

The Archive and its Other*

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review of:

S. Clegg (ed.) (2002) *Central Currents in Organization Studies I & II* (8 Vols.). London: Sage. (HB: pp.3250, £990.00, ISBN 0761947264)

A new archivist has been appointed. But has anyone actually appointed him? Is he not rather acting on his own instructions? Certain malevolent people say that he is the new representative of structural technology or technocracy. (Gilles Deleuze, 'A New Archivist (*The Archaeology of Knowledge*)')

How can anyone who "publishes" today accept to leave out of the picture, in the outside-text [*hors-texte*], or rather in the non-published, the whole complex functioning of the editorial machine: its mechanisms of selection, control, sanctioning, recruitment, internal promotion, elimination, censorship, and so on? (Jacques Derrida, 'Between Brackets I')

Collecting

At first glance, possibly the most obviously striking aspect of this collection is its gargantuan size. Here we have 142 articles reprinted over 3,250 pages in eight volumes. These eight volumes are broken into two parts, with the first four volumes concerned with 'Frameworks and Applications' and the latter four with 'Contemporary Trends'. To this Professor Clegg has contributed two editorial introductions, which introduce the two halves of the collection. The stated goal is to bring together the *Central Currents in Organization Studies*, and the size of this collection surely reflects the magnitude of such an undertaking.

Titles always risk missing their target and Clegg, being aware of this, makes efforts to delimit the domain of his archive. In the first note to the editorial introduction to the first volume he writes:

* Thanks to Steffen Böhm, Peter Fleming, Shayne Grice, Dag Petersson and Olga Suhomlinova for their generous comments on an earlier version of this review.

There is some debate about the appropriate title for the endeavour represented here, as to whether it should be “organization theory”, “organization analysis”, “organization science”, “organization studies” or just “management” (see Clegg and Hardy, 1996). I have followed the convention established in the “Handbook” of using the broader title. (Clegg, 2002b: xxii)

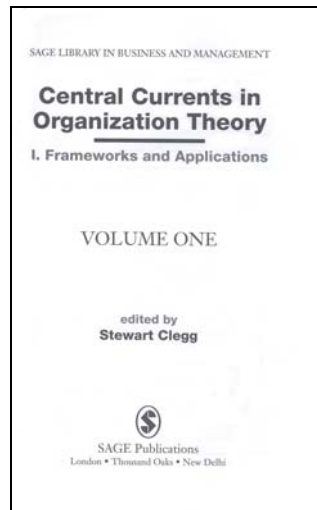
One might be excused for finding this explanation of the choice of title rather confusing. Clegg gives us a list of five possible names for his collection, suggests that the project of archivisation is open to ‘debate’ (see Oswick in this issue on questions of ‘debate’) and proposes to settle this debate by using the ‘broader title’. But he doesn’t inform us *directly* which of these five it will be. To get to the answer to this riddle involves a certain amount of inside knowledge (and as we will find, this presumption of inside knowledge runs throughout this collection).

The conscientious student or uninitiated reader might seek to refer to the work that Clegg cites here (Clegg and Hardy, 1996), but will face the slight difficulty that this work does not appear in the bibliography for this editorial introduction. With a little inside knowledge (that is, if one already knows something of the ‘archive’ that is ‘organization studies’), it is fairly safe to assume that the reference to Clegg and Hardy (1996) is intended either as a reference to Clegg, Hardy and Nord’s *Handbook of Organization Studies* (1996) or the selections reprinted from that in paperback, Clegg and Hardy’s *Studying Organization* (1999). But importantly, this missing reference draws attention to a few things that should be known about this collection in advance, which can be summarised telegraphically as follows: (1) there are numerous errors in Clegg’s editorial apparatus, of which this missing reference is but one example; (2) this practice of self-citation in order to refer to apparently established protocols recurs throughout both editorial introductions; and (3) there is a game of the insider here, that involves a vast and complicated set of questions about interiority and exteriority.

But in case you sense that these criticisms run too quickly and I am accused of tilting my lance at a giant who is really a windmill, let us consider the title of the collection further. Here we find another example of editorial indiscretion. This relates directly to the choice of the name ‘organization studies’ for the collection. Embarrassingly, something strange seems to have happened in the printing of the covers and the printing of the inside cover pages. The spine and cover of all 8 volumes display the title *Central Currents in Organization Studies*. So far so good. With a deep red cloth cover and lettering in black and silver, everything here gives the sense of a carefully constructed publication from a publishing house of quality.



But inside the cover of each of the first four volumes one is met with a discrepancy that could miss the eye of a careless proof-reader. On the inside of the four volumes we find the title *Central Currents in Organization Theory*:



This inconsistency is not only an error in the copy of this collection that I consulted. On the publisher's websites advertising the first four volumes, for example, we find, on a page headed *Central Currents in Organization Studies*, the claim that: "The volumes will enable any instructor to construct a coherent and evolutionary course on 'organizations'. *Central Currents in Organization Theory* volumes 1-4 presents all the main works that lead to the emergence of organization theory and which still constitute central debates in the field".¹

Given that Clegg was so careful to specify that 'organization studies' was his preferred title, how could this have happened?² It could be a simple typesetting error, which could have been the oversight of a negligent typesetter. But the same error on the website suggests that something more is up. As a clue, perhaps we should take seriously Clegg's own warning that "There is some debate about the appropriate title for the endeavour represented here" (Clegg, 2002b: xxii). This warning could be applied 'outside the text' to recall that such debates do not only take place within the academic sphere, but in the space of publishing and in the relations between authors and publishers. Is it not possible that this inconsistency is indicative of frequent debates about the appropriate title of publishing endeavours? Quite often an author has one title in mind while the publisher has another. If such a discrepancy had not been sorted out in advance of printing the covers and the title pages of volumes 1-4, this would provide one possible

1 See the European website at <http://www.sagepub.co.uk/book.aspx?pid=100902> or the US website at <http://www.sagepub.com/book.aspx?pid=8542>. While I refer to the websites as at January 2004, it will be interesting to see if this page is changed at a later date.

2 This mistake recalls Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*, a tale held together around a set of apparent errors. There is also the famous joke about the young undergraduate who returns Joyce's *Ulysses* to the bookshop with the complaint that there are spelling mistakes throughout, and especially at the end. While such comparisons might be fruitful, in these examples the printing 'errors' are inserted purposefully. In the current case, I will not assume that Clegg has cleverly filled the text with errors. Although this is, of course, possible.

explanation of the situation at hand. And it would draw us closer to the need for further consideration of the relations between authors and the apparatuses involved in the production of archives.

Producing

In 1798 Kant wrote two letters to Friedrich Nicolai, a publisher who had previously written scathing attacks directed at the critical philosopher. In the second of his letters Kant explicitly addresses the question of the commercialisation of publishing, an issue that is certainly raised by Clegg's collection, and that we should not relegate to an 'outside text' here. Kant writes:

The *turning out of books* is not an insignificant branch of business in a commonwealth whose culture has already progressed quite far, and where reading has become a nearly indispensable and general need. This part of *industry* in a country, however, thereby reaps uncommon gains if it is carried on *in the manner of a factory*, which, however, cannot happen unless by means of a publisher capable of *judging* the taste of the public and *paying* for the skill of every manufacturer who is to be employed. Yet as a stimulus to his publishing trade, he does not need to take into account the inner worth and content of the commodities he produces, but only the market *to* which, and the fashion of the day *for* which, the in any case ephemeral products of the printing press are brought into lively currency, and can achieve a swift, even if not an enduring, turnover of inventory. (Kant, 1798: 625-626, emphases in original)

Kant points to several important aspects of publishing, in terms of the means and the ends towards which publishing is put. He takes up an attractively dialectical position with regard to the press. That is to say, he defends the freedom of the press and the democratising institution of publishing but is also critical of what publishers may do with that freedom. But we should note that the set of eight volumes that we have in front of us is not a mere 'ephemeral product' that has no intention of anything other than selling itself in cheap paperback reproductions for a mass market. On the contrary, *Central Currents* sells itself on the basis of its exclusivity and authority. *It is the very opposite of ephemera*. It is a mighty, sturdy, erect monument that is of value as a commodity exactly because it is anything but a passing whimsey. Forget the fleeting and the small. This is the *Central Currents* of organization studies.

Still, *Central Currents* brings itself to market as commodity, and in this respect Kant's comments still hold. Considering *Central Currents* as a commodity, we might consider some of the financial statistics related to this collection. The *Central Currents* commodity comes to the market with a staggering price tag of £525 for the first four volumes, and the same again for the latter four. For the whole set the discounted price is £990.³ With eight volumes this comes to £123.75 per volume. With 3250 pages plus 54 editorial pages this comes to around 30 pence per page. With 142 articles reprinted, this comes to £6.97 per article.

3 In the US that is \$850 for each half, or \$1650 for all 8 volumes.

So this is not the kind of book that I am personally in the habit of buying, and I guess that the same is the case for most readers of this review.⁴ Quite obviously, with this kind of pricing strategy, this book is not intended for the personal library of the average student or academic, but is targeted at a quite different market. Clearly – university libraries. So when the publisher’s websites suggest that ‘The volumes will enable any instructor to construct a coherent and evolutionary course on ‘organizations’’, they might add that no student ever known to a university educator would buy this volume. I can envisage the situation now, as the seventy-odd students on my Critical Perspectives on Management module rush to the library to borrow the first volume of Clegg (2002) for their first week’s reading!

If this is a library book, marketed to and for libraries, should a reader of this review recommend it for purchase for their institutional library? One of the selling points of a collection like this is that it could be a time-saving device. It could bring to the library the central currents, and hence save the time of scouring through other already existing archives. But before rushing out to order *Central Currents*, the sensible librarian should ask if there aren’t alternative ways of getting one’s hands on these articles. Most obviously, perhaps, one might consult already existing archives in one’s library. After all, very few of the articles reprinted here are rare or hard to find. Indeed, most of them will exist on the shelf or the electronic archive of a decent research library. And if they aren’t, then they should be available to that old-fashioned technology of the interlibrary loan. Given that the reprinted volumes come in at £6.97 per article, it is probably worth the time of filling in the interlibrary loan forms.

But before abandoning *Central Currents* and setting ourselves to work constructing our own archive, we should check to see if Clegg’s collection doesn’t provide us with an editorial apparatus that would add something over and above a box file with 142 photocopied articles in it. But unfortunately our archivist disappoints us once again. One might have hoped for some basic editorial devices such as a system of indexing, which could be used to trace lines across the archive. An index that would indicate each time a particular word, concept, or author is mentioned across the *Central Currents*. We can find a particularly nice example of such devices in the French edition of the non book-length works of that other archivist, Michel Foucault. In the four volume collection of Foucault’s *Dits et écrits* we find page upon page in the last volume of indexes, by subject, name, place, date and author. To select another example, in the collection of the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (now available in paperback for a mere £9.99 per volume) we find a complete volume (vol. 24) of indices. By comparison, in Clegg’s collection, we have nothing. Not even the most basic index. Further, Clegg’s collection does not even reproduce the original page numbers of the articles reproduced here, which is standard practice in many collections

4 One might think that this is the kind of book that is the object of affection of a collector like Walter Benjamin (see ‘Unpacking my Library’ in *Illuminations*). But while this collection has all of the outward appearance of value (the lustre of cover, the red, black and silver, the high-grade paper, and so on), this is hardly the ‘irreplacable item’ that founds a collector’s collection. On the contrary, while making a show of its finery, this is a result of what Benjamin called ‘mechanical reproduction’, one which strips the original of its aura while presenting itself as technically superior to the original (see ‘The Work of Art in Age of Mechanical Reproduction’ in *Illuminations*).

and makes it possible to check and to cite page sources from the reprinted version. But not here. Nothing other than the archive.⁵

The Archive

Let us turn therefore to the contents of the archive. Structurally, each half of the archive is broken into eight sections. Hence, in volumes 1-4 ('Frameworks and Applications') we find the following sections:

1. Early histories: The emergence of formally rational organizations
2. Human relations in formally rational organizations
3. Sociological foundations for theories of modern organizations
4. Building organization theories
5. Debating contingency theory
6. The environments of organizations
7. Institutions and organizations
8. Economics and organizations

And in volumes 5-8 ('Contemporary Trends') we find the following:

1. Power and politics of organizing
2. Inter-organizational collaboration and alliances
3. Discursive subjects
4. Researching organizing qualitatively
5. Organizations as encultured and encoded
6. Organizations as sense-making arenas
7. Paradigms and organization studies
8. Paradigms for new organizational forms

Readers of *ephemera* will be asking what gets left out of this division and subdivision. Any inclusion will result in exclusion, of course. To the side of the central currents will be a remainder. So, what is missing? There are no distinct sections on developments in 'theory' or poststructuralism (or even 'postmodernism') or on critique (or even 'critical management studies'), although there are a few selections that could be considered to cover these sectional interests. There are no separate sections for feminist or postcolonial analyses of organization. There is almost nothing from critics of economic globalisation. And nothing on the anti-capitalist and anti-corporate movements. These, obviously, are the 'other' of this archive.

5 One might begin to wonder if it is fair to call this collection an 'archive' at all. Commenting on an earlier draft of my review, Dag Petersson noted: "The tome that you target for your critique is not an archive for the very reason that it is closed. An anthology of texts is not an archive because (1) no other texts can be included into it (only in a second edition, but that is a different body of text), (2) there is no classification system nor a catalogue that organizes it, and (3) it does not perform the sedimentation of knowledge that for Foucault is the attractive thing about the word 'Archive'." For further discussion of archives and power, see Petersson (2003).

The flipside of what is left out is the question of what gets into the archive. We find some interesting reading if we look at which journals are represented in the selections that appear in this collection. Looking at the half dozen most highly represented journals in volumes 1-4 we find these journals represented (with the number of articles reprinted from that journal):

Rank	Journal Title	Selections
1	Administrative Science Quarterly	18
2	American Sociological Review	6
3	American Journal of Sociology	6
4	Academy of Management Review	3
5	Organization Studies	3
6	Theory and Society	3

In volumes 5-8, we find the following:

Rank	Journal Title	Selections
1	Administrative Science Quarterly	14
2	Organization Science	10
3	Organization Studies	9
4	Academy of Management Review	6
5	Organization	5
6	Human Relations	4

No surprises here then, although from this we get something of the sense of an historical shift across time. The first four volumes select from a significant number of sociologically oriented journals, but by comparison the journals selected for the latter four volumes look more like the kind of list of journals that might be recognised as the ‘organization studies’ journals today. One constant across time is the journal *Administrative Science Quarterly*, which strides triumphant across this collection. With 18 out of the first 69 selections and 14 out of the latter 73 selections, this gives a representation of 26% of the first four volumes and 19% of the latter four. Overall, this represents 23% of the reprinted entries, which leads one to wonder if the collection might better be titled *Central Currents in Administrative Science*.

While it would be rash to suggest that a journal such as the *Administrative Science Quarterly* is merely a mouthpiece for American neoliberal conservatism, it is hardly leading a vanguard across the barricades. Its presence here raises the issue of the conservatism that could be seen to run throughout this collection. But I do not want to suggest that this is simply a conservative collection. This would be unfair, firstly, because there are a number of articles reprinted here that could be considered ‘critical’ and that certainly challenge certain ways of thinking about organization. But also, this collection is of such a size that it would be foolish to speak of singular leanings that run

across it as a whole. There would always be examples to the contrary, and this archive is not unified or totalisable.

In the place of a reading of the entire contents in this vast collection, we might pose the question of conservation by looking at the procedures of selection and censorship at work. If we look at the latter four volumes which make up the 'Contemporary Trends' section, we find that half of the articles in this section were originally published in or before 1990, and three quarters were originally published in or before 1995. Less than a quarter were originally published after 1995. In short, this collection, published in 2002 and being read in 2004, has a decisively dated feel. Once again, the title 'contemporary trends' for these latter four volumes misses its mark.

This brings me to the basic problem that I have with this collection, which is that it is principally a backward-looking collection. Perhaps this is inescapable when reprinting journal articles or collecting an archive. One must look back, see what is there, and from the past one must select, collect and represent history. *In a particular way*, one might add, and this cuts to the heart of the matter. If we accept, as Clegg puts it, that "in historical science...there are an enormous number of variables, great complexity, unique actors, and no possibility of artful laboratory closure" (2002c: xxvii), then we should also recall that it is also impossible to avoid closure. The question before us, following Derrida, is not whether or not one closes, but of how one closes.

This is important because closure of an archive always involves that the "complex functioning of the editorial machine: its mechanisms of selection, control, sanctioning, recruitment, internal promotion, elimination, censorship" (Derrida, 1995: 29). The point is not to imagine a space in which such things would no longer take place – which is the fiction of escape, pure transcendence, other-wordliness, onto-theology – even if such a notion of escape might organize and coordinate our hopes for a future to come. The task of critically reviewing history is to consider its emplacement – the ways that it has been put in place. It is possible to see history as a story of development, of *Bildung*, evolution, and so on; or, alternatively, it is also possible to see history as censorship, control, elimination and so on. We know the first conception of history as history of the central current and the latter as (Nietzschean or Foucauldian) genealogy.

Clegg has made this kind of distinction throughout his writing (see Clegg, 1988, 1998, for example), and has almost always come down in favour of the latter (in theory, at least). This distinction could be recalled here to think about the procedures of selection of the archive that Clegg has collected. In brief, there is almost nothing new in this archive. Almost nothing that will surprise. It reproduces history *in a particular way*, that is to say, it gives us a story of the past that will be largely comfortable and reassuring to those already 'in' what is agreed upon as 'organization studies'. This is not the kind of archival work that one might expect from a Foucauldian historian, the kind of historian that Clegg has presented himself as, and been presented as, on more than one occasion (see Rowlinson and Carter, 2002, cf. Jones, 2002). Surely the Foucauldian task of a genealogy is to "cultivate the details and accidents that accompany every beginning; it will be scrupulously attentive to their petty malice; it will await their emergence, once unmasked, as the face of the other" (Foucault, 1977: 144). But this other is not what you will find in this archive.

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