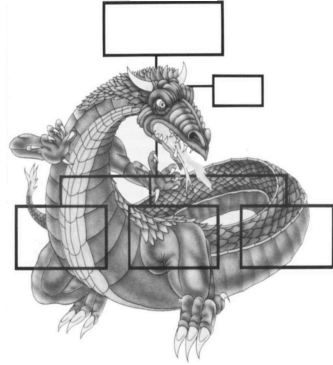
We are…

…an international and interdisciplinary network of academics and practitioners interested in organizational symbolism, culture and change. Formed in 1981 as an autonomous working group of the European Group for Organisation Studies, SCOS has grown to become a global research network comprising of hundreds of members.

Philosophy: scosophilia

The SCOS philosophy of 'serious fun' is articulated throughout the network's activities, particularly in the encouraging of unusual and groundbreaking ideas in the analysis of organizing and organization. Since its formation, SCOS has run annual international conferences and regular workshops, producing both critical debate and a considerable output of original scholarship. SCOS has always been committed to a critical approach to qualitative research that crosses traditional disciplinary and functional boundaries as well as to reflection on the forms and voices that this work takes.

Research

Moving into its fourth decade, the SCOS network continues to develop innovative views of organization and management, taking inspiration from a variety of different fields and disciplines. SCOS has always been committed to providing a forum for research that crosses traditional disciplinary and functional boundaries, and a reflective space for the development of new forms and new voices for this work. The SCOS Network also aims to produce and develop theoretically and practically innovative views of organization and management and seeks to:

- encourage and foster new approaches in the study of culture and symbolism of everyday life in organizations
- provoke discussion of marginalised perspectives on the understanding of organized life
- provide an arena where the boundaries of conventional thinking about organized life can be challenged and blurred
- sustain continuity and development in this fast-growing field of study
- enable the continued exchange of information and the development of community amongst a highly dispersed group of researchers, scholars and practitioners

Notes from the Chair

These *Notes* find me in relatively upbeat mood on my return from the April SCOS board meeting in Madrid. Following on from the excellent conference we had in Nijmegen, hosted so congenially and generously by René ten Bos and Ruud Kaulingfreks, we continue seamlessly from 'Organizations and Demons' to 'Signs of the Future' in Ljubljana 2007. (If you've just arrived in Ljubljana and are reading the conference pack edition of *Notework* it will not have escaped your notice that this city is, itself, not short of a dragon or two). As I write, I am still very much haunted by my first face-to-face encounter with Francisco Goya's *Picturas Negra* (Black Paintings) on permanent display in Madrid's Museo Naticional Del Prado; an experience that prompted my synapses to make further speculative connections between the Nijmegen and Ljubljana conference.
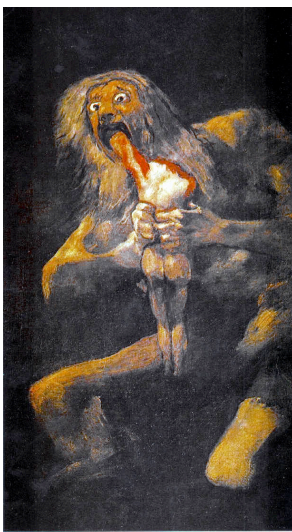
It's quite remarkable how Goya had such an explosive flourish of original and prescient creativity so late in life. Moved, perhaps, by his experiences of the Napoleonic wars and doubtless in trepidation at his impending loss of hearing - one thinks of parallels with late Beethoven and the latter's deafness– Goya covered the walls of his own dwelling ("Deaf Man's House") with large murals and other canvasses depicting hordes of tortured souls and impressionistic images of hell. Echoes across the centuries here of Bosch and Bruegel, many of whose own depictions of lost souls are housed in the basement of the Prado and which spatial juxtaposition suggest –to me at least – a kind of atemporal symmetry to the museum. What an extraordinary contrast there is between early Goya, the 'hack' courtly painter of bourgeois portraiture, and the dark foreboding of these late works. If one were to want to find an artist who, metaphorically speaking, forges a connection between the two SCOS conference themes of 'organizational demonology' and 'The Future', one would be hard pressed to better late Goya. Aside from the overt satanic content of the *Picturas Negra* and their promise of damnation for the un-saved in these Black Paintings (dating from the late 1820s), one finds anticipated the impressionism of Turner, the surrealism of Dali and the grotesque corporeal modernism of Francis Bacon, to list just a few lines of development that suggest themselves. Signs of the future?

So much for self indulgent free association… which reminds me of a story I'd like to share briefly, apropos of nothing in particular. The Catholic Church owns a row of shops in the centre of my hometown, Bradford of Avon (a quaint little picture-postcard town), which it lets to retailers of various sorts. The most recent tenant is a lingerie provider trading under the name of 'Indulgence' – no, seriously… I'm not making this up. Perhaps predictably, some of the parishioners were quite upset by this development and moved to have the tenant removed. Might not a simpler solution to the problem have been just to rename the shop 'Chastity'? The power of irony will have done the rest.

Okay, really, enough word association… I'm happy to report from Madrid that SCOS is in splendid health in this its twenty-fifth anniversary year. We have a worldwide membership approaching 900 which grows steadily by the week, sound finances that permit us – amongst other things - to fund several PhD conference bursaries each year and an upward trend in conference attendance. Added to this, we are now planning future SCOS events in a way that is unprecedented in its twenty-five year history, including, of course, a bi-annual Australasian Caucus. As far as the annual conference is concerned, following Ljubljana we find ourselves in the very capable hands of Dr. Damian O'Doherty and Prof. Sir John Hassard of Manchester Business School for the 2008 'Organizing the City' theme. Damian

and John have not only put together an imaginative and stimulating call for papers but have also given careful thought to a Manchunian cultural itinerary that promises to complement perfectly the academic content of the conference. I'm confident that Manchester 2008 will be both intellectually engaging and fun. It seems likely that 2009 will find us in Copenhagen, Malmö or somewhere in between (I am not at liberty to say more at this juncture…). Dr. Annette Risberg, Dr. Peter Elsmore and Prof. David Crowther have some creative ideas for that summer, more of which in the my next set of *Notes*. We are even in the position of entertaining proposals for SCOS 2010 and beyond, though final decisions have yet to be made. If you would like to organize a SCOS, then please get in touch with me (peter.case@uwe.ac.uk) with your ideas for themes and venues.

So, all in all, signs for the future of SCOS in our Silver Jubilee year are very bright indeed. It remains only for me to thank Dr. Campbell Jones and his team for all their hard work and creativity in staging what I'm sure will be a marvellous SCOS in Ljubljana. Campbell and colleagues have really pulled out all the stops to get this conference organized in record time. Thanks are also owed to Rudi Rozman of the Faculty of Economics at Ljubljana University for so kindly hosting us this summer. It promises to be a splendid event, combining intellectual endeavour, SCOS radicalism and collegiality in a wonderfully agreeable setting. I wish all who attend a rewarding and enjoyable time.

Finally, as ever, warm thanks go to my colleagues on the SCOS board whose hard work and dedication ensure the continuity of this unique community. What other academic forum in the organization studies field acts as such a consistent multi-disciplinary vehicle for the imaginative development of theory, qualitative fieldwork and method? It is a great festival of marginality which, in its twenty-five year history, has never ceased to challenge conventional thinking and break new ground. This may sound rather cliché (it's that moment in a chairperson's report where cliché is called for), but I genuinely hope that my successor in 2032 on the eve of the 50th anniversary conference will be able to write with similar enthusiasm and confidence about the marvellous institution that is SCOS.

Ex cathedra

Peter

The City: Regenerating Management and Organization?

A CALL FOR PAPERS

The city has become an obligatory reference in studies of management and organization. There are global-cities, postindustrial cities, dream cities, narcissistic cities, alphabet cities, and even messian-icities, to name just a few. According to Baudelaire in the modern city the 'marvelous envelops and saturates us like the atmosphere', a lyrically intense dreamworld that for many remains suspended between imminent catastrophe and proliferating on-going repair and sprawl. 'Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else', Calvino writes in *Invisible Cities*. In terms of size and population, the concentration of productivity and wealth, cities have come to dominate the global economy. At the beginning of the 20th century 10% of the world's population lived in cities; by 2000, an estimated 50%. In every hour Delhi grows by an addition of 47 people and Manila by 60; London acquires a rather more modest number of inhabitants growing by 12 individuals each year, whilst Moscow, by contrast, loses an average of 6 people every hour (Moriconi-Ebrard, 2000).

One typical approach is to treat the city as a context or a background, a space, a frame or place within which organization is formed. Factories, schools, banks, hospitals, the police force, churches, etc. might all be considered discrete organizations located in the space and time of a particular city. In cities people variously work, shop, walk, form 'encounters', interaction rituals, and seek what Goffman (1967) calls 'vicarious fatefulness', 'distraction', and 'killing time'. The city is also the site of the mob, the unruly mass, collective protest, barricades and the infamous massacre. It is at the heart of the 'society of the spectacle', and its street life a system of desire. On the other hand cities are not simply the space *within which* organizations are located – a simple background or frame; the city *is organization* – verb and noun. Like the arterial network of the human body, transportation systems regulate the movement of vehicles such bicycles, buses, cars, lorries, railroads, wheelchairs, and air-traffic. Road, rail, and footpaths are all specific 'organizations' in their own right, but crucially they also must inter-relate and interact in ways that allow cities to be 'organized'. Cities are literally traffic in motion – a complex, emergent and cyclical phenomena, a leviathan or doppelganger that seems to live and breathe a rhythm all of its own.

Context and text, subject and object, cause and effect, the city is a complex space and time within which to conceive, practice and possibly understand organization. What are the coming 'stories' of organization in the less sedentary times of the global airport city in which we travel without ever seeming to arrive, as we reside in the postmetropolis 'end of the city' (Soja), or dwell in the simulacra of cities that appear to roll up on themselves and take their leave from any shared sense of 'the social' or 'the real'? From Park Forest to South Park we can be sure that 'the city' continues to regenerate organization, but perhaps in ways that we are still waiting to discover.

Papers are invited that address the question of organization and city, and which may include the following:

- The City as Spectacle – a space of consumption, sport, leisure, entertainment, festivals, the shopping mall, 'fashionable cities'
- Organizations in the city – the brothel, hospital, hotels, prisons, dance-halls, clubs, 'street corner' societies, housing estates, skateboard parks
- The symbols and artefacts that allow the city to happen – traffic lights, street markings, lampposts, elevators, the subway, one-way streets, police officers, bouncers, taxis, rules and regulations

- 'Cities on the edge' – terrorism and the city, secret societies, secret agents, cabals, factions, plots and counter-plots that haunt as shades in modern cities
- The City as a space of 'encounters' and ritual interactions – enclaves and sub-cultures, dwell time, waiting, 'hanging-out'
- The Crowd and the multitude, the riotous mob, the unruly mass
- Temporary Autonomous Zones, Reclaim the Streets, the 'capture' of the city
- Alternative Geographies and mappings of Organization and the City
- Digital Cities, Information Cities, Imaginary Cities, Virtual communities, The Liquid City
- Alphabet Cities – The city as text, graffiti, tag lines, hieroglyphics, signs, ciphers, cryptograms, insignia …
- Psycho-geographical mappings of the City – where characters move across real and imaginary cities to leave a trace of hidden letters and runes, a secret alphabet, or what Iain Sinclair (1996) calls a 'subterranean, preconscious text capable of divination and prophecy'.
- Studies of particular cities or comparative studies that treat the city as an example of organization – Athens, Rome, Cairo, Harare, Lagos, London, Paris, New York, Los Angeles, São Paulo, Buenos Aires, Istanbul, Baghdad, Persepolis, Mumbai, Delhi, Beijing, Tokyo …
- Global, Postmodern Cities – the Cities of the Future
- Dream Cities or the nightmare City – accidents, waste, pollution, decay, violence, distress
- City Planning and the Organization of Urban Living
- Myths, Traditions and Histories that organize and disorganize cities
- The City as Action-Net – heterogeneous and interorganizational networks
- The Industrial and Post-Industrial Organization of Cities
- Tactile, the somatic, the olfactory, and other sensual dimensions of cities
- The city as a mapping of sex, desire, acoustic footprints …

Ed says…

He's been given this space to rant, so rant he shall!

Each time I drive through the quaint town of Matlock Bath, in the Derbyshire peak district, I'm troubled by the sights of hundreds of motorbikes parked along the roads – their riders, filling up the pavements, cafes, pubs and tea shops. Not that motorbikes are inherently unattractive to me - far from it. As a motorcyclist of some years I happen to be very partial to them. Carefully polished gleaming metal and leather clad bodies are no bad things. And I have nothing against the invasion of quaint tea shops by bikers – in fact I happen to like the juxtaposition. Like *Withnail and I* in chaps. No, I'm troubled by the thought why the hell are they all here? Why aren't they off on the open road, leaching from life the intoxication of space and sensation which a motorbike can bring? Why do they choose to replicate the herding instinct of the unfortunate beasts from which their leather jackets were ripped?

I've started to realise that the feeling I get looking at these, my biking brethren, can often be present too when walking into spaces where business academics congregate. Most, it seems have swapped dust(y) jackets, containing a body of work marked by all the lines of long roads travelled, for the protective armour of the latest fashionable RA(c)E leathers. They have traded an image redolent of being slightly edgy, slightly unpredictable, of asking questions of mainstream society, for comfortable and comforting consumerism.

This *ed says!* is not, however, a rallying call for more of the hyper-macho 'Hells Angels' of organisational theory. Those gangs of marauding (most often-) men you can still see stomping around conferences, flexing their academic muscles, looking for people to sneer at and revelling in a gratuitous will-to-horse-power, do little to appease my troubled soul. Perhaps instead it is a lament: for the academic lost for a while in the twists and turns of their ideas, driven by an inexplicable desire to take the road less travelled; a quiet celebration of those who steer their unfashionable research through cold winters, with teeth and roads gritted, focussing upon a destination that seems to them worth getting to; a nod of respect to those that realise that there is more to this caper than pointing one's career down the six lane highway of well established ideas to safe publication city.

Or, perhaps most of all, this text marks a desire to look in the mirror and see flies in my own teeth.

(thanks to Robert Frost and *The The* for some of the imagery).

Musings of a Board Secretary....

Sam Warren gives us the minutes of the SCOS Executive Board Meeting, Ljubljana, October 2006

My first job as SCOS secretary is to bring you a round up of the latest Board discussions. We met in the lovely city of Ljubljana at the Faculty of Economics (the 2007 conference venue) and were treated to some fine Slovenian hospitality and a guided tour of the conference facilities. A compact and bijou board were able to make the trip, consisting of Peter Case, Peter Pelzer, Saara Taalas, Ruud Kaulingfreks, Annette Risberg, Sam Warren, Campbell Jones and Nina Kivinen and they agreed the minutes of the previous meeting.

Matters arising
The unfortunate events at the 2006 conference were discussed and it was agreed that Peter Case would speak to the protagonist concerned. We consider that SCOS values openness, inclusiveness and respectful conduct and agreed that the board will do everything in its power to ensure SCOS activities reflect these principles, which given the diversity of SCOS may sometimes be an interesting challenge (see Peter's 'notes from the chair' in Dec 2006 notework)

Conferences
Ruud Kaulingfreks reported on the hugely successful Nijmegen 2006 conference. 114 people attended, with 12 bursaries awarded to PhD students.
Campbell Jones updated us on the Ljubljana 2007 conference and informed of the many ways the 25th anniversary of SCOS would be noted.
A report from Damian O'Doherty presented the preliminary arrangements for the Manchester 2008 conference – which are progressing well – and possibilities for future venues were discussed.

Treasurer's report
We decided on some important practicalities concerning the change of treasurer from David Crowther to Saara Taalas and considered why the accounts are held in the UK and in sterling given the multi-national nature of SCOS. It was decided to provide 3 bursaries for the 2007 conference in line with previous years.

Election issues
Lots of changes to report on here – Sam Warren was nominated and unopposed as secretary, and Saara Taalas as treasurer. Nina Kivinen takes Saara's place as Scandinavian representative, along with Sheena Vachhani as UK rep. Peter Elsmore and David Crowther will remain on the Board as prospective organisers of SCOS 2009 and Damian

O'Doherty as organiser for the 2008 conference.

Regional reports
Janet Sayers (Australia and NZ rep) sent her report and provoked a lively discussion about the growth of 'SCOS down-under'. Saara and Peter also reported on goings-on in their parts of the world and you can read more here in Notework.

Notework eds. Report.
Sam Warren reported that she and Damian were in the process of handing over editorial control and that they would stay on to publish the December issue. She was pleased to report that the services of Zoe Bertgan have been retained – a real coup for SCOS.

Journal editors' report
A long discussion of the aims and scope of C&O was undertaken and the board were pleased to be involved in such an important 'repositioning' of the journal.

Website officers report
The board thanked Alf Rehn for the superb new-look website and we discussed uploading a range of SCOS documents to the site, including back issues of the 'Dragon' (for those old enough to remember her!), conference proceedings etc.

Date of next meeting
We agreed to meet in Madrid on April 21st 2007 for the next board meeting.

Your board are currently:

Chair: Peter Case (UK) **Meetings Secretary**: Annette Risberg (Denmark) **Secretary & Elections Officer**: Sam Warren (UK), **2006 Conference**: Rene ten Bos and Ruud Kaulingfreks (Netherlands) **2007 Conference**: Leicester Management School represented by Campbell Jones (UK), **Membership Secretary**: Ann Rippin (UK) **Treasurer**: Saara Taalas (Finland) *Notework* **Editors**: Sheena Vachhani and Stephen Dunne (UK) **Web Officer**: Alf Rehn (Finland) **Journal Editors (C&O):** Heather Höpfl (UK) & Bob Westwood (Australia) **Regional representatives:** Peter Pelzer (Germany)

Niina Kivinen (Nordic countries) Rowland Curtis (UK) Janet Sayers (New Zealand), David Bubna-Litic and Carl Rhodes (Australasia) J Santos (South America).

The Musery

The Making-Up of the Academic – Reflections of a New Lecturer

By Daniel King

It is late Thursday afternoon and I'm sitting in front of my computer trying to make sense of the *Individual Research Plan* form I have been 'invited' (rather than being told) to submit as part of the research planning exercise of the university. In this form, which takes its cue from the categories and assumptions of the RAE, I am required to state my 'research outputs' over the previous year – publications, external income, Ph.D. supervisions etc – and provide an account of my 'projected activity' for the coming year, including specifying exact funding and publications details. By submitting this form, the accompanying email states, we are helping the university review its research for the coming year and to support research active staff.

Forms of this nature will be familiar to many academics working within UK based institutions. As regular readers of *Notework* will be aware, the RAE and other related league tables are becoming increasingly important for universities in terms of reputation, student applications and funding. Increasingly they shape the practices and procedures of the university and through this impacting the thinking of those that work within it. Whether one is looking for tenure within a university or in progressing in one's career, the contribution one can make to the RAE is vital. Therefore the reflections which I will put forward in this piece, inspired by filling in this form, are not specifically directed at my university but are applicable to most UK academic institutions.

Despite their ubiquity, as a new academic, having recently completed a Ph.D., this emphasis on RAE is relatively new to me. Whilst a Ph.D. student I had come across phrases such as '*esteem indicators*' and '*contributions to research culture*', I was aware of the pressure to publish and the importance of league tables. I also distinctly remember the mood of depression during the evening when, at the now defunct UMIST, the rumours spread that 'we lost our star' and slipped from the RAE category 5* to 5. Nevertheless, I was able to dismiss these pressures as they seemed to have little bearing on my existence. Now, incumbent in a full-time post, I am slowly seeing how the RAE is subtly infiltrating my outlook as an academic. In recent weeks my email box has been filled with a number of emails regarding the university's position in various league tables and how we should adjust what we do to succeed by their criteria. Discussions at departmental meetings tend to privilege RAE activity and the receiving of external funding income.

This emphasis also comes through a form of peer pressure. In recent weeks well meaning colleagues, both from within my institution and externally, have informally offered me 'helpful advice' about being an academic. They have encouraged me to concentrate on producing a few 'good' publications and possibly getting in some research funding, to contribute to the RAE. 'We know it's a game and we don't like it' they tell me, 'but it is just a question of jumping through a few hoops and then concentrating on what you really want to do'. They often go on to say: 'Try to preserve as much autonomy and space to do what you *really* want to do'. 'The trick is', so I'm told, 'to work out what you want to do and then try to fit that around the RAE. Try to preserve as much autonomy and space as you can, to do what you *really* want to do'. These comments are all well meaning and designed to encourage me.

However, as I reflect on this process, my thoughts are not directed towards the structural position of the academic framed within the RAE. Rather resonances with my experiences of founding and running a small Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisation, called Arts in Action, are being triggered. As I sought to establish this VCS organisation, just like I'm doing now, I spent considerable time receiving advice and hearing the personal experiences from more established VCS practitioners. I wanted to know how to establish an organisation and run the therapeutic

arts courses I was interested in putting on. However, just like in academia, the focus of these conversations were not on the content of what I wanted to deliver, but on the difficulties attached to the funding process, and the subsequent evaluation and monitoring procedures that accompany it.

The particular focus of many of these conversations with VCS practitioners centred on funding procedures – and if you meet any VCS practitioner it will not be long before this subject comes up. Funding has become a hot topic within the sector and a major preoccupation of practitioners (like the RAE has to academics). The move from grants to contracts (see 6 and Kendall, 1997) and the introduction of 'target centred funding' and 'evidence based practice' has dramatically alternated the nature of the VCS. Voluntary and community sector organisations are increasingly required to present their work in terms of government priorities, through 'SMART' targets (specific measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound), which are dramatically altering the nature of their work. For many VCS practitioners such procedures distort the nature of their work, forcing them to focus more upon targets and less upon people. Many often state they can no longer be responsive directly to their client group or undertake projects which are developed from their own interests. Instead, their activity is lead by what they can get funding for. Struggling to cope with this arrangement, their formula often echoes that of my well meaning academic colleagues: 'work out what you want to achieve, jump through the hoops in order to get funding but try to not become controlled by this process'.

The underlying arrangement of my *Individual Review Plan* (as an academic) and the *funding, evaluation and monitoring* forms (as a VCS practitioner), I was required to complete when I worked in the Voluntary and Community Sector is of course Peter Drucker's *Management by Objectives* (MBO). *Performance Measures*, now such a mainstay of New Public Management, have increasingly become a key facet within academia, the VCS and wider society. MBO gives the veneer of autonomy since nobody directly states what academics should publish or what programmes VCS practitioners put on. Nevertheless, the very direction of activity towards seemingly neutral or technocratic goals redirects behaviour and distorts social relations towards these pre-ascribed objectivities. Whilst there may be scope for resistance within this framework and indeed the potential to subvert the whole process, (is it possible to get a 'category A' article which critiques the RAE?) the emphasis placed upon these objectives by the informal and structural pressures to achieve them is very strong. The stakes are high. For academics it is their career progression. For VCS practitioners the very existence of their organisation.

I have one major concern regarding the idea that we can work round these procedures by filling in these forms whilst simultaneously setting our own objectives and thus retaining our autonomy. The belief that one can fill in these forms (in my case the *Individual Review Plan)* and not be affected by it has a certain naivety to it. As Rose and Miller argue, "making people write things down, and the nature of the things people are made to write down, is itself a kind of government of them, urging them to think about and note certain aspects of their activities according to certain norms" (1992:200). I found that when completing this plan I was gradually thinking about my academic work in a different way. This exercise introduced me to the discourse of the RAE and made me think about my academic work within its categories. Writing these things down was thus a sort of disciplinary exercise; training and teaching me to think, act and talk in a new way. Just as when I was completing the evaluation and monitoring forms for my VCS organisation, this process has made me think of my activity in terms of satisfying certain outcomes. In this sense the *Individual Review Plan* is a 'technology', to use Foucault's phrases, in which I am being made up as an academic, to see myself as a small entrepreneurial project with goals, outputs and sets of achievements, defined by knowable and measurable targets. Moreover, these are targets that I have chosen. Indeed I did not *have* to complete this plan, I was invited so. Thus I have willingly participated in my disciplining!

I am still new to the RAE and its potential to impact on my life within the university. There are others who are infinitely more qualified to discuss its impact than I. However, what I can reflect on, given these experiences within the university and the VCS, are their similarity. One often reads that there is a separation between those within the university, the so-called 'ivory tower' and the lives and experiences of those in the 'real world'. Rather my understanding is that if we take a closer look at this distinction it is not so apparent. As academics we are confronting many similar struggles as VCS practitioners, against the same operation and arrangements of power. Performance measures and target and goal setting culture, imported and mutated from MBO, underlying both the RAE and the funding mechanisms in the VCS, is a specific operation of power. It works on us in similar ways, directing our focus, shaping our understandings and

managing our activity through these concepts of goals and targets. Whilst this is problematic, the fact that we as academics are confronted by similar issues to those in the 'real world' also provides us with opportunities for engagement and struggle. "If" as Foucault states in conversation with Deleuze "the fight is directed against power, then all those on whom power is exercised to their detriment, all who find it intolerable, can begin to struggle on their own territory and the basis of their proper activity (or passivity)" (1977: 216). The mechanisms from which the RAE is constructed thus could be the starting point of struggle for critically inclined academics. This does not have to be an isolated or myopic concern, as I have sought to argue here. The issues we face as academics are very similar to those others face in other domains. Critically inspired academics, on the basis of their own experiences thus have the possibility to engage with others, and help them to struggle in their own domains, around their own concerns and particular interests. Acting in this way we might be able to form connections, acting as a 'nodal point' (Grey and Willmott 2002), between different groups.

I am not as yet sure how this can be achieved. The challenges that face us in this target culture are considerable. Yet some of the perversities are beginning to become apparent in wider media. As I write this in the news today is an incident where the police have arrested a 14 year old boy for stealing 49 pence worth of sweets arguably in order to hit one of their arrest targets. I do know that many VCS practitioners are well aware of the impacts that these procedures have on distorting their own practices and affecting the lives of their client group (Lyon-Callo 2004). What, however, does seems evident, is that we must try to engage directly, starting in academia but in support and connection with others, to challenge this form of disciplinary power and through that open up alternative modes of engagement with practitioners. This might mean engaging differently with our own experiences as academics and forging new relationships with practitioners. Indeed we might have to forgo some of the allusion to authority and expertise that exists in the public perception and be honest and say that we struggle with these questions and problems as well. In the midst of these challenges are some fascinating opportunities to reengage with the questions around the role of critically inspired academia, the role of the university and the possibilities for struggle. And you never know, there might even be a paper in it … which, if all else fails, could be put towards your next RAE submission!

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MAJOR EXHIBITION OF GILBERT AND GEoRGE AT THE TATE MODERN, LONDON, 2007

Impressions of the exhibition

by Beatriz Acevedo

1967...
Living Sculptures
*

1967
G&G met at St. Martin's College
Sculptors
*

1969
Gilbert the 'shit' &
George the 'cunt'
*

....

Law of the Sculptors
1. Always smartly dressed, well groomed, relaxed, friendly, polite and in complete control'
2. Make the world believe in you and pay heavily for this privilege
3. Never worry assess, discuss or criticize but remain quiet respectful and calm
4. The lord chisels still, so don't leave your bench for long

---

As part of the exploration of art and society, it was time to navigate through the work of Gilbert and George –recently exhibiting at the Tate Modern in London. For most people in Britain and the art world , Gilbert and George are well known. Their work, stemming from the 1970s, represents an unusual partnership between two artists, pioneering expressions in the performing arts and being themselves 'living art'. The view presented here is a personal impression from a visit to their Major Exhibition – a retrospective of almost 40 years of work , also a way of exploring pieces of history through the eyes of Gilbert and George.

....*there were two young men...*..

When Gilbert and George met in 1967 they began to 'dream of the world as an art gallery'. In this quest, they have collected, registered, confronted and explored human experiences from their surroundings in East London, and their concerns on the universal questions of fear, death, hope and life.

It is difficult though to classify their job. In 1970 they remarked that they are just 'human sculptures', yet, their work has included painting, photography, montage, films, sketching and performance. In 1969 they chose to recreate the 1930s music hall song 'Underneath the Arches', their famous "living sculpture'. In this way, they pioneered 'performance art', which became influential in the decades that followed in Britain and across the world.

During this decade they start to experiment with photography and to define what would become their signature: the grid and their presence in the pictures. Throughout these years of 'drunkenness and dusty corners' G&G explored how inner feelings contrasted with the rhythm of the city, their characters and anxieties. After the series of pictures, they started experimenting with red to emphasise the messages of their pictures. It was during this time that they made a decision to live a particular life, away from the mainstream, rooted in the East End of London –then a lively and wild and not yet trendy neighbourhood. From their headquarters in Fournier Street, they watched the world go by.

1970
The evening before the morning after

Dirty Words
Dusty Corners
Gin and Tonic
Human Bondage

Cherry blossom
Mental
Red Morning:
Hate/Trouble/Violence/Dirt

Postal sculpture

Are you angry
or are you boring?

Red sculpture

1980s:
Death, Hope, Fear, Life

Black Jesus
Black God
Black Cross
Black Church Face
*

Aids,
Fournier Street,
Mullah
*
Patriots,
England,
Rose hole,
Youth,
Faith,
Shitted,
Thirst/Hunger,
Sperm Eaters,
Naked Love,
Armed Faith
*

............*drunk with god*................

In spite of their constantly well groomed and relaxed posture, they have managed to shock and confront the society around them. Their pictures depicting young people, even black people – a topic which was taboo in the earlier 70s– earned the criticism of media and journalists. Adjectives including 'disgusting', 'obscene', 'ridiculous' or 'queerly' describe how these artists were perceived. Nevertheless, when wandering through the rooms it is possible to come across a great variety of human feelings, pieces of urban history, traces of their lives all of them represented in the magnificent pictures, sculptures, paintings, films, sketches and performances.

By the 1980s their work embraced a major exploration of photography based on the available techniques, conserving the same grid scheme. Later on, their messages gained in colour. Better techniques and a great range of characters are included in their images: announcing a certain socio-cultural 'dizziness'. It is the time of pop, music, media, fashion, post-punk and Conservatives. A money oriented, young and hedonist society. In contrast, it is the time of despair: dying hopes, exclusion, AIDS, power, urban poverty. And again, their presence in the pictures is hallucinated, naked, shitted, ceremonial and iconic.

.................*a love letter to the spectator*................

The explosion of colour and the evolution of their subjects marked their transition into the 1990s. Themes oscillate between the universal and the local, the intimate and the public. On the one hand, their archaeology of the city becomes obsessive: steps, traces, fingertips, abuses, blood, spit, sperm, gum, are traced back with the patience of a taxonomist. There are streets, trains, buildings. On the other hand, works in the same period are more inside themselves –literally-: tears, blood, spunk, piss, shit, luring abstract through the microscopic images. The pictures here charm the spectator, yet they defy her: a naked truth, a shitty world, human despair, and their ubiquitous images floating amongst the turds coloured by the bright green, blues, pinks, purples, blues, reds and yellows.

In the 2000s, their archaeology deepens and widens, including images of the city. Bigger formats came with improved computer techniques. They collected tangible objects: crucifixes, steps, locks, coins, graffiti, trees, ads, and pictures of people. And in a more delicate exercise they also collect intangible anxieties of the society: terrorism, bombs, victims, war, sex, anonymity, religion, despair, happiness. Emotional landscapes of our contemporary world.

An invitation

Perhaps the best advice is to go to the exhibition without awareness, expectations or even knowledge of them. This will allow the spectator to surf in the colours, the grids, the pictures, their constant presence, their shocking mock of the world. The journey through the Fourth Floor of the Tate Modern is filled with a fifth of their massive work: 18 rooms of paintings, experiences, colours, history, city tales, political insinuations, savage mordacity, self-deprecation, intimate spanking, body fluids and naked feelings…

1990

Blood
Tears
Spunk
Piss
*

2001

Bombers
London
Terror
Terrorist
Terrorism
Attacks
London
Killed
Shooting
Bombs

Two reviews of the Novel and Organization Conference
A 2-day conference held at the University of Essex, May 10-12ᵗʰ organised by Martyna Sliwa and Chris Land.

The Novel and Organization

Reviewed by Chris Land and Martyna Sliwa – University of Essex

It has been over 50 years since William Whyte devoted two chapters of *The Organizational Man* to the analysis of representations of management in contemporary literature and almost 40 years since Dwight Waldo called for greater attention to novels in the study of business and management. Since then, organizational scholars have developed, albeit sporadically at times, an engagement with cultural representations of work and organization. We have seen books, edited collections, chapters and journal articles on organization and film, tv, popular music, theatre, poetry, short stories and cartoons, but there has remained an abiding interest in the novel - perhaps the pre-eminent form of cultural representation of organization. Why?

This was the question we asked ourselves in 2006. For a while we pondered the matter through a series of discussions conducted over coffee, cigarettes, wine and occasionally those small, dry triangles of lard and preservative that pass for sandwiches in the minds of Essex University's catering services. We even thought about doing some research on the subject and read a few bits and pieces by the likes of Terry Eagleton and Ian Watt, suggesting an intriguing correspondence between the rise of industrial capitalism, bourgeois individualism, managerial authority and the novel. This seemed pretty relevant, especially given organizational scholars' proclivity for a particular form of 'realist' novel. Could we argue that the use of novels, rather than a critical move in the study of organization and culture, was actually a highly conservative one, reproducing capitalist models of authority and industrial bourgeois subjectivities? We also looked at the work of Edward Said, to ask questions about the novel and the formation of literary canons in the reproduction of imperialist cultures. Could a post-colonial analysis of culture, business and the novel say something useful about contemporary forms of globalisation and the hegemonic imperialism of 'management' and business over other forms of organization?

So we read some interesting books, including a few more novels, drank more coffee and wine. Ate a few more 'sandwiches'… and concluded that, shiftless and lazy as we were, we'd try to get someone else to do the hard work of putting all of this together.

And so we organized a conference. On 'The Novel and Organization'. Hell, even if we didn't get the answers we wanted, it was a great excuse to blow our annual research budget on amazon, read a bunch of novels, and spend a couple of days talking in fine company, eating, drinking and discoursing on one of our favourite topics.

And so it came to pass that from the 10th to the 12th of May 2007, a group of some 36 organizational researchers gathered together in the landscaped confines of Wivenhoe House Hotel, at the North end of the University of Essex campus. The conference itself brought a range of speakers together, from around the world (well, we had one person from the United States to complement the otherwise European contingent) to stroll through the grounds of an 18th century stately home feeling like bit parts in a Jane Austen adaptation. Except for the lack of period costume and the fact that we spent most of the time packed into an air conditioned conference room focussed on the power-point projector. The speakers included Barbara Czarniawska's keynote on day one, addressing a variety of issues from the representation of gender and accountancy in Polish novels, to the literary criticism of Wolfgang Iser, and went on to consider a broad selection of subjects from hope, hypocrisy and sense-making in Japanese novels, through to the impossibility of reading. Novels discussed ranged from Swedish tales of women entrepreneurs in the works of Almqvist and Bergman, the North American 'dirty realism' of Bukowski and the post-modern fiction of Pynchon, to Kafka's 'Transformation' which, whilst not strictly a 'novel', in the hands of Kaulingfreks and Lilley, offered a fascinating account of novelists' abiding tendency to obsess over 'work'. Theoretically the papers addressed a range of issues, from the question of representation in novels and the status of 'theory' versus 'literature', to explorations of the use of novels in teaching leadership or doing ethnographic research. Although the papers covered different political and epistemological

positions, the focus on 'the novel' as a particular way of organizing representation gave the conference the necessary degree of consistency. Overall the quality of the contributions was high and we are now looking forward to editing a special issue of the *Journal of Organizational Change Management* over the coming months, which will include a few of the highlights from the conference.

If we had one regret it was that the pace of the conference was a little too hectic. In our desire to include as many papers as we could, and to incorporate a range of approaches to the topic, we corralled our conferees into a room from 9 in the morning until 6 at night, followed by the inevitable late night of rich food and copious wine. In the future we will perhaps consider the wisdom of David Lodge's character, Morris Zapp, who, when organizing a conference on the Future of Criticism in Jerusalem, keeps it minimalist:

> Almost everybody involved agrees that it is the best conference they have ever attended. Morris is smug. The secret of his success is very simple: the formal proceedings of the conference are kept to a bare minimum. There is just one paper a day actually delivered by its author, early in the morning. All the other papers are circulated in Xeroxed form, and the remainder of the day is allocated to "unstructured discussion" of the issues raised in these documents, or, in other words, to swimming and sunbathing at the Hilton pool, sightseeing in the Old City, shopping in the bazaar, eating out in ethnic restaurants, and making expeditions to Jericho, the Jordan valley, and Galilee. (*Small World,* p. 298)

Given that the final day of the Novel and Organization saw discussion move toward this being the *first* Novel and Organization conference, and given that S_awomir Magala was already lining up venues in Italy for a repeat event, we may well bear this model in mind next year...

The Novel and Organization (2)

Reviewed by Sam Warren, University of Portsmouth

Reading is increasingly squeezed out of our hectic academic lives, moved (regrettably) to the margins of scholarly endeavour and replaced by the requirement to be always writing for publication. Bizarrely this writing is not likely to be read by many people as they are too busy writing themselves…. So it was nice that reading was the focus of this gathering of Poles (plus a few other Europeans and a lone stateside visitor!) looking at the import and role of the literary work – and especially the novel – in organization and management studies. Drs. Sliwa and Land set out in the call for papers, the conference brought together scholars to explore the growing popularity of the novel in teaching and research – a practice that is gaining legitimacy as a 'good' way to engage students, explore organizational life, or indeed as a form of writing (and reading) to be borrowed in order to enrich our own much drier, sterile – but still fictional? – accounts of organization.

As we were reminded in different ways, reading is perhaps impossible – a private, often silent affair with ourselves akin to masturbation (thanks Slawomir Magala for that gem). Our dirty insertion into the text (cf. Pullen & Rhodes, cited by Hopfl) creates a multiplicity of readings through the lacework of indeterminacies and interstices – er, gaps – left more or less intentionally in the text by its author as she weaves her/ his plot(s) (and here I am referring to the dare I say it old fashioned idea of the author as the person who actually wrote the book – how naïve!). So giving 'a reading' or using 'a reading' is pretty meaningless and actually impossible. But nevertheless, the various ways in which we have, are and should be trying to use novels in organization studies was interestingly debated in good company, over good food and nice wine. The three cornerstones of a good conference for sure.

I was lucky enough to be attending without presenting a paper and so was able to sit back and luxuriate in the ebb and flow of ideas pouring forth – a nice place to be, meaning my only anxieties were deciding what 'favourite novel' I should write on my name badge (thankfully I seemed not to be the only literary schizophrenic incapable of making such a final choice…) and wondering why 2 of the 3 novels I brought for the novel-exchange box (how novel!) were left unwanted in the bottom. Clearly not clever enough by half, and no getting away from the fact they were mine, since I had added a little note to their new owners inside the covers. Drat.

Chris Land opened the conference by stating we perhaps ought to begin by recognising that the assumption that our students read novels (or anything for that matter) is a big one. Strangely this wasn't really mentioned again over the two days. I say strange, because using novels to teach only works if the students engage with them and, more fundamentally actually *read* them, otherwise we may as well stick to text-books that they don't read either. So some reflection on this might have been expected. Perhaps that's a little unfair and more nuanced criticism would attend to the intellectual capital of the various novels used as starting points and foci of the papers presented over the two days – a highly middle class collection of works, almost all of which were alien to me (it seemed that a significant number of delegates had first degrees in literature or communications so I tried not to feel too crap about this!). But if these novels were unfamiliar to me, we can be pretty sure that students will not have encountered them either – and I couldn't help wondering whether it might make sense to find out what students actually *do* read and discuss how we might talk to them in their own language occasionally? Or perhaps that's an excuse for dumbing down made by a not very well read working class academic… To be fair, Cynthia Dereli did ask delegates whether they thought a 19th century novel (Dickens' *Hard Times*) had any relevance for 21st century students – but I don't think she got a reply.

But of course the conference was not just about novels and teaching business, management and the socio-political economics of capitalism. Introduced as 'an obligatory passage point" for anyone wanting to consider literature in the same breath as organization studies, Barbara Czarniawska gave a keynote that immediately called into question the nature and legitimacy of organization theory and studies – no small talk, first night niceties here – the conference began with a call for organization studies to leave novel writing to the novelists and get on with the business of *reading* novels as organization theory. We should accept that we do not own the sole right to theorise about such things and instead enquire as to the underlying theories and assumptions that move both literary and academic texts between the real, the imaginary, the fictionalised and the fantastic. Of course, this leaves us in the rather uncomfortable position of considering that if novels are as good, or better, at 'doing organization theory' than organization theorists, then what is it that we do better than them? Measure? Count? Practice 'physics envy'? or, as a later speaker remarked, just feel thankful that we get the opportunity to travel all over the world, speaking a lot of nonsense that no-one is interested in hearing… Mmm. I'll get me coat. Nothing like a legitimation crisis to set the scene for a good conference, eh?

For me the most interesting discussions centred on the novel as a vehicle for research, either by reading them for the affectively infused clues they might give about the organizational realities of their time (gender, entrepreneurship, oppression of the working classes, work-as-goodness, leadership, and many other things) or by taking a nugget of an idea contained within its pages and running around with it in organization studies – Sverre Spoelstra gave a dazzling example of how he's currently playing with Jose Saramago's concept of 'white blindness' as a lens through which to look at the ignorance and ways-of-not-seeing that ironically abound in the IN-YER-FACE, all-too-visible world of 21st century business. Blindingly obvious perhaps (pardon the pun!), but to my mind this kind of practice represents something that organization studies *could* do with novels that sticks us to our knitting in a Petersesque fashion (OS = systematic, rigorous analysis…albeit still fictions!) but recognises the value of many well expressed – and often beautifully simple – ideas gifted to us through novels.

I feel I should conclude this review by reminding you that – as alluded to above and during the two days of the conference – my words here are a necessarily and inescapably partial, partisan and limited reading of this conference as a text. Mainly because I left early to go to a Eurovision Song Contest party in the East Midlands and missed the last 5 papers…

SCOS Regional rep. reports: news from around the globe.

Thoughts, views and news from the SCOS regional representatives, take it away reps!

More from the 'nomadic' Nordic rep

Nina Kivinen

La Finlande, douze points!

It is probably difficult for anyone to understand how such a spectacle as the Eurovision song contest can change a nation, at least momentarily. This year's song contest took place in mid-May in Helsinki after Lordi's fantastic victory last year. I must confess that I hadn't watched the competition in years. But last year I was woken up by an sms from my brother, encouraging me to watch the unthinkable, something which would happen only when hell freezes over, a Finnish victory of the Eurovision song contest. For years I had watched in agony as one more horrifying performance after another left Finland hanging at the end of the scoreboard. Finland is even featured in Tim Moore's book entitled Nul points, a book with a chapter on every song in the Eurovision sing contest's history that has received no points at all. Nul points.

And then in 2006 my fellow countrymen had gone completely mad and voted for a hard rock band dressed as monsters. No use watching the telly at all, I thought.

But there I was sitting in my sofa last year, still half a sleep, suddenly very much awake and with tears in my eyes listening to the fantastic sound of "la Finlande, douze points!" time and time again.

Suddenly we Finns were not losers anymore. We'd won the ice hockey world championship in 1995, we had Nokia and then in 2006 the unachievable had become true. Now the sky was the limit. At least the Finnish music industry saw new markets open up in a ways they had not anticipated.

So, yes according to the tabloids Finland was going to win this year too, or at the very least come second to Sweden's the Ark. But this year things were back to normal. Hanna Pakarinen's Leave me alone gave us a 17th place in the competition. But the audience in Sweden's was kind enough to let us Finns again hear the magical "la Finlande, douze points", although we did not return the favour.

For a full year, this little nation of mine was full of pride for winning an enormously popular and in my opinion silly and hilarious song contest. A contest that seems to have very little to do with music and more to do with erotic dancing, compulsory modulations before the final chorus, fire works, you name it. A contest that in a way should feel wrong for the

times we are living in. But this year's contest again showed its importance for the Europe of today.

So hard rock halleluja!

Nina

PS: The nomadic university of art, philosophy and enterprise continues in Kassel in Germany just before SCOS 2007 and continues in October in Ljubjana. Check out the website for information on how you can join! www.nurope.eu

Aesthetics and Malaise? SCOS Aussie style

David Bubna-Litic

Many of the familiar faces of Australian SCOS community came together for a one day symposium, entitled 'Aesthesis and Organizations in the Popular Media' held on Thursday 19 April 2007 at UTS, by Carl Rhodes. Apart from this Australian academia seems to be suffering the same malaise that has spread across the Western world. As I write this, I wonder if my sense of irony and cynicism has not been amplified out of proportion by reading four hundred thousand words on sustainability and environmental destruction. I think Australia is waking up to its denial at last, with no thanks to the many academics who have been wildly signalling it for the past couple of decades. Given that we are such a dry continent, now that as we are virtually running out of water the Government has finally woken up. Perhaps this is because it has been overshadowed by the resources boom; in which the

share market is roaring ahead, as China turns our natural resources into more and more cheaper things at huge cost to their own environment. Who are we to complain, as we don't really need these products and together we are depleting the earth. I suspect that this sort of critique might be levelled at the world of Universities, as most people don't seem to need us, nor take that much notice of academics. As I get older, I am not sure whether I am beginning to agree, I find poetry more inviting. When I was invited to the latest faculty seminar on the numerical analysis of finance markets, I even secretly gloated that one day, in the not so distant future, that is going to be over. Does anyone have time to even read this?

SCOS gets back to its roots!

Rowland Curtis

Greetings from Manchester, where May has begun in typical 'don't leave home without your coat' style. Manchester's predominant management guru (Sir Alex this time, not Sir John as you may have been expecting) has seen his possible 'treble' cut back by a dreary FA Cup final and a scorching in Milan, but he still has the silver lining of another Premiership title. For me of course, the cloudy days have been brightened by my exciting activities as your UK Rep - though I have to admit last month's SCOS board meeting in Madrid didn't hurt on the sunshine stakes either (!). And on that point, I should probably take the opportunity say a big thank you to the board for my appointment as

UK Rep, and let you know that I look forward to doing my bit for the SCOS community.

As I'm sure you will know the 2007 conference is fast approaching, and I have been spreading the word with missionary zeal. Highlights for me have included bewildering first year doctoral students with SCOS propaganda at the Manchester Business School Doctoral Conference earlier in the month, and ambushing attendees at the MBS Org Studies seminars with SCOS literature and enlightenment. With the CMS conference taking place in Manchester this summer I have taken it upon myself to raise SCOS awareness to an equal (perhaps competing isn't the word...) level, and we have the exciting news that SCOS will be along in Manchester in 2008 to bring the real deal.

Though I haven't attended many academic events in the UK recently, I would like to give mention to the activities of the excellent Discourse Theory and Organization Network (https://cmsorg.wikispaces.com/Discourse+Theory+and+Organization+Network), who had their fifth meeting at the University of Essex at the end of April, hosted by the University's Centre for Theoretical Studies and the Department of Accounting, Finance and Management. The aim of the Network is to address the methodological implications of discourse theory in studies of organisation, and the Essex event gave particular attention to empirical case material. The event provoked lively (and generally constructive) discussion between CMS and Ideology and

Discourse Analysis (IDA) scholars, and the momentum has been provided for another such event to take place in Warwick in July (see network website for details).

I shall sign off by looking forward to seeing you all in Ljubljana in July, and UK-based academics, if there is anything you think I might be able to help you with as UK Rep then please do drop me a line and I'll do my best to be of assistance (rowlandcurtis@yahoo.com). So its 'ta-raa' from Manchester for now.

We downsize our German rep…

Peter Pelzer

The current reorientation of German universities towards more competition and transparency produces strange effects in some places. A university is a company which sells packages of knowledge to solvent students, i.e. customers and looks for an optimal corporate identity in the media, so is the new attitude. This sounds strange in this country with its strong tradition of insisting on the difference between education, knowledge and information, but a recent rule set by the president of Hamburg university demonstrates a worrying consequence. The president instructed the deans to coordinate media questions concerning actual, politically discussed topics with the public relation department. Even statements or reports on topics specially related to one's subject shall be reported after publication. Considering the possible topics like the introduction of fees, the

discussion around excellence of universities or restrictions on admissions it is quite clear that researchers have a distinct opinion resulting from their research which might be different from the university's policy. These are discussions around the framework conditions of German society. If the new freedom for universities, as declared by the proponents of opening education to market standards means that research results have to be coordinated with the corporate identity of the institution where these results are produced this definitely means a restriction of the freedom of research, which is, by the way, granted by the German constitution.

All quiet on the South American front…. Is anybody out there?

Finally, Janet Sayers our New Zealand rep brings us an adaptation of a paper presented at our sister conference ACSCOS…beware the contagion!

Emotional contagion and the 'infectious' service smile: A response using parody

Janet Sayers[1]

Introduction

This paper is in three parts. The first part of this paper introduces the concepts of social and emotional contagion (Hatfield *et al.*, 1994). The second part of this paper makes a somewhat alarming swerve to a recent article by Martin Lefebvre (2005) in *Theory, Culture & Society* on the topic of conspicuous consumption and cannibalism. In using Lefebvre I introduce the zombie movie to this discussion, which is then used as the basis of the third part of this paper—a parody.

The parody targets the idea of emotional contagion. The idea behind providing a parody is to challenge the basic idea that underlies emotional contagion theory which is that human emotional memory is ape-like, and replicates (like a virus). Instead I use what Lefebvre (2005) has argued actually constitutes human memory—*poetic memory*—which he argues is "an *active process* whereby *relations* are created by way of the imagination" (p. 43). The parody, presented at the end of this paper, uses a recent advertisement's structure that is currently showing on New Zealand television where a 'contagious' smile is passed along from person to person, However, instead of focusing on the good service represented by the contagious smile in the advertisement, the parody focuses on poor service and an ensuing bad mood being passed from person to person. The parody refers to two zombie movies from the oeuvre of Peter Jackson (*Bad Taste* and *Brain Dead*), but any zombie movie would suffice. Writer's Notes are provided which provide a brief discussion of parody and other 'behind the scenes' issues of relevance to this paper.

Social and emotional contagion

Ideas about biological contagion have a long history in the medical sciences (the field of epidemiology). Ideas about social contagion have been commonly discussed since at least the later part of the 19th century, but it is only

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[1] I would like to acknowledge the influence of Dr. Nanette Monin on this paper, whose teaching methods and writing practice have influenced my approach to its presentation. However, the interest in zombies is the author's own worrisome issue (especially to herself).

since the 1950s that experimental research has established the existence of the social contagion phenomenon in a number of areas of social life (Hatfield et al., 1994). Examples of social contagion include, for examples: hysterical contagions (burning books); deliberate self-harm contagions (copy-cat suicide); contagions of aggression (riots, copy-cat murders); rule violation contagions (running red lights); consumer behaviour contagions ('viral' behaviour); and financial contagions (share market panics).

Running through the research about behavioural and/or social contagion is a simple thesis: exposure to a behaviour appears to be a sufficient condition for social transmission to occur. Socio-cultural phenomenon can spread through and leap between populations like outbreaks of chicken pox or the measles. Research evidence points to this process of behavioural mimicry being automatic, unconscious and uncontrollable (Howard & Gengler, 2001). Moreover, the evidence suggests this automatic response occurs without thought: "emotions and behavioural patterns spread rapidly and are accepted <u>uncritically</u> by the members of a collective" (Furnham, 1983, emphasis added). Mathematical models can even predict the spread of contagion and ways of curtailing undesirable social contagions have been provided (Patten & Arboleda-Flórez, 2004).

Emotional contagion, usually researched as a dyadic event, has been defined as "the tendency to automatically mimic and synchronize movements, expressions, postures, and vocalizations with those of another person and, consequently, to converge emotionally". The science of Emotional Contagion is now well advanced, with the 'Emotional Contagion Scale' being developed and validated to assist with further research in this area, which has identified several examples of emotional contagion including mood, anxiety, fear, appreciation and enjoyment (Doherty, 1997).

So far I have introduced the ideas of social and emotional contagion. Hopefully as a reader you are thinking about smiling, viruses, mimicry, and whatever happened to subject agency? If you watch zombie movies, you probably know where I am now going to go with this, but because this article has some pseudo-academic pretensions, I now move on to discuss Lefebvre's recent article on the figure of the cannibalistic serial-killer in conspicuous consumption.

Capitalism, cannibalism and zombie movies

Lefebvre's (2005) article concerns memory, the imagination, and the cinema. He argues that human memory "is not simply a passive storehouse of information where items are preserved without alteration in a term-to-term coded relation", but that "Human memory, instead, is a *poetic memory*: it is an *active process* whereby *relations* are created by way of the imagination" (p. 43, emphasis in the original). Using ideas about trope, figure and 'memoria', Lefebvre shows in his paper that the metaphor of 'capitalism as cannibalism' finds its way through this memory-image of the serial-killer and inserts itself in fictional forms like the cinema. His paper traces this image through exploring initial encounters in the New World by Columbus (where cannibalism was inflected with 'colour', and so helped make George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* an allegorical tale about racism), Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, the impact of Jack the Ripper, as well as critiques of capitalism by Marx, Lukács and Baudrillard, amongst others.

Arriving at the modern figure of the serial killer, he (and the serial-killer is almost always a he), is shown to be obsessed with food. Eating, devouring, food preparation, and biting parts of the human body feature in the ways these fictions are told. By examining the ways that cannibalism features in narratives, Lefebvre shows how the figure expresses a deep anxiety about the 'appetite' of early colonial capitalism, the fear of the 'other', and the will to dominate. Capitalism is savage and violent: "Cannibalism represents the ultimate in possessiveness, hence the logical end to human relations under capitalism" and "Capitalism's appetite is for labour, its consumption that of worker's time, from which the surplus-value is extracted and accumulated in profit" (p. 48).

Characteristics of serial-killing include seriality, repetition, and the murder of strangers. Serial-killers strip away the individuality and humanity of their victims and consume the victim's life with the utmost violence. Lefebvre argues that serial killer victims are subjects of serial consumption. Mass production, mass consumption and the 'commercialisation of everything' in advanced capitalist society, and the advent of mass technology, moves this seriality memory-image into a new dimension of mass murder. The advent of Fordism means that mass consumption is new economic dimension within which the figure of the serial-killer exists. Mary Kilgour has argued that "cannibalism provides a perfect, if a rather simplistic, image for the nightmare of a consumer society, uneasy about its own appetite", and she goes on to cite Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* as an example as in the film "the refugees from the cannibal zombies hide in a shopping mall, whose walls separate the two mirror forms of conspicuous consumption" (cited on p. 49).

In the original *Dawn of the Dead*, and its recent remake, the inference is that the entire world is consumed by the zombie plague, leaving all humanity dead at its end. Everyone falls and is eaten. The obsession with eating brains is a feature of zombie movies. Generally zombies go straight for the brain, the site of thought, learning and agency. Once bitten, the subject is inevitably turned into a zombie also. Victims die, and are reborn as the walking dead. *28 Days Later* provides some of the most violently savage ravenous zombies pitted to screen. The outbreak of the plague that all but destroys Great Britain starts in an experimental lab, where experiments have been conducted on chimpanzees. The Chimpanzees start the plague by biting the environmental activists that have come to set the chimpanzees free. Monkeys also start the plague in Peter Jackson's zombie comedy *Brain Dead.* Having the plague start with the bite of a monkey starts the pattern of thoughtless mimicked, or 'aped', behaviour that characterises the spread of zombie plagues.

In short cannibalism in the zombie movie, as with the serial-killer in the cinema, is a metaphor for the nightmare of unbridled capitalism, but also hints at deeper fears. This troubled anxiety is imagined in zombie movies: unrestrained appetites, infection, contagion, teeth and biting, ravenous mouths, the distrust of strangers, and the brain-dead walking around, as if alive.

We ourselves consume texts constantly: these texts include advertisements, movies and academic texts. As readers what we do is try to reintegrate these texts into our imaginary worlds through which we give meaning to the work. We use, not a process of mimicry to learn, but a process of *poetic memory*. Part of our role as teachers and academics is to help our students re-imagine and empower themselves within these texts: to help them play (pedagogical issues are discussed in Sayers & Monin, 2007, forthcoming). The following script provides a parody incorporating the ideas described above, with an explanation.

Bad Service
Back-story

An advertisement is currently being played regularly on New Zealand television, advertising a service company. As the action unfolds on screen a poem is read out. The text of the poem is as follows:

Smile Poem

A smile is contagious,
It's passed from me to you.
As soon as one is witnessed,
It's so hard not to do.

To be party to a smile,
Is privilege indeed,
A smile can make things better.
It's sometimes all you need.

So valuable a smile,
You'll find out that it's true.
That if you smile at everyone,
Your smile comes back to you.

The advertisement runs as follows (the parts of the poem are stated in italics). The action starts by showing a company employee in the doorway of a recently re-branded retail store. The female service representative is shaking hands whilst smiling at a customer (*A smile is contagious*). The man leaves and passes on this smile to another man, in a suit, walking past (*It's passed from me to you*). A bus passes by and a young male passenger smiles in response to the main in the suit (*It's so hard not to do*). The man looks across the bus aisle to a young woman sitting opposite, who smiles shyly in response (*To be party to a smile*). She looks out the window smiling, and a mature woman walking by picks it up (*Is a privilege indeed*). She walks past a café and a man sitting inside starts to smile. He smiles at a child

sitting on her Dad's shoulders who smiles back in response (*A smile can make things better*). The child smiles at a woman walking past in the opposite direction (*It's sometimes all you need*). The woman sits next to an older man sitting on a park bench and smiles at him (*So valuable a smile*). This man smiles back and a woman driving by in a car picks it up (*You'll find out that it's true*). The woman in the car smiles and a man walking past on the pavement and he picks it up (*That if you smile at everyone*). This man enters the same store the advert started with, shakes hands with the same employee and smiles at her. She responds with a smile (*Your smile comes back to you*).

Précis: The purpose of the parody is to poke at the concept of emotional contagion, using the advertisement 'contagious smile' advert as a narrative structure. The company is NOT the target of the parody: the idea of emotional contagion is the target. I have conducted NO critique of the service claims of the company in question, and I am sure that their retail service people do smile a great deal, and make other people feel good on many occasions.

Parody motif: Spread of infection ala Zombie movie.

Props

Motor mower
Alien mask
Zombie make-up
Bad teeth

Characters required:

1. Narrator of 'The Smile' poem
2. Person 1
3. Person 2
4. Person 3
5. Cute puppy (optional)
6. Child and child's friends (optional (Parent's permission required))
7. Crowd of adult zombies

As the action unfolds the Narrator reads out the following poem.

'The Smile'

There is a Smile of Love
And there is a Smile of Deceit
And there is a Smile of Smiles
In which these two Smiles meet

And there is a Frown of Hate
And there is a Frown of Disdain
And there is a Frown of Frowns
Which you strive to forget in vain

For it sticks in the Hearts deep Core
And it sticks in the deep Back bone
And no Smile that ever was smil'd
But only one Smile alone

That betwixt the Cradle & Grave
It only once Smil'd can be
But when it once is Smil'd
There's an end to all Misery

(William Blake, from the Pickering Manuscript, circa 1803)

Scene One:

1. Person 1 drives into a service petrol station. She is smiling happily to herself.
2. Person 1 looks around anxiously for some help. None arrives. Person 1 looks pissed.
3. Person 1 angrily tries to do it herself and lifts up petrol lever
4. Person 1 spills petrol all over trousers and screams with anger and frustration while looking at a Person 2 exiting service station in car.

There is a Smile of Love
And there is a Smile of Deceit
And there is a Smile of Smiles
In which these two Smiles meet

Scene Two:

1. Person 2 gestures back to Person 1 with the middle finger, while yelling "What the f… did I do?".
2. Starts to foam at the mouth. (Note: Can't hear words through window but should be able to guess them)
3. Person 2 turns angrily to Person 3 in passenger seat, "What are you laughing at?". Spittle flies in Person 3's face. (Again, words not to be heard, but should be able to work it out from looking)

And there is a Frown of Hate
And there is a Frown of Disdain

Scene Three
1. Person 1 is at home, looking dishevelled and really ill.
2. Person 1 kicks cute puppy*.
3. Cute dog zombified.

And there is a Frown of Frowns
Which you strive to forget in vain

Scene Four

1. Person 2 yells at child in back seat of car.
2. Child cowers with fear.

For it sticks in the Hearts deep Core
And it sticks in the deep Back bone

Scene Five

1. Child advances across open space with large group of zombified children behind him or her.

And no Smile that ever was smil'd
But only one Smile alone

Scene Six

1. Person 3, looking the worse for wear, grimacing with large bad teeth, partially zombified, enters classroom and sits down.
2. Person 3 shoves person next in class. Person next to Person 3 shoves person next, and whole class erupts into a riot. Motor mower can feature.
3. All become zombies.

That betwixt the Cradle & Grave
It only once Smil'd can be
But when it once is Smil'd
There's an end to all Misery

END

* No animals, children or students are to be harmed in this production

Writer's Notes

Parody

A parody is a work that imitates another work in order to ridicule, ironically comment on, or poke affectionate fun at the work itself, the subject of the work, the author or fictional voice of the parody, or another subject. Hutcheon (1985, p. 7) has said, "parody...is imitation with a critical difference, not always at the expense of the parodied text". Dentith (2000, p. 9), defines parody as "any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice".

Bad Service

The script title is a direct reference to Peter Jackson's cult movie, *Bad Taste*. The 'home-movie' made with friends and family is a splatter-fest zombie movie, and a cult classic favourite in NZ. *Bad Taste* offers the following: a home-movie made by film amateurs; a strong sense of humour that doesn't take itself too seriously; and Kiwi cultural in-jokes that 'take-the-piss' out of NZ cultural icons; and an obsession with eating brains. The movies of Peter Jackson often feature New Zealand iconography, and *Bad Taste* and *Brain Dead* feature several scenes that New Zealanders are fond of. One is in *Brain Dead*, when the main hero attacks a crowd of zombies with a motor-mower. Another is in *Bad Taste* when a misfired bazooka explodes a sheep grazing gently in a paddock.

The Poem

The smile poem and William Blake's poem are similar. Both are about smiling and the structure is the same with each verse having four lines, with the rhyming words at the end of the second and fourth line. William Blake's poem is one of his most popular and recognisable.

William Blake was an artist, poet, visionary, and revolutionary who lived from 28 November 1757 until 12 August 1827. He delved deeply and critically into human nature and society, and questioned presuppositions whilst evoking a sense of the uncanny. He drew illustrations to his poetry, often based on his visions, which gives his poetry a vivid, supernatural and evocative presence. The following quote provides an explanation of the poem:

> This poem reflects the two-fold nature of human existence, as well as the duality between appearance and reality, by simultaneously revealing and concealing its inner meaning. Behind the finite interpersonal meanings of smiles and frowns, which ought not to mislead us about the totality comprised of positive and negative moments, there is a whole other layer of significance. The smile of smiles, whose inner nature is invisible, can only function in the finite world by means of potentially deceptive appearances, either as love or deceit depending on the character of the recipient. The frown of frowns—bitter experience beyond merely personal discord— induces radical self-doubt, which can only be relieved by an equally cosmic smile which surmounts the traps of the finite and restores the self. Thus Blake, by smiling upon my 'hungry consciousness' with his intelligence as no one else can, fills me up with indescribable joy and helps me to surmount all disappointments.

(Notes at http://www.autodidactproject.org/my/smile.html by Ralph Dumain on William Blake's 'The Smile' have helped provide this explanation of the poem)

In terms of the poem in relation to the unfolding action on screen, the poem should provide a soft, civilising and intelligent counterpoint to the ensuing action that takes place on the screen.

Note on adaptations and evolutions

The script can be adapted. All that is really needed is the following: first, a poor service experience that engenders a bad mood; second, several people willing to participate; and third, a sense of fun about zombie movies.

The parody can be filmed out of class, or in the classroom, or both. It could also be adapted to create a short role play, or used as a learning activity (like Chinese Whispers which is often also used to teach the process of emotional contagion and mitigating factors effecting mimicry).

A further adaptation could be to use the horror movie 'The Ring', which provides a further brain-eating spin (this time the virus is spread by the mass media – a tape inserted in a VCR and then watched) as the basis for a parody.

Please feel free to adopt and adapt. Post on You Tube and send me an email with the link so I can watch ;o)

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Tales from the Field
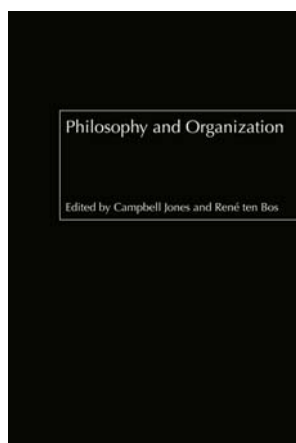
Dr. Zoe Bertgan – over to you Zoe!

Professor Stuart Cligg came for dinner last night and boy does he know his methodology! I had prepared Risotto with white Alba truffles "Enoteca Pinchiorri" which I intended to serve with a 1961 Château Palmer. As I was dressing the asparagus and decanting the wine he was telling me that 'a humanist ontology serves as a bulwark in Gidden's opposition to any deterministic and mechanical view of social action as something externally caused or conditioned'. Now I want to avoid a deterministic and mechanical view of social action as much as the next lady, but I couldn't help feeling there was a certain vulgarity to this presumption of humanism before taking dessert. With his golden locks in a tussle of tangle and L'oreal blow-dry shine ('Go on, because you're worth it'), he reminded me of a young Liberace. It was the rhythm and diction of his tone that was most mesmerising. I had no truck with his circuits of power and his urbanism as a feudal nodal point but I was determined to argue the point about participant observation. He was initially dismissive, but I pressed it to my advantage. It seemed to me that Stuart knew a thing or two about building sites, or what we call over here construction sites, and as I was supervising a doctoral student who was doing some work with some brickies, I wanted to take the opportunity to test the possibilities of an 'animalist ontology' (Noonan, 1998) as a supplement to participant observation as a possible way of avoiding determinism and mechanics. You have to remember that I still had a bee in my bonnet about Karl Weick and so when it all started to rain on the veranda of my 65th street apartment I had to down ships and take a bit of a scramble down that here-be would-be drainpipe all caked in anti-climb and good and proper slipper to get my bearings. Well, you get the idea! Before I knew where we were Stuart was stripped to the waist claiming he could clean shin a pipe 36 floors down and back up again in less time than I could read Weick on participant observation. The rare 1959 Ardeche blue notwithstanding I took the challenge. The elevator was working fine! Anyway, I began to prepare my case. Most people think that participant observation is simply a matter of good old honest working the line and then writing up your notes in the evening over a good bottle of bubbly. What Weick of course does not tell the reader is that the itinerant nature of the shadowing method lies at the heart of a more subtle approach to participant observation. And here was my move on the animalist ontology. Remember that Chris Tilley is not the only one to go crawling around amongst menhirs and cliff depressions and if phenomenology be the sloppy side of the qualitative empirical then so be it. By following one person through the organization, the shadower obtains insight into a focused and specific experience which is relevant to a particular expert role. This is what Belinda was doing at local 455 in New Jersey. I had to be quick. I could hear panting and began to smell 'Oriental Outlaw' aftershave. Reader! Imagine: I'm flicking through the *Social Psychology of Organization* and I just darned knew that Stuart was preparing a learning/becoming/organizing move across the chessboard of academic joust. How could I counter that gambit? Quick, down the stairs. Oh! Lordy I was all in a tizzy. Down the stairs .. .down the stairs!! .. to my library! *Miaow*. Woops, sorry pussy. There it was, the back window open. Street car off in the distance – a straight mainline to Jersey City! Neon lights all spread before me, I got down on all fours and laddered my Janet Reger's in a desperate fumble through the fire escape. But I just got to have that reference! The train station was pretty quiet by the time I got there, and there Belinda and I met for a quick session during which I managed to rid myself of those laddered Reger's. The moiré a glitter! Oh, how we laughed.

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Philosophy and Organization

Edited by **Campbell Jones**, University of Leicester School of Management, UK and **René ten Bos**, Radboud University, Nijmegen, the Netherlands

This groundbreaking new book explores why philosophy matters to organization and why organization matters to philosophy. Drawing on recent efforts in management and organization studies to take philosophy seriously, this volume features contributions from some of the most exciting scholars writing today at the intersection of philosophy and organization. Accessibly written in an engaging style, the chapters offer several images of philosophy, engage critically with the way that philosophy might inform organization, and illuminate issues including idleness, aesthetics, singularity, things and language, power and cruelty.

This book will be essential reading for students of philosophy and of business and management, and will be of interest to all those who seek to think seriously about the way their lives are organized.

Contents:
Introduction *Campbell Jones and René ten Bos*
Part One: Images
1. Organization: recovering philosophy *Damian O'Doherty*
2. The uselessness of philosophy *Ruud Kaulingfreks*
3. What is philosophy of organization? *Sverre Spoelstra*
4. Critique and resistance: on the necessity of organizational philosophy *Martin Fuglsang*
Part Two: Engagements
5. Ask not what philosophy can for critical management studies *Peter Case*
6. Reading critical theory *Steffen Bohm*
7. Why feminist ethics? *Janet Borgerson*
8. Race, revolution and organization *Stefano Harney and Nceku Q. Nyathi*
Part Three: Illuminations
9. Workers of the world … relax! Introducing a philosophy of idleness to organization studies *Norman Jackson and Pippa Carter*
10. Messing up organizational aesthetics *Samantha Warren and Alf Rehn*
11. Singular plurality and organization *Ignaas Devisch*
12. Double-crossing the landscapes of philosophy: conjoining the transparency of 'things' with the veil of language *Rolland Munro*
13. After power: Artaud and the theatre of cruelty *Steven D. Brown*

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Organization Studies (www.egosnet.org/os)

Special Issue on:
'Responses to Social Constructionism and Critical Realism in Organization Studies'

Guest Editors
Stan Deetz, University of Colarado, Tim Newton, University of Exeter, and Mike Reed, University of Cardiff.

Deadline: 31 October 2007

Rationale

Debate in organization studies has become increasingly sophisticated over recent decades. Earlier schisms between positivist/functionalist and interpretive/critical traditions have broadened toward a greater plurality of perspective. Yet there remain major differences in orientation. Prominent amongst these is the dispute between social constructionism and critical realism. This debate has now gained sufficient momentum for it to constitute a key axis in organizational research. It is therefore timely to reconsider its argument and counter-argument.

In part, this debate speaks to the difficulty of dispelling doubt about the legitimacy of organizational intervention. For example, whether we are concerned with changing organizational ethics, values or processes, how do we defend our actions? In addressing this question, critical realists generally assert that we can only defend our interventions if we assume that there exists both a material reality and a pre-existent social reality. In contrast, social constructionists tend to argue that these assumptions are not a pre-requisite of political or organizational intervention. In this manner, discussion between constructionists and critical realists directly informs our actions as researchers and change agents.

In part, the debate also reflects increasing concern about the stability of organizational life. For instance, should we see organizations as unstable sites of flux, flow and flexibility where constancy is a precarious and temporary achievement, or do there remain on-going stabilities and 'permanences'? Constructionists have tended to emphasize flux and fluidity whereas critical realists argue that there still remain pressures toward consistency in organizational structure and discourse. In so doing, these debates directly address the way in which we view stability and change in organizations.

Dispute between constructionists and critical realists has also gained increased impetus within organization studies from a series of articles within organizational, sociology and economics journals. Constructionist positions have been attacked on the grounds that they conflate structure and agency, collapse ontology into epistemology, practice 'ontological oscillation', and generally place too much emphasis on discourse in the creation of organizational reality. Although such argument has aimed to clarify critical realist contention and perhaps 'settle' recent debate, it remains the case that realist contention has itself been subject to a range of critique. Critics have challenged the language of causation that is employed by critical realists, such as that of 'social laws' and cultural 'recipes'. Similarly the critical realist reliance on the concept of 'emergence' and transcendentalism has criticized by a range of social theorists,

feminist economists, and sociologists. In addition, the emancipatory vision within critical realism has been debated as has the critical realist contention that a pre-existing social reality provides a basis to analytically distinguish structuring processes from human agency.

Yet this wide ranging critique of critical realism has received limited consideration from writers on organizations. In consequence, there remains a clear need to debate and discuss these issues. Similarly, more studies are required which consider whether the critical realist critique of social constructionism is justified. In addition, we need work which repositions these debates. Although examples do exist (such as Willmott's reframing of critical realism, Newton's re-analysis of constructionism and critical realism, and Fairclough's application of critical realism to discourse analysis), they remain comparatively limited.

In sum, this Special Issue aims to re-analyze existing debates but also move significantly beyond them. We therefore welcome contributions that adopt the following kinds of approach:

- Defend constructionist or critical realist perspectives in organization studies in response to earlier critique. For instance, how can constructionist argument respond to critical realist critique? How can critical realists address critique of their central assumptions such as emergence, a stratified ontology and transcendentalism, or a pre-existent social reality?
- Overview critical realism and/or constructionism from an alternative or historical perspective, and/or try to move beyond a partisan position in the context of organization studies.
- Explore other approaches to realism such as Shilling's project of 'corporeal realism' or discussion of realism within literary studies.
- Address key social theorists and theoretical issues in a novel manner. For example, should we view Foucault from a realist perspective (as Marsden suggests), or based on a stress on human agency? Similarly, how do we view discourse analysis from a realist framework (as with the argument of Fairclough)? Can we defend notions of stability or social structure from a constructionist perspective? Can we explain 'nature' or 'the working body' within a constructionist framework?
- Consider how these competing perspectives help us to re-think how we go about intervening in organizations?
- Consider the ability of constructionist and/or realist argument to advance the critical analysis of organizations and organizing.

Submissions

To be considered for publication, papers must be electronically received by **31 October 2007**. Please submit papers as email attachments (Microsoft World files only) to the Editor-in-Chief (OSeditor@alba.edu.gr), indicating in the email the title of the Special Issue. Please prepare all manuscripts according to the OS guidelines shown at <www.egosnet.org/os>. All papers will be blind reviewed following OS's normal review process and criteria. The number of papers that will be published in the Special Issue will depend on the mixture of full- and short-length papers that will be eventually accepted. The Special Issue is scheduled for publication in the summer of 2009. Any papers which are accepted for publication but not included in the Special Issue will be published in a regular issue at a later point in time. For further information please contact the Guest Editors for this Special Issue, Stan Deetz (sdeetz@sbcglobal.net) Tim Newton (T.J.Newton@exeter.ac.uk), or Mike Reed (reedm@Cardiff.ac.uk).

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It is fast becoming recognised that the standard methodological tools of qualitative and quantitative research (ranging from in-depth interviews to surveys and questionnaires) are inadequate to grasp in totality the everyday practices of business organizations or consumers. As a result, both managers and marketers are beginning to look around for different ways of studying and understanding business methods, organizational set-ups, social structures and consumer lifestyles. Bringing together five experienced ethnographers and leading experts in the field, this course in The Business of Ethnography will give research students first-hand experience with an ethnographic situation, as well as acquaint them with the aims and practices of ethnography as a methodological tool in the study of business organizations and marketing.

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Conference of Practical Criticism in the Managerial Social Sciences

Submissions are invited for a conference at the University of Leicester School of Management from January 15th - 17th, 2008.

Rationale

In 1919, the great literary critic and linguist I A Richards devised one of the most influential undergraduate courses ever taught. His method of teaching literary criticism through the close analysis of particular texts proved so popular with the

Cambridge undergraduates that his lectures repeatedly overflowed into the street and were applauded with cheers and stamping. Largely thought he agency of one of his students, F. R. Leavis, 'Cambridge English' ended forever the belles lettrist tradition whereby the appreciation of literature was held to be the exclusive province of the superior sensibility. Against this kind of socially exclusive pretension, Leavis insisted that literature could only be properly understood through the application of critical intelligence to the text itself, in which democratising sense it was accessible to all. Though yoked to moral preoccupations which few would find acceptable today, practical criticism as a method dominated the teaching of English for the next half century. In the process it destroyed a number of reputations which could not survive a close reading of the texts on which they were based, reputations which, in Leavis' words 'belonged more to the history of publicity that the history of literature'. Meanwhile, Richards' Practical Criticism, the text based on that pioneering course of 80 years ago, remains an important teaching resource having survived the passing of Leavisite criticism as a distinct school.

It is our belief that the social sciences of management stand in dire need of a similar approach, albeit one which dispenses with Leavis' narrow-minded authoritarianism. The aim is not censorship, but the subversion of a censorship and self-censorship which already exists. The young researcher today faces a situation in which the production of knowledge is dominated by reputations variously built on evidence-free prescription, on flat-earth empiricism or on flatulent and bloated 'theory', sometimes home-grown, more often imported and more often still, half-baked. The eminences in these fields of cultural production may be as much the product of what Bourdieu called 'professorial power' (and Leavis called 'flank-rubbing') as any qualities which their actual work may once have possessed. Certainly their current capacity to direct and constrain the effort of junior colleagues is so exercised. Examinerships, appointments committees, editorships and the advisory boards of grant-giving bodies and the managerial professions are used to favour loyalist pupils and infiltrate them into positions of influence. The result of this fissiparous, loosely structured but fundamentally authoritarian system is that the field of management research has become partitioned into a number of quasi-independent fiefdoms. Between them, there are long-running 'debates' whose inconclusiveness - and therefore continuity - is guaranteed by an imprecision of terminology, an inability to produce or criticise a logical argument, and an absence of recourse to evidence, sometimes combined with a principled avoidance of all three. Once they are up-and-running, debates of this kind can develop into fields of knowledge production in their own right, each with its own institutional embodiment and its own established reputations.

Within the enclaves of intellectual pretension created by these processes, the young researcher is under pressure to learn the outward gestures of enthusiastic conformity which all-too-frequently becomes inner motivation. This works to define the production of knowledge as the production of more of a particular same, acknowledging, in the process, the indebtedness to the particular authority which has laid down the template of that sameness. The outward signs of the process are a mass of inward-facing citations which further inflate the reputation of the authority at its centre, sometimes accompanied by more explicit, and so more excruciating, acts of homage in the text itself. It is all a long way from what research could or should be.

Since 'critical management' has so obviously been caught up these processes, and may even have originated within them, we intend to hold a conference devoted to a critical examination of the academic bases of academic authority. The rules governing the contributions are flexible, but are basically those of Richards' practical criticism. Texts which are influential in their particular fields of academic enquiry or managerial practice are to be subject to a detailed examination in respect of the arguments they make, the evidence, or the representation of previous scholarship on which they are based and the validity of their claims to have made important and original contributions. What is to be scrutinised, in other words, are the standards of scholarship which are being implicitly promulgated through the current influence-networks of managerial social science.

This basic format may be varied at the discretion of the critic and according to the case in point. The examination may be extended to a number of works of a particular authority, or even a whole corpus. Critiques which extend beyond that to include the work of a whole school would probably be need to be excluded, partly because that would preclude the detailed examination of particular texts and partly because it is at this point that criticism tends merge into the boundary disputes already described.

It is intended that the end-product of the conference will be an edited book of readings devoted to the close examination of prominent texts. It will serve the purpose, not only of questioning the bases on which academic authority is presently

exercised, but also of providing models of practical criticism with the object of encouraging students to practice it on their own account.

Submission and Selection of Papers
Papers will be selected by a committee which includes Peter Armstrong, Campbell Jones, Simon Lilley, Geoff Lightfoot and Martin Parker of Leicester University and Stefano Harney and Cliff Oswick of the Queen Mary University of London.

Please send abstracts, which should include details of the work(s) to be criticised and the grounds of criticism, via e-mail to p.armstrong@le.ac.uk by 30th June 2007. Successful submissions will be notified by 31st July 2007. Complete papers should be received by 31st October 2007.

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A Call For (and Description of) Forthcoming Features

Before you go, we would like to take the opportunity to briefly introduce some forthcoming features in an attempt to tease some academics out of their comfort zones and get everyone engaging in not-so-comical puns.

'Note-wok'

>An open "corner" in which academics get a chance to sizzle and stir-up (***get it? – eds***) some heated debate (we know how you like to be angry)! This feature will be short and sharp and give people a chance to "speak out" (shorter and perhaps more polemical than the "Speaking Out" section in *Organization*).

'Book-notes'

>Various contributions on book fetishism from the interested and afflicted. These will include reviews of published books and commentary on bibliophilia in academia.

'Words-works'

>Various contributions on the uses and abuses of 'academese'; witnessed or imagined.

Make of this what you will……….

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….and finally
We hope you've enjoyed this edition of Notework. Please continue to support your locally global SCOS museletter by sending your contributions to us:

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